

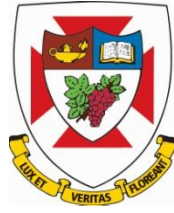
Evaluating Winnipeg's Unicity Government: Past Efforts and Present Challenges

Research and Working Paper No. 9

**By Philip H. Wichern
1984**

The Institute of Urban Studies





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EVALUATING WINNIPEG'S UNICITY GOVERNMENT: PAST EFFORTS AND PRESENT CHALLENGES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Winnipeg has attained national and some international prominence as the most striking innovation in metropolitan structural reform to appear during the 1970s in North America.¹ Given final approval on 24 July 1971, the City of Winnipeg Act, Chapter 105 of Manitoba Statutes, formally amalgamated twelve municipalities--seven cities, one town, four rural municipalities--and the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg into the new City of Winnipeg as of January 1, 1972. The preceding years and the creation of "Unicity," as the new City government was nicknamed, have been the subject of several major books and monographs (T. Axworthy, 1972; Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983), as well as numerous articles, papers, and theses (e.g., T. Axworthy, L. Axworthy, Lightbody, Plunkett, and Wichern).

Evaluations of the new form of urban government began almost immediately. Both the Institute of Urban Studies and the author produced initial evaluations based on primary research in 1974 (L. Axworthy and J. Cassidy, 1974; Wichern, 1974). The first major governmental evaluation was the Provincial Government's Committee of Review, City of Winnipeg Act (the "Taraska Committee"), which was created in September, 1975 and issued its Report and Recommendations on October 21, 1976 (Committee of Review, 1976). The following year, the provincial government introduced 140 Amendments to the Act, reducing the number of wards (and therefore, councillors) from 50 to 29 and the number of Community Committees from 12 to 6, as well as other important modifications (Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983: 138-145).

Virtually all of the evaluations published since 1977 rely upon patterns and views expressed by the Taraska Committee or by previous studies. The most recently published of these evaluations is by the original designers of the Unicity proposals (Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983). Though their assessment contains some post-1977 citations and references, it is clearly based on the findings of that Committee and the opinions of the authors. Primary research and evaluation of the period since 1976 are clearly needed, especially of the impacts of numerous amendments to the City of Winnipeg Act beginning with the major changes made in 1977 (the 1984 version of the Act has no pages that have not been replaced since 1976, and only 119 of 376 remain from 1977; 251 pages have been replaced since 1981).

The current Provincial Government, the same party that created Unicity, has announced its intention to appoint another Committee of Review and has initiated research into various aspects of the Act's provisions and performance under them.² In this context, it is imperative not only to evaluate the performance of Unicity institutions and processes over the last seven years, but also to evaluate how best to go about evaluating Unicity. This latter task, undertaken here, involves drawing from the growing literature of evaluation research, as well as evaluation of the conceptual frameworks and data bases used by previous evaluations. In addition, it involves introducing alternative perspectives which hold promise for enriching the formal review and the future performance of the Unicity innovation.

This study and those which follow in this series^{*} continue the Institute's tradition of monitoring and contributing to Unicity's development, a tradition which was established by the "Future City"

* Several additional papers will be published by the Institute in the coming months dealing with the Unicity experience.

series of IUS publications (L. Axworthy, 1970; T. Axworthy, 1972; L. Axworthy and Cassidy, 1974). This report focuses on evaluation, while those which follow focus on providing basic data and analysis of Unicity's performance over the last ten years since those earlier studies were published, as well as relating the Unicity experience to contemporary intellectual and practical contexts.

2.0 EVALUATION RESEARCH

During the Unicity era, 1971 to the present, there has been a burgeoning of research and literature on the evaluation of public institutions and policies, as well as a growth in the number of public inquiries into those same subjects--both of specific focus and more general or broader scope. New books, journals, articles, and papers have appeared on how to research and make such evaluations. While there is no literature applying evaluation research developments to this subject matter, certain basic perspectives and lessons can be identified. These include the need for a prior examination of what is being evaluated, how appropriate research should be undertaken, and evaluation of the consequences of pursuing various strategies and methods of evaluation. The sections which follow discuss questions, principles, and concepts which grow out of this evaluation context as it applies to evaluating Unicity.

