Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	**Vojtěch Bartoš**
Advisor:	**Michal Bauer**
Title of the thesis:	**Discrimination, Information and Cognitive Effects: Evidence from a Field Experiment in the Czech Rental Housing Market**

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

Is there a discrimination according to race or ethnicity on the Czech rental housing market (thus in a setting where financial stakes are high)? Does the extent of discrimination differs for various nationalities/ethnicities? Is discrimination preference-based or statistical (members of different ethnicities have on average different characteristics)? In other words, does provision of information about a tenant reduce the discrimination? Vojtěch Bartoš, Lenka Švejdová, Julie Chytilová and I have decided to study those questions using a field experiment method, based on sending emails of fictitious applicants to internet offers of landlords where emails randomly differed only in terms of a name of an applicant, and a level and a form of information provided to a landlord. The variable of interest is whether a landlord invites the applicant for a flat visit.

Vojta has been responsible for an important part of the project– implementation of the personal website and construction of the mouse tracking technology based on the popular MouseLab tool that allows us to study the landlords' behavior online. This contribution allows to study further subtle questions, related to recent concepts in behavioral and information economics: Are landlords willing to „pay" small transaction costs to acquire information that can reduce the discrimination? Can framing of information influence the choices of landlords? These design features have been his independent work and also the authorship of this thesis is fully his own.

Throughout the year Vojta worked hard on the thesis, discussing regularly with me the ideas and progress. I think the quality of the thesis is very high: clear questions, deep knowledge of relevant literature, right econometric methods and efficient and clear writing style. I think the results are interesting and important, although I am not going to discuss them all here. For example, he finds that education reduces discrimination for Vietnamese and Ukrainian minority, but it does not help the Roma minority in increasing the likelihood of invitation for a flat visit. This has potentially interesting policy implications. I also think Vojta's idea to construct the mousetracking-like technology for an internet website has a potential to open up this method for field experimentation and is a contribution on its own.

I think Vojta has a potential to soon become a promising young researcher – he successfully presented the design of the project at a GDN workshop and a research proposal (written jointly with Lenka Švejdová) attracted funding from GDN and GAUK. Based on knowledge of his work, Vojta has recently been offered a part-time position at the Academy of Science of the Czech republic and he plans to work further on this topic during his planned PhD studies at CERGE-EI.

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To sum up, I think this thesis is a clear A and I would also suggest the committee to consider some form of special acknowledgement for the outstanding quality of the thesis.

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	20
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	20
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**100**
GRADE	**(1 – 2 – 3 – 4)**	**1**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Michal Bauer

DATE OF EVALUATION: **8.6.2010**

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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