

Provincial dominance: the unique case of Winnipeg

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Abstract: This paper identifies Winnipeg as a unique city within the Canadian urban system. While it is not among the largest cities in Canada, it dominates the province of Manitoba in a way that other capital cities and large cities do not. Statistical evidence for this domination is presented followed by historical reasons for its development. The economic and political effects on Manitoba are discussed. The city should not be discounted because of its decline in position at the national scale.

Introduction

When one thinks of the most powerful cities in Canada, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver quickly come to mind (McCann and Gunn 1998). At the provincial scale however, there is another city that appears to have more influence over its province than any other Canadian city. That city is Winnipeg. This paper will present evidence from the 2001 Census to support this claim. Four historical explanations for this situation will be argued. A review of provincial-municipal relationships across Canada will demonstrate the unique position of Winnipeg within Manitoba. The political structure of the province will further explain a number of actions taken by the provincial government to increase the economic and social importance of Winnipeg. Collectively, these factors give Winnipeg a unique position among Canadian cities.

Much has been written about urban systems and the development of urban hierarchies. Stutz and Warf (2005) review two theories about the development of urban hierarchies. The central place model proposes that urban growth is related to the provision of services to a surrounding urban region. The provision of a wider variety of services leads to an increase in city size. This was demonstrated in the American Midwest by Borchert and Adams (1963), who found an eight level hierarchy of urban

places. The economic base theory attributes city growth to economic activities beyond the urban region. The provision of a larger number of basic activities leads to larger city size. Particularly, cities that provide only primary and secondary economic activities are less likely to grow than those providing quaternary and quinary activities. McCann and Simmons (2000) note a division in the Canadian urban system in which the largest cities are in the heartland and contain most of the quinary and quaternary service industries. Smaller cities are in the hinterland and depend on primary, secondary or tertiary industries, which have lower average incomes and therefore generate smaller multiplier effects within the local economy. Vance (1970) and Burghardt (1971) identified the importance to city growth of a gateway position between a resource area and a market area. The gateway city has a basic function linking its region to the rest of the world and also supports the development of central places in its hinterland.

Ziph (1949) found a statistical relationship between city sizes and their rank in the urban hierarchy. Listing the cities in order largest to smallest and dividing the population of the largest city by the rank of the city in question provides an estimate to the size of that city. Thus if the largest city has a population of 1 million, the second city should be 500,000, the fourth city 250,000 and so forth. An alternative model is that of the primate city. Here, the largest city is at least five times larger than the second largest city and the remaining cities are all rather small, thus a hierarchical structure does not exist.

McCann and Simmons (2002) note that Canada has a weak urban system, with 36 per cent of all its cities in Ontario and Quebec. The relationship to the rank-size rule is also weak. An application of this model to the 25 largest cities in the Canadian urban system finds only eight cities fall within two per cent of the predicted populations. Montreal is 46 per cent larger than expected and Vancouver is 29 per cent larger than expected. Edmonton, Winnipeg and Hamilton are all over 15 per cent larger than predicted. Conversely, Ottawa, Kitchener and Saskatoon are over nine per cent smaller than expected and all of the eight smallest cities are between 24 per cent and 35 per cent smaller than predicted. There are probably a number of factors at work here including Montreal's cultural differences, Vancouver's distance from the centre of the country, and a general migration of people from smaller cities to larger cities (Bourne 2002).

At the provincial level, Ontario with eleven cities over 75,000 population linked to Toronto has the most complete urban system. Quebec has five cities over 75,000 linked to Montreal. Alberta and Saskatchewan both have two large cities and no medium sized cities in the 75-150,000 range. British Columbia has an urban system in the southwest corner of the

province based on Vancouver and Victoria. The Maritimes have a weak urban system. Moncton is the geographical centre for the four Maritime cities: Saint John, Fredericton, Halifax and Charlottetown, but Halifax is the largest city and Charlottetown is smaller than 75,000 (Wallace 2002). Primate cities exist in four provinces: British Columbia, Quebec, Newfoundland and Manitoba. Manitoba has only four urban places of consequence: Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and Portage la Prairie. Thompson, as a mining community, is linked to external markets rather than to the other three cities, which have agriculture-based economies (McCann and Simmons 2002). It is this province that will be explored in more detail below.

