

Opponent's Report on Dissertation Thesis

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Title of the Thesis:	Essays on Natural Resource Richness, Economic Growth and Institutional Quality
Type of Defense:	DEFENSE
Date of Pre-Defense:	December 7, 2016
Opponent	Christopher A. Hartwell MPP, PhD

Address the following questions in your report, please:

- a) Can you recognize an original contribution of the author?
- b) Is the thesis based on relevant references?
- c) Do the results of the thesis allow their publication in a respected economic journal?
- d) Are there any additional major comments on what should be improved?
- e) Were the comments raised at the pre-defense, addressed in the dissertation submitted to the regular defense?
- f) What is your overall assessment of the thesis? (a) I recommend the thesis to be defended without major changes; (b) The thesis is not defensible.

(Note: The report should be at least 2 pages long.)

Content of the Report:

Having commented extensively on this dissertation in the previous report, along with the two other excellent referee reports, I have only a few brief remarks to add here. The main issue that I was looking forward to being resolved in this paper was the addition of an introduction, in order to tie the dissertation together and lay out an overall motivation for the specific chapters contained therein. In other dissertations (including my own), the introductory chapter has served to alert the reader of the deeper motivations and questions behind the empirical analyses to come, sketching out some of the theoretical basis and lightly touching on some of the seminal works in the literature. Most importantly, it lays out the *why* of the dissertation, how it contributes to the broader base of knowledge and builds on earlier work.

The introduction which was added to this dissertation since my last viewing unfortunately does not really meet that criteria. Only two pages long, it does briefly sketch out what the dissertation is about and what the connecting thread is, but it is far too brief to offer a unifying reason for the specific portions of the dissertation. It still appears as merely a placeholder, a brief formality before the real analysis begins.

In one sense, I can understand this, as the papers were essentially written in isolation with an eye on them being published in journals; the dissertation was not meant to be a standalone book, like other monograph-length dissertations are. And to undertake what I would have liked to have seen in the introduction would have necessitated a thorough overhaul of the dissertation, moving forward much of the literature review and theory from the constituent papers into a unifying introduction. Again, I realize that this was not the intent of the student, and thus I refuse to play the role of refereeing a paper that I want, not the one I was given. However, it still would have been better if the introduction had more substance for explaining the author's motivations.

For other comments, I agree with Professor Frensch's comment about the inclusion of the initial level of manufacturing in order to capture convergence effects (Chapter 3, Equation 3.3). Again, it is difficult to comment on papers which have already been accepted for publication, and manufacturing underwent its own transition in the move from communism to capitalism, but it is an interesting question and perhaps one that the author can explore in the future.

As with Professor Frensch, I was worried about the English throughout the dissertation and it does appear to have improved. For the author's future prospects, however, I would suggest improving their written English and having papers checked by a native speaker. The responses to each of the reviewers show that the author still has some way to go in perfecting his English and consistently turning out publication-worthy work.

In conclusion, the bulk of my comments were addressed and I feel that this paper has already been given a seal of approval by the economics profession. I recommend therefore that the thesis be defended without major changes

Date:	4/4/2017
Opponent's Signature:	
Opponent's Affiliation:	