Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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“Spectres of Development: Corrupted Dreams of a Chronically
Emerging a Latin American Giant”

Department of Political Science

Monday, July 6, 2015
9:00 A.M.
David Turpin Building
Room A144

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. R.B.J. Walker, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Warren Magnusson, Department of Political Science, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Paulo Esteves, Institute of International Relations, PUC-Rio (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Matt Davies, Department of Geography, New Castle University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Sudhir Nair, School of Business, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Latin America has been envisioned, time and again, as home to the semi-civilized. Or so (post)colonial imaginaries continue to impress upon us in developmental renderings of a New World that has yet to take off. Neither backward (in the ways of a ‘dark continent’) or advanced (as guaranteed by the status of a ‘first world’), its giants are, at best, chronically emerging. This in-between position is acutely exemplified by the Brazilian dilemma of an interminable modernization, responsibilized for curing all of our ills. The most wide-ranging projects of development are mobilized within this context, but the closer that we get to their distinct materializations, the more that they appear to us as mirages of what ought to be rather than what is, measured against the incorruptible standards of a modernity realized somewhere ‘out there’. In this study, I look to everyday dynamics in Brazil’s aspiring world-city, Rio de Janeiro, that compose the fields and subjects on which development projects operate, in turn revealing and obscuring successes, failures, and ultimately, assorted desires and expectations that (mis)lead a politics of transformation in the peripheries of the modern world. In Part III, I elaborate this history of the present as a way to reorient such grand narratives of arrested development, corruption, and other ‘third world’ problems, by drawing on a range of sites of sociability that nurture particular kinds of relations between (dis)obedient subjects and their governing institutions. To this end, I reconceive the terms of debate for thinking about places of an incomplete or corrupted modernity, in Part II, where I largely reframe the problems that a developmental ethos appropriates for itself, which situates the third world as the constitutive outside of idealized ways of living. By investigating the predominant developmental archetypes of the last century of Brazil’s promised take-offs, in Part I, I set up the pathways to decondition and recondition how we think about the limits and possibilities of a peripheral politics of transformation. In these ways, conclude that the standards of political judgement that follow from such idealized ways of living neutralize contentions and negotiations over how we want to live, here and now, making way for confused desires, expectations, and responsibilities more in line with (inter)nationalist paradigms and prescriptions than the politics of everyday life in out of the way places.