

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Considering Procreation: Arguments from Philosophy and Economics
Student's name:	Josef Bialas
Referee's name:	Janusz Salamon

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	45	
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	14	
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	13	
<i>Total</i>		72	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	4	
<i>Total</i>		19	
TOTAL		91	

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:

Josef Bialas as a student of an interdisciplinary study programme chose to explore in his Bachelor's thesis an interdisciplinary topic. This is commendable, since the topic of his choice was bound to be methodologically challenging, intertwining, as it does, issues and arguments that tend to fall on either the descriptive or the normative side of the methodological divide in social sciences, the mutual relation of which is a subject of a never-ending controversy. While not shying away from the lines of argument that some might consider controversial (such as setting strict conditions on procreation particularly in the Global North which is typically perceived as the area of the Globe undergoing demographic crisis), Josef can find support in prominent anti-natalist theorists or procreation, his methodological design and the ensuing structure of the main argument of his thesis seems

innovative, independent, unusual and complex which is arguably the source of both the main strength and the main weakness of this thesis. What is commendable is that Josef took into account numerous philosophical perspectives and a fair amount of economic data. Indeed, at times a reader might get a sense that this short thesis is packed with arguments and data that might call for a book-length treatment. Still, one may appreciate Josef's attempt not to leave out all the important voices in the debate he is plunging into, since none of the arguments and data he considers are irrelevant to his research question (whether procreation requires justification). Having said that, it is less clear whether bringing together the insights from economics and philosophy into this debate is fully successful. For example, initially Josef appears to promise to relate closely the economic and philosophical perspectives on procreation (and at times he seems to make the reader to expect him to ground his philosophical constraints on the justification of procreation in the micro- and macroeconomic implications of procreation), while at the end his moral conclusions regarding the permissibility of procreation appear to be fairly independent of the economic considerations (or at least, the economic considerations on their own are not conclusive or perhaps even not as important as the considerations that a moral philosopher might come up with largely ignoring the economic implications). So in a nutshell, the explanation of the challenge of interdisciplinarity of this thesis is what I will be looking for at Josef's defence of his thesis.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): A

Suggested questions for the defence are:

- (1) How might the *limited* predictability of the future economic development (such as the unforeseeable but possible *positive* changes resulting from the future technological discoveries) impact your core argument? To what extent your argument relies on the *current* assumptions about the state of the world?
- (2) Couldn't one argue that your 'local justification' and 'global justification' of procreating are not necessarily as interconnected as your argument seems to require? What if one argued instead that these two forms of justification may more often than not be in tension? Isn't your conjunction of the two like claiming that we must combine deontology and consequentialism into one comprehensive moral theory?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Janusz
Salamon, Ph.D.

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Salamon, Ph.D.
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Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.