

**IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DIVIDING THE
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY? CAN IT STOP?**

A WINNIPEG CASE STUDY

by

**Christopher Leo
University of Winnipeg**

with

**Martine August
University of Toronto**

and

**Matthew D. Rogers
University of British Columbia**

**Prepared for the Canadian Political Science Association
May, 2009
Ottawa**

IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DIVIDING THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY? CAN IT STOP?

A WINNIPEG CASE STUDY

ABSTRACT

There is a remarkable contrast between the way aboriginal policy and immigration and settlement policy operate in Winnipeg. Immigration and settlement, which is responsive to an unusual social and political consensus, is built on a constructive relationship between government and civil society and shows a considerable degree of effectiveness in building social cohesion. Aboriginal policy, built upon a centuries-old, deeply troubled neo-colonial relationship between aboriginal people and the federal government, is marked by sharp divisions among the colonized groups, and a set of government policies that could hardly have been better calculated to exacerbate the divisions. The paper analyses the sources of the success of the immigration and settlement policy as well as the reasons for the much less favourable outcomes of aboriginal policy and considers the lessons that might be learned.

1 Introduction

In 1989, Wayne Helgason, a respected leader in Winnipeg's aboriginal community, was looking for better quarters for Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata, an aboriginal child welfare agency he headed. It occurred to him that the Canadian Pacific railway station, a magnificent old building, abandoned and run down, could be redeveloped to serve his agency's needs, while at the same time serving as a focal point for Winnipeg's aboriginal community. It was not a new idea. For a couple of decades the concept of an umbrella organization for a variety of aboriginal business development, educational and social service activities had been circulating in the aboriginal community. (Loxley, 2002)

Helgason, currently Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, put his formidable networking skills to work. Undeterred by his failure to gain co-operation from the mainstream aboriginal organizations – the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Metis Federation – he mobilized enough leaders looking for space for their organizations, and got enough government assistance, to save the old building, get it renovated and turn it into the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg Inc., which, at this writing, houses the Neeginan¹ Institute of Applied Technology, the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre, a daycare centre, an art gallery, a printing company, and a single-window office for access to aboriginal programmes offered by the three levels of government. Leveraging its equity, it has bought adjacent properties to provide space for another daycare centre and a training facility for welders.

The organization of the Aboriginal Centre demonstrates the potential of such political initiatives, while partaking of their untidiness. Critics argue that it is excessively dependent on government funding. (Loxley, 2002, p. 3) It is caught up in ongoing disputes and subject to the backbiting that is an inevitable by-product of a controversial political initiative. Nevertheless, embodying the rich irony that it took an aboriginal political initiative to save a quintessentially Anglo

¹ Cree for "Our Place".

landmark from destruction and bring new life to a derelict downtown district, it demonstrates that, through co-operation and political finesse, a community can create an institution that takes on a life of its own and serves as a potentially significant social and economic asset.



Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg

The Aboriginal Centre was a community initiative that mobilized government assistance. In these pages we look at a government initiative that reversed that sequence, and scored a significant success in the administration of immigration and settlement by mobilizing community co-operation. Either way, a combination of government programming and community mobilization can produce positive results. We then turn to a broad overview of aboriginal policy in Winnipeg, where – despite such occasional exceptions as that of the Aboriginal Centre – the government programming we reviewed produces competition and internal division within an already badly divided community. The paper asks: If the Manitoba government is able to initiate a co-operative effort on the part of

settlement service providers, why does the federal government rarely even attempt the same kind of initiative with aboriginal organizations?

2 Immigration settlement

Immigration to Canada, and the settlement of new Canadians, is the subject of a series of federal-provincial agreements that are different for each province, in recognition of the fact that each community presents a very different combination of opportunities and problems. In Winnipeg, a provincial nominee agreement, designed to increase the numbers of immigrants, has played a prominent role in policy-making and implementation. In this section, we look at Winnipeg's provincial nominee program and then turn to settlement services, summarizing the findings of a more detailed study that is available elsewhere (Leo and August 2009).

2.1 Provincial nominee program

Canada's provincial nominee programs (PNPs) are incentive-based strategies to draw immigrants to destinations other than Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Immigrants are selected who will fill specified labour market needs, and who are deemed well suited to integrate into life in their new province. Rather than applying to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for permanent resident status through the federal family or independent classes, prospective immigrants apply directly to their province of choice. The province reviews applicants based on its own criteria, rather than using the federal points system, and then nominates those who qualify.

