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All That Is Holy Is Profaned:
Building War through Militarization, Memorialization, and
Recreationalization of the Urban Middle East

By
Ayda Taghikhani Melika

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Architecture
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:
Professor Nezar AlSayyad, Co-chair
Professor Andy Shanken, Co-chair
Professor Galen Cranz
Professor Cihan Tugal

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Abstract

All That Is Holy Is Profaned: Building War Through Militarization,
Memorialization, and Recreationalization of the Urban Middle East

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University of California, Berkeley

Professors Nezar AlSayyad and Andy Shanken, Co-chairs

The greatest enemy of humanity is not war; it is the illusion of humanism and peacemaking. The convergence of militarization, memorialization, and recreationalization is a widespread modern phenomenon observed in spatial and architectural manifestations worldwide. For example, memorial parks have often been dedicated to the memory of wars while simultaneously designed for recreational activities. In this dissertation, I examine how these sites, which are often erected under the legitimizing banner of humanitarian or sacred values, are designed to have political socialization and militarization effects on the users. The neoliberal militarization of spaces of daily life, collective memory and recreations shape the political landscape of our world threatening societies with a slow but steady normalization of war and the spread of a deadly culture of global violence. Implementation of extensive spatial militarization, memorialization, and recreationalization is aiding the spread of neoliberalism in the formation of new Middle Eastern cities. Decades of US interventions under peace keeping and humanitarian banners have fueled Islamic fundamentalism and sectarianism, which preserves instability and animosity among the large oil-producing nations of the Middle East. In this dissertation, I examine the war-ridden landscapes of the Middle East as the most militarized spatial manifestation of a globally spreading neoliberal militant governmentality that I call *militantality*¹.

Methods used in my research include literature review, archival research, newspaper and released top-secret CIA document analysis, as well as ethnographical methods, such as observation, participatory observation and interviews. Moreover, for my field research I traveled to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Turkey, and the Lebanese Republic where I focused on several main case study sites such as Iran's Museum of Holy Defense, Turkey's Panorama 1453 History Museum, and Mleeta, Lebanon's multimillion-dollar theme park of martyrdom.

¹ Inspired by Foucault's theory, *militantality* is a term I will use to refer to a Governmentality that has apparatuses of military as its essential technical means. A full description can be found in chapter nine of this dissertation.

The explorations and arguments in my dissertation are organized in three parts: militarization, memorialization, and recreationalization. Part one starts with a broad review of cultures of violence in developing countries in relation to the spread of colonialism, nationalism, advancement of warfare, and neoliberal imperialism. This is followed by chapter three, which is an in-depth investigation of the militarization of the Middle East, the world's most extensively militarized and conflict-ridden region. Focusing on the United States imperialistic militarization of the Middle East, and Iran as my main case study, I argue that a lucrative economy of enmity fuels the regional wars, making military institutions ever stronger, while preventing any fundamental change to structures of power. Using Iraq as the main case study, the following three chapters in part two, explore the relationship between memory and violence in the Middle East in the twenty-first century. First, I offer an interdisciplinary approach for the study of memorials as media, followed by chapter five where I argue there has been what I call a *memory-centric* warfare waged against the region by the United States' neoliberal military complex, producing, preserving and perpetuating sectarianism. Highlighting the role of scholar's in militarizing cultural knowledge, I dedicate the next chapter to arguing that memory has been utilized as *weapons of mass disorientation*². In part three, I argue that new forms of Islamized spaces of recreation and leisure have emerged out of the interplay between terrorism and tourism through which local leaders militarize fate, history, and culture in order to expand neo-liberal urbanism. Using the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* in Istanbul, Turkey as my main case study, I argue that the converged militarized recreational landscapes of memory are both triumphs of neoliberal hegemony and symbolic edifices intended to generate fear in external enemies while simultaneously aiming to maintain order at home. I further demonstrate how these sites are designed to achieve the consent of the masses to further expand militarized urbanism by indoctrinating, legitimizing, and disseminating the ideas and values of dominant ideological, economic, and military leaders.

Finally, in the epilog, I conclude that the spatial and architectural manifestations of the global militarized neoliberal imperialism can, by design, only perpetuate violence. Further I argue that we have entered a time of *militantality*³ where the overwhelmingly militant structure of our governments has encroached on the spaces of everyday life, leading to a highly militarized world where people are socialized into a culture of violence.

² This is a term I will use to refer to *memory-centric* weapons that produce large scale historic amnesia, cultural damage, and collective disorientation. A full description can be found in chapter six of this dissertation.

³ Inspired by Foucault's Governmentality, this is a term I will use to refer to a militant mentality that governs our era. A full description can be found in section concluding chapter of this dissertation.

I dedicate this thesis to my peace-loving family: Mahshid, Mona and Vahid.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND DATES

This dissertation adopts a system of transliteration based loosely on that used in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES), eliminating all diacritical marks. All years mentioned in the text relate to the Common Era. Quotations in non-English languages, especially in the case of travel reports and interviews in Persian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, and Arabic have been translated in the main text.

CHAPTER 1. Prologue

1.1 A Brief Introduction

1.2 Hypothesis and Research Questions

1.3 Methods and Theoretical Framework

1.4 Structure

1.1 A Brief Introduction

In many ways, this research stems from the findings of my master's thesis, *The Myth of Karbala: Socio-Political and Spatial Practices in Contemporary Tehran*, which was completed in December 2012.¹ In that thesis, I examined the formal and informal buildings constructed for the commemoration ceremony of the historic battle of Karbala, which helped establish the tradition of war memorials and martyrdom in Iran. In recent decades new forms of war memorialization have emerged that more closely resemble their modern Western counterparts than the traditional Iranian version. These memorials are designed using modern techniques and technologies to construct new forms of spatial and narrative structures. In this dissertation, I will build on the findings of my master's thesis regarding the historic and ideological roots for the creation of the traditional memorial sites in Iran to examine how they differ from their modern counterparts.²

The extensive militarization and memorialization I witnessed during my 2010–2011 field research in Iran made me question the correlation between militarized spaces and mentalities. A brief examination of other cities in the Middle East also revealed severe levels of securitization in the urban spaces rising from high levels of insecurity. What modes of thinking could have generated such intensive levels of visibly demonstrated policing and militarization in the Middle East? Many still question the imagined boundaries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and ask *Is There A Middle East?*³ Michel Camau, for instance, has called the term a “polysemic practical concept” and Anthony Giddens sees it as a “theory-in-use”. For some, the term connotes the “norms and institutions that govern the relations among citizens and between citizens and the state”⁴. These, plus certain historical contexts, socioeconomic constructs and shared geopolitical realities, have made the countries in this modern conceptualization develop shared circumstances after World War II, including civic orders that allow states with authoritarian–populist character, or local and external threats that result in the most extensively militarized countries in the world. In this dissertation I will examine several countries within the MENA region in the broader

¹ Ayda Melika, “The Myth of Karbala: Socio-Political and Spatial Practices in Contemporary Tehran” (University of California, Berkeley, 2012).

² Therefore I will also be using: Kamran Scot Aghaie, *The Martyrs Of Karbala: Shi'i Symbols and Rituals in Modern Iran* (University of Washington Press, 2004); Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism : A Religion of Protest* (Cambridge Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011); Hamid Dabashi, “Taziyyeh as Theatre of Protest,” *TDR/The Drama Review* 49, no. 4 (2005): 91–99, <https://doi.org/10.1162/105420405774762925>; Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982); Masoud Kamali, *Revolutionary Iran : Civil Society and State in the Modernization Process* (Aldershot England ;;Brookfield Vt.: Ashgate, 1998); Michael Fischer, *Iran : From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980) and more.

³ Michael E. Bonine, Abbas Amanat, and Michael Ezekiel Gasper, *Is There a Middle East? : The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept* (Stanford, California : Stanford University Press, [2012], ©2012., 2012).

⁴ James Gelvin's chapter in Bonine, Amanat, and Gasper.

context of colonialism, the global history of post-war capitalism, the crisis of the 1970s, and the interventions of twenty-first century neoliberal imperialism.

The countries I will primarily use as case studies in the Middle East are the Islamic Republic of Iran, the semi-secular state of Turkey, the sectarian Republic of Iraq and the sectarian Lebanese Republic, each with a distinct war history and specific diplomatic relations with the West. Together, these countries allow for a politically, ethnically, and ideologically encompassing portrayal of the Middle East, and help reveal the mentioned sites both as a manifestation of external interventions and as reactions to internal and external threats. Through these case studies, I will demonstrate that, far from simply reflecting the local culture, they are manifestations of a worldwide neoliberal urbanism that is militarizing the Middle East and shaping it politically into one of the strongest engines of the vicious cycle of global violence. Ultimately, I conclude that the condition of life we live in produces a militant mentality that governs our lives, our relations with our kind, and a type of militarized neoliberal urbanism that, in contrast to the humanitarian and/or sacred justifications for their existence, can only lead to the perpetuation of violence.

To investigate the role of militarized space in the spread of global violence, this study will look at the ways in which militarization, memorialization, and recreationalization have converged, through various architectural projects in the modern Middle East to create new forms of entertainment and political socialization.⁵ Highlighting the role of these multi-purpose spaces of recreational violence and enmity as militarized neoliberal socialization sites, I will argue that the political leaders create and use these settings to assimilate people into a political and military culture. Additionally, I will argue that these spaces are used to communicate military might to local and foreign enemies. Ultimately, I will demonstrate the role of these ideologically designed environments in militarizing culture and spreading the global culture of violence.

Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Lebanon are used to explore the ways in which both imperialistic powers and local governments reshape memorial landscapes to extend and secure their own power. Moreover, similar urban and architectural phenomena will be compared in some of these cases in an effort to develop a widely applicable model for the study of recreationalization, memorialization and militarization.

In this dissertation, I will initially investigate the connections between colonialism, nationalism and warfare to examine the cultures of violence in developing countries that have given rise to new forms of spatial militarization and violence. Furthermore, the historical analysis component of my research will help

⁵ This research acknowledges upfront that this is a worldwide phenomenon. By looking at the Middle East through comparative perspective I intend to illustrate the ways in which the convergence of recreation and memorial sites there are being used by the local and foreign governments.

explore the rapid military developments of the Middle East during 1970s and its perpetual militarization as a consequence of external forces. Through an extensive literature review, I will demonstrate the relationship between the militarization of the Middle East and the United States' political agenda during the 1970s.

Moreover, I will explain how the dynamics of these relationships shifted after the collapse of the American-supported states, such as the Pahlavi dynasty in the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran, and examine the changed aspects of militarization after the termination/deterioration of the official diplomatic connections with the United States. Iran makes a strong case study for this section because it was the first country that was excessively militarized by the United States. Moreover, because of its frequent political turmoil and drastic transformation, it allows for comparative study of the same location under distinct state powers. I will trace the changes and developments in the forms and functions of memorial sites in Iran by depicting how Iran's dependency on the West shifted toward other world powers such as Russia and China for militarization. Hence, the transformations in memorial sites in the past three decades will be demonstrated as a response to new international relations, specifically the threats from Israel and the United States' militarization of the Persian Gulf region, and the construction of numerous American bases all over the Middle East.

Following this more general historic overview I will focus on memory and violence in the Middle East in the twenty-first century by examining memorials as media in contemporary Iraq. The case of Iraq will allow for a recent example of US military interventions in the region. Advocating a multidisciplinary methodology, I will argue that a holistic study of memorials should include five parts: examining the context, the sender, the medium, the receiver, and the scholar. Investigating the case of memorials in Iraq through examples of previous scholarships, I will demonstrate how applying certain interdisciplinary approaches to widely studied memorials such as Baghdad's Victory Arch allow inferring new and broader comprehension of the phenomena. Furthermore, I propose there has been a *memory-centric* war waged against the Middle East by a neoliberal global military complex and suggest that scholars have a responsibility in demilitarizing cultural knowledge and realizing the large-scale destructiveness of how memory is used as what I call *weapons of mass disorientation*.⁶

Furthermore, I will argue that the state sponsored militarized spaces of memory and recreation have the power to shape new collective identities and play a role in both internal political mobilizations and demonstrations of power to the external enemies. Examples from three Middle Eastern republics (Turkey, Lebanon and Iran) will reveal the ways in which leaders shape and reshape memorial landscapes to exhibit power and, more specifically, how the role of the conflated recreational and memorial spaces in a militarizing culture fuels the cycle

⁶ This is a term I will use to refer to *memory-centric* weapons that produce large scale historic amnesia, cultural damage, and collective disorientation. A full description can be found in chapter six of this dissertation.

of global violence by giving more incentive for an arms race and high defense expenditure, resulting in increased insecurity.

Ultimately, I will conclude that all the humanitarian, peacekeeping, and/or sacred justifications presented by various power structures internal and external to the Middle East have been fueling the rapid construction and expansion of a militarized neoliberal urbanism that is a manifestation of what I call *militantality*, a militant mentality that governs our society and perpetuates violence and forms our life conditions and our relations with our kind.

1.2 Hypothesis and Research Questions

The hypothesis of this study is that the current stage of modernity necessitates that the physical and mental structures of society be constructed and destroyed at a much faster speed than ever before to fuel the ever growing “crises capitalism” and “economy of enmity” required for neoliberal imperialism to thrive. The questions that evolve from this claim are: How is the rise in activism and the seemingly legitimate efforts to “do good” – to build, to make peace, to resist evil, to remember, or to entertain – correlated with the increasing number of suicides and wars, and the amount of violence globally? Are humanitarian efforts truly saving humanity? Have peacemaking efforts decreased war and violence? Do the scholars participating in “cultural-centric” warfare prevent or expand cultural damage? How is it that the “war on terror” produced and unleashed exponentially greater global insecurity, violence, and war?

In part one of this study I will hypothesize there are strong connections between modernity, colonialism, nationalism, imperialism, neoliberalism and war, the interplay of which has had some brutal manifestations in the built environment. Additionally, using Iran as my main case study, I will hypothesize that the United States has played a role in the development of the current militarized state of the Middle Eastern cities and their war-ridden landscapes. The extensive violence in the region has been fueled by the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which began with the United States’ Green Belt Doctrine and continues through the spread of sectarianism to preserve instability and animosity among the large oil-producing nations in the region. The United States has played a major role in the formation of new Middle Eastern cities by influencing and implementing the expansion of new militarized spaces of memorialization and recreationalization. The questions that evolve from this claim are: what is the geopolitical significance of the Middle East for the United States? When did the United States’ military presence begin in the Middle East and what socialization techniques were employed? What are the economic benefits of an unstable, war-ridden Middle East? How does the neoliberal system benefit from the urban dynamics of turmoil within cities? How is it that the so-called “revolutions” in the region often preserve the military institutions and cause no fundamental change in the power structures?

In part two, using Iraq as my main case study, I will hypothesize that during the United States led invasion and occupation of Iraq, memory was systematically used as cultural weapons that tampered with collective memory to disorient communities and create an altered mental state. Calling them *weapons of mass disorientation*, I will hypothesize these cultural weapons are capable of causing great damage to a large number of humans, social structures of communities and political organizations by tampering with an entire collective’s orientation about their identity, memory and history. The questions that evolve from this claim are: How was a war on Iraq justified by the United States? What was the role of scholars and knowledge producing institutions in the war? What was the role of memorials in producing, preserving, and perpetuating sectarianism? What are the

responsibilities of scholar's in demilitarizing cultural knowledge? Is militarizing neoliberal urbanism responsible for the disorientation of the Iraqi people's sense of history, identity, and socio-political capabilities?

Using Turkey as my main case study in part three, I will hypothesize that the convergence of memorial landscapes and state sponsored spaces of recreation in the Middle East is part of larger national strategies. These sites are constructed by the regimes as a mechanism for control of public opinion and the promotion of national ideologies. The questions that evolve from this claim are: What types of spaces of combined recreation and memorialization have been designed and constructed in each country? Who finances these built projects? Who designs them? Who are the intended audience/visitors/users? What are the ideologies encoded into the design of these spaces? How do the users actually decode these messages? When constructed under the influence of Middle Eastern regimes, how are these sites similar to, or different from, their Western counterparts? Moreover, examining their role in militarizing culture, I will hypothesize that the emergence of these types of "militarizing" recreational memory sites is a response to both internal and external threats perceived by the states sponsoring them. The questions that evolve from this claim are: What are various internal and external threats to the structures of local power in the region? How have urban spaces been utilized for further militarization? What is the meaning of these sites within each specific cultural context that created them, and what is the role that memorial recreation landscapes play in militarizing culture? Looking beyond their specific local characteristics, what is the role these recreational memorial sites play in a larger global militarization phenomenon that is threatening peace everywhere?

Ultimately, in the epilogue, the answers to these questions will result in a better understanding of how the current conditions of life have been producing a militant governmentality that gives rise to a kind of neoliberal urbanism that is, by design, a perpetuator of violence and destruction.

1.3 Methods and Theoretical Framework

Research methods used in this dissertation include a literature review, archival research, newspaper and released top-secret Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) document analysis, observation, participant observation, and interviews. Part one and part two will mainly rely on literature review, archival research, and close examination of newspaper articles and partially/fully released CIA documents to present an in-depth historical analysis. Part three will rely mainly on the field research that I conducted between 2014 and 2017. To study the spatial manifestations of *militantality* in the Middle East, I traveled to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Turkey, and the Lebanese Republic. I focused on one main site in each of these three republics: Iran's Museum of Holy Defense, Turkey's Historical Museum of Panorama 1453, and Mleeta, Lebanon's multimillion-dollar theme park of martyrdom.

An important aspect that informs and structures this dissertation is my exposure to scholars whose works are relevant to mine. This study was initially inspired by my interest in Baudrillard's concepts of simulacra and simulation⁷, Barthes' semiotics,⁸ and Benjamin's aestheticization of politics.⁹ My conversations with Paul Groth, an expert in material culture with an in-depth knowledge about social spaces of recreation; Iraj Etessam, the architect of Tehran's Holy Defense Garden Museum; and Jason Hamza van Boom, scholar of Karbala, Islam and Liberation Theology, have also been inspirational.

Intellectually, my dissertation mainly grows out of and builds on Foucault's *governmentality*¹⁰ and Marshall McLuhan's *the medium is the message*.¹¹ Marshall Berman's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* has also been a tremendous inspiration in the formation of this research. My dissertation committee's historiographical, sociological, and theoretic works have also greatly informed my research. It has been my aim to follow my advisor Andrew Shanken's research on memorials and themed environments¹² while theoretically relying on Nezar

⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

⁸ Roland Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1988).

⁹ Walter Benjamin et al., *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility, and other writings on media* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ Michel Foucault et al., *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan : République Française, 2007); Michel Foucault et al., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

¹¹ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium Is the Massage* (Touchstone, 1989).

¹² Andrew M. Shanken, "Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II," *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 1 (March 1, 2002): 130–47, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3177256>; Andrew Michael Shanken, *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front*, Architecture, Landscape, and American Culture Series (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Andrew Shanken, "Confederates on the Fairway: A Civil War Themed Subdivision in Rural Ohio," *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 2 (January 1, 2007): 287–301, <https://doi.org/10.3368/lj.26.2.287>; Andrew Michael Shanken, *Into the Void Pacific*:

AlSayyad's research on traditions,¹³ modern urban experience,¹⁴ and memorials in the Middle Eastern context¹⁵. Moreover, my urban sociology advisor Cihan Tuğal's *passive revolution* theory has been very informative¹⁶. Methodologically, my research is inspired by the works of Galen Cranz,¹⁷ whose research employs sociological approaches for the study of the built environments and cities. These scholars have strongly inspired and influenced the formation and direction of my research.

Building the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair, Berkeley/Design/Books, #7 (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2014).

¹³ Jean-Paul Bourdier and Nezar AlSayyad, *Dwellings, Settlements, and Tradition: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (University Press of America, 1989); Nezar AlSayyad, *The End of Tradition?* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004); Nezar AlSayyad, *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001).

¹⁴ Nezar AlSayyad, *Cinematic Urbanism: A History of the Modern from Reel to Real* (New York; London: Routledge, 2006); Nezar AlSayyad and Mejgan Massoumi, *The Fundamentalist City?: Religiosity and the Remaking of Urban Space* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁵ Nezar AlSayyad, "Architecture and the Lurking Potential" in Tetsuji Yamamoto, *Philosophical Designs for a Socio-Cultural Transformation*, Isla: 1 (Tokyo, Japan : Ecole des hautes études en sciences culturelles (E.H.E.S.C.) ; Boulder, CO : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, c1998., 1998).

¹⁶ Cihan Tuğal, *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009).

¹⁷ Galen Cranz, *Changing Roles of Urban Parks: From Pleasure Garden to Open Space* (Institute of Urban & Regional Development, University of California, Berkeley, 1978).

1.4 Structure

With the main objective of presenting comprehensive case studies of the converged memorial and recreation spaces in the Middle East as sites of political socialization and militarization in the region, this prologue introduces the topic, the hypothesis, and the main research questions, methods and theoretical frame, as well as the structure for this research. The three main parts following this prologue will explore the politics of militarized spaces in the contemporary Middle East.

Part One of the dissertation, focusing on militarization, starts with chapter two and is a historical analysis of cultures of violence in developing countries that demonstrates the strong connections between modernity, colonialism, nationalism, neoliberal imperialism, and advancements in warfare that gave rise to new forms of urban militarization. Initially, it explores developments in the social sciences, the convergence of technology with capitalism, and changes in the processes of warfare, using literature covering each of these specific aspects of modernity. Chapter three provides a literature review on the historic context of war and the military in the Middle East, focusing on the urban manifestations of war. This section heavily relies on archival newspaper articles, memoirs, and partially/fully released top-secret CIA documents to support my arguments. While militarization has had spatial consequences throughout the world, the focus of my study is mainly on the Middle East. The changes in the Middle East as a result of the First World War show the continuous application of militarization practices by the United States as well as the formation of the internal political opposition movements. Imperialistic intervention in the region prevents fundamental change to structures of power by producing pseudo-revolts that preserve the military institution at an ever-growing expense.

Part Two of the dissertation, focusing on memorialization, starts with chapter four. which examines memorials as media in contemporary Iraq and presents a communication model for study of memorials that includes the context, sender, medium, receiver, and scholar in producing a holistic understanding of the site examined. This chapter will review previous scholarly work focused on the subject of memorials in Iraq to demonstrate the impact of memorial studies on the actual development/destruction of the physical spaces of the country. Chapter five will argue that violence in the twenty-first century Middle East is waged through memory-centric warfare. Newspaper articles, army reports, and military training instructions are included in the documents examined to support the arguments. This part invites scholars to take responsibility for demilitarizing cultural knowledge. The last chapter in Part Two illuminates the role of memorials as weapons of mass disorientation.

Part Three of the dissertation, focusing on recreationalization, starts with chapter seven, which is an examination of the relationship between terrorism and tourism, and argue that their interplay has given rise to new forms of Islamized

tourism, such as Halal tourism, Jihadi tourism, and *warmusements*.¹⁸ Using Turkey as the main case study, chapter eight looks at the extensive militarization of history, religion, and tradition with the aim of neoliberal urbanization. This part presents a main case study from the Republic of Turkey in addition to two other museums constructed on preserved battlefields, one in the Lebanese Republic, and the other in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This part relies mainly on data collected during the interview and the participant observation phases of my field research. It examines the cultural coding of these hegemonic spaces within the context of each regime. Translated excerpts from the interviews I conducted in Persian, Turkish, and Arabic with the sponsors, designers, and users of these conflated recreational memorialization spaces in the Middle East are also included. Qualitative data and interpretation of the physical traces and behaviors of users, along with observations of some of the built environments within the actual setting of preserved battlefields, affords a closer look at the interaction of visitors with both the newly built and the preserved spaces. This section includes excerpts from key figures involved in the design and building of these militarized spaces of recreation.

The apologue will highlight the dangerous potential of the militarized spaces of conflated recreational memorials and their role in the political landscape of both the Middle East and the world. These militarized spaces, which are often erected under humanitarian, peace keeping, or divine banners, have profoundly destructive impacts on both the structures of our cities and our mentality. The militarization of spaces of daily life, recreation, and memorialization, no matter how small, are extremely dangerous given that they allow for the slow but steady normalization of war and the spread of a deadly culture of global violence.

¹⁸ *Warmusement* is a term I will use to refer to spaces designed to amuse people about the outmost violent aspects of humanity. A full description can be found in chapter seven of this dissertation.

PART ONE: MILITARIZATION

CHAPTER 2. Cultures of Violence in Developing Countries

CHAPTER 3. Imperialistic Militarization of the Middle East

CHAPTER 2. Cultures of Violence in Developing Countries

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Colonialism

2.3 Nationalism

2.4 Warfare

2.5 Imperialism

2.6 Neoliberalism

2.7 Conclusion

2.1 Introduction

When the war ended I went to confession and said, Father, Bless me for I have sinned. During the war I took in a woman and hid her from the Nazis. The priest replies, “Why son, that’s a wonderful thing you did. You have no need to confess.” So I continued, Father to repay me for my kindness, the woman gave me sexual favors. And the Father replies, “That’s OK, son. During wars we are all sinners.”¹

In the film *Killing Season*, a veteran starts telling a joke, but he is interrupted right after the priest reminds us, “During wars we are all sinners.” Considering the number of wars and the millions upon millions who have been killed and who have been dislocated by modern conflicts in the past four centuries, the sins of modern men and women become increasingly unbearable. Yet, in the modern era, we have done away with religion and medieval thinking, freed ourselves from the concepts of sin and religious morality to make rational decisions. We must only be convinced rationally of the “justice” of the wars we are fighting; but as Benedict Anderson observed, with the dusk of religious modes of thought came the dawn of the age of nationalism: “The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness.”² With the expansion of the American empire and the twenty-first century developments in neoliberal military complex, the world has undergone extensive militarization and violence. There are very strong connections between modernity, colonialism, nationalism, imperialism, neoliberalism and war, the interplay of which has had some brutal manifestations in the built environment. In this chapter, I focus on four main aspects of modernity: developments in social sciences, convergence of technology with capitalism, changes in the processes of warfare, and development of a neoliberal military empire.

Anderson argues that developments in the modern era have made possible new “imagined communities” that gave rise to modern nations. Building on that notion, I argue that simultaneously and through the same means, modern men and women began to develop a conception of “imagined enemies,” which gave rise to modern wars. From this point of view, modernity appears as the era of enmity.

¹ This dark joke was told by one of the veteran characters in the movie *Killing Season*. Mark Steven Johnson, *Killing Season*, DVD (Millennium, 2013).

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006), 11.

2.2 Colonialism

...something true and important about modernity: its power to generate forms of “outward show,” brilliant designs, glamorous spectacles, so dazzling that they can blind even the most incisive self to the radiance of its own darker life within.³ – Marshall Berman

Modernity has been defined in many different ways. It is not my intention to give a holistic definition of modernity or provide a survey of its previous definitions. Rather, the aim is to look briefly at the developments in three specific fields in modernity—science, technology, and warfare—as a way to explain the increasing culture of violence starting from the early modern period. In *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*, Paul Rabinow argues that while Karl Marx’s analysis of capitalism and Weber’s of bureaucracy describe two legs of modernity, Foucault’s bio-technico-political or welfare describes a third (though Foucault was not able to complete it before his death).⁴ Together, these factors can illustrate a fuller understanding of the workings of the modern society. Accordingly, a new understanding of the culture of violence in society can be achieved through examination of its modernization process. This entails analyzing the internal structural transformation of capitalism, bureaucracy and welfare to examine the role of developments in science, technology and warfare in the emergence of various social and political groups, their interrelations, and their impact on the built environment and government.

The field of science underwent significant developments during the modern era. According to Bromley, the changes in the character and spirit of the European scientific movement were gradual but definite by 1687. At that time, science had found a new status as a result of many successful examples of experimental and mathematical science. Bromley claims, “Newton’s masterpiece showed for a fact that the ‘new philosophy’ could solve the most imposing of problems.”⁵ This meant that unlike the old days, it was no longer necessary to convince contemporaries of the power of science by argument. “Scientific deeds had spoken for themselves,” states Bromley, and “with these developments, a period of adventure in ideas and organization gave way to one of systematization, fact-collecting and the diffusion of scientific ideas.”⁶

According to Foucault, modernity is linked to the “constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet called man.” The realignments in the discursive field of human sciences in which “Man appears as an object of knowledge and as

³ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (Verso, 1983), 138.

⁴ Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 8.

⁵ J. S. Bromley, *The New Cambridge Modern History: The Rise of Great Britain and Russia, 1688-1725* (CUP Archive, 1970), 37.

⁶ Bromley, 37.

a subject that knows” are responsible for the historic rupture that brought about modernity.⁷ This new understanding of the self as both the subject and object of one’s own knowledge allowed for new practices of reason.

Paul Rabinow examines how some of these practices of reason in France led to new fields of knowledge focused on hygienic, statistical, biological, geographic, and social studies. He argues that these practices produced new forms, both architectural and urbanistic, as well as new social technologies of pacification, such as disciplinary and welfare methods. This enabled cities to be seen as social laboratories where social experiments would be conducted in order to create new social spaces, including liberal disciplinary spaces, agglomerations, and new towns. Through an approach that identified society as a cultural object and scientific approaches that saw the city as a technical object, norms were constructed into understandable forms as a way to regulate what came to be known as modern society.

These developments in social sciences clearly celebrated the built environment as the proper medium for social control. This established the concept of “the planned city as a regulator of modern society.”⁸ Modernization, on these terms, “concerns the infrastructure of cities, although it obviously in turn affects human experience,” according to Gwendolyn Wright.⁹ In *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, she investigates the relation between culture and politics by looking at how French urban designers and social scientists used colonial cities as “laboratories” to work out their ideas on urban planning, housing, and public health. Examining three French colonies (Morocco, Madagascar, and Indochina), she demonstrates how social imperialism was used to pacify the colonies and make them more productive. Moreover, she argues that these experiments in the colonies would also “provide a way to revitalize metropolitan France, regenerating politics and culture with new leaders, fresh ideas, and proven methods.”¹⁰ Colonies at the time possessed an important pragmatic appeal for the European powers as they offered opportunities for extracting wealth and labor, glorifying the preeminence of their civilization, and asserting their power to the world at large.

Edward Said reminds us that, “To colonize meant at first the identification—indeed, the creation—of interests; these could be commercial, communicational, religious, military, cultural.”¹¹ For the architects, public health officers, politicians, military officers, and planners, these colonial environments additionally offered an “apparatus of observation of the social body.” They used them to study people and

⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Psychology Press, 2002), p. 319.

⁸ Rabinow, p. 12.

⁹ Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 9.

¹⁰ Wright, 3.

¹¹ Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 100.

learn the trades and test out their ideas. Said argues, however, that there is a difference between studying other peoples with the intention of understanding, compassion and “knowledge—if that is what it is—that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war. There is, after all, a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate for the purposes of control and external dominion.”¹² Those who were studying the colonized population and their environment, however, were strictly doing so for the benefit of the colonizers themselves, even when they pretended it to be for the sake of the colonized. While colonial professionals claimed to be apolitical experts, Wright argues, “aesthetic appeal cannot mask the unrelenting quest for political control and economic modernization.”¹³ The colonizers were never involved in purely aesthetic or technical matters and inevitably entered into the political realm. These “testing grounds,” as Hubert Lyautey, a French army general and a Marshal of France, called them, were not just meant to generate capital investment or cultural pride through exploitation of the colonies; they also functioned as laboratories where the colonizers embarked on innovative approaches to governance and tested out administrative techniques.

In terms of administration, military men typically governed the colonies. For example, Hubert Lyautey was also involved in Madagascar and Morocco. He was the commander of the French forces in the invasion of Madagascar and served there from 1897 to 1902. The experience of his Madagascar campaign urged him to assert: “To build, this is the goal, and the unique goal, of every colonial war.”¹⁴ From 1907 to 1912, he was a military governor and served as governor-general of Morocco from 1912–1925. These military men who governed the colonies can be seen as great symbols of “social modernity.” They converged militaristic organizational logic with city building and with regulatory population management; therefore, it can be argued that these men were pioneers in building the first systematically militarized cities to regulate populations.

An example of this can be seen in Antananarivo, where the city’s major open space, the Andohalo, was redesigned to facilitate military parades and maneuvers. First, the French renamed the site Square Jean Laborde, and then began changing its aesthetics in accordance with French taste. The traditionally sacred setting was replaced by nineteenth-century landscaping with a central bandshell where the military band played concerts on Sunday afternoons. The French military maneuvers in this central location were a display of power and worked as a constant reminder of the might of the French army. Soon after the opening of the square, a French military officer, Joseph-Simon Gallieni,

¹² Said, 100.

¹³ Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, 83.

¹⁴ Lyautey cited by Wright, p. 83.

appointed a commission of not just engineers and commercial interests, but also military advisors to study and oversee the city's internal street system.¹⁵



Figure 2.1. Police station in the “indigenous village” of Toamasina, an example of infrastructure built by the colonizers to regulate the population, c. 1900.

Moreover, modernization of infrastructure in Madagascar had a militarizing effect. Through an associationist approach to colonization, which appeared to respect indigenous urban norms while introducing modern forms of planning and architecture in urban environments, Gallieni built many new kinds of buildings. Most notable are the 650 schools that were established “to train 50,000 future Malagasy workers by 1903, the curricula stressing practical and manual education.”¹⁶ In addition to training the population to become useful labor, the colonizers built infrastructure to regulate the population and keep the labor force healthy by constructing many clinics, jails, and police stations (Figure 2.1).

This type of militarization was quite common in the other colonial cities as well. For instance, in his book *Colonising Egypt*, Timothy Mitchell similarly argues that the architectural and city planning interventions in Cairo were also aimed at

¹⁵ Wright, 256.

¹⁶ Wright, 255.

creating order, visibility, and control. Mitchell wrote, “The urban space in which Egyptians moved had become a political matter, material to be ‘organised’ by the construction of great thoroughfares radiating out from the geographical and political center.”¹⁷ According to Mitchell, the Egyptians’ minds and bodies were similarly subjected to order and discipline as they moved through and experienced these militarized spaces of the city. Open, well-lit streets were considered a benefit to commerce, for they embodied the principles of visibility and inspection versus the dark “interior” and native part of the city, which was much harder to police.¹⁸

A more intensely exaggerated system of policing was used to control the agricultural wealth of the Nile Valley and commercial revenues. According to Mitchell “the people of Egypt were made inmates of their own villages” in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In accordance with a January 1830 government mandate, Egyptians were confined to their native districts and a permit was required for any outside travels: “The village was to be run like a barracks, its inhabitants placed under the surveillance of guards night and day, and under the supervision of inspectors as they cultivated the land—and surrendered to the government warehouse its produce.”¹⁹ In this way, Egyptians were constantly inspected, instructed, and supervised. Egypt was organized militaristically through different confinements, regulations, and supervisions, which disciplined the population like an army. Mitchell continues, “If they left the village, it was generally under guard, forcibly drafted into the still harsher discipline of the *corvée* or the military camp—unless they were ‘absconders’ who abandoned their homes and fled, as tens of thousands began to do.”²⁰ Interestingly, Egyptians were both guarded and used as guards, but those who were guards were also under the surveillance of countless spies who were placed at every point.

While various colonizers have employed a variety of methods at different times, their final goals have always been about control and exploitation. The overall mentality becomes clearer in Gallieni’s 1898 statement regarding associationist policy to his staff in Madagascar. According to Wright, in his statement Gallieni gave the policy a political rationale and administrative precision by calling for simultaneous military and political action in city planning. Lyautey elevated these tactics by adding that power should be exercised, “not as a matter of destroying [people], but of transforming them.”²¹ As Marx wrote, workingmen “are as much the invention of modern time as machinery itself.”²² The colonizers’ stance toward power, specifically military power, comes in part from a redefined understanding of the modern army as an organization concerned with social benefit rather than

¹⁷ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt: With a New Preface* (University of California Press, 1991), 68.

¹⁸ Mitchell, 67.

¹⁹ Mitchell, 34.

²⁰ Mitchell, 34.

²¹ Lyautey cited by Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, 76.

²² Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and E. J Hobsbawm, *The Communist manifesto: a modern edition* (London; New York: Verso, 1998).

military force. While these claims are often just a cover for exploitation, the propagation of the military as defender of “social benefits” allowed a smoother process — but nonetheless militarization — to encroach into various aspects of society and social life.

2.3 Nationalism

The story of nationalism is necessarily a story of betrayal as it confers freedom only by imposing new controls, defines a cultural identity for the nation only by excluding many from its fold, and grants the dignity of citizenship to some because others could not be allowed to speak for themselves.²³ – Partha Chatterjee

Another factor that contributed to the historic transition from the Middle Ages to modern modes of political and economic organization was the rapid developments in technology. The early modern era (1500–1800) not only witnessed the rise of capitalism but also new technological inventions such as the printing press. Technological progress, for instance, profoundly improved methods of transportation and communication, leading to the reduction of relative distance and making possible new types of interactions. Politically, this era is closely associated with the development of capitalism. According to the political scientist and historian, Benedict Anderson, during this era “fundamental change was taking place in modes of apprehending the world”²⁴ The interplay between new technologies and capitalism in the modern era, for instance, was essential to the rise of new concepts such as nationalism. What made notions such as ‘nation’ imaginable was the “interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity.”²⁵ Print-languages, Anderson argues, laid the bases for national consciousness by creating unified fields of exchange and communication, making people aware of all other people in their particular language-field, and making it possible to imagine all these readers as a community. Anderson explains, “These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community.”²⁶ This convergence of capitalism and print technology, therefore, is responsible for setting the stage for the modern nation.

Print-capitalism, moreover, created languages-of-power that were different to the older administrative languages. Whereas the latter were “languages used by and for officialdoms for their own inner convenience,” the former was systematically imposed on everyone in society to create a unified subject population.²⁷ This made it possible for people to care for total strangers with whom they only shared membership in the imagined community of their nation. They could imagine events just based on what they read in the newspaper and be emotionally moved about a person who they did not know personally but regarded

²³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 154.

²⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 22.

²⁵ Anderson, 42–43.

²⁶ Anderson, 44.

²⁷ Anderson, 42.

as a comrade since each member was considered a representative body. Norman Denzin notes:

Now it is Christmas time 2002, and the flags are still here. Flags have taken over Christmas. Flags have taken over Santa Claus and his reindeer and sled... We are having a second patriotic Christmas, but no longer is it clear who or what we are fighting, or protecting, or mourning. Last year I guess the flags were about the victims and heroes of 9/11... This year I'm not sure who the flags are for. I guess they just mark our endless war against the terrorists...²⁸

The same mechanisms that make imagined communities possible are also in play in the formation of what I call "imagined enemies," contributing greatly to the culture of war and violence. The same means that allow modern people to imagine a national community also impose some limitations on this imagining. Anderson wrote, "The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind."²⁹ In a chapter on patriotism and racism, Anderson asks again "why people are ready to die for these inventions" and goes on to answer that nations are, for most ordinary people, *interestless*, and for that reason alone can ask for sacrifices.³⁰ His previous research on languages seems to dominate his argument, which circles around themes such as "imagining sounds" and how "nation was conceived in language, not in blood." He finally refutes those arguing that racism and anti-semitism derive from nationalism. Specifically, he rejects Narin's statement that, "seen in sufficient historical depth, fascism tells us more about nationalism than any other episode" because, Anderson argues, actions based on racism erase nation-ness by reducing the adversary to biological physiognomy. While the distinction drawn between nationalism and racism is valid, it still does not discredit Narin's argument.

Anderson remains mostly concerned with the creation of national consciousness without factoring in the importance of the "other" in this construction. The "other" does not necessarily mean an "other nation." While people gained the tools by which they were able to "imagine communities," such as their own "nation," they also began to imagine communities that were against their nation; communities that may be ideological, racial, religious, or political. Just as Anderson explained the imagined sense of comradeship the modern reader felt toward the dead vanguard reported in the newspaper who s/he never personally knew, the reader imagines a sense of enmity toward a jihadi, for instance, who s/he also never personally knew. Both the vanguard and the jihadi were fighting

²⁸ Norman K Denzin, *Flags in the Window: Dispatches from the American War Zone* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 21.

²⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

³⁰ Anderson, 144.

for something they believed in, but how they are framed and presented in the media allows for different imaginations. The identity of the individual is not the focus; rather, the individual represents the body of the “imagined enemy.” Just as Anderson depicts its early conception through the print media, these imagined communities continue to be carefully constructed through various forms of mass media. With the information age, even more technologically advanced forms of media that catered to a large number of audiences were invented. Ultimately, as Edward Said reminds us, “Without a well-organized sense that these people over there were not like “us” and didn't appreciate “our” values... there would have been no war.”³¹ He elaborated:

In the demonization of an unknown enemy, for whom the label "terrorist" serves the general purpose of keeping people stirred up and angry, media images command too much attention and can be exploited at times of crisis and insecurity of the kind that the post-9/11 period has produced. Speaking both as an American and as an Arab I must ask my reader not to underestimate the kind of simplified view of the world that a relative handful of Pentagon civilian elites have formulated for US policy in the entire Arab and Islamic worlds, a view in which terror, pre-emptive war, and unilateral regime change—backed up by the most bloated military budget in history—are the main ideas debated endlessly and impoverishingly by a media that assigns itself the role of producing so-called "experts" who validate the government's general line.³²

In other words, nations and their enemies are, therefore, made up of a conscious human effort that constructs the Other. As James Derian asserts, it is always more than a rational calculation of interests that takes us to war: “People go to war because of how they see, perceive, picture, imagine, and speak of others: that is, how they construct the difference of others as well as the sameness of themselves through representations.”³³ These supreme fictions are easily manipulated to stir collective action and, as evident in Said’s example, they are used to (re)organize feelings such as fear, hatred, disgust, self-pride, and arrogance to mobilize communities against one another in large-scale wars.

³¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 1978.

³² Said.

³³ James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2001), 238.

2.4 Warfare

A fact of modern life that should not be easily forgotten is the tremendous importance of military display—psychological as well as political importance—and its power to captivate even the freest spirits. Armies on parade, from Baudelaire’s time to our own, play a central role in the pastoral vision of modernity: glittering hardware, gaudy colors, flowing lines, fast and graceful movements, modernity without tears.³⁴ – Marshall Berman

Developments in the field of warfare also marked a turning point in modern history, contributing to the growing culture of violence. The modern era has witnessed countless technological and strategic revolutions in the field of warfare that have had pronounced impacts on the battlefield as well as on the trajectories of nations and empires. Inventions such as gunpowder and GPS have tremendously transformed battle and military affairs. In *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History*, Max Boot demonstrates the impact of the Gunpowder Revolution on warfare. According to Boot, wars were no longer drawn-out ritualistic events after the development of gunpowder weapons, and turned into much deadlier engagements.³⁵ Moreover, with the Industrial Revolution, beginning in England in the mid-eighteenth century, significant developments such as steel and steam kept fueling war.

The first Industrial Revolution merged into the Second Industrial Revolution around 1850, when technological and economic progress gained momentum with the development of steam-powered ships and railways, all of which contributed to the spread of European colonial empires.³⁶ Boot examines World War II to illustrate how the new technology of the Second Industrial Revolution, such as the tank, radio, and airplane, ushered in terrifying new forms of warfare that aided the rise of highly centralized, and even totalitarian, world powers. The transition from the industrial age to the information age also impacted warfare greatly. According to Emily Goldman, advances in precision weapons, surveillance satellites, robotics, and computer-based information processing, together with organizational changes in the networks of military units, produced fundamentally new ways of war.³⁷ Like all other technological and strategic revolutions, the Information Revolution drastically changed the field of warfare. Most significantly, the United States’ dominance over the many cutting-edge technological inventions of this era,

³⁴ Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, 137.

³⁵ Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006).

³⁶ Boot.

³⁷ Emily O Goldman and Eliason, Leslie C, *The Diffusion of Military Technology and Ideas* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

such as stealth aircraft, greatly impacted global power dynamics, making it the most potent military power in world history.

As these technologies were developing, socialization techniques were used to lure people onto the battlefield and normalize war for the population. Besides nationalistic propaganda and “othering,” states engaged in both militarism and militarization. Otley defines *militarism* as taking place through the doctrine and practice of exalting war and the armed forces over other social functions and institutions in the state, while *militarization* is the encroachment of military forms, personnel, and practices upon civilian institutions or social order.³⁸ Both these have been exercised in all major cities around the globe. The United States has been actively using various media with the aim of socializing its population into a military culture.

Historically, the possibility of educating the public through public exhibits motivated United States’ federal officials. Military exhibits have been a favored medium for establishing military hegemony in the United States. In *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions*, Robert W. Rydell explains how America’s world’s fair served to legitimate racial exploitation at home and the creation of an empire abroad. “While expositions were arenas for asserting the moral authority of the United States government as opposed to its coercive power,” Rydell asserts, “numerous military exhibits suggested that force was available to maintain order whenever and wherever necessary.”³⁹ Entertaining exhibitions of powerful military exercises remain popular to this day as thousands annually attend events, such as air shows that celebrate military might through advanced technology, skillful officers, and jubilant ceremonies. Many war memorials and museums have also been designed and constructed in the United States where the space simultaneously entertains and socializes citizens into military culture. These exhibits bestow meaning upon the military and enable all members of society to conceive of themselves in relation to this proud and powerful universe.

³⁸ C. B Otley, “Militarism and militarization in the public schools, 1900-1972.,” *British Journal of Sociology* 29, no. 3 (1978).

³⁹ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (University of Chicago Press, 1987).

2.5 Imperialism

The concept of globalization argues for the interdependence of nations, the shared nature of their economies, the mutuality of their interests and the shared benefits of their exchanges. Imperialism, in contrast, emphasizes the domination and exploitation by imperial states and multinational corporations and banks of less-developed states and laboring classes.⁴⁰ – Petras and Veltmeyer

Late nineteenth century leaders of the United States realized that, in order to expand their power like traditional empires, they would have to raise states. But as a nation founded through rebellion against a distant sovereign, the United States pledged above all to the ideal of self-government. American journalist, author, and academic, Stephen Kinzer asserts, “For a country that was once a colony to begin taking colonies of its own would be something new in modern history.”⁴¹ On June 15, 1898, the House of Representatives endorsed the seizure of an overseas territory for the first time in American history. According to Kinzer, debates surrounding Congress’ decision that day set the United States on its imperial path and shaped the kind of nation it would become in the twentieth century and beyond. The debate leading to the vote had comprised many anti-imperialistic arguments that did not prevail. Anti-imperialists argued that expansionism was an act of taking over someone else’s land out of “greed” and would eventually lead to the fate of Rome. In response, it was argued, “We have not a foot of territory that we have not taken from others.”⁴² Added to this uncomfortable truth were reminders of the success of other empires:

Look at England. What would she be today if confined to her insular domain? What could she be? The mistress of the seas? Ah, no! One of the leading nations of the earth? Ah, no! Giving her laws, her literature, and her civilization to the rest of the world? Ah, no! She would have been powerless for this great end.... The same “greed,” this thirst for annexation, this desire for new territory, this passion for extending civilization, has blessed the earth.⁴³ –William Hepburn

With this model in mind, the United States began a long career in foreign interventions. Opposition has always existed in American history, yet presidents, one after another, have tried to justify their decisions as humanitarian. When President McKinley, for instance, was asked why the United States should invade the Philippines even though many Filipinos did not want them to. The same

⁴⁰ James F Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21st Century* (Halifax, N.S.; New York: Fernwood Pub. ; Zed Books : Distributed in the USA by Palgrave, 2001), 29–30.

⁴¹ Stephen Kinzer, *The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire*, 1st edition (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2017), 7.

⁴² Kinzer, 17.

⁴³ Kinzer, 17.

question came up regarding Vietnam, Nicaragua, Iraq, Afghanistan and more. According to Kinzer, McKinley responded, “did we need their consent to perform a great act for humanity?”⁴⁴ A senator at the debate also said, “the rule of liberty applies only to those who are capable of self-government. We govern the Indians without their consent. We govern territories. We govern our children without their consent. We cannot fly from our world duties.”⁴⁵ This “duty” to perform “great acts for humanity” has continued to burden leaders of the United States.

“While in theory we now live in the world of free nation-states which according to Presidents Wilson and F.D. Roosevelt was to replace the world of empires,” Hobsbawm explains, “in practice we live in what we can now recognize as a deeply unstable form of global disorder internationally and within states.”⁴⁶ Of course, what had been envisioned in the nineteenth century was less bloody than how history played out. At the time the goal was, as Edwin Ridgeley argued, to let the market forces do the job. He said, “We need not, nor do I believe we will, enter into a conquest of force but, to the contrary, our higher civilization will be carried across the Pacific by the white and peaceful wings of our rapidly increasing commerce.”⁴⁷ As it turned out, these Trojan horses described as “white and peaceful wings” would be accompanied with aggressive winds of “humanitarian” military procedures. At times the outcomes of these interventions are rendered as the inevitable workings of globalization.

However, Petras and Veltmeyer argue that globalization “has become an ideological mask disguising the emerging power of U.S. corporations to exploit and enrich themselves and their chief executive officers to an unprecedented degree.”⁴⁸ They assert that, imperialism better describes the contemporary global power dynamic because the less-developed states and laboring classes continue to be dominated and exploited by imperial states in these scenarios, which mainly benefit multinational corporations and banks of the imperial states. The notion of “emerging markets” in the mid-1970s, which proposed that “Third World dependency” would end as developing countries enter world capitalism, turned out to be a myth. By the end of the 20th century only 26 of the 500 leading companies belonged to emerging countries from Latin American, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In contrast, the United States owned 244 and Europe 173.

The same singular concentration and unidirectional flows towards imperial-based corporations also apply to military policy and intelligence operations. Petras and Veltmeyer wrote, “There is no mutual penetration of military commands, but only the extension of military missions from the imperial center to the dominated

⁴⁴ “The History of U.S. Intervention And The ‘Birth Of The American Empire,’” NPR.org, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2017/01/24/511387528/the-history-of-u-s-intervention-and-the-birth-of-the-american-empire>.

⁴⁵ “The History of U.S. Intervention And The ‘Birth Of The American Empire.’”

⁴⁶ E. J Hobsbawm, *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism* (London: Little, Brown, 2007), 75.

⁴⁷ Kinzer, *The True Flag*, 8.

⁴⁸ Petras and Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked*, 62.

countries. In legal terms, only the imperial countries raise claims of extraterritoriality (the supremacy of their laws over the laws of other sovereign nations); the dominated countries invariably are the targets.”⁴⁹ Even when the United States began selling arms to developing countries in the 1970s, the proposed aim of producing powerful independent regional powers turned out to be a myth as countries remained dependent on the United States for the technology, maintenance, training, and parts. Dominated countries thus remained exploited and militaristically dependent while ideologically, politically, economically, and culturally insecure.

Moreover, according to Kinzer, “Imperialists considered war a purifying, invigorating, unifying force. In their imagined future, humanity would be guided by a virtuous United States and disciplined by American military power.”⁵⁰ The twentieth century saw the rise of United States imperial conquests. In addition to the military interventions in the Western Hemisphere, “anti-Communism” and the “Red menace” became a pretext for new imperialistic engagements after the Russian Revolution. The end of the Cold War and the demise of Soviet Communism should have drained the livelihood out of an imperial system that thrived on enmity and war against the evils of Communism and for defending “order and stability,” “protecting the lives of American Citizens,” and democracy. Yet new “evils” were carved out as enemies to regain the “high moral” warfare position and again hide the real economic, political and military motivations for United States interventions. For instance, the focus on “narcotic threat” justified United States’ interventions and control of security policies and officials in Latin America.⁵¹ Since the end of the Cold War, the world has experienced continuous and destructive armed conflict in large areas of Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and parts of the Pacific. According to Hobsbawm, “the sheer scale of human suffering increased dramatically in the 1990s, religious wars fueled by secular ideologies were reinforced with, or replaced by, a return to various brands of crusading and counter-crusading religious fundamentalism.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Petras and Veltmeyer, 31.

⁵⁰ Kinzer, *The True Flag*, 13.

⁵¹ For an account of the United States construction of the “narcotic threat” see chapter 9, *The U.S. Empire and Narco-Capitalism*, in Petras and Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked*, 139–45.

⁵² Hobsbawm, *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism*, 128–29.

2.6 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit⁵³ –David Harvey.

During the US led invasion of Iraq in 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told reporters, “The scenes of free Iraqis celebrating in the streets, riding American tanks, tearing down the statues of Saddam Hussein in the center of Baghdad are breathtaking. Watching them, one cannot help but think of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Iron Curtain.”⁵⁴ Images of seemingly liberated crowds repeat throughout the twentieth and twenty centuries in places where the United States has politically and militaristically intervened. These interventions have taken place under ‘humanitarian’ banners, at times covertly, to promote free trade, free markets and free flows of capital. What has developed out of these practices is a military doctrine that encompasses “a notion of war as a permanent, boundless exercise, pitting high-tech militaries and security operations—along with private-sector outsourcers and military corporations—against a wide array of non-state adversaries.”⁵⁵ Privatized war zone reconstruction has experienced a boom in recent years. Many multimillion-dollar contractors served in Iraq and Afghanistan to secure what was made unsecure and to reconstruct what was destroyed. Reconstruction is now such big business, Naomi Klein explains, that investors greet each new disaster with the excitement of hot initial public stock offerings: \$7.6 billion for Lebanon, \$30 billion for Iraq reconstruction. Klein explains, “Today, global instability does not just benefit a

⁵³ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism. [Electronic Resource]* (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2005., 2005), 2.

⁵⁴ Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense, quoted in Deborah L. Jaramillo, *Ugly War, Pretty Package: How CNN and Fox News Made the Invasion of Iraq High Concept* (Indiana University Press, 2009), 200.

⁵⁵ Stephen Graham, *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism* (Verso Books, 2011), 27.

small group of arms dealers; it generates huge profits for the high-tech-homeland-security sector, for heavy construction, for private health-care companies, for the oil and gas sectors—and, of course, for defense contractors.”⁵⁶

According to Stephen Graham, “amongst many hawks and neocons,” this neoliberal military notion of war has “helped to make American imperial wars a desirable means of forcing the ‘pre-emptive’ reordering of the world so as to extend US political and economic power within the framework of the clash of civilizations.”⁵⁷ According to Hobsbawm, American culture’s domination over other world cultures and also the English language are important assets; however, “the major asset Americans have for imperial projects at the moment is military.” The US military is beyond competition.

Catherine Lutz argues that we live in an era of permanent war, “an era in which peacetime military spending and a permanent war footing were normalized in the US beginning in the 1947.”⁵⁸ American military bases have spread and expanded around the world and the United States has been participating in numerous direct and indirect conflicts. Militarized entertainment along with other types of militarization, help normalize and pacify reactions toward the United States military, which is by far the deadliest military and has the largest budget.

According to Lutz, by 2009 there were 909 military facilities in 46 countries and territories located on 795,000 acres of land that the United States owns or rents. These facilities contain 26,000 buildings and structures valued at US\$146 billion. Among these, the United States has constructed about 100 mini-cities complete with “lines of drying laundry, wandering donkeys, Arabic graffiti, tape loops endlessly playing the call to prayer, minarets and mosques” to be used for military urban simulations.⁵⁹ Thus, on a global level, the United States is responsible for directly militarizing all of the 28 million acres of land that it either rents or owns internationally, while also being responsible for the militarization that happens as a response to the threats posed by its military presence worldwide. Hobsbawm observes, “Of course Americans theoretically do not aim to occupy the whole world. What they aim to do is to go to war,” because war is profitable.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (Henry Holt and Company, 2010), 56.

⁵⁷ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 29.

⁵⁸ Catherine Lutz, “Anthropology in an Era of Permanent War,” *Anthropologica*, 2009, 367–379.

⁵⁹ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*.

⁶⁰ Hobsbawm, *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism*, 162.

2.7 Conclusion

Men believe themselves free, simply because they are conscious of their actions, and unconscious of the causes whereby those actions are determined. –Baruch Spinoza.

The combination of developments in science and technology, the spread of colonialism, nationalism, and United States imperialism, as well as the revolutions in warfare and neoliberal militarism, totally changed thinking and thought in the modern period, producing a militant governmentality that tremendously influenced modes of violence.⁶¹ To understand the modern culture of violence, one must understand the dialectics of militarization (social processes) and militarism (visions and values) as they are experienced by contemporary societies. These experiences reinforce and perpetuate the militant governmentality of our times, which in turn translates into more “architecture of enmity.”⁶² According to Said, we have built a conceptual framework around the notion of us-versus-them, the principal consideration of which we have come to see as “epistemological and natural—our civilization is known and accepted, theirs is different and strange—whereas in fact the framework separating us from them is belligerent, constructed and situational.”⁶³ Understanding this conceptual framework is most vital for understanding its physical manifestations, such as militarized space and buildings.

In summary, I like to return to the joke in *Killing Season* that was interrupted after the priest replied, “That’s OK son. During wars we are all sinners.” When the veteran gets a chance, he finishes it by adding that the man said, “well, father, the problem is that I never told her that the war ended!” War has proved to be beneficial for some, mostly those in power who unify the nation under patriotic flags against a common enemy, the capitalist producers of weaponry, and corporations related to the military industry. Their constant propaganda has produced enmity and kept war almost uninterrupted over the past century. Starting with World War I in 1914 and continuing to the present day, there are numerous ongoing conflicts and wars around the world.

⁶¹ I call this Militantality, a concept based on Foucault’s Governmentality which will be developed in the next chapters and explained in the last chapter. Foucault et al., *The Foucault Effect*; Foucault et al., *Security, territory, population*.

⁶² I borrow this phrase from Derek Gregory and his specific use of the phrase in Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004), 17–24.

⁶³ “The clash of definitions,” in Edward W Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 577.

