

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE**  
**Fakulta sociálních věd**  
**Institut mezinárodních studií**  
**PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE**  
**(Posudek oponenta)**

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): **Pavel Novota**

Název práce: **Women on Periphery: The Invisible Empire Reborn**

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):

In his thesis, Pavel Novota is focusing on the incorporation of women into the structures of the Ku-Klux-Klan. The goal of the thesis is to find out “whether women were a marginal factor or whether they were more relevant than it might seem...” The author argues that “Klanswomen may have not have achieved much and ended up on the perimeter of society in most meanings of the word”.

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter, the author states the major goals of the thesis, outlines some of the biggest challenges he encountered (namely, the lack of reliable resources on the KKK and its female auxiliary due to the secretive nature of the organization), defines the key terms, as well as provides a critical overview of the most important sources he used for his analysis.

The second chapter provides a brief overview of the history of the KKK, in which the author compares the KKK of the 1920s to the original KKK, which was founded in the 1860s. He points out the spreading of the KKK to the north of the United States - a response to the series of migration waves, which brought in immigrants who challenged many American traditions. Further, the author explores the basic principles of Klan's operation, its founding documents, as well as established hierarchy. The chapter also covers many of the challenges - financial, ideological, and organizational - which eventually led to the KKK's decline in the second half of the 1920s. At the end of this chapter, the author focuses on the history of women's push to create a KKK-linked women's organization, the background of founding of the WKKK (women's auxiliary), as well as the relationship between the KKK and the WKKK.

In the third and the fourth chapters, the author points out to the divisive nature of women's inclusion in the KKK. He analyzes the disputes among the male KKK members about including women in the organization, looks in detail at women's motivation to establish a formal affiliate of the KKK as well as many women's ambiguity over the perceived role women should play in

the KKK. Interestingly enough, the author also tries to construct a profile of a typical woman who was likely to join the KKK's women's auxiliary.

In his analysis, the author argues that the KKK was very different from its Reconstruction era predecessor - while the old KKK was focusing primarily on preserving the rights and the position of the former slave owners, the new KKK turned into "a social movement" - like any social movement of the Progressive era, it adopted many progressive ideas, such as fighting against alcoholism, corruption, loose morals etc. In addition to that though, the KKK also promoted anti-immigrant stance and strong traditional Protestant values. Implicit was the emphasis on racial supremacy of the Anglo-Saxons.

In the fourth chapter, the author argues that for many women, particularly from rural areas, joining the KKK auxiliary was often seen as the possibility of taking part in community building and the social movements of the Progressive era. However, he also points out that many of these women felt particularly strong about the racial hierarchy in the United States and had a very critical approach towards the immigration.

In the fifth chapter, the author looks in details at the importance of women in the KKK. While he points out that the WKKK women oftentimes participated in charitable events and pushed for changes in education, they were still bound to the KKK ideology (i.e. anti-Catholic, anti-immigration stance). The author concludes that the inclusion of women in the KKK was purely utilitarian - "Klanswomen strengthened the group's claim that it was a family-oriented organization that promoted sociability". Given the changes in the era, such as the 19th amendment - not including women simply did not seem as a sustainable approach for the renewed KKK.

In the sixth chapter, the author offers a present-day approach to women's activism in the KKK ranks in the 1920s. Among the current KKK members, little is known of the role of women in the KKK. The existing organization does not emphasize the existence of the WKKK - and in fact, it went back to being an exclusively male-dominated organization. The author also points out, based on oral history project, that many WKKK members tended to blame external factors for their hardship. Many women were brought in the KKK due to their personal relationship with a KKK member. Many of these women were attracted by the community work they were invited to participate in and many did not fully subscribe to the KKK ideology. Still, in most cases, the WKKK members' worldview was based on strict racial hierarchy - which proved almost impossible to challenge.

In the conclusion, the author points out that the dispute about inclusion of women was eventually symptomatic of the internal disputes within the KKK - whether the KKK should stick to the tradition or should opt for changes which would reflect the dawn of modernity. The author concludes that the inclusion of women was mostly rhetorical, for the show that the KKK changed and modernized - and therefore, "Klanswomen can be considered legitimizers of the

entire movement". Practically, however, arrangements were made so that the women's organization of the KKK had only little autonomy - in other words, the women of the KKK remained on the periphery and their role was soon forgotten.