Provincial nominees receive priority processing by CIC, bypassing assessment at the federal level. The CIC is still responsible for criminal, security, and medical checks, but in other respects the nominating province takes over assessment of PNP applicants. Applying through the PNP offers the carrot of faster processing times, and in most cases, easier-to-meet assessment criteria. Among the categories of immigrants eligible to apply are the following (Province of Manitoba 2004b):

Employer Direct: Gives top priority by the province to applicants already working full-time in Manitoba, or who have a job offer from a Manitoba employer.

Family Support: Acts as a complement to the federal family class, and is for applicants who can prove that they have strong family support in Manitoba.

Community Support: For applicants who have evidence of support from an ethno-cultural community.

International Student: For international students who have graduated from a post-secondary program in Manitoba, received a full-time job offer in their field of studies, and have a post-graduation work permit.

The Manitoba Government began pursuing immigration as early as the 1970s, partly because of a consensus, at least among elite groups, that would be considered remarkable in many other jurisdictions. Because both the province and Winnipeg are growing slowly, additional population is much more likely to be seen as an asset than it is in areas that are growing more rapidly (Leo and Brown, 2000). Thus the business community wants more immigration to address labour shortages; rural communities want more immigrants to live and work in their communities; ethno-cultural communities want immigration to increase their numbers, the City of Winnipeg wants more immigration to expand its tax base and population, and to revitalize decaying neighbourhoods with new residents. The right wants economic growth and more workers, and the left wants to meet humanitarian goals while building a more diverse society.

Therefore, whether under Tory or NDP governments, the provincial government was prepared to make the necessary infrastructure and resources available. Unlike many provinces, where the immigration, settlement, and language activities are split up into different departments, and jammed in with files like education or social services, Manitoba has had a dedicated immigration division since 1990, which coordinates all immigration and settlement activity within one department (Clement 2002, 16). In 1996, the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement was signed, outlining the province's objectives, direction and priorities, and providing a framework within which to negotiate the PNP and

settlement service agreements which would be developed over the next two years (Clement 2003, 198).

The program started modestly in 1998, with an initial allocation from the federal government to nominate 200 immigrants and their families each year for two years. The program grew, according to Gerald Clement, Assistant Deputy Minister of Labour and Immigration, “beyond our wildest expectations” (2003, p. 199). By 2003, the limit on provincial nominees had been removed, with annual figures to be determined each year in consultations between Canada and the province (Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement 2003, 2003b).

Manitoba Immigration

Year	Total Manitoba Immigration	Provincial Nominees and their families	Provincial Nominee Allocation per year
1998	2,993	-	200
1999	3,702	418	450
2000	4,606	1,088	500
2001	4,588	972	750
2002	4,621	1,527	1500
2003	6,469	3,106	Preset limits removed
2004	7,421	4,036	
2005	8,097	4,619	
2006	9,990*	6,641*	
*Preliminary figures			
Sources: Province of Manitoba 2001b, 2002, 2004a; Janzen 2005.			

Provincial nominees have directly contributed to record immigration levels and population growth figures for Manitoba (Janzen 2005). In 1998, the number of immigrants was 2,993 – a figure that made the province’s goal of bringing in 10,000 newcomers by 2006 seem laughable, but the goal was reached. (See table.) This growth in immigration levels is directly attributable to the PNP, which was the route taken by two-thirds of Manitoba immigrants in 2006.

2.2 Settlement services agreement

The 1998 agreement that set the PNP in motion also included an agreement giving Manitoba complete responsibility for the design, administration, and delivery of settlement services. Manitoba's settlement program includes orientation and counselling, adult language training, labour market access services, and assistance for other organizations that provide settlement services (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1998). Under the Settlement Services Agreement, Manitoba receives settlement funding annually from Ottawa, and is responsible for the design, delivery, and administration of all settlement service programming in the province. In the first two years of the program, Manitoba received \$3.55 million per year. In the 2001-2002 fiscal year, as a result of the growth in Manitoba's immigrant intake, this was increased to \$5.32 million. (Province of Manitoba 2001a). The province has also committed substantial funding of its own to immigration and settlement. For example, in fiscal 2004-05 the provincial immigration and settlement budget was \$11,111,800 (Morrish 2004).

