



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Johana Franz Palacios

Title: Natural resource abundance and food insecurity – An interrelationship? The Venezuelan case study

Programme/year: SECINTEL 2017

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Tomáš Kučera

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	70
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	90



Evaluation

This dissertation investigates a truly interesting research puzzle: how it happens that oil-rich Venezuela suffers a serious food insecurity. As the author presents in a comprehensive literature review, the paradox of resource abundance/'resource curse' is an extensively discussed issue in the economics/IPE literature. However, the connection between resource abundance and food security stays an underresearched issue. This dissertation thus truly attempts to fill a gap in the literature.

The dissertation proves a painstaking effort of the author to trace the complex and complicated routes connecting resource abundance and food insecurity. Based on a literature review, the author constructs a causal model connecting these two phenomena. Unfortunately, the explanation produced by so constructed a model rests predominantly on the factor of economic decline (a well-documented outcome of a 'resource curse' and an obvious cause of food insecurity). It is only a relatively brief critical evaluation of this model that attempts to explore specificity of the relationship between resource abundance and food insecurity in the case of Venezuela. I consider this sub-chapter (5e) the most valuable contribution of this dissertation. It would only make the dissertation more interesting if this part was given more space and was moved to a more central position in the dissertation's argument.

In the oral defence, the author may explain if, in her understanding, resource abundance in combination with institution weakness are likely to lead to food insecurity in general or if this connection is specific for Venezuela and depends on the specific context of Venezuelan politics.

Suggested grade: Excellent

Signature: 28.8.2017