

Opponent's Report on Dissertation Thesis

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Author:	Ian Lively
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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
Opponent	Mgr. PhDr. Silvester van Koten, Ph.D.

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:

The PhD thesis of Ian Lively makes not only a solid, new, contribution in the field of Post-Conflict Reintegration, but shows also the innovative use of a variety of methods. More specifically, the methods of empirical analysis – using propensity-score matching, field-experiments – using the well-known dictator and trust games in an original way, and economics experiments – using a version the Tullock game to create group identities by conflict.

The thesis has a well-written introduction that clearly introduces the theme and conveys well the importance of research in the field of Post-Conflict Reintegration. The thesis then lays out different ways in which the author will research specific elements in this field.

The first paper reports a reappraisal of empirical data, enriching the analysis done previously by using propensity-score matching. The research has been performed in a competent and

professional way. I am not surprised that the research has already found its way into a good international journal with impact factor.

The second paper reports a field experiment. The trust game and the dictator game are used on samples of older male citizens and previous soldiers. The most remarkable effect is probably that ex-soldiers are *not* trusted less. The author even identifies a positive effect on trust for a subgroup of the participants. The findings seem very relevant for the field. I expect the paper to be published in a good international journal with impact factor.

The third paper reports a laboratory experiment. The Tullock game and a multilevel public good game are combined in a truly novel way. Indeed, the author finds very interesting and valuable effects. Firstly, the author finds that the conflict increases the contributions to the (more inefficient) local public good at the cost of the global public good. Secondly, the author finds that an increase in efficiency of the public good does *not* increase investment in the public good. This effect is in contrast with earlier findings. regard this experiment as very successful as it has produced such interesting, novel findings. I expect the paper to be published in a good international journal with impact factor.

The whole thesis, all 3 papers, are very clearly written. The autor has a very accessible way of writing, gives clear examples and lays out the necessary preliminary information very well. The author presents the existing literature very well, and gives all the needed references, without losing his own, main narrative.

I regard all 3 papers as original contributions, and all 3 make important points that make valuable contributions to the field of Post-Conflict Reintegration, the field of Field Experiments, and Experimental Economics. To repeat, in all papers, relevant references are used. This dissertation would likely be successfully defended at CERGE-EI and without a doubt at my main institute at VŠE. To repeat, I am not surprised the first paper has been published already in an international journal with impact factor and I expect the same for the second and third paper.


I believe that the comments raised at the pre-defense have been well addressed.

I recommend the thesis for defense without changes. I might add that I think it may be useful to follow the procedure of other top economic schools in the world, and not make the successful defense conditional on the publication of the papers in journals. Making this conditional, would necessitate the student – in order to graduate within a reasonable time-frame – to publish his paper in low-quality journals, while the papers could have been published in a high-quality journal, provided the student could have polished the papers for another 1-2 years. Such a publishing condition would thus especially handicap the more talented students who aspire a career in academics.

With kind regards,



Doc. Drs. Ph.Dr Silvester van Koten Ph.D

Date:	2015.11.19
Opponent's Signature:	
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