Statistical Arguments for Dominance

The following analysis examines 21 cities across Canada. These cities represent the two largest cities in each province and the three largest in New Brunswick. In five of Canada's provinces the largest city is also the capital city, thus the capital city and the second largest city were selected in each of these provinces. In four other provinces there is one city larger than the capital. Thus, the largest city and the capital were chosen. New Brunswick has two cities larger than the capital, thus three cities were chosen (Table 1).

The Census defines a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) as a core urban area with a population of over 100,000, together with adjacent urban and rural areas, which have high degrees of economic and social integration with the core. A Census Agglomeration (CA) identifies one or more adjacent urban places with a population over 50,000. This group of 21 cities includes Canada's eight largest CMAs, all of the other CMAs outside of Ontario and Quebec, and seven CAs. that are significant provincially.

The 2001 Census provides statistics that can be used to measure the relative political power of large cities within their provinces. First, the Census allows the calculation of city population versus total provincial population. Although the provincial governments often provide rural areas with more seats per capita, Lightbody (1995) notes that a large city will still have a larger number of representatives in the legislature and as such more political power. Secondly, the distribution of the remainder of the province's population, and therefore of seats, is also important. A primate city has a larger difference in population between itself and the second largest city and thus has a greater plurality and greater political power. In provinces with two large cities, neither will have as large a plurality either within the province or against the other city (Table 1).

Table 1: Major Provincial cities in Canada.

PROV.	CITY	STATUS		POPULATION CMA/CA	% of PROV. POPULATION	Pop. LARGEST CITY/2 ND CITY
BC	Vancouver	CMA	largest city	2,048,800	50.8	6.4
	Victoria	CMA	capital	317,500	8.0	
AB	Calgary	CMA	largest city	953,000	32.0	1.1
	Edmonton	CMA	capital	944,200	31.5	
SK	Saskatoon	CMA	largest city	232,600	23.1	1.2
	Regina	CMA	capital	200,500	19.7	
MB	Winnipeg	CMA	capital	681,100	60.0	16.1
	Brandon	CA	2 nd city	42,242	3.7	
ON	Toronto	CMA	capital	4,751,400	41.0	4.4
	Ottawa	CMA	2 nd city	1,081,000	9.3	
QC	Montreal	CMA	largest city	3,480,300	47.3	6.4
	Quebec	CMA	capital	689,700	9.4	
NB	Saint John	CMA	largest city	127,700	16.9	1.4
	Moncton	CA	2 nd city	90,359	12.0	
	Fredericton	CA	capital	54,068	7.2	
PEI	Charlottetown	CA	capital	38,114	43.1	3.6
	Summerside	CA	2 nd city	14,654		
NS	Halifax	CMA	capital	356,000	39.6	3.4
	Cape Breton	CA	2 nd city	105,968	11.4	
NF	St. John	CMA	capital	175,100	33.7	4.2
	Corner Brook	CA	2 nd city	42,000	7.5	

The 2001 Census shows that British Columbia and Quebec have striking similarities. The largest cities, Vancouver and Montreal, contain about half of the provincial population, and their capital cities are about six times smaller than the largest city (Table 1). Among provincial capitals, Victoria and Quebec rank eighth and ninth in terms of proportion of their provincial populations.

Saskatchewan and Alberta both have two cities of approximately equal size, with the capital being the smaller of the two in each case. This pattern reduces the percentage of the provincial population in both the largest city and the capital. New Brunswick is the only province with two cities larger than the capital. Saint John and Moncton are almost equal in size and Fredericton is just 2.3 times smaller than Saint John. Among the provinces, New Brunswick has the lowest percentage of the provincial population in the largest city, and among capital cities, Fredericton has the lowest percentage of provincial population.

