



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

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

of

**ALEXANDRE CHARRON**

BA (University of Ottawa, 2006)

**“The Economic Theories of Rosa Luxemburg and Michal Kalecki:  
Continuity or Rupture?”**

Interdisciplinary Studies

Wednesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
10:00 a.m.  
Clearihue Building  
Room B021

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. William Carroll, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)  
Dr. Jamie Lawson, Department of Political Science, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:

Prof. Sandra Rein, Department of Political Science, University of Alberta

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Darlene Clover, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

From the time of its first publication, Rosa Luxemburg's main economic work, *The Accumulation of Capital*, was heavily criticized. This set a precedent towards the dismissal of her economic theory which has continued almost to the present day. Very recently, however, a stream of literature favourable to Luxemburg has begun to emerge. Commentators in this group have attempted to re-evaluate Luxemburg's contribution to Marxian economic theory by, among other approaches, attempting to show her as an important precursor to Michal Kalecki. This work operates within this framework. It attempts to further specify the nature of the theoretical relationship between Luxemburg and Kalecki by closely examining and comparing the economic theories of the two thinkers. What such a study reveals, however, is that this relationship is better defined as a one of rupture rather than of continuity. While Kalecki seems to accept the basic structure of Luxemburg's argument, he modifies and qualifies it in so many respects as to make it almost unrecognizable. But such a divergence between the theories is hardly surprising if we view them in their proper historical contexts. The differing empirical, personal and political backgrounds from which the theories emerged is what would have led to the development of the divergent elements within them. Such substantial differences in the contexts which gave rise to the respective theories underscore the ill-advised nature of the attempt to draw too strong a link between the economic thought of Luxemburg and Kalecki.