3. FORMÁLNÍ A JAZYKOVÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (jazykový projev, správnost citace a odkazů na literaturu, grafická úprava, formální náležitosti práce apod.):

Language-wise, Pavel's thesis is of superb quality. The text is well organized, the author's arguments are clear and logical. The thesis is based on abundance of resources, which includes newspaper articles from the 1920s, oral history, as well as academic secondary sources. The author carefully develops his footnotes - there are altogether 452 of them and they include not only reference to his sources, but also additional explanation or information on the topic covered. I only missed page numbers, which may have been lost in the formatting process.

4. STRUČNÝ KOMENTÁŘ HODNOTITELE (celkový dojem z bakalářské práce, silné a slabé stránky, originalita myšlenek, naplnění cíle apod.):

Despite the fact that the author focuses on the surge of the KKK in the 1920s, the topic of his thesis is very relevant today. While the author focuses on the role of women in the KKK, he also explores the general milieu in which the KKK was operating and which bears some similarities to contemporary times, including anti-immigrant stances, rise of racism and populism.

The author delves into a topic that sits on the periphery of academic research. He points out that the history of the KKK is dominated by the male narrative, while the women's aspect is mostly missing. While the author is very well aware of the challenges his research poses - namely the lack of reliable resources due to the rather secretive nature of the KKK and WKKK, he uses all available resources to portray a telling picture of the KKK and its women's auxiliary. The author is careful with his assumptions, he makes sure that the reader is aware of the fact that oftentimes there is no chance for verification of information and his conclusions can be taken - at its best - as estimates. This unfortunately leads the author to repeat some of his observations and conclusions throughout the text - the lack of data simply does not allow him to go deeper in his analysis.

I personally believe that the author could have included a little bit more on the context of the era in which the KKK was renewed. From his writing, it seems that all elements have aligned for the second KKK to become - albeit temporarily - successful. The United States was going through an era of abrupt change due to massive industrialization, which the federal government seemed unable to respond to. The plight of both industrial workers as well as rural farmers, activists fighting against corruption and for democratization of politics, women fighting for their voting rights as well as organizing to improve the quality of life in cities and providing social services to the millions of immigrants who crossed the borders of the United

States within a span of twenty years - all of this created reverberations in the society and many sought means for dealing with these new and unknown phenomena. The rise of the second KKK and the push for women's inclusion in the KKK was - to some extent - a reaction to these changes.

It would also be helpful for the author's analysis of the motivation for women to join the WKKK to use social psychology, which could more comprehensively explain the narratives used by the KKK/WKKK as well as their tendency to portray themselves as victims under threat from the influx of "different" and "unknown".

Despite these suggestions, Pavel Novota presented an extremely interesting analysis, which has a solid foundation in both primary and secondary sources. The author clearly put a lot of thought into the thesis title and structure. I particularly appreciated his critical approach to sources.

5. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):

- How would you explain the fact that the WKKK was much less popular in the South?
- How much did the KKK/WKKK draw from the idea of Republican Motherhood?
- How did the KKK react to the discrepancy between the emphasis on traditional family and the movement for emancipation of women in the 1920s?

6. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA

(výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhověl):

**Pavel Novota's thesis fully fulfills the requirements for Master's thesis, and therefore it is recommended for defense. I propose the final grade A.**

Datum: 10. září 2018

Podpis: Jana Sehnálková

Pozn.: Hodnocení pište k jednotlivým bodům, pokud nepíšete v textovém editoru, použijte při nedostatku místa zadní stranu nebo příložený list. V hodnocení práce se pokuste oddělit ty její nedostatky, které jsou, podle vašeho mínění, obhajobou neodstranitelné (např. chybí kritické zhodnocení pramenů a literatury), od těch věcí, které student může dobrou obhajobou napravit; poměr těchto dvou položek berte prosím v úvahu při stanovení konečné známky.