Not surprisingly, the capital cities that are also largest cities in their province all have a larger proportion of the provincial population than the capitals that are not largest cities. All of the capital cities that are largest cities also have a larger proportion of the provincial population than do Saint John, Saskatoon or Calgary. Only Montreal and Vancouver surpass four of the capitals that are also largest cities. Winnipeg has the largest proportion of the provincial population of any city in Canada.

A comparison of statistical dominance of the largest city in the province over the second largest city shows that Alberta, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have the smallest differences. St. John's is slightly more dominant than Vancouver and Montreal, but again, Winnipeg is over 16 times larger than Brandon, a lead that is 2.4 times greater than St. John's over Corner Brook. Further, unlike Vancouver and Montreal, Winnipeg has the added advantage of being the capital city.

The above calculations are based on CMA and CA statistics. Sancton (1994) states that the standard belief in Canada has been that it is best for both economic development and the provision of public services, if the CMA is a single municipal unit. The city's power within the provincial legislature should also be strengthened with a single municipal unit. The continuous growth of urban areas and the more static placement of municipal boundaries make a 100 per cent fit unlikely. In Canada there exists a considerable range in values (Table 2).

In eastern Canada, five of the nine capital cities and largest cities contain between 50 and 60 per cent of their CMA or CA populations. Moncton, the lowest, has been intentionally divided into French and English municipalities by the province (Sancton 1994). High values for Halifax and Cape Breton (Glace Bay/Sydney) reflect newly created boundaries for these cities. The CAs of Summerside and Corner Brook are the two smallest cities in this study and their high values may reflect that they are too small to suffer from any significant urban sprawl.

In Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia there are two-tier governments in the major cities, except Toronto. The city of Ottawa has the highest proportion of its CMA population among two-tier cities, but it has the problem of a CMA divided between two provinces. The unified Metropolitan Toronto has barely half of its CMA population. The cities of Montreal and Quebec have even lower values. Vancouver and Victoria also suffer from being a small part of their respective CMAs within a system that has weak upper tiers compared to Ontario and Quebec (Wallace 2002).

The cities of western Canada all have high values. In Alberta and Saskatchewan cities have been able to expand by amalgamation or annexation of neighbouring municipalities. When the one-tier Unicity of

Table 2: *City population as a percentage of CMA/CA.*

Census Agglomerations		Regional Governments		One-Tier Cities	
Brandon	96.8	Halifax	99.9	Calgary	92.4
Glace Bay	96.9	Ottawa	72.8	Regina	92.4
Summerside	90.5	Toronto	53.0	Winnipeg	92.3
Corner Brook	78.1	Montreal	30.3	Saskatoon	87.1
Fredericton	58.5	Vancouver	27.5	Edmonton	71.0
Charlottetown	5.3	Quebec	24.8	St John's	57.4
Moncton	1.9	Victoria	23.8	Saint John	56.8

Winnipeg was created in 1972 by amalgamating the city and 12 other municipalities, it contained 99.1 per cent of the CMA population. Growth beyond the city limits over the past thirty years and the withdrawal of the municipality of Headingley from Unicity in 1992 has reduced that figure (Sancton 1994). It now stands at 92.3 per cent, which is still third highest among all CMAs. Brandon is the third smallest CA in the study and has not yet expanded significantly beyond a large territorial annexation made in 1972 (Welstead, Everitt and Stadel 1988).

This section has demonstrated that Winnipeg dominates its province by having the largest percentage of the provincial population of any city in Canada, the largest separation between the largest city and the second largest city in Canada, and over 90 per cent of its CMA population within its municipal boundaries.

Further, status may be obtained as the provincial capital, regardless of size. For example, when speaking about the provincial government, the media often refer to it by mentioning the name of the capital city. Winnipeg is such a capital city.

Historical Arguments for Dominance

The findings presented above are clearly the result of historical events; however there is much discussion as to exactly which historical events are of most significance. Four arguments can be presented to explain the early development of cities on the prairies between 1880 and 1920.