CHAPTER 3. Imperialistic Militarization of the Middle East

3.1 Geopolitical Significance of the Middle East for the US

3.2 US Military Presence and Socialization in the Middle East

3.3 Equipping and Training the Middle East to Fight for the US

3.4 The USA's Green Belt Doctrine and the Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism

3.5 Revillusion: Pseudo-Revolts Preserving Military Institutions

3.6 Economy of Enmity: Why Wars Don't End

3.1 Geopolitical Significance of the Middle East for the US

Prior to the Second World War, the British Raj controlled the regional politics of the Middle East and held sway over its nations through either hegemonic or colonial means. The United Kingdom's domination faced no serious external military threat and United States' exploitation of Middle East oil was limitless, except in competition generated by the oil companies of other advanced industrial nations. The presence of the Empire armed forces in the region left Washington no reason to seek a periodic or permanent regional presence of significant United States' armed strength to guarantee unfettered operation of their oil companies or to guard against dangers to the country's welfare. Thus, the spirit of international isolationism and the absence of any threat to the United States' national interests kept their military forces at home.

These dynamics changed abruptly with the outbreak of World War II. With the Nazi invasion of mountains within reach of Azerbaijan and Iran, only a short distance from the major oil fields of the Middle East, the threats began to materialize. German offensives seriously endangered Great Britain's traditional dominion over this portion of the globe. Thus, the United States' military participated in World War II as a way to stabilize and secure access to the resources of the Middle East. Once in the war, the United States joined the United Kingdom in opening a military supply line to the hard-pressed Russians. According to Robert Hanks, the "operation to supply weapons and material, desperately needed by the Soviets to stem the Nazi invasion, thus produced the first American military presence in the Middle East."¹ American troops and equipment poured into the Persian Gulf region, going through Iran into the Caucasus.

Although the exploitation of Middle East petroleum resources continued, the end of the fighting in Europe and the reliance on British political dominion throughout the region allowed American military units to withdraw from duty stations in the Persian Gulf region to go back to the old isolationist posture. At the time, no military backup was needed for the operation of any international oil company, even if it were American—whole or in part—and its operations were producing substantial benefits for the United States.² However, some events following immediately after the Second World War altered the international circumstances that prevailed in the Middle East.

Moscow's refusal to pull its troops out of Iran in accordance with the Allied agreement, by which they had been inserted in the first place, provided evidence that the communist regime's objectives were not confined to acquisition of warm-water ports to the south. The Soviet's determination in keeping its troops in northern Iran, establishing a Soviet puppet government in Azerbaijan, and an "independent" Kurdish republic, all pointed at the ultimate goal of controlling the

¹ Robert Hanks, *The U.S. Military Presence in the Middle East: Problems and Prospects*, Foreign Policy Report (Cambridge, Mass: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1982), 5.

² Hanks, 6.

Iranian oil fields and other oil resources of the Middle East. Additionally, what became clearer was that the Russian leaders, having realized the dependency of the advanced industrialized nations of the West on the petroleum resources of the Middle East, were ultimately aiming to gain global control.

Appalled at the threat of losing access to Middle East oil and afraid of the ideas of Soviet expansionism, the United Kingdom and the United States led a joint American–British ultimatum that included implicit threats from America’s nuclear monopoly at the time, which forced Stalin to withdraw out of Iran. These events led American officials to conclude that the United States had important strategic interests in the region that had to be protected. How they chose to do this became apparent in the next decade as the Middle East began to be extensively militarized by the United States. To accomplish this goal, the United States had a twofold strategy: on the one hand, to rent/own bases throughout the Middle East through which it would establish a military presence and promote its ideals and militarism; and on the other hand, to militarize ally nations in the Middle East to a point where they could essentially fight for the United States’ cause.

3.2 US Military Presence and Socialization in the Middle East

According to Robert Hanks, on January 1, 1949, the US Middle East Force, which consisted of a flagship and two destroyers, started operating as a symbol of American international interest on the Persian Gulf island of Bahrain in facilities leased from Great Britain. When Bahrain gained independence from the British Empire in 1971, the permanent Royal Navy presence in Bahrain officially ended and the US Navy immediately took over the entire 10-acre site. Over time, the size of the Middle East Force also fluctuated. For instance, during the 1980 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States added two additional destroyers to the Force.

The mission of the US Middle East Force has always remained a politico-military one without the manifest combat role implicit in its makeup. Visiting major ports throughout the Indian Ocean region once or twice each quarter, and smaller, more isolated ports at least once a year, the US Middle East Force's objective was set to promote goodwill, understanding, mutual respect and acceptance between the American people and those of the countries visited by the ships. Hanks wrote, "The commander of the force extend[ed] this coverage by means of an aircraft which permit[ed] him to travel to inland capitals and other important cities where he [met] with government and military leaders as well as with US diplomatic representatives."³ Despite its small size, this naval force was eminently successful in socializing locals into United States' political and military culture and normalizing their military presence in the region through recreational activities. For example, according to Hanks, these port calls normally included general visiting aboard ship by the local inhabitants, onboard children's parties, and athletic contests with local teams, as well as luncheons, receptions and formal dinners for the host-country's government and military leaders.

Moreover, the US Middle East Force actively used an accompanying program called "Operation Handclasp" during the 1950s in those ports where charitable assistance was appropriate to meet local needs. The program's explicit purpose was waging the Cold War by humanitarian means.⁴ Starting in 1959, "Project Handclasp" succeeded the earlier program and became a formal US Navy program that coordinates the transportation and delivery of humanitarian and educational items to foreign countries on a space available basis.⁵ The idea is for each ship's crewmembers to also possess a variety of useful skills to take part in refurbishing hospitals, orphanages, schools, and provide emergency repair or disaster relief assistance when necessary. While packaged as humanitarian, the program has often been criticized by anthropologists for "politicizing medicine" and

³ Hanks, 9.

⁴ David Horton Smith and Frederick Elkin, *Volunteers, Voluntary Associations, and Development* (BRILL, 1981), 190.

⁵ OPNAV Instruction. Department of the Navy. "OPNAV Instruction 5726.3D" (DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY, 26 2006), 1–2.

as a “propaganda operation.”⁶ Despite the continuing disapproval of some local governments and the remarkable buildup of similar forces in the region by other world powers, the American naval presence in the Middle East has maintained a relatively steady state across the years and has continued to promote its presence through various military socialization programs.

These enduring recreational and educational programs for cultural militarism paved the way for the United States’ further militarization of the Middle East. With the objective of containing the military and political power of the Soviet Union, the United States established and maintained a large number of overseas basing rights and facilities from 1945–1991. However, the demise of the Soviet Union in December 1991 did not lead to the termination of United States’ military presence in the region. Its bases continue to influence the region politically and guarantee long-term United States and Western access to key economic resources including petroleum.

⁶ Vincanne Adams, *Doctors for Democracy: Health Professionals in the Nepal Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 179–80.

3.3 Equipping and Training the Middle East to Fight for the US

The second strategy formulated by the US was called the Nixon Doctrine, which enabled the militarization of a select number of Middle Eastern allies by supplying them with the requisite military hardware and training to take on the policing of the region. Specifically, the Nixon Doctrine set forth the following guidelines:

(1) Henceforth, the United States would take a more selective approach to its global role—inherited with the termination of the Second World War—particularly in the wielding of its military power. (2) An increased measure of burden-sharing would have to be assumed by America’s allies and friends around the globe insofar as their own defense was concerned. (3) American help (restricted essentially to military equipment and training) would be provided to safeguard the independent posture of regional states and to assist them in maintaining political stability, thereby implicitly helping to safeguard U.S. national interests around the world.⁷

This national strategy was set out not only to decrease United States’ financial costs and casualties, but also to lower its direct participation in the policing of the world, basically by making regional allies primarily responsible for maintaining the kind of local political order most beneficial to the United States. Moreover, the Nixon Doctrine generated revenue through military arms sales to the Middle East, helping make the region the focal point of the world arms buildup. Historians Joe Stork and Jim Paul report, “During the 1970s, while the world arms trade doubled, Middle East arms imports rose fourfold...[receiving] over half of all arms deliveries to the Third World, and more than a quarter of all world arms shipments.”⁸ According to data, along with the arms buildup, the region’s military expenditure increased tenfold in less than two decades, consuming about 15 percent of gross national product by 1980.⁹

Becoming the top arms exporter to the Middle East, the United States was deliberately cautious so that the allies in the region remained highly dependent on

⁷ The Future Role of Iran. “The US Role in a Changing World Political Economy Major Issues for the 96th Congress (941).Pdf,” 547, accessed March 16, 2017, [https://www.jec.senate.gov/reports/96th%20Congress/The%20US%20Role%20in%20a%20Changing%20World%20Political%20Economy%20Major%20Issues%20for%20the%2096th%20Congress%20\(941\).pdf](https://www.jec.senate.gov/reports/96th%20Congress/The%20US%20Role%20in%20a%20Changing%20World%20Political%20Economy%20Major%20Issues%20for%20the%2096th%20Congress%20(941).pdf).

⁸ Joe Stork and Jim Paul, “Arms Sales and the Militarization of the Middle East | Middle East Research and Information Project,” *MERIP Reports*, no. 112 (1983): 5.

⁹ Middle East’s military expenditures increased from \$4.7 billion in 1962 to \$46.7 billion in 1980, nearly nine times the world average. For more details refer to the table on page 7 in Joe Stork and Jim Paul, “Arms Sales and the Militarization of the Middle East,” *MERIP Reports*, no. 112 (1983): 5–15, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3010847> Also, on page 6 note the authors explanation on how the expenditure data did not include aid from other countries: the spending total for Israel, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan and others was in fact much higher.

them for their military maintenance and training processes. Only in the case of a sufficiently severe external threat, when the local countries could not cope, would the United States enter to provide the needed naval and air power, and only as a last resort would the American ground forces get involved. Hence, the Nixon Doctrine aimed to maximize profit by making revenues from the dependence of the Middle Eastern countries on the weapons and training it provided and minimize costs by steering them to pay for the United States' political and economic ambitions with their financial and human resources. Inherent in its nationalistic design, the Nixon Doctrine had an obvious racial hierarchy that placed a lower value on the prosperity and lives of the Middle Eastern people.

Implementation of the Nixon Doctrine was most evident in the Persian Gulf where it was accompanied by a supplementary approach that, subsequent to 1972, came to be known as the "Twin Pillar" policy. Iran and Saudi Arabia, having been two of the most populated and rich nations in the area, were chosen to be militarized and were given the responsibility of protecting not only the security of the region itself but also that of American national interests. This meant that the United States' arms locker was thrown open to both these countries, which enabled the Shah of Iran to spend billions of dollars flowing from Iran's rapidly expanding oil revenues to acquire huge quantities of the latest and most advanced military weaponry produced in the United States.¹⁰ To a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia also began to purchase the kinds of modern military equipment that would begin to militarize it in modern terms. This highly organized plan was to prepare local nations of the Persian Gulf to fill the vacuum that would be created by the 1971 British military withdrawal from East of Suez.

According to Stork and Paul, "Iran under the Shah embarked on the largest military buildup."¹¹ However, the scheme plunged when faced with the events of the Iranian Revolution, which eliminated an important US non-Arab ally that provided key intelligence facilities to the United States.¹² Thus, when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini replaced the Shah of Iran and ended the Pahlavi dynasty in 1979, one of the two pillars crumbled. The upheaval in Iran, the United States' complex relations with Ayatollah Khomeini, and the anti-Western attitude subsequently manifested by the new Iranian Shiite leadership collapsed the stronger pillar and marked the breakdown of what had been seen as a promising American foreign policy, placing US interests in considerable jeopardy. According to some experts, "[o]f prime concern in Washington was the prospect that this form of religious virus might be exported to other Arab nations in the region wherein Shiite Moslems were either in a substantial minority or constituted very nearly a

¹⁰ Robert Hanks, *The U.S. Military Presence in the Middle East: Problems and Prospects*, Foreign Policy Report (Cambridge, Mass: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1982), 13 The Collapse of U.S. Middle East Strategy.

¹¹ Stork and Paul, "Arms Sales and the Militarization of the Middle East | Middle East Research and Information Project," 5. Arms Race Factors.

¹² Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987*, Reissue edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 31.

majority.”¹³ Besides causing threats to the uninterrupted flow of oil, which the West had been enjoying, the world saw Iran’s Islamic revolution as a threat that would change power dynamics in the region against the United States’ interests. Decades later, the release of top-secret CIA documents would demonstrate that the United States did not actually see the Islamic regime as a threat, even if the constructed contrast and animosity was perceived as advantageous for its covert operations in the Middle East.

¹³ Hanks, *The U.S. Military Presence in the Middle East*, 1982, 14 *The Collapse of U.S. Middle East Strategy*.

3.4 The USA's Green Belt Doctrine and the Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism

The Cold War turned the Middle East into a major stage for proxy wars between many regional and world powers, wars that continue to be fought today. The US–USSR conflict has had various manifestations throughout the Middle East. One of its most devastating and lasting impacts has been that of Washington's implementation of Islamic fundamentalism through Carter's Green Belt doctrine, which fostered Islamic radicalism in the Middle East as a tool against pro-Soviet nationalism and an anti-Communist strategy.¹⁴ To protect Western interests, "the United States demonized [Middle Eastern] leaders who did not wholeheartedly sign on to the U.S. agenda or who might challenge Western—and in particular U.S.—hegemony."¹⁵ Leaders deemed dangerous were those who held ideas and ideologies such as nationalism, humanism, secularism, and socialism. However, as the American investigative journalist Robert Dreyfuss observes, "subversive ideas such as these were also the ones most feared by the nascent forces of Muslim fundamentalism."¹⁶ Therefore, Western governments did not hesitate to utilize Muslim fundamentalism to sabotage the efforts of nationalist leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, responsible for nationalization of the Suez Canal, and Mohammad Mossadegh of Iran, responsible for nationalization of Iran's oil industry, which contained the world's largest refinery.

Decades later, release of some classified documents on covert operations in the Middle East showed the pivotal role of the British intelligence officials and the American CIA in sabotaging Middle Eastern leaders who aimed to end Western domination in the Middle East. According to Dreyfuss, "Gradually the idea of a green belt along the 'arc of Islam' took form. The idea was not just defensive. Adventurous policy makers imagined that restive Muslims inside the Soviet Union's own Central Asian republics might be the undoing of the USSR itself, and they took steps to encourage them."¹⁷ Due to their inherent disagreement with secular nationalist and communist ideologies, Muslim fundamentalists were seen as the ideal opposition to mobilize against perceived local threats to United States interests while simultaneously preventing the spread of communism. It became a routine strategy for the United States to secretly support Muslim organizations and leaders such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia's ultra-orthodox Wahhabis, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, Hamas and Hezbollah, Afghan jihadis and Osama bin Laden.¹⁸

¹⁴ "The United States and the Birth of Islamism," *The Globalist* (blog), January 18, 2006, <https://www.theglobalist.com/united-states-birth-islamism/>.

¹⁵ Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), 2.

¹⁶ Dreyfuss, 2.

¹⁷ Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*.

¹⁸ Dreyfuss.

However, the hybrid force that came to be known by different names, such as pan-Islam, Islamic fundamentalism or political Islam, otherwise labeled as “terrorism”, was far different to anything associated with Islam prior to the nineteenth century. According to Dreyfuss, “The mutant ideology that the United States encouraged, supported, organized or funded is, in fact, a perversion of that religious faith...[a] political creed with its origins in the late 19th century, a militant, all-encompassing philosophy.” While at apparent odds with the United States, members of these groups, though secretly, have been militaristically trained, financially supported, socially constructed, and openly destroyed, when necessary, by the United States. Osama bin Laden is a prime example of the type of militant Islamic leader the United States constructed first as an ally, then as a monster whose execution was globally televised.

In the aftermath of World War II and as a result of the Cold War struggles with the Soviet Union over global leadership and influence, the geographic scope of the United States’ “*regime change*” actions extended to the Middle East. The United States’ covert interventions in the region are now known to have resulted in small and large-scale political unrest, nationwide protests, coup d’états, and even revolutions. While these techniques and political interventions have been used against many states in the Middle East, Iran makes an interesting case in which almost all of these militant imperialistic techniques have been experimented with. Iran was where the United States chose to militarize extensively by selling the highest number of arms, setting up one of the most torturous intelligence agencies called SAVAK, making its first successful overthrow of a foreign government in 1953 in Tehran, and fueling and steering the Islamic revolution in 1978–79. The list goes on to include interventions to preserve the Islamic Republic during the Iran–Iraq war and the mass murders of the leftist opposition after the revolution, which will be examined in following sections.

In 1953, the United Kingdom and the United States orchestrated the overthrow of the democratically elected Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, and the transition of Mohammad-Reza Shah Pahlavi from a constitutional monarch into an authoritarian one who relied heavily on United States support to hold on to power until his own overthrow in 1979.¹⁹ As long as he was cooperative with the United States, the Shah received America’s guidance and aid in acquiring the largest military buildup in the Middle East and establishing the secret police force, SAVAK. He had been lured into believing that acquisition of these two forces would make him an invincible power both internationally and at home. However, his military purchases, “the largest in the world,”²⁰ did little,

¹⁹ “CIA Admits Role in 1953 Iranian Coup | World News | The Guardian,” accessed March 21, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/19/cia-admits-role-1953-iranian-coup>.

²⁰ United States et al., *U.S. Arms Sales Policy: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-Fourth Congress, Second Session, on Proposed Sales of Arms to Iran and Saudi Arabia, September 16, 21, and 24, 1976*. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977).

other than turn him into a threat, installing insecurity in other regional and international powers. Similarly, SAVAK, the intelligence agency built “with the help of the FBI and Israeli Mossad,” made him unpopular at home for the torture bestowed on so many thousands of Iranians.²¹

Later, declassified reports of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unveiled the role of the CIA and confirmed that it had provided the Shah money, as well as training, for the purpose of forming SAVAK, whose operatives and informers kept an eye on Iranians not only in governmental jobs, universities, the arts and the media, but also in their neighborhoods and homes.²² “It soon created an Orwellian environment where intellectuals were not allowed to utter the name of Marx.”²³ According to a British journalist, SAVAK had become the Shah’s “eyes and ears, and where necessary, his iron fist.”²⁴ But, it would also be accurate to say both the SAVAK and Iran’s military had been designed and did become the United States’ eyes, ears, and iron fist in Iran.

Taking all threats to the United States’ interests very seriously, the CIA went above the Shah’s head to plan executions. For example, when the Shah’s government was condemned as “not viable,” Washington originally planned to stage yet another coup d’état in Iran to remove the “quixotic” Prime Minister Bakhtiar who “did not take ‘guidance’ from the US.”²⁵ To strategically deal with the situation “the White House strongly backed [Bakhtiar] in public, but in private, explored ousting him in a coup” while still keeping the Shah in power.²⁶ However, in September 1978, the American government was informed by the French government that the Shah, who had kept his illness secret since 1974, was dying of cancer.²⁷ Physically declining, undergoing cancer treatment and “beset with depression, indecision and paralysis, [the Shah’s] indecision led to the immobilization of the entire system.”²⁸ His suspicious absences and unexplained reduced activities while undergoing medical treatment provoked more distrust and unrest among the opposition, who had always questioned the Shah’s secretiveness, especially when it came to his dealings with Washington.

As the Shah was getting weaker and the opposition stronger, the United States realized the days of anonymously enjoying the monetary benefits of a

²¹ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 126.

²² “CIA’S ROLE IN FORMING SAVAK | CIA FOIA (Foia.Cia.Gov),” accessed March 11, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp90-00552r000505290007-5>.

²³ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 126.

²⁴ Robert Graham, *Iran: The Illusion of Power* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1980), 143 As seen quoted in Abrahamian’s *A History of Modern Iran*.

²⁵ Kambiz Fattahi, “America’s Secret Engagement with Khomeini,” *BBC News*, June 3, 2016, sec. US & Canada, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36431160>.

²⁶ Fattahi.

²⁷ Marvin Zonis, *Majestic Failure: The Fall of the Shah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 160.

²⁸ Abbas Milani, *The Shah* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 409.

rapidly militarizing Iran while also preventing the spread of communism through the compliant “iron fist” of the Shah were over. The Shah had to be replaced before the situation got out of hand due to his deteriorating physical and mental health, his sudden death, or the start of a civil war in Iran. What occurred from this point on confirms the supposition that Washington had a greater grip over Iran’s military than the Shah himself, and explains how, among various political oppositions, the United States chose to support the inauguration of the Islamists.

The CIA, having experience with manufacturing pro and anti-government movements to steer Iranian politics, decided it was time for the dying Shah to be replaced with someone who could secure the United States’ interests more covertly. Therefore, this had to be done in a way that would not signal a shift in United States policy. Washington dumping its old friend was not the way America wanted to be seen; in fact, that would be damaging to the United States’ international relations. However, the Shah’s reputation as an intimidating autocratic ruler, combined with all the political unrest he faced at home, made it easy for the United States to dispose of the Shah under the pretense of full friendship. After all, the United States had kept the Shah in power for 26 years, so it wasn’t the first time Washington’s advice on governmental issues was taken: “the Shah was persuaded by President Carter to depart Iran on a ‘vacation’ abroad, leaving behind an unpopular prime minister and a military in disarray—a force of 400,000 men with heavy dependence on American arms and advice.”²⁹

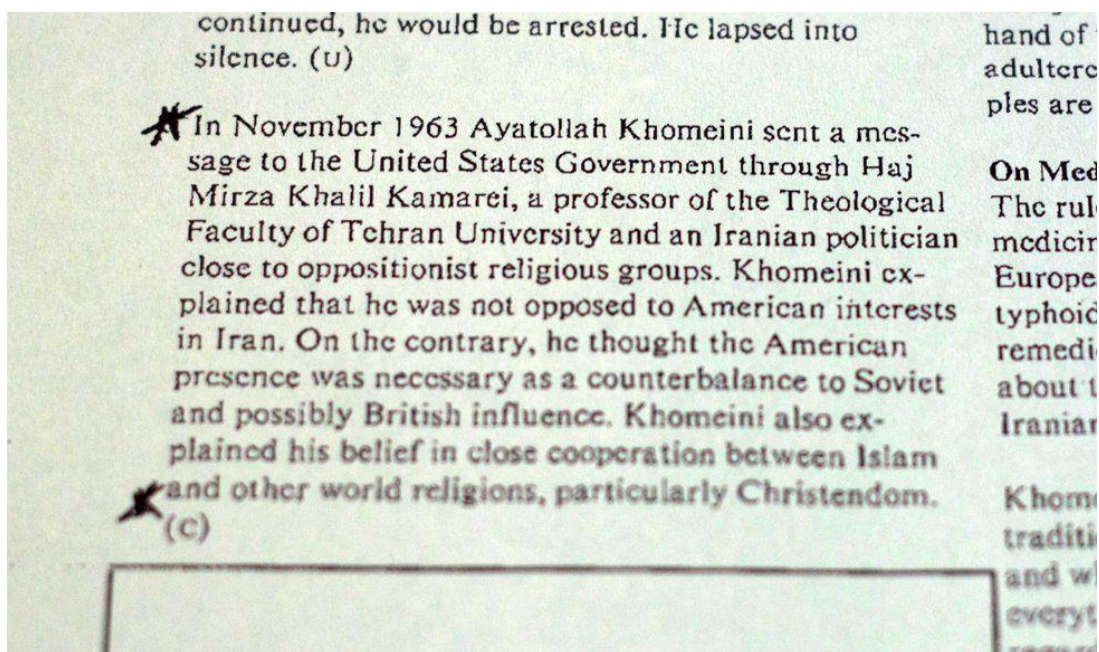


Figure 3.1. Declassified CIA document revealing a message of support sent by Khomeini, in November 1963, to the Kennedy administration while being held under house arrest in Tehran.

²⁹ Fattahi, “America’s Secret Engagement with Khomeini.”

While declassified documents had previously shown the United States' direct involvement in the planning and execution of the August 1953 Iranian coup d'état, the overthrow of the Shah and the success of the subsequent Islamic Revolution had been staged as surprising spontaneous local developments, all in disagreement with the United States' interests and desire. However, in 2016 reporters learned that "[T]he United States Documents seen by the BBC suggest[ed] the Carter administration paved the way for Khomeini to return to Iran by holding the army back from launching a military coup."³⁰

The CIA, having been in communication with and monitoring Khomeini since 1963, while he was under house arrest in Tehran (Figure 3.1), predicted that Khomeini would be a useful asset who:

Would sit back and let his moderate, Western-educated followers and his second-in-command, Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, run the government. Beheshti was considered by US officials to be a rare bird: a pragmatic, English-speaking cleric with a university education, experience of living in the West, and close ties to Khomeini. In short, he was someone with whom the Americans could reason.³¹

These hybrid Westernized/Islamist politicians possessed the type of mentality Washington envisaged most suitable for leadership in the Middle East.

Thus, a week before President Carter convinced the Shah to depart Iran, on January 9, 1979, the Deputy National Security Advisor, David Aaron, wrote to his superior, Zbigniew Brzezinski, saying "[t]he best that can result, in my view, is a military coup against Bakhtiar and then a deal struck between the military and Khomeini that finally pushes the Shah out of power."³² On January 14, 1979, President Carter had Secretary of State Cyrus Vance send a cable to United States embassies in Paris and Tehran: "We have decided that it is desirable to establish a direct American channel to Khomeini's entourage."³³ The Carter administration was curious about Khomeini's plans in regard to the United States' core interests such as the oil flow, political-military relations, and views on communism. To ease Washington's fears, "Khomeini explained he was not opposed to American interests in Iran," and that "[t]here should be no fear about oil. It is not true that we wouldn't sell to the US" and, most importantly, conveyed that "[t]he Russian government is atheistic and anti-religion... You [Americans] are Christians and

³⁰ Saeed Kamali Dehghan and David Smith, "US Had Extensive Contact with Ayatollah Khomeini before Iran Revolution," *The Guardian*, June 10, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/10/ayatollah-khomeini-jimmy-carter-administration-iran-revolution>.

³¹ Fattahi, "America's Secret Engagement with Khomeini."

³² Fattahi.

³³ Quoted in America's Secret Engagement with Khomeini. Fattahi.

believe in God and they don't. We feel it easier to be closer to you than to Russians."³⁴

As a result, "a broad consensus had emerged within the US national security bureaucracy that they could do business with the ayatollah and his inner circle after all."³⁵ Two days later, having already sketched up a new future plan for Iran, President Carter told the depressed and cancer-stricken Shah to leave Iran without revealing what waited for him or his country.

Declassified CIA documents show messages exchanged between Ayatollah Khomeini in exile near Paris and the United States Government during the crucial weeks following the Shah's departure from Iran on January 16, 1979, which led to the Islamic Revolution. One message shows Khomeini negotiating a deal with the Carter administration: "Iranian military leaders listen to you he said, but the Iranian people follow my orders,"³⁶ thus suggesting he could calm the nation "if president Jimmy Carter could use his influence on the military to clear the way for his takeover." Khomeini added that: "Stability could be restored, America's interests and citizens in Iran would be protected."³⁷ Clearly aware of Washington's concerns, "Khomeini explained he was not opposed to American interests in Iran."³⁸ He reiterated, "[y]ou have in mind that communists or some others will take over the country. When the government is announced, you will see that none of this is correct. You will see that the provisional government is capable of bringing stability." The message goes on to reassure that the prospect of the Islamic regime "will not create any harm for the Americans...you will see that we are not, repeat not, in any particular animosity with the Americans."³⁹

With all this top-secret "friendship" in the air, the then-head of the State Department Intelligence Bureau, Philip Stoddard, concluded: "We would do a disservice to Khomeini to consider him simply as a symbol of segregated education and an opponent to women's rights."⁴⁰ Of course, Khomeini proved to be more than just a "symbol" of segregation and oppression. With Washington's help, Khomeini returned to Iran and actually became the supreme leader of his newly founded Islamic Republic of Iran, which he established and turned into one of the most tyrannical theocracies, feared both internally and externally.

³⁴ Fattahi.

³⁵ Fattahi.

³⁶ "Message to Usg from Khomeini," Wikileaks Public Library of US Diplomacy (France Paris | PARIS OR-P, January 27, 1979), https://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PARIS02949_e.html.

³⁷ Fattahi, "America's Secret Engagement with Khomeini."

³⁸ according to a 1980 CIA analysis titled Islam in Iran, partially released to the public in 2008. "ISLAM IN IRAN - CIA-RDP81B00401R000400110013-5.Pdf," accessed March 18, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP81B00401R000400110013-5.pdf>.

³⁹ "Message to Usg from Khomeini."

⁴⁰ Fattahi, "America's Secret Engagement with Khomeini."

The official narrative of the revolution, however, differs vastly from what the CIA's declassified documents suggest. Both the Iranian and United States governments insist on portraying a history of an incompatible, uncooperative relationship full of animosity and, if ever exposed, downplaying any collaboration or favoritism. It would be damaging to the United States' image to be associated with the "terrorist" state of the Islamic Republic. Iran's current supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, also denounced the declassified documents that show Khomeini's engagement with Washington, calling them "fabrications" and part of a manipulative, "childish game" to ease the stigma of American-Iranian relations in the Iranian public's mind.⁴¹ With Khomeini long gone and a national identity built on his heroic resistance toward American imperialism, the CIA's scenario would dismantle the myths of the revelation because "[t]he documents clearly show that Khomeini was less heroic, and far craftier...courting two US presidents behind the scenes. They illustrate a pattern of behavior—that Khomeini at critical moments during his long struggle for an Islamic republic, secretly engaged what he would call 'the Great Satan.'"⁴² Thus, the United States' leaders referring to Iran as part of the "Axis of Evil" and Iran's supreme leaders labeling the United States as the "Great Satan" has been an attempt to disguise the codependence of the two oppressive political entities.

With the twentieth century's apocalyptic terrors of communism losing plausibility with the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, Islamic political entities like the Islamic Republic of Iran gained increased value for the survival of the American Empire. The twenty-first century United States policy has been able to revive its international position by replacing communism with Islamism and inventing new "enemies" like ISIS to legitimize its expansion and use of global power. The dangers of the "war against terror" do not come from the "terrorist movements" because, as Hobsbawm asserts, "they are symptoms, not significant historic agents."⁴³ Since September 2001, the United States has continually produced "irrational fear" to mobilize a global "war against terror."

According to Jeremy Keenan, the United States, with the aid of Algerian military intelligence services, initiated and manufactured a series of events starting in 2002 to justify the launch of a new front in the "war on terror" in the Sahara-Sahel region. Keenan, whose research has explored "whether an event or series of events described by the intelligence services as part of the 'official truth' actually happened or was merely part of their fabrication," discovered that these events that framed the region "terroristic" were "fiction" and did not happen as sources described. He reports, "An analysis of all relevant reports released by the US and Algerian intelligence services to the media reveals them to be riddled with

⁴¹ "Another 'Conspiracy' Confirmed: Khomeini Had A 'Secret Channel' With The US : The Corbett Report," accessed March 20, 2018, <https://www.corbettreport.com/another-conspiracy-confirmed-khomeini-had-a-secret-channel-with-the-us/>.

⁴² Dehghan and Smith, "US Had Extensive Contact with Ayatollah Khomeini before Iran Revolution."

⁴³ Hobsbawm, *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism*, 136.

contradiction and verifiably false information.”⁴⁴ In fact, it is likely some of the “key terrorists” were “American trained.” According to Keenan, “The launch of a Sahara front in the ‘war on terror’ has not put an end to terror in the region for the simple reason that there was none there to start with. But it has created immense anger, frustration, rebellion, political instability and insecurity across the entire region.”⁴⁵ As the region and its people were being “securitized” and rebranded as “terrorists,” Keenan warned “that this attempt to fight ‘terrorists’ in what was a terrorism-free region and against a people who were, and predominantly still are, strongly opposed to *salafiste* doctrines is likely to produce the very movements and activities that the US government claimed it wanted to expunge in the first place.”⁴⁶ Keenan asserts that the successful Mauritanian coup (2005), the Tuareg rebellion in Niger (2004–2005), the riots in southern Algeria (2005), the Tuareg rebellion in Mali (2006), and the political crisis in Chad, are some direct outcomes of America’s imperialistic interventions and United States’ foreign policy.

In Washington, the same people who classified these innocent victims of United States’ foreign policy as putative “terrorists,” had produced other fabricated “terror” generating events by forging a fictitious accusation of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and al-Qaida links to Saddam Hussein in order to lead the 2003 invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq. As a result of that war, Hobsbawm concludes,

Iraqis did not get the democracy they were promised but instead received tyranny, civil war, sectarian violence, Iran-backed Shia jihadists and murderous savages such as the Islamic State (ISIS). Even the trappings of democracy are slowly being eroded by those whom the world thinks were elected to high office but were in fact installed through backroom deals between interventionist powers.⁴⁷

According to Eric Hobsbawm, the American empire’s war on Iraq “destroyed one of the two guaranteed secular governments in the Middle East.” The second currently being destroyed is Syria.⁴⁸ This pattern of United States-backed militant Islamist groups playing a role in regional politics repeats throughout the contemporary history of the Middle East. The United States’ revival of armed foreign intervention has produced hybrid forms of militant “Islamic” resistance

⁴⁴ JEREMY KEENAN, “Conspiracy Theories and ‘Terrorists’: How the ‘war on Terror’ Is Placing New Responsibilities on Anthropology,” *Anthropology Today* 22, no. 6 (2006): 4.

⁴⁵ KEENAN, 8-9.

⁴⁶ KEENAN, 9.

⁴⁷ Tallha Abdulrazaq, “Iraq Is a Militant Theocracy, Not a Secular Democracy,” *The Arab Weekly*, August 20, 2017, <https://thearabweekly.com/iraq-militant-theocracy-not-secular-democracy>.

⁴⁸ Hobsbawm, *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism*, 163.

forces and, “If things have changed for the worse,” Hobsbawm argues, “it is not by the action of the terrorists but by those of the US government.”⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Hobsbawm, 135.

3.5 Revillusion: Pseudo-Revolts Preserving Military Institutions

Most accounts of the Islamic Revolution, including those that are academically recorded, do not point to the United States' role in Khomeini's rise to power. Even when they are willing to acknowledge the United States' role in the Shah's fall, it is rendered "non-determinative". Having no knowledge about the top-secret covert operations of the United States, the coming to power of Ayatollah Khomeini, the success of the Islamic Revolution and the formation of the Islamic Republic have been described as "unthinkable" and "absurd":

A White House aide who had to face some of its most unpleasant consequences expresses the surprise caused by this revolution very well when he writes: 'The notion of a popular revolution leading to the establishment of a theocratic state seemed so unlikely as to be absurd.' ... The inability to understand the unfolding of the Islamic revolution is by no means confined to American observers. It also characterizes many of the key actors in the revolution who paid dearly for their incomprehension and consequent misreading of the events and trends. In fact, the widespread inability to comprehend the Islamic revolution persists in the Iranian émigré communities and accounts for a mushrooming of the most fantastic conspiracy theories among them.⁵⁰ –Arjomand

There are different social scientific explanations for revolutions: political, organizational, cultural, economic, and military. However, according to Charles Kruzman, none can fully explain the Islamic Revolution, not even when several or all are combined in a "holistic analysis".⁵¹ "Rather than attribut[ing] this deficiency to the incomprehensibility of Iranians," he suggests trying "to understand the experience of the revolution in all its anomalous diversity and confusion, and to abandon the mirage of retroactive predictability."⁵² Although, he proposes an "anti-explanation," his own account in terms of "confusion" and "viability" proceeds into an explicit retroactive prediction offering the same mode as those explanations that the book dismisses for their "partial validity" and constitutive defect.⁵³

Being blindsided from covert interventions of extra-state forces, such as those of the CIA, adds an invisible factor to the complex sets of variables at play within the state that can very well make revolutions unpredictable. However, there is still value in investigating these interactive processes and their interaction effects in order to map the shaping forces for expanding militarization, memorialization and recreationalization in the Middle East. In the case of Iran's Islamic Revolution,

⁵⁰ Said Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3.

⁵¹ Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), 166.

⁵² Kurzman, 5–6.

⁵³ Ivan Ermakoff, "The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran.," *American Journal of Sociology* 113, no. 3 (2007).

and in light of declassified CIA documents, a retrospective examination is of great importance for the sake of identifying patterns. I would even suggest there is great value in academic investigation of the “conspiracy theories” that Said Amir Arjomand mentioned were “mushrooming’ among the Iranian diaspora” due to their “inability to comprehend the Islamic revolution.” In light of a history full of confirmed conspiracy theories, sometimes decades later, from many sources including declassified documents, confessions, memoirs, official apologies, and WikiLeaks, one realizes the value in investigating the symptomatic implications of these socio-political obsessions.

Indeed, the interactive character and the multiplicity of the processes at play in high-contention conjunctures make collective outcomes hard to predict. In the case of the Middle East, when it comes to the formulation of revolution theory, one must additionally consider that national, regional, and global variables are intertwined. Internal and external ties to the oil economy affect the revolutionary processes in all petrostates particularly those of the Middle East. Arguing that “the empirical evidence generates conflicting conclusions about whether oil leads to greater political stability (e.g., longer leadership and regime tenure) or instability (e.g., more frequent civil wars),” political scientist Jeff Colgan uses quantitative analysis to conclude “revolutionary governments are no more (or less) likely to occur in petrostates than in non-petrostates.”⁵⁴ Indeed, revolutionary governments have not occurred more frequently in petrostates; to the contrary, they have been less likely to occur because petrostates have more resources to fight insurgencies; there is less chance for the formation and success of a revolutionary government than in non-petrostates. Colgan assesses the link between oil and revolution by looking at the frequency of revolutions in petrostates and non-petrostates to conclude there is no statistically significant difference. He reports that “revolutionary leaders have led petrostates in almost precisely the same proportion of state-years as in non-petrostates: 15.8 percent for petrostates, and 15.6 percent for non-petrostates.” Note, however, that the level of corruption, oppression, and insurgencies are not equal in petrostates and non-petrostates; the equal frequency in revolutionary occurrences is, in fact, an indication of controlling forces that steer and oppress the opposition in petrostates.

Indeed, insurgencies lose more often, incumbent leaders have longer tenures and regimes are more durable in petrostates in large part because there has been a lot of foreign intervention to control the usual causes and outcomes of revolutionary development. For instance, powerful oil-consuming states such as the United States and the United Kingdom have not only intervened to suppress opposition and make sure revolutions do not take place, they have also funded opposition groups and seeded revolutions in the Middle East in order to further their own interests. Examples of political intervention include Iran in 1953, 1979, 2009; Iraq in 1963, 1991, 2003; and the more recent events of the “Arab Spring.”

⁵⁴ Jeff Colgan, *Petro-Aggression: When Oil Causes War*, 2013, 259 Chapter 10: Does Oil Cause Revolutions? 250-259.

Colgan refutes the claim “that the financial rewards of being a petrostate leader provides additional incentive for revolutionary leaders to succeed in overthrowing the government.”⁵⁵ He uses Khomeini, Qaddafi, and Hussein to show that their acts to become revolutionary leaders were not motivated by personal financial gain. Yet, he does not investigate the motivation of those who supported these leaders to come to power. Khomeini, for instance, was not the only, and certainly not the most organized, revolutionary leader at the time. Why was it that the United States secretly engaged and collaborated with Khomeini prior, during, and after the Islamic revolution and his coming into power, if not to protect its own interests?⁵⁶ Among the highly organized opposition groups were the leftists, yet the United States managed to strategically put down insurrections and opposition movements by the leftists in the name of stability.

Colgan asserts, “The US government’s desire to have stability in Saudi Arabia is one reason that it shares intelligence with the Saudi monarchy about its domestic opposition groups, despite US policymakers’ nominal desire to see democracy in the kingdom.”⁵⁷ This example is used to refute the argument that foreign meddling might be the potential cause of frequent revolutions in petrostates. It is convenient to conclude that foreign powers are against opposition because “revolutions could bring significant instability and uncertainty that would be harmful to their interests because it would disrupt global oil markets.”⁵⁸ Scholars like Colgan examine the situation focusing on the means rather than the end. For the major neoliberal oil dependent power states like the United States, the end is to secure uninterrupted oil flow and the opportunity to produce and harvest new markets. Thus, revolutions, as a means to this end, sometimes need to be prevented and sometimes promoted; it depends on the compatibilities of the existing regime versus the benefits of the one that can replace it. Thus, some regimes become dispensable, while some are protected, even in the face of frequent intrastate violence. When the regime in place is cooperative and suited to neoliberal aims, the rebels become less successful at ousting incumbent leaders and, even if they do succeed at replacing the tyrant, they almost always fail at

⁵⁵ Colgan, 256.

⁵⁶ For details on United States role in the Islamic Revolution see: Fattahi, “America’s Secret Engagement with Khomeini”; “Another ‘Conspiracy’ Confirmed”; Bob Woodward, “CIA Curried Favor With Khomeini, Exiles,” *Washington Post*, November 19, 1986, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1986/11/19/cia-curried-favor-with-khomeini-exiles/9cc0073c-0522-44e8-9eb8-a0bd6bd708d1/>; “Khomeini’s Secret Dialogue with ‘The Great Satan,’” BBC News, accessed March 11, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-36438556/khomeini-s-secret-dialogue-with-the-great-satan>; “Message to Usg from Khomeini”; “Reports: Khomeini’s ‘Vilayat-e Faqih’ Emerged with US’ Blessings,” accessed March 18, 2018, http://orient-news.net/en/news_show/114176/Reports-Khomeinis-Vilayat-e-Faqih-emerged-with-US-blessings; Dehghan and Smith, “US Had Extensive Contact with Ayatollah Khomeini before Iran Revolution.”

⁵⁷ Colgan, *Petro-Aggression*, 259.

⁵⁸ Colgan, 259.

producing a revolution: a fundamental change in the apparatus of political power, economy and military.

Iran provides a good case for examining the United States' obsession with promoting, creating, and preserving a militarized Islamic Middle East. This obsession becomes vividly clear when Gary Sick, a member of the National Security Council staff during the period of the Iranian revolution, explains the communications with Khomeini to have been because "the US wanted to preserve the Iranian military as an institution and ensure that the transition would be orderly."⁵⁹ The Iranian military was the institution of highest power within a new militarized police state constructed after an uninterrupted 2,500 years of Persian monarchy. To ensure a smooth transition meant the institutions of power, such as the military and the intelligence agency SAVAK, would remain in place even if their names and uniforms changed. SAVAK, for instance, became SAVAMA and later in 1984 developed into a ministry called VEVAK (*Vezerat-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar*), Ministry of National Intelligence and Security. There have been several name changes; the ministry has been known as VEVAK, MOIS, and most recently VAJA, Islamic Republic of Iran's Intelligence Ministry. Under the otherwise astatically new configurations, it was made a requirement for the minister to be a Doctor of Islam, yet the role of the intelligence agency remains consistent with its predecessor, SAVAK.

Among the continuities, for instance, are the many former experienced SAVAK personnel who were retained in their roles and the ministry's crushing fist against the left-wing dissident groups. The CIA, which had introduced, helped set up, and trained Iran's intelligence agency before the revolution, continued to count on its apparatus after the revolution in 1982 when "provid[ing] Khomeini with lists and supporting details of at least 100 and perhaps as many as 200 Soviet agents in Iran."⁶⁰ The CIA knew it could rely on Iran's intelligence agency to cripple the KGB and the Tudeh (the Iranian communist party) by arresting and executing the alleged agents. In addition to numerous executions, "many Tudeh members were arrested, including the party's secretary general and six central committee members, and they were forced to make televised confessions that they spied for Moscow."⁶¹ On May 4, 1983 Khomeini outlawed the Tudeh party and expelled the 18 Soviet diplomats believed to be involved in KGB operations. The name and ideologies may have changed, yet the institute remains an oppressive apparatus of a militarized regime. From the perspective of the citizens, Iran remains a strongly securitized country run by a police state where critics and opposition are crushed by a highly militarized regime. Examined from this perspective, Iran's 1978–1979 revolution appears to have been a *revillusion*, a pseudo-revolt that is nothing more than an illusion of a revolution.

⁵⁹ "Another 'Conspiracy' Confirmed."

⁶⁰ Woodward, "CIA Curried Favor With Khomeini, Exiles."

⁶¹ Woodward.

This is not to say there was not a real opposition to the Shah's oppressive dictatorship and that fake protesters were somehow imported to perform a staged revolution in a perfectly stable country. On the contrary, the seriousness of civil and political unrest in revolutionary Iran triggered the United States' interventions. Iran's case provides some insight into the strategy the United States has employed to preserve the militarized apparatus, even under the seemingly opposing militant fundamentalist regimes in the region. To put it simply, when a real revolution becomes unpreventable, a revillusion becomes a strategy to steer the existing opposition. Leaders and events may appear and may very well be real; however, they are selected, empowered, played up or played down as needed to reach the ultimate goal of preserving a regime best fit for fulfilling the desires of a neoliberal military empire.

Another example where the military institution managed to remain intact and keep its hegemonic status within the post-revolutionary state is Egypt. According to the historian of the Middle East, Zeinab Abul-Magd, Egypt's militarization began on July 23, 1952, when a group of young officers overthrew the monarch, ended the British occupation, created a postcolonial republic, and made their leader, Nasser, the first military president of Egypt. According to Abul-Magd, "While Nasser fought wars carrying the banner of Arab nationalism, the military institution enjoyed a bloated budget and a superior status over the country's political affairs and industrial sector...it was a heavily securitizing form of state capitalism, where the single ruling party imposed entrenched surveillance over its managers and submissive workforce alike."⁶² When Nasser died, Sadat became the second military president of Egypt. During this time, the military lost its importance as "fake socialists" dismembered the ruling party and dismantled state capitalism. But again, under Mubarak, the third military president of Egypt, the institution returned to its hegemonic place within the state. Relying on open markets and substantial acquisition of United States' arms, Mubarak's first defense minister, Abu Ghazala, was able to develop the Egyptian military into the most powerful institution of the state. According to Abul-Magd, by entering the domestic consumerist markets for profit, the Egyptian military prospered throughout the 1980s and established full-fledged neoliberalism by the first decade of the twenty-first century:

Abu Ghazala's army invented new tactics of penetrating into the daily life of citizens and restoring urban surveillance and control. It did so through selling those citizens...goods and providing them with necessary services... During the time of peace, Abu Ghazala turned the whole society into a large military camp, subjected to the army's constant watch and hegemony...a practice that continues until the present day. This novel mode of postwar or peacetime militarization fundamentally expanded in the 1990s and 2000s, when the age of full-fledged neoliberalism arrived in Egypt.⁶³

⁶² Zeinab Abul-Magd, *Militarizing the Nation: The Army, Business, and Revolution in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 229.

⁶³ Abul-Magd, 230.

Within this neoliberal economy, an accelerated wave of privatization allowed the “neoliberal officers” to occupy pivotal bureaucratic positions in the state as well as consumer markets for legal or illicit profit and exercise power over urban vicinities, which Abul-Magd argues lead to the creation of a “gigantic business empire.” These direct and indirect penetrations of military into urban spaces, manipulation of citizens, and securitization of everyday life encouraged the masses to rise against Mubarak’s authoritarian regime in 2011.

While Egypt weathered many fundamental moments of transformation during the past few decades, including mass uprisings in 2011, the country’s semiautonomous military institution managed to adapt to these changes and survive. At crucial moments of socialist, neoliberal, or revolutionary transition, the Egyptian military managed to maintain a hegemonic position within the state structure and maximize its economic profits. Evidently, the officers have successfully weathered the latest shaking wave of revolutionary unrest and come out of it with full retention of dominance.⁶⁴ – Zeinab Abul-Magd

According to Abul-Magd, a public attempt to demilitarize the nation failed in 2011. Despite efforts by the same protesters that were able to take down Mubarak, dismantling militarization of civilian spaces in the country proved impossible in the following years. The neoliberal military switched alliances as needed to protect its institution. It allied with the wealthy Islamists and delivered power to a Muslim Brothers president. When a mass protest erupted against the economically and politically repressive government of the Muslim Brothers in 2013, the army switched sides and supported the wave that brought al-Sisi to power.

Robert Springborg highlights the political persistence of the Egyptian military in confronting “successive challenges to its authority, including Sadat’s attempted civilianization, the global Third Wave of democracy, Mubarak’s effort to establish a family dynasty, the uprising of 2011 and the Muslim Brothers’ one-year interregnum.”⁶⁵ In the face of such enduring power, he refers to the 2011 “Arab Spring” events as “coup-volution.”⁶⁶ These types of events that urge the military to become the savior of the nation aid further expansion of the military. Egypt’s military, the most powerful and oppressive apparatus of the state, continued to thrive under the banner of a “heroic” institute that saves the nation from all kinds of autocratic regimes. According to Abul-Magd, “During these eventful three years [of post-revolution], the military managed to further expand its business enterprises and appropriate more bureaucratic positions, and hence optimized its

⁶⁴ Abul-Magd, 229.

⁶⁵ Robert Springborg, “The Rewards of Failure: Persisting Military Rule in Egypt,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 4 (October 2, 2017): 478–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2017.1363956>.

⁶⁶ Robert Springborg and Istituto affari internazionali, *President Sisi’s Delegation Authoritarianism* (Roma: Istituto affari internazionali, 2015), <http://www.iai.it/it/pubblicazioni/lista/all/iai-working-papers>.

uninterrupted urban surveillance and subsequent control over the manipulated and quelled masses.”⁶⁷ For instance, al-Sisi got Egyptian masses to contribute to an ambitious national project of digging a “New Suez Canal” that consumed the nation’s limited resources without generating substantial income for Egyptians in return, yet proved highly beneficial to foreign contractors that built it and those who will use it for transport of resources extracted from the region. Other neoliberal forces enjoyed Egypt’s new direction and confirmed approval by investing billions in large projects. In addition to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), donors included regional United States’ allies such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In an international conference on Egyptian economic development held by Al-Sisi, the Secretary of State, John Kerry, who was pleased with Egypt’s direction, announced:

The United States is committed to supporting Egypt’s economic reforms...we in the United States share the sense of the need for this economic transformation [thus] 160 CEOs, leading business people representing some 70 countries—70 companies came here to spend time with President al-Sisi and his administration in order to help define the future. We’ve committed...to a billion dollars of loan guarantee, 500 million dollars of recent investment by The Coca-Cola Company, General Electric, others who are deeply committed to this enterprise.⁶⁸

After listing numerous investments by the United States and its corporations in Egypt, John Kerry continued his militarized speech by confirming “renewed commitment to fully empower Egypt’s entrepreneurs and innovators as well as provide for greater economic opportunity” in order “to stand up and fight against extremists and terrorists.” After projecting a war-ridden future for Egypt, Kerry weaponized the country’s economy by describing its neoliberal economic development as “one of the most important tools in our toolbox to be able to embrace that future.” He finished his speech by reminding everyone at the economic conference of their role in this war by saying; “the one thing we know is here at this conference we stand in direct contradiction to the nihilism that they present. They want to destroy and go back in time. We want to build and go to the future, and that’s what this conference is about.” Thus, in his short speech Kerry defined the war zone, the combatants, the allies, the enemy and the weapons of yet another one of the United States’ war games.

In retrospect, it appears to be less of a coincidence that the “Arab Spring” started in 2011, the same year the United States finally withdrew from Iraq, where most cities were destroyed. Yet a whole new Islamic State terrorist group had been forged and spread in the region, making the Middle East ready for new heroic

⁶⁷ Abul-Magd, *Militarizing the Nation*, 232.

⁶⁸ John Kerry, “Remarks at the Opening Plenary of the Egypt Economic Development Conference,” U.S. Department of State, n.d., //2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/03/238872.htm.

“operations of freedom” by the United States. Furthermore, perhaps it is not a coincidence that countries such as Libya, Syria, and Yemen, that also experienced mass uprisings during the “Arab Spring” but were able to weaken the military institutions by making them lose their command over the political and economic affairs, some of which faced full dismantling, ended up as battlefields where the United States and its allies are now fighting terrorist groups such as ISIS. Rather than being celebrated and showered with investments for having accomplished revillusions, these countries are still under the bombardment of United States manufactured arms, which continue pouring into the region at unprecedented rates. In 2017 alone, the Middle East and North African countries received nearly \$30 billion of the \$82.2 billion US arms sold globally.⁶⁹ In 2018, Saudi Arabia, the primary destination for US arms sales, signed a weapons deal agreement with the US worth \$350 billion over 10 years, with \$110 billion taking effect immediately.⁷⁰

These arms deals and wars, however, do not necessarily increase peace or financial prosperity in the receiving countries. For instance, soon after John Kerry’s return from Egypt’s Economic Development Conference, which had guaranteed the suitability of Egypt’s direction for the neoliberal military complex, the United States released the suspended shipment of military equipment to Egypt after almost two years.⁷¹ Under these types of neoliberal militarism and arms support, the military’s grip on the public sphere tightened and Egypt’s economy further deteriorated. In a way, the revolution never happened. It may instead be described as revillusion; a series of events resembling a revolution that were contained and steered by various neoliberal forces, internal and external, which supported the coming to power of Al-Sisi, who followed Mubarak’s neoliberal footsteps by pursuing the IMF’s market reforms through gradually eliminating subsidies and stimulating local and foreign private capital. What remains most destructive, however, is how the events of the “Arab Spring” continue to be understood as revolutions. Unlike revolutions, revillusions do not fundamentally alter systems of power. As demonstrated in the case of Egypt, the existing militarized system crushes those inside it trying to make fundamental change and continues to thrive by adapting ever so slightly to contain the opposition through mass confusion and illusions. These strategic reforms in the language of revolution produce revillusions that suppress the possibility of the occurrence of an actual revolution. They are political misrepresentations, distorted collective-assessments, false public awareness, and historic lies that are highly destructive to the socio-

⁶⁹ Jack Detsch, “US Still Pouring Weapons into Yemen War,” Al-Monitor, March 8, 2018, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/03/yemen-us-weapons-saudi-arabia-uae.html>; Zachary Cohen and Laura Koran CNN, “How Trump Plans to Arm the World with US Weapons,” CNN, n.d., <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/19/politics/trump-us-arms-sales-policy/index.html>.

⁷⁰ Javier E. David, “US-Saudi Arabia Seal Weapons Deal Worth Nearly \$110 Billion as Trump Begins Visit,” May 20, 2017, <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/05/20/us-saudi-arabia-seal-weapons-deal-worth-nearly-110-billion-as-trump-begins-visit.html>.

⁷¹ Abul-Magd, *Militarizing the Nation*, 237.

political fabric of civil society.

Of course, Iran and Egypt are just two examples among others in the Middle East and worldwide where the United States has politically intervened⁷² through foreign policy, covert projects, arms deals, technical training, political and even military confrontations such as coup d'état, revolution, and war, to help dictators and fundamentalists rise to power. The United States aims to achieve its imperialistic goals, marketed and sold as “democracy” and “freedom”.

⁷² Ishaan Tharoor, “Analysis | The Long History of the U.S. Interfering with Elections Elsewhere,” *Washington Post*, October 13, 2016, sec. WorldViews Analysis Analysis Interpretation of the news based on evidence, including data, as well as anticipating how events might unfold based on past events, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/10/13/the-long-history-of-the-u-s-interfering-with-elections-elsewhere/>.

3.6 Economy of Enmity: Why Wars Don't End

The Middle East has long been a battleground for international power struggles, where wars designed, fueled, and stirred by external forces continue to be waged. The United States' interventions and secretive policies, at times even aiding both sides of a war in the Middle East, provide evidence that Washington has been playing an enormous role in both the militarization and the course of the many long and costly political conflicts and wars in the region.

As demonstrated earlier, Islamic fundamentalism has been encouraged and fostered by the United States since the Cold War. In Iran's case, the Islamic Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which were portrayed as the United States' loss of one of its strongest allies with a highly strategic geopolitical location for basing, turned out to be more beneficial to the United States than devastating. The scenario that the region's strongest military force had seemingly turned into an enemy that could use the same military techniques and technologies acquired from the United States against the United States' interests ended up being a distortion of reality, if not completely false. Long before declassifying the facts some decades later, the top-secret Washington consensus was in agreement with President Carter, who said, "[a] genuinely non-aligned Iran need not be viewed as a US setback".⁷³

The "turban" replacing the "crown" appeared as a negative development on the surface; however, the changes were planned and ended up further nourishing United States' interests as "Iran's grab for the role of regional gendarme, and the messianism of the Islamic Republic after 1979, [became] one key factor in the arms race in the Gulf."⁷⁴ Thus, the United States' militarization of, and interference in, the Middle East only expanded. Relying on regional bullies and common enemies in order to legitimate its military presence in the region and to justify the need for further militarization, the United States continued to influence and profit from the unstable political landscape of the Middle East.

Looking at the United States' role in the Iran–Iraq war of 1980–1988 as an example, this section illuminates the reasons such interventions were perceived to be beneficial. During the entire duration of what came to be known as the longest running war of the twentieth century, the United States secretly aided both Iran and Iraq in an effort to keep the war going without a victor. Despite the United States' attempts to appear neutral, it was discovered in 1992 that it had been secretly helping Iraq in the early days of its war against Iran to avoid an Iranian victory. Seymour Hersh reported, "The Reagan Administration secretly decided to provide highly classified intelligence to Iraq in the spring of 1982...while also permitting the sale of American-made arms to Baghdad in a successful effort to

⁷³ Fattahi, "America's Secret Engagement with Khomeini."

