

Report on Bachelor Thesis

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

Student:	Barbora Chochláčová
Advisor:	Barbara Pertold-Gebicka
Title of the thesis:	Estimation of the optimal length of maternity leave

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

The bachelor thesis by Barbora Chochláčová is devoted to estimation of the optimal (from the point of view of the labor market) length of parental leave. The author follows a methodology applied in an OECD study on a related topic. She takes advantage of country-level panel data on parental leave characteristics, gender-related labor market statistics, and macroeconomic indicators to estimate the relationship between the length of statutory parental leave and the gender wage gap. The thesis contribution, in comparison to the recent OECD study, lies in the concentration on the gender wage gap (the OECD study investigated employment rates) and utilization of most recent data compiled by the student herself.

The thesis represents a decent piece of work with a good introduction to the topic, presentation of the most relevant literature and summary of the parental leave legislation across the world. The author also did a very good job collecting the relevant data from different sources.

While working on the thesis the student has struggled with methodological issues, however most of these were solved in the preparation stage. What still could be improved is the discussion concerning the choice of proper estimation method (why fixed effects and not random effects?).

The weakest part of the thesis is interpretation of results. While the title promises estimation of the optimal length of parental leave, the author does not satisfactory discuss her results with respect to this question. I find it a bit puzzling at the first sight that the estimated relationship between parental leave length and gender wage gap is (negative and) linear, what suggests that the optimal length of parental leave is infinity. Could this be driven by the fact that the longer the leave, the fewer mothers enter the labor market after having children and thus we observe only a self-selected sample of employees?

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	17
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	20
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	25
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	15
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	77
GRADE (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	2

NAME OF THE REFEREE: *Barbara Pertold-Gebicka*

DATE OF EVALUATION: 1.6.2015



Referee Signature