First, Simmons and Simmons (1969) argue that the relative size of Canada's cities is related to factors of site and situation. In western Canada,

the prairie grasslands may be viewed as a triangle with the foothills of the Rockies as the base, and the narrow area between Lake Winnipeg and the United States border as the apex. In Alberta and Saskatchewan there is room for two cities in each province, one in the south (Calgary and Regina) and one in the parkland area (Edmonton and Saskatoon). After the arrival of the railways, Calgary and Edmonton acted as gateways through the Rockies. Regina and Saskatoon had large service areas but no gateway function, and thus are smaller.

In Manitoba there is only room for one major city at the gateway between the Canadian Shield and the grasslands. In the days of the fur trade when water transportation was vital, the confluence of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers was the most accessible location in the apex of the prairie triangle. It was chosen for the Red River Settlement in 1812. Later, Winnipeg attracted the railway and by 1891 it had a population of over 25,000 when no other community in the west had reached 4,000 (Artibise 1992). Located between Winnipeg and Regina, Brandon has a limited hinterland and no gateway function, thus it had the least opportunity to grow.

Second, Code (1996) places the most importance on the actions of the federal government. The National Policy promoted the settlement of the west, the building of the railway, and the development of east-west trade with special freight rates that made Winnipeg a wholesale centre. These developments stimulated a wide variety of financial and commercial functions as well (Phillips 1981). Brennan (1981) credits community success directly on the railways. Winnipeg had connections to St. Paul prior to the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). By 1911, Winnipeg was not only a key station on the CPR, but also on the Grand Trunk Railway and the Canadian Northern Railway.

It was generally felt that the CPR would follow a northern route from Winnipeg to Edmonton and through the Yellowhead Pass. The CPR, however, recognized that there was already considerable settlement along this route and therefore that it would be cheaper for them to strike out due west across the empty plains, creating a new line of cities as they went. Later, north-south connections between Calgary and Edmonton, and Regina and Saskatoon would aid in the development of the two sets of twin cities. No similar north-south connections happened in Manitoba.

Third, at the local scale, the decision to move through unsettled territory made it necessary for the CPR to build division points at about 200 kilometre intervals (Phillips 1981). Brandon, Calgary and Swift Current are such points. Speculators were developing communities ahead of the track and the CPR shifted its lines to avoid them. For example, a community was built on the north side of the Assiniboine River just east of Brandon

at the point where the railway was expected to cross the river. Instead, the CPR crossed the river to the east of the community and established Brandon on the south side of the river (Welsted, et al. 1988). Similarly, a community existed on Wascana Creek and the CPR decided to cross the river a few miles to the south, where they established the town of Regina (Brennan 1981).

Fourth, Artibise (1992) attributes the growth of specific cities on the prairies to a growth ideology and boosterism on the part of civic leaders who felt they were in competition with other cities. Phillips (1981) included as important parts of boosterism: claiming city status early, attracting railways, court houses, universities, and other major government functions, and the provision of public services while keeping land taxes low.

While these factors may explain the growth of the five largest cities on the prairies, it does not explain the inability of Brandon to keep up with Winnipeg. Brandon was the second largest city on the prairies until 1906. In 1882 it became the first prairie community, after Winnipeg, to claim city status. It had been founded by the CPR and had attracted the Canadian Northern Railway in 1906 (Welstead et al. 1988). The Brandon Mental Health Centre founded in 1890, had 645 patients by 1910 (Refuiki 1991). Brandon College was founded in 1899 and the city had a courthouse, a municipal water system, ten miles of streetcar tracks, and a municipal airport before WWI (Welstead et al. 1988). Despite all these characteristics, Brandon fell from second place to seventh place by 1916 as new towns in Alberta and Saskatchewan grew faster.

It would appear that all four arguments contributed to urban growth, but community boosterism and railway construction could not overcome some basic elements of site and situation. Winnipeg's gateway function allowed it to dominate Manitoba while Saskatchewan developed twin central place cities and Alberta's central places became gateways through the Rockies to the new port of Vancouver.

