

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Applicant

Dr. rer. agr. Christian Kimmich

Habilitation thesis

Shared expectations and connected games in economic resource governance

Reviewer

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Summary of the submitted work

It is a pleasure to provide my review of the Habilitation Thesis submitted by Dr. Christian Kimmich as part of his application for the position of Associate Professor (Docent). The habilitation thesis is a collection of seven research papers, preceded by an integrative introduction, focusing on environmental and sustainability-related challenges. The work is unified by a strong interdisciplinary approach and a consistent emphasis on societally relevant questions. All seven papers have been accepted in respected international journals, including several highly reputed outlets such as *Earth's Future*, *Energy Research & Social Science*, *Ecology & Society*, and *Sustainability Science*, underscoring both the quality and the impact of Dr. Kimmich's research. The selection of paper reflects a strong and coherent focus on environmental governance and sustainability, with several contributions in well-regarded interdisciplinary journals, though with a primary orientation outside the standard field journals in public or environmental economics. The papers included in the thesis were published between 2016 and 2022, which means that some of the work is not recent; however, this is mitigated by the candidate's continued publication activity, including more recent contributions in well-regarded journals such as *Climatic Change* and *Ecological Economics*, indicating sustained research productivity and ongoing relevance in the field.

Scientific contribution

The thesis makes a coherent and multifaceted contribution to the study of expectations and interdependent decision-making in environmental and economic governance. The first four articles study the role of individual and shared expectations across diverse contexts, including supply chain governance, coordination problems, participatory modelling, and energy system transitions, thereby demonstrating the broad behavioral relevance of expectations in shaping outcomes. Building on the empirical analysis of shared expectations and coordination (Kimmich and Sagebiel 2016), the remaining three studies extend the perspective to interdependencies between decision situations by developing and applying the concept of connected games, or by using the method of network analysis.

Results and methods: evaluation

All studies included in the thesis have been published in reputable peer-reviewed journals, which attests to their quality and relevance within an interdisciplinary research context. The work is particularly strong in its policy relevance, addressing concrete challenges and realistically complex governance problems. At the same time, several studies stand out for their innovative contributions. In particular, I commend the author for providing evidence of a novel association between behavioral preferences, expectations, and real-world decisions affecting supply chain integration in Kimmich and Fischbacher (2016); for offering practically relevant insights into potential solutions to a compelling case of coordination failure in Kimmich and Sagebiel (2016); and for developing an evaluation framework for a low-cost intervention with promising implications for addressing complex collective action problems in Kimmich et al. (2019).

From the perspective of current standards in empirical economics, some limitations can nevertheless be noted, though these should be interpreted in light of the interdisciplinary nature of the work. Two studies that rely on experimental designs (Kimmich and Fischbacher 2016; Kimmich et al. 2019) are based on relatively small samples, which is understandable in field settings but may limit statistical power. These studies also examine a relatively large number of hypotheses, raising potential concerns related to multiple hypothesis testing, and the within-subject design in Kimmich et al. (2019) may be somewhat sensitive to demand effects. The remaining contributions rely more heavily on qualitative or mixed-method approaches, which are well suited to capturing complex governance processes, though they do not use the type of causal identification typically expected in top field journals in economics. Overall, while parts of the thesis may be less closely aligned with recent methodological trends in applied microeconomics, the contributions remain valuable and appropriate within their interdisciplinary domain.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defense:

1. Several studies focus on specific governance problems. To what extent are these problems representative of broader settings, and how generalizable are the findings beyond the particular cases analyzed?
2. The analysis of coordination failure in Andhra Pradesh, India, was presented in Kimmich and Sagebiel (2016). How has the situation evolved since then? Has the resolution of the problem followed the directions suggested in the paper?
3. In Kimmich and Fischbacher (2016), risk preferences and price expectations were elicited using the same instrument. What motivated this design choice? Can both constructs be reliably measured within a single instrument without introducing bias?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled *Shared expectations and connected games in economic resource governance* by Dr. rer. agr. Christian Kimmich **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Public Economics.

Date: 15. 4. 2026

Signature: