

**REPORT ON MASTER THESIS**  
**CENTER FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

<b>STUDENT:</b>	<b>Evgeniya Dubinina</b>
<b>ADVISOR:</b>	<b>Vasily Korovkin</b>
<b>TITLE OF THE THESIS:</b>	<b>Impact of Special Economic Zones on the Domestic Market: Evidence from Russia</b>

***OVERALL ASSESSMENT:***

**CONTRIBUTION:** This thesis provides an original assessment about the effect of the so-called “Special Economic Zones” (SEZs) of Russia on the revenue of local firms. While the question is itself not new (the author does a good job at listing and discussing previous studies on this topic about other countries), and although analogous studies about regional policies enacted in Russia exist, the topic and the focus region are important and the results, although they shall be deemed as preliminary and to be confirmed by better and more refined tests, are meaningful. In fact, the magnitude of the main estimate of interest (the semi-elasticity of in-SEZ location status on firms’ earnings) is large enough to suggest that SEZs may have had an impact on those firms, although it is not clear by what mechanisms, and whether such estimates conflate other factors that are not fully accounted by the analysis.

**METHODS:** The methods used in the original empirical analysis are conventional and, at least in the case of the “leads-and-lags” analysis, they are certainly very well executed. The thesis falls slightly shorter in the use and discussion of Instrumental Variables: the motivation, presentation (e.g. by proper mathematical formulae) and analysis of the instrument could have been improved – although the author is certainly aware of its limitations. In addition, the main regression model (an augmented Cobb-Douglas production function) is too simplistic and possibly incorrect as per the current standards in analyses of this kind.

**LITERATURE:** The literature review is certainly comprehensive and well-presented; the author did a very good job in this regard.

**MANUSCRIPT FORM:** The thesis is well structured and written, although occasional typos or poorly structured sentences are found. There are occasional mathematical expressions that I have found redundant; in other cases, I would have added or improved some formulae.

**SUMMARY AND SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION DURING THE DEFENSE:**

Overall, this is a good thesis and the original empirical analysis (inclusive of data collection and assembling) must be praised. The author can be asked if there are explanations for the unrealistic negative coefficient of labor in the estimates of production functions (I believe that measurement error is at play there) and of ways to address it; and how does firms’ endogenous location choice affect the results – at a conceptual level, and specifically in relationship with the instrument.

Please indicate whether you recommend the Thesis for defense or not.

**I recommend the thesis for defense.**

### TEXT ORIGINALITY CONTROL

I confirm that I acquainted myself with the report on the originality of the text of the thesis from

Theses  Turnitin  Ouriginal (Urkund)

Comments on the reported results: The Turnitin report assesses that about 99% of the submitted thesis' text matches another unspecified manuscript submitted at Charles University a few days before the thesis, arguably a previous version of the thesis itself. Consequently, I find it difficult to provide a well-informed evaluation on this point.

### SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED

CATEGORY	POINTS
Contribution <i>(max. 30 points)</i>	25
Methods <i>(max. 30 points)</i>	26
Literature <i>(max. 20 points)</i>	20
Manuscript Form <i>(max. 20 points)</i>	18
<b>TOTAL POINTS <i>(max. 100 points)</i></b>	<b>89</b>
<b>GRADE <i>(A – B – C – D – E – F)</i></b>	<b>B</b>

**NAME OF THE REFEREE:**

Paolo Zacchia

**DATE OF EVALUATION:**

August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021



---

**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.*

Strong	Average	Weak
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.*

Strong	Average	Weak
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.*

Strong	Average	Weak
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.*

Strong	Average	Weak
20	10	0

**OVERALL GRADING:**

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