Notice of the Final Oral Examination 
for the Degree of Master of Arts 
of

JUSTIN FRITZ

BA (University of Victoria, 2012)

“The SWELSWÁLET of the WSÁNEĆ Nation: 
Narratives of a ‘Nation (Re)Building Process’ ”

Department of Anthropology

Wednesday, December 6, 2017
10:00 A.M.
Cornett Building
Room A319

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Brian Thom, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Lisa Mitchell, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Nicholas Claxton, Department of Indigenous Education, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Amb. Derek Fraser, Department of Political Science, UVic

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

In this Master’s thesis, I document my experience working with members of the WSÁNEĆ Nation in their efforts to revitalize the reef net fishery. As part of this research project, I interviewed WSÁNEĆ community members, and I created a digital map of reef net fishing locations (SWELSWÁLET). In each of these interviews, different WSÁNEĆ community members chose to frame reef net fishing differently, and they highlighted specific and unique “alternative political approaches” toward WSÁNEĆ cultural resurgence (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59). Despite these differences, each WSÁNEĆ community member that I interviewed believed that reef net fishing is something that “needs to be shared” (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). In Chapter 1, I explore the variations in what specific WSÁNEĆ community members want shared. In Chapters 2 and 3, however, I examine the delicate cultural, political, and legal contexts that have made sharing a complicated process. In Chapter 2, I analyze how the BC Treaty Process (BCTP) has exacerbated conflicts among First Nations in British Columbia. Further, I discuss the impact that these conflicts have had on how the WSÁNEĆ Nation shares information with their intranational and international neighbours. In Chapter 3, I explore how my misaligned expectations of knowledge sharing in collaborative community-based research—as a white settler man—clashed with “the values and beliefs, practices and customs of [the WSÁNEĆ Nation]” (L. Smith 2012:15-16; Lassiter 2005). I also make recommendations for how settler researchers in the future should proceed with research projects in these contexts.