In the rest of the country, with the exception of British Columbia and Quebec, which also have settlement agreements, the federal government is responsible for the delivery and funding of all settlement programs. In doing so, it comes in for a considerable amount of criticism, criticism that is suggestive of the problems that arise in trying to apply uniform national criteria to diverse localities, and therefore illustrative of the importance of administration that is directly responsive to community concerns. For example, in a 2003 report, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration reported complaints that Citizenship and Immigration Canada micro-managed the operations of settlement providers, and that "any variation from the line-by-line authorizations leads to significant administrative difficulties" (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration 2003, 9). The department has also been criticized for focusing too much on meeting 'front-end' settlement needs, at the expense of long-run integration needs (Omidvar and Richmond 2003, 8). In Manitoba, the

provincial government's management of settlement, backed by widespread public support, has produced a much more favourable result.

Prominent representatives of the settlement provider community, as well as impartial outside observers, speak highly of the provincial government's programs. Although they generally agree that more funding is needed, they contend that Manitoba's performance stands out nationally. According to Tom Denton, chair of the Manitoba Immigration Council and former executive director of the International Centre of Winnipeg, long an outspoken advocate for immigrants, Manitoba's settlement services are "probably the best in Canada" (Denton, 2005). The province scored the highest on a 2002 inter-provincial settlement 'report card' prepared by the BC Coalition for Immigrant Integration, obtaining a "B" (Canada, 2003: 12). Emily Shane, Executive Director of Jewish Child and Family Services, which works closely with the provincial government in the selection and settlement of immigrants, applauded the decision to devolve responsibility for settlement, citing the "approachability and flexibility" of the provincial government (Shane, 2005). As well, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (2003: 12) praised Manitoba for having the only advanced language training programme in Canada offered free to newcomers.

The provincial government has developed two 'community-based' language training programs that meet the unique needs of immigrant women and seniors. The women's program provides English instruction to mothers who find it hard to attend regular training hours, and who may lack confidence and feel isolated. The program for senior citizens recognizes that they are often isolated and lonely in a new country where they face a language barrier. The program teaches English at a learner-centred pace, and is as much about providing immigrant seniors a chance to meet, make friends, and get out of the house as it is about teaching English (Doan and MacFarlane 2003). Manitoba has also created an innovative occupation-specific language program, in which newcomers acquire job-specific language skills during the workday, learning while earning wages.

Such creative and innovative programs would not be possible under the federal program, service providers argue. Tom Denton says, “settlement is a local thing requiring fine tuning to the local scene”. When Manitoba took over in 1998, Denton reports that it was “an instant improvement” (Denton, 2005).

To be sure, more could – and, service providers insist, should – be done. For example, the main provider of settlement services in Manitoba, the International Centre, had not, at the time of the research for this paper, received a funding increase in the past three years, despite steep increases in the numbers of immigrants, and have “cut their administrative staff to the bare bones”. Executive Director Linda Lelande (2005) explained that well-educated people with considerable expertise are being lost to higher-salaried positions in other organizations. Emily Shane (2005) argued that while settlement services were adequate, “huge amounts of money” were required. Shane and Lelande did not blame the province for these shortfalls. Manitoba receives its fair share of the nation’s settlement budget, and, as noted, tops it up significantly with provincial funds – but the province can only add so much. In short, service providers argued that Manitoba was doing as well as could be expected, considering the resources available.

2.3 Responsiveness to the community

One of the most important reasons for the success of Manitoba’s immigration and settlement programs – and, at the same time, one of their most important benefits – is the provincial government’s early and continuing consultation with community stakeholders. Close relations with the community not only made it possible for the program to become attuned to community requirements, to meet the requirements of what is elsewhere referred to as deep federalism (Leo and Enns, 2009), but also laid the basis for community collaboration in achieving effective and economical operation of the program.

The Business Council of Manitoba, anxious to find a way of alleviating labour shortages, was an early supporter of increased immigration. The council’s support “gave the politicians cover” by framing immigration as an economic, not political issue (Carr, 2005). Tom Denton explained that “the Business Council

fostered community dialogue, the Premier's Economic Council has taken advice from the community, the Provincial government has listened and has acted in both predictable and ingenious ways" (Denton, 2005).

