Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Jana Holková
Advisor:	PhDr. Václav Korbel
Title of the thesis:	**Discrimination of Slovak people in the Prague rental housing market – A field experiment**

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

Please provide your assessment of each of the following four categories, summary and suggested questions for the discussion. The minimum length of the report is 300 words.

Jana Holková studies discrimination of Slovaks on the Czech housing market. She uses a correspondance experiment where she randomly assigns Czech and Slovak names to applications. Moreover, she varies the job status of the applicants (student vs. worker). Jana finds a lower response rate for Slovaks suggesting a discrimination based on nationality. Students receive slightly fewer answers but the effect is lower and not significant.

Contribution
The thesis is a nice and novel contribution to the literature. The results suggest that people can discriminate not only based on factors such as gender or race but also based on more subtle characterstics such as nationality. I am convinced that a shorter and more polished version of the thesis could be published in an academic journal.

From the perspective of a bachelor thesis at the IES, the main contribution lies in conducting an independent experiment using the state-of-the-art methods.

Methods
As I mentioned in the previous section, Jana uses state-of-the-art methods. The experiment is well-designed. The author appropriately takes care of sample size, randomization and carefully considers other confounding factors such as order effect or response time.

Minor comments:
- Even though Jana took special care in choice of the fictious identities, some of the Slovak names can evoke a Roma ethinicity among some people which may partly drive the effects.
- There is a small difference in wording of student and worker applications which I missed during the design of the experiment. Students mention street name in the body of the email whereas workers do not. Therefore, the worker applications may seem more like copy-paste which may discourage some landlords from answering. However, this is not relevant for the main research question and it does not influence the Czech vs. Slovak treatment effect.
- I feel it would be sufficient to report marginal effects only (only column 2 in regression tables).

Literature
The literature review provides both theoretical aspect (statistical vs. taste-based) and empirical evidence. It is well-structured and easy to follow.

Manuscript form
Even though Jana improved the text significantly, it is relatively the weakest part of the thesis. Some sections are unnecessary long (e.g. section 3) and there are still typos and grammar errors here and there. On the other hand, the manuscript form is adequate for a bachelor thesis at the IES.

Summary and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense
The thesis presents an interesting and well-designed experiment. The research questions posed present a subtle form of discrimination which has not been extensively studies so far. In that sense, the contribution exceeds the standards of bachelor thesis at the IES. The text could have been

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improved but still is adequate for the bachelor level. **Overall, I recommend the thesis for defense and suggest the grade A**

Questions for discussion:
1) How the effect sizes compare to other correspondence studies in the Czech Republic and other countries? Do you think your results are rather a lower or upper bound given the rental housing market conditions?
2) The discrimination of Slovaks is surprising since both nations have no obvious history of conflicts or animosities. Your experiment cannot disentangle the difference between statistical and taste based discrimination. Could you think of an experimental (or non-experimental) design which would answer the source of discrimination of Slovaks on the Czech rental market?

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	27
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	20
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	15
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**92**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: PhDr. Václav Korbel

DATE OF EVALUATION: *30.5.2018*

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Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

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*

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*

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*

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	GRADE
91 – 100	A
81 - 90	B
71 - 80	C
61 – 70	D
51 – 60	E
0 – 50	F