Report on **Master Thesis**

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

Student:	Bc. Robert Rott M.Sc.
Advisor:	PhDr. Martin Gregor, Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	Lobbying: Microeconomic Evidence

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

In his master thesis, Robert Rott aims to study lobbying in the United States. He asks three important and clearly defined research questions (what is the value added of connections and expertise of lobbyists, what is the role of competition for access to congressmen, which characteristics of congressmen predict higher contributions from lobbyists). The thesis is a very nice extension of the work of Bertrand et al. (2014). Robert replicates their results using another method and, most importantly, asks new research questions. To study these questions, Robert employs appropriate econometric techniques. The data analysis is very careful and besides the main results provides many reasonable robustness checks. Robert combines the dataset collected for the purposes of Bertrand et al. (2014) with data from other sources. It is obvious that he has a very good knowledge of the relevant literature. The thesis is well written and easy to read.

My main comment relates to the main results presented in Table 4.4. It seems to me that either the results are not interpreted correctly, or the description of the explanatory variables in the table is wrong.

- The text says the following: in the baseline (no competition) the premium is 3.1% for specialised and 7.2% for connected reports. There is an additional premium for connected competitive reports of 3.6% and no statistically significant change for specialised competitive reports.

- In Table 4.4 the coefficient show that in the baseline the premium is 3.1% for specialised and 1.2% (insignificant) for connected reports (this goes agains the main results for the first hypothesis and the results of Bertrand et al.). Plus there seems to be an additional premium of 7.2% and 3.6% for specialised and connected reports, respectively.

Another potential topic for the discussion during the defence would be the following: To what extent do you think that the advantages of the method of matching compared to the method used by Bertrand et al. (2014) outweight the disadvatages? In my view, a relatively big disadvantage is the loss of a big part of the dataset (reports which are neither specialized nor connected, and reports which are both specialized and connected). Not only you end up with much smaller sample, but while you can estimate the value added of connections relative to specialization, you cannot estimate the value added of both.

To sum up, I enjoyed reading the thesis and I am happy to recommend it for the defence and suggest grade A (1, vyborne).

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	20
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	25
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	20
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**95**
GRADE	**(1 – 2 – 3 – 4)**	**1**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Julie Chytilová

DATE OF EVALUATION: August 5, 2015

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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