

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Bc. Anna Umlaufová
Advisor:	Mgr. Roman Kalabiška
Title of the thesis:	Determinants of Crime in Easter 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

This thesis studies the topic of criminality in Eastern Europe and the underlying factors that explain it. The author uses a dataset of 11 countries over a period of 21 years, between 1998 – 2018 and tries to find determinants of different crimes in categories of homicide, violent crimes, sexual crimes and property crimes. She also explains in great detail the economical, historical and cultural specifics of chosen countries. Furthermore, Chapter 6 presents a regional comparison of Czechia and Slovakia. Although this was not the main objective of the thesis and there is surely a room for more detailed analysis of Czech and Slovak crime rates on regional or district level, the author explains the problem in detail and follows up on the specifics on eastern european region in the text quite nicely.

Contribution

Due to the scarcity of research on crime analysis in Eastern Europe, this thesis brings an undeniable contribution to the academic literature, since most empirical studies are focused on Western Europe or the US. I would especially like to point out the author's work with data. She goes into a great detail to compare different data sources, to explain the theory and to illustrate her results clearly and comprehensively for the reader.

Methods

The author uses standard panel data estimators (fixed or random effects), depending on each of the models and supports her choice by performing all appropriate tests (F-test, Hausman test), as well as additional tests for heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation (Breusch-Pagan test, Durbin-Watson test); and used Arellano's robust standard errors in most models. All of this is a textbook procedure taught at econometrics classes at IES. In Sections 5.5 and 5.6 the author considers alternative data sources, discusses potential multicollinearity and endogeneity issues and follows it with a short but concise overview of her results. Basically, in this part of the thesis she answers all the main questions/concerns that the reader might have about the methodology. My only minor complaint is that it would be better to include references to the test results in Section 4.3, in which the author describes how she chose the optimal method of estimation.

Literature

The author proves a good knowledge of the current literature and provides the reader with a nice, comprehensive overview of both the theoretical studies as well as empirical literature in her area of research. As far as I can tell, all relevant articles in the text are properly referenced.

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Manuscript form

The thesis is very well organized and written in good English; or at least I did not find any typos and never struggled with the intended meaning. The thesis is typeset in LaTeX, which results in a professional appearance. The thesis includes a lot of tables and figures, which help to illustrate the problem in hand. All are labeled and appropriately numbered. As a whole the text is well structured and convenient to read. In my opinion, the manuscript meets the criteria of a Master's thesis.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

The author has worked on her thesis very independently, demonstrating her ability to do an advanced research work. At the same time, she has incorporated all my suggestions in a satisfactory way. Therefore, I believe that the thesis fulfills the requirements for a master thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. It is my pleasure to recommend the thesis for the defense and suggest a grade A.

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

Question for the defense:

I suggest that the author could shortly explain the Arellano's standard errors and why she did not use them in all models.

Also, the author could highlight the contribution of her research at the defense, since I do not think she „sold“ her hard work enough in the thesis.

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

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

NAME OF THE REFEREE: *Mgr. Roman Kalabiška*

DATE OF EVALUATION: 18/01/2022

Digitálně podepsáno (18.1.2022)
Roman Kalabiška

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