

# Research Degrees Examination Decision Form (PhD)



Please complete within three weeks of the oral examination and email to the Examinations Office, together with both preliminary reports and a joint final report.

Name of Candidate: Danilo Freire

Names of Examiners: Graham Denyer Willis and Toke S Aidt

1. The examiners report that they have examined the thesis submitted by the candidate and have conducted an oral examination:

Date of oral examination: June 25 2018

Was the supervisor present: YES ☐ NO ☒

2. The examiners further report that they have satisfied themselves that the thesis:  
Please tick relevant boxes

a) is genuinely the work of the candidate	X	g) includes discussion of those findings and how they advance the study	X
b) forms a distinct contribution to knowledge of the subject	X	h) demonstrates a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, objectivity and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field	X
c) affords evidence of originality: 1) by the discovery of new facts <i>and/or</i> 2) by the exercise of independent critical power	X	i) is satisfactory as regards literary presentation	X
d) is an integrated whole and presents a coherent argument	X	j) includes a full bibliography and references	X
e) gives critical assessment of the relevant literature	X	k) demonstrates research skills relevant to the thesis	X
f) describes the method of research and its findings	X	l) is of a standard to merit publication in whole, in part or in a revised form	X

3. Following the oral examination, the examiners have agreed the following result:  
Please tick one box only

1)	Pass: The candidate has satisfied the examiners in the examination for the degree of PhD	
2)	Pass, subject to minor amendments: To satisfy the examiners in the examination for the degree of PhD, the candidate is required to make specified minor amendments within three months	X
3)	Pass, subject to major amendments: To satisfy the examiners in the examination for the degree of PhD, the candidate is required to make specified major amendments within six months	
4)	Not a pass, however: The candidate is permitted to re-enter the examination for the PhD degree and to re-present the thesis in a revised form within eighteen months (A further oral examination is at the discretion of the examiners)  A further oral examination is <input type="checkbox"/> required <input type="checkbox"/> not required <input type="checkbox"/> not yet decided	
5)	Pass, subject to one month's amendments: Only to be used if the candidate has not satisfied minor or major amendments or after the re-presentation of the thesis	

6)	<b>Not a pass, however:</b> The candidate is permitted to re-enter the oral examination (on the same thesis) no later than  ..... (A period not exceeding eighteen months)	
7)	<b>Failed PhD, however:</b> The candidate has satisfied the criteria for the award of a related lower degree (if available)	
8)	<b>Failed PhD, however:</b> The candidate is permitted to enter the examination for a related lower degree and to re-present the thesis in a revised form within eighteen months (if available)	
9)	<b>Fail:</b> The candidate has not satisfied the criteria	

#### 4. Preliminary Reports

4.1 Both examiners should complete the independent preliminary reports template prior to the oral examination

4.2 **Please note:** The candidate **will** be provided with a copy of both the preliminary reports

#### 5. Final Joint Report

5.1 The final joint report should give the grounds on which your decision is based, and should include the candidate's name; thesis title; the names of each of the examiners; and the date.

5.2 **Please note:** The candidate **will** be provided with a copy of this report.

5.3 Please also refer to supplementary Graduate School Prize form.

#### 6. Minor Amendments (within 1 or 3 months) or Major Amendments (within 6 months)

6.1 Minor amendments may be checked by either or both examiners, or the supervisor. Major amendments may be checked by either or both examiners. Please indicate the person(s) responsible for checking the amendments:

...Dr Toke Aidt.....  
(Please note: if no one is indicated, this will default to the examiners for checking)

6.2 **Please note:** The official start date of the corrections will be once the research degrees team emails them to the candidate following ratification

#### 7 Corrections

7.1 If the candidate is required to make corrections to the thesis, please ensure that the person responsible for checking the corrections confirms the final decision by email/in writing to the Examinations Office. ([researchdegrees@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:researchdegrees@kcl.ac.uk))

**Examiners' Names:**

.......... Date .....26/6/2018.

.......... Date .....28/6/2018

## Joint Examiners Report

<b>Candidate Name:</b>	Danilo Freire
<b>Thesis title:</b>	Essays on Political and Criminal Violence
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Examiner Name</b>	Graham Denyer Willis
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Examiner Name</b>	Toke S Aidt
<b>Date:</b>	June 26 2018

### Comments:

The Viva took place on June 25 2018 at noon and was completed at 2pm.

We questioned and challenged the candidate on the three substantive chapters of the dissertation and we are satisfied that the work is original and adds to the understanding of the topic. Overall, we found the work interesting and of a quality that warrants a PhD degree and which will form a solid basis for subsequent publication.