Consultation has gone well beyond the business community to include immigrant-serving organizations, ethno-cultural community groups, rural communities, employers, residents in general, and immigrants themselves. The government made a commitment to involve community stakeholders in the immigration agreements, promising both to "encourage community involvement in identifying local settlement and integration priorities", and to "consult with regional and community representatives" (Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement 2003, 3.1 b; 2003b, 4.2 f). Gerald Clement (2003), an Assistant Deputy Minister with Manitoba Labour and Immigration, argues that community involvement has played a key role in Manitoba's immigration programming, claiming that "one of the keys to our success has been an openness to partnerships with communities ... be it ethnic or geographic, [they] are an important dimension of the immigrant integration process" (199).

Manitoba's approach to immigration and settlement has been based on cultivating an understanding of those communities and their needs. In the prosperous southern Manitoba cities of Steinbach and Winkler, there is both a need for more workers and a desire on the part of many to build on German Mennonite traditions. In Winnipeg, the declining Jewish community was looking for new members, and in the flourishing Filipino community there was a demand to bring in family and friends. There are also community-specific needs to be addressed once immigrants have arrived. Employers want newcomers to learn occupation-specific language skills, and isolated groups, such as single mothers and seniors, need language training to help them break their isolation. These are examples of the case for programming attuned to community requirements, a condition that is unlikely to be met by the central government.

The attention the government pays to individual communities is repaid in kind as community organizations rally to help make programming more effective and economical. This is part of the rationale for the Community Support Stream,

designed for applicants who have evidence of support from an ethno-cultural community. Ethno-cultural or regional community organizations may enter into community support agreements with the province, thereby assuming responsibility to pre-screen potential applicants. Applicants may apply to the Community Support stream if they have a Letter of Support from a community group that holds a community support agreement with the province.

Only one organization, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW) is party to a support agreement. Under their agreement, the Federation does all pre-screening, invites applicants with potential for an exploratory visit, assists applicants in filling out the application for provincial nominee status, and delivers the application to the province (Hecht, 2005). The JFW does not receive funding for its services, having agreed to take on the assessment of prospective immigrants because it serves its own interests. In effect, the province is capitalizing on the JFW's desire for more immigrants to discharge some of its own administrative responsibilities at no cost.

Other organizations work to bring immigrants to Manitoba without being party to a support agreement. An example is the Société franco-manitobaine, long active in support of French-speaking immigrants (Boucher 2005). But whether the relations are formal or informal, ongoing community consultations, can, under favourable circumstances, help to ensure outcomes that are more reflective of community demands, more efficient and more effective. Manitoba has done a credible job of producing outcomes that are both responsive and efficacious.

The provincial government's immigration and settlement policies, and the manner of their implementation, contrast sharply with the way the federal government executes aboriginal policy in Winnipeg, as we will now see.

3 Aboriginal policy

Winnipeg is the urban aboriginal capital of Canada. That is one of those rare statements that can be made without any qualification at all. With persons identifying themselves as aboriginal constituting 8.4 per cent of the population

and numbering almost 56,000, Winnipeg has the largest number of urban aboriginal people in the country, both relatively and absolutely. Population projections foresee aboriginal people constituting one in four of those eligible for the workforce in 2020 (City of Winnipeg, 2001b).

ABORIGINAL IDENTITY POPULATION: SELECTED METROPOLITAN AREAS	
Winnipeg	55,755
Edmonton	40,930
Vancouver	36,855
Calgary	21,915
Toronto	20,300
Saskatoon	20,275
Regina	15,685
Montreal	11,085
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001.	

Winnipeg’s aboriginal community is a study in contrasts. Aboriginal people are well represented in the community by such leaders as Mary Richard, former executive director of the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg; Wayne Helgason, executive director of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg; Damon Johnson, president of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, and Dan Vandal, a long-serving, influential member of Winnipeg City Council.

At the same time aboriginal Winnipeggers face some of the city’s most serious social problems. Relatively low education and employment rates contribute to inadequate housing, poor social conditions and poverty (Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg 2004). In 2000, aboriginal people in the Winnipeg census metropolitan area were nearly three times as likely to be classified as low-income as the general population. While 16.2 per cent of Winnipeg residents were low-income, down from 17.5 per cent two decades earlier, the more than eight per cent of the population who identified themselves as aboriginal had a poverty rate of 46.2 per cent. Aboriginal people constituted 23.8 per cent of Winnipeg’s low-income population.

