

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): **Anna Jaškina**

Název práce: **Dopad americké invaze na irácké školství v letech 2003-2010**

Oponoval (u externích oponentů uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

doc. PhDr. Francis Raška, PhD.

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

This BA dissertation examines the impact of the US invasion of Iraq on the Iraqi education system between 2003 and 2010. The primary, secondary, and tertiary education sectors are taken into account, as well as the impact of the invasion and later reconstruction efforts on students' well-being.

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

This topic is very demanding and required significant research by the student. The argumentation is sound, sources are correctly cited, and the methodological and theoretical considerations are appropriate.

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

I have found no significant issues regarding the formal aspects of the work, which is presented very well.

4. KONTROLA ORIGINALITY TEXTU

Prohlašuji, že jsem se seznámil/a s výsledkem kontroly originality textu závěrečné práce v systému:

[] Theses [] Turnitin [] Ouriginal (Urkund)

Komentář k výsledku kontroly:

There is no reason to question the originality of the work.

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

Anna Jaškina has opted to write her BA dissertation on the impact of the American invasion on the education system of Iraq between 2003 and 2010. Not only is the topic original and innovative, but Anna is also very fortunate to have Jan Hornát as her supervisor because Jan's knowledge of United States national security decisions and their consequences for others is very broad and nuanced. Moreover, Jan is a gentleman, as well as a devoted scholar. Anna's work consists of an Introduction, three main chapters, and a Conclusion. I shall comment upon each section of the treatise in the paragraphs that follow.

The Introduction provides a roadmap of what the reader should expect from the work. Anna explains the topic at hand, defines her approach, and provides welcome background information. She discusses the most important sources in detail and summarizes the content of each main chapter. I think that the Introduction is of phenomenal quality and my only quibble is that the Introduction is not listed in the table of contents.

Anna provides the pre-2003 historical context in Chapter 1. She begins with the Iran-Iraq War, which broke out shortly after Saddam Hussein seized power with Iraq as the initial aggressor. This is followed by a discussion of the Ba'ath Party and Saddam Hussein's efforts to completely dominate politics in Iraq. The Ba'ath Party predated Saddam Hussein's rule and Anna furnishes some insightful information concerning positive educational reforms implemented in Iraq, most notably the campaign against illiteracy launched in 1976. It is clear that prior to Saddam Hussein, there was significant social and educational progress in Iraq (even though in the 1970s university teachers were pressured to join Ba'athist organizations) before Saddam transformed schools and universities into ideological mouthpieces of his murderous regime. In the 1980s overall, however, the educational situation was improving largely on account of the continuing campaign against illiteracy. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the First Gulf War of 1991 were accompanied by international sanctions, which had a devastating impact on the educational system and illiteracy again became a greater social problem. This can also be attributed to the stress caused by the military conflicts themselves. This chapter fulfills its purpose by providing necessary background information.

Chapter 2 discusses the US invasion of Iraq, the factors leading up to it, and the impact of the occupation on Iraqi society. Anna correctly points out that the consequences of the invasion and subsequent occupation were mostly negative. The ouster of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party resulted in great instability and ethnic tensions that threatened the territorial integrity of the Iraqi state. Anna correctly states that flawed decisions on the part of the occupation authority, including the dissolution of the existing Iraqi army, only made a precarious situation even worse. The upheaval exacted a great toll on the young who suffered from PTSD and many babies during this period were born with birth defects. This well-written chapter guides the reader into the final one. Anna deserves to be commended.

Chapter 3 directly addresses the impact of the US invasion and occupation on the education of Iraqis. Not surprisingly, the combat between the occupiers and insurgents had grave consequences for the young and their educational progress. On 27 June 2023, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution providing funding for the reconstruction of the Iraqi educational system. The educational reform consisted of de-Ba'athification at all costs. This entailed the dismissal of teachers and university officials appointed by the Saddam Hussein regime and the replacement of educational curricula and textbooks. However, the occupation authorities made very little progress despite calling for great projects. When these responsibilities were transferred to the weak coalition government, no significant improvement occurred. One of the main reasons for this dismal state of affairs was the dire security situation. Children could often not attend school under safe conditions, so many did not attend at all. Furthermore, the social conditions of the Iraqi population obviously hindered progress. It is logical that when the food security and housing infrastructure are inadequate, education on all levels suffers. Anna demonstrates that Iraqi education suffered from underfunding, lack of teachers due to poor compensation, and gender imbalances. She indicates that, in fact, educational opportunities generally at all levels continued to decline. Iraq, which had been one of the first countries in the region to introduce universal state-guaranteed access to education in 1976, during the occupation witnessed declining attendance rates and greater gender inequality in access to education. In my view, this represents an unforgivable crime against the Iraqi people. The prosperity promised by President

George W. Bush prior to the US invasion proved to be illusory. Ill-advised decisions from the outset doomed the Iraqis to a future without security or opportunity, and education on all three levels was in a worse state than in the 1980s. Those middle-class Iraqis who valued education had more of an incentive to emigrate and seek better fortunes for their families elsewhere. The content of this chapter basically demonstrates that ignorant occupiers made decisions that transformed Iraq into a failed state. Though USAID instituted programs that were meant to improve the situation, poor implementation and misguided assumptions rendered such programs ineffective. Anna cites reliable data, which indicates that prospects for Iraq in the near future are indeed grim. She is also (rightly in my view) skeptical about USAID data and points out that USAID as an organization falls under the US Government and is, therefore, not objective. A well-known saying comes to mind: “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” This chapter is of excellent quality.

In the Conclusion, Anna recapitulates her main points and states that the decline of Iraqi education indeed began before the 2003 invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq and can roughly be traced back to the impact of the Iran-Iraq War and subsequent events, including the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the international sanctions that followed. The US invasion and occupation exacerbated the tragic situation and represented the last nail in the coffin. In her final remarks, Anna says that much more research is in order.

My impression of Anna Jaškina’s dissertation is very favorable. She tackled a difficult question and reached sound, balanced conclusions. If the quality of the oral defense matches that of the dissertation itself, I recommend an excellent mark (A).

**6. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):
Could the Americans have implemented better policies vis-a-vis Iraqi education? Please explain.**

How does the situation in Iraq look now? Please explain?

**7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA
(A-F): If the oral defense goes well, I recommend an excellent classification (A).**

Datum: **1 June 2024**

Podpis:

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.