⁷⁴ Stork and Paul, "Arms Sales and the Militarization of the Middle East | Middle East Research and Information Project," 1.

help President Saddam Hussein avert imminent defeat in the war with Iran.”⁷⁵ Even though American export law forbade the third-party transfer of American-made arms without Washington's permission, American officials made no effort to stop these sales. The decision appears to be more questionable in light of the fact that a year earlier, in 1981, the Regan administration had bolstered the Iranian army by allowing Israel to ship several billion dollars' worth of American arms and spare parts to Iran. New York Times reporter Hersh observed, “Those arms, former Administration officials now acknowledge, helped Iran defy initial predictions of a quick Iraqi victory and achieve important successes early in the war, which began with an Iraqi attack in September 1980.”⁷⁶ Considering the eight-year duration of a war that could have ended in days or months, one begins to imagine the profits associated with war and the arms sales necessary to enable both sides to carry on a war that took the lives of over one million people.

While certainly profitable, the American arms sale wasn't the sole purpose of the United States' intervention in the region. The outcome of the war was of such importance to them that the CIA secretly stationed its own agent in Baghdad to handle the intelligence related to Iran. Hersh revealed:

The Administration did not inform the Senate and House Intelligence Committees that the C.I.A. was passing intelligence to Iraq...The C.I.A. also did not inform the committees that it had permitted American-made arms to be sold to Iraq. Starting in 1983, the agency also did not interfere as private American arms dealers began selling Iraq sophisticated Soviet arms purchased in Eastern Europe.⁷⁷

This last point illustrates how the United States was interested in keeping the war fueled, even if their long-term enemy, the Soviets, were to profit from the arms sales, as long as they were adding to the flames of war. The secret alterations to the United States' foreign policy, therefore, were specifically designed to prevent victory for either of the oil-rich countries. According to a former senior State Department official, “the policy was researched at the State Department and approved at the highest levels... We wanted to avoid victory by both sides.” The intervention of the White House in the Iran–Iraq war was therefore “arming both sides in its desire to see neither side dominate the vital oil region.”⁷⁸ A divided dominance over the oil-producing lands was, of course, another very profitable arena, which a constantly militarizing and war-ridden Middle East would guarantee for the United States.

⁷⁵ Seymour M. Hersh, “U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran,” *The New York Times*, January 26, 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/26/world/us-secretly-gave-aid-to-iraq-early-in-its-war-against-iran.html>.

⁷⁶ Hersh.

⁷⁷ Hersh.

⁷⁸ Hersh.

Washington was not just going behind Congress or bending US laws to prolong the killings; it was also breaking international law. The Geneva protocol of 1925 banned the use of chemical weapons in war. Recently declassified CIA documents and interviews with former intelligence officials show “the U.S. had firm evidence of Iraqi chemical attacks beginning in 1983.”⁷⁹ According to a military attaché in Baghdad during the 1988 strikes, “The Iraqis never told us that they intended to use nerve gas. They didn’t have to. We already knew.”⁸⁰

When Iran was building a case to show illegal chemical attacks were carried out on its forces to present to the United Nations, “it lacked the evidence implicating Iraq, much of which was contained in top-secret reports and memoranda sent to the most senior intelligence officials in the U.S. government.”⁸¹ However, the United States did nothing to assist Iran in its attempts to bring proof of illegal Iraqi chemical attacks to light. Instead, the United States aided Saddam Hussain in gassing Iran. In early 1988, relying on United States satellite imagery, maps, and other intelligence, the Iraqis used mustard gas and sarin prior to four major offensives. The information the CIA provided regarding Iranian troop movements, the locations of Iranian logistics facilities, and details about Iranian air defenses, as well as CIA assessments showed “where the Iranian weaknesses were” and allowed Iraq to gas Iran more effectively.⁸² The only concern that the CIA reported in a top-secret document in November 1983 was “[a]s Iraqi attacks continue and intensify, the chances increase that Iranian forces will acquire a shell containing mustard agent with Iraqi markings,” and if that happened, “Tehran would take such evidence to the U.N. and charge U.S. complicity in violating international law.”⁸³ Otherwise, the United States continued to supply top-secret intelligence until a ceasefire ended the Iran–Iraq war in 1988, just as Washington wanted, without a local victor.

Multiple lucrative benefits seemed to drive the United States to radicalize and militarize the Middle East. First, the legitimacy gained through the process of “Othering”, which authorizes interventions in the region under the cover of “war against terrorists,” the same groups it actually helped raise to power. As a democratic empire, leaders of the United States need votes and these framings of “heroic” gestures against “evil” help win votes. The “unacceptable” values and “unfamiliar” ways of life of the Islamists are highlighted when necessary to allow the United States to intervene under the banner of “humanism”. Eric Hobsbawm asserts, “Few things are more dangerous than empires pursuing their own interests in the belief that by doing so they are doing humanity a favour.” What is

⁷⁹ Shane Harris and Matthew M. Aid, “Exclusive: CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as He Gassed Iran,” *Foreign Policy*, August 26, 2013, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/26/exclusive-cia-files-prove-america-helped-saddam-as-he-gassed-iran/>.

⁸⁰ Harris and Aid.

⁸¹ Harris and Aid.

⁸² Hersh, “U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran.”

⁸³ Harris and Aid, “CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as He Gassed Iran.”

more dangerous is when an imperial power is fully aware of the damages of their pursuit on humanity, yet it pursues them anyway by making “others” pay the costs with their lives and resources in the belief that by doing so they are fighting for ‘humanity.’ In other words, fostering extreme ideologies to develop into entire fundamentalist communities of various sects and then sit back and let them kill each other with American arms as they each defend their ideologies.

The second benefit is that a radical, militarized Middle East promotes the United States’ global domination. Creating unstable dynamics keeps the region divided, which, in turn, minimizes the threat of unification of Middle Eastern powers against the West. It also eliminates the chance of all oil-producing land falling under the domination of one power structure. In addition, it keeps the rest of the world at perceived risk and therefore in need of the United States’ interventions in the region to keep matters contained.

The third benefit of a radicalized and militarized Middle East is the wars it can host and fight, which minimizes cost while maximizing profit for the United States to achieve its interests. Middle Eastern countries are not only burdened with great costs for military personnel and the arms used during these wars, but they also sustain substantial damages to the infrastructure of their cities. Since the majority of the arms in the Middle East are purchased from the United States, and destroyed cities provide neoliberal corporations with a large sum of postwar reconstruction contracts, wars provide large monetary profits as well. Therefore, as independent critic Naomi Klein asserts, “They have designed a system that invites war and destruction only to create business out of securitizing and reconstruction.”⁸⁴ Klein explains the phenomena as a “disaster–capitalism complex, in which all conflict-and-disaster-related functions (waging war, securing borders, spying on citizens, re-building cities, treating traumatized soldiers) can be performed by corporations at a profit.”⁸⁵ Lockheed Martin, Halliburton, Blackwater, Fluor, Shaw, and Bechtel are only a few of the corporations that benefited from the Iraq war. The former vice president of Lockheed Martin was so sure about the financial returns from the war that he chaired the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq and advocated the invasion. He was proved to be right, as the Iraq war brought unprecedented revenues to Lockheed Martin, including \$25 billion in United States government contracts in 2005 alone. Democratic Congressman Henry Waxman noted that the sum of the revenues “exceeded the gross domestic product of 103 countries.... [and was] also larger than the combined budgets of the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Interior, the Small Business Administration, and the entire legislative branch of government.”⁸⁶ Moreover, Klein noted that in 2006, as a result of the war, ExxonMobil made \$40 billion, the largest profit ever recorded.

⁸⁴ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 56.

⁸⁵ Klein, 50.

⁸⁶ Klein, 57.

There are so many layers to the economy of enmity and so many corporations involved in war related industry that there has even been business made of “disaster-proofing” other corporations. For instance, Paul Bremer, Bush’s proconsul in Iraq, worked on “turning multinationals into security bubbles able to function smoothly even if the states in which they are doing business crumble around them.”⁸⁷ Moreover, the CH2M Hill Corporation, a multimillion-dollar contractor in Iraq, “was paid to perform the core government function of overseeing other contractors.”⁸⁸ Historically, part of the money generated is then reinvested into war business to keep the United States in power and allow it to dominate the world through more militaristic interventions.⁸⁹ An twentieth century example is the 1980s Iran–Contra, where the CIA and the United States National Security Council facilitated the transfer of funds from the secret Iran arms sales to partially fund anti-Sandinista fighters, known as Contras, against the socialist government in Nicaragua.⁹⁰

Similar self-serving imperialistic logic has driven the United States’ interventions in many wars around the world, including the Middle East and North Africa. The events of September 11, 2001; invasion, occupation and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the confrontation over Iran’s nuclear ambitions; the Islamic States’ insurgency and United States’ counterinsurgency; all demonstrate the increasing dominance of the economy of enmity. Klein asserts, “the world is becoming less peaceful while accumulating significantly more profit.”⁹¹ The process described does not occur indiscriminately and equally in all areas of the world. The twenty-first century economy of enmity has clearly defined geographical receivers, which has culminated in spiraling financial gain for the United States and allies while producing unprecedented insecurity and violence in the Middle East and North Africa.

In light of what we now know about the Iran–Iraq war, the Persian Gulf War, and the more recent US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, one has no choice but to question the actual motives behind the advertised “humanitarian” Washington response to the Syrian government’s use of chemical weapons in February and March 2018. According to officials, the Trump administration’s consideration of new military action against the Syrian government in response to these reports of ongoing use of chemical weapons was an attempt for a second United States strike on President Bashar al-Assad in less than a year.⁹² Of course, that excuse was

⁸⁷ Klein, 54.

⁸⁸ Klein, 56.

⁸⁹ “Tower Commission Report Excerpts,” accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/PS157/assignment%20files%20public/TOWER%20EXCERPTS.htm> Iran-Contra.

⁹⁰ Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA*.

⁹¹ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 56.

⁹² Karen DeYoung et al., “After Reports of Chemical Attacks, White House Considers New Military Action against Syrian Regime,” *Washington Post*, March 5, 2018, sec. National Security, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/after-reports-of-chemical-attacks->

used in April 2018 by the United States and European allies to launch airstrikes against Syrian research, storage, and military targets “as President Trump sought to punish President Bashar al-Assad for a suspected chemical attack near Damascus...that killed more than 40 people.”⁹³ The leaders of Britain, France, and the United States called the chemical attacks “violations of international law.” In a televised address from the White House Diplomatic Room, Trump said, “These are not the actions of a man. They are crimes of a monster instead.” What is most striking is that the CIA has declassified top-secret documents listed on its website that clearly demonstrate how the United States covertly helped Saddam Hussain make and use chemical weapons against Iran and the Kurds of his own country with exponentially more casualties than the one Trump condemns. The released CIA documents illustrate that they were fully aware of the illegal status of the weapons and their intended use on civilians and only worried about getting caught. Yet Trump continued the speech, specifically addressing Iran:

To Iran and to Russia I ask: “What kind of a nation wants to be associated with the mass murder of innocent men, women and children?” The nations of the world can be judged by the friends they keep. No nation can succeed in the long run by promoting rogue states, brutal tyrants and murderous dictators.⁹⁴

Perhaps Trump is asking questions he himself would never want to answer. Perhaps he is ignorant of the United States’ history. Or perhaps when saying nations can be “judged by the friends they keep” he is under the impression that having hanged Saddam and destroyed Iraq, the United States has a clear conscience and should not be judged. While it may take decades for the “logic” of these attacks on Syria to declassify, it is not hard to place new developments in existing historic patterns of the self-serving seemingly “humanitarian” interventions of the United States in the Middle East. Trump’s address in the context of the Islamic fundamentalism the United States has been cultivated to justify and fuel profitable wars, seemingly a strategy to stir enmity and provoke reactions that would lead to more lucrative aggression in the region. Having received insufficient response from Iran and Russia, in May 2018 Trump proceeded to add fuel to the fires of sectarianism in the Middle East by withdrawing the United States from the Iran Nuclear Agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). An economy of enmity depends on regional hostilities that are often

[white-house-considers-new-military-action-against-syrian-regime/2018/03/05/d5d2de2e-1d7a-11e8-b2d9-08e748f892c0_story.html](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2018/03/05/d5d2de2e-1d7a-11e8-b2d9-08e748f892c0_story.html).

⁹³ Helene Cooper, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, and Ben Hubbard, “U.S., Britain and France Strike Syria Over Suspected Chemical Weapons Attack,” *The New York Times*, April 14, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/world/middleeast/trump-strikes-syria-attack.html>.

⁹⁴ Fox News, *President Trump Announces US Strikes on Syria*, n.d., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEO7BS4CW9s>.

presented as historic Sunni–Shiite rivalry. However, expert observers remind us that the “tension is recent, not ancient” and that “it is rooted in politics, not piety.”⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, “Opinion | Iran, Saudi Arabia and Modern Hatreds,” *The New York Times*, May 17, 2018, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/15/opinion/iran-saudi-arabia-and-modern-hatreds.html>.

PART TWO: MEMORIALIZATION

**CHAPTER 4. Memory and Violence in the 21st Century Middle East:
Examining Memorials as Media in Contemporary Iraq**

**CHAPTER 5. Memory-centric Warfare: Militarized Memory in the “Cultural-
centric” War Against Iraq**

CHAPTER 6. Memorials as Weapons of Mass Disorientation

CHAPTER 4. Memory and Violence in the 21st Century Middle East: Examining Memorials as Media in Contemporary Iraq

4.1 Theoretical and Methodological Introduction

4.2 The Context

4.3 The Sender

4.4 The Medium

4.5 The Receiver

4.6 The Scholar

4.1 Theoretical and Methodological Introduction

Upon leaving Egypt, after twenty-long-years of traveling in the “orient” and producing knowledge for the French empire, Chateaubriand suddenly felt the urge to make his presence there remembered. “Unable to do more than look at the Pyramids from a distance, he takes the trouble to send an emissary there, to have him inscribe his (Chateaubriand's) name on the stone.”¹

Memorials express the human urge to stop the passage of time; they are a fight against impermanence. They are built to stop time and make permanent a particular human experience, be it the joy of victory, the pleasures of beauty, the glory of a state, or the lessons of a tragedy. *Lieux de Memoire*, or sites of memory, in their material, symbolic, and functional capacities, allow communities to “block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial.”² In contrast to the self-referential private memories of individuals, the fundamental purpose of publicly displayed memorials, however unconscious, is to subjugate others to a particular understanding of an experience and encourage a perpetual remembrance of a set of values inscribed in the representation of this experience. As such, different groups may find them instrumentally valuable, for instance, to build “historical capital” for the underrepresented minorities; to be used as socio-political control apparatus for various states and oppressive regimes; or to have therapeutic effects on traumatized communities. As with any other site of expression and prescription, they can conjure contestation and turn into sites for the struggle for power. Therefore, memorials are, most importantly, communication tools. There is a notion of the “other” in the inception of each memorial: those who envision do so for those who are to observe. The relationship between, for instance, a state that builds a monument and the public that will be its audience becomes most significant. The state becomes the “sender” and the public the “receiver.” Thus, a proper study of memorials, in my view, is one that does not see a memorial as an object but rather as a medium.

Advocating a multidisciplinary methodology, I will argue that a holistic study of memorials should include five parts, examining the context, the sender, the medium, the receiver, and the scholar. After explaining the significance of each part, I will demonstrate the necessary components and methods required to conduct that research. Furthermore, investigating the case of memorials in Iraq through examples of previous scholars, I will highlight the strengths and limitations of commonly used methods. Ultimately, I will demonstrate how applying certain interdisciplinary approaches to widely studied memorials such as Baghdad’s Victory Arch allows new and broader comprehension of the phenomena.

¹ Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 175.

² Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations* *Representations* 26, no. 1 (1989): 19.

4.2 The Context

I found only the memories of my glorious country worthy of those magnificent plains; I saw the remains of monuments of a new civilization, brought to the banks of the Nile by the genius of France. –Chateaubriand.³

Context is extremely important to the study of memorials, whether it be social, historical, political, cultural or ethnic. As Hobsbawm asserts, “apart from remembering what others have forgotten, or wish to forget” it is the responsibility of scholars “to stand back, so far as possible, from the contemporary record and see it in a broader context and in a longer perspective.”⁴ The historical background concerning the passage above, for instance, would help the reader understand Chateaubriand’s disturbing remarks in the context of other significant courses of the eighteenth century, such as colonialism, orientalism, and the rivalries of the British and French empires; a condition that made possible a particular mentality that could only appreciate French “memories” on the ancient land of Egypt.

Researchers from various disciplines often utilize historical methods while investigating context. They use primary sources and other evidence to systematically investigate memorials, and then to write their histories. These accounts usually provide the larger societal context by examining both the political and social factors leading to and enabling the particular relation between the “sender” and the “receiver”. Therefore, the context can assist understanding of the desire, conception, design, production, consumption and/or contestation of memorials.

Interpretive-historical research is one approach for investigating context that allows for an explanation of the past through narrative construction. Tactically, this approach provides a means of “getting in” to a context in time past.⁵ An example of scholarship that uses the interpretive–historical approach is Eric Davis’s *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq*. The book builds on research that Davis began in the 1980s, and on his past publication looking at instrumentalist logic and manipulation of memory in Iraq. Davis provides detailed historic context to explain how such a state with much power still felt the need to engage in a massive rewriting of the nation’s history and cultural heritage. As with his other work on the museums and the politics of social control, Davis traces the foundation of various sites of memory to argue that these state sponsored establishments reflect efforts by the state to expand its power in society during the twentieth century.⁶

³ Chateaubriand, *Oeuvres*, p. 1137. Cited by Said, *Orientalism*, 1979, 174.

⁴ Hobsbawm, *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism*, 2.

⁵ Linda N Groat and David Wang, *Architectural Research Methods* (New York: J. Wiley, 2002), 167.

⁶ Eric Davis, “The Museum and the Politics of Social Control in Modern Iraq,” *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, 1994, 90–104.

As a political scientist, it is not surprising that Davis's book is more heavily focused on the political sphere when examining historical memory. Following the introduction, his chapters are organized chronologically to cover early resistance to the Ottoman Empire during World War I, followed by opposition to British colonial forces to create a unified vision for an Iraqi political community, leading to the Ba'athist regime and Saddam Hussein. As such, the book fits best in the category of political history. This in itself raises some criticism from the perspective of the Annales school of historiography, which started a movement against political history. Members promoted a history of the whole range of human activities in the place of a mainly political history.⁷ However, Davis's book has a clear question: why did the authoritarian regime under Saddam Hussein, who had eliminated all opposition with a strong grip on civil society, still find the need to spend resources to reinterpret its history and cultural heritage? The analytical history Davis provides in response to this question is an approach that the Annales movement, which advocates substitution of a problem-oriented analytical history for a traditional narrative of events, would support.⁸

Moreover, his approach is particularly interesting to me because of the sources he uses to explore the political impact of historical memories on the formation of the nation-state and the relations between state and society. To "get in" to the context, he makes use of official documents, analysis of cultural projects, and interviews. The publications he analyzes are from Iraq before and during Ba'athist rule. In addition to the secondary sources, the interviews he conducted from the early 1980s serve as the primary source for his study of state-society and provide him with a sound argument regarding the relationship of intellectuals and state power in the context of authoritarian rule. However, the intellectuals and expats are not a substitute for the entire civil society. Thus, even though the socio-political context provided is strongly narrated to draw connection between institutions of memory and trends in nationalist movement, in my view more interviews with the users of the museums from the general population could have elaborated on the first-hand experiences of these orchestrated memories in trying to understand how historical memory operates in the context of a dictatorship. What is concluded, therefore, is inferred mostly from interpreting the 'sender' and the assumption that the voices included can speak for the larger population. To be comprehensive, studies that similarly plan to examine the relations between the state and society would ideally include additional primary evidence to determine whether the population did, in fact, "decode" the messages "encoded" in the spaces of memory in ways intended by the regime.

Davis begins this project with a preconceived theory in mind for which he provides convincing support; however, I believe the study would have benefited from a qualitative research method. As a method primarily belonging to the social sciences, qualitative research would not be very different from the interpretive-

⁷ Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-89* (Stanford University Press, 1990), 1.

⁸ Burke, 2.

historical method, since “both strategies seek to describe or explain socio/physical phenomena within complex contexts, and both seek to consider the relevant phenomena in a holistic manner.”⁹ However, qualitative research is generally more open-ended in both theoretical conception and research design than other research strategies because it avoids the notion of a knowable, objective reality.¹⁰ For instance, the use of grounded theory would have allowed Davis to begin his research without preset opinions or notions about the connection between institutions of memory and trends in nationalist movement, cultural pluralism, and political participation, and to remain flexible both during the data collection process and the data synthesis.

Davis’s theory that the “Project for the Rewriting of History” is aimed at hegemonic supremacy is problematic in connection to some data he provides, yet he continues to make that argument. He argues that the “absence of a commonly accepted model of political community is related to the problem of collective identity and foundation myths.”¹¹ However, he rejects explanations based on the “ethnic model” or those of the *Republic of Fear*¹² because, in his view, they fail to explain the need felt by the authoritarian states to spend so many resources on reconstructing history. The problem is that his own theory also fails in the latter chapters as he provides accounts of the growing repression under Ba’athist authoritarianism. Ultimately, the repressive nature of the state and the emergence of the Tikriti Ba’athism further marginalized the role of civil society. In the absence of a functioning civil society, the concept of hegemony appears less relevant.

Finally, without a perceived theory the research would have remained more flexible by not continually insisting on the idea that Saddam Hussein’s investment in a “Project for the Rewriting of History” was aimed at hegemonic supremacy. If Davis had allowed the theory to emerge from the data, he might have been more likely to offer deeper insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to the workings of the politics of memory.

⁹ Groat and Wang, *Architectural Research Methods*, 179.

¹⁰ John W Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1994), 44.

¹¹ Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 2.

¹² Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

4.3 The “Sender”

Man is literally split in two: he has an awareness of his own splendid uniqueness in that he sticks out of nature with a towering majesty, and yet he goes back into the ground a few feet in order blindly and dumbly to rot and disappear forever. –Ernest Becker.¹³

Detailed knowledge regarding contextual history often informs the scholars of memorials of the structures and relations between social and political spheres, which in turn enables them to interpret the sender’s position as well as the forces influencing their decision to erect a memorial. However, socio-political factors alone cannot explain the “why” and “how” of memorial formation. In addition, the psychological characteristics of the sender, an individual or a collective, influence the inception, quantity, quality, form, and message that a memorial embodies. Simultaneously understanding the mentality of the sender is necessary to understand the messages encoded into the memorial.

Researchers who take into account psychological factors with regard to memorials typically do so for examination of the post-consumption effects of the memorials on the receivers. For instance, scholars have looked at the therapeutic or victimizing effects of monuments on those encountering them.¹⁴ However, while these studies are extremely valuable, there is also a lot to be learned from a psychological analysis of the sender.

Researchers who do use qualitative psychological approaches do not simply rely on quantitative procedures, because their goal is to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the sender and to understand the meanings they give to their memorials. To achieve this, researchers often use naturalistic methods, such as interviewing, observation, participant observation, and focus groups. However, this may not be possible with all senders, including some political figures or those deceased. In this case, data for the study is collected from other sources and evidence. A good example is Kanan Makiya’s *Republic of Fear: The politics of modern Iraq*. Having “fear” as its central theme, the book is essentially an attempt to give a psychological explanation for the socio-political conditions in Iraq. As such, Makiya skillfully dedicates a chapter to explaining “authority” and a subsection focusing on “the leader syndrome”. Looking at old interviews, recorded conversations, personal statements, and a televised biography of Saddam Hussein, Makiya aims to explain the leader’s actions as intended to instill fear in the public.¹⁵ Through a detailed and involved account of Saddam’s totalitarian institutionalization of memory and violence, Makiya argues the regime was able to infuse universal fear great enough to foster widespread violence such as that seen during the Iraq–Iran war. Regardless of their relevance,

¹³ Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*, 1 edition (New York: Free Press, 1997), 26.

¹⁴ These aspects will be explained in more detail in part 4 where the ‘receivers’ of memorials are examined.

¹⁵ Makiya, *Republic of Fear*, 110–24.

however, theoretical frameworks from psychology of leadership and group psychology are completely ignored. My recommendation for researchers aiming to explain these types of phenomena is to apply theories such as “mental contagion” and “herd instinct”.¹⁶

In addition to gathering the appropriate data mentioned above and having a hypothesis, the way the data is analyzed demonstrates the strength of the argument. This entails reviewing, summarizing, generalizing and interpreting collected data accurately. At one instance, Makiya uses the leader’s family tree, reproduced in his “semiofficial biography,” to note that the family tree issued to the public “traced his roots to Ali, the fourth caliph and patron imam of Shiism.” But the link between Ali and the prophet was not drawn, making it a “political exercise”. Giving no explanation as to how he arrives at this, Makiya interprets that “This gesture was not made in weakness, or as an attempt by Saddam to ingratiate himself with Shiis at a time of their regional activism.” Saddam supposedly did this knowing people “would accept this proof of ancestry, largely because there was no longer a soul in the length and breadth of the country who could be heard if they were prepared to deny it.”¹⁷ Thus, Makiya asserts Saddam did X, not because he wanted A or B, but because he knew no one dares to reject X. This type of argument logic weakens the book at times, as the reader remains uncertain about the motivations for Saddam’s many historic inventions and the excessive dissemination of his portrait all over the city.

One common fallacy is to force a solely “political” explanation where a “personal” one might also be helpful. The complexities of Saddam’s childhood and challenges of the stigma of growing up as an orphan certainly influenced some of his behaviors as an adult. Saddam’s family tree is not an isolated attempt; he used every occasion and medium he could to talk about his family background. Rather than an instrument of fear, it appears to have been another tool to prove to the world that which he might have been unable to prove to his harassing playmates in childhood. The missing link to Mohammad is emphasized in Makiya’s interpretation of the family tree as a “political exercise.” But this does not appear to be a “political” message, or at least a consistent one, that Saddam was concerned with, since on other occasions he made the link to Mohammad very clear. For example, the monument of the Unknown Soldier also had his life story from birth through his early years as a militant presented with an analogy to the story of Mohammad, “both having been brought up as orphans, by uncles, becoming militant activists and idealists, etc.”¹⁸ Connecting himself to Mohammad and Ali, both of whom grew up without their parents, and who turned out to be very powerful and respected leaders, could be argued to have some therapeutic effect

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud and Peter Gay, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York: Norton, 1989).

¹⁷ Makiya, *Republic of Fear*, 115.

¹⁸ Kanan Makiya, *The Monument : Art and Vulgarity in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq*, New ed. (London ;;New York: I.B. Tauris ;Distributed by Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 15.

on him.

An analytical procedure that might have been helpful in this study is the meaning-focused approach, which emphasizes meaning comprehension. In other words, Makiya could have tried to understand the subjective meaning of these exercises for Saddam instead of placing meanings into his own conceptions. At one point, Makiya employs a metaphor that hints at Saddam's psychological madness: "in the fictional world of Ba'athism, an emperor who has no clothes can forget his condition when he ventures outside."¹⁹

Another lens that might be helpful to use is the paradox of existential dualism. Eric Fromm explains that the existential contradiction between a symbolic self and a mortal body could have a negative effect on the sanity of some people in society.²⁰ For example, Saddam symbolically held a very high position in the country but he was fully intimate with the pain of destruction, death and loss from a young age.²¹ According to Becker, this dualism is at times unbearable: "[E]verything that man does in his symbolic world is an attempt to deny and overcome his grotesque fate. He literally drives himself into a blind obliviousness with social games, psychological tricks, personal preoccupations so far removed from the reality of his situation that they are forms of madness — agreed madness, shared madness, disguised and dignified madness, but madness all the same."²²

Moreover, impermanence was tangible in regard to Saddam's political position. He was well aware of the United States' role in the 1963 overthrow of the Iraqi government and the CIA-backed military coup that brought to power the Baath, Saddam's own party.²³ Saddam himself had been hired by the CIA, aged 22, to carry out assassinations and remained closely connected with the US during and after his own forceful coming to power as president in 1979. Having been involved with the CIA and the plot to kill a former Iraqi president, Saddam knew well how probable yet unexpected a coup and removal by murder could be, even if, like the assassinated president his government felt safe among its own citizens for whom it had introduced land reform, women's rights, universal education, and other populist programs. For Iraq, as with most Middle Eastern countries, the

¹⁹ Makiya, *Republic of Fear*, 112.

²⁰ Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Rinehart, 1955).

²¹ Makiya provides a brief summary of Saddam's biography which includes familiarity with guns from the age of ten; being held at gunpoint; the bullet that was gouged out of his flesh under his direction in hiding; etc. Makiya, p. 118.

²² Becker, *The Denial of Death*, 27.

²³ On the CIA's failed attempt to murder President Qasim of Iraq in February 1960, see Thomas Powers, "Strategic Intelligence: Part One, an Isolated Man," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1979, and the hearings and report of the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee), 1976. On CIA support for the 1963 coup, see "The Survival of Saddam: An Interview with James Akins," *PBS Frontline*, at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saddam/interviews/akins.html. Timothy Mitchell, "McJihad: Islam in the U.S. Global Order," *Social Text* 20, no. 4 (2002): 1–18.

external threat has always loomed more than the internal threat.

The fear of impermanence was very real for Saddam and accounted for his countless bodyguards and security measures. James Akins, an attaché at the United States Embassy in Baghdad, wasn't the only one in Washington thinking of ways to "get rid of Saddam." "If we wait for a natural death, that could be another 20 years... Although assassinating Saddam is not going to be easy, it's not impossible."²⁴ According to Akins, sanctions against Iraq, which hurt the Iraqi people tremendously, were intended to weaken Saddam. However, since they weren't successful, Akin argued they should be lifted to "[a]llow normal life to be renewed and then there will be some move from the army, or a group of officers, or civilians with the army against Saddam." Akins even hoped that Saddam would be overthrown by a coup when explaining several failed coup attempts where the perpetrators were not found. To speed up a coup, the United States could be "arming the Kurds against [Saddam]," but that would give the ally Turks "a collective heart attack," he said. During the 1992 interview, Akin even contemplated sending in a mission to kill him: "Well, we're not supposed to do that sort of thing. We have tried it at times, and we've never been very successful at it, nor, for that matter, have the Israelis."²⁵ While many like Akin eventually ran out of ideas for Saddam's removal and resorted to hoping that some day he would be "killed or overthrown," Saddam never stopped fearing for his life while politicians in Washington continued plotting and executing plans to actually "get rid of him."

This maddening fear of impermanence that the Iraqi president experienced might begin to explain, in part, the countless numbers of cutout figures of Saddam Husain towering over each Iraqi village, the thirty-foot high version near Baghdad, and many other memorials that tried to make Saddam's presence more permanent. Iraq could then still be seen as a Republic of Fear; fear of loss for those who found comfort in positions of power.

However, "Man's fears are fashioned out of the ways in which he perceives the world."²⁶ Of course, there are different ways people deal with the dilemma of ephemerality and inevitable loss. Psychological characteristics, for example, affect how one reacts to this condition. The performance philosopher, Jason Silva, thinks "we defy entropy and impermanence with our films and our poems... we hold onto each other a little harder."²⁷ Some others chose to escape the painful thought: "I drink not from mere joy in wine nor to scoff at faith... no, only to forget myself for a moment, that only do I want of intoxication, that alone..." wrote Omar Khayyam,

²⁴ Interviews - James Akins | The Survival Of Saddam | FRONTLINE | PBS, 1992, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saddam/interviews/akins.html>.

²⁵ Interviews - James Akins | The Survival Of Saddam | FRONTLINE | PBS.

²⁶ Becker, *The Denial of Death*, 18.

²⁷ *Existential Bummer*, 2013 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yb-OYmHVchQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player>

the Persian mathematician and astronomer,²⁸ while some, like Mawlānā Rumi, found peace in Sufi explanations: “Don’t grieve. Anything you lose comes ‘round in another form... As rainwater, down into flowerbed. As roses up from ground.”²⁹

These are, of course, different mentalities from different societies in different times. Some believe there can be no study of society without a study of mentalities.³⁰ An example of how that has been achieved in studying memorials is Françoise Choay’s book, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*. The book is a thought-provoking history of the historic monument. Choay’s description of how historic preservation began and developed clarified how “any object from the past can be converted into an historic witness without having had, originally, a memorial purpose” and how “any human artifact can be deliberately invested with memorial function.”³¹ In the style of the Annales school, Choay examines the “conceptual apparatus” or “mental equipment” in order to write a history of mentalities. This means that instead of emphasizing singular contributions of any one person, she aims to situate them within an evolving mentality of the historic monument. In her book, she examines the impact of the French Revolution on the collective mentalities and conceptualization of historic monuments. According to Choay, it was at that moment that the “abstract iconographic conservations” of the antiquarians gave way to “real, concrete conservation.”³² She argues the choices regarding the built heritage in the twenty-first century reflect a hyper-conscious mindset that remembers, though not always, “organically.” There is something fascinating about the changing mentalities in regard to the conservative practice of holding on to the physical built forms; the desire to keep alive the stories of the past, even if they are highly selected ones. Choay hypothesizes that even though preserving monuments at first situates the objects of knowledge into a “linear conception of time,” eventually the landscape of past stories preserved by several generations might “become the priceless playground for developing and reshaping our human identity,”³³ an ultimate playground in which we will be able to liberate ourselves from both “space and time in order to be differently and more creatively immersed in them.”³⁴

²⁸ Omar Khayyam et al., *The Sufistic Quatrains of Omar Khayyam in Definitive Form* (New York; London: M.W. Dunne, 1903).

²⁹ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, John Moyne, and Coleman Barks, *Open Secret: Versions of Rumi* (Putney, Vt.: Threshold Books, 1984).

³⁰ Burke, *The French Historical Revolution*, 55.

³¹ Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13.

³² Choay, 63.

³³ Choay, 178.

³⁴ Choay, 178.

4.4 The Medium

With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning. Motor power places gigantic forces at his disposal, which, like his muscles, he can employ in any direction; thanks to ships and aircraft neither water nor air can hinder his movements; by means of spectacles he corrects defects in the lens of his own eye; by means of the telescope he sees into the far distance; and by means of the microscope he overcomes the limits of visibility set by the structure of his retina. In the photographic camera he has created an instrument which retains the fleeting visual impressions, just as a gramophone disc retains the equally fleeting auditory ones; both are at bottom materializations of the power he possesses of recollection, his memory. –Sigmund Freud.³⁵

Just like Freud’s photograph and gramophone examples, memorials, regardless of what technology they are made with, are tools that materialize human power to remember. But more importantly, in their symbolic essence, they are tools that enable people to bond or break communities; to heal or hurt wounds; to preserve or invent traditions; and to build or destroy regimes. There are three main aspects of the “medium” that deserve detailed examination: the design, the manifestation, and the codification.

The design of a memorial starts the first moment an individual or team begins thinking about the project. It requires a mixture of “ideas, drawings, information, and many other ingredients to create something where nothing was before.”³⁶ The design process includes several stages, such as development of detailed working drawings, instructing contractors on the expected outcomes, negotiating changes in response to construction problems, and finally the construction itself.³⁷ However, it does not always end there. The design process sometimes continues on for years, even after the first conception of the memorial is built and installed. For example, new additions can be made to a monument or pieces removed from a memorial to better represent how the community feels and to accommodate the changing needs of their society.³⁸

Examining the design process helps the researcher identify, most importantly, the purpose behind the construction of the memorial. It is not just what is accepted into the final design, but the entire process of choosing and negotiating

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey, n.d., 41–42.

³⁶ John Zeisel, *Inquiry by Design: Environment/Behavior/Neuroscience in Architecture, Interiors, Landscape, and Planning* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 21.

³⁷ Zeisel, 19.

³⁸ See, for instance, how new monuments were added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as the public began to feel the need for additional representation. Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz, “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past,” *American Journal of Sociology* 97, no. 2 (September 1, 1991): 376–420.

ideas that is revealing. If archived, and when access is granted, an investigation of the architectural designs and proposed memorials for any memorialization can be deeply informative.³⁹ Examining the concepts that were not picked is revealing of the larger mentalities and helps readers understand various narratives and meanings that have been projected onto the spaces of memory.

Kanan Makiya's *The Monument: Art and Vulgarly in Saddam Hussein's Iraq* is an example of memorial study that examines the design process. The book begins with a detailed description of how the idea of a "Victory Arch" was first conceived by the President of Iraq, Saddam Husain. Makiya provides interesting and informative detail, such as the fact that the plan for this monument was first announced in a speech on April 22, 1985, before the war with Iran had ended. To name a monument "Victory Arch" dedicated to a war that eventually ended with no victors and with about one million casualties no doubt appears to be a political exercise. However, Makiya does not examine the history or context of the war that this memorial was erected to. When examining the design of memorials, it is essential to study the memory they are trying to perpetuate. Since the Victory Arch, erected to memory of the Iran–Iraq war, occupies the cover, title, and most pages in his book *The Monument*, it would have been constructive for Makiya to closely examine the dynamics of the war to discover why, in 1985 Saddam was confident of the Iraqi victory for which he began preparing a monument. By referring to the Victory Arch simply as "the monument," he avoids dealing with it analytically. Perhaps a closer decoding of the name of the monument would inspire Makiya to scratch deeper to understand the complexities of the war.

Curiosity about Saddam's assertiveness regarding victory led me to discover that in the spring of 1982 "in a successful effort to help President Saddam Hussein avert imminent defeat in the war with Iran" the Reagan administration began to secretly provide highly classified intelligence to Iraq while also permitting the sale of American-made arms to Baghdad.⁴⁰ Starting in 1983, "the U.S. had firm evidence of Iraqi chemical attacks," yet continued to aid Saddam in gassing Iran.⁴¹ The satellite imagery and maps the CIA provided Iraq showed "where the Iranian weaknesses were" and allowed Iraq to more effectively use mustard gas and sarin prior to major offensives.⁴² Getting all of this help from the world's strongest power, the United States, Saddam had no reason not to be sure of ,and prepare for, a victory against a destabilized, revolution-ridden Iran. Based on the secrets known to him, imagining a victory for Iraq and designing the Victory Arch were based on realistic prediction.

However, what Saddam did not know was that, starting in 1981, the Regan administration had also been secretly bolstering the Iranian army by allowing Israel

³⁹ See, for instance, Marita Sturken, "The Aesthetics of Absence: Rebuilding Ground Zero," *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 3 (August 1, 2004): 220, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.2004.31.3.311>.

⁴⁰ Hersh, "U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran."

⁴¹ Harris and Aid, "CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as He Gassed Iran."

⁴² Hersh, "U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran."

to ship several billion dollars' worth of American arms and spare parts to Iran, which "helped Iran defy initial predictions of a quick Iraqi victory and achieve important successes early in the war."⁴³ As far as Saddam was aware, the war could and should have ended at any point. However, the secret alterations to the United States' foreign policy were specifically designed to prevent victory for either of the oil-rich countries. According to a former senior State Department official, Washington "wanted to avoid victory by both sides." The intervention of the White House in the Iran–Iraq war was, therefore, "arming both sides in its desire to see neither side dominate the vital oil region."⁴⁴ The United States continued to supply top-secret intelligence in a strategic manner until a ceasefire ended the Iran–Iraq war in 1988, just as Washington wanted, without a local victor. Based on my observation, therefore, more than anything else, the Victory Arch should be seen as a reminder of the United States' militarization of the Middle East. Makiya, however, misses the opportunity to decode the monument as a war memorial, remaining instead focused on using it as evidence to further demonize a dictator's vulgarity and insanity.

Makiya, however, does investigate notes, concept drawings, and descriptive pamphlets to illuminate some objectives envisioned for the physical setting. He explains that the "final scheme was worked out with the help of an eminent Iraqi sculptor, Khalid al-Rahal, and executed under the President's close supervision. When Rahal died early on in the project, his role passed to another eminent Iraqi sculptor, Mohammed Ghani."⁴⁵ However, Makiya does not investigate the impact of these two architects on the final design and assumes they closely followed Saddam's guidelines. Yet, a closer look at the preliminary sketch the president had drawn shows little resemblance to the final monument (Figure 4.1).

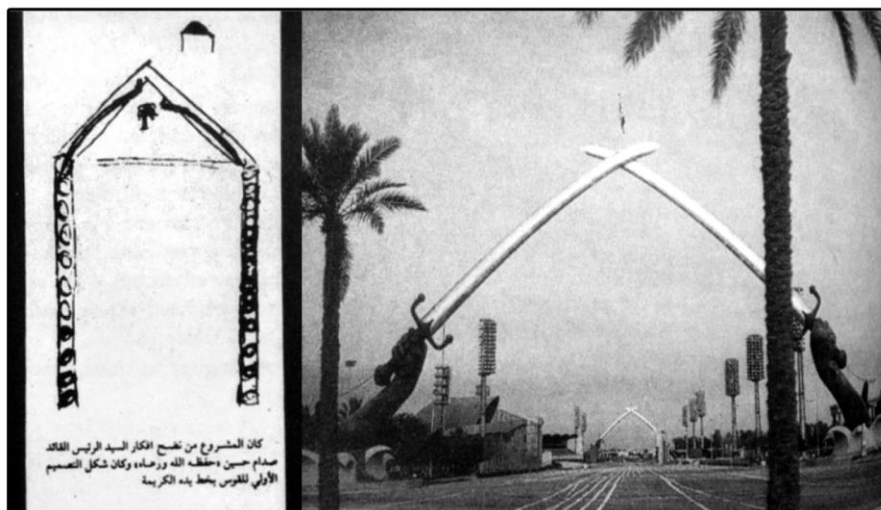


Figure 4.1. Left: preliminary sketch drawn by Saddam. Right: "Victory Arch" monument.

⁴³ Hersh.

⁴⁴ Hersh.

⁴⁵ Makiya, *Republic of Fear*, 1.

The book also portrays the final physical manifestation of the design in great detail. The quantity, the size, the scale, the volume, and the aura are all explained. It also provides details about many aspects of the monument from the treatment of the ground to the material used in the construction of each part.⁴⁶ Some detail is also shared in the way the monument is codified with layers of meaning. For example, the stainless steel used in the swords was made from the weapons of the Iraqi soldiers who died during the war and the scattered helmets at the base belonged to the Iranian soldiers who were killed. Included in the book are extracts from Saddam's speech of April 22, 1985, which reads: "...we have chosen that Iraqis will pass under their fluttering flag protected by their swords which have cut through the necks of the aggressors..."⁴⁷ These passages, plus photographs from various angles and distances, are included by Makiya to illustrate the intended meanings encoded into the monument.

The invitation card sent to selected guests for the opening day of the Victory Arch depicts a desire to control the audience's decoding process of the design. Saddam wanted what he built to have a particular social, psychological effect on those who see it. Many designers share this desire; however, "[t]his is not easy in our increasingly complex society, where designers often build for strangers and strange groups. The gap between decision maker and user is too great to be overcome by designers using only a personal perspective (Figure 4.2)."⁴⁸

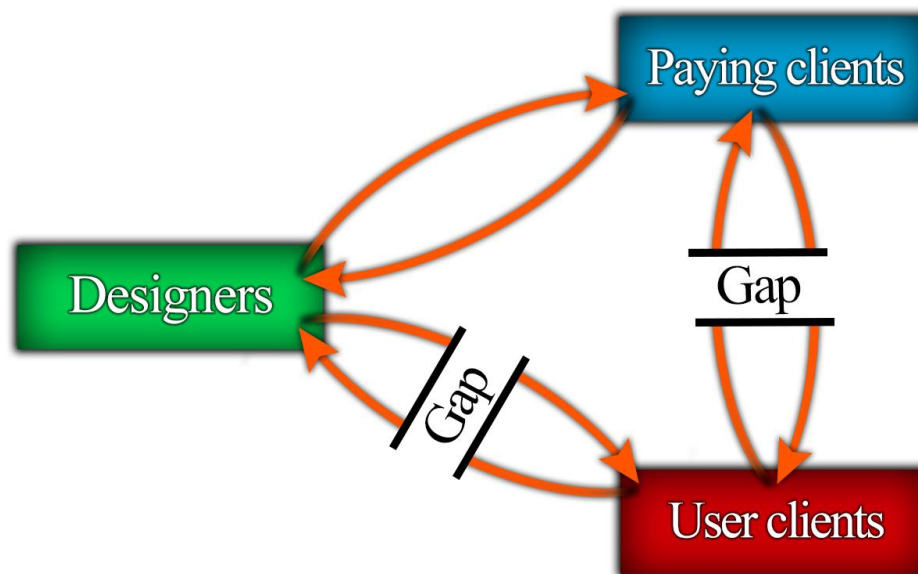


Figure 4.2. The user-needs gap.

The gap between the designers and those who consume their designs has developed historically as a result of changes in cultural, climatic, physical, and

⁴⁶ Makiya, 49–58.

⁴⁷ Makiya, 3.

⁴⁸ Zeisel, *Inquiry by Design*, 49.

maintenance requirements.⁴⁹ When it comes to memorials, the gap between the builders and the consumers becomes increasingly more of a political construct. Therefore, this gap differs based on the power dynamics of populations involved in each location and project. In Saddam's case, his mental process can also define the designer–consumer gap. As a narcissistic authoritarian leader with a taste for design, the president did not welcome any design participation from the people, nor an open call for a design competition. While it is hard to deny the role of foreign interventions and the two sculptors in the formation of the outcomes of the war and its monument, Saddam continued to pretend to be the mastermind behind this invented “victory” and invented “arch.”

⁴⁹ Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969).

4.5 The Receiver

No act of remembering is like any other.⁵⁰ –Kerwin Lee Klein.

Metaphorically speaking, memorials are living objects: they are conceived, they are born, they change, and they die (either by decay or annihilation). The receiver, however, plays the biggest role in the life of memorials and as such, is the most important link in the chain of factors to be assessed in their study. As with the sender, the contextual history and psychological analysis of the receiver(s) is extremely influential in understanding the trajectory of a memorial's symbolic and physical life: how it is valued and conserved or refuted and demolished. Two main aspects to examine are how the receiver perceives and decodes a memorial, and why the receiver preserves, redefines, rejects, ignores, alters, or destroys a memorial.

Scholars have different approaches to studying the receiver. For example, some scholars have used interpretive methods to assess the reception of the Victory Arch. Makiya argues that observing the Victory Arch is disorienting for its audience as the scale and size are tastelessly disproportionate: "The arms are much too far apart to read as a pair (approximately ninety meters center to center). Yet they are supposed to form one arch."⁵¹ He asserts that a lack of basic quality of sculptural form makes this enormously enlarged, disembodied pair of forearms pose a perceptual challenge to the viewer: "The proportions of our bodies are so deeply ingrained in us that they cannot easily be escaped...[thus] the bodily standard will impose itself...[and] one cannot therefore avoid the desire to imagine the whole person of Saddam Husain gripping the two swords."⁵² It is unclear whether that was, in fact, what the users experienced at the time Makiya was writing his book. His account of how "one" would receive the monument is not based on interviews with users about their experience; it is rather a generalization of how he personally perceives it.

For the American forces occupying Iraq, for instance, the unavoidable desire seems to have been to imagine not Saddam, as Makiya argues, but themselves holding the Victory Arch. This desire turned "[t]he Crossed Swords [into] the routine backdrop for everyone's 'Look Ma, I'm in Baghdad' photo op."⁵³ There are countless photos of American soldiers posing as victors of the arch holding their hands up in front of the sculptures of Saddam's fists so that it appears as if they are holding the two giant celebratory crossed swords up in the air: "Anyone who knows anyone who has served in Baghdad will have seen [...a]

⁵⁰ Kerwin Lee Klein, 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', *Representations*, 2000, 127–50 (p. 133).

⁵¹ Makiya, *The Monument*, 50–51.

⁵² Makiya, 51–52.

⁵³ "Crossed Swords Monument ('Hands of Victory')," *Jim Scrofani's Weblog* (blog), November 27, 2007, <https://scrofani.wordpress.com/2007/11/27/crossed-swords/>.

picture taken at the Hands of Victory monument.”⁵⁴ With most of them appearing very young with playful smiles on their faces, it is unclear if they realized the historic and political irony of their act (Figure 4.3).



Figure 4.3. American soldier posing in front of the Victory Arch, Baghdad. Photo courtesy of Jim Scrofani’s weblog. Posted November 27, 2007.⁵⁵

Another interpretive account of the Victory Arch is that of Sergiusz Michalski. Given the physical context of the monument, he argues, the Victory Arch can be seen as a “symbolic enclosure of a military parade ground” that has “a two-pronged symbolic function.”⁵⁶ According to him, Iraqis see it as “an equivalent of the Arc de Triomphe, while for the vanquished it would be the yoke under which they would have to pass during a great victory parade.”⁵⁷ These assumptions,

⁵⁴ “Saddam ‘Hands of Victory’ Monument Being Destroyed,” n.d., <http://gazingattheflag.blogspot.com/2007/03/saddam-hands-of-victory-monument-being.html>.

⁵⁵ “Crossed Swords Monument (‘Hands of Victory’).”

⁵⁶ Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage, 1870-1997* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), 198.

⁵⁷ Michalski, 198.

however, are all based on these scholars' imaginative interpretations, and neither Makiya nor Michalski have provided any data proving whether civilian Iraqis or the Iranian "enemies" are the intended users of the space; and, if they are, whether that is how the monument is experienced by locals and the "vanquished."

Moreover, all these assumptions appear to be based on visual observation of images only. In his chapter *The City as Material Culture*, Dell Upton reminds scholars that "I" is not just the "eye" and that the students of material culture must go beyond reading the visible symbolic expression of social values and understand that "most people perceive the world through five senses."⁵⁸ Observation is itself a great research method; however, observers must not forget to use their full range of abilities and try to cover the widest range of behavior in an environment.⁵⁹ Besides sights, researchers should observe sounds, smells, temperature, lighting, subjective moods, and objective action. However, Upton agrees that when it comes to the past, such a work is extremely hard because studying the noises, smells, and textures of the past is more demanding than looking at visual records from the past, and often the "invisible landscapes" of the past become impossible to study as they are gone and unrecoverable.⁶⁰ In some cases where there are still users alive who have experienced annihilated landscapes, investigators can attempt to rediscover the environment of a past site through oral history interviews. However, neither Michalski nor Makiya visited the Victory Arch for their research. Although the memorial examined is a contemporary monument still in existence, no effort was made to interview users. Most curiously, it is unclear why, for their own personal observation and imagination, they did not go beyond the visual perception to include other senses.

In the 1960s and 1970s, social scientists, designers, and planners who were interested in environment-behavior research developed new methods. Realizing the limitations of other methods, they developed techniques that helped in understanding the experience of building users and representing the "non-paying" client.⁶¹ One example I recommend is post-occupancy evaluation (POE), which is "the systematic assessment of the process of delivering buildings or other designed settings or of the performance of those settings as they are actually used."⁶² Scholars who choose to use the POE method for their memorial studies should investigate post-instillation reactions, examine any documents relating to the performance or use pattern of the structure, observe the environment and people's behavior within the setting, and find out what people think about the

⁵⁸ Dell Upton, "The City as Material Culture," *The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of James Deetz*, 1992, 52.

⁵⁹ Robert B. Bechtel and John Zeisel, "Observation: The World under a Glass," *Methods in Environmental and Behavioral Research*, 1987, 11–40.

⁶⁰ Upton, "The City as Material Culture," 53.

⁶¹ John Zeisel, *Sociology and Architectural Design* (Russell Sage Foundation New York, 1975)

⁶² Craig Zimring, "Postoccupancy Evaluation: Issues and Implementation," *Handbook of Environmental Psychology*, 2002, 306–21.

memorial by asking questions in interviews and questionnaires.

As Choay stated, “[t]he very essence of the monument lies in its relationship to lived time and to memory, in other words, in its anthropological function.”⁶³ To scholars of memorials, I recommend considering semantic ethnography whenever possible. Conducting in-depth interviews to understand the emotional experiences of the informants will enable researchers to look at the emotional effects of memorials on people. This is most useful for studies that look at the therapeutic effects of memorials on survivors of traumas or those victimized by insensitive commemorative practices.⁶⁴ Ethnographic research is particularly important for understanding memorials in areas with contested histories like the Middle East, where populations have experienced political turmoil, such as colonialism, coup d’état, revolution, civil war, invasion, and war.

As spatial phenomena, memorials may be located in areas where the investigator cannot enter due to any number of reasons, including visa restrictions or ongoing war. At certain times, certain powers restrict certain people from entering certain *locations*, making it impossible for some researchers to physically access the site of memory they are examining. It is important to examine all four areas: the times, the powers, the locations, and the people and ask who is restricting access and why. Exploring this alone will be a huge contribution to the study of that memorial. Having no direct access for fieldwork does not detract from the contribution an investigator can make. However, disclosing that information will shed light on the position of the writer and the context. It will also inform the reader of existing biases, which will enable a broader comprehension of the memorial as presented by the author. For instance, many of Kanan Makiya’s works were written in exile and first published under the pseudonym Samir al-Khalil. While at the time he had limited access to his birthplace, Iraq, for onsite field research, he was able to write books that were widely reviewed in the West and his *Republic of Fear* became a best seller after the Gulf War. However, all of Makiya’s books, and in particular *The Monument: Art and Vulgarly in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq*, could have greatly benefited from ethnographic research giving voice to what people living in Iraq and experiencing the monument actually thought about the Victory Arch rather than bolstering a set of assumptions.

In the absence of physical access, I recommend using the internet to gain virtual access and gather user experience data on memorials. Scholars can find information in a variety of forms including existing published interviews, surveys, tweets, newspapers, visitors’ blogs, and Facebook and Instagram posts, in order to infer new understandings about user receptions of memorials. This online research method is often called “online ethnography,” but is also referred to as

⁶³ Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, 7.

⁶⁴ For example see “therapeutic memorials” in: Daniel J Sherman and Terry Nardin, eds., *Terror, Culture, Politics: Rethinking 9/11* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) or James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

“cyber ethnography” or “virtual ethnography.” For instance, by conducting a quick online search, a scholar can find a range of material to observe a variety of attitudes toward the Victory Arch across different times. This method will enable any researcher to delve into the affective nature of memorials, even from a distance, because in reality the psychological task of memorials is “not simply a question of informing, of calling to mind a neutral bit of information, but rather of stirring up, through the emotions, a living memory.”⁶⁵

In the case of the Victory Arch, the range of receptions and reactions varies widely. The sociologists Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz studied memorials in order to understand the way society conceives its past. They refute Durkheimian approaches that believe moral unity is the ultimate object of commemoration and while Griswold’s analytic approach to culture defines commemorative objects as “shared significance embodied in form,” Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz are interested in formulating an approach for “those kinds of commemoration for which significance is not shared.”⁶⁶ Their approach, therefore, is suited to the study of many memorials in the Middle East, including Baghdad’s monuments.

As a memorial erected by a fallen regime that is less than glorious, and to a war whose memory induces controversy instead of consensus, the Victory Arch has endured both love and hate. Its design invites many challenges. As a monument to a politically complex and morally questionable war, which ended in a ceasefire with neither Iraq nor Iran winning, everything, including the title of the Victory Arch, is controversial. Examining different points of view, it can be concluded that after the 2003 United States’ invasion of Iraq, different collectives, through various interactions and interpretations, give the Victory Arch a “multivocal” quality.

For instance, in June 2004, a public forum focusing on whether or not to demolish Saddam Hussein’s surviving monuments in Iraq was jointly organized by the Guardian newspaper and the British Museum. There, Makiya argued, not just to preserve Baghdad’s Victory Arch but to also document all atrocities of Ba’athist rule as a way to turn the area around the monument into a place for “education on life under tyranny” and to provoke “thoughtful reflection”.⁶⁷ At that debate, Neil MacGregor, the director of the British Museum, agreed and indirectly supported Makiya by stating that “one of the first acts of new regimes is to obliterate the face of the previous ruler from monuments,” adding that “[t]he Iraqis need to decide what should happen to them.” However, since 2003 it was not the Iraqis or their new regime that had been damaging the historic site of Babylon deliberately and unthinkingly. According to Robert Bevan’s book, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, one of the first acts of the occupying forces in Iraq was to

⁶⁵ Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, 6.

⁶⁶ Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial,” 379.

⁶⁷ Brian Whitaker, “Fate of Saddam Relics Sparks Debate,” the Guardian, June 16, 2004, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/jun/16/arts.iraq>.

topple statues and dismantle memorials. According to Zainab Bahrani, professor of Ancient Near Eastern art history and archaeology, even the presence of the United States military was causing damage to Iraq's historic sites. During the occupation, the wall of the Temple of Nabu and the roof of the Temple of Ninmah collapsed due to helicopter movements at a United States base at the site of ancient Babylon.⁶⁸

However, it wasn't saving ancient world heritage at the "cradle of civilization" that was being debated at the British Museum; the discussion was about preserving a monument to an imagined victory built less than two decades earlier which, with the help of Makiya's book *The Monument*, had transformed into an icon of Saddam's brutal dictatorship. Ghaith Abdul Ahad, a young Iraqi architect at the British Museum, complicated the debate by arguing that, "These monuments are just symbols of oppression," but what Iraqis need "is to have a fresh start". Abdul Ahad, who did not support the idea of preserving the structures of violence, said that this act "reminded him of foreigners coming back from Iraq with Saddam Hussein watches." The argument for turning an entire area of the city into a living museum of tyranny to remember the evils of Saddam did not seem to have made much sense to Abdul Ahad as he asked the audience, "Why don't you get a couple of bones from a mass grave?"⁶⁹

In 2007, the new Iraqi government organized the Committee for Removing Symbols of the Saddam Era and began to dismantle the Victory Arch monument. Large parts of the bronze structure were removed, including "the panels of one fist and the pommels of two swords," and Iraqi bystanders and coalition troops were reported to be taking helmets and bits of the monument away as souvenirs (Figure 4.4).⁷⁰ "Not all [were] pleased. Mustafa Khadimi, director of the Iraq Memory Foundation [founded by Makiya], which documents the atrocities of Saddam's regime, [was] quite unhappy to have it removed."⁷¹ Protests from preservationist groups continued and finally the United States' Ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad, challenged the decision to remove the monument and was able to block the demolition the next day.