Between 1980 and 2000, income in the 10 per cent of Winnipeg’s neighbourhoods with the lowest incomes fell by 4.5 per cent, while those in the 10 per cent of neighbourhoods with the highest incomes rose 16.8 per cent. In 8.5 per cent of neighbourhoods more than 40 per cent were low-income in 2000,

virtually unchanged from 1980. Aboriginal people were highly concentrated in these low-income neighbourhoods. Altogether, 21.2 per cent of aboriginal people in Winnipeg lived in a low-income neighbourhood, compared with only 5.7 per cent of the general population (Statistics Canada 2001, 2004, 2005).

3.1 Federal programs in Winnipeg

In order to understand the federal government role in aboriginal policy in Winnipeg, we must consider two programs: the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement (WPA) the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS). The WPA is a tri-level agreement that took effect in 2004 and ends 2009, the most recent in a series of such agreements beginning in 1981 with the Core Area Initiative, intended to promote the physical, economic and social renewal of Winnipeg's struggling inner city. Only one of its four components, aboriginal participation, is relevant for our purposes (Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg, 2004, 16-21).

The agreement promises that Winnipeg's aboriginal community "will play a lead role in the development and implementation... and in ensuring it provides full and transparent access to all parts of the community" (Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg 2004, 17) in order to "ensure Winnipeg will benefit from the opportunities presented by significant growth in the young aboriginal population" (16). The aboriginal component includes three elements: economic development; training, education and employment, and health, wellness, quality of life and social development. Each level of government is obligated to contribute \$25 million to the WPA over the period covered by the agreement.

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy was funded in 2003, a \$25 million program that was to last three years. The purpose was to undertake pilot projects in eight cities, Winnipeg included, with the ultimate objective of finding ways of narrowing the "gap in life chances" between urban aboriginal people and the rest of the population. In 2004, funding was doubled, four cities were added, and the program was extended an extra year, ending in March 2007 (Western Economic Diversification Canada 2007; Alderson-Gill and Associates Consulting Inc. 2005).

The initial infusion of funds was intended – according to both the UAS web site and the consultants' evaluation – to underwrite the testing of innovative

policy ideas. During this period, a number of objectives were to be achieved. The first was to build – the wording used in the evaluation report is instructive – “organizational capacity within urban aboriginal organizations ...to enhance community leadership ...” (Alderson-Gill and Associates 2005, 4). At the same time, efforts would be made to develop partnerships and co-ordinate resources, both across government departments and within the local communities.

At first blush, these programs look very positive: \$75 million in WPA funds from three levels of government – distributed across four major program components and four or five years (the agreement stipulates that Canada must have completed its program approvals by March 31st, 2008, while Manitoba and Winnipeg have until September 30th, 2009); \$50 million from the UAS to be shared by 12 cities over four years; encouragement of innovative policy ideas to address deep-seated and persistent problems. However, there are problems.

The first is the idea of using a federal government program to build “organizational capacity [and] ...enhance community leadership.” These conceptions mirror what a colleague and I found in another study, in which we evaluated the federal government’s Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, a component of the National Homelessness Initiative (Leo and August 2006). There too the federal government set itself the objective of responding to voices from the community and chose to do so by organizing a series of community forums where, according to one community leader, community members and service providers were not listened to, or asked for advice, but “lectured to” on the “academic definitions of homelessness”. In that instance, community leaders finally rebelled, organized their own meetings, and produced a very credible set of recommendations – recommendations the federal government did not follow because they did not jibe with federal priorities.

Winnipeg’s aboriginal community, like the city’s community of service providers to homeless people, do not require the assistance of federal public servants to build their leadership skills. As noted at the beginning of this article, and again at the beginning of this section, the community has strong leaders within provincial or local organizations involved in aboriginal governance, as well

as in other local organizations. Among the aboriginal organizations at the provincial level are the Aboriginal Council of Manitoba, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Métis Federation and Mothers of Red Nations. Three of these provincial organizations maintain municipal branches in Winnipeg, including the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, the Manitoba Métis Federation (Winnipeg Region) and Mothers of Red Nations (Winnipeg Region).

