

Advisor's Report on Dissertation Thesis

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Title of the Thesis:	Three Essays on Post-Conflict Reintegration
Type of Defense:	DEFENSE
Date of Pre-Defense:	May 20, 2015

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:

Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to write this report/letter for Ian Lively. It has been a rewarding experience to work with Ian and to observe how he has grown into an independent researcher, with outstanding ability to ask important questions, and to design and implement field experiments in diverse settings. Ian has started the PhD program with deep interest in issues of post-conflict societies and barriers to their development. Over time, he also got interested in more general topics in behavioral economics, in particular related to (1) formation of preferences and (2) the link between institutions and behavior.

Throughout the PhD studies Ian has been very active and quickly acquired the aspiration to succeed at the international academic arena. He visited University of Nottingham (audited experimental courses, presented at a seminar and interacted with Abigail Barr and Simon Gächter), Norwegian School of Economics in Bergen and attended experimental and behavioral PhD workshops given by John List in Bergen, Sam Bowles and Daniel Friedman in Trento and Bertil Tungodden in Paris.

His dissertation contains a set of three original empirical papers, unified by topics related to understanding post-conflict recovery. He received a lot of excellent comments from Reviewers during pre-defense, which helped him to improve the papers.

In his first chapter, "Measuring Intermediate Outcomes of Liberia's Disarmament Demobilization and Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program" (published in *Defense and Peace Economics*) Ian

analyzes existing survey data of ex-combatants in Liberia. The aim is to identify the effect of the major reintegration program, called DDR, on income and employment, using propensity score matching. He finds that the program had a positive effect on likelihood of employment, but it has no effect on income. This is a competent applied work. Since a lot of money is spent on implementation of the DDR program in various post-conflict societies, the paper is very relevant for policy-makers.

In his second chapter, “Trusting Former Rebels: An Experimental Approach to Understanding Reintegration after Civil War”, Ian (with Nathan Fiala and me) Ian studies reintegration and social capital of former child soldiers, one of the key pre-conditions for peaceful development of post-conflict societies. The common view is that re-integration is complicated by the negative effect of the normative environment of rebel groups on cooperative behavior, and by anger and lack of acceptance by receiving communities. This project is based on field experiments in Northern Uganda, where an unpopular rebel group (the Lord’s Resistance Army) forcibly recruited tens of thousands of youth. The setting is interesting for estimating the effects of soldiering because soldiers did not self-select nor were systematically screened by rebels. The findings in this paper speak to development economics and political scientists, giving a more optimistic view on prospects of reintegration and suggesting the effects of forced participation in combat does not necessarily harm the studied components of social capital. The results also speak to theories of human cooperation, which emphasize the role of inter-group fighting in elevating altruistic tendencies, and to the literature on formation of preferences, indicating extreme experiences have bigger or more enduring effects if experienced during childhood. I want to note that Ian came up with the idea of studying social capital of former soldiers by himself and played a major role in collecting the data and creating the paper.

His third dissertation paper “The effect of conflict history on cooperation within and between groups“ (with Gonne Geekman and Stephen Cheung) studies the effect of conflict on cooperation in the laboratory, and finds several interesting results, but let me mention one more completed paper that is not a part of Ian’s dissertation. In his fourth paper, „Social Preferences and Environmental quality: Evidence from School Children in Sierra Leone“ (with Giovanna D’Adda), Ian and Giovanna use experimental and survey data from Sierra Leone and study the effect of health on formation of social preferences in children. Ian and Giovanna linked original experimental data from dictator games played by children with information about rainfall during periods, when the children were in utero and during their infancy. They exploit the variation over time and across regions to estimate the effects on social preferences elicited in the experiments. They find that variation in rainfall affects both height (proxy for health) as well as social preferences. These results add to the literature on the impact of nutrition and health on child outcomes, by suggesting the effects on social behavior. The paper is forthcoming in *Journal of African Economies*.


Ian and his collaborators have recently finished two more papers, one focusing on the link between institutions and inter-ethnic trust in Northern Afghanistan (with Vojtěch Bartoš, a PhD student at CERGE-EI) and the second one focusing on the effects of stress on gender differences in competitiveness (joint with Jana Cahlíková, a PhD student at CERGE-EI, and Lubomír Cingl, a PhD student at IES). These papers still need polishing, but both are promising.

In sum, Ian’s papers demonstrate his skills to use insights from behavioral economics together with experimental econ tools to study social issues. He is a talented, careful and independent young researcher, with impressive ability to implement relatively elaborate experimental designs in the field settings (Northern Uganda, Afghanistan, or Sierra Leone). He has good quantitative skills and a network of collaborators. His qualities as a researcher were also tested on the international job market with a satisfying outcome – he got a post-doc position at the University Wageningen. This will allow him to work with and learn from one of the most active development economics groups in Europe. I wish him all the best in his future academic career.

If more information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Michal Bauer, Ph.D.
Assistant professor
IES FSV UK and CERGE-EI

Date:	October 20 th , 2015
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