Economic Growth of Winnipeg after 1950

The foregoing authors agree that the pattern of prairie settlement was established by 1914. In the decades that followed, economic and political reasons can be identified which account for the differential growth of existing cities. The rapid growth of Calgary and Edmonton can be attributed to increased trade through Vancouver with the opening of the Panama Canal, the development of the oil industry after 1949, and the subsequent rapid rise in oil prices during the 1970s. Diversification into minerals allowed Regina and Saskatoon to grow (Code 1996).

Meanwhile, Winnipeg was losing control of the agricultural economy with the removal of special freight rates, the replacement of the private railways with the Canadian National Railway, the creation of the wheat pools in the 1920s, the Depression and drought of the 1930s and the mechanization of agriculture in the 1940s (Phillips 1981). The loss of wholesale trade to Regina and Saskatoon and to direct mail order from Ontario further hurt Winnipeg during the 1930s. The stagnant agricultural base of Winnipeg caused it to fall from Canada's third largest city in 1921 to seventh place in 1971 (Yeates 1990) and ninth by 2001 (Wallace 2002).

In recent years Winnipeg has grown more rapidly and may again surpass Quebec City. This growth has been due to diversification into aerospace, biotechnology and other industries, and the growth of back office services (Destination Winnipeg 2006). GDP growth has been above provincial and national averages, unemployment has remained low, personal incomes have risen as have housing starts and consumer spending. Airport passenger and cargo traffic have also increased (Destination Winnipeg 2006). An examination of major Canadian cities shows Winnipeg's economy is still dominated by the transportation sector and that communication industries are also important (Wallace 2002).

Brandon has remained dependent on the surrounding agricultural economy and did not prosper from the development of mining and forestry in northern Manitoba (Code 1996). Diversification in Brandon has been limited to new agricultural products such as hogs and potatoes. Tourism and back office jobs have also grown. Simmons and Simmons (1969) note that capital cities tend to grow in good times and bad, while the growth of commercial service centres, such as Brandon, tends to be cyclical. Winnipeg thus continually increased its dominance over Brandon.

Artibise (1990) attributes post 1920 growth patterns to a loss of local control and an increase in provincial control. As the business elite lost control of city councils the importance of the growth ethic declined. Further, the rise in importance to the local economy of national and international firms also decreased local boosterism. The locational strategies of these companies affect local growth but are not based on local concerns. Meanwhile, the provincial governments used conditional grants to direct development. Alberta in particular, used oil revenues to maintain Calgary and Edmonton at roughly the same size.

Code (1996) also notes increased federal government involvement in the west including: equalization payments (1957), the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Agency (1961), the Federal Fund for Rural Economic Development (1965), the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (1969) and the Department of Western Diversification (1987). Recent Federal Infrastructure Grants have continued this history of upper level government intervention in local growth patterns.

Provincial Municipal Structures

Interaction between urban areas and their provincial governments is worthy of further investigation. Each of the provinces has a single ministry to deal with municipalities, although there are some variations. Following a Royal Commission in 1967, the province of New Brunswick dissolved its county system and allowed rural municipalities to revert to unincorporated status. The province took over health, education and welfare services, leaving the municipalities with local services only. Beginning in 1992 the province began to amalgamate communities coterminous with large urban areas (Diamant and Pike 1996). Nova Scotia followed a similar path encouraging the inter-urban sharing of facilities (Tindal and Tindal 1995). The creation of regional governments for the Halifax and the Glace Bay/Sydney areas is the culmination of a process that began with the Halifax-Dartmouth Authority in 1962. Saskatchewan has taken the opposite route. Their 1984 Urban Municipalities Act set the population of an urban area at 100 inhabitants and gives the province more municipal governments per 100,000 population than any other province (Diamant and Pike 1996). The cities of Regina and Saskatoon are eligible for the same grants offered to all other municipalities.

