The benefits trickled up: The political geography of water provision in Paris, Ontario, 1882-1924

John Solomon Hagopian, Wilfrid Laurier University

Document Type
Thesis

Degree Name
Master of Arts (MA)

Department
Geography & Environmental Studies

Faculty/School
Faculty of Arts

First Advisor
Robert Sharpe

Advisor Role
Thesis Supervisor

Abstract
The social and political factors which affected nineteenth-century waterworks development have been relatively well researched in the United States. The few Canadian studies have found inequities in the systems of water provision. Using Paris, Ontario as a case study, an attempt is made to fill this research gap in Canada. The research centres on the identification of the social classes which paid for the Paris waterworks and which received the benefits. The spatial distribution of these social classes is determined and then compared to the spatial pattern of waterworks development. A similar comparison is done between the functional zonation of the town and the spatial pattern of waterworks in order to test an hypothesized emphasis on the needs of the owners of the means of production. The correlations found are explained in the course of an examination of nineteenth-century laws concerning council membership and municipal voting. The legislative bias in favour of the owners of capital is anticipated by both Marxism and critical theory. The primary data source used were the local newspapers of the day, which in many instances propagated much of the prodevelopment misinformation. In addition to the analysis of events which occurred after the completion of the waterworks system, there is a detailed examination of the statements and actions of the proponents and opponents of the system before the undertaking was authorized by council and by the electors. The proponents are prominent industrialists and merchants whose coordinated development efforts are generally well-received by municipal politicians and newspaper editors. Support is thus found for Habermas’ theories concerning the legitimizing role of the state, and the systematic distortion of communication which is characteristic of capitalism.

Recommended Citation
https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/369

Convocation Year
1992

Convocation Season
Fall
Making Up Their Own Limits. From ancient times through the 1950s, countries established the limits of their jurisdiction at sea on their own. While most countries established a distance of three nautical miles, the borders varied between three and 12 nm. These territorial waters are considered part of a country's jurisdiction, subject to all of the laws of the land of that country. The UNCLOS definition is that an island must remain above the water line during high water and may not just be rocks, and must also be habitable for humans. There's still much to be hammered out regarding the political geography of the oceans but it seems that countries are following the recommendations of the 1982 treaty, which should limit most arguments over control of the sea. Paris, Ontario was chosen as the site of this case study because, as a small town, it affords an opportunity to do a comprehensive study into the early experience of waterworks development of a whole community. Published studies have focused on larger urban areas. Paris was among the first towns in Ontario to construct a municipally-financed waterworks system. (1) Most of the municipalities which built a system before 1882-84 when Paris did were cities. (2). Most North American studies have shown that waterworks systems were developed not for reasons of public health, but rather for reasons of