3.0 WHAT IS BEING EVALUATED?

This may appear to be an unnecessary question, but it may produce a greater understanding of the subject matter, and may reveal initially hidden or overlooked subjects, ways of framing the analysis, and problems or possibilities of research. It may also distinguish primary and secondary (tertiary, etc.) foci of evaluation and research; in other words, answering this question may help to prioritize the use of available resources and focus them toward the ultimate uses of the evaluation.

3.1 Evaluation of The Act

In the case of Unicity, evaluation by Review Committees created by the provincial government, the primary focus is the City of Winnipeg Act, which is Chapter 105 of Manitoba Statutes. Its Section 660 creates the framework for "Legislative Review," providing for appointment of a committee or commissioners by the government "to review the operation of this Act and the activities of the city thereunder, and to consider other relevant matters as the Lieutenant Governor in Council may prescribe..." (Act, 1984: 358).

The first significance of this focus is that ultimately it is amendments to the Act, or adoption of a completely new Act, or no changes to the Act, which are the primary projected results of evaluation. Therefore, whatever concepts, views, or data are reported, and whatever recommendations for change are made will have to be translated by legal draftsmanship into proposed legislation and go through the legislative process, the nature of which is very well documented in Brownstone and Plunkett's case study of the original legislation (1984: Chapters 3-4). Their description suggests some of the problems inherent in legislative translation of concepts and ideas, in their case expressed in the White Paper, released 23 December 1970, excerpts of which are included as an Appendix in their book.

Perhaps even more instructive in the present practical context is the fate of the Taraska Committee's recommendations prescribing a "modified parliamentary system" of government for Winnipeg. The subsequently proposed 140 amendments did not incorporate the concept

at all, avoiding even proposing specific features, such as Council election of the Mayor, that had been introduced as part of the original 1971 legislation (Brownstone and Plunkett, 1984: Chapter 6).³ The point for our evaluation is not that the government rejected or ignored the Committee's work; it did adopt some of the Committee's general and specific recommendations. But the process involved political decisions on whether and how to translate Committee ideas into concrete amendments, which were not part of the Committee's report. Therefore, the Committee's Report and Recommendations are more of a discussion paper than a realistic guide to specific changes in the wording of the Act, even though some of the Committee's suggestions--such as reduction of the number of wards, councillors, and committees--were incorporated in the subsequent changes to the Act.

This experience suggests that extensive recommendations going beyond existing reform legislation, will be translated into legislative amendments only on a piecemeal basis, if at all. Similar lessons may be drawn from evaluating the results of various reviews of regional governments in Ontario (Tindal and Tindal, 1984: 71). The more specific the suggestions and the more focused on particular wording and provisions of the Act, the more likely the probability of adoption.

Also inherent in explicit recognition that it is the Act that is being evaluated is the awareness that changes to it must ultimately be legal in nature, conforming to the demands of the legal system in general and municipal law in particular.⁴

In addition to the general framework of municipal law, this

Act also has a particular legal history which should be taken into account in evaluating it. The original Unicity legislation, was a combination of sections from the previous City of Winnipeg Act, the Metropolitan Corporation Act, and new provisions--"a collage of snippets from existing statutes and new draftings to express the new ideas" (Committee of Review, 1976: Part II, Chapter 5, at 113). Since that initial document dozens of changes have been made. Therefore, we are dealing with a conspicuously patched together, and much evolved, legal document whose current form deserves detailed evaluation in terms of municipal law and legal draftsmanship, as well as what the performance is under its provisions. Some important principles for use in redrafting of the Act were indicated by the Taraska Committee (Committee of Review, 1976: 321); for example, that "the Act should be as brief and simple as possible, eliminating much of the present detail while providing enough general powers to enable the city to operate effectively."⁵ Such principles should be addressed and developed into specific recommendations by the province's newly appointed Review Committee.

3.2 Evaluation of the Act: Compliance and Non-compliance

This focus on the Act as a legal instrument should also suggest caution as to what it, or changes to it, can do--that is, its limits in prescribing attitudes or behaviour. It does not prescribe any penalties for non-compliance with most of its provisions by public officials. For example, if the councillors acting as Community Committees have not performed their directed responsibilities, as provided in Section 23 of the Act, there is no provision for legal action or for even protesting by withholding taxes, attempting to recall them, or holding a referendum (referenda are their

prerogative also). The only recourse is political action within the rules set out by the Act and adopted by the very officials who may be in non-compliance.

