Report on Bachelor Thesis

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

Student:	**Natálie Kolářová**
Advisor:	**PhDr. Jana Votápková, Ph.D.**
Title of the thesis:	**Determinants of divorce: Evidence from 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.

The thesis is a nice first attemt of an academic research given publicly available data. The thesis aims to find out determinants of divorce in Czech districts using a fixed effects panel data model. It finds out that the crude divorce rate is higher in districts with more marriages, abortions, more job applicants, higher population incrase and criminality. More physicians operating in the area and lower educational level of the area decrease the divorce rate. Individual and time effects however play a major role.

Contribution
To my knowledge, this is the only quantitative work on determinants of divorce in the Czech Republic. International research has been quite extensive, however primarily using individual-level data. Application to district-level data is quite scarce.

Methods
The thesis uses a fixed effects panel data model which is beyond the curriculum of an undergraduate program. Natálie studied the methodology herself, including all relevant tests.

Literature
Natálie carried out an extensive literature review, however the link between thoughts is sometimes missing. For example pages 11 and 12 pre-marital cohabitation and divorce.

Manuscript form
English and stylistics deserve improvements. There are many fillers and sometimes inappropriate vocabulary is used. Sometimes a reader gets lost in the thoughts of the authors.
e.g. p.14 "Preparedness for marriage and time spent by looking for a suitable partner may be reflected in the age at marriage (South *et al.* (2001))" I did not figure out how specifically it determines divorce. Some expressions are unreasonably complicated too. Some parts may be expressed in a reader-friendlier way.
e.g. p 26 "Since, in the Czech Republic, there is a possibility of education accessibility provided by the state at all levels, we assume that the predictor of this variation will be the preferences and situation in the district."

Summary and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

It is is an aggregate analysis, the results of which may be spilled over to determine the effects of these variables on individual behavior. The problem is throughly examined. Natálie developed a strong sense for independent work during the process of writing of this thesis. I, as a supervisor of this thesis, noticed improvements in the way of thinking towards academic style. I am very positive that Natálie

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will work on her research and writing skills further as a graduate student. **I suggest Natálie Kolářová should be awarded grade A (excellent).**

My questions for the defense are the following:

1. The number of physicians in the district represents health conditions in the thesis. I would argue that it is a proxy of attractiveness of the regions rather than health status of the population. Elaborate more under what circumstances the number of doctors is a proxy for health status and under what conditions it represents attractiveness of the regions
2. What do we learn from this macro analysis for micro purposes? How can the resulting effect be transferred for micro purposes?
3. The author finds a positive relationship of natural increase on divorce claiming that two effects may be at play – either lower fatality causes a higher pool of people who may divorce, or higher fertility causes the people to divorce in aggregate. However, I doubt that the effect is linear. Elaborate whether there is a possibility of a non-linear effect of fertility. On page 33, the author says that „70 % of divorcing couples are characterized by having one or none minor". Is it possible that the effect up to one child is positive and with more children the effect turns negative? What is the evidence in the literature?
4. Is health status pro-cyclical or counter-cyclical?

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	29
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	19
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	15
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100*	**93**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E –**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: PhDr. Jana Votápková, Ph.D.

DATE OF EVALUATION: **May 31, 2020**

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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.*

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.*

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

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.*

Overall grading:

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