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

of

DEXTER ROBSON

BASc (Quest University Canada, 2017)

“Evaluating the potential of cybercartography in facilitating Indigenous self-determination: a First Nations case study on Vancouver Island”

Department of Geography

Thursday, April 16, 2020
2:00 P.M.
Conducted Remotely

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Christopher Bone, Department of Geography, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Crystal Tremblay, Department of Geography, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Brian Thom, Department of Anthropology, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Charles Perin, Department of Computer Science, UVic

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

Since the arrival of settlers in the 16th century, the Canadian Government has dispossessed First Nations people of their land and culture through a history of colonialism. This has led to over a century of contentious relationships between First Nations and the Canadian Government in which First Nations have often struggled with the revitalization and reclamation of their culture and land due to oppressive systemic structures. Cartography has been one approach, among many, adopted by First Nations to facilitate self-determination in recent decades. However, the role of cartography has been one focused on western technocratic approaches of drawing territorial boundaries as part of the land claims process. Such approaches may assist First Nations in documenting land use and negotiating territorial rights and as such move them towards self-determination. Conventional western cartography is inherently incapable of representing the rich spatial nature of First Nations' sense of cultural place. More recently, cybercartography has emerged due to technological advances in software and web-based publishing that has the potential to encapsulate First Nations' oral history and culture by providing digital multimedia elements (i.e. audio, imagery, and video) within a digital spatial context. The use of cybercartography in this manner is quickly increasing over time, but research is lacking in understanding how new representations of First Nations history and culture through cybercartographic frameworks explicitly facilitate, or prohibit, First Nations ability to attain self-determination. To address this gap, this study evaluates the ways in which contemporary cybercartographic technologies may facilitate the process of self-determination through an application development and interview process with a local First Nation on Vancouver Island, BC. The research process throughout the project are evaluated using the Indigenous principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) and uses this as a framework to understand how the experiences of the Nation relate to the broader narrative of self-determination. The results of this study suggest that using a community-engaged approach to cybercartography facilitates community-specific requirements of self-determination, mainly because community engagement can lead to the development of tools that match community objectives and needs. Furthermore, this study demonstrated that the OCAP principles have the potential to be used in future studies for evaluating the efficacy of technologies that are intended to facilitate self-determination in First Nation communities.