⁶⁸ Zainab Bahrani, "Zainab Bahrani: Days of Plunder," the Guardian, August 31, 2004, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/aug/31/heritage.iraq>.

⁶⁹ Whitaker, "Fate of Saddam Relics Sparks Debate."

⁷⁰ Steven Lee Myers, "Iraq Restores Monument That Symbolized Hussein Era," *The New York Times*, February 5, 2011, sec. Middle East, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/world/middleeast/06iraq.html>.

⁷¹ "Saddam 'Hands of Victory' Monument Being Destroyed."



Figure 4.4. On July 4, 2006 an American soldier steps over helmets of dead Iranian soldiers at the base of the Victory Arch monument in a conqueror's pose. The Green Zone, Baghdad. Photo courtesy of DocDuffy at the English language Wikipedia. Posted July 5, 2006.⁷²

Of course, attitudes toward the Victory Arch have always remained mixed. For some Iraqi veterans, it is still a reminder of the eight year war against Iran; for some families of the dead, it is a kind of shrine; for some Iraqi authorities, the monument highlights part of the country's past they wish to forget or rewrite; for some artists, this public monument from Saddam's era deserves to be preserved for its artistic value;⁷³ for some American veterans, it is the icon of the Green Zone and a reminder of their service in Baghdad; for Makiya and most of his readers, it is the embodiment of Saddam's brutality and should be preserved as an educational tool to teach about tyranny; for some Iranians, it is a total disrespect

⁷² DocDuffy at English Wikipedia, *English: I Took This Picture on July 4, 2006 at the Hands of Victory in Baghdad.*, July 5, 2006, July 5, 2006, Own work, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:4th_of_july_001.jpg.

⁷³ Mohammed Ghani Hikmat who created many of Baghdad's most famous landmarks including the Victory Arch "was so devastated, because he saw that people had broken his work." Michael S. Schmidt, "Mohammed Ghani Hikmat, Iraqi Sculptor, Dies at 82," *The New York Times*, September 21, 2011, sec. Art & Design, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/21/arts/design/mohammed-ghani-hikmat-iraqi-sculptor-dies-at-82.html>.

to “Iranian martyrs” and should be demolished;⁷⁴ for many people around the world who have never traveled to Baghdad, it is the backdrop of many images from the Iraq war portrayed in the media; for some American politicians, the monument is an icon of Saddam’s vulgar dictatorship and thus should be preserved as vindication for the 2003 United States’ invasion and the following occupation of Iraq; for some intellectuals, the Victory Arch embodies elements of American culture and is an icon of United States’ imperialism,⁷⁵ and, for some tourists, the memorial is an attractive Orientalized object to be visited and the backdrop of endless snapshots.



⁷⁴ An Iranian expressed frustration in his blog after finding out about the Victory Arch through a widely shared photo of an American soldier posing with two of the five thousand helmets of “Iranian Martyrs” used to decorate the base of the monument. His blog written in June 2013 expresses surprise at this monument not having been demolished already and calls on “this memory of bastards to be destroyed”. Aria Bod, “Qadisiyya,” *Ariabod-Qadisiyya* (blog), June 2013, <http://www.ariabod137.blogfa.com/tag/%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B3%DB%8C%D9%87>.

⁷⁵ See for instance Michael Rakowitz exhibit *Backstroke of the West*. Stephanie Smith et al., *Michael Rakowitz: Recent Projects on Baghdad and Montreal*, Bilingual edition (Montréal: SBC galerie d’art contemporain, 2010).



Figures 4.5 and 4.6. *Michael Rakowitz's* mixed-media installation: *The worst condition is to pass under a sword which is not one's own*, 2009. Work also displayed as *Backstroke of the West*, MCA Chicago, Sep 2017–Mar 2018. Photos courtesy of the artist, Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, and Princeton University Art Museum.⁷⁶

In February 2011, Iraqi authorities began the restoration of the monument. Some saw it as an “act of reconciliation with a past” and, referencing the infamous 2001 destruction of Buddha statues in Bamiyan, argued, “We don’t want to be like Afghanistan and the Taliban and remove things like that... We are a civilized people.” Ali al-Moussawi, a spokesman for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki added, “and this monument is a part of the memories of this country.”⁷⁷ Evidently, however, there was no consensus, even among the members of the parliament. According to *The Independent* report, the restoration was “enraging many” in Iraq. “It is not acceptable to bring it back,” said Samira al-Mousawi, a member of Nouri al-Maliki's bloc in parliament, arguing. “It will bring back the bad memories to people”.⁷⁸ The restoration was also conceived as a sign of regression. For instance, the *New York Times* reported, “As hundreds of thousands in Egypt

⁷⁶ Michael Rakowitz, in his exhibit *The Worst Condition Is to Pass Under a Sword Which Is Not One's Own* traces links between western science fiction and military-industrial activities in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's regime. “The Worst Condition Is to Pass under a Sword Which Is Not One's Own,” MICHAEL RAKOWITZ, n.d., <http://www.michaelrakowitz.com/the-worst-condition/>; “Tour: Michael Rakowitz: Backstroke of the West,” MCA, n.d., <https://mcachicago.org/Calendar/2017/12/Tour-Michael-Rakowitz-Backstroke-Of-The-West>.

⁷⁷ “Iraq Restores Hussein's Victory Arch as Sign of Reconciliation - News - The Columbus Dispatch - Columbus, OH,” accessed April 6, 2018, <http://www.dispatch.com/article/20110206/NEWS/302069745>.

⁷⁸ “Iraq Repairs Saddam's Triumphal Sword Arch,” *The Independent*, February 7, 2011, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-repairs-saddams-triumphal-sword-arch-2206361.html>.

protested the iron rule of that country's president, Iraq quietly began restoring a bronze fist of its former dictator, Saddam Hussein." According to the report, "Without public announcement or debate, Iraqi authorities ordered the reconstruction of one of the most-audacious symbols in Baghdad of Hussein's long, violent and oppressive rule: the Victory Arch... put[ting] back together the detritus of Hussein's megalomania."⁷⁹

Therefore, while many encounter the site, visiting the Victory Arch can be only conceived of unity in action and not in belief, as interpretations vary. Since the Iran–Iraq war was both morally disputed and an unsuccessful military effort, it is not unexpected for society to take longer to come to terms with it. However, as a monument that has now become associated with other political upheavals, including the United States' occupation, a single unified attitude toward it should not be expected. The competing claims over what should happen to the Victory Arch are part of a political process of coming to terms with the past. As a result, the memorial has faced partial demolition, restoration, and reinterpretation. Starting as a celebratory monument to an imagined triumph in the war against Iran, the Victory Arch later became referred to more commonly as the Crossed Swords or Swords of Qadisiyya to divert bitter reminders of unaccomplished victory and to highlight triumphal memories of the historic defeat of the Persians by the Arab–Muslim army invasion in the battle of Qadisiyya in AD 637. Then Makiya redefined the memorial to be seen as an icon of demonized Saddam, then the United States army turned it into an iconic justification for their invasion and occupation of Iraq. Therefore, the Victory Arch Memorial will continue to be a target of intervention and will be reinterpreted as a way for not only the society to accept its past, but also for politicians to shape the future.

⁷⁹ Steven Lee Myers, "Iraq Restores Monument Symbolizing Hussein Era," *New York Times*, February 5 (2011), https://courses.marlboro.edu/pluginfile.php/45112/mod_page/content/16/Iraq%20Restores%20Monument%20That%20Symbolized%20Hussein%20Era%20-%20NYTimes.pdf.

4.6 The Scholar

At the end, while reflecting on his twenty-year study project, Chateaubriand wished he could “dedicate himself in silence to erecting a ‘monument a ma patrie’.” After inscribing his name on a Pyramid, he departed Egypt never to go back for erecting a “monument to his homeland.” What he is left with on earth, however, is his writing... –Edward Said.⁸⁰

Scholars always leave their mark on whatever memorial they study. It might not be as literal as Chateaubriand’s name on the Pyramids, but they do, with their writings, alter the reality of the monuments they study. The descriptions, interpretations, and meanings they draw, shape and frame the experience of the readership. While Chateaubriand did not erect a monument to his homeland, his books contributed to the construction of orientalism, a system of organized knowledge, which changed the way monuments in the orient were conceived thereafter.

Kanan Makiya’s case presents a contemporary example of how a scholar’s work impacts societies. In his 2007 *New York Times* article, Dexter Filkins describes Kanan Makiya as a secular Shiite, born of a British mother and educated in the United States. According to Filkins, Makiya made it his life’s work to topple Saddam Hussein by writing books that highlighted Saddam’s brutality and to becoming the most persuasive voice for ending his reign: “In the buildup to the Iraq war, Makiya, more than any single figure, made the case for invading because it was the right thing to do—to destroy an evil regime and rescue a people from their nightmare of terror and suffering.”⁸¹ Makiya told a gathering at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington in October 2002, “The removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein presents the U.S. with a historic opportunity, that is as large as anything that has happened in the Middle East since the fall of the Ottoman Empire.”⁸² According to Filkins, two months before the war, Makiya affirmed his full support for United States intervention by advocating to president Bush in the Oval Office that Iraqis would greet invading American soldiers with “sweets and flowers.”

“Now, of course, those dreams are gone, carried away on a tide of blood,” Filkins wrote in 2007. He continued, “The catastrophe in Iraq has thoroughly undermined the idea... that American military power can achieve humanitarian ends. And it has made Makiya and the others who justified the invasion look reckless and naive.”⁸³ Certain people, such as Edward Said, however, had been aware of the paradox and dangers of scholarship such as Makiya’s much earlier.

⁸⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 1979, 175.

⁸¹ Dexter Filkins, “Regrets Only? Iraq - Kanan Makiya - Saddam Hussein,” *The New York Times*, October 7, 2007, sec. Magazine, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/07/magazine/07MAKIYA-t.html>.

⁸² Filkins.

⁸³ Filkins.

Said had warned Middle East scholars about the consequences of these types of Orientalizing work.

Makiya had begun advocating for American military intervention in Iraq in the early 1990s. In a talk he gave at Harvard on March 7, 1991, days after the Persian Gulf war had ended, Makiya “called on the U.S. to suspend its ceasefire negotiations with the Iraqi military & instead march on Baghdad at once & flush out Saddam once & for all.”⁸⁴ Later, he wrote a book, *Cruelty and Silence*, in which he severely critiqued the Arab world’s intelligentsia, whose anti-Americanism, according to Makiya, had promoted a collective silence in the face of Saddam’s ruthless inhumanity. Makiya claimed that the silence of the Arab intellectuals on the crimes of Arab rulers is because they prefer to blame the West for the ills of the Arab society. Edward Said, however, explained how Makiya’s claims are without basis as “all the intellectuals he attacks are in fact the most vocal in opposition to the current regimes in the Middle East.”⁸⁵ According to Said, to make his point, Makiya set out to “mistranslate their Arabic, misrepresent their views, distort their opinions... because all of them opposed the Gulf War at the same time that they all opposed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.” Makiya, however, was not able to comprehend the complexity of Middle Eastern politics in the face of neoliberal military imperialism. Simplifying the complex matrix of the world power structure into a *simplistic good-guys-versus-bad-guys* equation, Makiya assumed removal of Saddam by any means would bring about fundamental positive change. Not questioning the cause: how the Baathist regime came into power, who supported Saddam throughout the 1980s as he committed his worst crimes against humanity, why has he fallen out of favor with Washington; Makiya just wanted to cure the symptom by throwing the syndrome at it.

Makiya’s book, nonetheless, got many praising reviews because, according to Said, there is a “widespread ignorance of and hostility toward Arab culture” and Makiya “writes as if from within” and the reviewers “know nothing about the Arab world except clichés and stereotypes” and seize on his book to bash critics of Israel and the United States, such as Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, and Ibrahim A. Abu-Lughod, to reinforce their own ideological interests.⁸⁶ Had they done some research, they would see that, “[w]ith a few exceptions, all the intellectuals he attacks [as silent in the face of crime] have been imprisoned, and/or exiled for speaking out,” whereas “Makiya worked for Iraq, he was part of the Ba’athist regime, he has profited from Iraq” before working for and profiting from the United States.⁸⁷ However, according to Said, while the book was about collaboration and

⁸⁴ Lawrence Weschler, “ARCHITECTS AMID THE RUINS,” *The New Yorker*, December 30, 1991, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1992/01/06/architects-amid-the-ruins>.

⁸⁵ Edward Said, *Lies of Our Times: Interview with Edward Said* conducted by Nabeel Abraham, interview by Nabeel Abraham, May 1993, <http://cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/articles/article0002772.html>.

⁸⁶ Said.

⁸⁷ Said.

complicity, no one questioned whether Makiya was collaborating and therefore complicit.

A *New Yorker* profile published on January 6, 1992 described Kanan and his father Mohamed Makiya as Iraqi architects who had been based in London since 1974. Mohamed's firm, Makiya Associates, which had been managed by Kanan for many years, was a bustling place in its earlier years, with a staff of more than 50 people working for Saddam Hussein to rebuild Baghdad.⁸⁸ During the early 1980s, Makiya Associates was "employed by President Saddam Hussein to build a large number of buildings and projects, including a military parade ground for the observation of Saddam's birthday in Tikrit [Saddam's hometown.]"⁸⁹ But as the long and costly war against Iran started draining Iraq, Saddam started running out of money to finance his gargantuan schemes, which in turn affected Makiya Associates and the firm began winding down in the latter half of the 1980s. Gradually, and at different points in time, the father and son begun to have serious reservations about working for Saddam and ultimately completely rejected him. Having resigned, Kanan went on to write *Republic of Fear* in the late 1980s, which Edward Said described as "a tremendous coverup for himself."

Incidentally, Makiya's desire to cover up past complicity coincided with the same urge in Washington. According to Timothy Mitchell, after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, "the United States blocked attempts to negotiate Iraq's withdrawal and seized the opportunity for a war that would permanently weaken Iraq."⁹⁰ This was also a coverup because, as James Akins argued, "we didn't want him to withdraw. We were already going forward preparing for a war [against Iraq], and we wanted to do what we ultimately did... Our nightmare in the last days was that Saddam would withdraw, and then we wouldn't be able to go forward with our grand plans to destroy Iraq and the infrastructure."⁹¹ Even though America had been "friendly" with Saddam and strongly supported Iraq throughout the 1980s, according to Akins, "everybody wanted to forget that. Nobody wanted anybody to remember the statements that he had made about Iraq in the past that were at all friendly."⁹² Thus, the 1990–1991 war against Iraq was designed to manufacture a new image of the United States as an opponent of Saddam. In addition to the profit from the billions of dollars of arms sold in the region, the war generated enough Iraqi threat and publicity for the United States' military might that the Saudis hastily agreed to America's reoccupation of its military base in Saudi Arabia.⁹³

Of course, this is not to suggest Makiya somehow singlehandedly justified political violence against Iraq; those wars would have happened with or without him. Nonetheless, Makiya's work, along with other orientalist scholarship, became

⁸⁸ Weschler, "ARCHITECTS AMID THE RUINS."

⁸⁹ Said, *Lies of Our Times: Interview with Edward Said* conducted by Nabeel Abraham.

⁹⁰ Mitchell, "McJihad: Islam in the U.S. Global Order," 15.

⁹¹ Interviews - James Akins | *The Survival Of Saddam* | FRONTLINE | PBS.

⁹² Interviews - James Akins | *The Survival Of Saddam* | FRONTLINE | PBS.

⁹³ Mitchell, "McJihad: Islam in the U.S. Global Order," 15.

a mighty weapon used by the United States to shape public opinion, decrease resistance, garner support and generate legitimacy for America's aggression against Iraq, both domestically and internationally. Perhaps Makiya would have written a different book and refrained from advocating war if he had examined his motives more thoroughly and found other ways to deal with his past, his family history and self-image? Perhaps, given a clear disclaimer of the relationship with Saddam's regime and past architectural work for him, would result in a different reading of the book, even if it were to become a best seller. Perhaps then, the United States would not have been able to co-opt his work so easily, or the militarization of his scholarship would have resulted in a less destructive weapon in the hands of the invaders.

Activists like Makiya succeeded in seeing the war they advocated materialize, though it is unlikely they anticipated the outcomes. The military forces in Iraq had a narrow understanding of the history and cultural value of the land they occupied. For instance, Sergeant Sprague, on duty near the 8,000-year-old remains of the city of Ur, said "I have been all the way through this desert from Basra to here and I ain't seen one shopping mall, or fast food restaurant. These people got nothing."⁹⁴ Not long after, New Bridge Strategies, one of the many neoliberal corporations profiting from wars "promised to bring Wal-Mart and 7-Eleven to Iraq."⁹⁵ Similar to Chateaubriand's limited ability to find only the artifacts of his own "glorious country" worthy of the banks of the Nile, the occupiers sought artifacts of their own consumerist culture in Iraq. The sergeant's remarks should be understood in the context of twenty-first century developments such as imperialism, neoliberalism, and the American military empire; a condition that has made possible a particular mentality that seeks an American lifestyle on the ancient land of Iraq. The same context and mentality have produced a body of orientalist activist scholars like Makiya, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, who promote aggression and destruction.

⁹⁴ Quoted in, Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory : Architecture at War* (London: Reaktion, 2006), 202.

⁹⁵ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 50.

CHAPTER 5. Memory-centric Warfare: Militarized Memory in the “Cultural-centric” War against Iraq

5.1 Just US and Unjust Them

5.2 “Cultural-centric” Warfare

5.3 Toppled or Multiplied: 1000s of Medals, “1000 Saddams”

5.4 Iraq Memory Foundation

5.5 Sectarianism: Produced, Preserved, Perpetuated

5.6 The Scholar’s Responsibility: Demilitarizing Cultural Knowledge

5.1 Just US and Unjust Them

While the United States, acting as a hegemonic power in the international state system, used imperatives and tools to frame a “just war,” the Arab resistance responded by framing the United States and its leadership as immoral and “unjust.”¹ Framing Iraq as a regional threat may have produced partial legitimacy in the United States and the West for the war, but the invasion stirred widespread objection in Iraq and the Middle East. Reflections of global antiwar protests in the newspapers of the Arab World worked directly against the legitimacy the United States sought in the Middle East. Al-Thawra, for instance, reported on the resignation of Andrew Wilkie, a senior intelligence analyst who was quoted as saying “all available evidence indicates that Iraq does not threaten any country and does not constitute a threat to anyone.”² This was reinforced by reports from other Middle Eastern countries, including Kuwait where voices of opposition were heard and demonstrations had taken place. Even when Kuwaiti leaders went against their own popular public sentiment, Al-Iraq reported attacks carried out in Kuwait against American troops.³ Thus, in early 2003, the Iraqi media constructed the war as “unjust military aggression requiring a just responsive war against US imperialism and infringement of Iraqi sovereignty,” which made American soldiers in Iraq the target of many attacks. Perhaps the saddest irony for everyone, both the Americans and Iraqis suffering losses, was that the Iraqi oppositional attacks, which were framed as regional violence and insurgency by occupying forces, were used to legitimize continued military presence and counter insurgencies, which maintained the propaganda that the war was “just” by the United States and “unjust” by Iraq.

¹ For a detailed analysis of the Arab response to the United States “just war” in Iraq see Ghazi-Walid Falah, Colin Flint, and Virginie Mamadouh, “Just War and Extraterritoriality: The Popular Geopolitics of the United States’ War on Iraq as Reflected in Newspapers of the Arab World,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 1 (2006): 142–64.

² Falah, Flint, and Mamadouh, 7.

³ Falah, Flint, and Mamadouh, 7.

5.2 “Cultural-centric” Warfare

Knowledge of the cultural “terrain” can be as important as, and sometimes even more important than, knowledge of the geographic terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographic terrain.⁴ –Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army, Commanding General Multi-National Force Iraq.

The post invasion local resistance reinforced the importance of “cultural knowledge” for the occupying forces that sought to generate hegemonic appreciation for their presence. In July 2004, retired US Army Major General Robert H. Scales argued that the conflict in Iraq required “an exceptional ability to understand people, their culture, and their motivations.”⁵ Realizing the advantages, the Pentagon’s war strategy began taking a “cultural turn” by carving out a new tactic:

In sharp stark contrast to then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s heavy-handed approach...which emphasized aggressive military tactics, the post-Rumsfeld Pentagon has advocated a “gentler” approach, emphasizing cultural knowledge and ethnographic intelligence... This “cultural turn” within DoD highlights efforts to understand adversary societies and to recruit “practitioners” of culture, notably anthropologists, to help in the war effort in both Iraq and Afghanistan.⁶

These events turned social scientists and anthropologists into “hot property” and the Pentagon budgets began reflecting an increasing commitment to “cultural knowledge” acquisition.⁷ In 2005, Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson proposed developing a specialized “Office of Operational Cultural Knowledge” within the Department of Defense “to produce, collect, and centralize cultural knowledge” that would facilitate an imperialist strategy for anthropological participation in “cultural-centric” warfare.⁸ Shortly after, the Pentagon budgeted approximately \$60 million on the United States Army’s experimental program called “Human Terrain,” which put together five-person teams comprising regional studies experts and social scientists, at times armed, to brigade combat team

⁴ David H Petraeus, “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq.,” *Military Review* 86, no. 1 (2006): 8.

⁵ Robert H. Scales cited in Sheila Miyoshi Jager, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), 2, <http://www.dtice.mil/docs/citations/ADA473980>.

⁶ Jager, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, 3.

⁷ Laura A. McNamara and Gustaaf Houtman, “Culture, Critique and Credibility: Speaking Truth to Power during the Long War,” *Anthoda Anthropology Today* 23, no. 2 (2007): 20–21.

⁸ Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson, “An Organizational Solution for DOD’s Cultural Knowledge Needs.,” *Military Review* 85, no. 4 (2005): 1.

headquarters in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁹ The program relied on social scientists to generate data about “the social, ethnographic, cultural, economic, and political elements of the people among whom a force [was] operating,” in addition to “the cultural characteristics and propensities of the enemies.”¹⁰ According to Roberto González, the Human Terrain, which “may be the most expensive social science project in history,” was promoted through the Pentagon’s public relations campaign that portrayed the project as “saving lives.”

Thus, as large majorities in the US, Iraq and Afghanistan were calling for the withdrawal of United States’ troops, groups of social scientists and anthropologists were enlisted to harvest data on Iraqis and Afghans to create propaganda campaigns to win “will and legitimacy” fights and, as a preferred method of warfare, Human Terrain supported an occupation resulting in hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths. While the approximately \$250,000 a year is a substantial economic incentive, Roberto Gonzalez emphasizes, “Scholars are not immune to nationalist and imperialist appeals in a highly militarized context,” which may explain these phenomena.

There are numerous examples of how “cultural knowledge” was used for operations and tactics by the US military and how many corporations, subsidiaries, and government agencies were also involved in the war, such as the CIA, which hired social scientists to carry out “secret work.”¹¹ Lockheed Martin, for instance, was a contractor responsible for military interrogation during the Iraq war and became deeply involved in the torture and prisoner abuse scandals at Bagram and Abu Gharib.¹² According to Gustaaf Houtman, even if there is “no evidence of anthropologists’ involvement in torture, there is still the issue of identifying ‘suspects’.”¹³ These examples demonstrate the use of cultural knowledge at the tactical and operational levels on the battlefield. However, to situate scholars studying memorials such as Makiya, it is crucial to examine how cultural knowledge is also applied at the policy and strategy levels. According to the American historian Sheila Jager, cultural knowledge as applied to the level of strategy takes into account the “vital role of history and historical memory” and assumes that cultures are *dynamic* entities, not static categories. Therefore, cultural knowledge focuses on the issues of “interpretation and reception” and

⁹ Roberto J González, “‘Human Terrain’: Past, Present and Future Applications,” *ANTH Anthropology Today* 24, no. 1 (2008): 21.

¹⁰ Kipp et al. cited in González, 22.

¹¹ For examples of how the CIA harnessed anthropology as a discipline useful to its needs see: DAVID H PRICE, “America the Ambivalent: Quietly Selling Anthropology to the CIA,” *ANTH Anthropology Today* 21, no. 6 (2005): 1–2; David Price, “Interlopers and Invited Guests: On Anthropology’s Witting and Unwitting Links to Intelligence Agencies,” *Anthropology Today* 18, no. 6 (2002): 16–21.

¹² Laura A. McNamara and Houtman, “Culture, Critique and Credibility.”

¹³ See Gustaaf Houtman’s respond in Laura A. McNamara and Houtman, 21.

requires a complex understanding of “culture as an on-going process of negotiation between past and present.”¹⁴

Studying memorials in this militarized context can be seen to produce cultural knowledge that may be applied to the level of strategy. Memorials, as all other cultural products, are dynamic entities rather than static objects. The knowledge generated by scholars studying memorials can therefore demonstrate different understandings of these dynamic entities and emphasize different aspects of the historical past and traditions to legitimize political actions and behavior in the present. In other words, cultural knowledge on memorials directly connects to the history, identity, and politics of a nation and can be manipulated to indoctrinate desired outcomes. As is evident in the case of Baghdad’s Victory Arch, memorials are not unchanging, nor do they entail a set of enduring values. How scholars interpret and mold them will produce new understanding and thought, which can result in new behavior.

Advocating “arming” the United States with cultural knowledge to “restrain adversaries,” Jager asserts, “A foreign policy guided by a deep understanding of the forces of nationalism, identity, and collective memory is a powerful tool to shape and mold adversarial behavior.”¹⁵ Understanding a nation’s public monuments, therefore, generates a dangerously “powerful tool” as memorials embody all of these forces and often become manifestations of collective identity, manipulation of which can impact a community’s behavior. Jiyul Kim argues, it “determines purpose, values and interests that form the foundation for policy and strategy to attain or preserve those interests.”¹⁶

In terms of their political and social power, memorials tend to embody a collective identity that amounts to more than the sum of the individual identities; therefore, they have the potential to mobilize the collective and generate political power. According to Jiyul Kim, the ability to mobilize a nation is “absolutely paramount for the enterprise of war.”¹⁷ As entities oriented toward a particular collectivity rather than an individual, memorials, be they subnational, national, regional, or trans-national, may be coopted into a strategy for collective mobilization.

Public memorials such as Baghdad’s Victory Arch represent history; therefore, they are based on interpretation and subject to constant revision and reinterpretation. Unlike academic history, they represent a more simplified version and a popular mass view of history. New evidence, real or fabricated, and

¹⁴ Jager, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge*, 9.

¹⁵ Jager, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, 24.

¹⁶ Jiyul Kim, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, *Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2009), viii, <http://books.google.com/books?id=n23ZPaLPvkC>.

¹⁷ Kim, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, 16.

unexamined new interpretations of the past can be projected on them to play a part in reshaping collective memory of the history they represent. Even if the memory projected or highlighted is actual, it is likely selective and subjective. Memorials, like history itself, are not definitive and will always need interpreters. As pieces of history, memorials are dynamic, changeable, and manipulative aspects of collective identity.

The “historian” is sometimes described as someone who is “selecting, simplifying, schematizing, leaving out what he thinks unimportant and putting in what he regards as essential. It is the artist, and not nature, that is responsible for what goes into the picture.”¹⁸ The independent decisions and the “artist” metaphor would, of course, be inappropriate for historians and those scholars who collaborate with intelligence agencies and government bodies because they work within a system with clear objectives that will guide their selection, simplifications, schematization, and dictate what should and should not be left out. In other words, their actions become more comparable to those of a political servant than an independent artist or activist.

¹⁸ R. G Collingwood and T. M Knox, *The Idea of History*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), 236.

5.3 Toppled or Multiplied: 1000s of Medals, “1000 Saddams”

In Iraq, for instance, the cultural knowledge produced by Makiya and coopted by Washington was utilized for a systematic strategy to destroy certain monuments and preserve some others to meet a political end that was not necessarily in line with Makiya’s ideals. According to Robert Bevan, “One of the first acts of Baghdad’s occupying forces was an irresistible piece of iconoclasm, the toppling of a large bronze statue of Saddam Hussein in Paradise Square on 9 April 2003.”¹⁹ While the extensively broadcast scene was framed to give the impression of a huge crowd of Iraqis, the event could not have happened without the assistance of United States’ soldiers and reporters, who outnumbered the Iraqi participants. Reportedly, a group of Marines backed an armored vehicle up to the monument, draped a United States flag over its head and attached a chain to the statue and pulled it down (figures 5.1 and 5.2).²⁰ According to an army report, it was not joyous Iraqi civilians, as assumed from media representations, but rather a Marine colonel who decided to topple the statue and “it was a quick-thinking Army psychological operations team that made it appear to be a spontaneous Iraqi undertaking.”²¹



Figure 5.1. Edward Chin, the US Marine who put an American flag over Saddam’s statue’s face before pulling it down with a chain. Firdous Square, Baghdad, Iraq, April 6, 2003. Photo: Mirropix/Yahoo News.²²

¹⁹ Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory*, 91.

²⁰ “CNN.Com - U.S Troops Topple Saddam Statue - Apr. 9, 2003,” accessed April 18, 2018, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/04/09/sprj.irq.int.war.main1400/index.html>.

²¹ “Army Stage-Managed Fall of Hussein Statue - Latimes,” accessed April 18, 2018, <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/jul/03/nation/na-statue3>.

²² Claudine Zap, “Marine Won’t Lend Military the Flag That Covered Saddam Hussein Statue’s Face,” April 9, 2018, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/blogs/lookout/marine-won-t-lend-military-flag-covered-saddam-205823837.html>.

Edward Chin, the Marine who was following orders, recalls, “As I was heading up there, my captain with Bravo Company handed me the flag, he said when you get up there, show the boys the colors.”²³ Fifteen years later, in 2018, Chin claims the wind blanketed the American flag over the statue’s head, but in 2006 he was quoted as claiming he was following orders before the statue was pulled to the ground by “just trying my best to get the chain around his neck and put the flag on his head... the flag—it was on the Pentagon when it got hit on 9/11. That was the same flag, and me being from New York, it kind of all goes together a little bit.”²⁴ Of course, the act caused controversy even though the American flag was quickly substituted with an Iraqi flag that one civilian provided after the loud cheers of the Iraqis faded. In a BBC documentary, an Iraqi man, Kazeem Al-Jabburi, recalls, “Before the statue fell, one of the soldiers put an American flag on its face. I couldn’t accept this, and gave him an Iraqi flag instead.”²⁵ The flag incident “touched a sensitive chord among Arabs and irritated U.S. military leaders who want[ed] Iraqis to view U.S. forces as liberators, not occupiers.”²⁶



Figure 5.2. US Marines pulling down Saddam’s statue at Firdous Square, Baghdad, Iraq, April 6, 2003. Photo by Sean Smith/Getty Images.

²³ Aaron Feis, “The Marine Who Shoved America in Saddam’s Face — 15 Years Later,” *New York Post* (blog), April 9, 2018, <https://nypost.com/2018/04/08/the-marine-who-shoved-america-in-saddams-face-15-years-later/>.

²⁴ “The Marine Behind American Flag Controversy,” *ABC News*, January 6, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=125241&page=1>.

²⁵ “*I Toppled Saddam’s Statue – Now I Want Him Back*” *BBC News - YouTube*, Documentary (BBC News, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9wC6W7EJpg>.

²⁶ “The Marine Behind American Flag Controversy.”

This highly orchestrated media event, which had enormous propaganda value, relied on the assistance of the 3rd Battalion of the United States Army's 4th Marines to echo the memory of media images depicting the tearing down of statues in revolutionary uprisings across the world.

There is no doubting the desire of most Iraqis to be free of Saddam Hussein, but in reality the events, even if initiated by Iraqis, were carefully choreographed; the vast square had been cordoned off by the US military for the exercise and there were at most 150 people in the square (including Marines and reporters) rather than the several hundred reported by outfits such as Fox News.²⁷ According to an Army report on the invasion, the event was orchestrated by a Marine colonel who was "looking for a target of opportunity, and seized on that statue."²⁸ –NPR.org

Using loudspeakers, the Army psychological operations team encouraged Iraqi civilians to assist.²⁹ According to an interview with the psych-op team leader, "somebody had the bright idea of getting a bunch of Iraqis and a lot of kids and pile them on the wrecker to make it look like a spontaneous Iraqi event, rather than, you know, the Marines sort of stage-managing this entire dramatic fall of the statue."³⁰ What is worth noticing is that while this information was reported in 2004, the prominent message disseminated in annual commemorations continues to frame the event void of the United States' intervention. Most of them echo a similar account as that reported by British television and broadcast on CNN:

You won't remember his name, but across the world they remember what Kazeem Al-Jaburi(ph) did that day in April, four years ago. Elated at the overthrow of the tyrant he hated, Kazeem used his considerable strength, leading his neighbors in a symbolic attack on a statue of Saddam Hussein in the Firdos Square in Central Baghdad, near to where he lived. This act, these images, broadcast around the globe, came to represent the end of a cruel dictatorship.

Control Room, a 2004 documentary film, through interviews with Al Jazeera journalists explored the toppling of Saddam's statue as a pseudo-event, "a show...a very clever idea," that used Iraqis as actors on the stage.³¹ The Firdous Square statue toppling was not an isolated event, either. According to David Zucchino, the international correspondent for the *LA Times*, two days earlier, on April 7, 2003, the United States Army charged in and took the Republican Palace and the Parade Ground, on which the famous Victory Arch stands. There, "the Army commander was looking for a very symbolic toppling of the regime to prove

²⁷ Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory*, 91.

²⁸ "Reminder: Saddam Statue Was Toppled by Psy-Ops," NPR.org, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89489923>.

²⁹ "Army Stage-Managed Fall of Hussein Statue - Latimes."

³⁰ "Reminder."

³¹ Jehane Noujaim, *Control Room*, Documentary, 2004, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0391024/>.

to the world that American troops were in Baghdad...So they found a statue of Saddam on horseback and blasted it with a tank with an embedded TV crew there, and the pictures were shown live.”³² Moreover, the giant bronze statue of Saddam in Tikrit, his birthplace, was also dismantled by US forces and shipped back to the United States to be melted down and recast as thousands of medals in commemoration of Operation Iraqi Freedom. One proud object in service of memorializing a tyrant was recast as thousands of proud objects in service of memorializing another oblivious, oppressive aggression. While the militarized violence they represented seemed only to be multiplying, at the time, physically the monuments of Ba'athist Iraq appeared to become “an endangered species.”³³ The destruction, however, was selective.

While Makiya may have identified the form, location, and cultural significance of many monuments in Iraq, it is not clear if he suggested the destruction of any of Saddam's statues. In *The Monument*, Makiya disapproved of the removal of monuments. For instance, he criticizes the destruction of the statues of General Maude and King Faisal I in Baghdad on July 14, 1958. He claims Iraqi crowds who did that as part of celebrating the overthrow of the monarchy were thinking they were “excising” the bad memories of the British Mandate and monarchical rule. Describing King Faisal I as a “polar opposite” of Saddam and “the most tolerant politician in modern Iraqi history,” Makiya argued Faisal's monument should never have been torn down.³⁴

Makiya's nostalgia for an earlier tyrant is not unusual among Middle Eastern intellectuals and activists, as well as the general public. After each covert foreign intervention, distorted histories, unjust prosecutions, false identities, and misdirected blame were shaped in an unsuccessful attempt to make sense of the political upheavals in the Middle East, just as they may have in other regions of the world where the United States has had a long record of secretly meddling with politics and “a well-documented history of interfering and sometimes interrupting the workings of democracies.”³⁵ Consumption and recycling of distorted histories has caused a serious collective disorientation that often results in misplaced values on a past regime. Mentally captive to existing “histories,” the extent of tyranny in Saddam's regime may allow someone like Makiya to romanticize another dictator like King Faisal without realizing both autocracies resulted from external interventions: the British Mandate and the US-backed coup d'état. Instead, because the past was “less oppressive,” the “Iraqi crowds” who are seen as the sole agents of political change receive the blame.

³² “Reminder.”

³³ Publisher's Preface. Makiya, *The Monument*, xiv.

³⁴ Makiya, 130.

³⁵ Tharoor, “Analysis | The Long History of the U.S. Interfering with Elections Elsewhere.”



Figure 5.3. Kazeem al-Jabbouri swings a hammer at the base of the statue of Saddam in Firdous Square, Baghdad, Iraq, 2003. Photo: Jerome Delay/AP.

Since 2003, Iraqis have been framed as agents of toppling Saddam's regime via toppling his statues. The highly choreographed iconoclastic toppling of Saddam's large bronze statue in Firdous Square on April 9, 2003 is commemorated in international media each year, reinforcing the myth of a spontaneous revolution-like Iraqi undertaking. Kazeem al-Jabbouri, who has been framed as "the man who toppled Saddam's statue" regretfully expressed, "I feel like Iraq has been stolen from us (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). And when they talked about the 'Fall of Baghdad,' those words hurt me." He admits, "I was so happy the day that the Americans came and got rid of Saddam's oppressive regime."³⁶ Kazeem is a survivor of Baathist prison and 14 of his family members were executed during Saddam's era. It is not a surprise that, in the presence of the United States forces taking over Baghdad, Kazeem felt safe to take out his anger on Saddam's statue at the square. "I started to strike the statue," he said, "I wanted to tear it down."³⁷ Of course, the carefully woven words in various media have been more successful than the cropped photographs to forcefully frame Kazeem as the man who organized and achieved the job. The images, even when able to fully illuminate the United States Navy's domination over the event, offer little evidence other than the few dents Kazeem had been able to make onto the plaster of the large concrete plinth of the statue. Reviewing the footage from that theatric performance demonstrates that Kazeem, whose efforts could not have brought down the statue even if he continued banging at the plinth for days, was the strongest with the best

³⁶ "I Toppled Saddam's Statue – Now I Want Him Back" BBC News - YouTube.

³⁷ "I Toppled Saddam's Statue – Now I Want Him Back" BBC News - YouTube.

performance of rage among the few participating civilians and the couple of dozen Iraqi onlookers at the square.

The Marines seized Firdous Square, the location of the Palestine, the only hotel in Baghdad where at least two hundred foreign reporters could be found. Upon arrival, Sergeant Leon Lambert recognized an opportunity and asked his commander, Captain Lewis, “Hey, get a look at that statue. Why don’t we take it down?”³⁸ But it had to look natural. So, he asked, “If a sledgehammer and rope fell off the 88 [M-88 tank tow truck], would you mind?” This is how Iraqis got the prompt, with which they began to swing against the statue’s pedestal. The reporters seemed to direct the scene by encouraging participation with their rush to photograph the Iraqis and Kazeem, a former weight lifter, who provided the best shots. Despite the effort, only a few inches of plaster fell away, and the rope accomplished nothing either. “We watched them with the rope, and I knew that was never going to happen,” Lambert said to Peter Maass in an interview for his *New Yorker* article. “They were never going to get it down.” Lieutenant Colonel Bryan McCoy, commander of the 3rd Battalion 4th Marines, witnessing the scene with “this Paris, 1944, feel” to it thought, “The media is watching the Iraqis trying to topple this icon of Saddam Hussein. Let’s give them a hand.” McCoy elaborated:

What would that moment have been if we hadn’t? It would have been some B reel of Iraqis banging away at this thing and eventually losing interest and going home. There was a momentum, there was a feeling, this atmosphere of liberation. Like a kid trying to whack a piñata and he’s not going to get it with a blindfold on, so let’s move the piñata so he can knock it. That was the attitude—keep the momentum going.³⁹

However, the repeat of the accounts that made Iraqis seem collectively responsible and Kazeem specifically “the man” who accomplished the task has resonated and developed into a global memory. Kazeem himself has been conditioned to bear the responsibility. He says, “Now, when I go past the statue, I feel pain and shame. I ask myself why did I topple this statue? I’d like to put it back up, to rebuild it.”⁴⁰ He knows he cannot undo the past. Kazeem is ashamed because he is made responsible for an act that was followed by many agonizing consequences. The problem is that most subsequent events had top-down designs as well, even when local actors were framed responsible. Kazeem remembers that after “he” toppled the statue “every year, things started to get worse. There was corruption, infighting, killing, looting. Saddam killed people, but it was nothing like this current government. Saddam has gone, but in his place we now have 1,000 Saddams.”⁴¹

³⁸ Peter Maass, “The Toppling,” *The New Yorker*, January 3, 2011, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/01/10/the-toppling>.

³⁹ Maass.

⁴⁰ “*I Toppled Saddam’s Statue – Now I Want Him Back*” *BBC News - YouTube*.

⁴¹ “*I Toppled Saddam’s Statue – Now I Want Him Back*” *BBC News - YouTube*.



Figure 5.4. Kazeem al-Jabbouri, known as “the man who toppled Saddam’s statue,” holding a copy of Newsweek article *The Fall of Baghdad* depicting Kazeem hammering the plinth of Saddam’s statue in 2003. Baghdad, Iraq, 2016. Photo: BBC News.⁴²

Kazeem is just one of the many people in the Middle East, including those who toppled statues of the Shah of Iran, who have been disoriented by distorted histories and their own role in them. Many in Iraq are “praying for the days of Saddam to return,” just as many in Iran dream of returning to the pre-revolution

⁴² Jeremy Bowen, “Iraq Chilcot Inquiry: Bitterness in Baghdad,” *BBC News*, July 5, 2016, sec. Middle East, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36706265>.

era.⁴³ The issue is not that the Shah or Saddam were not tyrants or that people were incapable of planning an uprising on their own; the issue is that the unnatural unfolding caused by covert forces steering the process and the false media accounts and pseudo-memories of the events produce collective confusion and inability to comprehend the outcomes or clearly plan and assess local competence for future moves. According to an Iraqi musician, Waleed Nasyif, “The worse thing America has done to Iraq and Iraqis is this. They made a dictator look like an angel in comparison to what we have right now.”⁴⁴ Waleed is right. The most damaging effect of external interventions is the grave destruction to collective memory and identity, which causes distorted understandings of the past and disorients entire nations toward a confused and crippled future. This makes citizens feel doubtful of the productiveness of their activism and most destructively distrustful of visions for a better future. Instead, they hopelessly resort to romanticizing earlier tyrants.

⁴³ Suroosh Alvi, *In Saddam's Shadow: Baghdad 10 Years After the Invasion (Full Length)*, Documentary (VICE, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhnNIhV4EsU>.

⁴⁴ Alvi.

5.4 Iraq Memory Foundation

Just as demolition, the top-down preservation of monuments of collective memory can be destructive to the socio-political fabric of a society. For instance, Makiya suggested, fought for, and succeeded in preserving some Ba'athist monuments built under Saddam's reign, such as the Victory Arch, because he believed, "the monument will one day have to be confronted, not excised."⁴⁵ But the preservation program designed for the monument prescribes a limited reading of what the Victory Arch represents.

After the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003, Makiya founded the Iraq Memory Foundation in Baghdad, which was an outgrowth of the Iraq Research and Documentation Project that he had founded at the Center of Middle East Studies at Harvard University in 1992, which had received grants from the Bradley Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy. The organization's mission is to document all facets of the Iraqi experience of dictatorship. Soon after its foundation in 2003, the municipality of Baghdad and the Iraqi Governing Council granted the Iraq Memory Foundation use of the Victory Arch monument and military parade ground in Sahat al-Ihtifalat in central Baghdad as the prospective site of its office, research, and museum complex (Figure 5.5).⁴⁶

The site granted is located in the Green Zone, where the occupation government had been installed after the invasion. Ironically the Green Zone, also referred to as "little America," was the seat of Saddam's power and a preserve of his favored associates. William Langewiesche reported, "In April of 2003, as the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division fought its way into the Green Zone with heavy loss of Iraqi life, the once privileged residents fled in haste, emptying compounds and palaces—and indeed an entire district—that therefore seemed ready-made for American use."⁴⁷ Thus, the very same modernistic government buildings—the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, the Baath Party headquarters—that had once been used by a dictator of a totalitarian regime became the base for an oppressive occupation. In the midst of all this, Makiya's organization also acquired the Ba'ath Regional Command Collection, which is a major document collection from the basement of the Ba'ath party headquarters in central Baghdad.

⁴⁵ Makiya, *The Monument*, 133.

⁴⁶ The History of the Iraq Memory Foundation "Iraq Memory Foundation," n.d., <http://www.iraqmemory.org/EN/index.asp>.

⁴⁷ William Langewiesche, "Welcome to the Green Zone," *The Atlantic*, November 2004, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/11/welcome-to-the-green-zone/303547/>.

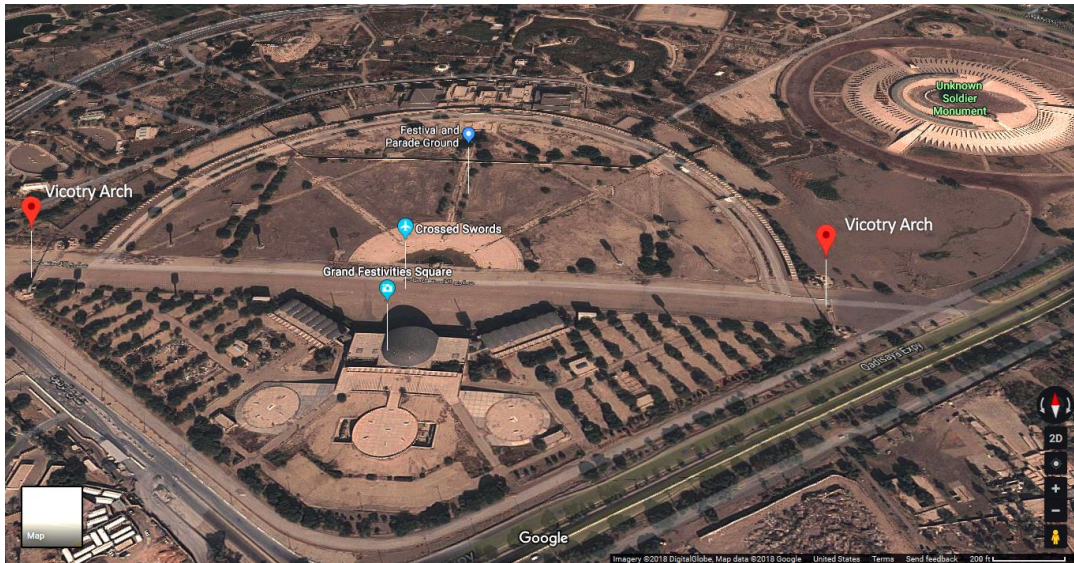


Figure 5.5. A Google Maps still shot showing the location of the two pairs of the Victory Arch crossed swords on the military parade ground, the site granted to the Iraq Memory Foundation in Baghdad during the United States-led invasion.⁴⁸

The site granted to Iraq’s Memory Foundation was not easily accessible by residents of Baghdad or other Iraqi people, at least until the end of the long war. The occupying forces controlled all entrances to the Green Zone and constructed a boundary that eventually hardened into a heavily guarded perimeter of high concrete blast walls, about eight miles around.⁴⁹ Therefore, during the foundation’s initial years, the memories preserved in the Green Zone were protected and consumed mostly by the occupying forces, which explains why a Google search for the Victory Arch pulls up an overwhelming number of images where the monument is a background to American soldiers, helicopters, tanks, and other military entities (Figure 5.6). During the war, the monument played a significant role in “othering” and justifying the invasion and continued military occupation of Iraq.

Placed in the heart of the Green Zone, the monument played a symbolic role for the occupying forces that had set an “American bubble” in the parade ground and used it as the governmental center for the Coalition Provisional Authority and a landing zone for the United States’ Black Hawk helicopters, among others. The Victory Arch’s many vulgar symbolisms of violence wrapped in a thematically Arab appearance, such as the crossed blades of the Swords of *Qādisīyah*, were a useful Orientalizing tool for justifying the occupying forces’

⁴⁸ “Google Maps - Victory Arch - Baghdad,” Google Maps, n.d., <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Swords+of+Q%C4%81dis%C4%AByah/@33.3052509,44.3776917,15z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x15577f0ac08d3f4b:0x4ad5423b58e623d7!8m2!3d33.3052509!4d44.3864464>.

⁴⁹ Langewiesche, “Welcome to the Green Zone.”

aggression in Iraq and reminding them of the demon they were fighting. Evidently, countless small and large-scale decisions that prolonged the war and its hostilities were rendered just at this spot. For instance, “Many Soldiers take the opportunity to reenlist at the [Victory Arch] site.”⁵⁰



Figure 5.6. Sargent Tamekia Henderson (right) re-enlisting in the US Army at the Victory Arch site in Baghdad, Iraq. April 15, 2008. Photo by Master Sgt. Timothy Gilmore.⁵¹

Before handing over the responsibility for the site’s preservation to Makiya, the United States had also been preserving the monument. For instance, during the Desert Storm, allied bombings destroyed the majority of the city’s infrastructure, yet the Victory Arch “was spared due to a legal opinion that the monument was protected under provisions of the Law of War.”⁵² The Law of War is part of public international law concerning acceptable justifications to engage in war and the limits to acceptable wartime conduct; however, it has been observed by the United States only occasionally. The same highly selective and ideologically

⁵⁰ Herald Post, *Re-Enlisting in Iraq*, April 15, 2008, photo, April 15, 2008, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/heraldpost/2437608929/>.

⁵¹ Post.

⁵² “Hands of Victory,” September 7, 2011, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/hands-of-victory.htm>.

driven “legal opinion” continued to protect the Victory Arch during subsequent conflicts while ignoring damages to Iraqi-built heritage, ancient cities, historic mosques, the Museum of Archaeology, and the National Library and Archives, along with other architectural treasures of global significance. Bevan wrote, “The chaos after the fall of Baghdad saw the priceless collections... of Korans at the Ministry of Religious Endowment go up in flames.”⁵³ This made the United States’ protection of a few buildings, including the Oil Ministry and the Victory Arch, more problematic.

The Iraq Memory Foundation, with offices in Baghdad, London and Washington DC, continues to selectively preserve monuments and other forms of documented memory with the rationale that “the truth can help heal a society that has been politically and physically brutalized on a large scale.” The organization’s website claims, “Citizens of a new and free Iraq have whole new identities to forge. And identity is memory. People whose identities are cobbled together from half-truths, or from distorted memories of who is to blame and who is blameless, are prone to commit new transgressions.”⁵⁴ The “truth” that is supposed to “heal” the “brutalized society” and the “memory” that is supposed to help citizens “forge new identities” are themselves constructed based on “distorted memories” and “half-truths” through a highly selective, simplified, and schematized process of memory preservation, reinterpretation, and representation.

⁵³ Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory*, 92.

⁵⁴ Addressing the Future of Iraq “Iraq Memory Foundation.”

5.5 Sectarianism: Produced, Preserved, Perpetuated

One must question the strategy behind saving the Victory Arch or, as the Iraq Memory Foundation calls it, the “Crossed Swords,” while many other monuments were pulled down in the city. For instance, why the statue of an Iraqi artist that replaced Saddam’s statue in Baghdad’s Firdous Square, unlike the Victory Arch, was not part of the agenda to be saved for “educational’ purposes” – “The modernist structure, with branches reaching toward the sky and a crescent moon balancing a ball was supposed to represent the freedom and unity among Iraq’s Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds.”⁵⁵ Why, on the 10th anniversary of toppling Saddam, “the pedestal stood empty, save for a rusted iron bar poking out of it?” What was mostly felt was “grief among almost everybody over the years of death, destruction and occupation that followed the fall of Baghdad to U.S. forces.” Rassol Hassan, 80 years old, who witnessed the fall of the statue from his nearby barber shop, told a reporter that, “Ten years ago, I dreamed of better life, [but] nothing has changed since then for me and many Iraqis, it has even gotten worse.” A disheartened Iraqi lawmaker, Hamid al-Mutlaq, called the day “black and ominous... a day of slavery.” He argued that on April 9, 2003, “Baghdad, the city of history and civilization, fell into the hands of a brutal occupation that ignored all laws... They came as occupiers and killers unlike what they said before. They left us killing, sectarianism and displacement.”⁵⁶

What was the ultimate goal of preserving the “Crossed Swords” that could not have been accomplished by not demolishing a statue symbolizing peace and unity? At a time when the United States-led invasion had weakened the nation-state, which is typically the strongest collective identity able to bring different peoples together, elements of the state, which were seen as remote from individual or group concerns, could not have stood as a binding symbol. Memorials, such as the one that had replaced Saddam’s statue in Firdous Square, depicted trans-national identity and advocated regionalism, which could strengthen a collective identity to bring people together. However, peace and unity does not seem to have been part of the political agenda.

Months before restoration began on the “Crossed Swords,” another monument, which was built by Saddam after Iraq’s defeat in the Persian Gulf war of 1991, was demolished. The monument was “[a] concrete sculpture of clasped hands in western Baghdad—supposed to represent Arab unity after the war—was demolished... to make way for a highway overpass, prompting angry protests that Iraq’s authorities were trying to rewrite all of the country’s past.”⁵⁷ Looking beyond the historical actors involved and justifications used for demolition and partial

⁵⁵ “Iraqis Mark 10-Year Anniversary of Fall of Baghdad with Grief, Relief - National | Globalnews.Ca,” April 9, 2013, <https://globalnews.ca/news/466623/iraqis-mark-10-year-anniversary-of-fall-of-baghdad-with-grief-and-relief/>.

⁵⁶ “Iraqis Mark 10-Year Anniversary of Fall of Baghdad with Grief, Relief - National | Globalnews.Ca.”

⁵⁷ Myers, “Iraq Restores Monument That Symbolized Hussein Era.”

dismantling of many monuments in war-ridden Iraq, it is important to examine the logic behind the selective restoration of monuments during the reconstruction period of the city scarred by war and decades of disrepair. While there was no attempt to try to restore the “Hand Clasp,” which was systematically eliminated to make way for a highway overpass, the “Crossed Swords,” which was a much larger and more expansive project, was rebuilt. The money for the restoration of the Crossed Swords was covered by a \$194 million beautification project ahead of the 2011 summit meeting of Arab League leaders in Baghdad. So why did it make sense not to restore the Hand Clasp monument, which symbolized regional identity and Arab unity during the Arab summit meeting? The Hand Clasp monument could simply be seen as an extension of the national identities of the region. But one must ask what political strategy was in play that left no room for the peaceful replacement of Saddam’s statue in Firdous Square, the unifying Hand Clasp, or other monuments embodying Middle Eastern collective identities that advocate human rights and equality, promote open and tolerant society for various ethnic and religious identities, build national consensus over peace, and encourage universal brotherhood?

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who was in the middle of a reelection during the Hand Clasp demolition protests, showed empathy with the people but once reelected, he did not attempt to restore the Hand Clasp monument. Instead, he ordered the restoration of the Victory Arch, which is antagonistic and militaristic in nature: “[W]hile most Iraqis [were] pleased to see money being spent on improving roads and pavements in a country ravaged by war, the arch’s restoration raised the hackles.”⁵⁸ Of course, as the World Bank provided the multimillion-dollar reconstruction grant to Iraq, it probably had to approve the projects. The restoration, however, must have been a mission the United States’ military wanted to see through, because it was accomplished at a time of increased violence and tensions before the complete withdrawal of United States’ soldiers.

Large numbers of Iraqis had been brutalized under Saddam’s rule which, according to Makiya, led to “atomization” of society and the destruction of the Iraqi identity. Contemplating this past, Makiya asked himself: “how can I find hope in this darkness? Upon what do you hang a new Iraqi sense of identity?” He then answered himself, “we are going to remember the pain. Let us find, in that pain, common ground. We are going to say that we are Iraqis, and we are held together by this.”⁵⁹ This logic, which did not imagine any peace oriented national, regional, or universal identity for the Iraqis, and aimed to highlight, reinforce, and perpetuate the memory of their pain and victimhood under Saddam, perhaps unselfconsciously, aligned with the objectives of leaders of the occupying forces.

According to Jager, Bush’s “forward strategy of freedom” failed in part

⁵⁸ “Iraq Repairs Saddam’s Triumphal Sword Arch | The Independent,” accessed April 9, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-repairs-saddams-triumphal-sword-arch-2206361.html>.

⁵⁹ Filkins, “Regrets Only? Iraq - Kanan Makiya - Saddam Hussein.”

because of its inability to take into account how the freedom it had advocated would be received by other cultures. She states, “The Bush ‘revolution’ was about the imposition of American values, not about laying the groundwork for creating the necessary conditions for their reception.”⁶⁰ Makiya’s interpretation and representation of the Ba’athist memorials before 2003 and their preservation after the invasion, regardless of the degree of its success, helped reinforce the United States’ myth about “operation freedom” and “war on terror.” Why else would the Iraq Memory Foundation focus on Iraqi “pain” only from 1968–2003? Did the Iraqi “pain” stop in 2003? Even if the goal had been to document the “pain” Saddam caused, shouldn’t the memories of the post-2003 events, which could be seen as a result of his ill-management, also be included? However, that is not what the Iraq Memory Foundation does. It frames post-2003 Iraqis as “free of terror” and in need of perpetual remembrance of how “un-free and terrorized” they were before the United States-led invasion. At one point after the invasion, Makiya himself wondered, “How many Iraqis have died since 2003?... Five hundred thousand?... It’s getting closer to Saddam.”⁶¹ How is it that this collective “pain” is not worked into the agenda of cataloging and preservation of Iraqi “pain?” Why is the Public Outreach Project of the Iraq Memory Foundation designed to train elementary and secondary school teachers with methods and materials designed to cover what happened in Iraq only from 1968–2003? Surely this focus and abundance of teaching tools on a single narrative and period would produce a selective, distorted, and discontinuous memory, identity, and history?