There are very real conflicts of interest amongst these groups – conflicts, it is fair to add, that are at least in part a product of distinctions that originate in federal legislation and are exacerbated by administration of those laws. But organizational divisions, however artificial to begin with, become real as they become freighted with economic and political interests. The challenge of achieving a unified urban aboriginal voice is not that of building leadership capacity, but of finding ways of bridging these very real differences. It is conceivable that the federal government could provide incentives that might help motivate leaders and their followers to seek accommodations, but lessons in leadership are not what is needed.

In light of those reflections, it is not surprising to note that one of the conclusions of the consultants who evaluated the program was that “some aboriginal political organizations take exception to the UAS model because it does not devolve control of the strategy and the funds to what they see as representative Aboriginal organizations” (Alderson-Gill and Associates 2005, 47).

A second problem is the funding for the WPA and the UAS. Apparently, the actual funds available are a great deal less than they appear. Two aboriginal leaders interviewed for this study complained about the aboriginal component of the WPA being a “shell game” or “not new money”, in that the WPA funds in question actually consisted of UAS funding previously allocated. Two public servants involved in the administration of the program – one with the federal

government and one with the province – confirmed this, and a municipal official did not deny it when asked.²

The federal official said UAS and WPA funds were “largely synonymous” and the provincial administrator volunteered, without being asked, that UAS funds had been “re-profiled” for inclusion in WPA – a usage that looks like a good candidate for inclusion in the notes on Newspeak in George Orwell’s *1984*. The same is true of \$1.4 million in Winnipeg’s Urban Aboriginal Strategy funds. If that money is finally spent – Mayor Sam Katz has promised that it will be, in a subsequent year – it will go toward the city’s share of WPA funding (Council of the City of Winnipeg 2007, 206).

Moreover, a comparison of the project profiles posted at the UAS and WPA web sites revealed eighteen cases in which the same projects were posted on both sites, with eleven of these receiving exactly the same amount of funding (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2007; Winnipeg Partnership Agreement, 2007). To be sure, if a matching formula were in place, the UAS and WPA funding might be identical, and not simply a duplication. However, interviews with aboriginal leaders indicated otherwise. Officials of two organizations, which the WPA and UAS claimed to have funded identically, stated independently that their organizations did not receive the funding twice.

A third problem is the way the funds are disbursed. The procedure is that organizations apply for the funding, usually in relatively modest amounts, as organizational budgeting goes. For example, \$61,420 for Mothers of Red Nations to pay a community development worker; \$68,415 for an initiative for aboriginal youth to develop leadership skills; \$73,528, to provide work placements for aboriginal teacher assistants; \$15,000 for the Wii Chii Waa Ka Nak Indigenous Education Centre, and so forth.

It seems reasonable to view this funding strategy in relation to the inter-organizational rivalries within the aboriginal community, referred to earlier. Instead of providing an incentive for competing aboriginal organizations to bridge

² The names of the interviewees are being withheld for ethical reasons, but the interview files, with identifiers removed, can be made available on request.

their differences, the federal government's method of funding sets them competing with each other to wage paper wars in pursuit of relatively small amounts of funding the need for which, in most cases, is probably keenly felt. If it were intended as a strategy to exacerbate divisions within the aboriginal community, while providing an incentive for them to deal politely with government officials, it could hardly have been better designed.

To be sure, interviews with aboriginal leaders made it clear that the cleavages within the community are deep, bitter and tenacious, and that there were instances of aboriginal leaders themselves thwarting government attempts to induce inter-organizational co-operation. However, aboriginal leaders also took for granted that the government always had an "agenda", and that organizations seeking funding had to find ways of making their plans fit with funding conditions. There was no suggestion at all that the government might be persuaded to take advice from aboriginal leaders regarding program priorities, even though the quality and depth of aboriginal leadership in Winnipeg strongly suggests that much good advice could be obtained.

Aboriginal leaders also reported that their attempts to bend their organizations' priorities to fit funding criteria were dogged by shifting priorities and ever-changing organizational arrangements within the government. Respondents cited instances in which projects appeared to have been given the go-ahead, only later to be called off. Because of staffing changes in the administration of the UAS, one official's positive response might be vetoed by his or her successor. As a result, time and money invested in a project would be lost, and more time and money expended on re-orientation, or a new beginning.

