

Author's Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0095-0696(16)30537-X
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jeem.2017.02.006>
Reference: YJEEM2008

To appear in: *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*

Received date: 16 December 2016
Accepted date: 20 February 2017

Cite this article as: Juan Moreno-Cruz and M. Scott Taylor, An energy-centric theory of agglomeration, *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jeem.2017.02.006>

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An Energy-centric Theory of Agglomeration

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February 22, 2017

Abstract

This paper sets out a simple spatial model of energy exploitation to ask how the location and productivity of energy resources affects the distribution of economic activity across geographic space. By combining elements from energy economics and economic geography we link the productivity of energy resources to the incentives for economic activity to agglomerate. We find a novel scaling law links the productivity of energy resources to population sizes, while rivers and roads effectively magnify productivity. We show how our theory's predictions concerning a single core, aggregate to predictions over regional landscapes and city size distributions at the country level.

Keywords: Energy, Geography, Agglomeration, Economic History

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