

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Marie Alice Kubánková

Název práce: Socio-economic Analysis of the Informal Economy in San Diego County

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

Jan Hornát

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

Ms. Kubánková has chosen an original topic for her thesis – exploring the factors that contribute to the existence of the informal economy in the San Diego County (SDC). She states that her “main goal is to determine the most conducive factors to the prevalence of the IE” (p. 6) in the SDC. She first proceeds by defining and discussing the complicated term of informal economy and further explains the difficulty of gathering data about the sector – not only in SDC, but in general. The succeeding chapter brings a closer look at the setup of the economy in the SDC and its main drivers and problems. The main chapter (ch. 4), lists and analyzes a number of factors that, according to secondary literature, are generally considered to be facilitators of the emergence and sustainability of the informal economy.

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

The author has chosen a topical issue that is relevant both for academic debates and for practical policymaking, which I commend. The structure of the thesis itself and the research question are quite clearly set, yet I believe that the main research goals have been outlined in a manner that is too ambitious. Especially given the availability of data and the scope of research that would otherwise be necessary for such a project, the final product is not very persuasive in terms of strong conclusions. The method employed serves rather heuristic purposes and does not produce solid arguments, as all “factors” in chapter 4 are analyzed in a rather shallow manner and thereby do not provide support for the goal of determining the circumstances that are most conducive to the prevalence of IE in SDC.

I am not sure why there is a list of appendices at the end of the thesis when no appendices are available (wasn't this perhaps supposed to be a “list of figures”?). The literature used in the paper is relevant and vast, showing that Ms. Kubánková has done a great deal of research for the paper.

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

The thesis is generally well-written, with only some minor typos, misspellings, and grammar mistakes. (i.e. “Many law abiding non-citizen might participate in the IE without being noticed or detected by ICE, as **they attentions seems** to be more focused on individuals with criminal record”, p. 50). The citation style is consistent throughout the paper. The formatting is fine, only some additional spaces between paragraphs and indents (e.g. p. 13) could have been taken care of before submission. Otherwise, the thesis meets all the formal requirements.

4. KONTROLA ORIGINALITY TEXTU

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

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Komentář k výsledku kontroly: Low levels of similarity with other texts.

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

I generally consider the thesis to be a topical, interesting and original endeavor, even though its execution remains a bit below my expectations. However, this is perhaps due to a lack of access to data and an overly ambitious research goal.

There are unclear passages in the text – e.g. “Also SDC property tax revenues are estimated between \$520 and \$640. Areas around San Francisco have revenues higher than \$890, and counties like Stanislaus, or Madera have tax revenues lower than \$410.” (p.22) – does this mean per capita? Per annum?

As mentioned above, I found the argumentation about the nine factors analyzed to be rather shallow and short in order to serve as clear evidence of their relevance for the prevalence of IE in SDC. The author in the conclusion states that, “Out of nine given factors, four of them were considered less instrumental in the prevalence of the IE than others. Two of them were proven to be the most conducive. The remaining three factors have to some degree an impact on the prevalence of the IE in SDC.” (p. 61) The measurement of the impact of these factors was not clearly set out in the paper and it seems that their relevance was assessed rather intuitively.

I believe it was irrelevant to use data and ranking that was available on the US federal level as there is too much variation across US states and counties – e.g. “In the following year, the US dropped to the score of 69 and 23rd rank. Unfortunately, as this study is globally conducted there is not any precise data considering the state of CA or even SDC.” (p. 32)

I do not understand the claim that “Although it is not the purpose of this thesis, the estimate of the size of the IE still needs to be determined. In the following part, we will determine the size of the IE and will summarize the individual factors and discuss their relevance to the IE in SDC.” (p. 60) As I understand it, the paper is not determining the size of IE, but merely adopting it from secondary sources.

I commend the author for identifying a research gap and attempting to fill it with her work – i.e. “Most of the research considering the IE is focused on the developing countries, and little is known how the IE can affect the developed countries such as the US.” (p. 64)

Overall, this was an ambitious project, but its conclusions remain quite vague and incoherent. Perhaps limiting the number of factors analyzed would have given the author more space to develop stronger causal links between these and the prevalence of the informal economy in SDC. Perhaps a comparative study of two counties would have given more persuasive conclusions.

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

- You state on p. 61 that according to „Table 07, it is visible that the share of IE has been declining over the years”, but you do not provide an explanation for this (although it would be relevant for your research question). Why? What do you think caused this decline?
- If you were to compare the informal economy in the Czech Republic and the SDC, what would be the main similarities and differences (also in terms of policy approach)?

7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA
(A a B výborně, C a D velmi dobře, E dobře, F nevyhověl):

I recommend the thesis for defense, and I suggest the grade C.

Datum: 11.01.2022

Podpis: Jan Hornát

Pozn.: Hodnocení píše 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.