

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of International Studies

PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT
(Supervisor)

Name of the student: **André Baroš**

Title: **Religiózní faktor v Republikánské straně a vliv evangeliků na její kandidáty**

Supervisor: **doc. PhDr. Francis Raška, PhD.**

1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):

This Master's dissertation discusses the role of the Evangelicals and their religious beliefs on Republican candidates.

2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):

André has chosen a highly complex and original topic. The argumentation is deep, the structure is fine, and the methodological underpinning is impressive. The sources are relevant as well.

3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):

As he spent much of his childhood in Toronto, André is a truly bilingual individual who speaks, reads, and writes Czech and English on the same excellent level. He is among the best students I have ever taught in my career at Charles University. I have found no significant formal shortcomings.

4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin/URKUND/Theses anti-plagiarism software and

I find no issues insofar as originality is concerned.

5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):c

André Baroš has written his Master's dissertation on the American Evangelical "Religious Right" and its influence on the Republican Party and its candidates. The treatise is divided into an Introduction, three main chapters, and a Conclusion. In the ensuing paragraphs, I will offer my comments on each part of the work.

In the Introduction, André defines the Evangelical Christian movement in the United States. He also delves into how Evangelicals became politicized and traces the political evolution of the so-called "Religious Right" and how the Republican Party achieved preference among Evangelicals. The major works on the topic are mentioned and critiqued as are the themes most important to Evangelical voters. Most importantly, the Introduction provides the reader with an idea as to what can be expected in the body of the dissertation. The Introduction is of outstanding quality in my view.

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the historical context. The role of the liberal 1960s and the liberal promotion of looser sexual mores, abortion, feminism, racial integration, secular humanism, and rights for homosexuals resulted in a conservative reaction that brought together conservative groups fiercely opposed to social liberalism. Examples of such organizations are *Concerned Women for America (CWA)*, *Moral Majority*, *Christian Coalition*, and *Eagle Forum*. Prominent conservative ministers and activists and their respective activities are also discussed. Moreover, the peculiar interpretation of the Bible and Christian thought has been utilized by Evangelicals in their effort to gain political influence. I think that André's characterization of "Christian capitalists" is rather apt. I like this chapter, which flows nicely into the next.

Chapter 2 represents a multifaceted case study of sorts. The main focus is on Republican presidential and senatorial candidates. André justifies his choice of presidential and senatorial candidates on the grounds that both political roles carry a preponderance of weight in the American political system. The individuals André has opted to concentrate on are Ronald Reagan, Jesse Helms, Pat Robertson, and George W. Bush. Throughout the chapter, there is evidence of meticulous research and the utilization of multiple sources. The superb quality of Chapter 2 speaks for itself.

In Chapter 3, André takes a closer look at how each of the individuals portrayed in the previous chapter have approached specific issues both domestic and foreign. Perceptions of God and religion were often significant in their thought processes. Again, I must emphasize the peculiar nature of the perceptions in question because leading religious studies scholars and theologians have questioned the validity of selective interpretation of biblical principles by Evangelical figures and politicians. André deserves praise for having the patience to analyze the prose of these self-righteous individuals. This chapter is, not surprisingly, interesting and informative.

The Conclusion recapitulates André's main points and he adds that the recent controversial Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, which had guaranteed unfettered access to abortion, has exposed the polarization present in American society today. Opposition to abortion and gay marriage are the two biggest issues for Evangelical voters and it remains to be seen how this will impact Republican fortunes in elections. The most important point André makes in the Conclusion is that the Evangelical element is a significant, though not decisive, force within the Republican Party.

André's dissertation speaks for itself. Without reservation, I recommend a classification of A.

6. COOPERATION WITH THE SUPERVISOR (communication with the supervisor, ability to reflect comments, shift from the original intention, etc.)

André was in regular contact with me and collaboration with him was both easy and delightful. His maturity and independence indicate suitability for admission to our doctoral program.

7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:

How do the Religious Right and the Trumpian MAGA movement overlap and on which issues do they differ? Please explain.

8. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:

YES – (on A-F scale) A

Date: **30 August 2022**

Signature: