



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

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

of

ROB DUMONT

**“Dreaming of Empire:
German Imperialism, The Use of Othering and the Evolution of the
Nazis’ Ideological Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler”**

Department of History

Thursday, January 9, 2020
11:30 A.M.
Cornett Building
Room A132

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Oliver Schmidtke, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Kristin Semmens, Department of History, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Elena Pnevmonidou, Department of Germanic & Slavic Studies, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Jennifer Thom, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany engaged in an extremely aggressive form of ideologically based conquest throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Based on the imperial doctrine established in *Mein Kampf*, this “ideological imperialism” sought to ensure that the German nation state had the resources needed to guarantee a “freedom of existence.” As a result, ideological imperialism became a potent mix of nationalism, a desire for empire and a rigid form of biological racism. Examining the origins of ideological imperialism has proven to be a difficult task for historians due to the rapid shift of German imperialism away from its traditional roots. Therefore, this thesis seeks to challenge the argument that German colonialism in Africa and the military campaigns against the Nama and Herero directly led to the development of Nazi imperialism in the 1930s. It seeks to address this problem by exploring the evolution of German imperialism as a *long durée* in order to place the rise of the Nazis’ ideological imperialism within the context of the wider German cultural understanding of identity, imperialism and race.

To accomplish this task, this thesis traces how the use of othering influenced key events during the Bismarckian, Wilhelmine, Weimar and Nazi periods and how they contributed to the development of the Nazi’s ideological imperialism. These events include the unification of Germany through the formation of a Prussian empire in Central Europe, the formation of German identity during the 1866 war with Austria and the *KulturKampf* as well as the creation of the German colonial empire in Asia and Africa. Other topics explored include the changing relationship between Russia and Germany as well as the First World War and the rise of Nazism and ideological imperialism in the 1920s and 1930s.