Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	**Ondřej Sláma**
Advisor:	**Petr Janský, Ph.D.**
Title of the thesis:	**Growing Role of Switzerland in Commodity Trade**

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

The aim of this thesis was to analyse the commodity trading of Switzerland and quantify its potential impact on developing countries. Ondřej Sláma fulfilled this objective in a very good way.

Ondřej used existing as well his own methodology to estimate the potential impact of Swiss commodity trading on developing countries. His thesis is partly a replication of research that I know very well and I am happy with the methods and the data that he used. In addition to his replication approach and results, I also find his new approach and results very good. In both cases, Ondřej has managed to work with very detailed data about international trade of goods from the UN Comtrade database. Furthermore, the literature review is very good as is the manuscript form.

The empirical methods used did not offer opportunities to show off the skills learnt in econometrics courses, some additional analysis on heterogeneity of the estimates might. For example, a follow-up analysis might study what are the countries (and the commodities) that are more likely to lose from trade with Switzerland and do they share some characteristics? For answering this, a regression model might be useful. Furthermore, new and more detailed data might be employed to study whether there are similar impacts of other trading hubs such as Singapore. For this, however, there was no time, space or data available in Ondřej's work.

Although the use of the mostly existing methods might imply less novelty in the thesis (and the thesis would need improvement in the presentation of the empirical methods before being ready for publication in an academic journal), in my view it definitely is also a signal of what empirical economics needs more: replication. I think that it is crucial - and it should happen much more often - to replicate existing methods and studies and to examine whether relationships or trends established in one context hold in another. Ondřej's work is partly about these worthwhile objectives and, in addition, he does come up with some interesting ideas and approaches himself.

Ondřej Sláma did a good job of writing a thesis and I recommend a grade of **excellent (výborně, 1).**

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	20
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	25
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	25
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	20
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**90**
GRADE	**(1 – 2 – 3 – 4)**	**1**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: **Petr Janský, Ph.D.**

DATE OF EVALUATION: **9th June, 2014**   *Referee Signature*