Report on **Master Thesis**

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

Student:	Jean-Baptiste Marigo
Advisor:	Paola Bertoli
Title of the thesis:	Where did people die? An international assessment of a potentially positive relationship between economic development and the severity of COVID-19 outbreaks

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

Short summary

The present thesis investigate the relationship between economic development and COVID-19 trying to identify its drivers and to estimate the magnitude of their impact. Based on a Bayesian Model Averaging approach to select the most relevant drivers of the relationship of interest, the author identifies as main driver the median age of population, overweight prevalence, democracy index, and (hydroxy)chloroquine variables.

Contribution

This study contributes to the literature examining what country's characteristics can be seen as source of the differences in the COVID-19 outbreaks observed among different countries focusing on those characteristics mainly related to economic development. In doing so, the author relies on an empirical approach (Bayesian Model Averaging) that allow him to better deal with classical problem in this kind of study (e.g., uncertainty issue).

Methods

The student proved a good methodological knowledge in adressing the proposed research questions. He carefully discussed the methodolgial approaches explaning the different step of the analysis and the differen choices done. Still, even though the performed analysis is more robust and sound than some other prevous studies, I would have turned down the claim of capturing an actual causal relationship.

Literature

The relevant literature is properly cited. Given the vast available literature, the student did a nice job in providing an overview of the latest evidence while keeping the focus on the topic of interest.

Manuscript form

Overall, the thesis is quite well structured even if I would have better organized/titled the different subsections. The language is appropriate and the text is well written. Bibliography and citations are adequate.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

I believe the present thesis fulfills the formal requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. The student formulated a clear research question spelling out some well targeted hypotheses to be tested, proved to be familiar with the existing works on the topic and performed an empirical analysis providing furter insights on the relationship between economic development and the severity of the COVID-19 outbreaks. Overall, the work is well written and presented. The results of the Urkud analysis does not raise concerns. For all these reasons, I believe the thesis is ready for defence and I recommend it for the defence suggesting a grade A.

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Questions:
- Why the choice to include in the analysis the use of (hydroxy)chloroquine since it is only a dummy providing limited information?
- Please, further elaborate on the claim that your analysis is actually capturing a proper causal relationship.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED:

CATEGORY	POINTS
Contribution *(max. 30 points)*	25
Methods *(max. 30 points)*	25
Literature *(max. 20 points)*	20
Manuscript Form *(max. 20 points)*	18
TOTAL POINTS *(max. 100 points)*	**88**
GRADE **(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**B**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Paola Bertoli

DATE OF EVALUATION: 10.06.2023

Digitally signed (10.06.2023)
Paola Bertoli

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Referee Signature