

Report on Master Thesis

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

Student:	Magdalena Hummelová
Advisor:	Barbara Pertold-Gebicka
Title of the thesis:	Measuring the Effect of the Timing of First Birth on Mothers' Wages in the Czech Republic

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

Please provide your assessment of each of the following four categories, summary and suggested questions for the discussion. The minimum length of the report is 300 words.

Contribution

Magdalena's master thesis approaches a very important question of how childbearing affects women's wages. Instead of simply estimating the motherhood wage gap, Magdalena estimates the effect of first birth timing on mothers' earnings. While there is vast literature on wage effect of motherhood (i.e. literature estimating the motherhood wage gap), much fewer studies focus on the timing effects. Timing of the first birth is very important, especially in today times of low fertility that is largely driven by postponing birth till later ages. It is believed that women postpone childbearing partially due to financial reasons.

In her master thesis Magdalena asks whether in the context of the Czech Republic postponing birth is financially profitable, whether women giving birth later experience lower motherhood penalty. This question has never been approached in the Czech Republic or in other CEE country and there are just a few, mainly work-in-progress studies analysing this effect for other European countries. Estimating motherhood postponement effects is very data-hungry and this is probably the main reason why very few studies on this topic were produced. Magdalena's thesis also faces serious data limitations and proposes solutions that partially overcome these insufficiencies, which is a big value added of the presented work.

Methods

The approach presented in this thesis is strongly motivated by the paper by Jane Herr published in 2016 in the Journal of Population Economics. However, due to data limitations and due to the specific institutional setup in the Czech Republic the applied method had to be significantly adjusted. Here I have to praise Magdalena's work on the thesis a lot. She paid a lot of attention to details, understood every single equation and every single estimate in the original paper and critically assessed the applicability of Herr's approach to the Czech case. Unfortunately, using the data that were available for a diploma thesis, Magdalena had to make many assumptions and approximations, but she managed to propose a reasonable estimation strategy and produce reliable results.

Reasoning behind some of the approaches is not made perfectly clear in the thesis, but I believe that Magdalena will explain it well during the defence.

Literature

The master thesis offers an extensive review of the literature on gender and motherhood wage gaps. It is evident that the author has reviewed many papers and that she understands the topic. I would say there is too much weight given to the literature on gender and motherhood wage gaps, but this is driven by the fact that there are very few papers concerning the postponement effect and Magdalena cited the most important of these.

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Manuscript form

The manuscript is generally well written in a good English and well organized. Tables and graphs are easy to read. Sometimes the text is a bit lengthy, though.

Summary and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

I judge Magdalena's master thesis as very good. She devoted a lot of time and energy in the thesis and it was a pleasure to cooperate with her and to see the progress. The topic she tackled is very difficult and the data she had at her disposal are not well-suited to this analysis. Nevertheless, she managed to produce meaningful results, present them in a clear way and give a reasonable interpretation.

Question for defense: Why are the results for the Czech Republic so different from the results for the US?

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	29
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	28
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	16
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	18
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	91
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A

NAME OF THE REFEREE: *Barbara Pertold-Gebicka*

DATE OF EVALUATION: 14.1.2019

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.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
30	15	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.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
30	15	0

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
20	10	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.*

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak</i>
20	10	0

Overall grading:

TOTAL	GRADE
91 – 100	A
81 - 90	B
71 - 80	C
61 – 70	D
51 – 60	E
0 – 50	F