

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE**  
**Fakulta sociálních věd**  
**Institut mezinárodních studií**

**PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE**  
**(Posudek vedoucího)**

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Emma Letham

Název práce: Black Republicans: A Subaltern Struggle for Recognition

---

Vedoucí: Jan Hornát

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

The thesis is concerned with the question of Black conservatism and Black Republicanism. It builds on the premise that “alignment with the Republican party appears to directly contradict the group interests determined by Black racial identity” and so the paper explores this conundrum and attempts to provide further explanations for the motivation of Blacks to side with or join the Republican party. Ms. Letham employs Axel Honneth’s sociological study of recognition, coupling it with Frantz Fanon’s conceptualizations of the subaltern, as the theoretical starting point for her thesis. She then proceeds with a characterization of “Black Republicanism” and in the fourth chapter presents a case study of multiple Black individuals (political candidates) and their standing during the 2016-2023 election cycles.

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

The thesis is based on a solid theoretical framework, its argumentation is coherent and persuasive. The literature used for the thesis is very rich and includes a number of primary sources and data. The structure of the piece is logical and generally guides the reader well in terms of explaining the functionality of each part and arriving at conclusions and answers to the research question.

There is a slight disconnect between what the author deems as her research question – “How can a Black American consolidate their racial identity with the realities of being a Republican?” – and the paper’s epistemology. In other words, what does the author mean by “consolidation”? Does it refer to public or personal/intimate consolidation? Perhaps it is “just” an issue of framing the question, but it seems to imply that there is an imperative for the Black Republicans to justify, explain or negotiate their “counter-intuitive” political preference – as if it was their duty to adhere to group interests and any aberration from that position was morally wrong. I believe this framing only complicates and, indeed, politicizes the entire question even more.

In this sense, even the premise that the Black alignment with the GOP directly contradicts the “group interests determined by Black racial identity” should also be problematized – does this mean that a “group interest” trumps alleged individual interests? In other words, do groups define preferences for the individual? By extension, we can speak of various scopes of these “groups” – Blacks, Whites, Women, Americans, Westerners. These are complex questions, but a short discussion in the thesis of in-group/out-group loyalty would also be useful to further clarify the author’s intentions.

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

The language of the thesis is nearly flawless; the citation norm is coherent across the entire paper. In short, all formal criteria have been met.

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: The results do not indicate instances of plagiarism.

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

I must sincerely say that this is one of the best BA theses that I have had the chance to supervise. It is an intellectually mature piece of original value. Ms. Letham has mostly framed her research question with clarity and successfully identified a certain gap in the existing analyses of Black Republicanism. In her words: “I approach Black Republicanism as a subaltern struggle for recognition in a White supremacist society. Unlike previous studies of the motivations of Black conservatives and Republicans, which have theorised them as ‘clients of the Republican party’ and ‘Uncle Toms’, referring to their political choices as ‘buffoonery’, this dissertation conceptualises Black Republican party affiliation as a consequence of the existing system of White supremacy.” (p. 5).

Her adoption of the Hegelian approach to intersubjective relations, building on Axel Honneth and others, is a unique contribution to the precarious and politically heated debates about group interests, racism and identity in the US (and applicable more broadly across other societies). The language of the thesis is impeccable. Doubtless, Ms. Letham has successfully reached her research goals in the thesis.

My appraisal of the thesis stretches beyond its substance and also to the author herself. Ms. Letham is not afraid to tap abstract philosophical debates and implement them in her thinking about our societies’ problems. She is an articulate thinker and intellectually well-equipped to remain in the academia for quite some time (career-wise). Our frequent consultations have always been intellectually stimulating, on point and constructive.

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

1. Would a similar explanatory framework used to in this thesis with respect to Black Republicans apply also to Latino/Hispanic Republicans?
2. What are the prospects for Black turnout and preferences in the 2024 elections? Do you expect increased mobilization of these voters for the GOP? And what can the GOP do to sway more Black voters?

7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA (A-F):

I cannot recommend any other grade than **A**.

Datum: 25 May 2023

Podpis: