

The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS  
AND REBUILDING THE STATE IN IRAQ, 2003-2009**

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Middle East Studies Program

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts

by Jin, Yong-Ki

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has been approved by

Professor First Last Name \_\_ Dr. Walid W. Kazziha \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Adviser

Affiliation \_\_ POLS \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 16 May 2010 \_\_\_\_\_

Professor First Last Name \_\_ Dr. Maye Kassem \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Second Reader

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ POLS \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 17 May 2010 \_\_\_\_\_

Professor First Last Name \_\_ Dr. Mona Mikhail \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Third Reader

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ ARIC \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 16 May 2010 \_\_\_\_\_

Professor First Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Nabil Fahmy, Ambassador \_\_\_\_\_

Dean of GAPP

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ABSTRACT

The American University in Cairo

Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Rebuilding the State in Iraq, 2003-2009

Jin, Yong Ki

under the supervision of Dr. Walid W. Kazziha

The thesis studies the effect of ethno-religious conflicts in Iraq on the reconstruction process of the state since 2003. This research hypothesizes that ethno-religious conflicts have a direct negative effect on rebuilding the state because each ethnic and religious group has its own political goal that contributes to the decentralization of Iraqi political power and reunification. In this sense, the current Iraqi ethno-religious conflicts seem undeniably linked to the Operation of Iraqi Freedom and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. As well, the misguided US future program for the Iraqis was an attempt doomed to fail. This is not to say that the current political instability was directly caused by the US attack on Iraq in 2003, but to say that Iraqi ethno-religious conflicts became more brutal, intense and internalized since 2003. As a result, these ethno-religious conflicts stand in the way of a peaceful future for Iraq, dividing the state into three main ethno-religious entities based on the Shiite, the Sunni and the Kurdish peoples with each territory of Iraq.

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지난 3년간 이집트에서의 중동학 석사과정은 한편으론 나에게 모험과 도전이었다. 낯선 생활 그리고 낯선 교육 체계에서 좌절도 하고 절망도 맛보았다. 또 다른 한편으론 전공자로서 저명한 학자들의 강의를 들을 수 있었고 많은 지역 정보 및 지식을 쌓을 수 있어서 이 과정을 발전이라고 할 수도 있겠다. 하지만 무엇보다도 무사히 학업에 열중할 수 있게 해준 사랑하는 아내 그리고 사랑스런 두 아들들 에게 고마움을 표하고 싶다. 특히, 지난 3년간 공부하는 나를 위해 묵묵히 두 아들들을 잘 키워준 부인에게 이 논문을 통해 기쁨을 줄 수 있어 기쁘다.

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