

Honors Thesis Proposal

Dictators Employing Memorialization in the Human Landscape: A Case Study on Saddam Hussein's Regime, 1979-'03

by

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Dictators Employing Memorialization in the Human Landscape: A Case Study with Saddam Hussein's Regime, 1979-'03

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to show that dictators, whether consciously or unconsciously, use memorialization to build nationalism in fractured states. In my thesis I will identify the mechanisms of memorialization that dictators employ and use Saddam Hussein's reign, 1979-2003, as a case study.

I expect to find that Saddam Hussein's regime built physical memorials in areas that coincide with ethnic tension in an effort to build a national identity. I also expect the nature of the memorials to be centered around two nationalistic ideas: (1) A "modern" Iraq with Saddam Hussein as the President, and (2) Iraqis are an Assyrian-descended people. These two ideas would promote loyalty to the regime, and promote cohesion and cultural unity in a country with multiple ethnic and religious groups that historically compete with one another.

By conducting this analysis, I hope to explore if Saddam Hussein's use of memorialization was effective in building nationalism in the fractured state of Iraq. To do this, I will also compare the timeline of memorials to the timeline of known military aggressions against ethnic minorities. I will also investigate if there is any data on how Hussein's memorialization impacted the 4th world communities in Iraq. The 4th world is term used to describe sub-populations that are state-less and marginalized (Nietchmann, 1994). Iraq is known for its ethnic diversity and has several ethnic groups that are considered "4th world". If Saddam Hussein's memorialization was effective, then this is important information for development experts on fractured states. It can be incorporated as an essential aspect of state-building best practices.

Project Importance

This project is relevant to the field of geography and political science because a dictator's behavior has not previously been analyzed through the lens of memorialization. The findings from this project could lead to a greater amount of research in comparing the political behavior of dictators, benevolent or not, and their use of memorialization. This study can influence the world's knowledge of the mechanisms dictators employ and their effects.

This research project will also contribute a comprehensive list of the physical memorials Saddam Hussein instituted during his reign. This list has not yet been done in any field. The effects of this knowledge could be felt within the fields of International Development, Geography, and Political Science, as well as our own government's international policy.

Project Overview

Scope of Project

To narrow the scope of my project to something suitable for an Honors Thesis, I will focus my research on Saddam Hussein's rule. Saddam Hussein's regime was in power from 1979 to 2003. The time period of his regime provides a natural limit to what I can study and evaluate in this project. I will only analyze physical forms of memorialization and how it altered the human landscape in Iraq.

Methodology

I will conduct a literature review of any books or articles that document Saddam Hussein's use of memorialization. I will then contact various Historical Societies of Iraq and the Iraq Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities asking for details on memorials created from 1979-2003. Historical geographers have qualified memorials as many different things, from monuments, cemeteries, scholarships, to even trees (Pickles, 2006). I aim to compile as robust of

a list as possible of all the physical changes Saddam Hussein's regime made to the human landscape as possible. My list will classify the type of memorial, what it is commemorating, and the year it was planned, the year it was completed, and location.

After compiling the information, I will then start into the analysis phase of my project. Using this list, I will analyze Saddam Hussein's memorialization using Geographic Information Software (GIS) and see if there can be any connections drawn or made with spatially analyzing the distribution of his memorialization tactics compared with distribution of ethnic minorities. I will also compare the timeline of memorials against the known timeline of military aggressions against ethnic minorities. After analyzing the methods of Saddam Hussein's memorialization, I will compare his behavior to observed behavior of dictators. I will also compare Saddam Hussein's "top-down" memorialization efforts to the successful "bottom-up" efforts of American memorialization by Edward Everett (Mason, 2017).

Outline of Proposed Paper

- I. Introduction
- II. Review Scholarly Basis for Article- Nationalism
 - a. Review nationalism, define fractured states.
 - b. Review dictators and benevolent dictators.
 - c. Establish Scope
- III. Review Scholarly Basis for Article- Memorialization
 - a. Review how that is relevant to governments controlling memory
- IV. Review Scholarly Basis for Article- Iraq
 - a. History
 - b. Formation

- c. Nationalism
- V. Introduce Saddam Hussein
 - a. Overview of Regime
 - b. Other methods he used to control national identity
- VI. Evaluate Saddam Hussein using Memorialization
 - a. Identify/list sites he created
 - b. Use GIS to create a map, see if any meaning or pattern can be identified
 - c. Contrast against maps of ethnic minorities
- VII. Review Scholarly Basis for Article – Dictators
 - a. Review what makes a dictator benevolent or not
 - b. Oftentimes they worry about the future of their country, don't want to give up control, just trust themselves
 - c. Make a statement on if Saddam Hussein was benevolent
- VIII. Evaluate motivations
 - a. If benevolent dictators effectively employ memorialization, is there a way fractured states can use memorialization without the benevolent dictators?
- IX. Compare Edward Everett vs Saddam Hussein
 - a. Example of how one man primarily built America's sense of nationalism through memorialization, "bottom-up"
 - b. Compare to Saddam Hussein building Iraqi nationalism through memorialization, "top-down"
 - c. Evaluate effectiveness of two different approaches
- X. Implications