3.2 Evaluation

The federal government has been very much involved in the affairs of Winnipeg's aboriginal community, through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy and the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement, a colourful mixture of good and bad policy. Included in this mixture are a paternalistic attitude toward the aboriginal leadership – as manifested in the government's assumption that there is a need to "enhance community leadership" – funding shell games, lamentably poor

communications with aboriginal leaders, and, at the same time, a significant allocation of money to meet a wide variety of very real community needs.

It is reasonable to suppose that the money enables funding recipients to accomplish many worthwhile things. Moreover, the funding procedures, whatever their faults, do provide an incentive for community groups to define those needs for themselves, though that self-definition is distorted by government priorities that seem to draw little inspiration from local knowledge and understanding.

Whether or not the UAS and WPA succeed in meeting the UAS's objective of narrowing the socio-economic gap between aboriginal people and the rest of the population, therefore, it would not be fair to pronounce them failures. But they can hardly claim a significant degree of responsiveness to the aboriginal community, and in the matter of increasing aboriginal peoples' control over their own lives, they probably take a step backward.

4 Conclusion

The federal and provincial governments give much evidence of good intentions in the significant funds they allocate to both aboriginal policy and immigration and settlement in Winnipeg, but the contrast between the way these programs are administered could hardly be more dramatic. Immigration and settlement, which is responsive to an unusual social and political consensus, is built on a constructive relationship between government and civil society and shows a considerable degree of effectiveness in building social cohesion.

As a result, Manitoba's immigration and settlement program, though falling short of perfection, has increased the level of immigration exponentially, is well regarded by local stakeholders, and has been hailed nationally as a model.

By contrast, aboriginal policy, built upon a centuries-old, deeply troubled neo-colonial relationship between aboriginal people and the federal government, is marked by apparently disingenuous reporting of funding levels, a paternalistic attitude toward the aboriginal leadership, a conspicuous failure to consult meaningfully with community stakeholders and – perhaps most seriously of all –

methods of implementation that could hardly have been better calculated to exacerbate already sharp divisions within the aboriginal community.

If we return to the story briefly sketched at the beginning of this article and consider what Wayne Helgason and a group of fellow aboriginal leaders were able to accomplish by working together, we can take some measure of how much better the millions the government is pouring into aboriginal programming might be spent. Under the project funding model currently in force, money is doled out, in small sums, to discrete aboriginal organizations, setting them to competing amongst themselves. This undoubtedly exacerbates the divisions within the community, imposes heavy administrative burdens on small organizations, and makes them dependent on a state that many of them consider an alien presence.

Suppose, instead, that the federal government decided to draw on the talents of Winnipeg aboriginal leaders – as the provincial government has done with immigrant settlement service providers – and adopt a lump sum approach to funding. Instead of small contributions to individual organizations, put all the funding on the table, and offer to make it available to the aboriginal community as a whole, on the condition that aboriginal leaders negotiate a large-scale program that they can agree on – one that withstands the reasonable scrutiny of the federal government – and create an organization to administer it, in co-operation with the government.

Undoubtedly the negotiation would involve unpleasantness and acrimony, and no one would walk away from the table with more than half a loaf. But a large sum of money, and the potential it represents, is a strong incentive to serious negotiations, and the possibilities that might open up could far exceed those represented by the Aboriginal Centre. If the provincial government can achieve good government programs by inventing ways to draw on the knowledge, ability and energy of the settlement service provider community, it is hard to see why the federal government could not do the same with the aboriginal community. They might consider giving it a try.

REFERENCES

Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc. 2005. *Urban Aboriginal strategy pilot projects formative evaluation: Final report*. Ottawa: Office of the Federal Interlocutor, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/urban/agreements/may2004/may2004_e.pdf (accessed April 11, 2007).

Boucher, Daniel. 2005. President & Chief Executive Director, Société Franco-Manitobain. Interview. March 9.

Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement. (2003). Annex B: Immigrant Settlement Services. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/about/laws-policy/agreements/manitoba/can-man-2003.asp> (accessed December 22, 2007).

Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement. (2003b). Annex B: Provincial Nominees. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/policy/fed-prov/can-man-2003b.html> (accessed April 5, 2007).

Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg. (2004). Agreement for community and economic development. Ottawa: Government of Canada. http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/urban/agreements/may2004/may2004_e.pdf (accessed July 24, 2005).

Canada. Parliament. 2003. House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. *Settlement and Integration: A Sense of Belonging "Feeling at Home"*. Ottawa: Communication Canada – Publishing.

Carr, Jim. 2005. President, Business Council of Manitoba. Personal communication, February 9.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (1998). *Canada and Manitoba reach agreements on provincial nominees and immigrant settlement services*. News Release, June 29.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2006). *Canada – Permanent Residents by Province or Territory and Urban Area*. Retrieved 15 May 2008 from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2006/permanent/18.asp>.

City of Winnipeg. 2001a. *A Homegrown Economic Development Strategy for Winnipeg*. Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, June.

City of Winnipeg. (2001b). *Mayor's Task Force on Diversity: Final Report*. Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg.

Clement, G. (2002). The Manitoba Advantage: Opportunity and Diversity. *Horizons* 5, no. 2: 16-17.

http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v5n2_art_07 (accessed April 5, 2007).

Clement, G. 2003. "The Manitoba Experience". In *Canadian immigration policy for the 21st century*, ed. Charles M. Beach and Jeffery G. Reitz, 197-200. Kingston, Ontario: John Deutsch Institute for the Study of Economic Policy.

Council of the City of Winnipeg. 2007. Minutes of March 20, 2007. <http://www.winnipeg.ca/CLKDMIS/MeetingAudio.asp?CommitteeType=C> (accessed April 11, 2007).

Denton, Tom. (2005). Chair, Manitoba Immigration Council. Personal communication, February 27.

Doan, Lan and Shannon MacFarlane. 2003. "Immigrant Seniors: No Longer a Forgotten Group." Presentation Summary from the National Settlement Conference II, Calgary. <http://www.integration-net.ca/inet/english/vsi-isb/conference2/session/8a.htm> (December 22, 2007).

Hecht, Evelyn. 2005. Community Immigration Officer, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg. Personal communication, January 24.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2007). *Urban Aboriginal Strategy*. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/interloc/uas/stpf_e.html (accessed July 6, 2007).

Janzen, L. (2005). Manitoba has record growth in population. *Winnipeg Free Press*. March 26.

Lelande, Linda. 2005. Executive Director, International Centre of Winnipeg. Personal Communication, February 1.

Leo, Christopher and Jeremy Enns. (2009). "Multi-level governance and ideological rigidity: The failure of deep federalism. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 42 (1).

Leo, Christopher and Martine August. 2006. National policy and community initiative: Mismanaging homelessness in a slow growth city. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 15, no. 1, (supplement).

Leo, Christopher and Martine August. (2009), "The Multi-Level Governance of Immigration and Settlement: Making Deep Federalism Work." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 42 (2).

Leo, Christopher and Wilson Brown. (2000). Slow growth and urban development policy. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 22, no. 2: 193-213.

Loxley, John. 2002. Aboriginal economic development in Winnipeg. Toronto: Fighting Urban Poverty Workshop, conference paper.

Morrish, Margot. 2004. *Manitoba immigration and integration policies and programs*. Calgary: Prairie Centre of Excellence on Immigration and Integration, Calgary Node Workshop, November 01.

http://pcerii.metropolis.net/events/events_content/Morrish.pdf (accessed February 23, 2005).

Omidvar, R. and T. Richmond. 2003. *Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada*. Toronto: The Laidlaw Foundation.

Province of Manitoba. 2001a. *Canada and Manitoba expand immigration agreement*. News release. November 27.

Province of Manitoba. (2004b). *Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program for skilled workers*. Accessed at:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/pnp/eligible.html>, 21 December 2007.

Winnipeg Partnership Agreement. 2007. *Project profiles*. <http://www.winnipegpartnership.mb.ca/projects.shtml> (accessed July 6, 2007).

Shane, Emily. 2005. Executive Director of the Jewish Child and Family Services. Personal communication. January 24.

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. (2003). *Settlement and integration: A sense of belonging, "feeling at home"*. Ottawa: Communication Canada – Publishing.

Western Economic Diversification Canada. (2007). *The Urban Aboriginal Strategy*. Edmonton: Government of Canada. January 8.

http://wed.gc.ca/ced/strategy_e.asp?ts=s (accessed April 11, 2007).