

# Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Bc. Vít Macháček</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>Petr Janský, Ph.D.</b>
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>The Basic Income concept in the perspective of Agent-Based modelling</b>

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

Vít Macháček wrote an interesting empirical thesis on the basic income concept in the perspective of agent-based modelling. The aim of his thesis was to examine the relationship between the introduction of the basic income and the price level. He constructs an agent-based model with the relevant variables and simulates the introduction. Although he does not succeed, as he says, in isolating the possible link between the price level and the basic income introduction and his empirical thesis therefore does not bear strong conclusions and, obviously, further research is needed, I evaluate this rather positively as a research attempt of a junior researcher at the very beginning of his research career.

Vít made relatively good use of the existing literature and applied empirical methods in a standard way. In terms of methodology, Vít applies the agent-based modelling to a question that has never been studied in this way before. This is something that is commendable, but such ambitious research project also requires a clear explanation of the motivation as well as more generally a lot of time, both of which have not always been in adequate supply on Vít's side, but proved obviously sufficient in the end. Due to a change in the topic and the advisor as well as his demanding work schedule, Vít had a relatively slow start working on the thesis, but finished with a very intensive period. His powerful finish enabled him to improve the text substantially from the early draft, but it might less fortunately lead to the fact that he was not able to react adequately to the results he obtained by, for example, re-working substantial parts of his methodology.

When Vít approached me during the academic year whether I would be willing to be his advisor, although I am not an expert in agent-based modelling, I have agreed for two reasons– (i) my earlier interest in basic income and knowledge of some related research areas and (ii) I knew Vít from previous occasions as an aspiring scholar with various interests in research. I believe that if Vít managed to have his first results earlier than he did or studied the relevant literature in more detail or more in advance, he might have avoided missing the target in his thesis by using a different model or applying different methodology. The choice of appropriate methodology has been something that I have discussed with Vít throughout my time as his advisor, but not being proficient in agent-based modelling left me feeling, but not certain, that, maybe, a simulation model based on individual- or household-level data (similar to, for example, Euromod developed for the EU members) might be more suitable for learning about the impacts of the potential introduction of the basic income concept. But I also understand Vít's strong motivation to use the agent-based modelling, which however does not relieve him of the necessity to motivate the methodology rigorously.

As a graduate thesis, the manuscript is well structured and mostly well written. However, in comparison with the currently published articles in top academic journals on related topics, Vít's thesis would surely and greatly benefit from better writing and shortening (the too long descriptive parts of the thesis – especially about basic income concepts in section 2 – seem too long even for a student thesis). Also, for example, I was somewhat surprised to see the language of “social security” used in the thesis – rather than, for example, a more general social or welfare system and, in any case, more clarification should have been included on the language and meaning of this - or the conclusion as well as the abstract seem too short for either a thesis or a research paper. Furthermore, I would expect for a similar research paper to make an even better argument how this new empirical research links with the wider research literature (beyond the close, but relatively shallow literature, as Vít observes) and how it is relevant to the broader international discourse (e.g. by trying to explain to the reader why she should care about the paper even if she is not interested in the main research question of the thesis per se).

Overall, I am content with the results of Vít's work in the sense that I view them as a good research manuscript and as the first step in his ongoing research agenda. I believe that the quality and

# Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Bc. Vít Macháček
Advisor:	Petr Janský, Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	The Basic Income concept in the perspective of Agent-Based modelling

relevance of his current work warrants a continuation in this research of his, which should include the reconsideration of the methodologies and likely relating it to other, important wider literature. For example, I would expect Vít to further work more on this research before Vít applies for a PhD program. This effort should ultimately lead to an enlightening research about the ever policy-relevant and much-discussed topic of the basic income concept and a submission to some of the leading academic journals in the relevant fields of economics.

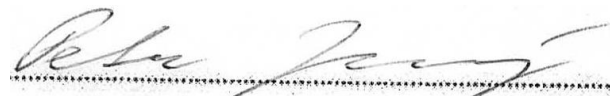
In short, although the thesis is far from perfect, Vít did a good job of writing a thesis and, in case of excellent responses of Vít at the defence, I recommend a grade of **excellent (výborně)**.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
Literature (max. 20 points)	18
Methods (max. 30 points)	25
Contribution (max. 30 points)	20
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	18
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b> (max. 100 points)	<b>81</b>
<b>GRADE</b> (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	<b>1</b>

**NAME OF THE REFEREE:** Petr Janský, Ph.D.

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2016



**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	<b>1</b>	= excellent	= výborně
61 – 80	<b>2</b>	= good	= velmi dobře
41 – 60	<b>3</b>	= satisfactory	= dobře
0 – 40	<b>4</b>	= fail	= nedoporučuji k obhajobě