Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Anastasiia Tolnykina
Advisor:	Barbara Pertold-Gebicka
Title of the thesis:	Gender Differences in Life Satisfaction

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
Originally the thesis of Anastasiia was supposed to look for reasons why gender gaps in subjective well-being (SWB) differ across countries and change over time. In the end the student only documents the evolution of gender difference in SWB over time, ignoring the cross-country dimention. There is no attempt to explain what might be responsible for the changing gender gap. As the result the contribution of this thesis to the topic is very small. There are other studies that compare the SWM of men and women using the World Values Survey.

Methods
The author of this thesis correctly uses ordered logit to estimate models where the left-hand-side variable is of an rdered nature (it is life satisfaction measured on a 0-10 scale). Unfortunately, she does not demonstrate understanding of the used method in the methodology part of the thesis.

There is a discussion of potential econometric problems that might threaten the analysis. It is very good to include such discussion in a thesis. Unfortunately here it shows further misunderstanding of the matter. For example, that the problem of heterogeneity bias „is eliminated due to the fact that the samples are very big and make independently pooled cross-sections" is not correct. In other cases the student discusses a potential problem and then claims, without any arguemnt, that it is not an issue in her analysis.

The estimated regressions – I mean their functional forms – are not well fitted to test the hypotheses outlined in the thesis proposal. The original idea was to interact country-level variables with the gender dummy to see how they affect the gender gap in SWB. The student did not follow my suggestions in this regard, mainly because of time constraint. She started to really work on the thesis and communicate with me as the supervisor in early July despite my repeated e-mails!

Literature
The literature review is presented in a clear way and lists many relevant studies. What I miss, though, is a clear comparison of the presented thesis to the up-to-date literature.

Manuscript form
It is visible that the thesis was written in a big hurry. For example, after reading the introduction it is not clear whether the thesis is about well-being or about happiness or about life satisfaction. The author starts by defining happiness, what suggests that the thesis is about happiness, and writing „This concept is complementary, but not identical to subjective well-being and life satisfaction", what suggests that is is not about well-being or life satisfaction. But further, the text reads: „This paper will focus on differences in life satisfaction between men and women and its development over time" – and over the next sections the reader learns that the paper indeed is about life satisfaction. Similar problem is found in the methodology section.

Figures are not well presented and/or described. Bar charts are difficult to read because of the scale used. It should not start at zero. Moreover, confidence intervals are missing in bar charts. The author is commenting differences in average life satisfaction between men and women and among people with different characteristics without knowing if these differences are statistically significant.
For line figures it is not written that the lines are smoothed (and how).

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It sems that the thesis is not finished. There are several questions left unanswered.

While the language is simple and sometimes colloquial, it is visible that the student has a good command of English.

Summary and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense
The thesis of Anastasiia Tolnykina "Gender Differences in life Satisfaction" had a potential to be a very interesting work and it seemed that the student is very involved in finding out why life satisfaction of men and women differs and why this difference is reduced over time. After initial cooperation when preparing the thesis proposal the student stopped responding to my e-mails/ reposnded occasionally with huge delays and failed to deliver partial output on which we agreed at the beginning of cooperation. In the end the student started analysing the data in June and communicating with me in July 2020. This did not give her enough time to understand the data and methods (by the way – ordered logit is beyond the curriculum of bachelor's econometrics), try differens specifications, and, most importantly, complete the analysis which was planned in the proposal. I trurely believe that one or two more months of work would make it a good thesis with potentially very interesting results. However, at this stage the thesis is not complete. First, the value added of the presented results is very low without the analysis of potential drivers of differences between men's and women's life satisfaction. Second, there are many errors in the thesis showing that either the author does not understand the analysis that she is performing or that she wrote the thesis in 5 minutes.

Taking all the above in consideration, I have to conclude that the thesis is not ready for defense. I suggest that the student takes some time to finish it and submits the complete thesis for the next round of defenses.

There are no signs of plagiarism in the thesis. The author really wrote everything by herself.

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	10
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	10
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	15
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	15
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**50**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**F**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Barbara Pertold-Gebicka

Digitálně podepsáno (27.8.2020)
Barbara Pertold-Gebicka

DATE OF EVALUATION: 27.8.2020

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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