

Report on Bachelor Thesis

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

Student:	Jan Hrušák
Advisor:	doc. Martin Gregor
Title of the thesis:	Metal Detecting Ownership and Non-Ownership Motives

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

Short summary

The thesis looks into a novel phenomenon, namely how private collections of coins (and other artifacts) are created by metal „detectorists“ in the Czech Republic. It exploits weakness of the Czech institutional environment; current regulation of metal detecting and finds is ambiguous and thus leaves a room to metal detectorists to make their own choices.

The author's key question is whether the rate that an individual submits the find to a museum (i.e., doesn't create a private collection) is affected by socioeconomic characteristics. The author finds some evidence that individual wealth (proxied by ownership of a costly detector) increases the submission rate, especially for coins that are the most valuable artifacts (but also where regulation is more stringent). The thesis is characterized by massive original data work.

Contribution

The key question is whether the submission rate (out of listed findings) is affected by economic characteristics of the metal detectorists. In other words, whether the ownership benefit is relatively less or more important with higher economic characteristics.

The phenomenon of creating private collections through metal detecting is new to economists. This thesis gives evidence that the submission rate should increase with economic development and thus private collections should be gradually less important. This result is new; while metal detecting is covered so in the literature in archeology, this literature is not looking into how submission rate varies in characteristics of detectorists.

Methods

There is massive data work underlying this thesis. Using web-scraping of the community website Lovecpokladu.cz, the author constructed a dataset with 7,728 observations of profiles of individual metal detectorists, a dataset with 203,846 artifacts and a dataset with 94,269 coins. The data were extensively processed; many variables were created and then analyzed. The author used a couple of standard econometric techniques.

Literature

There is a nascent literature on the economics of art collections and economics of hobbies that is somewhat loosely related to this thesis, but the topic of metal detecting is brand new (at least to the best of my knowledge).

Manuscript form

The thesis involves a great amount of information and it was a challenge to structure it in a convenient way. Given the voluminous size of the thesis, there are definitely places where the text could be more fluent and could be further polished. But the overall structure is, in my view, clear. I only recommend to fix a typo in the label of depository: https://github.com/hawk-s/Metal_Detecting_Ownership_and_Non-Ownerhsip_Motives

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Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

The thesis is an example of an original research idea which has been carried out independently. The main result is interesting and the publicly available datasets (at GitHub) open room for additional research. I truly appreciate how the author approached the project; it involved reading a lot of literature that is not close to economists, mastering web scraping, creating and working with large datasets, and testing a large number of econometric specifications.

The results of the Turnitin analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. In fact, with 113 pages of text and 149 pages in total, the thesis by far exceeds requirements for an undergraduate thesis.

I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade A. This is a thesis which may perhaps deserve extra accolades.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	30
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	29
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	19
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	19
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	97
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Martin Gregor

DATE OF EVALUATION: August 30, 2023

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