- a. Can we stop the need for benevolent dictators
- b. Effects on the 4th world
- c. Brief exploration of other ways to unify a state

Preliminary Literature Review

The literature I have reviewed so far provides me with information to use in the main divisions of my proposed paper:

Saddam Hussein/Iraqi History

Saddam Hussein came into power in Iraq in 1979, and remained in power until 2003. His reign became well known for the Anfal genocide of over a hundred thousand Kurdish people, the Iran-Iraq War, and the development of weapons of mass destruction that legitimized the U.S.'s invasion of Iraq (Long, 2004). Iraq is an artificial state created by the British in 1932. This has led to Iraq being a fractured country by nature, and having no *raison d'être*, or reason to exist. Iraq is a multi-nation state that not only has multiple ethnic groups, but multiple religions within the main Arab ethnic group, leading to conflict. Saddam Hussein's regime was organized and used various methods of propaganda to try to unite the country and build a nationalist idea around Iraq (Woods, 2011; Aburish, 2012). A well-documented use of Saddam Hussein's use of memorialization in particular used the "Victory Arch" in Baghdad as a way to memorialize and legitimize his regime (al-Khalil, 1991).

Memorialization

Memorials are created as components of ongoing campaigns to ingrain certain ideas into the public's hearts. Whether they are to commemorate the history of the American West, seeking to continue the civil rights movement, or commemorating tragedies on American soil, they are widely used to help shape public opinion (Otterstrom, 2019; Dwyer, 2008; Foote, 2003). Drs.

Dwyer and Alderman, human geographer experts on memorialization, also expound that memorials are not often located at the tradition hub of civic spaces, but throughout the local area (Dwyer, 2008). Location affects the impact memorials have on the public, so analyzing the locations of memorials against various factors can provide insight.

To continue to build my foundation of knowledge, I aim to review more literature on the following subjects: Nationalism, & Behavior of Dictators.

Thesis Committee

Honors Coordinator/Faculty Advisor: Dr. Samuel Otterstrom

Dr. Samuel Otterstrom is the resident expert on memorialization in Geography in the Geography department. He has had previous experience examining the effect of memorialization on the human and urban landscape throughout Utah and the Western US. He also has extensive history with the Honors Program and will be able to give me guidance on how to create an excellent Honors Thesis. He has been my Honors Coordinator since I joined the Geography major and over the past two years I've engaged in several conversations with him about my upcoming Honors Thesis. He has always been wonderfully supportive and collaborative.

First Faculty Reader: Dr. Mathew Mason

Dr. Matthew Mason, a Professor of History, is an expert on memory and its political uses. His scholarship in this field has dealt with how nineteenth-century Americans sought to use memorialization of the American Revolution to build a national identity. I have known him for five years, as he was the professor for my favorite Honors class, UNIV 293 "Unexpected Connections Social Sci-Art", which I took in 2015. Through conversations and mentorship Dr. Mason helped me to explore and decide on my major, Geography.

Second Faculty Reader: Dr. Chad Emmett

Dr. Chad Emmett has been one of my most influential professors in the Geography: Global Studies track. I have taken four classes from him since Fall 2017, including the class which sparked my interest in this topic, GEOG 271 “Middle East Geography”. Dr. Emmett is the Geography department’s expert on the Middle East. While his research primarily focuses on Israel, his experience finding available data on the Middle East will be crucial for my project.

Timeline

I will graduate August 2020 from BYU. In order to complete my Honors Thesis by the July 29 deadline set by the Honors Program, I have created the following schedule for completion of the intermediate steps:

Submit Thesis Proposal	January 17
Present Initial Findings at UCUR	February 7
Submit Thesis Poster	March 28
Complete GIS Analysis	April 24
Complete Draft 1 + Literature Review	May 15
Complete Draft 2	June 26
Submit Thesis Defense Information Form to Honors Program	July 10
Submit thesis to committee	July 10
Defend Thesis	July 17
Submit Thesis Submission Form	July 17
Submit Final Thesis PDF to Honors Program	July 24

IRB Approvals

NONE

Funding

NONE

Culminating Experience

My goal is to publish this Honors Thesis in an academic journal pertaining to memorialization, geography, middle eastern studies, or political science. As my Honors Thesis nears completion, I will sit down with each member of my committee and brainstorm various journals they are aware of and have had experience applying to. I have already been accepted to present this research at the Utah Conference for Undergraduate Research, and I am also applying to present at the WHRC Conference 2020. I will continue to look for academic venues where I can present my research.

Conclusion

I am looking forward to conducting this research as my Honors Thesis. By going through the process of finding a topic, I was able to find my true academic passion, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict studies. I now have a solid career and educational path I want to pursue. I eagerly wait to hear the Honors Executive Committee's decision regarding my Honors Thesis Proposal, and am open to any further notes or suggestions from the Committee.

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