Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Bc. Anna Umlaufová
Advisor:	Mgr. Roman Kalabiška
Title of the thesis:	Determinants of Crime in Eastern Europe with a Focus on Czechia and Slovakia

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 aims at testing whether income per capita, income inequality, and unemployment influences rates of homicides, violent crimes, sexual crimes, and property crimes in Eastern European countries. In the second part, the author provides a more detailed case study of Czechia and Slovakia.

Contribution

The existing empirical literature, as reviewed by the author, focuses mainly on the USA and the Western Europe, or takes Europe as a whole. But given the abrupt changes in the last three decades in the Eastern European countries, it is important to test the existing theories on data from this region, too. Moreover, the countries went through a series of significant milestones in the last two decades: EU accession, Eurozone accesssion, or criminal code reforms. The author takes all that into account in her analysis.

Methods

I believe that the fixed/random effects models are chosen correctly to address the hypotheses. I only wondered whether the author also thought about using seemingly unrelated regressions model. The results do not mention anything about year fixed effects. Did the author try to use them, too? If not, why?

I understand that the author was not primarily trying to model the crime rates. But still, I wonder what the goodness-of-fit of the models was. Would it maybe help to include more explanatory variables to improve the fit of the models and to try to minimize the omitted variable bias? For example, what about using some survey data regarding the level of trust in the society, or in general the perception of justice, crime, and crime-related factors? I was also wondering, whether there could not be some significant effect of GDP growth (instead of GDP level) and inflation? Were these variables covered in the literature and found to be irrelevant?

And last but not least, I wondered why some of the specifications do not use robust standard errors (see, e.g., table 5.2 on p. 37). As far as I can say, the text does not explain it anywhere.

Literature

The thesis provides a very good survey of relevant literature, the author quotes the literature in a proper way.

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

Report on **Bachelor / Master Thesis**

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

Student:	**Bc. Anna Umlaufová**
Advisor:	**Mgr. Roman Kalabiška**
Title of the thesis:	**Determinants of Crime in Eastern Europe with a Focus on Czechia and Slovakia**

Manuscript form

The manuscript form is very nice. I only missed the number of observations in the results tables. On the other hand, I really appreciated the section 5.6 which evaluates and summarizes all the results including the sensitivity analyses. The short text summary accompanied by a table is perfect and could serve as a best practice example.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

I congratulate the author for a very nice master thesis. In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade A.

Suggested questions for the defense:
1. Did you think about using the seemingly unrelated regressions model?
2. Could you think of other potentially relevant control variables, such as some survey-based data, or other macroeconomic vars? Are there other variables used in the existing literature?
3. When focusing on the regional comparison, could there be a problem caused by the fact that you only (probably) know the region where the crime happened, but not the region where the criminal comes from?
4. Did you try to do any statistical analysis on the regional level?

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	28
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	26
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	20
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	19
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**93**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: PhDr. Jiří Schwarz Ph.D.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 17.1.2022

_____
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