CHOOSING A TOPIC FOR A MASTER THESIS IN MECON AND MIQEF

The Master thesis is the single most important piece of own research that should illustrate your ability to give meaningful answers and suggest possible solutions for society’s most important social and economic challenges, based on reliable economic theory and rigorous empirical evidence. Apart from course grades, the Master thesis is a key element that defines your profile as an economist and is an important signal to future employers of your professional expertise. The quality of your thesis will also be an indicator of the excellence of our teaching programs MEcon and MiQEF with which we compete with other universities to attract the best students.

You have invested a lot of energy to develop your expertize in theoretical and empirical economics. Now is the time to get a return on this effort. In choosing a topic for your Master thesis, you should ask yourself a few questions and think about what could make a good choice:

- Is the topic sufficiently interesting to keep me motivated even after three months of tough work?
- Is the topic relevant for society, government, international organizations or the private sector and will it thus generate interest among potential future employers?
- Do I have a clear-cut research question? Can I answer this question applying the theory and empirical methods that were acquired in the course phase of the program? Is my choice of courses a sufficiently good preparation for my thesis work? If you never attended a course in public economics, it is probably not the best idea to write a thesis about tax reform.
- Who would be the best supervisor to choose? Did I attend a course with my supervisor that could establish a common ground for discussions? Is the topic likely to connect with the research and teaching interests of my advisor? The willingness to devote extra time and the quality of advice might importantly depend on this.
- If I choose to do empirical research in my Master thesis, will I have good access to the required data? Do I have the appropriate software? If necessary, will I be able to implement the estimators and numerical procedures myself?
- Is the topic part of an active research area and does it catch interest in the academic community? Can it possibly be further developed in later stages, e.g., during potential PhD studies?