Are there significant patterns of non-compliance to provisions of the Act by City officials? This would seem to be a crucial research question. The research on Community Committees, Resident Advisory Groups, and availability of information to citizens suggests that there may be in the case cited above. What has been the pattern of political reaction, and what has been its impact? These are research questions addressed in the next volume in this series on citizen participation and Resident Advisory Groups. But there may be other important areas of non-compliance as well. Various types of planning processes and plans prescribed by the Act in Part XX, such as "community plans," are either non-existent or appear to be only formal exercises with little Departmental commitment. Another example is apparent failure of the City to reassess "every parcel of rateable property in the city" "at least once in each three consecutive years ..." (The Act, Section 158(1)).⁶ Though excluded from provincial review committee consideration, this important aspect of the Act and Winnipeg local government will be addressed in this series.

Can some additional legal recourse be written into the Act to encourage compliance with its provisions by City officials? Is such a possibility legally feasible? Or, are there some patterns of behaviour effectively beyond the scope of legislative fiat--such as civic administration or citizen participation? In which cases are certain provisions of the Act--such as those prescribing significant communications responsibilities for Community Committees--simply impractical and unenforceable? If so, should

they be removed? These are the types of questions which focus on the Act can suggest for serious consideration and improvement in the Act as a policy instrument.

3.3 Evaluation of Other Relevant Statutes

In addition to the City of Winnipeg Act, there are a number of other provincial statutes whose provisions directly affect the performance of the City under its Act, such as the Local Authorities Election Act. If these correlative statutes are not evaluated in whole, their provisions' nature and their actual or potential influence on what is being evaluated should be explicitly addressed.

3.4 Evaluation of Institutional Performance

In the Act's provisions for Review, cited in the previous section, the primary emphasis is not on reviewing the Act itself, but on reviewing "the operation of this Act and the activities of the City thereunder." This wording appears to point evaluation toward behavioural and institutional performance within the framework created by the Act. The Act operates by creating a particular type of public corporation, a municipal government called the City of Winnipeg. The Act prescribes organizational structure and processes for this and gives it certain limited jurisdiction for the performance of public actions which the Act either prescribes or states are within the City's jurisdiction. There are a number of significant implications of this seemingly obvious fact which any evaluation of Unicity should reflect.

First, Unicity is a Canadian, Manitoban municipal government, and is subject to all the constraints, as well as powers and resources, imposed upon it by virtue of its nature as such a municipal government.⁷ In addition to its particular legal framework, evaluation should always include reference to its framework of provincial-municipal relations. Such consideration is a positive component of both the original White Paper and the Taraska Committee's Report (1976: Part VI). Contemporary evaluation by the provincial committee is to include "distribution of powers between the city and province" (Winnipeg Free Press, 29 June 1984, 3); but a much broader evaluation should be undertaken, and it should include assessment and other current provincial-municipal issues. It should also include the nature and significance of patterns of tri-level relations on operations of the City.

3.4.1 Local Intergovernmental Relations and Environments

In this context, it is important to note that though the Act made the (new) City of Winnipeg the only municipal government within what had been a metropolitan area, the City is not the only local government. There are the twelve public school divisions which provide services and exercise jurisdiction within the area under Unicity's municipal jurisdiction. In addition, there exist numerous quasi-independent local authorities, such as the Rivers and Streams Authority or the Harbour Commission, as well as local operations of provincial and federal authorities, such as Transport Canada's Winnipeg International Airport, operated separately from the City. The City's relationships with these other local governments--its local intergovernmental relations--has escaped the attention of evaluators and deserves much more attention than it has been given.

In the broader social and economic contexts of city life, the City is only one of many public and private organizations, and each of which has its own goals, programs of action and organizational life. In this setting the City, its officials, and employees, are only one set of actors in a complex human-natural ecology that is the real city--the urban settlement area--for which the City, however, often serves as the most prominent identifying symbol.⁸ This is an extremely important environment to consider in attempting to legislate leadership in urban problem-solving by civic officials. Again the question of the limits of legislation becomes relevant: can it be legislated?

