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

of

KATHERINE FAIRLEY

BSc (University of Victoria, 2019)

“Discrimination in the Market for Short Term Rentals: Evidence from Airbnb”

Department of Economics

Monday, June 14, 2020
10:00 A.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Maggie Jones, Department of Economics, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Donna Feir, Department of Economics, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. David Rosé, Department of Economics, Wilfrid University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Caetano Dorea, Department of Civil Engineering, UVic

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

Discrimination against people of colour in the hospitality, labour, and housing markets has been harming people of colour for throughout the history of the United States. Examining the discrepancy in outcomes for marginalized Airbnb host allows me to assess whether even those considered economically successful are harmed by racial and gender bias. Using an Ordinary Least Squares and a Propensity Score Matching approach, I find Airbnb hosts who are Asian or of Hispanic origin face both price and quantity penalties, having nightly prices on average 4% lower and receiving 3 percentage points fewer booked nights in a month than listings managed by white hosts. Black Airbnb hosts face higher nightly prices and a lower quantity of bookings; however, without holding neighbourhood constant, they charge approximately 12% less per night, indicating that Black hosts disproportionately own properties in low-price neighbourhoods. I also observe an intersectional discrimination penalty wherein women of colour face even higher price and quantity penalties.