

Evaluation of the Master's Thesis	
Geopolitical Studies, GPS	
Faculty of Social Sciences	
Charles University, Prague	
Name of student	Richardson Kovar
Title of the thesis	The Washington Consensus and the Quality of Democracy in Brasil and Chile
Date of evaluation	August 30 th , 2012
Opponent	PhDr. Malvína Krausz Hladká, Ph.D.

The presenting MA thesis deals with the analysis of the quality of democracy from 1989 (1990? differs throughout the thesis) through 2005 in Brazil and Chile with respect to the neoliberal economic policies adopted by both countries in the latter 20th century. In principle, thesis touches on an interesting topic that surely deserves coverage due to the interesting changes in politics in Latin America generally and particularly in these two states. The effort of student R. J. Kovar, in this context, seems very beneficial. And this is the reason why presented thesis fulfils the basic criteria – the proper relevancy for the research – from both theoretical and political perspectives.

Technical structure of the text is transparent, but in my opinion, it should be divided into chapters with more clear and systematic structure. The whole text starts with the introductory part, where student outline the research focus and background of U.S. – Latin American relations. Unfortunately, thesis misses clear methodology used. Even though in the second chapter author describes main definitions and “theoretical concepts” in which he rely on in his work, reader is not perfectly aware of the main goal as well as research questions that author wants to analyse. All chapters are divided into paragraphs in a correct manner. But technically, thesis possesses few important pitfalls such as unequal blank spaces among paragraphs, too many typing errors (work would require language correction), etc. Other formal inadequacies are quotations without referred pages of book; underestimated bibliography and quite short text itself which reached only a minimal necessary limit.

As for the content itself: the main part of thesis bear on the book 'The Quality of Democracy in Latin America' written by Daniel H. Levine and José E. Molina. Author uses the matrix from this book where terms of: electoral decision, participation, accountability, responsiveness and sovereignty are fundamental and evaluate the quality of democracy in Brazil and Chile in accordance with five basic prerequisites stated. Yet the thesis contains some serious shortcomings.

Topic of the thesis is too broad – both in terms of the time period covered and the focus, which makes a detailed focus impossible and which also seems to have caused serious pitfalls right at the onset of research. Author should certainly set up a more precise periodization of his work

since economic policies has undergone significant changes throughout the period. Also broad focus on two countries (but without any comparative tool) disables a clear and concentrated approach to the researched phenomenon, which also downgrades the scholarly value of the thesis. Strategic passages of the thesis are rather simplistic.

In spite of all, author has illustrated solid knowledge of the researched area and his findings based on his fieldwork are interesting in a number of ways. Argumentation is structured correctly and easy to follow, so the thesis fulfils all the criteria set to M.A. program according to the standards of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

To conclude, author has formulated the research focuses and they were analyzed critically. He has demonstrated knowledge of the research field and the conclusions of his thesis have showed author's ability to work with informative sources and literature but mainly his ability to analyse the topic and draw own inferences.

Therefore, I propose to evaluate the thesis as good.

In Prague, 30th of August

PhDr. Malvína Krausz Hladká, Ph.D.