The nature of this local external environment is sometimes forgotten by evaluators assessing the City's performance in terms of standards or goals which clearly involve these other local governments, organizations, and factors; for example, evaluating the City in terms of its success in solving urban problems. This is a concept of what proper governing of a city should result in, but not what the City can accomplish alone as a municipal corporation--one among many public and private corporations operating in the urban area. Urban problem-solving involves much more than ideal provincial legislation and perfect City performance under that legislation.⁹

3.5 Evaluation of Internal Organization and Performance

Appreciation of these external environments for the operation of the City should be matched by an understanding of the organizational nature of the City as a municipal government. Though this also may seem obvious, it is important for evaluation to recognize

that the City is a particular type of complex, large-scale organization, which is a conglomerate of many legislative, executive, and administrative units, each having its own organizational history and life and made up of organizational components that also have their own history, social-psychology, and ways of operating. Winnipeg Transit is an example, as well as any of Council's Committees, or any one of the many semi-autonomous boards, commissions, Trustees, or other units listed in the City's Municipal Manual.

Unicity was created as a new and unique organizational entity thirteen years ago, a mandated combination of one central, large city government organization with 4,003 employees, a Metropolitan Corporation having 1,955 employees, and eleven other municipalities having from 13 to 334 employees; 90 per cent of which were members of 23 different unions or associations, and many of whose contracts for 1972 had to be negotiated (The Urban Affairs Task Force on Personnel, 1971:7 and 22-23). It is very probably nothing short of an organizational miracle, a testimony to the abilities and efforts of numerous politicians and administrators, that Unicity came into operation and developed as smoothly as it did. A forthcoming research report in this series will examine this process of organizational birth and development, as well as evaluating where Unicity is now in terms of organizational development, and how it might be further developed as an organization that is a unique municipal government.

The social psychology of large-scale, public organizations is particularly important as a perspective in this context. An example of the usefulness of applying this perspective is recognition of the function of previously developed and ingrained patterns of handling

civic business: "traditional housekeeping administration" and reactive, item by item decision-making by City Council on the agenda provided by city clerks. These behaviour patterns were found to determine how Unicity Council and Committees actually operated, in contrast to the manner in which they were expected to operate by designers of the legislation (Wichern, 1974). The general conclusion of that research was that the Act prescribed new structures, and the White Paper described new perspectives and patterns of decision-making which did not materialize in practice. Instead, in the absence of any prescription of processes designed to bring about the desired behaviour, the old, established patterns of decision-making continued especially given the demands on officials [at that time] and were taught to new employees and elected officials. This produced "old wine" attitudes and behaviour patterns in the "new wineskin" structure that was provided for in the City of Winnipeg Act.

3.6 Evaluation of Local Governing and Problem-Solving

It is the basic thesis of this evaluation that the original concepts of Unicity, contained in the provincial government's White Paper (released 23 December 1970, excerpted in Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983: Appendix), were ideas not just about Winnipeg as a municipal government, but about how Winnipeg should operate as a local political system--how citizen participation should be stimulated, how greater autonomy and resources should be allocated to the local level, how equity of taxation might be achieved, how area-wide planning and rational policy-making could be achieved. But most of the design to achieve these goals focused on structural reform of Winnipeg's municipal government--not on processes or the social psychology of the local political system. It rested on the

assumption that the new Act, the provincial government's program of implementation, and the structure thereby created could produce the desired behavioural and policy results. It failed to examine its own assumptions or the improbability of the provincial government legislating all the proposed changes, as well as neglecting the social psychology of local officials who would operate the new structures. The evidence for this thesis is found both in the account of the consultants to the government (Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983) and in the accounts by those not involved in the design process (T. Axworthy, 1972; Lightbody, 1978), as well as in the research of the author (Wichern, 1974).

This type of evaluation followed established intellectual patterns of metropolitan reform thinking (Wichern, forthcoming), but bore the particular imprint of Canadian structural and political reform ideas (Plunkett, 1976). What is significant is that the Taraska Committee also adopted this framework for its analysis and recommendations, essentially asking that the potential of the original ideas and design be implemented through revisions to the Act (Committee of Review, 1976).