Iraqi citizens manipulated with a repackaged, violence-ridden memory that has been designed and manufactured for them at the political and militarized educational institutions of the United States cannot be called “new” or “free.” In light of the interconnected politics of memory, identity, and history, I remind the Iraq Memory Foundation of their own claim in “Addressing the Future of Iraq” that, “People whose identities are cobbled together from half-truths, or from distorted memories of who is to blame and who is blameless, are prone to commit new transgressions.”⁶² Makiya wished for “every thinking Iraqi” to some day see the preserved memorials as “an unforgettable testament to their country’s years of shame,” and take “collective responsibility for Saddam Husain’s monument” to understand “how is it possible that such an object came to represent, for however short a while, the city [they were] born and brought up in.”⁶³ This desire seems harsh as it hopes for a limited and self-blaming examination of urban conditions not as manifestations of the larger global politics, but a reflection of the Iraqi people.

Taking on that perspective and busy blaming themselves, Iraqis will not notice external factors affecting their past or present conditions. For instance, how

⁶⁰ Jager, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge*, 20.

⁶¹ Filkins, “Regrets Only? Iraq - Kanan Makiya - Saddam Hussein.”

⁶² Addressing the Future of Iraq “Iraq Memory Foundation.”

⁶³ Makiya, *The Monument*, 134.

the United States used cultural knowledge in strategic frameworks to produce and wipe out “insurgency” as needed. The manual formulation of cultural knowledge for the broader strategic goals of counterinsurgency encourages “reconceptualizing the ‘war on terror’ not as one war, but as many different wars,” while also “Focusing less on the moral distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’—a major centerpiece of the Bush Doctrine—and more on the differences between ‘them.’”⁶⁴ This explains why, before American soldiers were pulled out of Iraq, the United States considered it advantageous to support the demolition of memorials such as the Hand Clasp that symbolized Middle Eastern unity in a war waged by the United States, but reconstruct the Crossed Swords, a reminder of a war in which Kurds and Shia’s were gassed and slaughtered, symbolizing the battle of Qadissiyya, an old Arab–Persian rivalry known to generate many regional conflicts throughout history. Instead of allowing “like and unlike foes” to join together, Jager suggests focusing “more on the differences between ‘them’... recognizing that although all of them hate America, they might hate each other even more.”⁶⁵ Makiya’s Iraq Memory Foundation, in line with this strategy, helped the United States produce enmity between Iraqis. According to Samuel Helfont:

With at least tacit assistance from the American forces that had occupied the country, [Makiya] gathered documentation on the former regime’s crimes. He collected oral histories of torture and managed to preserve the secret, internal files of the Iraqi Ba’th Party... [After] Iraq descended into chaos...his foundation found itself at the center of conflict and retribution. Every nefarious group, from al-Qaida to the Sadrists wanted to use the documents that Makiya had collected to locate enemies and settle old scores.⁶⁶

This strategy has covertly turned the twenty-first century Middle East into a zone of countless conflicts, brutal viciousness, sectarianism, and large-scale displacement while the world is trying to determine what is inherently wrong with the region’s nations, races, ethnicities, and religious sects that makes them prone to violence, even after “humanitarian” interventions of the West remove “demonic” leaders.

⁶⁴ Jager, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge*, vii.

⁶⁵ Jager, Army War College (U.S.), and Strategic Studies Institute, 21.

⁶⁶ Samuel Helfont, “Kanan Makiya and the Rejection of Victimhood,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, September 2016, 2, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2016/09/kanan-makiya-rejection-victimhood/>.

5.6 The Scholar's Responsibility: Demilitarizing Cultural Knowledge

Enmity and regional conflicts are clearly beneficial for the neoliberal military complex. According to Timothy Mitchell, "The political violence that the United States, not alone but more than any other actor, has promoted, funded, and prolonged across so many parts of the Middle East over recent decades," fuels the oil and arms industries, "two of the most powerful forces shaping what is called the capitalist world economy."⁶⁷ In the present critical juncture, where there is a dangerous trend in the co-optation of cultural knowledge for military purposes, scholars should seriously question their own motives when they consider contributing to the militarized regimes of violence. This type of participation definitely threatens the integrity of social sciences, history, and humanities. Collaborating anthropologists, for instance, can take the discipline "toward a mercenary anthropology in which cultural knowledge itself is used as a weapon."⁶⁸ As such, the scholar has a significant responsibility "to remain located outside the corrupting sphere of intelligence agencies and government bodies and to act as independent witnesses and reporters."⁶⁹

When acting independently, scholars may share their contributions responsibly in ways that limit the threat of their work being coopted for militarized objectives. First of all, as much as possible, scholars should avoid using generalization and binary oppositions. Understanding how these oppositional categories, such as modern/traditional, logical/irrational, and humanitarian/savage are interrelated and are ideologically and historically constructed will help authors avoid Orientalizing their subject. For instance, in the conclusion of *The Monument*, Makiya makes an unnecessary assertion that, "Platonic irony in the sense of a journey into the unknown, even the unknowable—the humbling experience of knowing how little one knows—is itself unknown in Arabic culture; it is impossible for the traditional or classically formed Arab mind to conceive of irony even as an abstract idea."⁷⁰ For the conscious readers, these types of claims mainly provide a self-description of the author, but besides adding to a massive collection of Orientalist text, these dangerous comments may be picked up and used by those who gain from these allotting mentalities.

Additionally, scholars must prevent recycling dominant meanings and power systems perpetuated through various media by extending their inquiry into the field and conducting ethnographic research. As Jeremy Keenan instructs, scholars should "provide field-based information that can counter the propaganda emanating from the ever growing (and now increasingly privatized) intelligence and

⁶⁷ Mitchell, "McJihad: Islam in the U.S. Global Order," 16.

⁶⁸ ROBERTO J GONZÁLEZ, "Towards Mercenary Anthropology? The New US Army Counterinsurgency Manual FM 3-24 and the Military-Anthropology Complex," *ANTH Anthropology Today* 23, no. 3 (2007): 19.

⁶⁹ KEENAN, "Conspiracy Theories and 'Terrorists': How the 'war on Terror' Is Placing New Responsibilities on Anthropology," 9.

⁷⁰ Makiya, *The Monument*, 132.

other war agencies.”⁷¹ Interviews in the field allow the investigator to go beyond assuming the consumers of cultural productions unquestionably accept the message that the producers hoped to transmit. According to Stuart Hall, “dominant–hegemonic readings” of cultural products, in this case memorials, are certainly not the only, and not even the most common, reading because of the culturally specific experiences, memories, and desires of the recipients.⁷² Including “negotiated readings” where consumers negotiate an interpretation from the memorial and its dominant meanings as well as “oppositional readings” where consumers completely disagree, reject, or ignore the ideological position embodied in a memorial, will help produce a more accurate representation of the landscape under investigation.

Moreover, qualitative methods typically encourage a more personal informal writing stance that “lessens the distance between the writer and the reader.”⁷³ Likewise, scholars should provide certain insights to their own position (for example, social, political, ethnic) to explain the motives for the particular selection and ordering of the information represented in their work. These techniques allow more transparency for the contemporary readers and make the work more valuable for researchers in the future. The record of the investigation, be it a book, an article, or a documentary, will become more accessible to the reader by welcoming them to engage more readily with what has been presented. In this approach, the transparency of the author empowers the readers to establish a dialog with the text and instinctively form their own “negotiated” or “oppositional” reading of the information presented. This writing approach, therefore, fosters a discourse where the reader can remain engaged in an active dialog, even when in disagreement with the scholar on certain aspects.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, scholars have a responsibility not to ignore the broader context of the United States’ imperial power and realize that the military use of their training and research is tied to goals established by the Pentagon, which “include missions resembling colonial-style police operations.”⁷⁴ A “culturally informed” political violence is still political violence. A deceiving “culturally sensitive” foreign policy, intervention, invasion, occupation, regime change, and war does far more damage to the sociocultural and political fabric of a subjugated society than any “liberation” it presumes to accomplish or the “collateral damage” and money it might potentially save for the aggressor. Political violence disguised under a mask of culturally sensitive humanitarianism distorts memory, identity, and history for individuals, collectives and, most importantly, the intellectuals, who in turn perpetuate misconceptions and misdiagnoses, resulting

⁷¹ KEENAN, “Conspiracy Theories and ‘Terrorists’: How the ‘war on Terror’ Is Placing New Responsibilities on Anthropology,” 9.

⁷² Stuart Hall, *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79* (London; [Birmingham, West Midlands: Hutchinson ; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1980).

⁷³ Creswell, *Research Design*, 43.

⁷⁴ GONZÁLEZ, “Towards Mercenary Anthropology?,” 17.

in further sociocultural-destruction.

Years of Western covert operations such as targeted killings, military coup d'états, revolutions, regime changes, fundamentalist movements, and wars remain without an external trace in the Middle East, leaving most scholars uncomprehendingly perpetuating misrepresentations of events and misplacement of responsibilities. Except for the few cases where agents involved have leaked covert operations, or the CIA, often decided later, has decided to provide evidence by declassifying top-secret documents (motives for which require serious investigation), Western interventions in the Middle East remain secret. But even when those confessions, or the occasional partial official apologies become available, most scholars continue to refrain from broadening their research prospects to include the larger global dynamics of power (motives for which also require serious investigation). For instance, when suggesting ways to comprehend Saddam's brutalities, Makiya asserts, Iraqi Ba'th "are an indigenous creation, imposed by no outside power [...] there is no British yoke out there any longer, no king too 'soft' on minorities, no 'Zionist' threat; Iraqis have only themselves to look to."⁷⁵ Without examining the global context of neoliberal military imperialism, no amount of self-reflection will be able to generate a logical answer as to why the Middle East is the most militarized violence-ridden region struggling to establish fundamental change toward peace.

⁷⁵ Makiya, *The Monument*, 131 and 133.

CHAPTER 6. Memorials as Weapons of Mass Disorientation

6.1 Victory Arch Reconsidered

6.2 “War of the Cities”

6.3 Corporates and States Dissolve, Neoliberal Militarization

6.4 Weapons of Mass Disorientation

6.1 Victory Arch Reconsidered

Advocating remembrance of what the Iraqi Ba'th did and how they ruled, Makiya wrote, "Like the sword of Damocles, the swords of this monument hang over Iraqis. Even if the tyrant were dead, they are obliged to confront them to exit from his spell."¹ Saddam was hanged to death on December 31, 2006. Killing him before all of the truth came out is just as criminal as keeping the Victory Arch standing under imposed layers of encoded meaning by cultural producers, such as Makiya, who try to control the meaning, identity, and history it represents through construction of a specific framework of knowledge. This type of top-down assembly and perpetuation of memory "sanitizes" a portion of Iraq's history—the role of the neoliberal military interventions—that needs to be confronted. For Makiya, there seems to have been only two options: "Either responsibility devolves upon the President alone, or he shares that responsibility with others. The point is not about involving individuals (like Khalid Rahal) in the personal actions of this President; it is about all those features of the monument that unselfconsciously encompass both him [Saddam] and them [Iraqis]."² Thus, in the concluding pages of his book, Makiya not only rules out any responsibility for the complicity of any individual intellectual, artist, or architect, such as those of Makiya Associates, but also any Western complicity.



Figure 6.1. Left: Star Wars' *The Empire Strikes Back* Poster.³ Right: A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flies an American flag at the Victory Arch Parade Ground in the Green Zone, Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. Photo by HQ, 3rd ID Public Affairs.⁴

Makiya ignores all those features of the monument that quite self-consciously encompass the West—the concept of a triumphal arch is a European

¹ Makiya, 131.

² Makiya, 133.

³ "StarWars.Com | The Official Star Wars Website," StarWars.com, n.d., <https://www.starwars.com/>.

⁴ MarksMomma, "Bandit.Three.Six: Ask A Troop Sunday," *Flying an American Flag at Victory Arch, Baghdad*. (blog), July 23, 2006, <http://bandit36.blogspot.com/2006/07/ask-troop-sunday.html>.

import, without precedent in the Middle East since Roman times.⁵ The Baathist regime that commissioned the project came to power after a CIA-backed coup in 1963 and took revenge on those who had overthrown the British-backed monarchy. The president who designed the monument had been hired by the CIA at the age of 22 to carry out assassinations. He remained under US support and forcefully assumed the presidency in 1979 to prevent treaties with Syria that would lead to unification between the two countries. Instead, he started a war with another neighbor country, Iran, which further deepened regional divisions. The war the monument stands to commemorate is one fueled, stirred, and prolonged by the United States secretly selling arms to both sides through Israel and feeding intelligence to Iraq.

The material of Iraq's triumphal arches is also a Western import: a recast of melted American-made arms. Each blade of the two pairs of crossed swords weighs 24 tons, representing only a small fraction of the Western-made arms that had been militarizing the region to extreme levels of war and violence. A Western consortium led by the German foundry H+H Metalform, including the British foundry Morris Singer, made the gargantuan monument, comprising the hands modeled on Saddam's forearms towering the embodiments of cruelty and violence over Middle Eastern lives.

The double set of crossed swords that enhance the martial splendor of Baghdad's parade ground was where Saddam reviewed his troops from an outdoor, air-conditioned stand the day before the first bombing run on Baghdad during the 1991 Persian Gulf war. The mass of Iraqi soldiers marching beneath the Victory Arch to the theme music from "Star Wars" was televised in Iraq while also consumed internationally. Saddam and his son Uday, who were both fans of *Star Wars*, had been inspired by Darth Vader in designing for their military regime.⁶ Uday, for instance, had designed an Iraqi paramilitary helmet modeled on Darth Vader's ominous headgear.⁷ With all this outright display of hybridity, however, the shape of the swords and the impression of Saddam's fingerprint on one of the arches' thumbs is supposed to convince the observer that the monument is solely a manifestation of the orient.

⁵ Saddam's first concept drawing for the Victory Arch resembles the famous Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, one of the most famous monuments in Paris, standing at the western end of the Champs-Élysées, in memory of those who fought and died for France in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Also similar to Arc de Triomphe in Paris, Baghdad's Victory Arch Parade Ground dedicates space to the 'Unknown Soldier' (see figure 7). Also see: "Hands of Victory."

⁶ Epicenter, Michael Rakowitz, *The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist, Part 1*, n.d., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKDucJv6-s4>.

⁷ "Tour."

6.2 “War of the Cities”

Analyzing any of the concepts, actors, technologies, or ideologies that are embedded in the Victory Arch monument will reveal that the responsibility is not limited to Saddam, Iraqi people, Islam, or the Middle East. There is not a single individual or country in the West or East that can be charged with responsibility for the vulgarity of the monument. A particular neoliberal militarized mentality has become increasingly dominant and continues to be manifested in various physical forms, such as the Victory Arch monument, throughout the world. For instance, one could examine H+H Metalform, whose role in casting parts of the monument appears to be the most innocent. With a little investigation, however, one learns that the German foundry played an important role in supplying Iraq's ballistic missile and gas centrifuge programs with equipment, components, and on-site expertise. H+H's specialty in the production of vertical flow-forming machines was useful to the Iraqi military and continued to supply Iraq with machine tools, technical assistance, and facilitating the transfer of expertise to the Iraqi centrifuge program by German centrifuge experts.⁸ Under the false pretense that the items were for civilian industries and getting involved with civic projects, such as casting monuments, H+H Metalform continued supplying a wide variety of items for the Iraqi military, even during the time Iraq was waging a war against Iran.

Backed by H+H technology, in 1987 Baghdad's radio started announcing threats that if Iran did not comply with their proposal, Iraq would use its long-range missiles to destroy “all the Iranian cities.” This was, of course, devastating for Iran, as most of its population lived in cities: “Starting in the fall of 1987, H+H signed contracts to provide items to Iraq's ballistic missile program to increase the range of its missiles. In early 1988, Iraq's improved missiles would play an important role in the so-called ‘War of the Cities’ against major Iranian cities.”⁹ These missiles, which aimed at highly populated urban centers, rained on residential neighborhoods, schools, and hospitals, killing civilians in major cities, especially the capital Tehran (Figures 6.2 and 6.3). The war on the cities began on March 1, 1988 and continued for approximately two months, in which time Iraq launched 189 missiles, 133 of them aimed at Tehran. In addition, the cities on Qom, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz and Karaj came under numerous attacks, resulting in heavy damages to the city's infrastructure as well as thousands of deaths and people wounded.

⁸ “H+H Metalform,” n.d., http://exportcontrols.info/h&h_home.html.

⁹ “H+H Metalform.”



Figure 6.2. Urban residential neighborhoods bombed during the *War on the Cities* made possible by H+H technology that increased the range of Iraqi missiles. Narmak, Tehran, Iran. 1988. Photo by Sasan Moayyedi.¹⁰

According to a partially released declassified top secret CIA report, “Iran did not retaliate with a missile attack on Baghdad,” and continued attacks only on the Iraqi borders region where the militaries were waging war. The report adds, “morale in Baghdad remains good, in part because Iran’s missiles continue to hit lightly populated areas outside the city.”¹¹ The CIA was well aware of Iran’s missile capacity because the United States had sold most of the arms that militarized Iran into one of the strongest military regimes in the region prior to the revolution, and after the revolution, the CIA itself had secretly transferred arms to Iran through Israel. In the report’s comment section on the “War on the Cities,” the CIA agent wrote, “Iran’s long-range artillery could reach Iraqi launch sites.” Seemingly puzzled by the decision not to attack populated urban centers, the agent ignores any possible ethical motives; instead, she/he suffices to explain the aim by reasoning, “Tehran may be conserving its missiles.”¹²

¹⁰ Sasan Moayyedi, “Sasan Moayyedi, 50 Days of War (1988),” Sasan Moayyedi, n.d., <http://sasanmoayyedi.visura.co/50-days-of-war>.

¹¹ “IRAN-IRAQ: SITUATION REPORT -- GROUND WAR, WAR OF THE CITIES & SHIPPING WAR | CIA FOIA (Foia.Cia.Gov),” CIA Declassified Report - Released in part on Sep 2001, March 22, 1988, 5, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/0000651360>.

¹² “IRAN-IRAQ: SITUATION REPORT,” 5.



Figure 6.3. Urban residential neighborhoods bombed during the *War on the Cities* made possible by H+H technology that increased the range of Iraqi missiles. Shahrestani Street, Tehran, Iran. 1988. Photo by Sasan Moayyedi.¹³

Operating on an entirely business-centric mentality, monetary gain and power made it easy to forget how these missiles crushed precious little bodies in school yards, their little hearts beating in fear before exploding under the sonic pressure, and their tearful eyelashes falling short on a world that, on their last sight, manifested pure cruelty through a chain of lies, militaristic technologies and greed. Those who did not die, like myself, continue to witness displays of this ever-growing cruelty and greed in places like the occupied Palestine, Iraq and Syria, while still haunted by childhood memories of neighborhoods full of mourning mothers and anxious searches after each bombing to find out which family members were still alive. Fueled by Iraqi contracts, H+H's enormous profits blinded senior company officials to the dangers and political explosiveness of their program in the Middle East. This mutually beneficial collaboration gave way to the Iraqi company, Al Arabia, secretly acquiring 50 percent of the German company in 1987 through a representative, Habobi, who entered into a trust relationship with Hinze and Huetten by becoming a silent partner in H+H. The extensive technological acquisition lead to new heights in Iraq's military might and allowed Saddam to display a diverse missile program at its 1989 Air Fair in Baghdad. Yet,

¹³ Sasan Moayyedi, *50 DAYS OF WAR (MISSILE ATTACKS AGAINST TEHRAN) PICTORIAL NARRATION SASAN MOAYYEDI*, n.d., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d66xWUOjRxI>.

it wasn't until Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 that any investigation was made to discover information on this covert weaponizing cooperation.

6.3 Corporations and States Dissolve, Neoliberal Militarization Perpetuates

Why, one might ask, were there no investigations to discover H+H's illegal trades prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait? The reason presented is that the company listed strictly civilian end-use and the officials did not acquire any additional information or fact-check the applications to determine their authenticity before issuing an export permit. This reason appears simplistic against the German trade law, which required an "intensive investigation" aiming to "prevent certain military goods from reaching the wrong hands." It may be true that H+H placed false end-use information on its export application; however, that does not explain why it was able to circumvent the procedures without any obstacles from the German authorities at the Federal Office for Trade and Industry (BAW). According to Hinze, the authorities ignored suspicions raised by exporters to Iraq. This state of affairs encouraged Hinze and Huetten's decision to export illegally, "particularly since other German and foreign companies were also exporting weapons-related goods to Iraq."¹⁴ In one instance, Hinze had raised concerns regarding the end-use of a particular item in Iraq and was still issued an export approval because he did not know "something definitive." According to a case study of illicit procurement networks by the Institute for Science and International Security:

They failed to notice that, starting in 1986, there was a sharp drop in applications to export military goods to Iraq. This drop was against a background of a huge number of exports to Iraq. This decline was not related to Iraq's need for military hardware, because it remained at war with Iran until 1988. Yet, this trend did not cause any suspicions at the BAW.¹⁵

According to the court, BAW officials could not have missed Iraq's troubling missile developments: "By 1987, the German authorities were learning from the media and their own and foreign intelligence agencies that Iraq was not just buying SCUD missiles from the Soviet Union, but was developing its own indigenous missile production program."¹⁶ Of course, lucrative contracts had encouraged many countries to aid Iraq militaristically not just because, covertly or not, these dealings injected money into their economy, but because the war kept two of the world's largest oil-producing countries in a situation that required them to sell oil at much cheaper rates. These favorable outcomes made it easy not only to turn a blind eye on Iraq invading and waging war against its neighbor country Iran, but also to aid it, even during its illegal chemical attacks (Figure 6.4) and bombing of highly populated residential areas. This all changed in mid-August 1990, after Iraq invaded Kuwait, home to the only United States military base in the Persian Gulf region at that time. The attack on Kuwait differed from Iran because it was the base from which the United States was controlling the oil-rich area on which the Western industrial world depended. Thus, the United States, rather than aiding Saddam's murder of Kuwaitis, similar to how the CIA aided the gassing of Iranians, decided

¹⁴ "H+H Metalform."

¹⁵ "H+H Metalform."

¹⁶ "H+H Metalform."

to engage in a costly “humanitarian” war. The German officials suddenly suspected that H+H shipments were not for their declared civilian use and launched an investigation, seizing a shipment at the Frankfurt airport. Senior company officials were put on trial and the court found them guilty of violations of German export control laws: “The court concluded that they ‘ruthlessly violated the interests and concerns’ of Germany.”¹⁷

However, there was no talk about the interests and concerns of Iran. This was not a simple trade of rice instead of noodles; there were massive political consequences to these actions. The trial, however, treated company officials as simple, misled businessmen, not considering the scale of their damages to humanity. These were not simple business transactions and export violations: “On two occasions, Hinze met Hussein Kamel, the powerful son-in-law of Saddam Hussein, the head of Iraq's ballistic missile program, and, after 1988, the leader of all of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs.”¹⁸ There is no way they were unaware of the actual end-use of their exports in the ongoing war against Iran. Moreover, they were undoubtedly aware of Iraq’s incapability of accomplishing the same mass murder capacity without their assistance. According to H+H Metalform, “A senior H+H manager characterized the Iraqis as lacking technical understanding. They were used to buying high-technology items, but they did not understand the underlying processes adequately to operate the machines without extensive continuing assistance.” At one point, the German prosecutors considered filing additional charges against H+H personnel because of these extensive assistances; however, in the end, no charges were filed. Both Hinze and Huetten eventually “pled guilty” for simple export violations, which could have a maximum sentence of three years in prison, but since they were “respectable businessmen” with “no prior convictions” and also because “they were viewed as numbed by years of selling equipment to military programs worldwide, including programs located in regions of tension,” they each served less than two years in prison.¹⁹

Even when hidden under cover-up urban construction projects, such as casting parts of the Victory Arch monument, multinational corporations like H+H play a significant role in increasing violence, militarization and destruction of our cities. Often acting as scapegoats for agents with larger political agendas, these entities face minimal repercussions, even when complicit in horrific crimes against humanity. Dissolving a corporation, which often reappears under other names, and a couple of years of prison for senior company officials who often end up serving even less time than sentenced, is not proportionate to the large-scale human destruction they cause. The language on H+H’s case report demonstrates how the German representatives of the company are often referred to as Hinze and Huetten, whereas the Iraqi representatives are referred to as ‘Iraq’. So, when delegating responsibility for this multinational company, it is individual German

¹⁷ “H+H Metalform.”

¹⁸ “H+H Metalform.”

¹⁹ “H+H Metalform.”

businessmen and the entire nation of Iraq. These types of treatment stem from mentalities and attitudes that selectively demonize certain nations and relieve some others from responsibility. It also paves the way for aggression that would otherwise be unthinkable.

According to an interview with an Iraqi musician, Waleed Nesyif, "In 1991, America came and destroyed literally 75% of Iraqi infrastructure in all of the cities. It was all destroyed completely."²⁰ Yet Saddam's oppressive totalitarian regime remained untouched. Then again, in 2003 a United States-led invasion turning into a long-term occupation devastated Iraq, and did not end, even after Saddam was captured by United States forces, was put on trial, and executed. According to the BBC, United States' President, George W Bush, described the execution as "an important milestone" on the road to building an Iraqi democracy, and the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, welcomed the fact that Saddam had been "tried by an Iraqi court" and that "he has now been held to account".²¹ Nouri Maliki, Iraq's Prime Minister, wrote in a statement: "Justice, in the name of the people, has carried out the death sentence against the criminal Saddam" closing "a dark chapter in Iraq's history." However, there were also protests in several cities in Iraq and some dismay from leaders in the Middle East, such as Pakistan's Nafeesa Zafar, who felt "saddened by the death of Saddam, not because he deserved to live but because it is taking place under US occupation of Iraq."²²

²⁰ Alvi, *In Saddam's Shadow: Baghdad 10 Years After the Invasion*.

²¹ "Saddam Hussein Executed in Iraq," December 30, 2006,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6218485.stm.

²² "Saddam Hussein Executed in Iraq."



Figure 6.4. The Halabja chemical attack, also known as the Halabja Massacre, took place during the closing days of the Iran–Iraq war. The Kurdish city of Halabja, Iraq, March 16, 1988. Photo by Sasan Moayyedi.²³

While Saddam had committed large-scale crimes against humanity, such as genocide and war crimes that should have been prosecuted by an international court, United States forces handed him over legally (though not physically) to the interim Iraqi government during the invasion. The interim government only prosecuted him for the killings of 148 Shias from the town of Dujail in the 1980s. They had been sentenced to death for attempting a coup to assassinate Saddam. This happened to be a rare crime with no Western power complicity. In fact, the CIA itself had tried assassinating Saddam multiple times before. If Saddam was prosecuted instead for using chemical weapons against Iran or his other war crimes, the complicity of many others would have been revealed through the court proceedings. Many different nations, corporations, intelligence agencies, and militaries worldwide aided Iraq in its war against Iran. For example, with regard to the war collaborations, according to a high-ranking Iranian military officer, “[Iran] had prisoners of war from 17 different countries.”²⁴ Thus, Saddam had to be tried in Iraq, by a specific religious group, under the watchful eye of the invaders, focusing on one of his smaller crimes. In fact, in his first trial session, “[Saddam]

²³ Sasan Moayyedi, “Sasan Moayyedi, Halabja (1988),” Sasan Moayyedi, n.d., <http://sasanmoayyedi.visura.co/halabja>.

²⁴ Ayda Melika, Interviews with military officers at the Navy Base, Khorramshahr, Iran., March 2015.

was appealing to Iraqis to stop fighting each other.”²⁵ In what turned out to be his last public trial, Saddam stated, "Let the [Iraqi] people unite and resist the invaders and their backers," and advised Iraqis: "Don't fight among yourselves." In response, the chief judge closed the courtroom to the public.

Thus, some multinational corporations dissolved into new entities or simply changed names, while some high-ranking officials and leaders were forcefully removed, executed, or simply finished their terms, like Bush, Blair, Khomeini, Bin Laden, Saddam, Gadhafi. Yet crimes against humanity continue to grow ever stronger. The letter in which Saddam ordered the construction of the monument has been inscribed on a tablet near one pair of the swords of the Victory Arch. This tablet was, at one point, defaced by the people, “[Saddam’s] name and that of Iran’s revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, scratched out.”²⁶ Both of those dictators may be dead now, yet the monument and the violence it represents are no less today. The Victory Arch stands to present a particular selective “history” with efforts from the Iraq Memory Foundation, which began restoration and preservation of the monument in 2011.

²⁵ “Judge Closes Trial During Saddam Testimony,” Text.Article, Fox News, March 15, 2006, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2006/03/15/judge-closes-trial-during-saddam-testimony.html>.

²⁶ Myers, “Iraq Restores Monument That Symbolized Hussein Era.”

6.4 Weapons of Mass Disorientation

As Gonzalez suggests, government entities and intelligence agencies use cultural knowledge as “weapons.”²⁷ However, the production, manipulation, preservation, or perpetuation of certain types of cultural knowledge can be more destructive than a weapon. For instance, strategic militarization of memory, the act of utilizing memory as a war weapon, is far more destructive than operational use of day-to-day cultural knowledge by soldiers because memorials are often embodiments of collective memory, identity, and history. They are capable of shaping collective psychological as well as socio-political behavior, so when top-down preservation, manipulation, or destruction of public memorials is tampered with, cultural knowledge is not a “weapon” but “weapons of mass disorientation.” Weapons of mass destruction are defined as any chemical, biological or radioactive weapon capable of causing widespread death and destruction.²⁸ Adding militarized memory to the list of weapons capable of causing widespread death and destruction, I propose the term “weapons of mass disorientation” to describe cultural weapons that tamper with collective memory to disorient communities and create an altered mental state. These weapons are capable of causing great damage to a large number of humans, social structures of communities, and political organization by tampering with an entire collective’s orientation about their identity, memory and history.

Similar to weapons of mass destruction, weapons of mass disorientation should be crimes against humanity because they are also “indiscriminate in their destructive effect, and their use violates two of the basic elements of the laws of war: discrimination (making a distinction between combatants and noncombatants), and proportionality (destructive power must be proportionate to legitimate military objectives and targets).”²⁹ Utilization of weapons of mass disorientation cripple entire societies by leaving them historically disoriented, culturally confused and collectively unable to produce fundamental change, even years after the end of war.

The twenty-first century has witnessed increasing levels of memorialization of war and violence and yet simultaneously experienced an increase in militarization, terror, violence, and war. This is partly because of the cooption of sites of memory and worldwide top-down militarized memorialization practices. Insecurity and destruction have proven to be highly profitable, thus keeping most crimes against humanity unprosecuted, propagated and perpetuating. The Victory Arch monument, for instance, seen from this perspective, though at odds with its

²⁷ GONZÁLEZ, “Towards Mercenary Anthropology?,” 19.

²⁸ “Weapons of Mass Destruction - Dictionary Definition of Weapons of Mass Destruction | Encyclopedia.Com: FREE Online Dictionary,” n.d., <https://www.encyclopedia.com/defense/energy-government-and-defense-magazines/weapons-mass-destruction>.

²⁹ “Weapons of Mass Destruction - Dictionary Definition of Weapons of Mass Destruction | Encyclopedia.Com: FREE Online Dictionary.”

top-down preservationist agenda, seems to embody within it many tales of our times.

PART THREE: RECREATIONALIZATION

CHAPTER 7. “Terrorism” and Tourism: The Emergence of New “Islamized” Spaces of Recreation and Leisure

CHAPTER 8. Panoramic Militarization: Exploiting Ottoman-Islamic Traditions to Expand Neoliberal Urbanism in Turkey

CHAPTER 7. “Terrorism” and Tourism: The Emergence of New “Islamized” Spaces of Recreation and Leisure

7.1 “Terrorism” Strikes Tourism

7.2 Tourism Strikes “Terrorism”

7.3 Halal Tourism

7.4 Jihadi Tourism

7.5 Warmusement

7.1 “Terrorism” Strikes Tourism

America’s imperialist intervention in the MENA also played a role in hurting the region’s tourism industry and the livelihoods of families across the entire region. In the Sahara–Sahel, for instance, the CIA’s fabricated events pertaining to the kidnapping of European tourists by terrorists was a successful effort to open up a new front for the lucrative “war on terror,” which “destroyed the tourism industry and forced hundreds into the burgeoning smuggling and trafficking businesses for a living.”¹ The fall of tourism was not experienced evenly in the MENA region, and dependency on income from tourism varied widely among the nations of the region.



Figure 7.1. “‘Al-Qaida’ (GSPC) ‘terrorists’ present their arms to tourists in 2003. Their leader, El Para (‘bin-Laden’s man in the Sahel’), is on the right.” Photo by anonymous European tourist, given to Jeremy Keenan.²

Nevertheless, the decrease in tourism can be partially attributed to a general increase in regional tensions, political violence, and terrorist attacks that have resulted from the instabilities caused by the United States’ twenty-first century military interventions. As discussed in part one, the extensive militarization of the MENA region was itself a product of the United States’ interventions in the region that began in the twentieth century with the Nixon doctrine and the Green Belt doctrine. Put in the context of a highly militarized MENA region, prone to cultures of violence, the twenty-first century United States military interventions led to more devastating results. After 2001 and the United States’ invasion of Iraq, for instance, the Gulf states and Turkey (and Iran secondarily) not only contributed to the further militarization of the region, but some even pushed more consistently for

¹ KEENAN, 9.

² KEENAN, “Conspiracy Theories and ‘Terrorists’: How the ‘war on Terror’ Is Placing New Responsibilities on Anthropology,” 5.

militarization after the United States wavered around 2015. ISIS bombings, for example, are a result of complex forces, many of them traceable to Turkish-, Saudi-, and Qatari-led militarization, as much as the American unsettling of the region.

Two major ISIS bombings in Ankara and Suruç, for instance, were connected to the larger Islamization of the region and, more particularly, to the Turkish regime, even though “direct” operational links to AKP are not yet proven. As discussed in earlier chapters, the coming to power and strength of militarized regimes in the region are part of the neoliberal imperialistic agenda. Therefore, while its followers, imitators, protégés, and competitors are not passive actors, the United States has been the leader of this global militarization and spread of violence in the MENA region. It can be argued that violent attacks, which are one of the reasons for the decline of the tourism industry, happen, directly and indirectly, as a result of American imperialism and the encroachment of militarized neoliberalism in the MENA region.

Local officials such as the AKP have, of course, played a significant role in the economic and political faith of the region; however, the role played by the United States appears to be mutually important, if not more decisive. To demonstrate this, I will examine the case of the AKP and its relationship with the United States in order to illustrate how tourism was affected depending on which side of the wars it stood. The origins of AKP were built on the basis of Islamic schools and popular mobilizations that were pro-Muslim and pro-Palestinian; therefore, they were decisively opposed to Anglo-American military intervention in the region. However, realizing the dependency of its success on its relationship with the United States, the AKP acted differently once in power. According to Tuğal, after entering office in 2002, the AKP “lent its backing to successive Western military interventions in Muslim countries.”³ For instance, in 2003 the AKP foreign policy “supported a ruling to allow US bases in Turkey to be upgraded, preparatory to the invasion of Iraq.” Erdoğan not only managed to suppress the popular resistance against permitting United States troops to use Turkish soil for launching the invasion, but he also made sure the majority of AKP deputies voted in favor of the war and sent Turkish forces to support the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq. Moreover, “in 2006, when the Turkish population almost unanimously condemned Israel’s invasion of Lebanon and bombardment of southern Beirut, Erdoğan and Gül, then Foreign Minister, insisted on Turkish participation in the UN force sent to contain Hezbollah.”⁴

These cooperative military interventions, of course, strengthen ties with the United States. Consequently, “as a Muslim country that maintained diplomatic relations with Israel; in 2009 Obama hailed the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government as a ‘model partner’ and pillar of the NATO.”⁵ Thus, while

³ Cihan Tuğal, “Democratic Janissaries?,” *New Left Review*, II, no. 76 (2012): 5–24.

⁴ Tuğal.

⁵ Tuğal.

clearly contributing to invasion, occupation, war and other military violence in the region, “Tourists from elsewhere in the region flocked to witness ‘a Muslim society at peace with the world, economically advanced and where Islamic traditions coexist with Western patterns of consumption’.”⁶ This image of Turkey was reinforced through American media as if it is possible to be at war in your own region but be considered “at peace with the world” and as if Islam is compatible with Western patterns of consumption. According to Tugal, even though the government remained an “extension of the West,” many Islamic intellectuals and activists continued to support its attempt in hopes of claiming Islamic leadership. Eager to join the European Union and expand its regional control, by the end of the 2000s, Turkey had participated in Western-guided military interventions in the region in addition to drastically opening up its economy and unleashing a dynamic private sector.⁷

However, events did not unfold as the AKP had wished and the Turkish model, which was an attempt at marriage with neoliberalism, ultimately failed. The problem, Tugal argues, is inherent in the very model of Islamic liberalism that formed the basis of the AKP’s rule.⁸ In recent years, the Turkish economy suffered as Turkish relations with the United States and some members of the European Union soured over a number of issues, which will be discussed in this chapter. Turkey’s crucial tourism sector, for instance, was hit by political turmoil and instability in the region. The decrease in tourism impacted many economies in the region; however, those countries that depend more heavily on tourism income, such as Turkey, were further devastated. Experiencing political unrest, multiple terrorist attacks, and an unsuccessful coup d’état attempt, in addition to the large waves of refugees arriving from war-torn neighbor countries, has impacted the tourism industry in Turkey.

During my 2016 field research in Turkey, the economy was suffering from reduced tourism. “There’s no business now,” said Mehmet, a restaurant owner in the famous Sultanahmet tourist district in Istanbul, “we are all struggling to survive.” During my short walk in the alleys of the Bazar, many business owners approached me and offered me greetings in various languages in a hope to grab my attention and lure me into their shops and restaurants. It felt like I was the sole customer in the area. I wasn’t, but the numbers were very low, and these men and women were desperate for business. I finally sat at one of the outside tables in a large two-floor restaurant. I was the only one in the entire place. Mehmet, the owner, had walked

⁶ Tuğal.

⁷ Landon Thomas Jr, “In Turkey’s Example, Some See a Road Map for Egypt,” *The New York Times*, February 5, 2011, sec. Middle East, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/world/middleeast/06turkey.html>.

⁸ “The Fall of the Turkish Model : How the Arab Uprisings Brought down Islamic...: Start Your Search!,” accessed November 2, 2018, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=5214709b-aa73-4f28-88cc-b00946743943%40pdc-v-sessmgr01&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#AN=ucb.b23319601&db=cat04202a>.

with me a few steps advertising his restaurant's free WIFI and inviting me to have tea on the house. He literally begged, "just sit at our restaurant and have a tea on us. It will help us attract other customers." After checking my email and enjoying a fabulous Turkish tea, I ordered a dish, even though I had eaten already, and conversed with Mehmet. As I pretended to enjoy the mediocre dish I had randomly chosen, he shared how the economy was hurting his family, especially his brother, the co-owner of the restaurant, who had children and was struggling to make ends meet because the restaurant was not making enough money. It was mid-July, "the middle of peak season when we usually make most of our earnings, yet look around," Mehmet pointed out, waiving his hand in the air, "not a single customer."

In a long silence we stared at a row of empty tables that were set up along the curve of the alley. Even pigeons seemed distant as the narrow pathways no longer offered left over foods for them to feast on. The silence seemed like an infinite echo of the sorrow in Mehmet's voice when he talked about his brother's depression. The sunset was reflecting a gloomy golden light on the sundrenched, worn, historic walls of the bazaar that seemed to still hold murmurs of memories from the thousands upon thousands of admiring eyes that had been mesmerized by the dazzling shops and impatiently waited their turn to enter the scene of one of these captivating restaurants.

Statistically, from May to October Turkey earns around 70 percent of its tourism revenues, but that summer business had plunged. After paying my bill, Mehmet made me promise to try and return to his restaurant. "Talking to customers makes me feel better," he said. "Please come back." Walking down the alley, in a small jewelry shop, I met Ali, an old shopkeeper who had spent most of his life in that very small shop making money and conversing with people from all around the world. Ali, who had opened and closed the shop almost every day for the past 42 years said, "You are the first person to enter in hours." He explained business had declined since the bombing a few months earlier.

On January 6, 2015, a suicide boomer had detonated a bomb vest at a police station near Ali's shop in Istanbul's central Sultanahmet district, which is close to famous landmarks such as the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia Museum. "Tourists don't feel safe here anymore," Ali said, "even if they come to Istanbul, they avoid this district because they are advised not to go near main tourist attractions." Of course, business had suffered, but Ali was also disturbed by the boredom of spending long days in the tiny shop with little human interaction. When I asked if he was afraid of being in the heart of the biggest tourist attraction, thus an attraction for terrorism. He said, "the bombing was months ago and didn't do much damage. Besides, there is more police security nowadays and no reason for people to be afraid." I took a photo of a beautiful turquoise necklace for my sister and told Ali "I will send this photo to her when I get back to the hotel and if she approves, I'll come back to buy it tomorrow." I did not see Mehmet or Ali the next day when I returned. They did not open their shops.

Not far from Ali's shop, I saw the entrance to the famous Blue Mosque. It was getting late and I wasn't sure if the mosque was still open to visitors at that hour. A young Bosnian man approached me and warned me not to enter. He didn't explain why and started walking with me as I went toward the metro station. "The Blue Mosque is not safe" he said, "do you not know about the suicide bombing here? Just don't go there. It's not safe." When we got to the Metro station, military officers guarding the entrance said it was shut down and that we should go home. The young Bosnian, Harun, who had wrapped a large can of beer in a brown bag, said as he was cautiously sipping on his drink, "Muslims don't like alcohol. The city is more securitized and Islamic now, you know, they care about alcohol; it is not good to drink in public. But you people from the US don't even think about these things." I decided to take the 10 pm tram leaving toward my hotel near Taksim Square. In the 30 minutes left, I decided to enjoy the view from Galata Bridge, looking at the reflection of the Bosphorus Bridge's lights reflecting in the Bosphorus strait. Little did I know that the events of that night would officially rename the Bosphorus Bridge, *15 Temmuz Şehitler Köprüsü (15 July Martyrs Bridge)*.

Harun started noticing helicopters circling above the bridge and began acting anxious. He kept looking around and felt uncomfortable with the excessive military presence. I, on the other hand, was mostly desensitized, perhaps because of my extensive military field research that had taken me to numerous militarized sites in the Middle East since 2014. I had also spent the majority of that day, July 15, 2016, in Istanbul's military cemeteries observing graveyards and memorials honoring war, military operations, and military personnel. My stop at Sultanahmet Square was an attempt to unwind and relax. Thus, I ignored the helicopters thumping overhead and Harun worriedly saying, "I have been in Istanbul for four months now. This is not normal. Something is going on." We said our goodbyes and I got on the last tram that crossed the Galata Bridge going toward Taksim before military forces blocked the two main bridges spanning the Bosphorus strait (Figures 7.2 and 7.3). Military officers stopped the tram right after passing the bridge and ordered us to "get off and go home". The station was taped closed and no one was willing to answer the questions of those asking why the bus stopped, when it would resume, and how were we to get to our homes/hotels now. I learned later that the lower-rank soldiers were told "that the military's occupation of bridges and government buildings was due to a terrorist threat or a routine drill."⁹ The soldiers did not answer any questions and continued ordering us to get going. Eventually, a group of us began walking together, completely clueless of the scale and dimensions of the events unfolding.

⁹ Cihan Tuğal, Turkey's Disaster | Jacobin, interview by Duncan Thomas, July 23, 2016, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/07/turkey-erdogan-coup-gulen-kemalist-kurdish-war/>.



Figures 7.2 and 7.3: Soldiers blocking off the Bosphorus Bridge during the failed coup in Istanbul sending the first signs to the outside world that there was unrest brewing in Turkey. July 15, 2018. Photo: REUTERS/ bbc.com.

Walking toward Taksim, a young couple from Mexico, Victoria and Damian, shared their story about joining a company after high school that flew them to different countries and got them local jobs that allowed them to get a place to sleep and enough money to eat and experience new places before moving to their next destination. They had come to Istanbul two months earlier after spending six months in Mumbai, India. They planned to do this for two years to broaden their worldview before starting college. The couple had been blogging about the new things they experienced each day. “Our parents were not supportive at first, and many people don’t succeed to have this experience, because of all the terrorism going on everywhere. Many of our friends also felt it’s not safe, especially because

we travel with little money and go to countries that are not nicely represented in the news,” Victoria said. People separated at various points of the long walk as they approached their residences, but no one really speculated about what was going on. As I separated from the group to head toward my hotel, the sound of helicopters escalated, causing the streets to become completely deserted.

In my tiny hotel room, windows began shaking to the sound of what I later learned were low flying jets screeching over Istanbul’s Taksim Square. Not long after, there was the defining sound of a blast followed by gunfire rattling through the air. Some windows began shattering from the pressure of the low flying jets and sporadic screams rose from various hotel rooms. It took some time before we found out there was a full-on military coup d’état attempt. To secure the guests, the hotel manager decided to gather everyone in the basement. Every few minutes, he would provide a brief, calm and peaceful update on what was happening. He appeared completely in control and fearless and tried to transmit his calm by saying the minimum. He stopped speculations with his strong deep voice, saying, “the situation will be under control soon, there is nothing to worry about.” Guests were contacting anyone they could to see how they could leave the country. The father of an Arab family visiting from Jordan got off the phone and shared an update, “the airport is shut down; we cannot leave tonight.”

A little European boy broke into tears: “I am scared, you know. We don’t see things like this in Sweden, you know. I am just not used to this, you know.” The hotel manager’s dignified calm was admirable in the midst of what was an obvious hit to his economic livelihood. As he stared quietly at a corner of the basement, his thoughts seemed to rise above the whispers and crying. Behind his silence there were deep thoughts about the future of a hotel that was more than half empty even before the coup. And those of us who had booked a room there did so because the rates were unbeatable, at 10 times less than the previous year. My room for \$10 a night included free Wi-Fi and breakfast. As tears started running down my face from an overwhelming mixture of emotions, I also thought of Mehmet’s restaurant, Ali’s little shop, the manager of the hotel I was staying in, and all the other locals for whom business, which was already bad, was now destined to get worse.



I won't let the [#city](#) turn into an empty stage for the manufacturers of [#violence](#) and [#fear](#). I will bring my [#peaceful](#) presence and love to the streets of [#Istanbul](#) that hold some of the best memories of my childhood. If it was in my power, I would [#heal](#) all the [#urban #wounds](#) and erase the [#scars](#) of [#trauma](#) and fear off of our [#collectivememory](#), especially off the mind of the shaken little boy who had forgotten his asthma inhaler upstairs when he ran down to take [#shelter](#) in the hotel's basement. The fear I witnessed in his eyes each time there was an explosion or a jet went by still hunts me. The recent perpetual acts of violence around the world will inevitably change the face of our [#cities](#) and [#humanity](#) as we know it. As [#BertrandRussell](#) believed, "Neither a man nor a [#crowd](#) nor a [#nation](#) can be trusted to act [#humanely](#) or to think [#sanely](#) under the influence of a great fear." Our future remains uncertain with all the violence promoted, produced, pretended, performed, and consumed internationally. In the face of all this [#insecurity](#) generated by manufacturers of [#weaponry](#), [#war](#) and [#violence](#), all I can do is wish for [#bravery](#) because fear is what fuels this insanity. [#LiveFEARLESSLY](#) for [#peace](#) and [#love](#).

Figure 7.4. Instagram post by Ayda Melika the day after Turkey's failed coup. Istiklal Street near Taksim Square, Istanbul. July 16, 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Ayda Melika (@ayda_melika) • Instagram Photos and Videos," n.d., https://www.instagram.com/ayda_melika/.

Major bombings in Turkey

More than 200 people killed in bomb attacks in the past year

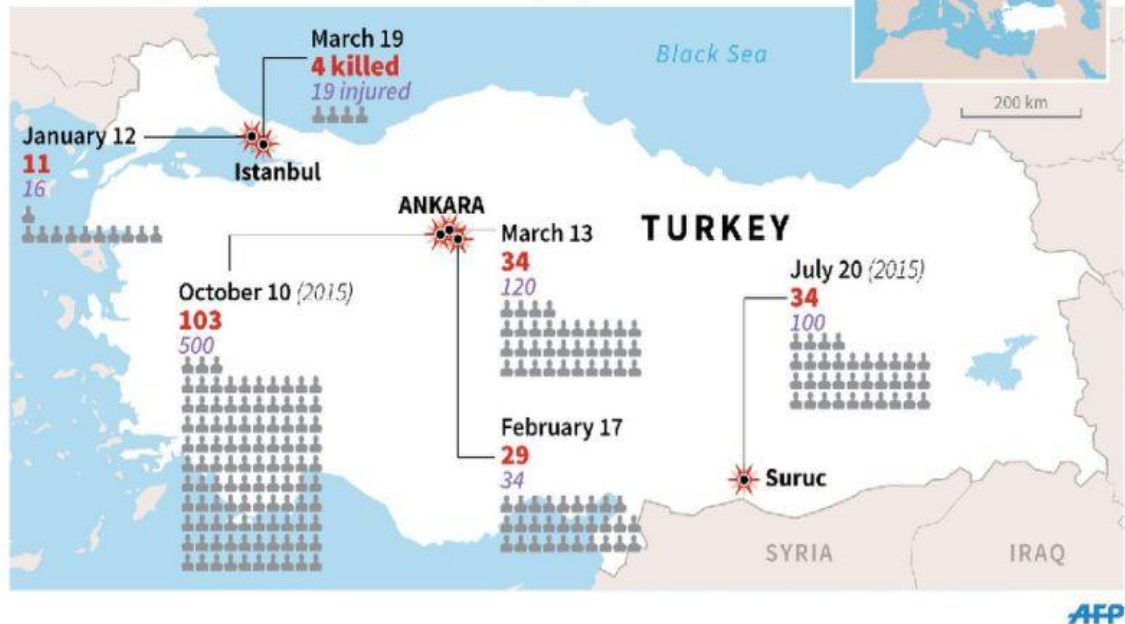


Figure 7.5. This major bombings' infograph depicts over 200 deaths in 2015 in Turkey. The map illustrates the number of people killed at each location. Photo: AFP.¹¹

In the following months, additional events continued devastating Turkey's tourism. An emergency travel warning published on the United States embassy's official website warned of "credible threats" to Turkish tourist spots: "The US Mission in Turkey would like to inform US citizens that there are credible threats to tourist areas, in particular to public squares and docks in Istanbul and Antalya."¹² Moreover, in January of 2016, an Islamist militant blew himself up near the famous Blue Mosque, killing 12 visitors from Germany. Accounting for the largest number of visitors to Turkey, the subsequent drop in German visitors was devastating. Germany was not alone. In fact, the number of visitors from other European countries, such as Britain and the Netherlands, also dropped. During the same period, however, there was a rise in the number of tourists visiting from neighboring Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran.

While several of the attacks were attributed to the Islamic State, two suicide bombings in 2015 (Figure 7.5) were linked to a radical Kurdish group associated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a group locked in a bloody battle

¹¹ "US Warns of 'credible Threats' to Turkish Tourist Spots," n.d., <https://www.yahoo.com/news/us-warns-threats-tourist-areas-istanbul-antalya-132244790.html>.

¹² Still in May 2018, there continues to be warning about increased risks on the US embassy website asking citizens to "Reconsider travel to Turkey due to terrorism and arbitrary detentions." "Turkey Travel Advisory," accessed May 24, 2018, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/turkey-travel-advisory.html>.

with government forces in southeast Turkey during the same year. The AKP had “carried out great purges (of alleged Kemalist-putschists) in the military, but this should not lead us to the impression that it is anti-militarist.”¹³ According to Tuğal, “Since Islamists do not have many military cadres, the party staffed the vacant positions with Gülenists.”¹⁴ Even though Erdoğan did not necessarily trust these people, the AKP resorted to the military heavily in its fight against the Kurds. Erdogan, angry with the biased treatment of different “terror” groups, “lashed out at the west for backing the Syrian Kurdish militia group the PYD in the fight against IS, which Turkey says is linked to the PKK—which the US and EU consider a terrorist group.”¹⁵ During a speech, Erdoğan said, “They are appendages of the same body...If you [Western leaders] do not see that the PYD is a terror organization that means that you do not see the Ankara attack as a terror attack.”¹⁶ Also, there had been anger toward Germany because, “The PKK is organized in every German city under a different name, and as long as it does not commit terrorist acts there [in Germany] the German state turns a blind eye.”¹⁷ Frustrated with the double standards, Erdoğan said, “The end of this crippled logic is that you [in the west] don't see the Brussels and Paris attacks—and god forbid any attacks in London—as terror attacks. Is the fight with terrorism not supposed to be a common struggle?”¹⁸

Tourism, not unlike terrorism, is a socio-political construct. Who visits whom is not apolitical. The local political (re)formations and (re)actions, have often been a response to, and a result of, the instability and violence generated through the twenty-first century imperialistic wars in the region, which have resulted not just in damages to those who experience them on the ground, but also to the image of these places in people’s minds internationally. Animosities depict a series of cause and effect relations when one reviews the chronologic unfolding of these events.

¹³ Tuğal, Turkey’s Disaster.

¹⁴ Tuğal.

¹⁵ “US Warns of ‘credible Threats’ to Turkish Tourist Spots.”

¹⁶ “US Warns of ‘credible Threats’ to Turkish Tourist Spots.”

¹⁷ “Turkish–German Ties at Historic Low, Says Scholar Faruk Şen,” Hürriyet Daily News, n.d., <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkishgerman-ties-at-historic-low-says-scholar-faruk-sen-106324>.

¹⁸ “US Warns of ‘credible Threats’ to Turkish Tourist Spots.”



Figure 7.6. Thomas Baumgärtel's painting titled "Turkish dictator," on display at the Art Karlsruhe fair in southwestern Germany as part of the "Despots Series - Trump, Kim and Erdogan". February 2018. Photo: Picture-alliance/dpa/U. Deck.¹⁹

Since the coup plot, for instance, more than 50,000 people have been arrested in Turkey, including journalists, opposition politicians, academics and activists. Through a systematic purging of over 140,000 people, Erdoğan has been able to extend his ruling AK party's control over important sectors, such as the armed forces, judiciary, police, and education institutes. In fear of the military, there has been preparation of paramilitary; police forces expanding further, and militarization spreading deeper.²⁰ In an effort to control the political landscape and remain in power, Erdoğan has even caused censorship in Germany through pro-government Turkish activists in Germany. For instance, he legally pursued German comedian Jan Böhmermann for criticizing his limitations on freedom of speech in Turkey.²¹ Additionally, through a rush of protests by a group of "regime agents," Erdoğan's supporters were able to force a German art gallery to take down an art piece titled "Turkish dictator" that was on display at the Art Karlsruhe fair in southwestern Germany in February of 2018 as part of the "Despots Series—Trump, Kim and Erdogan."²² The other two dictators remaining on display perhaps

¹⁹ Deutsche Welle, "'Turkish Dictator' Erdogan Banana Picture Causes Rumpus at German Art Fair | DW | 23.02.2018," DW.COM, n.d., <http://www.dw.com/en/turkish-dictator-erdogan-banana-picture-causes-rumpus-at-german-art-fair/a-42720075>.

²⁰ Tuğal, Turkey's Disaster.

²¹ Alison Smale, "Comedian's Takedown of Turkish President Tests Free Speech in Germany," *The New York Times*, January 19, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/12/world/europe/jan-bohmermann-erdogan-neo-magazin-royale.html>.

²² "'Turkish Dictator' Erdogan Banana Picture Causes Rumpus at German Art Fair | DW | 23.02.2018."

suggests something about the tactical difference and might of the Turkish dictatorship.

German and Turkish relations have soured over a number of issues and events in recent years. Hours after the failed coup, for instance, protesters unfurled a banner reading “The demon is in Pennsylvania.” The slogan referred to an influential Turkish religious figure, Fethullah Gülen.²³ “Erdogan blamed the network of US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen over the coup plot and accused Germany of protecting Gulenists.”²⁴ The cleric, of course, denied any role in the plot, but nonetheless Erdogan maintained a grudge.²⁵ According to Professor Faruk Şen, the president of the board of directors of the Turkish European Foundation for Education and Scientific Studies, the Fethullah Gülen movement is strongest not in the United States, but in Germany. Faruk Şen wrote, “When the Gülen movement started organizing in Germany in 1996 it did not open mosques, it opened dormitories and think tanks, research centers. It seduced German politicians and the press. So, the German state has come to tolerate them. In its view, the Gülenists have not committed any crime in Germany.”²⁶ According to Şen, while the coup attempt is an important factor, the German and Turkish governments are currently seeing a historic low in their ties because of a series of events that began before July 15, 2016. “President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is seen as an ‘enemy figure’ in Germany,” Şen said.²⁷ One of the reasons for the deterioration, Şen believes, was the very negative approach the German press took toward the Turkish government during the Gezi Park protests. In return, Şen said, Turkey had treated the German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who visited the country in an “unprecedented” humiliating manner. But most of all, Şen blames the media for the animosity:

Politicians take their lead from the press. Once Turkey made the agenda in the press, Turkey filled the picture of the enemy for politicians, who need a figure to attack in order to be visible in the media. But Turkey is also becoming the enemy in the eyes of many German people who are influenced by the press and politicians’ rhetoric. German tourists are not afraid of bombs; if fewer German tourists are now coming to Turkey, that is because of the country’s image. In Germany, if you say, ‘I’m going to Turkey’, this is now perceived as meaning ‘I’m going to a dictator’s country.’”²⁸

²³ Jared Malsin, “This Is What Istanbul Was Like on Night of the Turkey Coup,” *Time*, n.d., <http://time.com/4409152/turkey-coup-istanbul-army-police-explosions/>.

²⁴ “Erdogan Says German Leaders Are Enemies,” *BBC News*, August 18, 2017, sec. Europe, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40973197>.

