



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

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

of

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BA (University of Victoria, 1980)

“The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Articulation and Enhancement of Participatory Rights in Environmental Decision-Making as Evidenced in the Process Leading up to and after Miningwatch Canada V. Canada (Fisheries And Oceans), 2010 SCC 2”

School of Public Administration (Dispute Resolution)

Thursday, April 9, 2015

10:00AM

Human & Social Development Building

Room A373

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Kimberly Speers, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Thea Vakil, School of Public Administration, UVic (Member)

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Abstract

At the broader level, this thesis examines the role played by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the methods they use to increase public participation in environmental matters. It does this by investigating the process leading up to and following a Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decision, that of *MiningWatch Canada v. Canada (Fisheries and Oceans)* (2010 SCC 2). Specifically, the strategies and methods used by NGOs in this study and their impact on public participation during and in the aftermath of the decision are examined. Related, the primary research question being explored is: “what is the impact of NGOs on participatory politics as seen in the SCC decision, *MiningWatch Canada v. Canada*”? Other research questions examined in this thesis are: “what role have NGOs had in increasing participation in environmental decision-making”, and: “how do NGOs increase public participation in environmental decision-making?”

Data analysis found that there were three main groups of strategies used by the NGOs. The three main groups of strategies were “Legal”, “Challenge or Inform Government”, and “Creating an Emotional Response in an Audience.” Strategies common to all NGOs in this study were: “Increase Knowledge” by “Networking,” “Working with Communities at a Grass Roots Level” and “Publications and Reports”. The argument this thesis presents is that democracy is a dynamic, ongoing process and given this scenario, there are various strategies that can be used to influence participation in environmental decision-making. Specifically, groups of citizens can form in response to an issue, raise public awareness and encourage legislation and policy changes in the search for social progress; in this case, increase public participation in matters involving the environment.