In this light, it is interesting to note that the primary use of an evaluation may become quite different to that implied by the original terms of reference. For example, the Taraska Committee's work had originated in the mandate contained in Section 660 of the Act, cited above. But its primary focus and "claim to fame" became its effort to fulfill what it viewed as the goal of the original proposals, the establishment of a "modified parliamentary system" of government (Committee, 1976: Part 3). Instead of being legislated into the Act, its primary use has been by those who consistently cite its findings and recommendations, along with references to

certain changes and conditions, as evidence that Unicity is "largely a failure" (Proudfoot summarizing Axworthy's evaluation in Morley, Proudfoot, and Burns, 1980: 178), or "the illusion of reform" (Kiernan and Walker, 1983: 229). Most of these evaluations fail to examine in detail the organizational development of Unicity as an innovation in municipal government. Rather, they evaluate it to the degree it fulfills the expectations created by the initiators of the ideas--that is, the degree to which it creates ideal urban governing and problem-solving.

It is somewhat unnerving to discover that many current discussions and references to evaluation are made in the context of reference to the Taraska Committee's Report and Recommendations, rather than to the amendments and state of affairs since 1976, or to the overall state of Unicity as an urban municipal government just over thirteen years old. The assumption seems to be that we must go back to pick up where the Taraska Committee concluded, without carefully evaluating either the amendments which were the actual changes made to the legislation, or the assumptions which have been identified above. It can only be hoped that the new Review Committee will transcend this preoccupation with metropolitan reform idealism.

3.6.1. Evaluating Metropolitan Reform Ideas

Most of the other evaluations of Unicity are not particularly helpful because they are based on the premise that the performance of Unicity government can and should be what the proponents of metropolitan structural and political reform prescribe. Evaluation is viewed as a process of comparing actual performance with the

perceived potential dictated by assumed results of untried reform prescriptions. For Unicity, these prescriptions include central policymaking by responsible municipal parties, and decentralized participation in general local decision-making and communication through the Communities and the Resident Advisory Groups. Failures to achieve the potential promises of responsible local policymaking and extensive citizen participation are viewed by this type of evaluation as the primary fault of the provincial government which failed "to follow through on certain essential requirements for the new structure, and [its] inability to appreciate the importance of implementation," as well as local "concerns about economic growth (which) contributed to an environment that was not conducive to innovative new thrusts in municipal politics" (Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983: 173 and 180).

This evaluation, and others like it, almost totally neglect any evaluation of their framework for evaluation, or of the assumptions and unrealistic idealism which underlie not only their prescriptions, but their evaluations of why the Unicity experience did not happen as they intended it should. There is little or no evaluation by these evaluators, or by the Taraska Committee, of weaknesses in the empirical and theoretical bases for this kind of reform. But there are numerous problems identified in the literature and research of North American metropolitan reform--which neglects political and other realities (Ostrum, 1972, Wichern, forthcoming). In the case of Winnipeg this takes the form of emphasizing evidences of civic party politics, while neglecting overarching "boosterism" orientations (Wichern, 1983), "the diminishing relevance of ethnic and class conflict" in Winnipeg's civic politics (Kiernan and Walker, 1983: 223), and the increasing significance of local administration and the civic bureaucracy. But these realities are better understood in the context of Winnipeg's political history.

3.7 Evaluating Winnipeg's Local Political History

The purpose here is not to embark on an extensive review of Winnipeg's local political history. That was the subject of an earlier effort on the part of this author (Wichern, 1976). Probably the best overall treatment of this subject in the broader context of Winnipeg's social-economic development is by Artibise (1977). A more focused, if academic treatment, is found in Kaplan (1982), while the shorter review by Kiernan and Walker (1983) identifies a number of important historical themes.