²⁵ For an account of the dramatic history of relations between Erdoğan and Gülen see: Tuğal, *Turkey’s Disaster*.

²⁶ “Turkish–German Ties at Historic Low, Says Scholar Faruk Şen.”

²⁷ “Turkish–German Ties at Historic Low, Says Scholar Faruk Şen.”

²⁸ “Turkish–German Ties at Historic Low, Says Scholar Faruk Şen.”

In Germany, Turkish people are the largest ethnic minority, constituting the largest Turkish population in the world after Turkey. According to Şen, the political participation of the Turks has been considerable enough that every German political party has at least one Turkish member in its local organization. Understanding this influence, Erdogan decided to take revenge on Western interventions in his country by intervening in German politics. With a large Turkish diaspora living in Germany, in 2017 Erdogan called Germany's ruling politicians "enemies of Turkey" and tried to interfere in Germany's politics by asking the one million ethnic Turks living in Germany that can vote there, a majority of whom had backed Erdogan in a referendum, to participate in the German general election. "The Christian Democrats [CDU], SPD [Social Democrats], the Green Party are all enemies of Turkey," Erdogan announced to his people in Germany, asking them to "give necessary support to political parties that do not engage in enmity against Turkey."²⁹ In what Erdogan saw as "Nazi-style" behavior, the German government refused to let his allies campaign for him during the election and called the act an "unprecedented" interference in Germany's sovereignty.

Relations between Turkey and the United States have also soured over a host of issues in recent years and have escalated in recent months, ranging from United States policy in Syria to Trump's decision to move the United States embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. On May 21, 2018, during an iftar dinner in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Erdogan criticized the United States' withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran, stating, "Those who have more than 15,000 nuclear warheads are currently threatening the world."³⁰ Erdogan voiced a wish for the Middle East to be cleansed of all nuclear weapons, which clearly referred to Israel, the only nation in the region that possesses these weapons. While applauding the French, German and British decision to save the nuclear deal with Tehran, Erdogan said, "As Turkey, we do not accept re-igniting issues, including the Iran nuclear deal, that have been put to bed." This is not to say that some Turkish politicians do not sometimes cherish and manipulate regional crises or even refugee situations to their own best interest. In regard to refugees, for instance, Tugal argues, "The Turkish regime may have scored many PR points by opening its doors to millions, but it can't do much more than simply allow them in."³¹ However, Turkey's economy and its people have paid a high price for these power struggles that cause regional instabilities, and they do not want yet another neighboring country in crisis and another rush of desperate war refugees.

²⁹ "Erdogan Says German Leaders Are Enemies," *BBC News*, August 18, 2017, sec. Europe, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40973197>.

³⁰ "Erdogan Slams Trump's Exit from Iran Nuclear Deal," n.d., <http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/05/22/562537/Turkey-Erdogan-Iran-nuclear-deal-US-Trump>.

³¹ Cihan Tuğal, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey Are Pawns in a Geopolitical Game | Cihan Tugal," *The Guardian*, February 15, 2016, sec. Opinion, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/15/refugees-turkey-government-eu-crisis-europe>.

7.2 Tourism Strikes “Terrorism”

The ongoing military confrontations, international political conflicts, terrorist attacks, and wars in the region have directly and indirectly given rise to Islamic forms of leisure, recreation and entertainment. Animosity with the West, for instance, has led many Turkish tour operators to design advertisement campaigns focusing on capturing the attention of travelers from neighboring countries. The state-run Anatolia news agency reported, “Turkey [is] hoping to attract one million visitors from its Black Sea neighbors to compensate for losses elsewhere.”³² These types of developments have given rise to three categories of “Islamized” tourism: “Halal Tourism,” “Jihadi Tourism,” and “Warmusement,” which I will explore in the next section.



Figure 7.7. “Al-Qaida’ (GSPC) ‘terrorists’ pose for tourists in Mali. (2003)” Photo by anonymous European tourist, given to Jeremy Keenan.³³

³² “US Warns of ‘credible Threats’ to Turkish Tourist Spots.”

³³ KEENAN, “Conspiracy Theories and ‘Terrorists’: How the ‘war on Terror’ Is Placing New Responsibilities on Anthropology,” 5.

7.3 Halal Tourism

Halal tourism has been described as “a new product in the tourism industry that provides holiday destinations for Muslim families who abide by Sharia rules.”³⁴ Islam is a religion that provides guidance in many aspects of human activities that prescribe a “way of living.” According to Istvan Egresi’s book *Alternative Tourism in Turkey*:

Islam influences the direction of people’s tourism destination choices and shapes their behavior and their activities at the destination. The distinctive requirements of Muslims in terms of food, daily prayers, and travel patterns necessitate certain adjustments in the tourism. So, the needs of Muslims...should be met by the tourism sector if it wants to serve the Muslim community...[thus] halal tourism is important in developing potential tourism today and in the forthcoming decades.³⁵

The twenty-first century Muslim world has been envisioned as a high potential new niche market due to a general increase in the Muslim population worldwide. In fact, approximately one in four people worldwide are Muslim, and this religious group continues to be the world’s fastest-growing population. By 2050, the population has been estimated to reach 2.8 billion, with approximately one in three people worldwide practicing Islam. Additionally, there is an increase in the disposable income of the growing middle class in Muslim countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The Muslim population is also very young, with a median age of 24 in 2015. Thus, Millennials and young adults constitute the majority of this consumer group, making it the youngest segment among all other major religious groups who now have increasing accessibility to travel information and seek accommodation for their business trips and religious holidays, such as Ramadan travels. This new “market” is an incentive for investors to develop halal tourism facilities for its guaranteed profits. To be better able to cultivate and harvest this market, a number of organizations have formed.

³⁴ Georgeta Rață, *The English of Tourism* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 21.

³⁵ Istvan Egresi, *Alternative Tourism in Turkey: Role, Potential Development and Sustainability* (Springer, 2016), 261.



Figure 7.8. Top: Cover page of The World Halal Summit 2017 Report. Bottom: The World Halal Summit and OIC Halal Expo entrance. Istanbul, Turkey, 2017. Photo: The Event Report.³⁶

The 2017 World Halal Summit and OIC Halal Expo were hosted “under the auspices of the presidency of the Republic of Turkey” in cooperation with the Turkish Standards Institute (TSE), the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and Discover Events. The World Halal Summit in Istanbul paid significant attention to development of halal tourism.³⁷ These events and conceptions have been developed and supported by a number of organizations, such as the *Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC)*, *Organization of Islamic Cooperation*, *Islamic Center for Development of Trade* and the *Islamic Cooperation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD)*. The ICD, for instance, is a multilateral development financial institution and a part of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group, which began its operations in July 2000. The

³⁶ “The World Halal Summit and the 5th OIC Halal Expo 2018 - Event Report” (Istanbul, Turkey, November 2017), <http://www.halalexpo.com.tr/en/>.

³⁷ “As Global Halal Tourism Grows, Turkey Eyes Bigger Share,” DailySabah, n.d., <https://www.dailysabah.com/tourism/2017/08/07/as-global-halal-tourism-grows-turkey-eyes-bigger-share>.

ICD's objective is "to identify opportunities in the private sector that could function as engines of growth and to provide them with a wide range of financial products and services, [and] to encourage the development of Islamic financing and capital markets."³⁸

At the summit, there was a push for systemization, institutionalization, and regulation of the new tourist sector. Khaled Al-Aboodi, CEO of the Islamic Center for Development of Trade, expressed the need for the development of a system of accreditation and certification for regulation of halal products on which there is no consensus among members of the OIC.³⁹ Nihat Zeybekci asserted, "Of course I, as the Minister of Economy of Republic of Turkey, here will not talk about Halal, what the Halal or Haram is, the rules of Halal, the rules of standards and sensibilities. This is completely the business of Scientists and Islamic Scholars... They will set up the regulations."⁴⁰ He continued to emphasize that "halal" must be seen in larger scope. "You start from food, cosmetics, medicine, tourism, logistics, travel, banking," he said. The range of halal products and services must be understood in the accreditation system.

Of course, many countries have undertaken national standardization to formulate regulatory guidelines for Islamic or "halal" tourism. For instance, in Kenya, the Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA), established in 2011 to regulate the tourism sector, has recently been developing a new certification program for tourist establishments to comply with Islamic standards.⁴¹ The new program will certify hospitals and leisure establishments in a move targeting Muslims' growing demand for leisure travel.⁴² TRA director-general, Lagat Kipkorir, said: "We have already developed a detailed plan that entails drafting, stakeholder involvement, quality assurance preparations and training prior to roll out, and aim to produce guidelines necessary to ensure 'halal catering and accommodation'."⁴³

Turkey, however, has taken a lead in developing an internationally applicable Halal Tourism Standardization and Certification System. At the Summit, Nihat Zeybekci reported "As the Republic of Turkey we took an important step in this regard. The Turkish parliament has already issued the decision to establish the Halal Accreditation Institution (HAK). We will establish [the HAK] before the

³⁸ "The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD)," n.d., <https://www.icd-ps.org/>.

³⁹ "The World Halal Summit Report," 9.

⁴⁰ "The World Halal Summit Report," 7.

⁴¹ "Overview of Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA) - Kenya," n.d., <https://www.tourismauthority.go.ke/index.php/about-tra/overview-of-tra>.

⁴² Michael Trout, "Halal Tourism: Kenya Developing New Certification | .TR," February 13, 2017, <https://www.tourism-review.com/halal-tourism-in-kenya-to-develop-more-news5289>.

⁴³ Daily Nation App, "Kenya Developing Halal Rules with Eye on Muslim Tourists," n.d., <https://mobile.nation.co.ke/business/Kenya-developing-halal-rules-with-eye-on-Muslim-tourists/1950106-3798272-5e8e4hz/index.html>.

end of this year. InshAllah this strong institution will be a service to you all, to all 57 OIC member countries.”⁴⁴

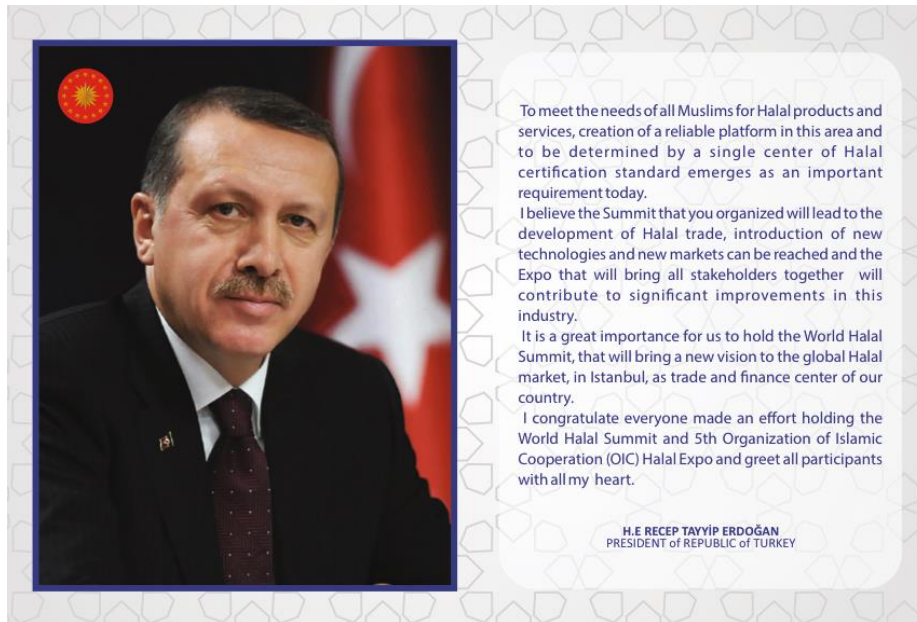


Figure 7.9. Top: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s welcome message to attendees at the World Halal Summit and the OIC Halal Expo, Istanbul, 2017. Photo: The event report. ⁴⁵

220 by 2020

Muslim travel market is on course to continue its fast-paced growth to reach US\$220 billion by 2020. It is expected to grow a further US\$80 billion to reach US\$300 billion by 2026.

In 2017, there were an estimated 131 million Muslim visitor arrivals globally – up from 121 million in 2016 – and this is forecasted to grow to 156 million visitors by 2020 representing 10 percent of the travel segment.



Figure 7.10. Muslim Travel market growth index. Source: 2018 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMITI) report. ⁴⁶

⁴⁴ “The World Halal Summit Report,” 7.

⁴⁵ “The World Halal Summit Report.”

⁴⁶ “Global Muslim Travel Index 2018,” 3, accessed May 24, 2018, <https://www.crescentrating.com/reports/mastercard-crescentrating-global-muslim-travel-index-gmti-2018.html>.

The incentives for investment in the halal tourism sector were discussed in some sessions, while others focused on what constitutes halal tourism, how to develop standards, and improvements to the halal tourism infrastructure. In Turkey, these ideas have been developing and experimented with for years now. This subcategory of tourism is a twenty-first century formation with the word “halal” starting to be more commonly used to describe tourism in the second decade of the century. Through construction of hotels such as the Club Familia in west Izmir, Turkey had begun accommodating “a new breed of holiday, one that targets Muslims who want the same things as everyone else on the beach...Under the slogan ‘Sun, sea and halal!,’ a handful of hotels in Turkey [began] offering what are being dubbed halal holidays—beach holidays that adhere to Islamic values.”⁴⁷



Figure 7.11. Muslim woman sitting at pool in tropical garden wearing ‘Burkini’, a halal swimwear. Photo: Shutterstock/Tourism-review.com.⁴⁸

However, Turkey is neither the only nor the most successful country in attracting Muslim tourists. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), in 2018 Malaysia continues to top the index for the eighth consecutive year while Indonesia has risen in the ranks and tied with United Arab Emirates in second

⁴⁷ Nasreen Suleaman, “The Birth of Halal Holidays,” *The Guardian*, August 27, 2010, sec. Travel, <http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2010/aug/28/halal-holidays-turkey-muslim-women>.

⁴⁸ Joe McClain, “Halal Travel: Malaysia Tops the List of Muslim-Friendly Countries | .TR,” May 2, 2016, <https://www.tourism-review.com/best-halal-travel-destinations-news4992>.

place in the Index.⁴⁹ The GMTI has designed an interactive online platform that provides a comprehensive search and analysis for each of the 48 Muslim countries and 92 non-Muslim destinations that offer halal tourism together with the scores and ranks for various criteria. The platform shows users the rankings of destinations based on the different criteria that were used to determine them, allowing users to filter destinations based on region, trade blocs and geography type in order to obtain more specific information. The GMTI's platform also contains a collection of images, videos, infographics, blog articles and other related media designed to serve the large population of Muslim millennials.

The 2018 GMTI report available on their website also includes tips for the investors and developers through a segmentation of Muslim travelers based on faith-based needs: "Muslim travelers are not homogeneous in their adherence to the faith-based needs."⁵⁰ In order to cater to these needs from a services perspective, service providers can look at grouping these needs into "Need to have," "Good to have" and "Nice to have." Need to haves are described as halal food service and salaath (Prayer) facilities. Good to haves include water usage friendly washrooms and Ramadan (fasting) services and facilities. Nice to haves are "no non-Halal activities," recreational facilities and services. The infrastructure of this data generating online platform provides support for the growing halal tourism sector and has enabled better control over creative envisioning and experiencing of alternate Muslim lifestyles in recreation and leisure.



Figure 7.12. Mysk by Shaza, upscale hotels specifically designed to cater to the Muslim millennials. Photo: Mysk by Shaza website.⁵¹

⁴⁹ "Global Muslim Travel Index 2018," April 2018, 38, <https://www.crescentrating.com/reports/mastercard-crescentrating-global-muslim-travel-index-gmti-2018.html>.

⁵⁰ "Global Muslim Travel Index 2018," 38.

⁵¹ "Hotel | Mysk by Shaza," Mysk, n.d., <http://myskhotels.com/>.

As a result of the growth and potential of halal tourism, new architectural projects have been envisioned. Shaza, a brand of luxury hotels, for instance, has recently launched its upscale brand Mysk by Shaza to specifically cater to the Muslim millennials. Christian Nader, Vice President of Development at Shaza describes Mysk by Shaza as “A Halal-friendly accommodation, young, vibrant, focusing on smart technology.” He reported that “The brand has been very well received by the investment community and we have already opened our first Mysk hotel in Muscat, Oman, and signed two more in Dubai and Kuwait. We are also in advanced negotiations for a Mysk resort in Indonesia as we are now actively seeking to enter the South-East Asia markets.”⁵²

There are other ways to accommodate Muslim populations that are faster and less expensive than designing and building a new hotel. Many have used existing hotels and converted the building so that it meets the needs of the halal-conscious traveler; however, “building hotels that are purposely designed to have the right facilities and configuration” is the route preferred by Nader and the investors at Shaza.⁵³ “At the end of the day, Halal-friendly hotels should not be only about Halal food and not serving alcohol. Any hotel can do this.” Nader also noted, “For Shaza, it is about privacy, experience, guest flow, respect. These principles can only be achieved in a tailor-made hotel program that must be purposely crafted for the Halal market.”⁵⁴ The Shaza website does not use the words “halal,” “Arab” or “Islamic” to describe its brand. Instead, the vision statement uses “silk” in reference to the Silk Road to create a sense of community: “The Silk Road courses through our being. Shaza is a celebration of our past—and our future. We proudly embrace all the wonders and generosity of the Silk cultures that have shaped our luxurious Shaza world.” Silk is, of course, one of those materials that gets right at an ancient relationship between Europe and Asia. By invoking silk, these promotional statements are playing knowingly with orientalist ideas. Under “Expertise” on the Shaza website, this is explained:

Shaza is a new interpretation of what it means to be of the East. Bright, effervescent and joyful, it is a modern retelling of an old world. While our past, ornate with the treasures and memories of the Silk empire, is indeed illustrious, our dreams are of our present and the future. Shaza is a five star breath of fresh air in a modern retelling of the East. We are focused on the creation of a 21st century East that respects the past, but does not get lost in its nostalgia. Ours is a brand new Eastern world filled with the promise of even more glories and reasons to be proud of who we are.⁵⁵

Shaza is obviously not satisfied with only offering the basic needs. Nader explains, “What makes Shaza stand out is the fact that the brand is focusing only

⁵² “Global Muslim Travel Index 2018,” April 2018, 33.

⁵³ “Global Muslim Travel Index 2018,” 34.

⁵⁴ “Global Muslim Travel Index 2018,” 34.

⁵⁵ “SHAZA | About Us,” n.d., <http://www.shazahotels.com/en/about-us/>.

on Halal-conscious travelers in all our hotels worldwide.”⁵⁶ The reason, he says, is a basic “business school” lesson where one learns “to find a gap in the market and fulfill the needs of your target customer.” Furthermore:

You learn that the more differentiated your product is, and the more niche your market is, the higher the chances you have of succeeding and creating sustainable returns. Obviously, niche does not mean small. Niche means specialized. The Halal tourism sector has the same business parameters for success. The Halal niche is not only specialized, it’s also very large.⁵⁷

Thus, we can see how the boom in halal tourism is leading to the Muslim lifestyle space to experience dynamic shifts. At the same time, these lucrative new markets are forming new “imagined communities,” encouraging “us” and “them” differentiations, the whole East and West and “silk empire” concepts reinforcing new forms of “Othering” practices for profit. What is silk after all, but a “commodity” manufactured only to be traded for profit. At the end of the day, halal tourism, with its entire “Islamic” and ideological facade appears to be developing into a giant “differentiating niche market” for neoliberal exploitations. Pervez Nasim, Chairman and CEO of Ansar Financial & Development Corporation, warned attendees at the 2017 World Halal Summit that, “For Muslim and ethical businessmen, profit maximization should not be the most important dimension of doing business, and there should be concerns about charity and social responsibility.”⁵⁸ However, the “halal tourism” appears less concerned with social responsibility than monetary profit as the competition for the newly emerging and fast growing market is globally high.

⁵⁶ “Global Muslim Travel Index 2018,” April 2018, 35.

⁵⁷ “Global Muslim Travel Index 2018,” 32.

⁵⁸ “The World Halal Summit Report,” 75.

7.4 Jihadi Tourism

Another entirely new subcategory of tourism also emerged in the 21st century that is referred to as 'Jihadi Tourism' (aka 'Jihad' tourism or 'Jihadist' tourism). Jihadi Tourism was also born directly out of America's imperialist intervention in the Middle East and North Africa. The ongoing military conflicts, terrorist attacks, and wars in the region produced a niche travel group interested in visiting foreign destinations with various objectives, such as scouting for terrorist training or volunteering to fight for the 'resistance'. A study done by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, found that:

Unresolved conflicts that include inter-communal violence appear to be one of the strongest magnets for FTFs [Foreign Terrorist Fighters]. A sense of identity with - and a desire to help - co-religionists who are perceived as victimized and mistreated by other groups has developed into a sense of obligation to act in defense of one's in-group. This was one of the most common reasons that individual FTFs in our sample gave for travelling to Syria. Empathy with the Sunni communities in Syria that are portrayed as being under attack as much for their belief as for any other reason was a common theme.⁵⁹

In 2010 it was reported, "Permissive military-dominated governments have been accused of allowing foreigners and emigrants with extremist impulses to scout for terror training in what is now being referred to in intelligence circles as "jihadi tourism.""⁶⁰ In December 2009 Secret State Department cables released to a number of news outlets by the document-dumping website WikiLeaks showed that Jihadi Tourism worried the British and American counterterrorism officials. "A U.S. diplomat at the embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, wrote, "There is believed to be a certain amount of so-called 'jihadi tourism' to southern Somalia by UK citizens of Somali ethnicity."⁶¹ However, the cables indicated that the US diplomats worried "the British government made "little progress" in reaching out to Muslim communities a year after the July 7, 2005, attacks in London's transit system, known at the 7/7 attacks."⁶²

According to Binoy Kampmark, some Western governments implemented strategies to deal with jihadi tourism. Since 2007, for instance, the United Kingdom

⁵⁹ "Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria" (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, July 2017), 3, http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/assets/img/Report_Final_20170727.pdf.

⁶⁰ "'Pakistanis Are Posing as Indians to Escape Discrimination' - Times of India," The Times of India, n.d., <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/Pakistanis-are-posing-as-Indians-to-escape-discrimination/articleshow/5907956.cms>.

⁶¹ Alex Sundby, "WikiLeaks: 'Jihadi Tourism' Worries U.S., U.K.," *CBS News*, December 13, 2010, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/wikileaks-jihadi-tourism-worries-us-uk/>.

⁶² Sundby.

has been running an anti-radicalization program to target youths at risk of involvement with extremist groups. In the United States, groups such as the Islamic Society for North America (ISNA) have been used to strengthen Muslim leadership, which were proven effective in condemnation of the Nairobi attacks. Moreover, certain groups like al-Shabaab were sustained through opportunistic and systematic factors.

In 2014 Switzerland established anti-terror laws prohibiting any activity by Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and other terror groups within Switzerland and abroad, in addition to any activities that support or promote the groups. The Swiss government has constantly worked on tightening its terror laws by introducing new, more specific, legislation making it a criminal offense to travel abroad for the purposes of terrorism.⁶³ In August 2017, there were some 60 people being prosecuted for criminal offenses linked to terrorism, some of whose convictions were upheld by Switzerland's highest court in Lausanne, to set a precedent for the prosecution of other “jihadi tourists.”⁶⁴

However, these measures have not been successful in dissuading Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs). In fact, member states are now more concerned about the phenomenon of FTFs than ever before. During the first two years of the Syrian war, the number of Europeans who had gone to fight in Syria were estimated between 140 and 600. However, these numbers have increased significantly since then: “By some estimates, over 25,000 foreigners had gone to fight in Syria between the start of the civil war in 2011 and September 2016. This compares with the far lower numbers that participated in conflicts such as the Afghan war (1979–1989), the war in Bosnia (1992–1995), or the war in Iraq (2003–2006).”⁶⁵ It is not just the numbers of FTFs but also the range of countries they come from that causes the concern. In May 2015, the United Nations Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team reported that FTFs had gone to Syria from over 100-member states. The unresolved conflict in Syria has therefore made jihadi tourism one of the most pressing transnational security issues of our time.

Of course, “jihadi tourism is big business, oiled by a global recruit base from which various diasporas can be tapped.”⁶⁶ Binoy Kampmark argues there is different reasoning behind “recruitment drives” including the Western involvement stemming from Yemen to Waziristan and drone warfare. However, another powerful factor is “The imagery of holy war and the trammeling of holy sacred land by the enemy.”⁶⁷ This may be why the Wall Street Journal described the opening

⁶³ “Swiss Woman Charged with Being ‘Jihadi Tourist,’” August 25, 2017, <https://www.thelocal.ch/20170825/swiss-woman-charged-with-being-jihadi-tourist>.

⁶⁴ “Swiss Woman Charged with Being ‘Jihadi Tourist.’”

⁶⁵ “Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria,” 9.

⁶⁶ Binoy Kampmark, “Problems with Jihadi Tourism.,” *Eureka Street* 23, no. 19 (2013).

⁶⁷ Kampmark.

of Mleeta, Hezbollah's first permanent museum, as "Jihadi Tourism Hits Lebanon".⁶⁸



Figure 7.13. Entrance to Mleeta, Hezbollah's first permanent war museum in Lebanon. 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Built atop a wooded hill in the same exact strategic territory used by Hezbollah fighters during the 2006 war against Israel, Mleeta offers strong "imagery of holy war" and spatial experiences of "holy sacred land." According to the museum's website, which is available in Arabic, English, and Persian, Mleeta Resistance Tourist Landmark aims "to preserve the places where the Mujahideen lived, giving people the chance to be acquainted with the style of the unique experience of the Islamic resistance against the Israeli enemy, since its occupation of Beirut in 1982."⁶⁹ The cave is one of the areas built by the resistance fighters for shelter. It was dug in rotation by more than 1000 freedom fighters over a span of three years. The cave, which is 200 meters deep, has different rooms built within it that have served more than 7000 resistance fighters (Figures 7.14 to 7.18).

⁶⁸ DON DUNCAN, "Jihadi Tourism Hits Lebanon.," *Wall Street Journal - Eastern Edition* 255, no. 140 (2010).

⁶⁹ "Mleeta :: The Land Speaks to the Heavens," n.d., <https://mleeta.com/mleeta/eng/>.



Figure 7.14. Preserved “living room” within the secret tunnel used by Hezbollah Mujahideen, representing living spaces of Islamic resistance forces in Mleeta museum. 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.15. Preserved “prayer room” within the secret tunnel used by Hezbollah Mujahideen, representing living spaces of Islamic resistance forces in Mleeta museum. 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.16. Preserved “field command room” within the secret tunnel used by Hezbollah Mujahideen, representing living spaces of Islamic resistance forces in Mleeta museum. 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.17. Preserved “storage room” within the secret tunnel used by Hezbollah Mujahideen, representing living spaces of Islamic resistance forces in Mleeta museum. 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.18. Preserved “kitchen” and “bathroom” within the secret tunnel used by Hezbollah Mujahideen, representing living spaces of Islamic resistance forces in Mleeta museum. 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Following a short “jihadi” introduction, the home page of the website lists the museum’s contribution to “tourism”: “Mleeta landmark contributes to the boosting of the tourist movement in south Lebanon, providing close acquaintance with the villages and towns of the south, which were shunned from the political map due to both chronic negligence and occupation.”⁷⁰ This upfront statement may also be an attempt to display Hezbollah’s contribution to the recovery of the Lebanese tourism industry, which was negatively impacted by the 2006 war. While many Lebanese appreciate Hezbollah’s resistance power, some see the organization as an aggressor responsible for the 2006 war as well as Lebanon’s subsequent wars. For instance, the organization is criticized “for siding with Bashar Assad and fighting on his behalf in Syria. A new war, even more devastating than the last.”⁷¹

The Wired reported “Hezbollah opens Terrorist Tourist Trap” and that “ISRAEL-HATERS AND TERRORIST-LOVERS, REJOICE!” Seeming unfamiliar and obviously disturbed by the idea of memorializing war and resistance, the author of the article, Spencer Ackerman, wrote, “the former Israeli military bunker is now home to war porn and propaganda... ‘HezbollahLand’ takes terror tourism to a whole new level.”⁷² Today, this tourist landmark is run by the Lebanese Association for Tourism and Tradition.

The convergence of recreation and war memorialization, however, is a widespread modern phenomenon observed in spatial and architectural manifestations worldwide. Examples of it are memorial parks dedicated to the memory of wars while simultaneously designed for recreational activities. In recent

⁷⁰ “Mleeta :: The Land Speaks to the Heavens.”

⁷¹ “What Is Hezbollah Planning for the Third Lebanon War? - Opinion - Jerusalem Post,” n.d., <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editors-Notes-The-looming-third-Lebanon-War-488526>.

⁷² Author: Spencer Ackerman Spencer Ackerman Security, “Hezbollah Opens Terrorist Tourist Trap,” *WIRED*, n.d., <https://www.wired.com/2010/07/hezbollah-opens-terrorist-tourist-trap/>.

decades, an increasing number of military and war museums have been constructed in which war is celebrated, glamorized, and fashioned into an interactive display.

“Despite their dramatic topic, military museums used to be dry stuffy collections, mainly appealing to soldiers and scholars,” according to Charles H. Cureton, chief of the museum’s division at the Center of Military History in Fort McNair in Washington. “But the galleries have grown up, capturing the interest of young visitors with theme-park thrills and dynamic displays.”⁷³ At the \$100 million National Infantry Museum in Fort Benning, Georgia, for instance, visitors can try out combat and rifle range simulators. Having positioned yourself in a soldier’s point of view, “You get a little bit of the drama of the attack, of that tension, the speed, the confusion, the noise, it takes you in time from the storming of Redoubt Number 10 at the Siege of Yorktown, to the war in Iraq,” Cureton says. Of course, if the visitor happens to identify more closely with one of the countries such as Iraq, whose destruction is toyed with in the museum, she/he might also be propelled to write an article similar to that of Spencer Ackerman, with the entire first sentence capitalized: “IRAQI-HATERS AND TERRORIST-LOVERS, REJOICE!” The United States National Infantry Museum could then be similarly described as “home to war porn and propaganda,” taking “terror tourism to a whole new level.”⁷⁴

The decoding and meaning making process of the visitors regarding the messages encoded into war museums heavily depend on the spatial design and environmental factors of the memorial space as well as each visitor’s background knowledge, ideological beliefs, political standing, and identity. In other words, the same acts of war and violence can be depicted/perceived as heroic sacrifice or inhuman terrorism depending on which side of the war the builders/consumers of the museums stand on.

⁷³ Larry Bleiberg, “10Best: Military Museums That Bring Battles to Life,” USA TODAY, n.d., <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/10greatplaces/2014/11/07/military-museum/18593775/>.

⁷⁴ Security, “Hezbollah Opens Terrorist Tourist Trap.”

7.5 Warmusement

Regardless of the war depicted, ideology displayed, and side taken, all war museums are inherently violent and destructive as polarizing embodiments of enmity and violence. I call these types of entertainment venues “warmusements”—spaces designed to amuse people about the utmost violent aspects of humanity. These sites are designed to have political socialization and militarization effects on their users while also sending messages to enemy states. The phenomenon of warmusement is a more recent development in the Middle East, inspired by its preceding Western counterparts. In the twenty-first century, political leaders of the Middle East create and use these settings where they display power as spaces of socialization and control.

For instance, in Iran the post-revolution post-Iran–Iraq war political leaders have been heavily invested in developing warmusements to assimilate people into a political and military culture. Considering Iran’s defensive position in a war imposed by Iraq and supported by multiple Western as well as Middle Eastern countries, it is undeniable that, to some degree, these spaces were meant to communicate military might to foreign enemies. Ultimately, however, these ideologically designed environments militarize local culture and add to a widely spreading global culture of violence. Iran’s case provides a significant background for understanding the rapidly expanding culture of war and violence in the region.

Carolyne Berson wrote, “war is modernity incarnate,” and as such, modernity subsists as a state of perpetual warfare.⁷⁵ Each country’s political and historical background, viewed within the larger context of its relations with other international powers, reveals the reasons behind its excessive militarization. In Iran, for example, the slogan “more children, more future soldiers” was the mindset that political leaders used to frame the Iranian baby boomers as Children of the Revolution and Soldiers of War.⁷⁶ Under the government’s ban on contraceptives and abortion, and as part of a new national agenda, there was a baby boom after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and during the 1980–88 Iran–Iraq war.⁷⁷ Growing up during the longest conventional war of the twentieth century, this generation saw both destruction and construction as Iran underwent rapid transformation.⁷⁸ While most Iranians were still puzzled by the changes in their government and society, Tehran and other major cities manifested these changes in built forms.

The Islamic regime was implementing new spatial policies while the war was imposing its own destruction. Nightclubs were turning into Islamic libraries, liquor stores into ration centers, basements into bomb shelters, and homes

⁷⁵Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory*, 79. Scholars such as Bacevich, Crysler, Bevan, Retort and Boal agree that we live in a world of ‘endless wars’ or ‘permanent warfare’.

⁷⁶Caroline Berson, “The Iranian Baby Boom,” *Slate*, June 12, 2009,

⁷⁷The leaders of the Islamic Republic sought population growth as a national agenda. Berson.

⁷⁸Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*.

became the only place where women could be without hijab.⁷⁹ The leaders of the Islamic Republic invested much in the upbringing of the younger generation in order to produce an ideological army. Today, Iran has a far higher literacy rate than neighboring countries.⁸⁰ However, education in Iran, as elsewhere, is ideologically charged; it also stretches beyond the classroom. History has been revised both in print media such as school books as well as in the landscape, from a time before this generation was old enough to decode the revision.

When the war ended, the entire city of Tehran turned into an active memorial construction site. With the population nearly doubled and many parts of the city needing to be rebuilt, the government refrained from building many traditional memorials and instead invested in a great many “living memorials.”⁸¹ While this was helpful for (re)construction of the necessary infrastructure in the city, it was not sufficiently symbolic, ideological, or educational for the “army” of baby boomers who now constituted more than half of the population and the regime’s best hope for staying in power. Simultaneously, the wave of Islamization had removed nearly all entertainment venues from public spaces, leaving the public with very few places for leisure and recreation apart from religious shrines and other Islamic institutions. The combination of the needed spaces of recreation and the ideologically requisite spaces of education carved out a completely new type of memorialization: a form of space that entertained, memorialized, educated, and militarized culture through recreational landscapes but, most importantly, legitimized the existence of an Islamic Regime. This model went beyond Iranian cities to manifest in other countries such as Turkey and Lebanon where warmusements were constructed with an Islamizing theme (Figure 7.19). Thus, top-down militarization in Iran happened for two reasons: the regime was trying to survive the war and international threats while simultaneously trying to control its own population and produce internal consent.

⁷⁹ Most Islamic legal systems define Hijab, a type of modest dressing, as covering everything except the face and hands in public. Cyril Glassé and Huston Smith, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam* (Rowman Altamira, 2003), 179–80.

⁸⁰ Berson, “The Iranian Baby Boom.”

⁸¹ According to Shanken, traditional memorials are “forms of memorials such as statues, obelisks, triumphal arches, and other commemorative structures, those forms of memorials whose sole purpose is to serve as a memorial.” Living memorials are “useful projects such as community centers, libraries, forests, and even highways.” Shanken, “Planning Memory,” 130.

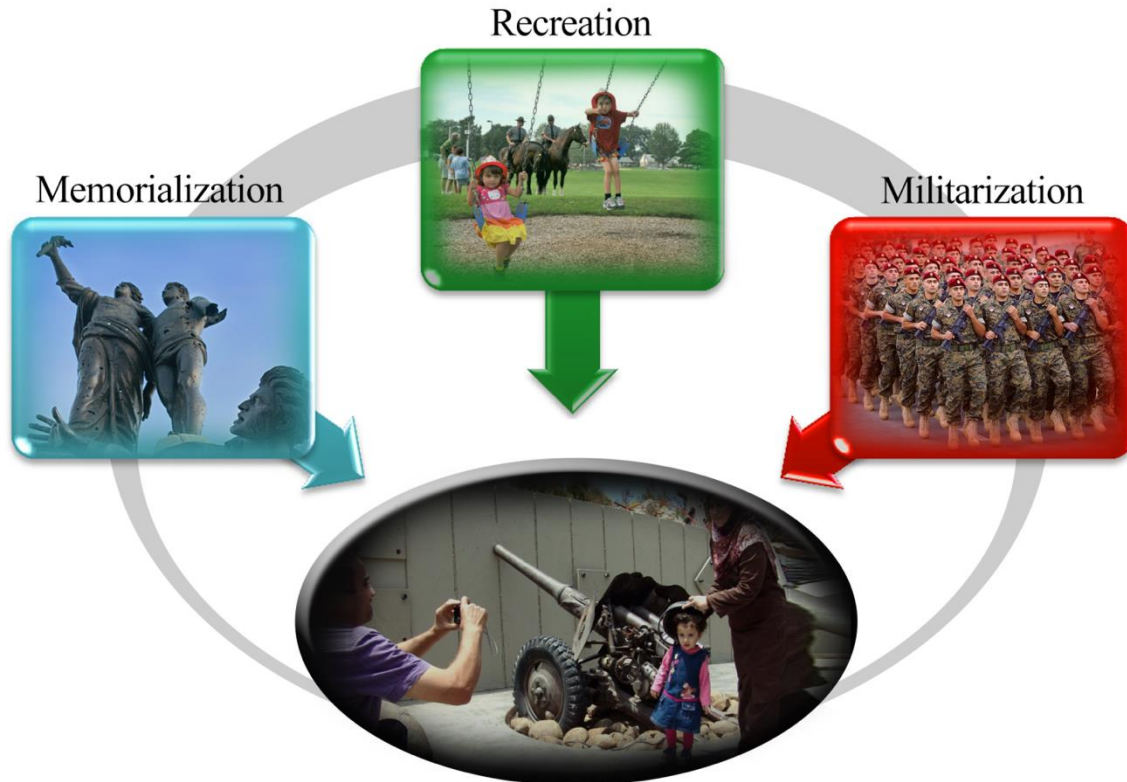


Figure 7.19. Diagram of converged spaces of memory, recreation, and militarization.

Tehran’s Museum of Holy Defense and Martyrs’ Museum are just two of the many museums built in various cities in Iran to memorialize the Iran–Iraq war. The Martyrs’ Museum, for instance, was first founded in 1980 to memorialize martyrs of the Revolution and later, in 1996, was renovated and expanded to include martyrs of the Iran–Iraq War. This museum and more than 25 others by the same name nationwide have been fully funded by Bunyad-e Shahid (Martyrs’ Foundation), a large and powerful organization in Iran with a stated mission “to glorify and memorialize those who gave their lives for a greater cause.”⁸² Being an entity of the state, however, the Martyrs’ Foundation is selective in its representations and constructs the displayed memory to match the state’s desired metanarrative. For instance, symbols of Islam and the Islamic Republic are overtly inscribed into the displays (Figure 7.20).

⁸² Christiane Gruber, “The Martyrs’ Museum in Tehran: Visualizing Memory in Post-Revolutionary Iran,” *Visual Anthropology* 25, no. 1–2 (2012): 72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.2012.629171>.



Figure 7.20. Display of Islamic symbols and the picture of Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic Republic in the Martyrs' Museum, Tehran.

In these spatial organizations, the state blends together the Revolution, the Iran–Iraq war, and the Shia Myth of Karbala in order to construct a complex inseparable mesh of sentimental memory that will ultimately further secure its own position in power.⁸³ The inclusion of political agenda by museum curators is nothing new;⁸⁴ however, the spatial conflation of the myth of Karbala with a modern war memorialization appears to be a more recent phenomenon. This modern phenomenon is not exclusive to Tehran or the Martyrs' Museums, either. It is a widespread phenomenon occurring in various cities in Iran through varying architectural manifestations. The Sacred Defense Garden Museum, the Museum of Sacred Defense and the Cinematic City of Holy Defense are some examples of sites designed for memorializing the war in their various exhibitions throughout the country by building on familiar Islamic myths such as that of Imam Hossein in the battle of Karbala. Thus, the government is able to promote sacrifice and unify the

⁸³ Melika, “The Myth of Karbala: Socio-Political and Spatial Practices in Contemporary Tehran,” 101.

⁸⁴ Castillo writes about Western “political exhibitions” that were similarly of special interest to the Foreign Minister and Public Education Administrators. Exhibitions that could “call on [their] beneficiaries for defense in times of need” thus producing a kind of capitalist soldier in the process, “a transnational consumer-citizen willing to take up arms to protect Atlanticism’s common home, in both the literal and figurative sense.” Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 71.

civic body through shared remembrance and mourning.

My 2012 thesis, *The Myth of Karbala: Socio-political and Spatial Practices in Contemporary Tehran*, investigated the linguistic roots and architectural manifestations of the culture of martyrdom in Iran. In it, I analyzed the difference between the top-down designs of the governmentally funded permanent memorial buildings versus the bottom-up design of the publicly funded temporary structures of memory. Looking at the ideologies and select memories employed by various designers of memorial spaces in Iran, I demonstrated how these buildings have been utilized both for and against the structure of power. Analyzing the top-down manifestation of war memory in Iran, I argued that:

Unlike in the tekiyehs [bottom up Shii ritual spaces of commemoration] where the users are also participatory designers and performers and operators in the commemorative space, the state funded spaces of memorialization are encouraging the users to remain in their passive observer's role. For instance, the parastatal Martyrs' Foundation also funds war-themed films and mobile memorial galleries commemorating the Iran-Iraq war as well as Karbala exhibitions during the month of Muharram [(Figures 7.21 and 7.22)]. These types of memorialization, while using similar symbols as the tekiyehs, prevent the visitors from leaving the role of solely the observer. Therefore, there is a one-way communication presenting only the metanarratives constructed by the state.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Melika, "The Myth of Karbala: Socio-Political and Spatial Practices in Contemporary Tehran," 103.



Figure 7.21. Ashura Gallery, Imam Hossein Square, Tehran, 2010. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.22. War Memorial Exhibit, Tehran, Iran.

A clear metanarrative present at almost all of the top-down spaces of commemoration are those about women and gender roles. There are very few women, if any, on display in Martyrs' Museums and Museums of Sacred Defense throughout the country. Khorramshahr, a city that was occupied by Iraqi forces and where thousands of people died, offers no accurate representation of the city's female resistance fighters or women martyrs. Khorramshahr's Sacred Defense Museum, for instance, displays only one single photograph of a female martyr (Figure 7.24) in the entire museum which is full of images of men who died during the occupation and war (Figure 7.23). Rather than photographs, women are often depicted in abstract paintings where there is more control over their representation. Women are primarily shown to be the ones giving birth to, raising, praying for, and mourning the loss of soldier sons.



Figure 7.23. Male martyr's on display at Sacred Defense Museum, Khorramshahr, 2015.
Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.24. Photograph of a female martyr on display at Sacred Defense Museum, Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.

In one of the gallery spaces, one will notice a table set up with a white satin table top on which there is a photograph of a woman's face framed by first a restricting headscarf, then two interlaying ornamental floral stars placed in a Khatam designed picture frame (Figure 7.24). Under the floral starburst, there are two lines of text. The first reads: Martyr of the 45-day resistance of Khorramshahr. The second line reads, in a larger bold font: Martyr Shahnaz Haji Shah (Figure 7.25). She seems to have offered a good package. First of all, there was a photograph of her with full hijab, without which she would be omitted from the museum. Second, her last name, Haji Shah, which means "the pious man is king." The wrong combination of names, those glorifying the kingdom, would have caused her story to fade through the years. The word "Shah" meaning "king" or

other names of the king like "Arya Mehr" were highly sensitive and heavily censored terms after the revolution. But the term "Haji" describes pious men returning from the Makkah pilgrimage.

Another thing that could have seen this single female martyr presence omitted from the museum would have been if member of her family fought for the "wrong" side and had political beliefs that did not support the Islamic Republic of Iran. Additionally, if her resistance journey and death involved sexual violence, she would also be censored. There are no memorials for any of the thousands of rape cases during the war. In fact, there is an effort to try to dismiss and downplay any accounts of such of incidents. When I asked a curator why he thinks that is the case, he uncomfortably and very briefly explained that it would not be culturally acceptable or bearable and changed the subject, making it obvious through his body language that further discussion about that matter was not welcomed.

There were, of course, millions of women who lost sons, brothers, and husbands. Hundreds of thousands were left widowed and with families to raise after the war. While the suffering has been great, the women are rarely on display, perhaps because it is much harder to represent their story as heroic. Bearing in mind that the number of women killed was considerably less than men during the revolution and war, it makes it harder for museums to find suitable female martyrs that would fit their metanarrative and socialization purposes. The selective process and censorship have also applied to men; however, it has been easier to hand pick presentable examples of "soldiers of Islam" from hundreds of thousands of dead men. Also, since men do not have visual signifiers such as hijab, it makes it easier to frame any man as pious by adding a few items such as a Quran and prayer beads in the display case next to their picture.

During my interviews, I found that the families of an air force pilot glorified on display refused to visit the museum as the narrative on display contradicts their real-life persona. In 2014, Kian the oldest son of a highly regarded martyr of the war said, "It is disrespectful and disgusting what they have done there. They make my dad seem like a religious man with everything they have put in the display and how they represent him. But my dad never prayed. He was not religious at all and did not care about Khomeini either. He fought to defend his country and his people like all military men should do. He died for Iran, not Khomeini, not Islam." In response to me asking if he has tried to go to the museum and make a complaint to change the situation, he laughed in disbelief and said, "Are you kidding me? Of course, I won't go! I will get myself in serious trouble if I insist on anything like that. I prefer just to ignore what they do. No one I care about visits these ridiculous places anyway. These propaganda museums are only used by their own people, a bunch of religious zealous. I have learned to ignore them and live my life. I know who my dad was and why he gave his life, and that is enough for me."



Figure 7.25. Photograph of a female martyr on display at Sacred Defense Museum, Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Shahnaz Haji Shah's photo is placed on the table next to white and red plastic flowers and a mirror larger than Shahnaz's picture frame. This shrine-like display uses many signifiers of home spaces, which helps relate the setup to personal household memorial practices. This unusual home-like display acts like hijab in this setting. Using markers of domesticity, the woman martyr enters the space of this public museum wrapped in a halo of typical private space. Her presence in this public space is protected, "respected," and buffered with layers of culturally appropriate gender markers including hijab and domestic space. Directly behind this domestic setup is a large painting depicting a group of women carrying a dead female body walking behind a leading spirit of the woman shown in full white hijab with a covered face and a halo around her head; a symbol of holiness. Her death is shown to have elevated her from the physical world to a purely spiritual one and she now leads other women in light and grace (Figure 7.24). The strategic placement of the large mirror next to Shahnaz's picture forces the onlooker to see their own reflection in the mirror, mixing Shahnaz's persona with one's own image (Figure 7.25). This arrangement ultimately reminds the visitors that everyone can become a martyr. This space, through its spatial plan and decorations, brings the visitor into a constructed metanarrative for women and socializes them into an Islamic culture of martyrdom.

The overarching account regarding gender roles repeats throughout the museum, echoing similar sentiments expressed in other public areas nationwide. Messages about the importance of hijab, for instance, provide stories that deliver a metanarrative about how women should live their lives. A colorful sign visible immediately after entering Khorramshahr's Sacred Defense Museum states, "My apparel is respectful toward expectations of the Iranian society" (Figure 7.26).



Figure 7.26. Sign promoting hijab at the Sacred Defense Museum, Khorramshahr, 2015.
Photo: Ayda Melika.

In fact, one would not be allowed in with "inappropriate" hijab. I was able to enter this museum because I had been "appropriated" the day before at another museum. I was denied entrance to Khorramshahr's Navy War Museum because my overcoat was considered too short, my shawl was too loose, my entire attire too revealing and not satisfying the requirements for entering holy places such as these museums. After explaining how far I had traveled to see the museums, I was given the option to purchase a chador (full black veil) from a hijab booth set up inside the Navy War Museum! In fact, the billboard outside the museum advertising the hijab booth was larger than the museum's overhead sign and advertisements in the street (Figure 7.27).



Figure 7.27. Hijab advertisement billboard outside the Navy War Museum. Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.

I was surprised to learn there was an exhibit room within the museum dedicated to promoting and selling hijab. I waited behind the curtain inside the hijab booth while the tailors custom-made a chador that I had picked out of a variety of models and fabrics. At first, they all appeared to be the same long black veils to me. However, I was given a crash course on how they are each different. One of the ladies working there recommended a style of chador she usually recommends to students or working women. She advised, “It has sleeves, making it possible for you to still use your hands to take photographs without having the front of your chador open up too much and, ‘God forbid,’ reveal your body.” Also, she added, the fabric around the head and shoulder area are designed to allow women to wear backpacks. Having had no prior experience with chadors, it took some time for me to get used to the movement restrictions inherent to the idea of chadors. Chadors cannot be tight, figure hugging, nor reveal curves or skin. As I struggled with the challenges of handling the loose bat-shaped fabric of the veil that limited my movement, I saw another sign near the main building of the Sacred Defense Museum stating, “My hijab is the peace of the society” (Figure 7.28).

Having the chador did gain me to access to many state sponsored

institutions I would have otherwise been denied entrance to, including the Khorramshahr Sacred Defense Museum, Shalamche memorial war zones, and even the Martyrs Foundation's Central Office. Rather than bringing peace for the "society," my personal experience confirmed that my veil brought peace to the "state."



Figure 7.28. Sign promoting hijab at the Sacred Defense Museum, Khorramshahr, 2015.
Photo: Ayda Melika.

Within the gallery spaces of the Khorramshahr Defense Museum, there were morality officers in addition to surveillance cameras that closely monitored the appropriateness of women's hijab and behavior (Figure 7.29). During my visit, I was approached three times to be reminded of what is not appropriate in the space. For instance, at one point I had raised my arms to take a photograph of a tank in the garden from a higher angle when a female morality guard rushed toward me in devastation and said, "Your entire thighs are visible. God forbid a man might see it and a sin will be committed." I immediately dropped my arms and became self-conscious of the photo angles I chose as arms moving in any direction away from my body could open the front of my chador, revealing my fitted pants showing from under my knee-short overcoat and put a pious man in danger of accidentally seeing, thinking, and committing a sin.



Figure 7.29. Security and morality guard next to the surveillance camera at the Sacred Defense Museum, Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Many of the Martyrs' and Sacred Defense museums I visited had these types of messages within their spatial program, which often included (re)constructed battle zones complete with combat-ready weaponry, allowing visitors to experience war sites and envision themselves as warriors in combat. The juxtaposition of messages about soldiers dying to defend Islam, how hijab is the most important signifier of Islam, and how piety brings peace to society is an attempt to associate hijab with resistance against enemies of Islam. The spatial programming of the museum thus reinforces that the hijab is a woman's armaments in combat and their chasteness contributes to a stable, peaceful society. Hence, women are socialized into a militarized pious culture (Figures 7.30 to 7.33).



Figure 7.30. Hijab promoting banner that reads “Hijab is my life.” Karbala-ie Panj War Exhibit, Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.31. Sign displayed next to exhibited boats left from the war operation reads “Chastity is a precious gem that one should not lose easily.” Arvand Kenar War Exhibit. Arvand Kenar, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.32. Two signs displayed at the Imam Hossein Desert Hospital War Memorial reading “Hijab is the shell for the pearl of existence” and “Pious people are dearest.” Near Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.33. A sign displayed in the hallway of a war hospital exhibit states “Honorable men with zeal have families with hijab.” Imam Hossein Desert Hospital War Memorial, Near Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.

These signs represent only one example of the various types of militarized Islamization that occur through spatial design and programming in the warmusements of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other Middle Eastern countries, such as the Republic of Turkey and the Lebanese Republic, where similar approaches have been used that deserve further investigation. In Iran, one of the biggest threats openly displayed in many war exhibitions is “Soft War” (Figure 7.34). The Soft War refers to cultural wars. It is based on a belief that the United States is combating Iran not by dropping bombs but through dissemination of cultural products that devalue Islamic codes and convention. Messages regarding the “Soft War” are especially visible within war memorial exhibits and museums designed and operated by paramilitary Basij forces and its parent organization, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Through these cultural teachings within state sponsored war museums, the regime is weaponizing citizens with preferred ideologies to fight against the aggressors whose ideologies are injected into society through invisible means aiming to change the norms and expectations of the people. This helps explain the placement of a stand for hijab right next to the Navy’s proud exhibition of models of the nationally built submarine tankers (Figure 7.35). These are all seen as weapons of resistance and war artillery. The “Soft War” is a threat experienced by many Muslim countries at a time when an overwhelming amount of cultural programming is being broadcast onto their population, fundamentally changing values and lifestyles.



Figure 7.34. Posters on the stronghold wall in a war museum depicting messages of Imam Khomeini and Khamenei regarding the “Soft War”. Military-Cultural Exhibition of Martyr Major General Parviz Madani, near Abadan, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 7.35. Model of the nationally built Iranian Submarine Tanker at the Navy’s War Museum, Khorramshahr, 2015. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Thus, cultural militarization of the Middle East is a result of external and internal threats to the structures of power within each country. Moreover, it is important to see the Islamized examples of recreational memorial landscapes in the larger body of militarized spaces worldwide and realize the polarizing role these militaristically designed environments of enmity play in the vicious cycle of global violence.

CHAPTER 8. Panoramic Militarization: Exploiting Ottoman–Islamic Traditions to Expand Neoliberal Urbanism in Turkey

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Panorama 1453 Historical Museum

8.3 Spaces of Indoctrination

8.4 Spaces of Legitimization

8.5 Spaces of Dissemination

8.6 Militarizing Fate and History to Urbanize Today and Tomorrow

8.1 Introduction

Examining the transformation of urban open spaces in Istanbul illuminates the politics of urban memorial (re)design and recreation in the modern history of Turkey. In this chapter, I will first review the history of the *Topkapi Cultural Park*, focusing on various transformations that took place there from Topkapi, the place where the fiercest battle of the Constantinople siege took place; to *Topkapi'daki*, used as a bus terminal; to additions of the more nationalistic and Islamized projects, such as the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*, memorializing the Conquest by tying it to Islamic hadith from Prophet Muhammad.



Figure 8.1. View of the main entrance of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Istanbul. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Studying various examples of environmental design, architectural projects, and visual entertainment in this park, I demonstrate the political intentions of the builders and users manifested in the site to create new forms of political socialization and spaces of resistance. Istanbul Metropolitan Council's Topkapi Cultural Park project envisioned by Recep Tayyip Erdogan will be argued to have been a top-down urban park plan aimed at dissemination of political goals into the public sphere to socialize people into desired cultures.

Illuminating the contemporary purpose of park planning as spaces of reform and control, I argue that the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* was a design strategy for large scale urban Islamization and militarization with a neoliberal agenda. After providing a brief description of *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*, how it was planned, built, and is used, I will examine three categories of spaces designed for *indoctrination, legitimization, and dissemination*. Through the case of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*, I demonstrate how the political leaders in Turkey create and use park settings to assimilate people into the regime's economic, political and military culture. Similarly, I show how the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality utilized these techniques to design and build spaces complying with and socializing users into "Islamized" neoliberal military culture. The *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* is used as an example to demonstrate how political leaders shape and reshape urban parks as part of a power struggle.

Using the term "Panoramic" in the title of this chapter is inspired by Ipek Tureli's chapter on "Panoramic Urbanism in Istanbul" in *Istanbul Open City: Exhibiting Anxieties of Urban Modernity*.¹ In this chapter, Tureli describes and analyzes how Panorama 1453 Historical Museum compares to its early nineteenth-century predecessors, invented as a mass attraction in Western European metropolises, "where [panorama] came to epitomize an international hunger for physically, geographically, and historically extended vision." In my chapter, *Panoramic Militarization: Exploiting Ottoman–Islamic Traditions to Expand Neoliberal Urbanism in Turkey*, I examine AKP's aim to construct an extended urban militarization. Panorama 1453 Historical Museum demonstrates a top-down design for indoctrination, legitimization, and dissemination of extensive cultural militarism along with promotion of urban militarization.

Tureli claims that "Panorama 1453 is a highly interactive space, not a silenced one, that is carefully curated for elation and identification." While Tureli has included some quotes from interviews with designers and constructors of the museum, her chapter lacks user perspective by indicating that the space is "highly interactive." A set of descriptions aimed at supporting this claim seem to be based on participant observation. For instance, Tureli argues,

The immersive view demands visitors to assume the point of view of the conquering soldiers on the ground. Yet, they were able to augment this "old" media with their own technology, zooming in and out using their cameras, thereby extending the given view; the platform's space, though restricted, doubled as a platform for socialization and conversation on the version of urban history displayed.

However, the choice of the audience regarding what to look at and for how long, how to decode and make meaning, and speaking to one another, as well as the use of technologies that enlarge the details, do not describe interactivity.

¹ Ipek Tureli, "Panoramic Urbanism in Istanbul," in *Istanbul Open City: Exhibiting Anxieties of Urban Modernity*, 2018.

Interactive media and spaces are those that allow the medium and the user or the space and the user to influence each other. Allowing a two-way flow of information between the spaces of the Panorama 1453 and its users is not permitted. In other words, the user is not allowed to add or illuminate, move or touch any part of the painting or the tightly screened off 3D objects on the platform guarded by a security person who is always in attendance. Thus, instead of referring to the museum's exhibit spaces as interactive, which would imply a two-way communication or information exchange, I recommend referring to them as *spaces of indoctrination*.

Moreover, Tureli uses the analogy of mosque, cinema, and theater to describe Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, finally settling more comfortably with theater.

