Report on **Master Thesis**

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

Student:	**Bc. Mikayel Harutyunyan**
Advisor:	**doc. PhDr. Julie Chytilová, Ph.D.**
Title of the thesis:	**Fighting Fake News with Accuracy: Dual Processing Perspective**

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

Please provide a short summary of the thesis, your assessment of each of the four key categories, and an overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion. The minimum length of the report is 300 words.

Short summary

The thesis concerns topic of fake news, missinformation, disinformation, factors contributing to this phenomen and its impact. The author designs an experimental study to perform analysis to study determinants of ability to discern fake news.

I would like to point out from the very start that I find this manuscript of outstanding quality and that it was my pleasure to read it and learn current aspects of the topic of the thesis.

Contribution

The thesis concerns highly important issue which have numerous negative effects, on both integrity of the society and also on finance, politics and public security. The author shows with grace that he has amazing overview of previous and current results on the topic and is well aware of the challenges and complexity of proper design of and experimental study, as well as suitable methods to process the collected data. I find Sections 3 and 6 the highlights of the manuscript. I am not aware of more professionally designed and executed collection of data on people in bachelor or master theses at IES. The author not just summarizes the achieved outcomes of the experiment but also confronts his results with numerous other studies , provides a note on practical implications of his results and is clearly aware of the weak spots of the approach and provides a peak to his future plans in research on this topic. As such, the presented muscript proves a pleasantly complete insight into the topic.
If I understand correctly, the experiment designed by the author goes even beyond the previous research by examining also the effect of political polarization and voter preferences of the respondents' place of residence.

Methods

The highlight of the thesis is the design of the experimental study and its masterful execution. Processing of the collected data is done by seemingly „ordinary" OLS and logit regression. However, these methods seem perfectly adequate with respect to the data set collected and research goals specified in the thesis. Another highlight of the thesis is the very precise processing and commentaries of the numerical outputs.

Literature

The author provides vast (enormous) list of literature which, however, due to high artisting writing abilities of the author do not overwhelm the reader and reading the introduction and the literature review sections was pure joy. As a one tiny flaw I could mention a rather inconsistent notion of reporting doi for articles in the list of references.

Manuscript form

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The author commands seemingly flawless English; at least I did not find any misprint or type and I never struggled with the sentence structure and the intended meaning. The manuscript is built logically, provides and pleasant walk through the topic and tends to engage the reader into the topic.

As my role in this oponent's review should be rather critical, to fulfill this duty I would point out that the table of content spans four pages which is longer than majority of the items in the list and perhaps less detailed table of content would serve better for a manuscript of approximately 80 pages. Also, the numbering of pages could start with number 1 on the first page of the Introduction. In section 5, most of the tables are unnecessarily split across two pages.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

The results of the Urkund analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

The thesis by far exceeds the requirements for a master thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a **grade A**.

I suggest the following two questions for the author of the thesis to answer during the thesis defense:
1. In section 5.2.1, you present sample summary and one of the characteristics you present is the ethnicity of respondents. In the light of reported distribution, do you consider the sample representative with respect to the U.S. population? What would you suggest as a tool to control the sample in order to establish higher representativeness?
2. What would you recommend to a researcher interested in replicating your study on respondents from either the Czech Republic, V4 countries or the Central European region?

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	19
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	18
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**97**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: RNDr. Michal Červinka, Ph.D.

DATE OF EVALUATION: September 9, 2021

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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