



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

DELACEY TEDESCO

MA (University of Victoria, 2006)

BA (University of Victoria, 2000)

**“Urbanization as Aporia, Kelowna as Hiatus: Geographical Imaginaries and
Political Limits of an Urban World”**

Department of Political Science

Friday, January 15, 2016

12:00PM

David Turpin Building

Room A136

Supervisory Committee:

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

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

Dr. Evelyn Cobley, Department of English, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Roger Keil, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Alona Fyshe, Department of Computer Science, UVic

Abstract

My dissertation questions contemporary accounts of a transition from modern to global urbanization, as embedded in urban geography literature and in popular debates, policies, and urban planning practices in Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada. The dominant transition narrative argues that there has been a shift from forms of modern urbanization (localized, state-based transitions from rural to urban) to emergent and uncertain forms of global, even planetary, urbanization: that we live, for the first time in human history, in an urban world. These accounts claim, ultimately, that the spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices or experiences of urbanization have changed irrevocably, and that politics is changing with it. In other words, they offer what I call transition metanarratives of the spatiotemporality, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology of both urbanization and politics. Despite these claims of radical transformations in urbanization and politics, the geographic and political imaginaries in these accounts rely on boundary practices that invoke distinctively modern arrangements. The patterns of progress and return that these boundary practices generate are characteristic of the aporia. An aporia is a line that, in the process of being drawn, simultaneously constitute entities, categories, or concepts as mutually incompatible and jointly necessary (Derrida 1993). These entities can take the form of a traditional binary (rural/urban; nature/culture; local/global; whiteness/other), or of a presence and its limit (this body/that body; community/lack of community), or of what might be called the boundaries of authorization (spacetime, ontology, epistemology, phenomenology). In all cases, aporetic boundaries create inherently unstable relations that Foucault (2002: 371) characterizes as the “hiatus between the ‘and,’” the spatial gap and temporal pause within the dynamic of determination and redetermination. The instability of the aporetic hiatus generates a desire for sovereign security, even as it ensures that sovereignty is an impossible dream. My dissertation interprets development proposals and community plans in Kelowna as expressions of these patterns of aporetic boundary generation, degeneration, and regeneration. In the midst of this encounter with seemingly over-determined limits, the aporetic hiatus offers a productive site of under-determination, where the drive for the sovereign capacity to decide and determine is held, temporarily at least, in abeyance. I use local aesthetic productions – the ‘revitalization’ of the downtown main street; an artist’s residency/installation piece – to engage the hiatus as a site where the vulnerability of aporetic boundaries can be experienced not as threat but as possibility. Rather than a determinative politics of the alternative, the transition, or the escape, which reproduces dominant modern geographical and political boundaries as authoritative and inescapable, this aporetic hiatus opens modes of engaging with the unstable boundaries of politics, without the panicked return to sovereign decision making.