Two provincial governments have decided to divest themselves of most of the costs of municipal government. The Alberta Municipal Act of 1994 consolidated the municipal structure and cut provincial spending on highways and policing. Municipalities were given greater autonomy and authority, allowing them to privatize services if they wished (Diamant and Pike 1996). British Columbia's Municipal Government Act of 2002 gives similar responsibilities and authority to municipalities while reducing provincial grants (British Columbia 2002). In both Alberta and British Columbia, neither capital cities nor the largest cities have special status at the provincial level.

In 1988 the Ontario government created the Office of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This is a group of provincial ministers and local mayors assigned to guide the development of Toronto and the Regions of Halton, Peel, York and Durham. The area of the GTA is slightly larger than the Toronto CMA. Sancton (1994) argues that Metropolitan Toronto is too small a unit but political expediency will prevent further changes to the GTA structure. A similar situation exists in Montreal where a Ministerial Committee for the Development of Grand Montreal was established in 1990. This includes the Montreal Urban Community (the island of Montreal) and the surrounding 13 Regional Municipalities (MRC). Grand Montreal is slightly larger than the Montreal CMA. While both of these structures give some attention to the provinces' largest cities, the city remains only a part of a larger metropolitan area.

Once again, Manitoba is unique. The creation of Unicity in 1971 also resulted in the creation of a Ministry of Urban Affairs with the sole responsibility of looking after Winnipeg and allowing it to avoid various provincial rules and regulations designed for smaller municipalities (Sancton 1994). Brandon, although it is the second largest city, was only eligible for grants from the Ministry of Rural Affairs, most of which were designed for much smaller communities. Brandon has had to resort to reviving local boosterism to deal with its urban problems (Horne 2001). The Ministry of Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Rural Affairs were amalgamated in 1999, however, in 2002, the new City of Winnipeg Act gave the city the powers of a corporation, allowing it to undertake actions without specific provincial legislation instructing it to do so (Romanowski 2002). This should provide it with opportunities not available to other municipalities in the province and therefore allow it to maintain if not increase its primate position. Winnipeg is also the only municipality in the province with full time councilors on its city council. In 2005 Brandon's charter was changed to give it greater power over local planning by disbanding the previous planning area, which was dominated by the surrounding rural municipalities (Brown 2006b).

Provincial Involvement in City Growth

The unique situation provided to Winnipeg by the province and other financial advantages described below, reflect the structure of the Manitoba government. There are 57 seats in the provincial legislature of which 31 are in Winnipeg while Brandon has only two. No other urban area has specific representation. Over the past forty years, the party in power has had between 25 and 33 seats. The current NDP cabinet consists of 16 members with ten from Winnipeg including the Premier and Deputy Premier. Both Brandon members are also in the cabinet.

The economic and social advantages given to Winnipeg over the years have not gone unnoticed by those who live outside of the city. Collectively these complaints are summed up in a general protest that the government, regardless of political affiliation, suffers from "perimeteritis", a reference to the circle highway around the borders of the city. This city-centred view became particularly apparent during the Red River flood of 1996 when the highway was used as a control structure to prevent flooding in the city at the expense of surrounding farmland.

Another significant complaint across the province, frequently picked up by the media, relates to health care. Differential payments to doctors who work in Winnipeg compared to those providing the same services

outside of the city contributes to a shortage of specialists in rural areas and not only causes personal distress for the sick and their families, but also forces rural residents, including those from Brandon, to seek medical attention in Winnipeg (Horne 1999). This travel brings additional money into the city at the expense of municipalities across the province. Brandon's MLAs however, point out that the province did provide \$58 million for the expansion of Brandon's hospital facilities (Brown 2006a).

Further, when the provincial lottery was established, the revenues were assigned to ten arms-length committees for distribution. Six of these organizations operated province wide, but the other four (The Red River Exhibition Association, Le Festival de Voyageur, the Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers Football Team), were Winnipeg based organizations (Horne 1997). This situation provides more cultural and recreational opportunities to city dwellers than to others, and encourages travel into the city. When the province began receiving complaints about this situation, it moved the lottery funds into general revenues so that it could not be so easily traced to the ten committees, which still exist.

