



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

**Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Science**

of

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BTech (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2008)
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**“Applying a health lens to the Environmental Assessment process:
a British Columbia case study of the Ajax mine proposal”**

Department of Geography

Tuesday, December 17, 2019
10:30 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Michael Hayes, Department of Geography, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Janis Shandro, Department of Geography, UVic (Member)

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Abstract

This thesis presents a case study of an open pit mine proposal in Kamloops, BC. During an integrated Environmental (Impact) Assessment (EA) process mandated by the Provincial and Federal governments, stakeholders addressed the mine's environmental, social, heritage, economic, and health-related impacts. At the end of a 7-year process, the application was denied. My research sought to examine how health was conceptualized in the EA, and, specifically, had the mine been approved, how would the permit conditions have protected the public from adverse health effects. To that end, I conducted a review of health-related documents incorporated in the EA and studied the results through a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) lens based on guidance from the International Finance Corporation (IFC). As well as reviewing and analyzing the EA documents, I conducted interviews with participants in and outside the formal stakeholder group, as prescribed by the IFC HIA Guidance. Specifically, my analysis was based on the scoping phase of the assessment, and the baseline health profile that was included, using this internationally recognized HIA framework. My results show that the social determinants of health were not factored into the EA as per HIA best practice. Many in the formal stakeholder group, and outside of it, felt that institutional barriers prevented inclusion of the social determinants of health in the assessment. That finding raises questions about the reality of EA processes to protect public health.