

Report on Master Thesis

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

Student:	Bc. Michal Bradáč
Advisor:	Prof. Ing. Lubomír Mlčoch, Csc.
Title of the thesis:	Family Economics: Fertility Rate and the Pension Motive

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

The thesis aims to analyze motives for having children in developed countries, particularly focusing on securing oneself for the retirement age. In the empirical part, it uses a cluster analysis to classify and compare results for the sample of 30 countries.

The author chose a very interesting and topical hypothesis, however, my impression from the thesis is that it was not dealt with carefully but rather in a hasty manner. There is a large number of typos, starting with the abstract ("...havin..." instead of "having" in line 1), List of tables (table 3.2, "...firsty..." instead of "first"), list of figures (figure 6.3 "...mean age women..." instead of "mean age of women") to name a few.

Furthermore, the master thesis proposal included in the thesis does not seem to be complete.

There is, however, a number of other more severe objections against the thesis I have.

1. The clusters classified are very much consistent with already existing typology of "social states", as of Esping-Andersen (1990) and Titmuss (1974). Without any reference to these authors, as well as their methodology, **I cast doubt on original contribution of the classification in the thesis (and thus the thesis as a whole). At the defense, the author should clarify how his thesis contributes to the stream of research and how the findings contribute to the existing knowledge.**
2. **The list of Bibliography does not seem to be sufficient literature search for a master thesis. There are only 13 papers/books, the rest is data sources. In overall, I miss decent literature search, i.e. who did similar analyses as the author attempts, etc.**
3. **Original source should always be quoted**, not "Giddens refers to G. Theborn's research..." as on p. 4. Similarly, on p. 5 "Mlčoch refers to Max Wewber's and Josef Schumpeter's research..."
4. **Sources are quoted in an inappropriate way** (see above) or "Neher argues..." without year on p. 6 to provide an example.
5. **I sometimes miss references**, e.g. on p. 10 "...total fertility rate is positively related to the female labour force participation ratio." Where does it come from? This statement seems to me very suspicious. I doubt, that the more children a woman has, the more she works in the labour market.
6. **Abbreviations are not explained** - e.g. PAYG
7. p. 12 - the author uses DM as an example, but what is the exchange rate? It is hard to image the real value for the reader.
8. I find the most interesting part on p 13, the last two paragraphs, which deserve more attention and may have provided floor for a better analysis for a master thesis than this one.
9. I do not understand the sentence on p. 15 "However, total fertility rates in Arabic countries fell faster than world's populatioin weighted total fertility rate", was that suppose to mean "weighted by"?
10. Why deal with the description of HDI on 5 pages when it is not the core of the thesis. **It generally seems to me that some parts are written just to fill in the pages.** Furhtermore some parts of this section are written as methodology, some as data description and the reader gets really confused.

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11. **Methodology parts should not mingle with the Data sections and visa versa.** In overall the structure of the thesis is not very clear. Specifically, p. 29 paragraph starting "After we..." till the end of the section, belongs to the Data section rather than Methodology.
12. **The author provides descriptive statistics in a very weird manner - it is described in the text but rather a table should be used.**
13. Table 5.1 on p. 33 belongs to the appendix. Furthermore, it should be distinguished which variables classify as "enabling environment", "performance", etc as of division of the cluster analysis.
14. As many as 30 observations seems to me quite few for such an analysis.
15. Last but not least, the thesis definitely deserves English proofreading. E.g. on p. 4 "...fertility rate had experienced significant decline in the twentieth century." And similar, two lines below.

Because of all the above stated reasons, I suggest the author be awarded grade 3 (satisfactory), unless at the defense the author answers the points raised here exceptionally well and the committee decides otherwise.

Bibliography of the report:

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity Press
Titmuss, R.M. (1974) *Social Policy*, George Allen & Unwin Publishing

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
Literature (max. 20 points)	7
Methods (max. 30 points)	15
Contribution (max. 30 points)	8
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	11
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	41
GRADE (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	3 (satisfactory)

NAME OF THE REFEREE:

DATE OF EVALUATION: June 15, 2013

Jana Votápková

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