



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

NICOL MACDONALD

MA (York University, 1993)
BA (Hons) (McMaster University, 1986)

**“Canada’s Oceans Act:
A narrative analysis of Canada’s ocean policy”**

School of Public Administration

Monday, October 22, 2018
10:00 A.M.

Closed to the Public
on compassionate grounds

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Lynne Siemens, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Kimberly Speers, School of Public Administration, UVic (Member)
Dr. Deborah Curran, Faculty of Law & School of Environmental Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Adam Lajeunesse, Mulroney Institute of Government, St. Francis Xavier University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Merwan Engineer, Department of Economics, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Canada's Oceans Act, enacted in 1997, was intended to be the primary policy framework through which the Government of Canada would coordinate and integrate the management of ocean territory within its jurisdiction. More than 20 years following its passage, this research undertook a narrative analysis of the Oceans Act and its key implementing activities, specifically the Oceans Strategy in 2002 and the Ocean Plan in 2005, to address the questions of what the framing policy narrative of the Act was, and did it persist through these primary implementation activities. In addition, given that the amendment of the Act is now under review by the Parliament of Canada, this research also addressed the question of whether the framing policy narrative was relevant to the current public expectation regarding ocean management. To answer this question, a narrative analysis was conducted of the public statements made during the consultation process undertaken by the Joint Review Panel for the Northern Gateway Project. The statements served as a proxy for the public expectations of ocean management, as ocean management was a primary narrative theme throughout the consultations. The results of the narrative analysis of the public consultation were then compared with the results of the narrative analysis of the framing policy narrative. The primary conclusions drawn from this research activity were that the framing policy narrative did persist through the implementation period of 1997-2006, but the progress was uneven, punctuated by periods of expansion under the Strategy and retraction under the Plan. In addition, the framing policy narrative was found to be relevant, but not sufficient to meet the current day public expectations around ocean management. Interestingly it was the 2002 Strategy that articulated a narrative around ocean use that came closest to meeting the 2012 public expectations. The research revealed as well that the recognition of Indigenous values in ocean management had modest expression in the official policy narrative from 1996 to 2006 but the 2012 public narrative showed that there was a high degree of correlation between traditional Indigenous values and the public expressions of expectation around ocean use. Both of these latter findings would be valuable for the current policy activity underway within the federal government to improve the policy and programs of ocean management. Finally, this dissertation illustrated the contribution that narrative analysis can provide to the assessment of major projects that often require understanding the complex balance of values involved in making decisions about the use or conservation of the environment.