

# Report on Master Thesis

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

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Bc. Veronika Plachá</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>Mgr. Barbara Pertold-Gebicka M.A., Ph.D.</b>
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>Does childbirth change the gender gap in well-being within family?</b>

## **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 assess well-being differences between males and females analyzing over 30,000 individual. In subsequent analysis the thesis matches observations by household. Two cross-sectional years (2013 and 2018) using SILC data are analyzed.

The effect of children on wellbeing was found positive for mothers until age 7 of the child, then it disappears. For fathers, the effect is positive only until age 2 of the child. The thesis also estimates the effect of children on the well-being gap between parents. However, the results are not very conclusive and are not robust between the two observed years.

The thesis uses two control groups – parents without children and parents with grown up children. Again, robustness of the results is not supported. Not surprisingly, the thesis finds out that women are more stressed out by unstable financial situation of the family.

### **Contribution**

The thesis contributes to the stream of literature in the field. It fits into the context of the current research.

### **Methods**

The author does not have panel data at disposal which would better fit the purposes of the model. To solve the issue, the author uses a family fixed effect to capture at least some fixed family characteristics.

The author uses OLS without any discussion that it may not be the most appropriate method since the distribution of the dependent variable is skewed (parental well-being model). Well-being gap appears rather normal so OLS may be appropriate. No OLS tests are reported.

The model is some form of a control-treatment model, though not really correct. I understand that data availability does not allow for a real natural experiment but I wonder how the model would change if the variable for a control group would be captured within the model (say, two models with two control groups) where the control dummy would take the form  $x_c=1$  if member of the control group, be it families without children in the first model and families with grown up children in the second model, and  $x_c=0$  otherwise.

### **Literature**

The literature review section is quite extensive and it is obvious that Veronika spent a lot of time analyzing the available literature. Sometimes citations are wrongs, such as:  
p. 19 Priebe – wrong citation without year

### **Manuscript form**

The thesis is a good attempt for academic work. However, the flow of thoughts of the author is not very clear and the reader has to read some sections multiple times to actually get what the author wants to say.

# Report on Master Thesis

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

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Bc. Veronika Plachá</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>Mgr. Barbara Pertold-Gebicka M.A., Ph.D.</b>
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>Does childbirth change the gender gap in well-being within family?</b>

Sometimes the author immediately contradicts what she has just said, e.g. p.15. „Adults who have kids at home appear to have lower satisfaction levels than other control group.“ But a sentences after contradicts the former: „It appears that there is little difference between parents and childless individuals.“

In literature review same statements repeat at multiple times, such as „with children women’s housekeeping duties increase but men’s not“, on page 13 and also page 17.

## **Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense**

The thesis is a good attempt for academic work, however suffers from major drawbacks. As major ones I consider perfect multicollinearity in the dummy variables for child’s age 0-15 where all 15 dummies are included. In order to avoid perfect multicollinearity, at least one dummy has to be excluded from the model. Also, given the distributional properties of the dependent variable, the OLS model is not appropriately selected for the assessment of wellbeing. Variable „well-being gap“ seems rather normal and OLS may be appropriate. The OLS test are missing completely, however.

### Major questions for the defense:

1. Section 2.5.2. Children’s subjective well being. The author argues based on literature review that children’s and parents’ subjective well-being do not strongly correlate. I would however assume that there is rather a causal relationship, i.e. a higher subjective well-being of a parents results in a higher subjective well-being of the children. Discuss and maybe provide literature review on this assumption.
2. Variable „Possibility to make end needs“. Discuss possible endogeneity in this variable. The author claims that nearly everyone owns a computer, TV, car and a telephone, but only 47 % and 45 %, respectively, people can make end needs. Could there be endogeneity represented by the fact that those who cannot afford end needs pre-select themselves into this category? E.g. they do not work hard enough, they chose not to study hard prior to their employment which determines this variable?
3. In the results the author finds out that having a job increases well-being. I would argue that mothers with young children usually do not work. Therefore the results also suggest that mothers with young children report lower well-being, right? What is the correlation between employment status and age of the youngest child? Age of the youngest child was not considered in the model, right?

### Minor questions:

4. „Trend is the largest in 2018“ Should not trend mean observations over a period of time?
5. P28 variable accounting for whether a family could afford meal with meat every other day. Is there also a variables accounting for whether a family can afford fresh vegetables on daily basis? I would assume that this variable would be more accurate as vegetable is even more expensive than meat. Furthermore meat can be understood by different individuals differently. You can have sausages with 50 % meat and sirloin steak. It is a huge difference in quality, but it is both meat. Provide a more thorough discussion.
6. P 26 on 22 % are married – if expressed in „married couples“, there is half of married couples?
7. Correlation matrix is missing. The author assumes a lot of variables for the model. It would be nice if the reader could check correlation among variables.

# Report on Master Thesis

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

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Bc. Veronika Plachá</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>Mgr. Barbara Pertold-Gebicka M.A., Ph.D.</b>
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>Does childbirth change the gender gap in well-being within family?</b>

8. The author uses 15 dummy variables to account for the time distance from the birth of the first child – how much thus this method causes the loss of degrees of freedom? Do the results change if e.g. only three dummies are created (3 spans)?
9. See Methodology above
10. P 50 conclusion – unexpected signs produced by latex
11. P51 conclusion „In 2013, For fathers - typo

Despite the points above, the thesis still fulfills the requirements for a master thesis at the IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, **I thus recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade B.**

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

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

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<i>Contribution (max. 30 points)</i>	27
<i>Methods (max. 30 points)</i>	20
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	17
<i>Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)</i>	17
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)</b>	<b>B</b>

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

**DATE OF EVALUATION: September 5, 2022**

*digitally signed (5.9.2022)*  
**Jana Votápková**

---

**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