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

of

CELESTE MORALES

BA (University of British Columbia, 2017)

“Public Policy & Political Parties: A Qualitative Analysis of Homelessness and Poverty Reduction Frameworks in British Columbia”

Department of Sociology

Monday, August 17, 2020
10:00 A.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Garry Gray, Department of Sociology, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:
Dr. Bernie Pauly, School of Nursing, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Xiaodai Dong, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This study employed the Qualitative Narrative Policy Framework (Q-NPF) and content analysis as methodological approaches in order to analyze the differences between the province of British Columbia’s New Democratic Party (NDP) and the British Columbia (BC) Liberal Party’s policy strategies towards the issues of poverty reduction and homelessness in BC. The Q-NPF is a theoretically deductive approach used to analyze narratives in public policy, and its defining purpose is to “empirically understand the role of policy narratives in shaping public policy” (Gray & Jones, 2016, p. 22). Analyzing the policy recommendations and implementations by these political parties revealed how the parties framed poverty and homelessness issues. Three research questions guided this study: (i) Does the characterization of these issues within policy differ between the BC NDP and the BC Liberals, and if so, how? (ii) What narrative strategies did each political party use to promote their policy positions on poverty and homelessness, and how did these differ? (iii) Are there policy-related reasons for the continuation of poverty and homelessness in BC? The results of this study demonstrated that the characterization of poverty and homelessness within policy does indeed differ, which was demonstrated in the narrative strategies of both parties. While the NDP focused on their innovative, ‘landmark’ policies and programs, discredited and criticized past government efforts, and utilized themes of togetherness and community, the Liberal party’s two most dominant narrative strategies consisted of promoting past successes and strengthening economic prosperity. Finally, in regard to the third research question, assumptions were able to be made that pointed towards the notion that there are policy-related reasons for the continuation of poverty and homelessness in BC. However, evidence to sufficiently answer this question was found to be more nuanced and requires further research.