Chapter 2 is published and although there is scope for disagreement about the interpretation of the results, we do not feel that there is a need to undertake any corrections for that chapter. Chapter 3, an Austrian analysis of the Animal Game, is a good start for eventual publication. But as discussed in the viva, we feel that the argument can and should be sharpened with specific hypotheses and by making a clear distinction between the forces that established the market around the game more than one hundred years ago, and the forces that have sustained it outside the legal system in spite of many cycles of government, global pressures and political interests. This is not a requirement for the PhD but something that must be taken into account when trying to publish the chapter. Chapter 4 studies the correlates of mass killings. We believe that this chapter is in need of some minor corrections before the dissertation is accepted. We have listed these in the appropriate form.

## List of Corrections

<b>Candidate Name:</b>	Danilo Freire
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Examiner Name:</b>	Graham Denyer Willis
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Examiner Name:</b>	Toke S Aidt
<b>Date:</b>	June 26 2018

### Corrections:

The dissertation is of an acceptable standard with innovative and strong chapters. Chapter 4 can and should, however, be strengthened with some minor corrections:

- 1) The contribution to the broader literature is not sufficiently clear. What do we learn from the analysis in the chapter? Why should we care about correlations? We would like to see a clearer statement related to this.
- 2) The frontier in research on conflict prediction is to use machine learning methods on a much broader set of observables (e.g., words in the news media, see Mueller, H., C. Rauh 2018. Reading between the lines: Prediction of political violence using newspaper text, *American Political Science Review*, 112(2): 358-375. We would like to see a discussion of this and of the limitations on building forecast model with annual data on slow moving macro aggregates.
- 3) The chapter could make a bigger contribution to the literature by looking at heterogeneity across time and space. In particular, it would be interesting to see the EBA done for the cold-war period and for the post-cold-war period separately and it would be interesting to investigate the sub-sample of cases which are not associated with civil war. These two extensions would enrich the chapter significantly.

Chapter 2 is published and although there is scope for disagreement about interpretation of the results, we do not feel that there is a need to undertake any corrections for that chapter. Chapter 3 is a good start, but as discussed in the Viva, it might enhance the argument if the analysis was centred more clearly on the start of the market for the game versus sustaining the market outside the law over time. This is not a requirement for the PhD but something to consider when trying to publish the chapter, as either a more refined version or as two separate manuscripts.

## Preliminary Examiners Report

<b>Candidate Name:</b>	Danilo Alves M. Freire
<b>Thesis title:</b>	Essays on Political and Criminal Violence
<b>Examiner Name</b>	Graham Denyer Willis
<b>Date:</b>	June 25, 2018

### Comments:

This set of three essays examines disparate questions about violence, its mechanisms and drivers. The essays use a range of methods, data and cases to make three contributions to debates about homicide reduction, extra-legal systems and mass violence. The essays focus on Latin America primarily, or at least draw some empirical motivation from the egregious violence of the region. The essays show good competence with their related literature, empirical problems and use of methodological intervention.

At the same time, the essays raise a number of considerations that should be addressed by the author in the viva. I will focus largely on empirical, contextual and theory considerations, and less on methodological.

Broad comments:

As a political-economy student, how does the author understand the function of law relative to politics?

In keeping, how does the author reconcile essay one and essay two? These move from very different assumptions about law, legality and the state. In the case of essay one, drawing on the data from the site of essay two. Yet essay one makes an argument premised on the integrity of the state –via successful public policies-, while essay two is driven by a pervasive and deeply historical ‘extra-legal’ wrought by state capture. But essay one discounts the explanations of essay two as a possibility for essay one. Why?

How does the author see the literature on law, crime, policy relative to the Brazilian context, where each has been (and currently acutely is) in question?

Essay One -

Is the state both sufficient and necessary?

Why so comfortable situating ‘public policy’ so steady here?

How do we know how much was policy and how much was PCC via the policy?

What about the systemic interactions between the PCC and those same policies?

What about May 2006? How would this work interpret the agreement between the state and the PCC?

How does the difference between Sao Paulo state and city matter?

Why discount race, in favour of ‘all citizens are treated equally by policy’?

Essay Two-

## Preliminary Examiners Report

Important and interesting case. But very broad – covering a period of more than 120 years. The variation over this period is discussed too briefly, but without accounting for, for example, how the JdB has survived in spite of different periods of repression. This is a modest contribution that could be more.

Can an argument or more definitive proposition can be better proposed and defended here?

Illegal orgs. tend to discount the future more than other orgs – if JdB is an exception, how does it matter that other Brazilian cases are also examples?

Are there periods of time, outside of the genesis period that are particularly enlightening?

Or are there periods where there is interesting data?

Raffle – Rifa, as w/ the PCC. Carries exactly the same characteristics.

How to reconcile a repugnant market and the arbitrariness of law as open secret?

Discuss state capture in such a circumstance.

Is the absence of violence also owing to institutionalisation –the historical social infrastructure of JdB?

How does public versus private political support matter here?

Essay Three-

Nominal findings. How useful are these, really? What is the most important contribution – method, or finding?