Even when the government tries to appease the non-Winnipeg population, it runs into complaints. The former Progressive Conservative government moved some minor offices to rural municipalities claiming this would create jobs outside of Winnipeg. The logic for some of these moves was questioned. The schoolbook depository was moved to Souris, in southwestern Manitoba, even though most of the schools are located in the Winnipeg area. Significant transportation costs have been incurred in order to create six new jobs in Souris.

In 2006 a Brandon city councilor said he would file a complaint with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission against the provincial government because Winnipeg has two casinos, a horse track, and private wine stores and Brandon is not allowed to have the same economic opportunities (Brown 2006a). Further investigation found that in 2002 Brandon was offered a First Nations run casino but voted the proposal down in a plebiscite. The province gives Winnipeg's racetrack \$5 million a year plus a cut of video lottery terminal (VLT) revenues. A proposal to open a track in Brandon stalled when the province refused to allow the requested number of VLTs saying that no new machines were being allowed in the province. With respect to wine stores, a business wanted to open in Brandon but could not obtain a license (Brown 2006b). Brandon's two MLAs, who are cabinet ministers, argue that the former Conservative government opened Winnipeg's wine stores and it is not NDP policy to open such stores (Brown 2006a).

Brandon's mayor added that Winnipeg gets \$1.2 million from the province for tourism promotion while Brandon gets nothing. Brandon spends \$200,000 annually on tourism promotion. The province provides \$2.7 million in operating funds to the Winnipeg Convention Centre but Brandon's Keystone Centre has only been able to get capital grants and some relief of its debt. The mayor also argued that Brandon has not participated in provincial out of province trade trips that include Winnipeg business and civic leaders (Brown 2006a, 2006b).

The provincial government has supported, in principal, the expansion of Brandon's community college. The problem, according to the MLAs has been that while Winnipeg was prepared to share the cost of expanding Red River College, Brandon city council has balked at contributing to Assiniboine Community College's proposed new facilities (Brown 2006b). The provincial government maintains that it does not favour Winnipeg over other parts of the province. Winnipeg's sheer size within the province makes it inevitable that it will have a wider range of services and therefore more facilities and functions to be supported.

Conclusion

From an historical perspective, Winnipeg was the first city on the prairies, the first capital city, the first railway city, and the gateway of commerce into the mid-twentieth century. While its position at the apex of the prairie triangle proved advantageous in the beginning, it eventually allowed for the development of more service centres near the base of the triangle. When these cities found an alternative access to the world via Vancouver, and an alternative resource base with the petrochemical industry, Winnipeg lost some of its status in the west and an urban system developed in Alberta. However, Winnipeg was able to maintain its dominance within Manitoba where no similar urban system developed.

Indeed, at the provincial level, Winnipeg now has a much greater dominance over its province than is the case for any other provincial capital or major city in Canada. Its diverse economy provides opportunities of continual growth when other Manitoba centres suffer from the cyclical growth of one-industry communities. Further, while Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are small parts of their CMAs and must compete with surrounding municipalities for economic growth opportunities, Winnipeg includes 92 per cent of its CMA population and still has room for expansion within its municipal boundaries.

Winnipeg's sheer size gives it a commanding voice in the provincial government. For three decades Winnipeg had its own provincial

government ministry, unique in Canada, and under the new City of Winnipeg Act it will continue a special relationship with the province not found elsewhere in Canada. Unlike British Columbia and Alberta, which have chosen to divest themselves of municipal expenditures, Manitoba continues to provide financial support to Winnipeg.

Much of the literature on the Canadian urban system tends to discuss the competition between Montreal and Toronto and the growth of Vancouver and Calgary. Winnipeg's decline in position on the national scale has led to it becoming a historical footnote. However, Winnipeg remains a unique city in the Canadian urban system and one worthy of discussion.

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