

Kevin Farrell

Dr. Alison Smith

Advisor: Dr. Bahar Jalali

**Title:** Elusive Victory: Iraqi De-Ba'athification and its Consequences

### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the De-ba'athification policy implemented by the United States in Iraq following the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The Ba'athist party, led by Saddam Hussein, controlled Iraq for several decades until 2003. The Ba'athist party was comprised almost entirely of Sunni Arabs, even though they constituted a minority of Iraq's population. Through its targeting of bureaucratic and military personnel, the policy ultimately impacted hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. Following the invasion of 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the governing entity created by the U.S. to manage post-war Iraq, implemented de-ba'athification in order to identify and remove potentially hostile elements of the former regime. This thesis argues that the decision by the CPA to transfer the authority to execute this policy to the Iraqi Governing Council, a political organization comprised of former Iraqi exiles, resulted in negative political, economic, and security effects in Iraq. It uses various primary source documents and draws heavily on memorandums from the archive of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.