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

of

WILLIAM JESSE BALTUTIS

M.Sc. (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2009)
B.Soc.Sc. (University of Ottawa, 2007)

“Power, porous borders and polycentricity:
The changing nature of transboundary water governance”

Department of Geography

Monday, April 30, 2018
9:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B007

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Michele-Lee Moore, Department of Geography, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Stephen Tyler, Department of Geography, UVic (Member)
Dr. Michael Webb, Department of Political Science, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Emma Norman, Native Environmental Science, Northwest Indian College

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Ricardo Flores, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic

Dr. Stephen V. Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The challenges facing resource management, including transboundary river basins, have become increasingly complex, requiring more holistic readings of governance processes that encompass a range of formal and informal collaborations between diverse actors. Innovation and transformative governance changes hold potential for addressing the increased complexity and multi-scaled nature of the challenges facing the world’s shared rivers. However, significant research gaps exist around this application in practice. This dissertation asks the following questions: Is governance of transboundary waters changing to integrate a more diverse set of actors beyond centralized governments? If so, what is the role of non-central state actors in contributing to innovations and transformative changes to transboundary water governance processes? In working towards answering these questions, the study explores the case of the Columbia River Treaty (North America) and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (Southern Africa). This study has the following objectives: First, to determine the type of power that non-central state actors mobilize to engage in transboundary water governance processes, and assess if the power these actors mobilize is contributing to changes in governance. Second, to conceptualize the ongoing bordering processes for transboundary water governance, and evaluate whether non-central state actors are shaping these processes. And, third, to identify which non-central state actors are involved in transboundary water governance, and examine whether and how these governance systems are becoming more polycentric. This dissertation is composed of five chapters, three of which have been prepared as standalone articles for submission to academic journals. Broadly, the dissertation findings suggest that changes to governance of transboundary waters, away from state-centric processes, may be emerging in some areas, such as the ability of non-central state actors to exercise and mobilize different forms of power to shape water governance processes. Findings illustrate that a clear distinction between international and national processes is no longer sufficient to address transboundary water governance challenges and issues. However, these insights also highlight that centralized government authority for transboundary waters remains, and evidence of the emergence of polycentric governance systems at the international scale is limited.