

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Tomáš Svoboda
Advisor:	Ing. Vilém Semerák, M.A., Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	Impact of the international trade agreements between EU and African countries

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Short summary

The thesis analyses the impact of trade agreements between Africa and Europe, with more detailed focus on a per region basis, while employing standard panel data methods as well as more advanced tools, and providing insight on the development of the gravity model.

Contribution

The thesis has very ambitious goals when it sets out to cover a very broad topic with a variety of methods, and thus reviewing conclusions of some now outdated existing research. The topic itself is an essential one today, and will continue to become more so assuming that current demographical and geopolitical trends continue on the same trajectory. Compilation works of a range of methods updating previous research results such as this will therefore be an important stepping stone in understanding the problems of current approaches and informing policy going forward. Continuation of the thesis or granular analysis of particular regions or type of agreements would be a valuable area for further research.

Methods

The author rightly mentions multicollinearity and other possible assumption violations that could skew the results, but does not proceed to pay appropriate attention to pre-analyzing the data for potential issues with the dataset. On the other hand, certain robustness tests are conducted and heteroskedasticity is corrected for.

In general, the thesis contains a wide array of methods that exceed the expectations for a bachelor study. While space limitations are understandable, a wider discussion of the reasoning for choosing the specific method apart from the fact that they are „probably the most popular“.

Some of the sections of the methodology, especially when introducing variables and new empirical approaches, would benefit from more deeper introduction for clarity and to show real understanding of the method.

Literature

The citation style is consistent throughout the document, and the claim in the thesis as well as the methods and data are well referenced. The results of the Turnitin analysis do not indicate any larger text similarity with other available sources.

Decent overview of the development of the method and the microeconomic background is provided. The Literature Review section detailing the development of African-European trade is sourced somewhat less thoroughly with a few unreferenced statements, however the effort to use recent and high quality sources should be commended.

Manuscript form

The manuscript is overall very well formatted, logically structured, easy to navigate and properly referenced.

A few minor notes I would make is to be more careful about proper capitalization of headings and subheadings in English. When using someone's figure, it is better to download the data when available and recreate them in a uniform style while quoting the source, as that prevents problems with

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low resolution of important figures and reduced legibility. It is also stylistically preferable not to end sections with equations. In a few sections, the work would benefit for more proofreading – for instance, when introducing your variables, keep consistent usage of italics and non-italics.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

While there are improvements to be made on the technical side, the thesis shows understanding of tools exceeding what is expected from a bachelor's level student, and their relevant use on a topic of importance.

The thesis well fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at the Institute of Economic Studies, and I therefore recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade A. For the defense, I would suggest more discussion on the following issues:

- You mention that “renegotiation of several current agreements” would improve the current state of affairs, but do not specify later. Is there a specific type of agreements or policies you believe might be the source of the counter-intuitive detrimental effects, and have you considered adding variables differentiating between the types into the thesis? Are the less advantageous agreements concentrated in the Western and Eastern region?
- In the last year of your observation period, has there been a shift caused by the pandemic? In general, would an addition of more such *vis major* control variables make the results more robust, such as by controlling for the local geopolitical turbulences?

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	30
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	26
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	18
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	18
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	92
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Jan Mošovský

DATE OF EVALUATION: 29.5. 2023

Digitálně podepsáno (29. 5. 2023)
Jan Mošovský

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.*

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.*

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

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.*

Overall grading:

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