

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague

Student:	Martin Kosík
Advisor:	Doc. Julie Chytilová, PhD
Title of the thesis:	The Geopolitics of Repressions

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (provided in English, Czech, or Slovak):

Please provide your assessment of each of the following four categories, summary and suggested questions for the discussion. The minimum length of the report is 300 words.

Contribution

In his thesis, Martin Kosík studies the question how geopolitical relationships between Germany and Russia could have affected hostility to a German minority living in Russia, i.e. applying the collective responsibility principle by persecuting the German minority in the times of Hitler's Germany hostile attitudes towards Russia. This is an interesting and important research question that can increase our understanding of the factors affecting behavior of states towards ethnic minorities living in their territory. Martin presents a set of clear theoretical predictions which he tests using an impressive dataset which contains data on more than 2 million arrests by the Soviet secret police. Interestingly, he finds a significant increase in arrests of Germans after German invasion to USSR, the effect being very persistent and lasting for almost ten years after the war. The thesis contributes to the very limited literature studying the effects of international relations on behavior towards minority groups by applying rigorous methodological approaches. In my view, it aspires to become an academic paper.

Methods

When studying his research questions, Martin used difference-in-difference method complemented by the synthetic control method, analyzing the dataset which contains data on more than 2 million arrests by the Soviet secret police. Martin loves the challenges associated with working and organizing large datasets, and he has learned and used a number of more advanced methods as compared to standard undergraduate program curriculum. For example, a crucial information on ethnicity of the arrested people was missing in many cases. Instead of being satisfied with using the limited sample for which the information is available, he used advanced methods to predict ethnicity based on the name frequencies among different ethnic groups. I also appreciate a very careful approach to the analysis in general, including a wide range of robustness checks.

Literature

The thesis provides a comprehensive review of the existing related literature. Martin has an excellent knowledge of the literature, absolutely exceptional for a student of an undergraduate program, in fact very good for a student at PhD level.

Manuscript form

The thesis reads well and is written in very good English. There are a few small typos throughout the text.

Summary and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

To sum up, I believe the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, and suggest grade A. In fact, this is the best bachelor thesis that I have

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supervised at IES, which would make a very good master thesis and has an aspiration to become an academic paper.

A suggested question for the discussion during the defense:

- When studying the differences in border vs. non-border regions, would it make sense to include only Western borders, i.e. regions where German minority was more likely to be supported by Germany?

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	30
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	30
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	20
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	20
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	100
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A

NAME OF THE REFEREE: *Julie Chytilová*

DATE OF EVALUATION: *May 22, 2019*



Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

CONTRIBUTION: *The author presents original ideas on the topic demonstrating critical thinking and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and empirics. There is a distinct value added of the thesis.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
30	15	0

METHODS: *The tools used are relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The thesis topic is comprehensively analyzed.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
30	15	0

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
20	10	0

MANUSCRIPT FORM: *The thesis is well structured. The student uses appropriate language and style, including academic format for graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables and disposes with a complete bibliography.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
20	10	0

Overall grading:

TOTAL	GRADE
91 – 100	A
81 - 90	B
71 - 80	C
61 – 70	D
51 – 60	E
0 – 50	F