Particularly important, in so far as Unicity is concerned, is the nature and relevance of partisan-ethnic-class divisions and party politics in the municipal governing of Winnipeg. Respected historian Ed Rea successfully argued before the Committee of Review that Winnipeg's continuing political history was dominated by ethnic-class based partisan politics; and the Committee reproduced his research and findings as Appendix IV of its Report (Rea, 1976). Edited versions of this work have since been reprinted in a number of prominent collections (Rea, 1979, 1981). This author has elsewhere identified the limitations of the methodology and the assumptions on which Rea's conclusions rest (Wichern, 1978, 1983). Here it is perhaps sufficient to point to independent collaborating evidence in the conclusions of Kaplan (1982: 484ff), that much of the supposed class-oriented partisan activity was "cultural level politics" in which the supposed protagonists were not as far apart in actual handling of municipal business as their rhetoric and recorded votes suggests. Kaplan argues that the actual ruling elite of Winnipeg politics was a complex coalition of four main elements which "behind the unusual two-party facade...produced policy outputs little different from

those in Montreal and Toronto" (1983: 489). That is, "Unless the left chose to recast some issue within an ideological framework, Council proceeded with its traditional, non-partisan, quasi-judicial resolution of unique cases..."(490).

This pattern of Council decision-making and the apparent dominance of party politics at Winnipeg's City Hall were not altered by Unicity (Wichern, 1972; Rea, 1976, 1979, 1981). To what degree they have been altered since 1977 remains to be determined, and it is an important research question in terms of the ability of the Act, or other possible provincial actions, to produce rational policymaking and party government at City Hall. In other words, some appropriate questions are: what changes in Council decision-making have taken place since 1975-1976, and can further changes in the Act produce the desired results? Or should the attempt to legislate changes be abandoned? These would appear to be key questions which a Provincial Review Committee will have to address, explicitly or implicitly.

A major aspect of Winnipeg's local political history which is overlooked in the focus on party politics is the development of a strong and extensive civic bureaucracy. This began with the expansion of City services in the latter part of the last century, and continued with improvements in materials and technologies requiring greater expertise and more administration after the turn of the century. Winnipeg's conservative, business-dominated government also expanded its municipal activities into Hydro-electric power generation, gravel pits, quarries, and asphalt-making facilities, hospitals, and other endeavors requiring both employees and administrators.

It is significant to note that the only major strike of these employees was in 1918 when the City Council reversed a threat of mass dismissals and settled the dispute peacefully. The next strike was in 1976 when the transit drivers went on strike for higher pay. Research on personnel relations and labour negotiations of the old City suggests that labour was much better organized, and that only under Unicity did the City significantly improve its negotiating capabilities by further bureaucratic expansion and development of its Personnel Department (Zavignac, 1978).

The formal bureaucratic expansion into land-use and transportation planning for the greater Winnipeg area can be traced back at least as far as the creation of a regional planning agency in 1943, which after several transformations became the Metropolitan Planning Commission, and finally attained full bureaucratic status in the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg (Kaplan, 1983: 501). But Metro also meant further bureaucratic expansion and development in the municipal services under its control, especially regional waterworks, sewage treatment, refuse disposal, parks and recreation, road and bridge infrastructure, and transit. Under Unicity further expansions have taken place in existing services and through the creation of new units such as the Budget Bureau and the Chief Commissioner's and Board of Commissioners' operations. A suitable study of the bureaucratic expansion under Unicity remains a research gap to be filled.

In this context of evaluation it seems imperative to examine the present nature of Unicity's administration, and to evaluate the degree to which the elected councillors, many of whom are

part-time officials, can or do run the City; and to what degree the City is actually being directed by administrators and civic employees through their setting of agendas, control of information, making of policies and rules, and their avoidance of certain provisions of the Act. In other words, has an administrative Frankenstein developed? To what degree is the civic bureaucracy controlled and directed by the Mayor and councillors, or do they tend to react to its proposals and recommendations?

On the other hand, what has happened to local party and interest group politics over the period since the last Review? To what degree is there a social-psychological basis in contemporary Winnipeg for local party politics? Or are there other sources of political leadership among elected officials which can give some direction to the civic bureaucracy as well as to the solving of urban problems? Or is Winnipeg political history developing in different directions from those associated with its past?

3.8 Evaluation of "Other Relevant Matters"

Returning to the initial framework for evaluation, Section 660 of the Act, we find that the Review Committee is also "...to consider such other relevant matters as the Lieutenant Governor in Council may prescribe...." In the case of the current Committee these "other relevant matters" include examination of "...the act's effectiveness in five areas: distribution of powers between the city and province, distribution of powers for reconciling local and citywide problems, relationships between city and adjacent municipalities, city planning, and citizen participation in decisions" (Winnipeg Free Press, 29 June 1984, 3).

