

Report on Bachelor Thesis

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

Student:	Jiří Pokorný
Advisor:	Julie Chytilová, Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	AIDS and Polygamy in Sub-Saharan Africa

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

In his thesis, Jiří studies the relationship between AIDS, polygamy and economic performance. He uses the individual-level data from two African countries – Kenya and Malawi. The results suggest that polygamy might increase the risk of HIV infection since polygamous husbands have on average more extramarital sex. In addition, Jiří studied the characteristics of men and women living in polygamous households. One of the main results is that polygamists are wealthier, however the causal direction of this relationship remains an open question.

Jiří discussed his thesis with me but there are still some remaining issues. First of all, the structure of the thesis could be largely improved in order to make it easier for the reader to go through the text. In particular, separate individual sentences or bullet points could be replaced by continuous text. Secondly, I have some comments to the data analysis. The major problem I see is that Jiří selected the results which he considers to be “the most appropriate”, in other words the most significant ones. As he says, if there is some expected result missing it is either because it turned out to be insignificant or that it was omitted in the analysis. However, it is important to know if the results were not significant (which might be an interesting result as well) or if the author did not study that relationship. On the other hand, I appreciate that Jiří is aware of the problem of identifying the direction of causal relationship and of the effects of unobserved variables.

I also have some questions about the conclusions made based on the results. Jiří found that polygamous husbands are wealthier, want to have more children and are more unfaithful and therefore the risk of HIV infection increases. From there he concludes that families with polygamous and faithful husbands will be wealthy and have many children and therefore have the best outlook. Such a conclusion can be made only under several strong assumptions, e.g. that polygamy effects positively wealth and that having many children improves the outlook of a households (here it is the question of quantity-quality trade-off since we don't know if these children will be healthy and educated and what their future prospects would be). These might be the questions discussed during the defence.

On the other hand I appreciate the efforts Jiří devoted to data analysis and that he learned to work with the STATA software. I recommend the thesis for the defence and suggest grade B (“velmi dobře”).

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	15
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	20
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	20
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	10
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	65
GRADE (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	2

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Julie Chytilová

DATE OF EVALUATION: June 7, 2010

Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

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

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

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

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 POINTS	GRADE		
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= výborně
61 – 80	2	= good	= velmi dobře
41 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= dobře
0 – 40	4	= fail	= nedoporučuji k obhajobě