

Report on Bachelor Thesis

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

Student:	Klára Kantová
Advisor:	Dominika Špolcová
Title of the thesis:	Ex-prisoners and the Labour Market in the Czech Republic

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

The contribution of the thesis is somewhat limited. In the Introduction, I would expect more space devoted to economic relevance and contribution instead of starting directly with statistics and figures. The results are usually not convincing and counter-intuitive. As the thesis lacks theoretical and/or empirical background and wider literature review, it is hard to evaluate the relevance and contribution of the results.

The main problem are the data as its availability is scarce. However, I am not sure if the overall unemployment rate can approximate ex-prisoners' chances at the labour market. The group of ex-prisoners is surely highly specific. The author states that Rubikon organisation provides data on ex-prisoners, including employment, but the author avoids to use the data because "it would bias the results as Rubikon is approached by individuals who are much more motivated and interested in finding and keeping a job" (p. 17). I believe a case study performed for a selected sample of ex-prisoners actively looking for a job might bring more compelling and contributive results.

Methods

The analysis applies time-series and panel regressions. I appreciate precisely performed tests of models assumptions and selection. However, the selection of explanatory variables is not properly justified (for instance, how should be inflation related to the recidivism rate? See panel regression, equation on p. 27). The currently missing theoretical/empirical background might have helped the author to explain the relevance of included explanatory variables.

Literature

The literature review contains only several Czech studies or reports. The rest of bibliography comprise of econometric textbooks. International studies on ex-prisoners and their labour market outcomes is completely missing. This might be also the reason for a rather weak theoretical background of the thesis. I am not convinced that the literature review reflects the student's ability to work properly with scientific literature.

Manuscript form

The manuscript is well written, structured, and organized. Tables are presented in a proper academic format, including all relevant information, and referred to in the text. The only point I am aware is that equations are not numbered.

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Summary and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

The thesis conforms the requirements of a bachelor thesis. The author found interesting topic and the analyses are mostly technically well performed. However, the low value added of the thesis is given mainly by weak overview of relevant theory and empirics, which is necessary to understand and present the topic adequately.

Suggested questions:

Is there any (foreign) study using similar approach?

In the time-series models (the two equations on p. 24-25), unemployment rate (*unmplrt*) and recidivism rate (*recr*) are used as dependent and explanatory variables, respectively, in the first model, and *vice versa* in the second. Does it mean there is a mutual causality? Is there any theoretical justification for switching these dependent and explanatory variables in the two models? Is the model selected appropriately then?

Several times, the opposite coefficient's signs than (probably) expected are explained by potential - not tested - lagged effects (p. 36 or 40). Why are the variables not used in the lagged form?

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
Contribution (max. 30 points)	15
Methods (max. 30 points)	23
Literature (max. 20 points)	5
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	19
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	62
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	D

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Martina Mysíková

DATE OF EVALUATION: 28th August 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