

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek vedoucího)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Anna Matějčková

Název práce: What Type of First Lady Was Michelle Obama: Case Study on Michelle Obama as First Lady

Vedoucí práce (u externích vedoucích uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

Jana Sehnálková

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

In her thesis, Anna Matějčková examines the influence and impact of Michelle Obama on the role of the First Lady of the United States. She provides a case study of initiatives Michelle Obama took as her own, she analyzes how Mrs. Obama used the First Lady's platform to promote the causes she felt passionate about, and how these causes integrated with the policies of her husband, President Obama. The goal of the thesis is to "analyze the shift in the role and influence of the First Lady during Michelle Obama's term as First Lady" and to "find out how the role of First Lady was changed during Michelle Obama's term as First Lady and what kind of influence her initiatives brought" (p. 2-3).

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 three basic chapters. In the first chapter, the author provides some general historical background to the evolution and perception of the roles of the First Ladies and describes what criteria are used to evaluate the First Ladies. Here, it is important to underscore the author's argument that the role of the First Lady is not defined in any founding document of the United States and therefore, it is up to each First Lady to define it as she wants. However, each First Lady is confronted with certain expectations from the public - expectations that may be based on tradition, but also on previous perceptions of the First Lady. In the second chapter, the author describes the initiatives of Michelle Obama and their implementation. In this part, the author shows the innovative approaches that Michelle Obama's used - such as using celebrities or social media to advance her causes. In the last chapter, the author briefly looks at the life of First Ladies after they leave the White House. The author uses basic typology of the First Ladies: active/passive and the Bush Institute's division of First Ladies's role in hostess, teammate, champion, and policy advocate. While throughout the thesis, we can see examples of Michelle Obama performing all these roles, in conclusion, I am missing a final evaluation which role Michelle Obama performed the most effectively. Also, the original question which promises to look into how the role of the First Lady changed during Michelle Obama's tenure does not receive a definite answer.

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

The thesis would merit from thorough proof-reading, as it contains many typos, syntax flaws, grammar mistakes, punctuation issues, and confusing passages. There is for

example inconsistency in using First Lady v. first lady. On p. 21, the author writes that Laura Bush “never thought that decades later that Afghanistan and the status of women and girls in Afghanistan would be achieved”. On the bottom of p. 24, something is missing in “it the aspect of motherhood”. These are just a few examples of issues that could have been amended were there more time for proof-reading.

Since Michelle Obama is out of office, I would advise using past tense (incl. sequence of tenses) when describing her initiatives. The author’s preference for in-text parenthetical citations rather than for footnotes is a bit confusing. Direct citations also do not follow the generally accepted rules, as the author uses colons where they are not necessary. I would also prefer if longer quotes were placed into block quotes. The list of references could have been divided into primary and secondary sources.

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

Anna Matejkova has selected an interesting subject of her thesis. The First Ladies have so far received only marginal academic attention - and mostly only as an extension of presidential research. Interdisciplinary scholarship of American First Ladies is only recently becoming an independent area of study - particularly due to increased emphasis on gender and women in politics. I particularly enjoyed reading a comprehensive overview of Michelle Obama’s initiatives, which Anna put into context of President Obama’s policies. While Anna should be commended for her effort to get insights from people who were directly involved in working with the First Ladies, in my opinion, she should have done more research on the study of the First Ladies, which would provide more analytical framework. It is also not clear how the interviews, which were used as a basis for the analysis, were conducted as nowhere in the text does the author explain how she conducted the interviews and what questions she asked. The text also makes it look like Michelle Obama was the only initiator of all the initiatives - here, I would have appreciated if a short chapter on the Office of the First Lady and its operation was included. The text itself has only 44 pages which falls short of the required 60-page limit for master's theses - and the author could have added more on the literature overview to sum up the existing scholarship on the issue of the First Ladies.

5. **SPOLUPRÁCE S VEDOUCÍM PRÁCE** (komunikace s vedoucím práce, schopnost reflektovat připomínky, posun od původního záměru apod.)

The author consulted her work, although a more timely consultation could have helped in avoiding some of the issues with the thesis.

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

- From your analysis, it seems as Michelle Obama was the initiator of all her programs. Did she have advisors? How important are they? How does the Office of the First Lady operate?
- Would you argue that the role of the First Lady is becoming more professional?
- How has Melania Trump built upon the changes introduced by Michelle Obama?

7. **DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA**

Despite the reservations I have about the thesis, I recommend it for defense with the final grade D-E.

Datum: 8. září 2019

Podpis: Jana Sehnalkova

Pozn.: Hodnocení píše 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.