

Report on Master Thesis

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

Student:	Tereza TACHOVSKÁ
Advisor:	Doc. Ing. Vladimír Benáček, CSc.
Title of the thesis:	Factors Determining Czech Export on Different Aggregations with Focus on Electrical Engineering: Gravity Model Approach

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

Tereza Tachovska's master thesis is an extensive study, which represents a real research – i.e. a piece of work where the author contributed to the knowledge about the mechanisms of international trade and where the author had to be innovative in interpreting its quantitatively estimated characteristics. The main contribution of the thesis is four-pronged where each partial analysis addresses the **differences in the behaviour of decision-makers in space, time and production lines**, which as a research hypothesis is also innovative:

- a) In comparing the determining factors of aggregated exports at the level of countries with its disaggregations into machinery & transport equipment (SITC1 level) and electric motors and generators (SITC4 level).
- b) The comparison of Czech exports with French exports where the methodology for both was unchanged.
- c) The comparison of the evolution of coefficients in time.
- d) The non-neutrality of the estimation technique on the interpretation of results.

Such an approach to the gravity models of trade is quite recent and the author could not rely on procedures that would have been already tested in numerous other studies. It should be stressed that the research of Miss Tachovska was to that extent pioneering, bringing forth a new outlook on the functioning of trade. This was reflected in the unusually high time demands on the commitment of the author, which would deserve appreciation.

What concerns the literature used and reviewed, the author referred to some 60 titles, some of which were recent seminal papers in the field of gravity models or econometrics and which had a direct impact on the methodology used in the thesis.

The method used followed the top-down approach to scientific writing: starting with the review of literature, defining the working hypotheses to be tested, specification of the general model for empirical testing, acquisition of the data (some of them had to be proxies since not all theoretical variables had their statistical counterpart), selection of econometric methods of estimation and final interpretation of results.

Manuscript form: the thesis was written with due diligence. I did not find there any infringement on the discipline of referencing or in the layout of the text. The text is readable and it has a well-designed structure.

Final comment on the author's contribution: As I explained it at the start, this comparative thesis is in many respects quite original and innovative, especially in its contents (i.e. in scope and subject) of analysis. Perhaps, it could apply a more trendy specification of the basic gravity model – for example, the specification of Anderson/van Wincoop. Then, this thesis could be publishable in a good journal. However, that would raise the demand on the data collection to unbearable extent. I think that the author deserves a high grade even without such a treat. The joint degree with the University of Strasbourg is duly represented by this thesis. My recommended grade is : 1 (honours).

Suggested question for the defense is:

„Please explain the revealed differences in behaviour (decision-making) of exporters in your two compared countries (France vs Czechia) and how the different product structure of trade modifies these behavioural characteristics“.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
Literature (max. 20 points)	20
Methods (max. 30 points)	26
Contribution (max. 30 points)	30
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	20
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	96
GRADE (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	1

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Vladimír Benáček

DATE OF EVALUATION: 15.6.2015



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