

**REPORT ON MASTER THESIS**  
**CENTER FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION**

<b>STUDENT:</b>	<b>Lusine Sargasyan</b>
<b>ADVISOR:</b>	<b>Daniel Münich</b>
<b>TITLE OF THE THESIS:</b>	<b>Women’s employment before and during the Covid-19 pandemic: The case of Armenia</b>

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

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

**CONTRIBUTION:** The MA thesis contributes to the stock of empirical knowledge about the impacts of covid-19 pandemics on the labor markets. In particular, the analysis sheds light on developments in Armenia shortly before and during first two years of the pandemics. Due to time and space limits the research focuses only on the case of women. The value added of the thesis is that it uses probably the best data available for such an exercise – Armenian Labor Force Survey run on a quarterly basis. Individual level data (household sample) also impose limits on the empirical analysis. While the demographic characteristics and employment details are rather well documented (reported), information on income and in particular salaries suffer with rather high non-response. This prevented Lusine going beyond her detailed description of labor supply patterns to investigate other more rigorous notions such as Mincerian earning equation and / or estimation of labor supply function. Despite that, in my opinion, her analysis provides valuable exploratory empirical contribution.

**METHODS:** Lusine starts her quantitative analysis outlining the macroeconomic framework before and during the pandemics in Armenia. She follows by observational partial analysis of trends in fundamental labor market indicators. She tops up her explorations by a regression analysis to identify contributions (associations) of typical variables to the trends in labor supply during pandemic waves.

**LITERATURE:** Lusine reviews similar type of literature focusing on experience of other countries. Her review is focusing mainly on covid-19 cases while impacts of some other types of crisis could provide guidance or inspiration too. The literature review is by far not comprehensive, but serves its purpose and I find it sufficient. It documents that the student has good grasp of the theory, empirical methods and is able to compose a readable and valuable literature review.

**MANUSCRIPT FORM:** The form (structure and format) of the thesis is adequate. Presentation of tables and graphs could be done better both in terms of graphical formatting

and easier-to-read content but it reflects relative lack of time at the time of wrapping up the thesis before official deadline. I would recommend to move some too detailed parts of data inspections presented at the very beginning of the Data and Statistics section into an Appendix. As other example, the labeling of time on horizontal axis of graphs could be made better and unified across graphs.

**SUMMARY AND SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION DURING THE DEFENSE:** I will not repeat the summary which is provided already above. I suggest several questions for the defense:

- How important role was played by secondary jobs in Armenia before and during the pandemics and how well the Armenian Labor Force Survey data documents this phenomena?
- 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the thesis ends reviewing the patterns on wages and notes the problem of non-response and reporting zero wages while working. Since this precluded estimation of Mincerian equations and labor supply functions, it calls for more detailed clarification.
- I find the typology of education attainment chosen as somewhat unusual. It calls for better clarification during the defense.
- My impression is that most empirical findings are in line with common expectations. I am wondering if Lusine identified some phenomena which were not in line with her or common expectations or represent kind of a puzzle.
- The reasoning behind estimable functional form chosen deserves more detailed explanation.
- The regression part focuses only on the extensive margin of the labor supply (linear probability model of working or not). Intensive margin (hours worked) is documented only in the introductory section but not in the regression part. Based on the former, it seems that covid-19 had notable impact on the intensive margin too. Could the regression analysis be extended for this as a follow up of the research?

I recommend the thesis for defense.

#### **TEXT ORIGINALITY CONTROL**

I confirm that I acquainted myself with the report on the originality of the text of the thesis

**SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED** (for details, please see the page 3)

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
Contribution (max. 30 points)	20
Methods (max. 30 points)	18
Literature (max. 20 points)	18
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	15
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)</b>	<b>C</b>

**NAME OF THE REFEREE: Daniel Münich**

**DATE OF EVALUATION: August 28, 2023**

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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	<b>A</b>
81 – 90	<b>B</b>
71 – 80	<b>C</b>
61 – 70	<b>D</b>
51 – 60	<b>E</b>
0 – 50	<b>F</b>