



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

WILLIAM KUJALA

BA (University of Alberta, 2014)

“Origins and Openings: Modernity, Time, and Finitude in Hobbes’s Political Science”

Department of Political Science

Thursday, August 30, 2016

10:00AM

David Turpin Building

Room A357

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Robert Walker, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Warren Magnusson, Department of Political Science, UVic (Member)

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Dr. Sara Beam, Department of History, UVic

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Dr. Gary Kuchar, Department of English, UVic

Abstract

This thesis examines the politics of foundations in modern political thought through a reading and immanent critique of Hobbes's *Leviathan*. I argue that his thought exemplifies a specifically modern problem of foundations insofar as he must establish political and scientific foundations on the basis of precisely the impossibility of foundation. Hobbes's account of political founding and the establishment of scientific foundations is first and foremost a response to a condition of finitude in which foundations are no longer given or available but nevertheless demanded. While it appears that Hobbes describes the finitude of 'Man' and natural bodies and derives his political theory from these, in fact for Hobbes these no longer provide given foundations for political thought, but must themselves be posited in acts of political and epistemological projection. Hobbes's politics of foundations therefore demands that we fabricate political and scientific foundations for ourselves and act as if they are not incalculable postulations but calculable necessities. I call this the problem of projection, in which political knowledge is possible only because we make it and posit it ourselves. Through a reading of the role of the metaphor of making in Hobbes's account of political origins and sovereignty, I argue that this reading of Hobbes's politics of origins as the institution of foundations in the face of the impossibility of foundation exposes finitude as a groundlessness to which there is no necessary political response. It does not necessarily demand the production of foundations through the institution of sovereignty. Hobbes's *Leviathan* therefore provides a site in which we might begin to ask more precise empirical and theoretical questions about the transformative possibilities in the modern politics of foundations.