

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

*Master's Thesis Assessment*

**AUTHOR:** Richardson J. Kovar

**TITLE OF THE THESIS:** The Washington Consensus and the Quality of Democracy in Brazil and Chile 1989–2005

**ASSESSED BY:** PhDr. Josef Mlejnek, Ph.D.

**ASSESSMENT TYPE:**      **Opponent**

**1. ASSESSMENT OF THE THESIS CONTENT**

ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES	MARK
Relevancy of the topic in relation to the current scientific knowledge	2
Originality of the thesis, contribution to the science subject field	3-4
Integrity and scale of sources and literature relevant to the subject study	3-4
Ability for critical appraisal of the sources	3
Standards of working with sources	2
Methodology and its relevancy to the subject study and thesis goals	3-4
Logic of the thesis structure	3
Ability to argue, cohesion and coherence of the argument	3-4
Terminology in the relevant field	2
Adhesion to the citation norm	2
Language, stylistic and formal standard of the thesis	2

**COMMENTARY:**

The author of the thesis writes in the introduction: “This dissertation considers Brazil and Chile's adoption of neo-liberal economic policies espoused by the Washington Consensus and to what extent they affected the quality of democracy in both countries.” But unfortunately, in his thesis, a detailed analysis of the impact of neo-liberal policies is missing.

At the beginning, the author defines the main concepts of work and thereafter focuses on the quality of democracy in Chile and Brazil. The matrix, in this thesis, used to determine the quality of democracy in South America, comes from a study done by Daniel H. Levine and José E. Molina in their book, *The Quality of Democracy in Latin America*. The quality of democracy, therefore, is measured according to

the following criteria: 1. Electoral decision, 2. Participation, 3. Responsiveness, 4. Accountability and 5. Sovereignty.

That would be fine, but the main goal of this work is to assess the impact of neo-liberal economic policies on the quality of democracy. But a small subchapter "4.6 Chile & Neoliberalism" has only a few lines. The scope of subchapter "4.7 Chile & Washington Consensus" is roughly two pages. I have to make the same complaint about the passages on Brazil.

In order to fulfil its aim, the author would have to work with a wide range of economic and social data. He would have to really prove that the neo-liberal economic policy has (or has not) led to the growth of living standards of broad layers of the population, particularly the growth of middle class. The author would have to prove that neo-liberal policies in the countries surveyed have (or have not) led to a reduction of social disparities and weakened the political polarization. Almost nothing like that is included in the work. And if so, is it only briefly indicated.

Very problematic is also the author's concept that the neo-liberal economic policy in the region started to be enforced during the era after the fall of communism. But it was just in Chile where the Pinochet regime had already begun to practise neo-liberal economic policies. And successful economic policies of Pinochet still forms the main argument of proponents of Pinochet's regime. Yes, the author briefly mentions that the neo-liberal economic policy had already been carried out Pinochet's regime, but my criticism is that Chile then questions the author's general interpretive line: Neo-liberal policies have been in South America enforced since the nineties. This discrepancy would definitely need a more detailed analysis, which, unfortunately, this thesis lacks.

I also found several factual inaccuracies or typographical errors. For example, Brazilian President Lula da Silva acts as Lulu in the text. His predecessor in office was Fernando Henrique Cardoso, not Cardozo. And Patricio Aylwin, Patricio, not Patrizio, was elected president of Chile in March 1990, not in 1993, as the author of the thesis states on page 25.

This thesis, therefore, is only a descriptive rather than analytical text, and in my opinion should not be assessed better than a good (3) grade.

## **2. QUESTIONS FOR THE DEFENSE**

### **3. SUGGESTED MARK**

**The opponent suggests that this paper should be graded – at best – as good.**

Date: 30/08/2012

Signature: PhDr. Josef Mlejnek, Ph.D.