Perhaps an analogy with theater, rather than cinema, is more appropriate. Iber Ortayli, a respected Ottoman historian in Turkey [...] invokes this comparison to explain the power and choice of the panorama as a medium. "Theatricality" is indeed the effect that not only the Panorama but the whole culture park, with its set-like design, seeks to achieve. In this sense, the appeal of the panorama derives from its invitation for "reenactment" and interaction more than immersion.²

While the designers may have intended to create such a space, and even if the space appears to welcome "reenactment and interaction", it is important to note that the possibility does not actually exist for visitors to interact with the space. In the next sections, I will examine various spaces within the museum, exploring their functionality and user experiences.

² Ipek Türeli, *Istanbul, Open City: Exhibiting Anxieties of Urban Modernity*, 2018, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1565084>.

8.2 Panorama 1453 Historical Museum



Figure 8.2. External view of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum building*. July 2016. Istanbul. Photo: Ayda Melika.

The Panorama 1453 Historical Museum is set within Istanbul Metropolitan Council's Topkapi Cultural Park, which had been used as a bus terminal prior to the opening of the museum in January 2009. According to architectural historian, Ipek Tureli, the typically jammed bus terminal served as an entry point to the city for travelers and rural-to-urban migrants. “[I]n 1999 the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality decided to move the bus terminal further west to Esenler, and its Directorate of Projects carried out, during the mayoral term of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, one of the largest ‘urban transformation’ projects in the city’s history.”³ According to Tureli, the district municipality’s urban restructuring efforts have been aimed at extending the park along the city walls to create a “cultural island” that supports religious tourism. Contrary to the bus terminal, which did not engage with the surrounding historic remains, the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum has been designed and constructed to build on, consume, and develop the area’s historic setting, including the three mosques that are in its proximity. The introductory remarks regarding the area in a book on the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality describes the space by claiming:

This is Topkapi, the place where the fiercest battle of the Constantinople siege took place, where the unscalable walls were overcome, where the day that the blessed soldiers had awaited occurred...This is the door that opened onto the conquest of Constantinople...Here you will witness the

³ Tureli.

conquest of Constantinople once again and experience the moment when the soldiers entered the city, almost exactly as it happened. You will witness the explosion of the cannonballs, cast by the Hungarian cannon expert Urban, and see them flung at the walls of Constantinople. The battle cry of Sultan Mehmed II's soldiers and the sound of the marches played by the Janissary band will accompany you.⁴

The clear emphasis of many descriptions of the area is on the vivid experience of a highly glorified Islamic conquest through a set of environmental designs, artistic features and technological equipment that have been intended to enable the visitors to "witness" the fall of Constantinople "almost exactly as it happened." According to Kadir Topbas, mayor of Istanbul, "the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality [has] opened the Panorama 1453 Museum in order to bring to life the images of those bewitching moments; now the people of Istanbul can once again experience the conquest of Constantinople, a turning point that has made its effect felt throughout world history."⁵ Similar glorifying messages are also inserted throughout the exhibits in the museum. These messages are not just encoded in exhibited visual arts, but also repeated through written language and the audio guide available at the entrance.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was Turkey's prime minister at the time of the museum's opening in 2009, is responsible for starting the Topkapi Cultural Park project and initiating the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum. Along with the popularity of the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) in 1994, Recep Tayyip Erdogan who fought on an anti-globalization platform, was elected as mayor of Istanbul and began facilitating an expansion of construction projects with an Islamist agenda.



Figure 8.3. Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the opening ceremony of *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. January 31, 2009. Istanbul. Photo from the book *Panorama 1453 Tarih Muzesi*.⁶

⁴ Nevzat Bayhan and Esra Erkal, eds., *Panorama 1453 Tarih Muzesi*, trans. Zeynep Kandur, First Edition (Istanbul Metropolitan Culture Co. Publications, 2009), 5.

⁵ Bayhan and Erkal, 15.

⁶ Bayhan and Erkal, 19.

According to Tuğal, Mayor Erdogan was not engaged in using Istanbul's religious heritage for establishing an Islamic republic; instead he used it as a means of attracting global capital and tourism: "Istanbul would be mildly 'Islamized'; it would not be 'Islamicized'—if that means becoming the center of an Islamic republic."⁷ The process only accelerated after the Justice and Development Party (AKP), under Erdogan's leadership, won in Turkey's general election of 2002 and Erdogan became prime minister in 2003. Astonishingly, and in contrast to previous pro-corporate movements, "the Islamic free-market conservatives succeeded in further integrating Istanbul into the circuits of global capital without mobilizing opposition in the sprawling squatter neighborhoods that ringed the city."⁸ Tuğal conceptualized this urban-spatial condition as a dimension of his "passive revolution" theory, arguing that the phenomenon is "absorbing the challenge of Islamism into free-market Atlanticism." Furthermore, he asserts, "The pious Muslims of the AKP—who now held that they were no longer Islamists, but conservatives—would henceforth mobilize religion to reconstruct the city in ways that contradicted their earlier radical aspirations."⁹

It was in this context that the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* was envisioned and built. Demonstrating how Istanbul's religious heritage was used for attracting capital and tourism, the museum also symbolizes the neo-Ottomanized, neo-liberalized and "Islamized" aspects of urban reconstruction in Istanbul. Aware of the significance of the museum, on January 31, 2009 Erdogan participated in the opening of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum and left his remarks in the museum's guest book:

We have presided at the official opening of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum. There is no need to write a great deal. All that I need to say is that it was "Absolutely Marvelous". I congratulate Kadir Topbas, the mayor of Istanbul and all the artists who participated in this project. --Prime Minister Erdogan.

The museum was built through the efforts of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and its Mayor, Kadir Topbas. At the opening of the museum, Topbas applauded the advanced stage that museology has reached in Turkey by stating, "Panorama 1453, in which there are audio and three-dimensional visual effects, has superior qualities both esthetically and technically to similar museums throughout the world." He tied this work of design and engineering to the subject exhibited at the museum. "The conquest of Constantinople," he states, "is not only a legend of heroism; it was also a product of engineering genius." Describing the power and glory of Byzantium in 1453 and its advantage of being "surrounded by the sturdiest and best designed ramparts in the world," Topbas is able to highlight the might of the Ottoman power that defeated them. He calls Fatih Sultan Mehmed (III) "a master engineer" in charge of "the most modern army of the age." According

⁷ Cihan Tuğal, "The Greening of Istanbul," *New Left Review*, II, no. 51 (2008): 75–76.

⁸ Tuğal, 75.

⁹ Tuğal, 75.

to Topbas, “The ramparts, ravaged by cannons, some of which the Ottoman sultan had designed himself, became the setting for hand-to-hand combat” that led to the glorious conquest.

Topbas was not the first person trying to make a connection between current Islamists and those who conquered Istanbul in 1453. According to Tugal, Sultanbeyli, where the Islamists had built their first municipal base in Istanbul in the early 1980s, had become known as “the ‘fortress’ from which Islamists would conquer the rest of Istanbul.” In this metaphor, the secular inhabitants of the city center were compared to the Christians of Byzantine times. With the coming to power of the RP and Erdogan in 1994, “passionate controversy raged around a ‘second conquest’ of Istanbul, with the Ottoman seizure of the city in 1453 as the first.”¹⁰ Tugal asserts that this turned celebrations on the anniversaries of 1453 into a symbol of growing Islamist strength. What Topbas does, however, goes beyond just suggesting a “second conquest” or emphasizing Islamic heritage. Instead, in line with the messages encountered throughout the entire museum, he highlights and promotes a method of conquest through design, construction, urban products and engineering. Thus, in his statements, Topbas provided a vision of the “conquest” that is focused on progressive science, military, and engineering that can integrate Istanbul more successfully with other world cities and economy.

After the official opening day, the Panoramic 1453 Historical Museum has been managed by Kultur A.S., attracting not just the public’s attention but also that of state leaders such as Turkey’s president, Abdullah Gul, who visited the museum on March 15, 2009. In the museum’s guest book, Gul described his visit as “a great pleasure and a great honor” and added:

I am also extremely pleased that our metropolitan council has made such cultural opportunities available to the Turkish nation; this museum employs an art form that plays an extraordinary role in the formation of a historical consciousness and in reminding every member of our great nation of those days of pride in our glorious history. I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in realizing this magnificent project and hope that such success will continue. --Abdullah Gul, President.

The “historical consciousness” that Gul admired, however, has been focused only on specific aspects of the past made available for “every member” of the “Turkish nation” to remind them of a particularly glorified Islamic history. This, is exactly a part of history that had been intentionally hidden from public display, causing what has been frequently referred to as the “amnesia” of the Turkish population. Esra Özyürek wrote, “It has been said that there is no social memory in Turkey before Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded modern Turkey after World War I. Indeed, in 1923, the newly founded Turkish Republic committed to a modernist

¹⁰ Tuğal, 73.

future by erasing the memory of its Ottoman past.”¹¹ This relationship with history has changed instrumentally in recent years.

The history that was once erased with the aim of aiding the development of the modernist future is now being rewritten into the public sphere with exactly the same goal. According to Esra Özyürek, “New generations make every effort to remember, record, and reconcile earlier periods. The multiple, personalized representations of the past which they have recovered allow contemporary Turkish citizens to create alternative identities for themselves and their communities.”¹² While this may be the case at the personal level, the government has been utilizing a top-down implementation of memory to socialize the public. When it comes to official memorials installed in the public spaces, today specific aspects of history are selected, edited, and amplified with the same aims employed for the memory interventions during the Atatürk era. Turkish nationalism today (re)installs certain Islamic memories into public spaces in order to generate homogenizing narratives that aid its national ambitions.

In line with Gul’s wish to see “magnificent projects” such as the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum continue to succeed, these types of projects that intervene with public memory have been on a rise. For almost two decades, the city of Istanbul has been the prime target of an ambitious Turkish State strategy for urban transformation that has focused on reformation and regeneration of public identity through memorials and the redevelopment of historic consciousness. This strategy is intended to trigger a wide-ranging process of urban destruction and reconstruction that uses (re)creation of physical public environments to shape new forms of politicized recreation that produce new social and cultural formations. Through this radical and dramatic restructuring of Istanbul’s public memory, the authorities seek to bring about an Islamic neo-Ottoman neoliberal modernization.

¹¹ Esra Özyürek, *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2007).

¹² Özyürek.

8.3 Spaces of Indoctrination

In contrast to the order of words in the name of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*, the spatial organization of it presents the panorama at the very end. In order to reach the dome where the panorama painting representing the event of the conquest is located, one must pass through a carefully curated historical depiction of the conquest exhibited on two floors, which the museum website calls the “conquest corridors.” The two floors leading to the dome consist of gallery spaces exhibiting the “Panels of Istanbul.” These panels narrate a history of the city of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed II, who is referred to as “Fatih the Conqueror,” and the conquest of Constantinople. Each panel covers a particular aspect of history aiming to prepare the audience to witness the panorama. After passing by the real-size statue of Sultan Mehmed II at the entrance lobby and upon entering the exhibit hall, the visitor will first encounter panels narrating the history of Istanbul, followed by a series of character-based panels dedicated to the representation of “Fatih the Conqueror” and his reign (Figure 8.5). His presence dominates the exhibit and visitors are immersed in an extensively detailed and positive portrayal of his childhood, education, mentors, youth, army, conquest and governing of the city, all the way to his death. The panels are packaged to explain Sultan Mehmed II’s life as the glorified embodiment of Islamic and Ottoman traditions.

Some monitors are installed among the static images and long texts along the “conquest corridors,” screening documentaries that animate and reinforce the messages of the panels. These moving images attract the attention of the audience to further instruct them on their way to the panoramic painting.



Figure 8.4. Internal view of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum's* exhibit hall and gallery spaces. Photos: Museum Website.



Figure 8.5. Real size statue of Sultan Mehmed II at the entrance of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.6. Monitors presenting short documentaries at the exhibit hall of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photos: Ayda Melika.

While there are a few genuine objects present, the exhibit space is mostly filled with photographs of miniatures, engravings, plans, and drawings. What is shown at the exhibit is a reproduced heritage packaged through images that are accompanied by detailed descriptions of what it is that the visitor is looking at and should be seeing in these mostly abstract forms. In other words, the reproduced images are not left to be decoded by the audience, but rather narrated and explained to them. This curatorial decision is explained as “intended” so that “the incidents are visualized with a narration and works of art by describing the era, the way they were perceived as much as possible.”¹³ There is no indication as to whose perception has been considered in the exhibit, though it becomes clear that no one hurt by, or in disagreement with, the conquest is given voice at the museum. The statement continues, claiming, “The texts have been penned by employing a scientific approach and popular style considering the visitors' profile.” But again, there is no indication of who is considered to be the general visitor of the museum for whom the exhibit is curated. Associate Professor Dr. Erhan Afyoncu and Assistant Professor Dr. Coşkun Yılmaz are responsible for preparation of the content presented at the exhibit. This team, which “penned” the texts using a “scientific approach and popular style” has also benefited from collaboration with the designer of the exhibit, Özkul Eren, and M. Hilmi Şenalp, an architect who was consulted in forming the exhibition.

Claiming to have been “Established to contribute to the revered heritage,” the museum puts great effort into ensuring control of the cognitive experience of its visitors. *Spatial cognition* is a branch of cognitive psychology highly applicable to environmental studies that explore how people acquire and use knowledge about their environment to determine how to behave in a space. Considering that the physical environments that surround us have great impact on how we act in that moment, spatial designers prescribe behaviors into the physical environment and the programs of the spaces they design. For instance, at the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, there is a specific order in which the audience is to encounter the information provided. Besides the numbering of the “Panels of Istanbul,” which encourages a sequential viewing of the material, systematic crowd control barriers are used to prescribe the path and the order of the information received. Barrier ropes, retractable belt stanchions, glass barricades and queue ropes are used in addition to signs and arrows to dictate and control the flow of the visitor within the museum (Figure 8.7). Additionally, gallery attendees are available to direct people into the “correct” path in case anyone misses the clear instructions. Having attempted to pass under a red rope to find another photo angle, I was stopped by the attendee’s facial gestures showing disapproval while he pointed his finger at the direction of the arrow.

¹³ “Panorama 1453 > Physical Venue,” n.d., <http://panoramikmuze.com/homepage/panorama-1453/physical-venue.aspx>.



Figure 8.7. Prescribed viewing path imposed through retractable barrier belts at the exhibit hall of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.8. Prescribed viewing path imposed through retractable barrier belts at the exhibit hall of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photos: Ayda Melika.

The arranged spatial experience produces a setting for a prescribed reading of the material. Besides the physical flow, the arrangement produces what I call “persuasive space.” Persuasive spaces are those that embody an argument and, through their architectural arrangement, spatial hierarchy, paths and order of elements displayed as evidence, aim to persuade their users. The Panorama 1453 Historical Museum does exactly that.

For instance, visitors can only reach the panel titled *Fatih’s Istanbul* after passing other “Panels of Istanbul” along a maze-like viewing path ordained by barrier belts in the museum’s exhibit hall (Figures 8.8 and 8.9). This path is not constructed as a permanent part of the structure of the building; rather, it is implemented through temporary removable fixtures such as the barrier belts. This suggests there may have been an initial period when the curators solely relied on the numbering system of the panels to produce the desired cognitive experience, environmental behavior, and physical flow of users. The exhibit hall, void of the red belts for the prescribed path, is also visible in the older photos of the gallery (Figure 8.4). The physical traces, the worn out guiding barriers and experienced attendees controlling visitors to stick with the sequence of the panels in July 2016 when I was conducting my field research, indicated that the practice is not recent and that it has been in place for a number of years.



Figure 8.9. Visitors reaching panels titled *Fatih’s Charity Foundation* and *Fatih’s Istanbul* after passing other panels along the prescribed path ordained by barrier belts in the exhibit hall of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

The path suggested by the curators and marked with red belts throughout the exhibit hall allows visitors to encounter certain information prior to others. For instance, the panels encountered prior to *Fatih's Istanbul* provide necessary background for the visitors to be able to have a positive reading of that panel, which is placed immediately after a panel titled *Fatih's Charity Foundation* (Figure 8.9).

The main conclusion that a visitor is supposed to arrive at is something along the lines of what the introductory sentence of the "Panels of Istanbul" claims: "Thanks to its libertarian and fair management, Fatih the Conqueror captured the hearts before he conquered the castles, and desired that magnificent city became a center of sciences and arts."¹⁴ This message is repeatedly reinforced through the narrations at the exhibit. Breaking down the narrative of the history represented at the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum into its core elements (where, when, who, how, what) we arrive at the following: In the city of Istanbul (where), in the year 1453 (when), the Ottomans (who), using their advanced Islamic and cultural heritage (how), conquered and developed the city (what).

The panel titled *Fatih's Istanbul* includes a depiction of Istanbul produced in accordance with the style of maps from Fatih's era by Suheyl Unver (Figure 8.10). Besides the Topkapi Palace and the ramparts, the map illustrates architecture built after the conquest in Istanbul, including Fatih Mosque among other mosques and the madrasahs. The title gives ownership of Istanbul to Fatih the Conqueror. Out of the sequential context, this panel may raise questions about the intentions of the conqueror, the fate of what had been there prior to construction of the new Islamic structures, and the attitude of the residents of the city whose neighborhoods were being restructured with new religious institutions. But the sequential viewing will ensure that this panel is most immediately seen after another panel titled *Fatih's Charity Foundation*, which rationalizes Fatih the Conqueror's good will for the people (Figure 8.11). The panel and its accompanying narration explain that Sultan Mehmed II won people's hearts by establishing large waqfs (trusts). An image of the Fatih Vakfiye (deeds of the trust) document is included in the panel to depict the services provided by the warrior Sultan Mehmed II to the people. Serving the people through these waqfs, the narration stresses, was considered as important to him as establishing cities.

Learning about Fatih's Charity Foundation and his good will for the people helps dilute disapproval that may arise in response to the conquest of the city, which inevitably included destruction of some old infrastructure and its replacement with new social orders through construction of new Islamic buildings. However, before getting to the point in the exhibit where these two panels are encountered side by side, the visitors have also seen earlier panels preparing them to interpret the conquest as a life altering, glorious event that improved the lives of the residents of the city through Islamic urban interventions.

¹⁴ "Panorama 1453 > The Panels of Istanbul," n.d., <http://panoramikmuze.com/homepage/virtual-tour/the-panels-of-istanbul.aspx>.

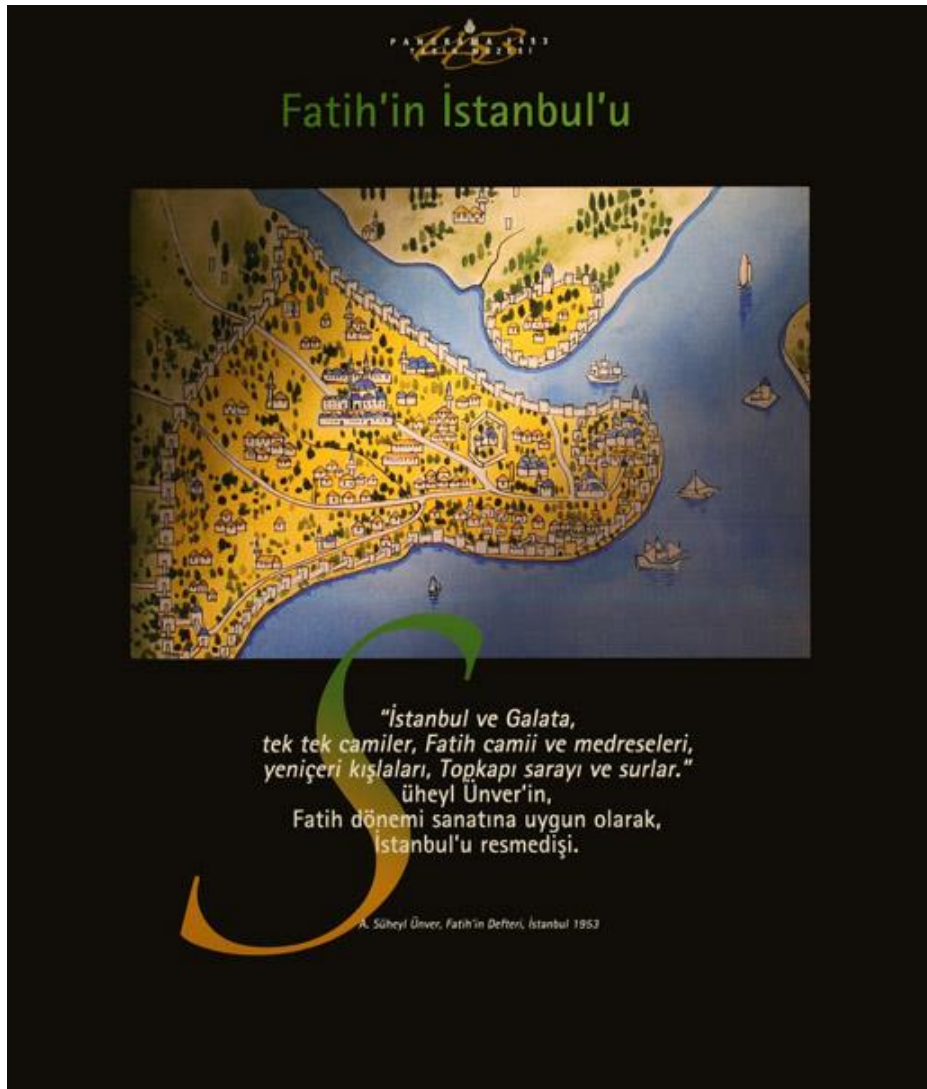


Figure 8.10. Panel titled *Fatih's Istanbul* displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Photo: Museum Website.

For instance, a panel titled *First Entry into the City: How were the people of Constantinople Treated?* claims the conqueror treated people with "tolerance and justice":

Sultan Mehmed II, entering the city from Topkapi in a glorious procession, treated the people of Constantinople after the conquest with tolerance and justice. The 21-year-old sultan came to Haghia Sophia and called to the people, who were waiting here in great fear: "I am Sultan Mehmed; I declare to all the people that from this day forth you need not fear for your lives or your freedom."¹⁵

¹⁵ Bayhan and Erkal, *Panorama 1453 Tarih Muzesi*, 86.

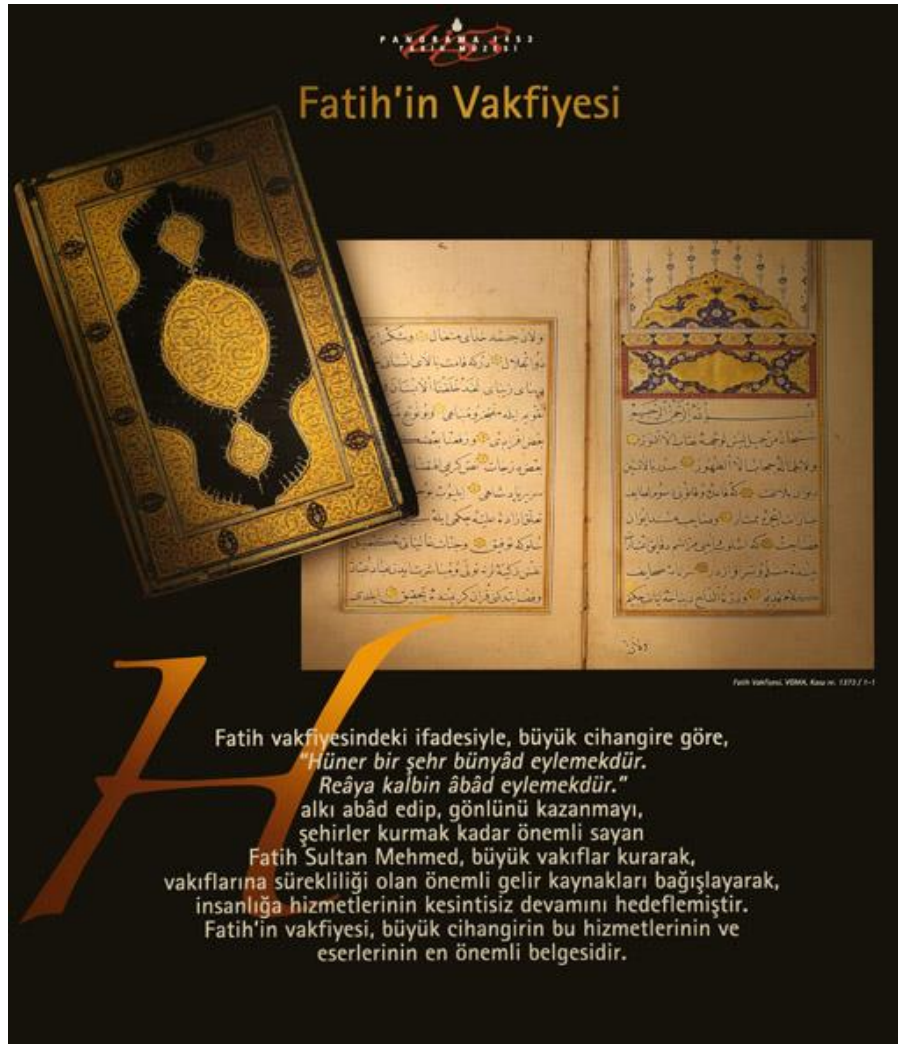


Figure 8.11. Panel titled *Fatih's Charity Foundation* displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Photo: Museum Website.

In addition to this gracious statement, visitors learn that, through a treaty, Sultan Mehmed II, granted the Galata residents freedom to hold and perform their "beliefs, traditions and customs" as they had prior to his conquest:

When the Galata residents swore allegiance to Sultan Mehmed II the young ruler granted them a treaty. In the treaty Fatih says: "I accept that the (residents of) Galata may continue to behave as they have until this time as necessitated by their beliefs, traditions and customs. Their lives, fortunes, earnings, property, depots...all their goods, women, children, slaves and concubines are theirs," thus demonstrating to the whole world how difference could be treated with respect.¹⁶

¹⁶ Bayhan and Erkal, 86.

Furthermore, another panel titled *A City is Rebuilt* claims Constantinople was in desperate need of “recovery” and the conqueror “repaired” the infrastructure and “improved” public life:

Constantinople was ravaged by Crusaders in 1204, and never fully recovered. After the conquest, Sultan Mehmed II did not drive out the residents nor destroy the works that existed in the city. Rather, he preferred keeping the people in the city and revivifying the remaining works. Fatih conceived of the conquest of Constantinople as a small task, with public improvement being the greater task; he repaired the ramparts and made bridges, roads and water canals. Thanks to Sultan Mehmed II’s financial support and religious tolerance, Istanbul became a center in which people of different religions could live together.¹⁷

Thus, before getting to the panel *Fatih’s Istanbul*, the visitors become versed on how the conqueror was “just and tolerant,” how the residents could freely live their “beliefs, traditions and customs,” and how their lives improved because of Fatih’s reconstruction of the city caused improvements in the physical condition of their lives. The title *Fatih’s Istanbul* generates a different meaning when put in this context and the interventions depicted in the map of the city illustrated on the panel *Fatih’s Istanbul* gain new implication having been encountered in this sequence.

Thus, the spatial composition of the museum, the layout of the paths through the galleries, and the arrangement of the “Panels of Istanbul” entail a particularly cognitive experience as well. Through curation of copies of modern works of miniature and the narrations attached to them, the exhibit produces a path of reasoning through which its main argument becomes acceptable. In addition to establishment of the city of Istanbul, the narrations consist of stories about the siege and the conquest. They are mostly told through the life of Fatih Sultan Mehmed II or, as he is proudly referred to, “Fatih the Conqueror,” whose character is glorified through consistent positive association. The stories are not necessarily all represented in chronological order. The ordering is more concerned about producing a particular reasoning rather than being chronological. Fatih’s character becomes a constant element that maintains a tie between the laws, arts, civilization, religion, culture, army, war and construction works of the city that is conveyed in the museum.

Without the reproduced images placed next to long passages of writing on the walls, the “Panels of Istanbul” would make the exhibit hall appear even more like a reading room. One definitely encounters more “telling” than “showing” in the gallery spaces. Consuming the carefully drafted narrations in the order represented are paramount to arriving at the conclusion intended by the museum designers and curators. However, for various reasons, including lack of interest in

¹⁷ Bayhan and Erkal, 80.

reading long passages and lack of reading knowledge of the Turkish language, the visitor may not be able to follow the text presented on the wall panels. This, however, would not work as the museum relies heavily on the curated storyline, therefore, according to the website:

...the museum of conquest also intended that the visitors spend some quality time. For those that cannot find time to read “Panels of Istanbul”, the main theme of the panels are also given in brief sentences. In addition to this, automatic audio guidance system [available in 10 different languages] provides detailed information at the museum.¹⁸

The reproduced copies of certain works of art, such as miniatures, painted maps and engraving represented at the exhibition appear to be an attempt to fit the profile of a traditional art museum and have visuals to accompany the narrations. However, Panorama 1453 is not an art museum nor, as its name suggests a “Historical Museum.” Most appropriately, it is, as its own website frequently refers to it, a “Museum of Conquest.”



Figure 8.12. Visitors reading the panel entitled *A Miracle of the Prophet: The Conquest* displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

The greatest number of panels in the exhibit are dedicated to depicting the Conquest of Constantinople and its connections to Islamic and Ottoman traditions.

¹⁸ “Panorama 1453 > The Panels of Istanbul.”

In this manner, Fatih the Conqueror and his army are associated with the Koran and elevated to represent "good" men of god. For instance, the narration accompanying a panel entitled *Soldiers of the Conquest: Holy and Blessed Soldiers* (Figure 8.13) claims:

The painting illustrates the heroism and bravery of the soldiers of conquest. One of the major reasons that renders conquest of the city meaningful for Muslims was the hadith for the conquest and favour of the prophet, who referred to the soldiers of the conquest as "Ni'me'l-ceys/Holy and blessed soldiers". After sultan Mehmed the conqueror surpassed the city walls and trespassed in the city, he walked in the company of his blessed soldiers. When he was at the hearth of the city, he called out as follows: "the courageous fighters! Thank our Allah, you are the conqueror of Konstantiniyye from now on. Our prophet's uttered "The city of Konstantiniyye of the prophet is destined to be conquered. The ruler that accomplished the conquest is a beautiful one and the soldiers are the brave ones." You are the soldiers honored by the sweet language of our prophet.

This hadith, therefore, which is repeated through some varying translations in the exhibit, reminds the visitors that the conquest and those responsible for it were not just heroic and brave, but part of a divine plan and praised by Prophet Muhammad himself. For instance, another panel, entitled *Why was the Conquest Necessary?*, refers to prophet Muhammad's hadith as justification for why it was thought to have been possible and obligatory for Muslims to conquer this apparently unconquerable city. The sacred hadith, of course, provides a less questionable and more divine justification in addition to the one presented regarding the poor living conditions of residents who needed to be liberated from the mismanagement of the Byzantine rulers by the Muslim conquerors.



Figure 8.14. A panel entitled *Fatih Sultan Mehmed's Kaftan and Armor* displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Photo: Museum Website.



Figure 8.15. A panel entitled *The Swords of Fatih Sultan Mehmed II* displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Photo: Museum Website.

The pride generated around the conquest by the hadith is associated with Turkish identity through panels, such as *Fatih Sultan Mehmed's Caftan and Armor* and *The Swords of Fatih Sultan Mehmed II*, which demonstrate the cultural and religious identity of the warriors (Figures 8.14 and 8.15). In these panels, illustrating examples of the swords and armor that belonged to the warrior Sultan Mehmed II, there are elements representing Islamic and Ottoman traditions. For instance, we are told “For the Ottomans a caftan was generally made of thick and expensive material and heavily embroidered” and the swords are inscribed with the *Be-Ism-Allah* (in the name of Allah...), the sultan’s name, his title, and prayers asking for Allah’s help to secure victory.²⁰ The actual caftans, armor and swords of the conqueror can be found exhibited at the nearby Topkapi Palace; however, at the exhibit hall of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, visitors are presented only with images and familiarized with the visual codes and conventions of war material. This is part of their preparation for entering the dome where the panorama painting is housed.



Figure 8.16. The entrance to the dome where the panorama painting is displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

It is only after receiving a comprehensive education through the “Panels of Istanbul” and becoming familiarized with what made Islamic and Ottoman traditions superb that visitors arrive at the dark corridor (Figure 8.16) taking them up to “the dawn of May 29, 1453, [to] bear witness to the moment of stepping in the city.”²¹ Equipped with ideological instructions and visual semiotic training, the audience enter the dome where they can apply the extensive militarism they experienced to cope with and interpret the militarized space inside the panorama.

²⁰ Bayhan and Erkal, 62 and 65.

²¹ “Panorama 1453 > Physical Venue.”



Figure 8.17. A visitor inside the dome where the panorama painting is displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

The panorama painting project started in 2005 and was completed in 2008. It was led by Haşim Vatandaş and a team of seven other artists, including Ramazan Erkut, Ahmet Kaya, Oksana Legka, Yaşar Zeynalov, Hasan H. Dinçer, Atilla Tunca and Murat Efe, who contributed to the panoramic painting. An entire panel in the museum is self-consciously dedicated to the museum itself, the name and profession of each artist involved, research methods, art production, and stages of construction (Figure 8.18). The panorama painting, measuring 38 meters in diameter and covering an area of 2,350 square meters, is claimed to make this “the first museum in the world with panoramic domed picture design.” The museum’s construction is celebrated within the museum itself (Figure 8.19).

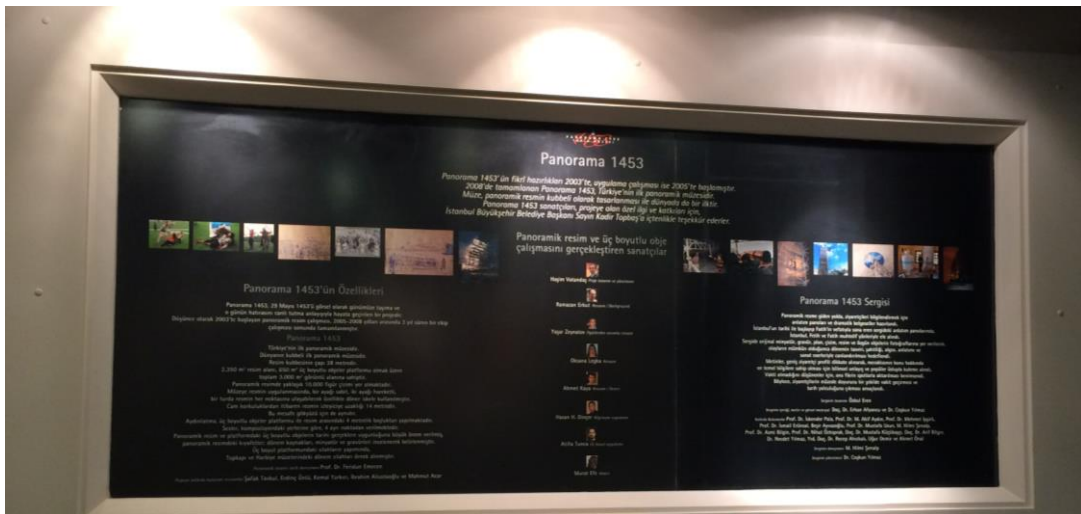


Figure 8.18. A panel entitled *Panorama 1453* displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.19. Photos of the production phases of the panorama painting on display at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum and website*. Photos: Museum Website.

According to the website, “the distance between the picture and the visitors’ platform reaches the size of 650 sqm and captures the visitors from all aspects and directions.”²² This painting distinguishes the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum from other museums because, the website claims, there is no “frame or boundary visible.” The description of the painting in the promotional book *Panorama 1453 Trih Muzesi* explains:

When a painting is framed it is limited; no matter how great the impression of three-dimensions may be, one can still see the edges of the picture, thus making it clear how far the picture is removed from where you are. However, as there is nothing in the “PANORAMA 1453 Historical Museum” that one could call the “limit” or “frame” of the picture, anyone looking on the painting will be able to perceive the work in its true dimensions. The moment the observer steps onto the platform they will experience a shock that lasts for 10 seconds. This situation is a result of your confusion at not being able to find reference points for dimension, like a start or a finish to the painting, thus increasing the impression of the picture’s reality. Here people, even though they are entering a closed location, feel as if they are entering a three-dimensional exterior space.²³

The “10 seconds of shock” example is used in several printed and online digital promotional descriptions of the museum. However, once the visitors climb the stairs and reach the platform, they immediately encounter short glass barrier walls, some of which are marked with large red arrows pointing to the exit direction (Figure 8.20). Additionally, a security guard, whose contemporary uniform is at odds with the traditional uniforms depicted in both the warrior manikins and painted soldiers in the panorama, is present in the dome at all times. The barriers, including

²² “Panorama 1453 > Physical Venue.”

²³ Bayhan and Erkal, *Panorama 1453 Tarih Muzesi*, 109.

other visitors visible in the foreground of the panorama, can prevent spatial disorientation and detract from the immediate awe advertised.



Figure 8.20. The glass barrier walls inside the dome where the panorama painting is displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

However, once visitors make their way closer to the painting at the edge of the platform and stand close enough to the glass barrier so that it leaves their view, they will more likely experience a sense of infinite space (Figure 8.21). A large part of the magical blurring effect experienced at the dome is produced in the area between the audience and the panoramic picture. This is the first time where the visitors encounter three-dimensional human figures and machines after walking through the long “corridors of conquest” where they were presented with the back-to-back two-dimensional “Panels of Istanbul.” In these 3,000 square meters of space, much blurring and cross dissolving of time and space occurs.



Figure 8.21. The glass barrier walls inside the dome where the panorama painting is displayed at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.22. The space between the audience and the painting where objects are blurred into images at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

As evident in Figures 8.21 and 8.22, certain physical objects exist both physically and in the image. For instance, the wooden barrels and the cannon balls are strategically placed in positions near the area where they are repeated in the painting (Figure 8.22). These objects, the physical and the image, are both visible to the eye of the visitor at a distance and lighting condition that make it hard to tell them apart. This technique enables a blurring of space where the audience loses the border separating the three-dimensional space from the two-dimensional image behind it. This blurs the visible space in front of the audience into an illusion of continuity.

The cannon displayed in the space between the onlookers and the panorama painting played an important role in the Conquest. Fatih Sultan Mehmet II was aware of the importance of weaponry in accomplishing his goal. He is said to have ordered the casting of the largest guns known to that day: “Guns cast by foundry masters like Muslihiddin Usta and Saruca Pasha made barrels that measured 60 centimeters in diameter. The largest three guns cast by the Hungarian foundry master Urban had barrels measuring 80 centimeters in diameter and eight meters in length.” Fatih the Conqueror demanded that the engineers cast the largest possible guns because he needed to make sure they were strong enough to bring down the walls. Also, Fatih believed the larger guns had the ability to induce greater fear in the enemy, leading to potential early surrender without a fight.

Looking past the three-dimensional cannon balls, arrows, and barrels placed in the foreground, other types of weaponry are visible in the painted image. The audio guide introduces various weapons depicted on the battle field. For instance, the small guns depicted in parts of the panorama painting are called Kolibrina (Figure 8.23). Because of their small size, these guns could be fired by a single person. At the time, these were considered to be advanced weaponry that was used by warriors during the transitional time between cannons and the flintlock carbines, which became popular a century after the conquest. The panoramic painting, the three-dimensional objects, and the audio narrations in the dome, place great emphasis on the might of the Ottoman military by highlighting its advanced technologies and modern weaponry. It is repeatedly stated that the weapons used by the Ottomans were the largest, most advanced, most capable weapons available in 1453. The importance of weaponry in deciding the fate of the siege was a well-known fact and had a profound implication worldwide:

When the importance of the cannon in the conquest of Constantinople was understood, research and development in firearms gained great impetus. According to a number of historians, the role that firearms played in deciding the fate of a siege for the first time was of greater importance than the conquest itself. With this siege, Europe realized the amazing power of this technology.

Besides the weaponry, the eight-person team of artists who worked on the

panorama paid close attention to depictions of the wall as the biggest obstacle of the Ottoman army. Its proportion had to be captured correctly to illustrate the challenge that the Turks faced during the siege. The battered wall in the painting thus signifies the might of the Ottoman's advanced army and modern weaponry.



Figure 8.23. The space between the audience and the painting where objects are blurred into images at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Conscious of the significant role of the wall in the narratives of the museum, the artists conducted a detailed study on the project. The first of the three-year period they spent on producing the panoramic painting was used to carry out research. The 53-day long siege had left clear traces of bombardment and had opened large breaches in three different sections of the wall. The panorama painting depicts this damage carefully. After extensive research, some of the almost completely destroyed segments of the wall are depicted in the painting (Figure 8.23). Details regarding the sections damaged, areas destroyed, and the extent of these damages to the wall were determined from the official documents available from the report presented to Hizir Bey, the first mayor of Istanbul, for the repairs of the walls.²⁴

Great effort was also put into ensuring the picture appears as realistic and accurate as possible, particularly when it came to representation of the human figures. Through debates and experimentation, the artists arrived at the decision to produce the work as a one-tenth scale model.²⁵ The panorama painting is said to contain 10,000 drawn figures; however, they are not all sketched with the same detail. In specific segments of the panoramic painting, soldiers depicted in varying levels of detail are visible in the far distance. Depending on the depth of field, less detail becomes possible to visualize and see (8.23). The closer they are to the visitors, the larger the figures are, and naturally, the more detail is illustrated and perceivable.



²⁴ Bayhan and Erkal, 110.

²⁵ Bayhan and Erkal, 136.



Figure 8.24. Two zooms of a popular segment of the panoramic painting at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* depicting Sultan Mehmed II on his white horse, his advisors, archer guards and their flags. Photo: Museum Website.

The museum website claims “Panorama 1453 Museum of History enables the visitors on the platform to discover and understand the heart and soul of thousands of soldiers of Sultan Mehmed II.”²⁶ While “heart and soul” might be an exaggeration, the program of the museum enables the visitors to become familiarized with the titles and duties of various soldiers of Sultan Mehmed II. For example, in a section of the panorama painting, Fatih Sultan Mehmet II is depicted on his white horse surrounded by a group of men with four flags raised in that spot (Figure 8.24). The audio guide explains the meaning of the flags: the white flag was an indicator of the position of the sultan, the red was the flag of the Ottoman Turks, and the two other flags represented different sections of the military.

Additionally, the occupations of the men surrounding Fatih are introduced. For instance, the soldiers wearing white turbans are known as “solak askerler” (left-handed soldiers) who formed half of the sultan’s archer guards, covering the right side of the sultan as they were better able to aim their arrows to the right. The yellow-turbaned soldiers were called “peyk,” those who could run fast and long to carry supplies to the soldiers. Moreover, those around the sultan with red caps, were “silahtars” (knights) who fulfilled the personal needs of the sultan, which included carrying his weapons. In another scene, the Janissary Band, referred to as the “Mehter Band,” is depicted and the narration explains that their function was “to raise the morale of the Ottoman soldiers and demoralize the enemy by playing appropriate battle themes.”

²⁶ “Panorama 1453 > Physical Venue.”

Another prominent figure depicted near Fatih the Conqueror on the battle ground is an older Islamic scholar with a white beard. He is carrying no weapons and holding his hands up in prayer. This figure accompanied the Sultan as a religious advisor and prayed for the army in battle. A concentration of symbolic elements of Ottoman and Islamic tradition make this section of the panorama painting especially attractive to the visitors. The area illustrates both the techniques and technologies of the Ottoman military. Therefore, the spot in the panoramic painting where Fatih the Conqueror is depicted is a popular spot for photographs and selfies (Figure 8.25).



Figure 8.25. Visitors taking selfies with the panoramic painting at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

Many visitors describe their visit with great enthusiasm as “experiencing the past” or “stepping into the actual war site.” When asked to describe how they felt, most described their feeling with words, such as “impressed,” “astonished,” and “proud.” Thomas, a 23-year-old visitor from London said, “It was amazing. Entering the three-D drawing you find yourself in battle. The sounds and music made me feel like a participant of the army.” Oliver, a 19-year-old visitor from Denmark who was impressed by Fatih’s weaponry said, “He used very new technology that affected different stages of the siege. The huge dome placed me in the middle of the battlefield with all those technologies of that time around me. It was very realistic. Very impressive.” Reactions after entering an actual war in the middle of

an ongoing battle, a site of human violence and bloodshed, may naturally include fear, rage, sorrow, and pain. However, having entered the panorama's battle field equipped with ideological weapons acquired in the "corridors of conquest," the meanings generated in the minds of those I interviewed were void of negative feelings toward the war they witnessed. The Turkish visitors, in particular, expressed an awe effect in which they were filled with pride and admiration about the accomplishments of their Ottoman ancestors. Non-Turkish Muslims had the same pride experienced through association of the glorified Conquest with their Islamic identity.

Those Muslim visitors who had brought their children to the Museum seemed enthusiastically involved in forming their experience and instruction. The museum claims: "The young and the elder from 7 to 70 experience the phenomenon of the conquest".²⁷ However, the museum is not specifically designed for children. The height of the panels, the position of the objects in the dome, the long-written passages and the highly abstract art and calligraphy displayed at the exhibit make the space incomprehensible to those looking up from a lower point of view and with limited decoding skills. Nevertheless, during my visit I saw several dedicated Muslim parents aiding their children to comprehend the messages they themselves had been able to decode from the design and program of the museum (Figure 8.26). They patiently translated the site and narrations into a more accessible language for the children.

A 32-year-old Turkish woman, Azra, who was visiting the museum with her husband, their two daughters and one son, explained her experience with pride. She said, "I am happy we brought the children here. It is important for them to know their past and understand how beautiful their culture and their religion is. They have to learn how advanced and just Muslim rulers were. This is important for their future. I want them to live with these values and with pride about their identity."

²⁷ "Panorama 1453 > Physical Venue."



Figure 8.26. Parents helping children comprehend the significance of the panoramic painting at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

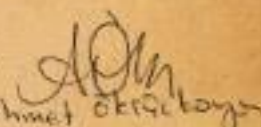
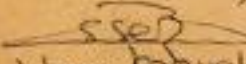
Gençsimizi geleceğe taşıyan bu mühterem
vatanı ve emeği geçen, karar veren, vasile olan
tüm idarecilere ve yapımcılara teşekkür
ediyoruz.
Bu günleri gördükçe geleceğe daha çok
güvenle bakıyoruz.
Kendimizi fatihin yanında asker gibi
kabul ediyoruz.
16.03.2009 / 
Ahmet Öksüzokaya
23. dönem kayseri
millîyet vekili

Yazar Katayel
23. dönem kayseri millîyet vekili
dönem

Figure 8.27. A page from the guest book of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* depicting Yazar Katayel-Ahmet Öksüzokaya's entry. Photo: Museum Website.

Yazar Katayel-Ahmet Öksüzkaya, a member of parliament from Kayseri, expressed a similar urge for the future in the museum's guest book (Figure 8.27). He wrote, "We would like to thank all administrators and producers that contributed to and made decisions for establishing this particular museum that convey our past to the future. We now look to the future more confidently. I see us as the soldiers behind the Conqueror." Through its spatial arrangement, content production, visual design, and militarizing agenda, the Panoramic 1453 Historical Museum not only blurs physical spaces between the viewing platform and the images of the Conquest of Constantinople, but also collapses separations between the audience and the Ottoman warriors in 1453. But what are these militarized, ideologically equipped Ottoman soldiers of the twenty-first century going to fight for?

8.4 Spaces of Legitimization

Scholars have argued that the emergence of political Islamism in Turkey paved the way for “neoliberalism.”²⁸ The rise of the AKP has intensified the growth of neo-Ottomans and their neoliberal agenda. Turkey’s political leaders, such as Tayyip Erdogan, have acted with similar ambition to the nineteenth-century sultans when aiming to modernize Istanbul. However, even if embodying some traditions of Ottoman leadership, the neo-Ottoman leaders significantly differ from their predecessors when it comes to urban preservation. Their method has been to exploit Turkey’s rich Ottoman history, but not necessarily through conservation. According to Tuğal, “Rather than preserve the historical fabric of the city, the current AKP metropolitan municipality seems set on pulling down the original Ottoman buildings and reconstructing ersatz versions.” Tuğal explains, “It is secularists, rather than Islamists, who are now resisting such redevelopments, accusing the municipality of wanting to recreate the historic center of Istanbul in glossy tourist fashion.”²⁹ But how is it that the same act of urban (re)construction appears legitimate to one group but not the other? Considering the legacy of protest among the Islamists, it is helpful to review the way in which the oppositions have been pacified in the face of erasure and remanufacturing of Islamic and Ottoman heritage.

The new Turkish Republic was a top-down creation by a military elite imposed on the people in 1923. Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the New Turkish Republic, and his successors believed an excess of popular religious piety was greatly responsible for Ottoman “backwardness” and aimed to modernize the country by downplaying Islam and secularizing the collective public realm. However, even though Turkey has commonly been claimed to have been a secular republic, since the 1930s the state has paid the salaries of Imams and founded religious training collages known as Imam Hatip schools.

According to Lovering and Türkmen, “The 1980 coup triggered a long and uneven process of neo-liberalization in the Turkish state and economy.”³⁰ Simultaneously, during the 1980s the state resources allocated to organized religion expanded to include additional aid such as subsidization of new mosque construction. While the neo-liberalizing push somewhat weakened during the 1990s, the growth of new Islamist political parties with a fresh image and “pro-market” strategy boosted neoliberalism by deeming its goals as consistent with

²⁸ Examples are: Tuğal, *Passive Revolution*; Alev Cinar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, and Time* (Minneapolis, Minn.; Bristol: University of Minnesota Press ; University Presses Marketing [distributor, 2005), <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=310690>; C Keyder, “Globalization and Social Exclusion in Istanbul,” *SAGE Urban Studies Abstracts* 34, no. 2 (2006).

²⁹ Tuğal, “The Greening of Istanbul,” 76.

³⁰ John Lovering and Hade Türkmen, “Bulldozer Neo-Liberalism in Istanbul: The State-Led Construction of Property Markets, and the Displacement of the Urban Poor,” *International Planning Studies* 16, no. 1 (2011): 78.

Islamic and Turkish traditions. Conscious of its benefits, the AKP has taken the neo-Ottoman and Islamic route toward its neoliberal mission because, as Tugal stresses, the site of domination for the AKP has been civil society. Instrumentalizing people's cultural and ideological heritage, therefore, has paved the way to a faster route with fewer obstacles. In this manner, the AKP has been able to engender a political culture in which many interventions in the collective public realm seem legitimate and hence, uncontested.



Figure 8.28. View of the historic Topkapi Walls in the background of *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. 2009. Istanbul. Photo from the book *Panorama 1453 Tarih Muzesi*.³¹

Of course, a massive program of social and cultural “re-engineering” was required to achieve the level of urban militarization and neo-liberalization manifest in Turkey today. Interventions with collective memory, historical consciousness, and identity formation have been an essential part of the AKP's agenda. Through (re)construction of recreational memorial landscapes such as the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, the AKP has been able to utilize Islamic heritage to pacify resistance toward further neo-liberalization, while utilizing Ottoman heritage to further militarize the society. Instrumental fashioning of the political culture and State apparatus with Islamic and neo-Ottoman traditions have thus created the new urban dynamics of Turkey, where extensive militarization and neo-liberalization are manifest.

³¹ Bayhan and Erkal, *Panorama 1453 Tarih Muzesi*, 21.



Figure 8.29. The historic Topkapi Wall near the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Istanbul. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

As discussed earlier, (re)construction of recreational memorial landscapes constitute an important aspect of the social and cultural “re-engineering.” To be successful at socialization, the landscape and architectural design of these socio-political constructs often includes some legitimizing features. I call these “spaces of legitimization” that work in close connection with “spaces of indoctrination” and “spaces of propagation.” Spaces of legitimization often include preserved historic ruins and/or constructed models of historic structures. The building of the Panoramic 1453 Historical Museum, for instance, is intentionally constructed in the context of the historic Topkapi Walls. Looking at the museum facing the entrance, one will notice the walls stretching out in the background (Figures 8.28 and 8.29).



Figure 8.30. The historic Topkapi Wall depicted in a puzzle sold at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum's gift shop*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.31. Framed pictures of the historic Topkapi Wall sold among other depictions from the 1453 conquest at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum's gift shop*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

The Museum website explains the selection of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum's physical location as "meaningful" and "efficient" because it is constructed inside Topkapı Culture Park. The website explains the site as:

...a place that witnessed the initial points through which the soldiers entered in the city. From the point where the museum stands, one would see the city walls of Edirnekapı on the left-hand side, and the city walls of Topkapı, that is, the gateway through which the soldiers of the Ottoman Empire entered the city for the first operation that renamed Konstantiniyy as Islambol and finally as Istanbul, across to it, and the city walls of Silivrikapı on the right-hand side. The young and the elder from 7 to 70 experience the phenomenon of the conquest in the most efficient manner at the museum, have the opportunity of examining these city walls in "three to five steps of distance," breathing the air at the areas where quarters were set up, and also have recreation and relaxation inside Topkapı Culture Park where the museum is located.³²

The museum extensively capitalizes on these historic remains. All the museum's promotional materials also proudly claim that the museum is situated near the point "where the Ottoman soldiers entered Constantinople." The presence of the Topkapı walls continues inside the museum through the images displayed in the exhibit rooms as well as those being sold in the museum's gift shop to maintain continuity between the represented history and the authenticity of the material history experienced outside (Figures 8.30 and 8.31). The General Director of the museum, Nevzat Bayhan, explains that the museum is "Where the Legend of the Conquest was written" and continues to describe its location:

This is where one era came to a close and another opened... This is where Sultan Mehmed II conquered not only Constantinople but also the hearts of the people... this is the address where the future of the Ottoman dynasty, sprouting in the shade of the mountain that covered the horizons at Söğüt and which opened a gap in the Ramparts in 1453, branched and was transformed into a great plane tree... This is Istanbul...! A legendary beauty that haunts our dreams...! She is sweetness on the tongue, longing in the heart...!³³

The visitors see the wall, which is physical material, as tangible history, real, and thus it is rendered as evidence to legitimize whatever story the curator chooses to associate with the wall; how the conquest happened, the descriptions of Istanbul, and how the wall represents the entire city and the city represents the "center of the earth." Legitimacy is thus accomplished through principles of reasoning and association, with the visitors recognizing and accepting the material represented in the museum as valid, in accordance with what they have seen outside.

³² "Panorama 1453 > Physical Venue."

³³ Bayhan and Erkal, *Panorama 1453 Tarih Muzesi*, 15.



Figure 8.32. One of the ‘Panels of Istanbul’ entitled *Istanbul: The Center of the Earth* at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum’s* exhibit hall. Photo: Museum website.

In regard to the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*, legitimacy is gained on several layers. First of all, the construction of a museum building and its particular location is legitimized through the remains of the Topkapi Wall and the worth and value that is attached to the wall. Represented stories aim to convince the visitors of the importance of the history that is being presented at the museum. For instance, a plaque titled *Istanbul: The Center of the Earth*, belonging to one of the “Panels of Istanbul, informs the audience of “the strategic significance of Istanbul” by stating: “Having served as the capital to three greatest empires in the world, namely the Roman Empire, East-Roman Empire, and the Ottoman Empire, the city is likened to the ‘center of the earth’ [Figure 8.32]. ‘Byzantium’ is the ancient name of the very first settlement on the historical peninsula where Istanbul is.” Then we are told about different colloquial names of the city, such as “Constantinople,” “Konstantiniyye,” and “Islambol.” According to the plaque, Muslim Arabs and the Turks preferred used Konstantiniyye as a sign of respect for the prophet who used that name when referring to the conquest in the Koran. However, we are told that Istanbul and “Islambol”, meaning “A place where Islam is in Abundance” are preferred as the official name of the city. This plaque, like many others at the museum, make a case for the importance of the conquest shaping not just that area and city, but also influencing world history so much so that it had been anticipated and written about in the Koran; a significant event that converted the city into Islambol, “a place where Islam is in Abundance”.

Therefore, if one is unaware of the events that took place in that location in 1453 and has only been lured to the museum because of its proximity to the historic walls and the curiosity induced by its aura, once inside the visitor will be educated on specific selections and carefully exhibited aspects of the history woven together

through a series of images and text. For example, when I asked Anna, a young German woman visiting Turkey for the first time with her partner, about their experience of the museum she replied: “we did not know the history of this area. It is really fascinating. We are glad we came, and we are learning all this at the same spot where it all happened.” When I asked if she had been able to read all the text on the walls, she said “No, because it’s mostly in Turkish. But we both have the German audio guide that does the work for us.” The audio guide, similar to the museum pamphlet, is available in multiple languages including Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, Italian, German, English, French, Japanese, Russian and Persian (Figures 8.33 and 8.34).



Figure 8.33. Stand at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* entrance providing pamphlets in several different languages. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.34. Stand at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* entrance advertising availability of audio guides in 10 different languages. Photo: Ayda Melika

“It is very helpful to understand the history and the background of all these things here,” Anna stated. “We have been here for three days now and we kept seeing this wall, which is very interesting, and we wanted to know more. Yesterday when we were passing the park, we sat outside on the benches near the wall and just enjoyed the view. We decided to come check out the museum today. It is amazing to learn all the things that happened right here and where we were relaxing in the park yesterday.” Anna and her partner’s experience have been intended by the designers of the park. The area between the museum and the historic Topkapi Wall has been beautified with a welcoming landscape and furnished with benches and a large grass area where families can gather for picnics (Figure 8.35). There is also a playground that attracts children (Figure 8.36).



Figure 8.35. The landscaping of the open space between the historic Topkapi Wall and the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Istanbul. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.36. Children's Playground located in the area between the Topkapi Wall and the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Istanbul. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

These areas are designed for the visitors to experience the city walls from up close or, as stated on the museum's website: "breathe the air at the areas where quarters were set up, and also have recreation and relaxation inside Topkapı Culture Park where the museum is located."³⁴ "Breathing the air of conquest" is a highly socializing exercise intended for the main users of the space: the citizens of Turkey.