To draw out the significance of this work is important. If regime change and pro-growth economic policies are the best 'preventative measures', then:

A) Is 'mass killing' still a relevant debate, given contemporary failures in regime change, and the kinds of chronic violence that continue? Is this literature too located in a historical moment?

B) How are these two things helpful when placed together?

## Preliminary Examiners Report

<b>Candidate Name:</b>	Danilo Freire
<b>Thesis title:</b>	Essays on Political and Criminal Violence
<b>Examiner Name</b>	Dr Toke Aidt
<b>Date:</b>	24/6/2018

## Preliminary Examiners Report

### Comments:

The dissertation contains three substantive chapters and an introduction. The chapters are related to the same broad theme but does not develop one particular argument or thesis throughout. This is normal in economics.

The dissertation engages with original and important questions and, chapters 2 and 4, the student displays the capacity to use the relevant quantitative tools effectively to provide answers to them. Chapter 3 contains an Austrian school analysis of a lottery game in Brazil.

The dissertation is well-presented and follows academic standards. The more technical material is in the appendix which is reasonable and helps the flow of reading. The intuitive explanations of the statistical techniques in the text are good and shows that the student can not only use the tools but also explain to others what they are and why they are right for the task at hand.

### Chapter 2 (Homicide in Sao Paulo).

The research question is highly relevant: can the sharp fall in homicide in Sao Paulo be attributed causally to a change in public policy. The research method (the synthetic control method) is appropriate, although alternatives could have been considered more systematically.

I have the following issues that could be discussed in the VIVA

- 1) PPC appears a bit like a strawman alternative.
- 2) The total versus the direct effect. Causality is a tricky concept and it is nice to see a reference to Pearl. A general problem with the type of evaluation that is being done here is that we cannot know which of the various components of the policy package is responsible. The PPC is taken to be a mediating factor, it would be clearer to argue that it was a consequence of the policy change. Question what does it mean to say that we have found a total causal effect.
- 3) The donor pool is all provinces. Was Sao Paulo the only state with a change in policy? If not, can that be used to isolate individual components of the policy package. Could there be spatial spill-overs? A map would be useful.
- 4) Figure 2.2: it looks like the control group breaks a year early and that something happens in 2002. What?
- 5) One important part of the policy was to imprison lots of young people. They are presumably still behind bars? What will happen when they are let out? Short term versus long term effect of the policy could be very different.
- 6) The chapter does not discuss the wider implications of the study. What can the study tell us about law enforcement efforts and crime in general? Is it specific to Sao Paulo?
- 7) More could be done with the estimates. What about a Cost-Benefit analysis of the policy?

### Chapter 3 (The animal game)

This chapter presents an "Austrian analysis" of a popular illegal Brazilian game. With reference to information economics, the theory of club goods and the political economy of clientelistic relationships, it tries to explain how the game has sustained itself for a very long time with relatively low levels of violence outside the law.

The context is interesting and the explanations appear plausible. The internal organization of the market is well explained on the whole but deeper explanations for some of the parts could bolster the argument (e.g., page 59, why is the insurance premium not fair (I suppose it is related to the market structure, but this could be explained); page 57 why do the booking agents discount the future more than their financiers (is it a wealth argument?)). The political economy of capture via the Sambo schools and local elections is illuminating but the one thing that struck me is why do the federal government not legalise the game and tax it? Local politicians may be captured but what about national politicians?



## Preliminary Examiners Report

Chapter 4 (State-sponsored violence).

The underlying research questions of the chapter are: what are the correlates of government organized mass killings of civilians and which factors can predict such episodes. The contribution is to undertake an extreme bounds analysis (EBA) to determine which of the many variables suggested in the literature are really robustly correlated with measures of mass killings and then to use the machine learning algorithm call the “random tree” to study the question of predictive power. Broadly the analysis confirms what is known from the literature, but with some new insights. The EBA method has become popular for this type of study and a study in the context of mass killings is of value. I have a number of issues that could be discussed in the VIVA

- 1) The chapter concerns two things: correlates and prediction. While the EBA is informative about correlates, I am not convinced that prediction models based on yearly aggregates are very helpful. The frontier in this type of research is to use machine learning methods on a much broader set of observables (e.g., words in the in the news media, see Mueller, H., C. Rauh 2018. Reading between the lines: Prediction of political violence using newspaper text, *American Political Science Review*, 112(2): 358-375.
- 2) I would like to probe what can be learned by the EBA analysis and now it relates or not to the type of estimations done in chapter 2 which were aimed a causal inference. Why do we care which variables correlate with something?
- 3) How is the outcome variable specified and coded? Why not use a Baysian approach? One reason for using the method is that there are too few observations, but that is not the case here. General to specific estimation could work or not?

Overall, I think that chapter 2 is strong and with revisions could be published in a good journal, chapter 4 is solid but still publishable. Chapter 3 I found interesting to read but I find it hard to judge its scholarly quality.