After exposure to the museum's spaces of indoctrination and spaces of legitimization, Turkish visitors often express their pride with an urge to associate themselves with the conquerors. For instance, Zeynel Abidin Erdem expressed his experience in the museum guest book by writing: "I feel proud as the grandchild of the great ancestors" (Figure 8.37). Another visitor, Özleyiş Topbaş, wrote, "It is a great bliss to keep the sensation of conquest alive! I felt as if living in those days." (Figure 8.38).

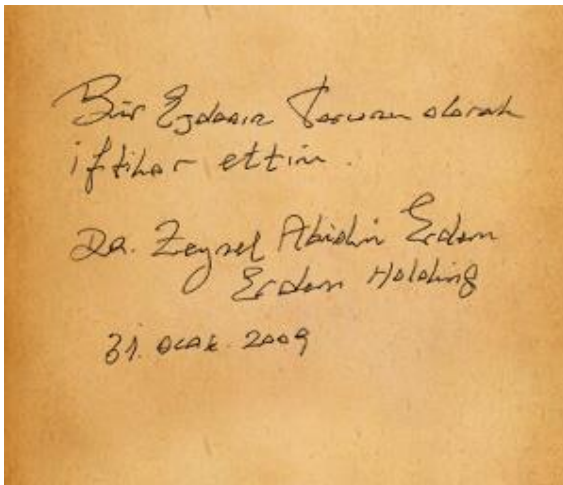


Figure 8.37. A page from the guest book of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* depicting Zeynel Abidin Erdem's entry. 2009. Photo: Museum Website.

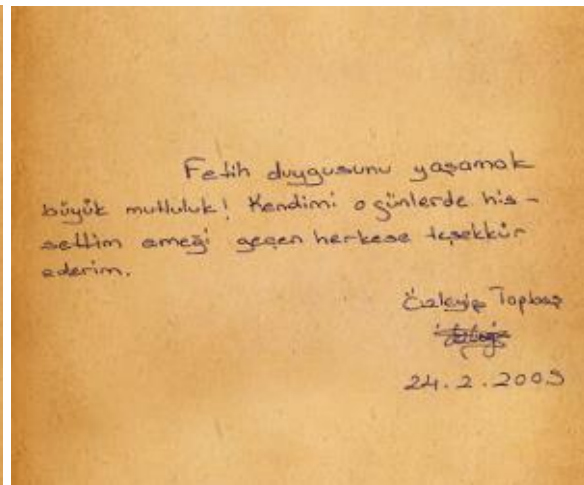


Figure 8.38. A page from the guest book of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* depicting Özleyiş Topbaş' entry. 2009. Photo: Museum Website.

In collaboration with users' experiences inside the museum, the surrounding recreational landscape outside helps internalize the message that the "military might" and "engineering excellence" enabled the Ottomans, their ancestors, to overcome the "unscalable walls" and enter the city exactly in the same spot where they now relax, picnic, and play. The curation of material and historical narratives presented make the visitors see themselves as "grandchildren" of the Ottomans who "gloriously" entered the city and brought about the fall of Constantinople, an event that gave Sultan Mehmed II his title of Fatih (the Conqueror) and their city the title of "İslambol" (a place where Islam is in

³⁴ "Panorama 1453 > Physical Venue."

abundance). Thus, the planned program of the Panorama 1453 legitimizes the existence and specific location of the museum through tradition and memory.

Tradition and collective memory have often been employed for legitimating, maintaining, and securing existing structures of power in the modern era. Therefore, looking at the top-down implementations of tradition and memory will illuminate existing power dynamics. For the majority of the visitors, especially those from the Turkish population, the museum “opens a door on to Istanbul’s history”; a door to part of their Islamic and cultural heritage that had been shut until recently. The area directly across from the spot on the Topkapi-Edirnekapi ramparts, where the siege occurred and the conquest prevailed, was used as a utilitarian bus terminal with the attempt to suppress the memory of the conquest and downplay the history that today is being used to produce a collective identity filled with pride and glory.

Since 1923, the new Turkish Republic’s leaders aiming to fight Ottoman “backwardness,” which they perceived to be a result of excessive popular religious piety, suppressed the Islamic and Ottoman traditions in the social sphere. The leaders began modernizing the country through erasure of Islamic and Ottoman collective memory from the face of the urban public realm. Many religious and traditional historic sites had lost their prominence and value while secular modernized spaces were rendered worthwhile to be constructed and preserved. The secularized space of the Topkapi bus terminal was therefore deliberately void of any reference to the area’s history. In contrast, under Erdogan’s leadership the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has implemented a different agenda in which the Islamic and Ottoman heritage have been instrumentalized in the urban space to achieve regime goals that, ironically, are not much different from their predecessors’ in their aim for large scale modernization. However, in order to construct large scale, new, “Islamized” urban spaces in Turkey, tradition itself needed to be legitimized, a task that has been achieved through production of memorial and recreational spaces such as the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum.

In each period, interventions with public collective memory and construction of recreational spaces have aimed at socializing the population into the modernizing agenda of the state. As art historian Annabel Jane Wharton asserts, “Marking the surface of the city inevitably involves the erasure of one set of social relations by another, the superimposition of an altered structure of authority over an older system.”³⁵ In the previous era, construction of recreational spaces such as the Hilton Hotel introduced modern American values and practices to Istanbul.³⁶ Today, there appears to be more of an “explosive combination of piety and capital at work” in global politics, which is only the most recent manifestation of a centuries

³⁵ Annabel Jane Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago, Ill.; Bristol: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1.

³⁶ For a detailed account on how the Hilton was written into the urban topography of Istanbul as an effective representation of the United States see: Wharton, *Building the Cold War*.

old obsession with the control of Middle Eastern cities.³⁷ Astonishingly, today's new recreational venues embody the same modern values beneath their "Islamized" material form as were manifest in the openly American form of the Hilton hotels. Today, recreational spaces like the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum deceitfully reproduce neoliberal values such as aestheticized technological efficiency and consumerism hidden within their traditional and religious imageries, form, and message.

It is through these types of construction, intervening with collective identity and tradition, that AKP's new urban policies and regulations, such as alcohol bans, prayer rooms, and hijab guidelines, are legitimized and implemented in certain environments in Turkey. In return, these policies secure the traditions that marked their existence. In this mutually supportive cycle, new collective memories are constructed, and new social and cultural values are rendered inherent among the members of the society. Therefore, the contrast between the recreational spaces of the Ataturk era and today is not in their characteristics as modern consumable space, but rather in the transformation of how they are rendered legitimate and sold to the public.

In the case of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, tradition and memory have acted as more than an agent of legitimation in the construction of a single museum building. Because of its strategic location, as well the fundamental history it represents, the curated tradition in the museum also plays a role in legitimizing and encouraging other similar interventions throughout the city and the entire country. For instance, İsmail Ok, mayor of Balıkesir, affected by his experience at the museum wrote: "While watching the visuals, I felt as if living in those moments when our ancestors conquered the city of Istanbul. I strongly believe that every young individual should see them. Hopefully this kind of works will continue in my town as in the rest of Turkey." Today, this type of work continues to maintain the legitimacy of dominant narratives in Turkey. Protected by the sacred shield of "culture," "tradition," and "religion," these spaces act as agents of legitimation in the construction of modern built environments throughout Turkey that are simultaneously militarized, neo-Ottoman, "Islamized," and neoliberal spaces of consumption.

³⁷ Annabel J Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Pr, 2006).

8.5 Spaces of Dissemination

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, disseminate means to “spread (something, especially information) widely.” It is derived from the Latin word *disseminare*, meaning to scatter seeds. In the field of communication, disseminate means to broadcast a message to the public without direct feedback from the audience. In the field of environmental design, certain spaces can be argued to have been designed as disseminators: to spread ideas as though sowing seeds. Within their design and program, these spaces do not allocate room for public feedback or interactive audience practices. Museum stores are prime examples of “spaces of dissemination.” In these stores, ideas packaged in different shapes and forms are disseminated to customers without knowing who the end users of the products are going to be and completely uncertain of the environments, the order, or the social context in which they will be consumed.

Museum gift shops are not a new invention. The allure of the museum store, which developed in middle of the twentieth century, drastically increased in the twenty-first century as consumer culture spread further, cultivating new international markets in recent decades. In 1955, around the same time that shopping began to prevail as a leisure activity, the *Museum Store Association (MSA)* was founded to support what they call “cultural commerce.” MSA, which is a 501(c)(3) (non-profit) international organization, describes itself as “a community of non-profit retailers who all have the same goal—to be successful.”³⁸ And success is clearly defined on MSA’s website as exceling in the “dual mission to be profitable and act as a brand ambassador for the institution.” This success “is central to extending the visitors’ experience beyond the front doors and into the community.”³⁹ Thus, museum stores are self-consciously aware of their role as “profit” generating businesses and disseminating “ambassadors” of the museum “beyond the front door and into the community.”

In accordance with this responsibility, museum stores are often located near the exit (Figure 8.39). Sometimes exiting is only possible through the museum store. *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum’s* store is directly located next the exit doors. The spatial logic of placing *spaces of dissemination* at the end is to catch visitors after they have gone through *spaces of indoctrination* and *spaces of legitimization* where they have been educated and convinced of the value and validity of what they are now prepared to propagate themselves.

³⁸ “About MSA – Museum Store Association,” n.d., <https://museumstoreassociation.org/about-msa/>.

³⁹ “About MSA – Museum Store Association.”



Figure 8.39. Museum store located near the exit at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

According to Sharon Macdonald, the director of Berlin's Center for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage, the museum stores present "the grand finale, the final exhibit of the show." Typically, museums highlight certain objects as culturally and historically significant, which encourages the visitors to collect them. For instance, coming out of the Van Gogh museum, one might be encouraged to purchase a poster of the famous *Starry Night* painting. Similarly, at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*, reproduced copies of the panorama painting are available for sale along with other merchandise. The selection at the store is also curated, and merchandise echoes the most prominent messages of the exhibit.

The Panorama Museum store mainly carries products of *Istanbul Kitapçısı* and *Hediyem Istanbul*. The carefully selected items available for sale at the store include books, jewelry, t-shirts, houseware, and board games for both adults and children. Most of the written and visual media products sold at the store are from *Istanbul Kitapçısı*, a company that also distributes products to Beyoğlu, Eminönü, and Kadıköy branches. The rest of the merchandise sold at the museum store belongs mostly to *Hediyem Istanbul*, which is a newer trademark of *Kültür A.Ş.*, the same organization responsible for running the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* since its opening. These products are often commercially available for domestic and foreign tourists at other touristic locations, as well as being purchasable online.



Figure 8.40. Refrigerator magnets on sale at the museum store at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

When I asked visitors shopping at the museum about their reason for buying the merchandise, I received a range of answers. A young woman who was searching through refrigerator magnets said she wanted to add them to her collection of magnets gathered from various museums she has visited (Figure 8.40). An older man purchasing a chess set explained, “I just love playing chess and this specific chess set has Ottoman soldiers” (Figure 8.41). He continued to explain with excitement, “after experiencing the panorama, I think it will be very fun to play with this chess in the role of Ottoman army because now I know a lot more about these characters and I can explain them to my friends when we play.”



Figure 8.41. Chess set on display at the museum store at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

An older woman purchasing two framed images, one of the Topkopi Wall and another of Fatih the Conqueror, explained she was going to “hang them in the hallway above a little desk I have at the entrance” (Figure 8.42). She believed the golden frames would match the aesthetics of her desk. Responding to my question regarding the reason she chose these two images to hang in her hallway rather than any other image with a gold frame, she explained, “This is not any image. This is our heritage, you see, our history! I am proud of Fatih and the Muslim conquest. This will be hung in my house as a reminder of our beautiful Ottoman heritage.”



Figure 8.42. Framed images of the Topkapi Wall and Fatih the Conqueror for sale at the at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum store*. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

A young man bought several books, one of which was a children's book. He said, "I am buying some souvenirs for my family and a special book for my nephew." He seemed pleased with the gifts he had found at the store and the smile that shone in his eyes when he talked about the book he got for his nephew suggested particular satisfaction. Whether as a personal keepsake or gift, each of the visitors at the museum store found a message in what they were purchasing, a message they wanted to share with the world outside the museum. They wanted to find a material object that embodied their new learnings, signified their visit to the museum, and reminded them of the cultural pride they had experienced there.



Figure 8.44. Children's books for sale at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* store. July 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

I thanked Adnan for his input and asked him if I could see which children's book he had selected for his nephew. He pulled a book entitled *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* (*Emre in the Conquest of Istanbul: Panorama 1453*) out of a dark navy plastic bag with the logo of the museum and showed it to me (see the book with the orange and yellow cover on the bottom right corner of Figure 8.44).

The promotional passage on the back cover of the book reads (Figure 8.45):

I am Emre, 9 years old. I visited the Panorama Museum with my family and learned a lot: what are the seven hills of Istanbul, why is this museum called "panorama", did Fatih Sultan Mehmed write poetry, who were his mentors? If you are a curious child like me, Panorama 1453 Historical Museum is waiting for you to come and discover.

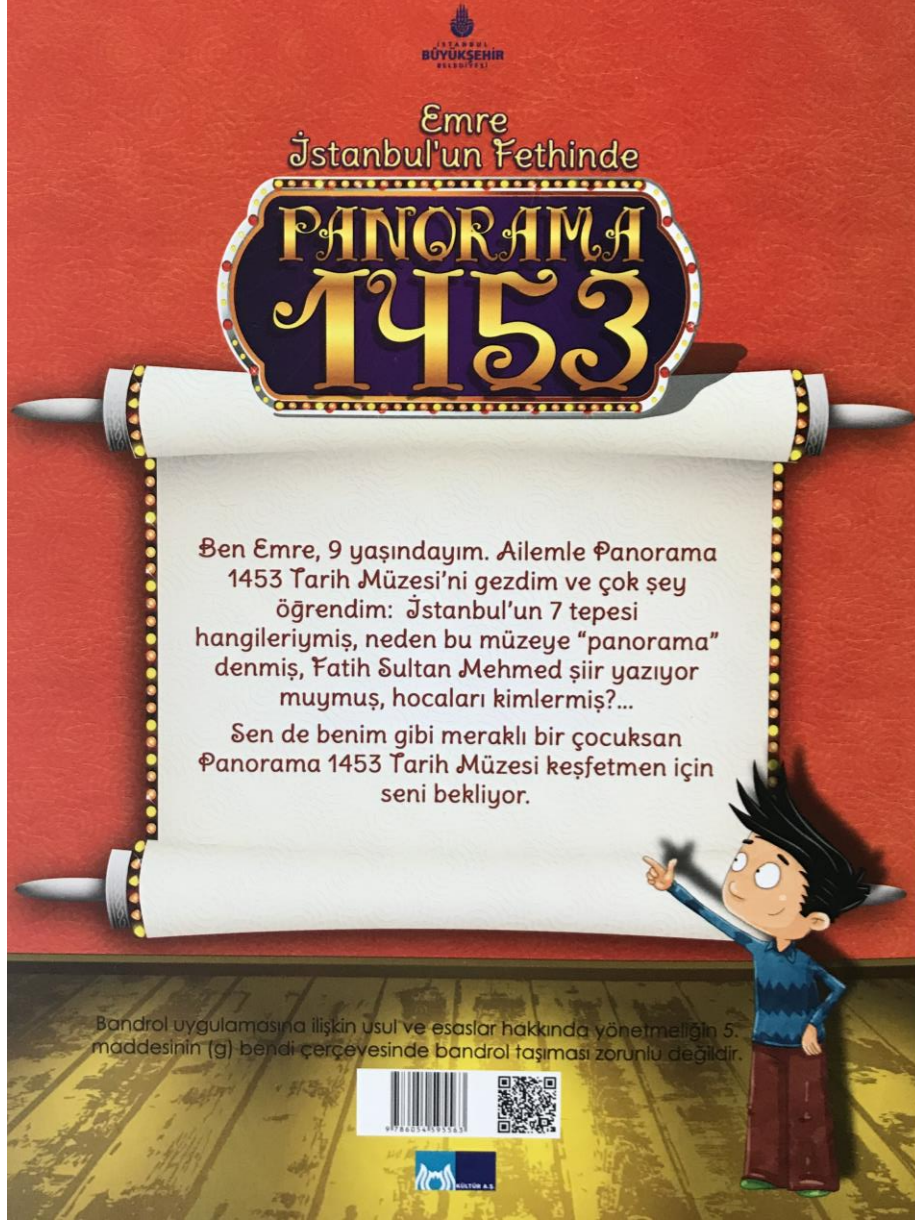


Figure 8.45. Back cover of the book *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453*.

The book provides a comprehensive example of the ideas disseminated from the museum store. Its story is told from the perspective of 9-year-old Emre, whose parents take him on a surprise visit to the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*. Through descriptions of the museum and what he learns in it, Emre advertises the museum while also educating children using the same clear curational agenda visible at the museum itself, only this time the images, the order, and the descriptions are more appropriately suited for younger audiences who may find the museum content less graspable from their physical point of view and with their level of comprehension.



Figure 8.46. A page from the book *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* where the main character, Emre, is shown standing in front of the panel entitled *A Miracle of the Prophet: The Conquest in the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*.

In order to remain within the limits of children's attention span, *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* could not have included all the "Panels of İstanbul." Thus, what is included in the book represents the most significant panels to convey the main message of the museum. On page 13, for example, Emre is depicted standing in front of the panel entitled *A Miracle of the Prophet: The Conquest*. The full wall panel, including the section entitled *Muslim Conquest of Constantinople*, is illustrated in the image. This panel explaining the conquest in its Islamic dimensions is the only one from the exhibit that is reproduced in its entirety in *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde* with all text legible and no figures obstructing the panel (Figure 8.46).

Additionally, the book highlights the essential role of Islamic scholars on the sultan's education and upbringing by dedicating an entire page to an illustration depicting the sultan's childhood as he is respectfully listening to his mentors' teachings with a tranquil smile on his face (Figure 8.47). Other panels that are mostly or partly reflected in the book are *Fatih's Childhood Notebook*, *Fatih Sultan Mehmed's Caftan and Armor*, and *Fatih's İstanbul*. There are moments where Emre is able to closely associate with the child sultan who, at age twelve and under Mullah Gurani and Aksemseddin's mentorship, had already begun thinking about the conquest. Impressed by the sultan's abilities and accomplishments when he was "only three years older" than him, Emre acknowledges his father who says,

“these great scholars have taught Fatih to use his mind, his intelligence, his power, and his energy for real and proper causes.”⁴⁰



Figure 8.47. Cartoon drawing of Sultan Mehmed and his Islamic mentor in the book *Emre Istanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453*.

Emre's experience of the panorama painting is depicted in a celebratory, colorful manner. The reactions shown in children's faces observing the "realistic battleground" are full of smiles, amusement, and playfulness. They seem excited about what they are witnessing and treat the war zone as a joyful festival or a playground where they can engage with weaponry (Figures 8.48 to 8.50).

⁴⁰ Figen Yaman Cosar, *Emre Istanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* (Istanbul Buyuksehir Belediyesi Kultur A.S. Yayinlari, n.d.), 20.



Figure 8.48. Cartoon illustration of the panorama painting in the children's book *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453*.

Impressed by what he has seen, Emre begins losing the separating line between the panorama painting and the platform he is standing on, between the militant warriors and the audience consuming their image, between then and now. He imagines an Ottoman soldier carrying an Islamic flag riding a horse toward him. "I am of you, I am you!" an inner voice cries in Emre, "Put me on your horseback too! I'll join the conquest..."⁴¹ Emre wonders what his mother would say about his participation in the conquest. He wonders if he is a little scared, yet his "heart is bursting" with excitement (Figure 8.49).

⁴¹ Cosar, 30.



Figure 8.49. Main character of the book *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* depicted imagining himself participating in the conquest.



Figure 8.50. Main character of the book *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* depicted playing with cannon balls at the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum.

When he is shaken out of his daydream, Emre realizes that the soldiers are motionless manikins. He says, "It seems that they are frozen, with huge open mouths and eyes. Then I realize that my mouth is wide open too. I don't think we are, but the soldiers are models."⁴² Right after, realizing that those figures are

⁴² Cosar, 30.

frozen and he himself is not, Emre is depicted joyfully playing with cannon balls (Figure 8.50). There is a lot connotated in this passage where Emre notices similarities and differences between himself and the still manikins of his warrior ancestors. They can no longer take action, but he can. The passage implies that the ancestors may be dead, but their offspring (Emre) and their means (conquest) still remain a hope for the revival of their convictions (traditional values: Islamic and Ottoman).



Figure 8.51. Main character of the book *Emre Istanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* depicted imagining and planning to drawing a map of Istanbul.

As Emre leaves the panorama he is struck with the panel entitled *Fatih's Istanbul* and takes a photograph of the map that is displayed on it. He plans to draw a similar map himself when he gets home (Figure 8.51). However, "*Fatih's Istanbul*," Emre acknowledges, "is not only described in images. Many testimonies, conquests accounts, wills, and other such documents exist as well."⁴³ This section of the book clearly highlights the ultimate result intended with construction of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum. The curated material in the exhibit, as well as the book, utilize various cultural and religious symbolisms to glorify war, but not just any war: a conquest that is depicted to have been a successful urban redevelopment. Through a series of positive associations, the curated narratives imply that drawing up a new map for Istanbul and intervening in the city's built environment is not merely a material urban reconstruction. With ties to sacred Islamic and Ottoman tradition, the just and tolerant Muslim Ottomans have engaged in urban redevelopment that is presented as a holy act causing social elevation, revitalization, and liberation.

⁴³ Cosar, 35.

Before exiting the museum, Emre's parents have another surprise for him. They stop by the coin machine called "Hatira Para" (memory money). Emre is curious as to what is happening to his father's coins as he turns the handle. The machine returns "another kind of money," which Emer's father hands to him saying, "here, memory money for you!" (Figure 8.52).



Figure 8.52. "Hatira Para" (memory money) bearing the signature of Sultan Mehmed II, illustrated in the children's book *Emre Istanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453*.

As he is taking in all of this, Emre's mother pats his head and tells him, "Istanbul'un fethine katilip da eve ganimetsiz donmek olmaz," which roughly translates to: "It's impossible to return home from participation in Istanbul's Conquest without a keepsake/booty." The word "ganimet" takes on a double meaning here, referring both to a keepsake as well as booty or a war souvenir (savasci ganimet). The author's decision to dedicate an entire page to tie the coin machine into Emre's experience of the museum may seem odd at first. But the "Hatira Para" machine *is highly metaphoric of the museum itself and the city at large*. The act of selling and purchasing memories is not exclusive to the memory money machine. There are many different commercial memory-producing machines in Istanbul. I call this "memory commerce," the business apparatus that fuels the memory commodification machinery. Memory commerce becomes distinctly evident in museums such as the Panorama 1453.

At the museum, the entrance fee pays to buy an immersive experience of a highly curated history to engrave a distinctly Ottomanized and Islamized war into the collective memory and identity of the audience. This is not widely different from the apparatus of the *Hatira Para* machine located near the *museum store entrance* selling what the museum website calls *Remembrance Money*. According to the website, "The visitors may buy remembrance money at Panorama 1453 Museum of History from the remembrance money vending machine for 3 TL."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ "Panorama 1453 > Remembrance Money," n.d., <http://panoramikmuze.com/homepage/panorama-1453/remembrance-money.aspx>.



Figure 8.53. “Hatıra Para” (Memory Money) machine near the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum store and close-up depiction of the machine’s three different coin designs.*
Photos: Ayda Melika.

The machine offers three different designs to be engraved on the tokens it produces. One bears the signature of the Muslim Conqueror in Arabic script, a reminder of the alphabet change as part of the modernizing *Tanzimat* reforms of the Kemalist program to promote Turkification, secularization and Westernization in place of the old Islamic identity (Figure 8.53.a). Another depicts Fatih Sultan Mehmed II, wearing Ottoman military attire, on his horse, a proud and glorified reminder of the militarized Ottoman identity (Figure 8.53.b). The third token has the logo of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, which is an image of the building’s architecture, a dual reminder of the Muslim conquest of the city in 1453 and now, by leaders constructing structures supposedly housing Ottoman-Islamic traditional values (Figure 8.53.c).

Historical museums offer a “legitimate” account of the past, commonly through representation of “material” objects upon which they bestow a great deal of value. As explored in the case of *Panorama 1453*, designed spaces of indoctrination and spaces of legitimization work together to glorify objects by tying them to cultural, religious, and traditional heritage. Whatever the main subject of representation, values, stories and objects are (re)produced and (re)presented to further validate and reinforce each other.

At the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* visitors are told that objects matter. This importance on material is bestowed through their association with the Ottoman–Islamic culture. Military objects and urban objects are two sets of material entities specifically valorized at Panorama 1453 Historical Museum. For instance, the Ottoman style of Fatih’s armor and the engravings of Allah’s name and Islamic prayers on Fatih’s swords have been utilized to venerate these instruments of death and violence. By closely associating them to Ottoman–Islamic culture, the militant objects of the conquest are elevated to a holy status. In similar ways, architecture and urban development are glorified by being depicted as the second and more crucial part of the conquest and a holy endeavor of the Muslim conqueror; one that brought justice to the city and liberated its people. Thus, from “*Fatih’s Sword*” all the way to “*Fatih’s Istanbul*” are material objects that the audience is told are important and that they are meaningful entities carrying elevating narratives about their past and identity.

Objects sold in the Panorama museum store, which mostly relate to the teachings of the “Panels of Istanbul” and the Panorama painting, allow visitors to own part of these narratives. The merchandise, decorative or practical, that is specifically custom-made for the museum store, such as framed pictures of Fatih the Conqueror on the battleground, refrigerator magnets of various Islamic architecture of Istanbul, or the book *Emre Istanbul’un Fethinde: Panorama 1453*, are all encoded with messages reinforcing the museum’s agenda. That is why all custom-made merchandise at the museum store is in one or both of the main categories of promoted objects/ideas: weaponry/militarization and architecture/urbanization. Through the museum store, these ideologically encrypted objects are disseminated to the outside world.

It is, of course, not a coincidence that these happen to be the same two categories that the AKP leaders have maneuvered and exploited to expand their political and economic power. Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been promoting and overseeing a revival of Ottoman tradition that has aided his political ambitions. For instance, when Erdogan was still Prime Minister, the AKP election campaigns referred to their supporters as *Osmanlı torunu* (grandsons of Ottomans). This reference to the Ottoman era, though controversial, proved effective in attracting support from those eager to defy the Westernized nature of modern Turkey founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.



Figure 8.54. Sultan figurines for sale at the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* store. Photo: Ayda Melika.



Figure 8.55. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan greeting the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, with an Ottoman-style ceremony in Turkey's newly constructed presidential palace. January 2015. Photo: Yıldız Yazıcıoğlu (VOA) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.

As president, Erdogan has continued his strategic utilization of tradition in a political context. For instance, in January 2015 he greeted the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, with an Ottoman-style ceremony in a newly constructed presidential palace (Figure 8.55). The theatrical ceremony involved guards dressed in martial costumes complete with weapons representing the founders of 16 historic Turkish empires. Excessive display of militarization, therefore, is not limited to warmusements such as the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum and its store. In fact, these types of touristic and recreational spaces play a role in normalizing militarization and the dissemination of militarism to the rest of the society. Through their spaces of indoctrination, legitimization, and dissemination, warmusements socialize citizens into military culture. Consuming these spaces renders excessive securitization and militarized urban landscapes less unsettling and crowd control less contested.



Figure 8.56. Militarized/securitized external spaces of the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* building. Photo: Museum Website.

In addition to excessive militarization, the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, in tandem with AKP leaders' agenda, have been promoting, naturalizing, and expanding excessive urban construction. For almost two decades, Istanbul has been undergoing ambitious urban regeneration, redevelopment, and transformation that was intended, according to Lovering & Turkmen, to "trigger a wide-ranging process of urban destruction and reconstruction, in both physical–environmental and social–cultural terms."⁴⁵ Even though the AKP has followed

⁴⁵ John Lovering and Hade Turkmen, "Bulldozer Neo-Liberalism in Istanbul: The State-Led Construction of Property Markets, and the Displacement of the Urban Poor," *International Planning Studies* 16, no. 1 (2011): 74.

exactly the same IMF prescriptions initiated by the previous administration, it has been able to maintain higher approval levels. The rise of the AKP has been accompanied by a political culture and State apparatus supporting a neoliberal urbanism in Turkey that has been described as neo-Ottoman.⁴⁶

Manifestations of this urban trend are visible in the neo-Ottoman architectural aesthetics as well as ideological institutions that appear to be modeled after Islamic–Ottoman values or simply named after famous characters of the Ottoman era (Figure 8.57). For example, *Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif Üniversitesi* (Fatih Sultan Mehmet Waqf University (FSMWU)) is a medium-sized urban university campus located in the historical peninsula of Istanbul and was founded in 2010 as a public–private partnership. The website of the university reminds the audience that, while this coeducational higher education institute may be newly established, “The university is subsidized by a very special charity (waqf), the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Charity which was founded in 1470 to facilitate education and continues to serve this goal for over five centuries.”⁴⁷



Figure 8.57. Neo-Ottoman façade of the *Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif Üniversitesi* (Fatih Sultan Mehmet Waqf University), Istanbul, Turkey. Summer 2016. Photo: Ayda Melika.

⁴⁶ Tuğal, *Passive Revolution*; Tuğal, “The Greening of Istanbul”; Lovering and Turkmen, “Bulldozer Neo-Liberalism in Istanbul,” 79.

⁴⁷ “FSMVÜ | International Relations,” accessed August 1, 2018, <http://iro.fsm.edu.tr/Uluslararası-Ofis-About-Us--About-FSMVU>.

To connect Turkey's recent trends in neoliberal urban development to a respected past, the website further emphasizes a historic continuity with the Ottoman tradition by claiming:

FSMWU emerged from the historical waqf tradition which played an influential role in the scientific, civic, and cultural life throughout Ottoman history. Being privileged to have its origins in the centuries old civic and academic heritage, FSMVU strives to carry on this tradition by combining traditional education with contemporary knowledge.

FSMWU is one of the many university campuses built in the last two decades as part of the larger neoliberal urban agenda of the AKP. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was personally involved in development of many of these projects and attended the opening ceremony for these institutions. For instance, at the 2015 opening ceremony of Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University's Esenboğa Campus and Health Sciences Complex, President Erdogan admitted to his personal involvement in the development of the project and claimed that the Esenboğa Campus is his own work (Figure 8.58).

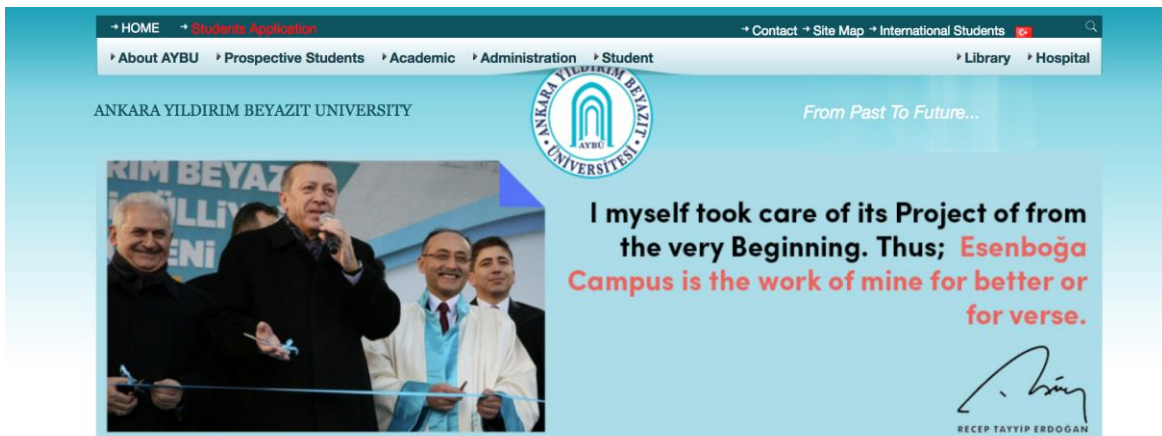


Figure 8.58. Website screen shot of the *Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi* (Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University) depicting a photograph of Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the opening ceremony of the Esenboğa Campus and Health Sciences Complex in 2015, Ankara. Photo: University Website.⁴⁸

At the opening ceremony, Erdogan continued his speech by endorsing the old Ottoman term *külliyeye* in a statement referring to university campuses rather than the more commonly used Westernized term *kampüs*. In the Turkish language, the word *külliyeye* refers to Islamic–Ottoman social complexes that often encompass several architectural structures, such as madrasas, imarets, libraries, and hospitals. Erdogan expressed, “It would be better to call it ‘*külliyeye*’ instead of campus. Esenboğa *külliyeye* is more accurate than Esenboğa Campus. With a

⁴⁸ “Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi,” n.d., <http://www.ybu.edu.tr/>.

closed area of 1 million square meters, such a complex will bring forth powerful generations of the future.”⁴⁹ These types of statements supported the claims of Erdogan’s critics, who accused him of wanting to become an Ottoman sultan.⁵⁰

According to the Telegraph’s David Blair, critics began accusing Erdogan of behaving like a “sultan” after he installed himself in the biggest residential palace in the world, costing £384 million in a country where three million people are without work.⁵¹ Erdogan designed much of the White Palace himself, taking the precaution of installing an underground bunker as well as dedicating space to a new presidential jet, costing £115 million and designed to his own specification. Boasting 1,000 rooms covering a total floor area of 3.1 million square feet, his palace was constructed in breach of court orders on protected forest land in the capital, Ankara. According to Blair, “the palace is four times the size of Versailles, allowing Mr. Erdogan to exceed the residential grandeur of Louis XIV, the ‘Sun King’ of France.” The quixotic Ottoman architectural style of the White Palace, the theatrical Ottoman-style greeting ceremonies held there, and Erdogan’s rhetoric in regard to the extensive urban redevelopment undertaken by the AKP have been described as signs of his desire to act as a new Ottoman sultan. However, in January 2015, Erdogan denied these accusations and claimed that he would aim to be more like the United Kingdom’s Queen Elizabeth II rather than like an Ottoman sultan.⁵²

What makes Erdogan’s statement most fascinating may be its level of truth. The urban constructions, architectural design, spatial programming and the rhetoric used to associate Erdogan with Ottoman sultans are all a disguise of a larger neoliberal urban agenda that has been made possible under a neo-Ottoman façade claiming to be revitalizing traditional Ottoman–Islamic values. Under a thin

⁴⁹ “Erdoğan: Kampus Değil, Külliye - İlk Kurşun Gazetesi,” n.d., <http://www.ilk-kursun.com/haber/212703/erdogan-kampus-degil-kulliye/>.

⁵⁰ “Turkey’s New Sultan,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 13, 2014, sec. Opinion, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/erdogan-is-turkeys-new-sultan-1407865770>; “The next Sultan?,” *The Economist*, August 16, 2014, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2014/08/16/the-next-sultan>; Raziye Akkoc, “‘Turkey’s President Is Not Acting like the Queen - He Is Acting like a Sultan,’” February 2, 2015, sec. World, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/11380281/Turkeys-president-is-not-acting-like-the-Queen-he-is-acting-like-a-sultan.html>.

⁵¹ David Blair, “Turkey’s President Moves into World’s Biggest Palace Costing £384 Million,” November 5, 2014, sec. World, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/11210083/Turkeys-president-moves-into-worlds-biggest-palace-costing-384-million.html>.

⁵² Raziye Akkoc, “Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: I Want to Be like Queen of UK,” January 30, 2015, sec. World, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/11380355/Turkish-president-Recep-Tayyip-Erdogan-I-want-to-be-like-Queen-of-UK.html>; Akkoc, “‘Turkey’s President Is Not Acting like the Queen - He Is Acting like a Sultan.’”

veneer of traditional signs, Erdogan has led Turkey further toward Westernization, IMF's prescribed urbanism, privatization, and neoliberalism.

Many of the urban construction projects undertaken by the AKP in the last two decades have superficial ties to the Ottoman–Islamic traditions. For instance, both *Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif Üniversitesi* and *Ankara Yildirim Beyazıt Üniversitesi* are modern businesses only named after historic Ottoman sultans. While their façade might reflect the neo-Ottoman style, their functions are distinctly neoliberal. The *Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif Üniversitesi*, for instance, is a public–private partnership (P3). According to Weimer and Vining, "A P3 typically involves a private entity financing, constructing, or managing a project in return for a promised stream of payments directly from government or indirectly from users over the projected life of the project or some other specified period of time."⁵³ Weimer and Vining farther explain that being directly responsible for a variety of activities, P3s often evolve into monopolies motivated by rent-seeking behavior. Similar to other expanding urban redevelopment projects such as housing, these mushrooming universities promise to serve the interests of the local poor. However, often their business model follows profitable agendas that do not necessarily benefit the locals. For instance, *Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif Üniversitesi* finds it more profitable to charge local students twice as much tuition than the international students, making it unaffordable for many locals, and certainly Istanbul's urban poor, to attend (Figure 8.59).

YEARLY TUITION RANGE

uniRank Tuition Range Matrix™		
	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Local students	5,000-7,500 US\$ (3,700-5,500 Euro)	5,000-7,500 US\$ (3,700-5,500 Euro)
International students	2,500-5,000 US\$ (1,800-3,700 Euro)	2,500-5,000 US\$ (1,800-3,700 Euro)

Important: the above *uniRank Tuition Range Matrix*^{â&#circledR} does not include room, board or other external costs; tuition may vary by areas of study, degree level, student nationality or residence and other criteria. Please contact the appropriate *Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif Üniversitesi*'s office for detailed information on yearly tuitions which apply to your specific situation and study interest; the above *uniRank Tuition Range Matrix*^{â&#circledR} is indicative only and may not be up-to-date or complete.

Figure 8.59. Yearly tuition range for local and international students of the *Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif Üniversitesi* (Fatih Sultan Mehmet Waqf University). Photo: Screen Shot of 2018 uniRank Tuition Range Matrix.

Conceptual inconsistencies underlying public–private partnerships, which lead them to deliver results opposite to those they claim, have been highlighted by scholars such as Faranak Miraftab. In her article *Public-Private Partnerships: The*

⁵³ David Leo Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis : Concepts and Practice* (Boston : Longman, c2011., 2011), 309.

Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Development?, Miraftab examines the equity dimension of partnerships between disadvantaged communities and local governments and private sector firms to demonstrate how such partnerships lack the necessary conditions for serving the interests of the poor.⁵⁴ In the case of Turkey, however, there was resistance from those who believed that Islam was antipathetic to capitalism. Thus, prior to the AKP, neoliberal movements had been facing challenges from existing local “anti-Modernists” who opposed growing inequality. Despite the local resistance, however, the AKP has been able to make “neoliberalism for the first time something like the common sense of the poor.”⁵⁵

This was possible because “Neo-liberal urbanism is compatible with a variety of ideological dressings, and Istanbul demonstrates vividly the specificities of the contemporary Turkish case.”⁵⁶ For instance, part of the basis of neoliberalism is faith in free-market capitalism, the state withdrawal of support for the social safety net, and reliance on the idea that as the wealthy become increasingly rich, they will give back in the form of philanthropy. In other words, private philanthropy supplants public social services. Considering the central role of giving of alms—charity—in Islam, Fatih’s Vakif provides a mytho-historical example of reinforcing compatibility of ideologies, even if indirectly. Thus, deceitfully, the overblown character of Fatih inserted into the urban fabric of Istanbul helps hide a neoliberal creed/greed behind Islamic creed.

Many studies have documented manifestations of expanding neoliberal urbanism in Turkey, while some have recognized that the AKP local state machinery mobilizes a “moral component” to ensure the smooth implementation of urban renewal policies. However, in this study, my focus has been to illustrate the militarized urban dimensions of the socializing mechanism through which the AKP has been able to indoctrinate, legitimate, and disseminate its regime goals to the public in order to bypass local resistance to implement a neoliberal urban agenda while maintaining a high approval level that keeps its leaders in power.

All of the urban socialization strategies portrayed in this chapter are part of a state machinery that the AKP has relied on for its rise to power, which I described as “memory commerce.” The current dynamics of Turkey’s urban “memory commerce” manifest clear neoliberal perceptions and goals. Through extensive redesign of recreational memorial landscapes and tactical programming of their spaces of indoctrination, legitimization, and dissemination, the AKP has been socializing citizens into military and economic regime goals. Considering that the “global flows of capital now work in tandem with a deference for all *things*

⁵⁴ Faranak Miraftab, “Public-Private Partnerships
Public-Private Partnerships: The Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Development?
The Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Development?,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research*
24, no. 1 (September 1, 2004): 89–101, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X04267173>.

⁵⁵ Perry Anderson, *The New Old World*, Reprint edition (London ; New York: Verso, 2011), 450.

⁵⁶ Lovering and Turkmen, “Bulldozer Neo-Liberalism in Istanbul,” 92.

military,”⁵⁷ these two goals are inseparable in many public manifestations of neoliberalism. Deploying various public memorials, historic sites, and recreational venues, the AKP has been able to construct an image of itself that appears consistent with Islam and Ottoman tradition. As demonstrated in the case of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, to establish legitimacy, urban conquest and urban redevelopment have been portrayed within a respected Turkish historic context and as an Ottoman tradition that is consistent with Islam. Thus, through the ambivalent and deceptive apparatus of memory commerce, the AKP has normalized excessive militarization and urban neo-liberalization, advancing the interests of the private sector and the market under the banner of traditional Ottoman–Islamic values. In the process leading to current urban conditions in Turkey, institutions such as *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* played pivotal roles as spaces of socialization in normalizing, legitimizing, and even glorifying these two pillars of global neoliberal power structure: militarization and urbanization.

⁵⁷ Henry A. Giroux, “Beyond Neoliberal Common Sense: Cultural Politics and Public Pedagogy in Dark Times,” *JAC* 27, no. 1/2 (2007): 11–61.

8.6 Militarizing Fate and History to Urbanize Today and Tomorrow

Reading the statement of Nevzat Bayhan, the General Director of Kultur A.S., responsible for the direction and operations of the museum, makes it clear that the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum is more about today and the future than it is about the past (Figure 8.60). His statement starts by blending and blurring instruments of violence with signifiers of Islam through juxtaposition of descriptions of the sultan “opening his hands in prayer” with him “drawing up war plans” and using “cannonballs [...] against the ramparts” and further, by describing “the sound of the Mehter (the military march band) combined with the melody of the Fatiha (the first chapter of the Qura’an).” After establishing this quick association between war and Islam, Bayhan goes on to explain that “The Panorama 1453 Historical Museum looks from today to this historical ‘moment’ and then presents it to the future...in a moment when fate and history coincided.” Interrupting his sentence with an ellipsis or three-dot pause, it is unclear if the second part of the sentence is referring to a moment in the past, today or the future. What resonates more clearly, however, appears to be a desire for all moments to “coincide fate and history,” but not just any fate: a highly militarized Islam.

“This is the concrete form of the idea of a ‘conquest’ that took as its basis a civilization,” Bayhan states before going on to further blur times and characters:

This is the spirit of conquest...Fatih was a sultan who had this soul incarnate...On the morning of 29 May, this area you see before you, which is set within Istanbul Metropolitan Council’s Topkapi Cultural Park—a project begun by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan—Mayor Kadir Topbas will immortalize the dream of the conquest with the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum.

Thus, Bayhan blends past and current events, suggesting a new conquest of the city in the making and blurs past and present leaders in a category of conquests that will “immortalize the dream of the conquest.” In an effort to illuminate the importance of the museum, Bayhan states, “Let us embark on this long journey through history and remember the history that started in this city with the conquest.” Doing so has a clear consequence, which Bayhan elaborates on by stating, “Here, the ‘spirit’ that lives is strong enough to enlighten tomorrow as well as today... with the heartfelt desire that the ‘Fatih’s’ of today and tomorrow will be combined with this spirit.” This desire to coincide fate and history, to enlighten an army of conquerors through the spirit of the conquest, to combine conquerors of today and tomorrow, and immortalize the dream of the conquest, clearly resonates not just with other management personal and the museum’s design doctrine, but also in all products disseminating from the museum.

W here the Legend of the Conquest was Written...

This is where one era came to a close and another opened...

This is where Sultan Mehmed II conquered not only Constantinople but also the hearts of the people...

This is the address where the future of the Ottoman dynasty, sprouting in the shade of the mountain that covered the

horizons at Söğüt and which opened a gap in the Ramparts in 1453, branched and was transformed into a great plane

tree... This is İstanbul...! A legendary beauty that haunts our dreams...! She is sweetness on the tongue, longing in the

heart...! On one side Mehmed II and on the other the eternal state...Pursuing a lofty vision at a tender age, he awaited

the "glad tidings", opening his hands in prayer... He drew up plans and the cannonballs cast by Urban struck against

the ramparts...the raging flames were like the elixir of testimony...the cannonballs fell like balls of flame, being extinguished

in the breasts of the Byzantines.... 53 days passed with patience, belief and resolution Ulubatlı Hasan appeared on

the ramparts with the rising sun.... The sound of the Mehter combined with the melody of the Fatiha (the first chapter

of the Qur'an; the title of this chapter means The Opening) The loved and the beloved find one another... The Panorama

1453 Historical Museum looks from today to this historical "moment" and then presents it to the future... In a moment

when fate and history coincided, the numbers rest at 1453 and the tidings are "glad"... This is the concrete form of the

idea of a "conquest" that took as its basis a civilization that established peace and the happiness of people; it is written

in history in golden letters. And the following words are uttered by the young sultan: "From today on you need not fear

my wrath in your life or in your freedom...!" This is the spirit of conquest...Fatih was a sultan who had this soul incarnate...

On the morning of 29 May, this area you see before you, which is set within İstanbul Metropolitan Council's Topkapı

Cultural Park - a project begun by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - Mayor Kadir Topbaş will immortalize the

dream of the conquest with the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum.... Let us embark on this long journey through history

and remember the history that started in this city with the conquest Here, the "spirit" that lives is strong enough

to enlighten tomorrow as well as today... With the heartfelt desire that the "Fatih"s of today and tomorrow will be

combined with this spirit....

Nevzat BAYHAN
Kültür A.Ş.
General Director

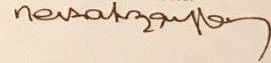


Figure 8.60. Statement by Nevzat Bayhan, the General Director of Kultur A.S. about the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum. Photo: Museum Website.

For instance, the book *Emre İstanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* clearly demonstrates the messages intended for children. The book's main character, Emre, models how the designers of the museum want children to experience and process the messages in the museum. In the last page of the book, Emre is depicted walking back home after visiting *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* with his mother and father (Figure 8.61). His shirt is the same two shades of blue that are used to depict the skyline of the city in the background. The mostly residential buildings have a mosque right in the middle, directly behind Emre's head, and two birds, which are colored in the same shades of blue, are flying as if out of his thoughts and in the direction of his gaze. Thus, Emre, the city, the mosque, and his thoughts are painted in unity and he is depicted with a smile on his face, contemplating his learnings from the museum. The text accompanying this cartoon illustration reads:

On our way back home that day, I looked more carefully at the surroundings. I looked for traces of conquest all over Istanbul. I dream of becoming a good architect when I grow up. What did Fatih say? Town development means big profit. “I have to work hard,” I said. “Do you have homework?” my dad asked. I thought to myself, “Yes, I have a lot of assignments... Besides, I have an assignment given to me by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror in the 15th century...”⁵⁸



Figure 8.61. The last page from the book *Emre Istanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453* where the main character Emre is contemplating on his learnings on his way back home from visiting the *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum*.

Thus, children are encouraged to see urban development as a “profitable” legacy of their ancestors and to feel responsible to participate in this urban heritage by becoming, for instance, an “architect.” While the messages the museum wants

⁵⁸ Cosar, *Emre Istanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453*, 40.

to disseminate may be presented directly and clearly, especially those put forth in children's books such *Emre Istanbul'un Fethinde: Panorama 1453*, not all readers will have a *dominant–hegemonic reading*. In other words, not everyone is going to identify with the hegemonic position and receive the dominant message of the cultural product in an unquestioning manner. According to Stuart Hall, certain factors influence the process of decoding. For example, “frameworks of knowledge” (class status, cultural knowledge), “relations of production” (which include the viewing context in which meaning is produced), and “technical infrastructure” (the technological medium in which one is viewing) can impact how meaning is made for each individual.⁵⁹ Hall argues there are two more potential positions for the viewer/consumer of cultural products besides the *dominant–hegemonic position*. Some will have a *negotiated reading*, such as Mick W, a visitor who reviewed the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum on TripAdvisor on 7 May 2018 and had a negotiated interpretation of the messages presented. Mick wrote, “Coming at it from a Western viewpoint it was interesting to read the potted history in the museum—an interesting alternative to the Western view. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two.”⁶⁰ Meanwhile, some will have an *oppositional reading*, meaning they will fully reject the dominant meaning and completely disagree with the ideological position embodied in the cultural product. This includes those who deliberately avoid and ignore places such as Panorama 1453 Historical Museum and their dominant messages.

The theory of the traditional view of communication involves a sender and receiver: a sender sends information, the receiver collects and processes information and sends it back. With spaces of dissemination, only half of this communication model theory is applied. The information is sent out to the world while the receiver, their mental process, and their reactions form in different social and physical settings. In other words, the spaces of dissemination are not designed for interactive dialog. These spaces are designed to spread the institution's “message,” not to one individual, but to many in a broadcasting manner. Similar to how information is transmitted in advertisement fields, the spaces of dissemination aim to scatter specific ideological seeds. These seeds, formed in the shape of games, images, books, and other cultural products, spread the institution's message to a larger audience.

While the messages programmed into spaces of dissemination may be the same as those in spaces of indoctrination, the two spaces differ in their functional capacity as communication apparatus (Figure 8.62). All cultural consumers engage in decoding when they view and interpret cultural products that have been encoded by producers. However, as demonstrated in the case of the Panorama 1453 Historical Museum, spaces of indoctrination utilize rhetoric along with the

⁵⁹ Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, “Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture: Marita Sturken,” n.d.

⁶⁰ “Panorama 1453 (Istanbul) - 2018 Reviews: All You Need to Know Before You Go (with Photos) - TripAdvisor,” n.d., https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g293974-d1973821-Reviews-Panorama_1453-Istanbul.html.

sequential visual imagery displayed in its galleries to achieve greater persuasiveness. According to John Durham Peters' chapter on *Communication as Dissemination*, "making a public offering is perhaps the most basic of all communicative acts, but once the seeds are cast, their harvest is never assured... The metaphor of dissemination points to the contingency of all words and deeds, their uncertain consequences, and their governance by probabilities rather than certainties."⁶¹

	Cultural Products Within Spaces of Indoctrination	Cultural Products Spreading from Spaces of Dissemination
Spatial Position	Fixed	Flexible
Temporal Ordering	Sequential	Fluid
Crowded Control	Heavy Prescribed	None
Consumable At	Designated Spaces	Anywhere
Consumable During	Museum's Working Hours	Anytime
Consumable By	Visitors of the Museum	Anyone Anywhere
Oppositional Position	Limited	Limitless

Figure 8.62. Chart illustrating spatial, temporal, and social aspects of Spaces of Indoctrination versus Spaces of Dissemination. Chart: Ayda Melika.

Some factors, however, allow greater control over audiences' meaning making process. For instance, the space and time in which the information seeds are "planted" can affect the outcome. Indoctrinated visitors carry the encoded "keepsake" items of the museum store to spaces beyond the controlled settings of the museum where the propaganda can spread to multiple people at various times and locations. New exposures generate various new meanings depending on the historical context and socio-political setting within which the cultural products are decoded, which can distort the original message that the museum aimed to disseminate toward the public. The environmental design, the physical circumstances, the temporal order, and the context surrounding the audience can affect the outcome of the meaning of the message received. Thus, spaces of dissemination metaphorically refer to those spaces of significance that are not directly interactive; spaces designed to send information to an audience, similar to the Panorama museum store, without direct control over a receiver's spatial or temporal context, without the persuasive ordering to guide meaning making process, and without a direct response or clarification method that was evident in the spaces of indoctrination.

⁶¹ Gregory J. Shepherd, Jeffrey St John, and Ted Striphas, eds., *Communication as ...: Perspectives on Theory* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2005), 212.

Spatially and temporally unbound cultural products disseminating from the museum store are more likely to receive oppositional readings. This means it is more probable for them to be completely disagreed with, deliberately ignored, or even appropriated and changed. For instance, people may take a cultural product from the museum and appropriate it to make a political statement. This allows more agency over the messages encoded in products from spaces of dissemination that can be used to make a statement opposing the dominant ideology, something that is very hard, if not impossible, to do with cultural products existing within the spaces of indoctrination of the museum. Regardless of the message and how it is interpreted, however, the medium itself shapes society. As I will argue in the following chapter, the architectural medium of warmusement is itself the message.

Apologue: All That Is Holy Is Profaned

CHAPTER 9. Medium Is the Message: Warmusements and the Perpetuation of Violence

9.1 Medium Is the Message

9.2 Militantality: The Real Conditions of Life and Our Relations with Our Kind

9.1 Medium Is the Message

As Marshall McLuhan asserted, the medium is the message. Medium, which is an extension of ourselves, shapes and controls “the scale and form of human association and action.”¹ Taking the machine as an example, McLuhan argued that unlike what many people think, the message or meaning is not what one does with the machine: “In terms of the ways in which the machine altered our relations to one another and to ourselves, it mattered not in the least whether it turned out cornflakes or Cadillacs.”² Rather, what matters is the essence of the machine technology, which is fragmentary, centralist, and superficial in its patterning of human relationships. In the same way, if we look at militarization, it does not matter whether what is produced is a plastic toy gun or a multi-million-dollar theme park of martyrdom. What matters is the essence of militarization, which is aggressive, violent, and antagonistic in its patterning of human relationships.

According to McLuhan, the personal and social consequences of any medium result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each new technology. The Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber, which was used in the Hiroshima bombing, did not introduce flight or war or bombs or planes into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions by introducing a massive atomic weapon. The countless warmusements around the world did not invent the concept of war memorials, nor weaponry, nor the war they display, but they have altered our cities and created new kinds of work and leisure. This is true regardless of the location of the warmusements, which could be in the deserts of the Middle East or the tropical islands of Hawaii, and independent of the content of the war or whose side of the story is being displayed in the memorial medium.

Similar to movie medium, it can be argued that the war museum medium can carry us “from the world of sequence and connections into the world of creative configuration and structure.”³ McLuhan argues: “The message of the movie medium is that of transition from lineal connections to configurations.” It can be said that the message of the warmusement is similarly to break the lineal experience of war into a fragmented configuration of selected aspects that are framed with particular socializing intentions. As with all the media, the psychic and social consequences of this architectural medium is in the spatial designs or patterns they amplify or the existing processes they accelerate. In that sense, a warmusement is similar to an art museum in promoting consumption of commodified space and cultural products. However, what is more important than the particular war story that is being displayed is the change in public attitude toward wars that turns them into spectacles and recreational activity. These

¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1964, 11.

² The Medium Is the Message in McLuhan, 7–8.

³ McLuhan, 12.

mechanisms turn militarized spaces into socialized spaces that normalize a culture of violence.

9.2 Militantality: The Real Conditions of Life and Our Relations with Our Kind

In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary... All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face...the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men. –Karl Marx.⁴

Paul Rabinow points out the true intentions of the Social Army: how it institutionalized a conscript army and universal military service, installed hierarchy and respect for authority, and infused military matters with our everyday social life.⁵ Gwendolyn Wright writes of the manipulative goals of the colonial associationism style: how it mixed military and political action, how it rendered power invisible, and how it exploited the colonies through a benevolent presence.⁶ Noam Chomsky shows us how there is no humanity in the new military humanism: how power interests divide victims of human rights violations, and those rendered “unworthy,” such as the Kurdish victims of ethnic cleansing being ignored while arms are sold to the paying ally, the Turkish government to accomplish the task.⁷ Cihan Tuğal explains how Turkey’s “passive revolution” absorbed the “challenges of Islamism into free-market Atlanticism” and how the AKP’s “Islamically embellished paradise of speculation” retained the votes of the poor, defused opposition in the sprawling squatter neighborhoods, and further integrated Istanbul into the circuits of global capital, making it an Islamic world city better catering to “the whims of global finance.”⁸ The Holy Wars and Sacred Jihads have been a cover for profane collaborations in lucrative business. The so-called “War on Terror” has generated the most terror in recent history, and the United States is effectively “freeing the world to death.”⁹

Nonetheless, these methods, even though full of contradictions, have aided the governing forces to inject into the social fabric a particular highly militant mentality through which they hold a grip on power. I call this “militantality”: a governmentality that has apparatuses of military as its essential technical means. Foucault explains governmentality as the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow an exercise of power that has the population as its target, political economy as its principal form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical means.¹⁰ He asserts that the governmentality of this era was first discovered in the eighteenth century and formed the dynamics of state as it is today.

⁴ Marx cited in Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, 20 and 21.

⁵ Rabinow, *French Modern*, 118–21.

⁶ Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, 73–84.

⁷ Noam Chomsky, *The New Military Humanism: Lessons from Kosovo* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1999).

⁸ Tuğal, “The Greening of Istanbul”; Tuğal, *Passive Revolution*.

⁹ William Blum, *Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire* (Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press, 2005).

¹⁰ Foucault et al., *The Foucault Effect*, 102.

Governmentality is “at once internal and external to the state, since it is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on; thus, the state can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality.”¹¹ Today, cultural militarism and spatial militarization have become survival tactics for many states, especially for the United States, which has been extensively utilizing the apparatuses of military as its essential technical means to govern both internal and external affairs through militarization that goes far beyond the limits of its own territory.

¹¹ Foucault et al., 103.

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