The first three words of this quotation are quite significant: "the act's effectiveness..." implies evaluating the adequacy of the legislation in terms of some standard of "effectiveness" in each of the five areas mentioned. To develop and apply such standards is not a simple matter. Most of the studies of public organization effectiveness are undertaken in regard to the delivery of services (for example, arrival times for ambulances, fire, or police vehicles; and quality of the service given once arrived). But the above quoted terms of reference appear to be more general and involve interorganizational interactions which are much harder to evaluate with controlled research. However, such research should be undertaken. Public and private hearings should not be a substitute for such research.

3.9 What is Being Evaluated?: A Summary

It clearly is crucial in evaluating Unicity not only to be aware of the focus of evaluation, but also the political and intellectual frameworks within which the evaluation is being undertaken. This section has attempted to identify and illuminate the nature of both of these dimensions of evaluation.

4.0 EVALUATION FROM OTHER PERSPECTIVES

A number of seemingly less practical, but intellectually relevant, perspectives might also generate evaluation. Among these include the several prominent approaches to metropolitan reform. From the traditional metropolitan reform perspective, Unicity is an

ideal opportunity to test propositions on the performance of reformed metropolitan government (Erie, Kirlin, and Rabinovitz, 1972). Its performance might be compared with other "experiments in metropolitan government" (Horan and Taylor, 1977). The findings on propositions from the traditional reform model might be compared with what Unicity's experience says about propositions generated by the conservative political economy--public choice--model of metropolitan governance (Bish, 1971; Ostrum, 1972; Bird and Slack, 1983). Finally, what does the Unicity record say with regard to "radical political economy" perspectives on metropolitan reform (Magnusson, 1981)? These are probably outside the scope of provincial review, but very relevant to contemporary intellectual understanding of urban phenomena, especially in North America (Wichern, forthcoming).

In addition to all of these foci for evaluation, there are a number of issues that continually arise in evaluations of Unicity, and which probably will be themes again in the current Review. The most central of these concerns is the issue of local political leadership. The White Paper and Unicity's designers placed their intellectual faith in election of the Mayor by Council, and felt the cause was lost when the government failed to legislate that aspect of their design (Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983: 78, 99, 176). The Taraska Committee went farther in proposing the Mayor be Leader of the dominant faction on Council, and that in addition to him/her, the Council be required to select a Chief Critic (leader of the opposition), and a Speaker--a "modified parliamentary system" (Committee of Review, 1976: Part IV, Chapter 1). If these recommendations for achieving political leadership are rejected, what alternatives are available? Is the present arrangement providing the political leadership which Winnipeggers can and should

expect of their Mayor and councillors? Informal interviews with councillors and citizens suggest that the current Committee will again hear extensive dissatisfaction with the current situation.

Another issue which may arise and stimulate evaluation is the issue of inner city vs. suburbs. This concern is mentioned, along with political leadership, in many of the existing evaluations (L. Axworthy, 1980: 207; Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983: 169-171). The Taraska Committee said little about this issue. Instead, it focused on a related issue: the number of wards (and therefore, councillors), and communities (and therefore, Community Committees [CC] and Resident Advisory Groups [RAG]). Its proposed reduction to 39 councillors was modified by the Government to 29, but its recommendation of reducing from 12 to 6 the number of CC's and RAG's was followed. An important research question for contemporary evaluation of citizen participation is "what was the impact or the effect of these changes?" Another is, "what might be the impact of various types of changes which could be made to the Act?" This latter question takes us into the fascinating area of futures evaluation. Unfortunately, it does not appear that enough of this type of evaluation was done with the previously adopted changes, or it was done but was superceded by other considerations. In any case, the issue of decentralized structures and forces cannot be avoided and must be addressed by evaluation.

A final issue not previously mentioned, is the nature of the Unicity's legislative organization: Council, its Standing Committees, the Community Committees, the Executive Policy Committee, and the various *ad hoc* committees, boards, and commissions. There still seems to be extensive concern about the way in which all of these bodies do or do not interact smoothly and responsibly in the

legislative processes, and especially in budgeting. A focus of concern appears to be the role of the Executive Policy Committee in its Act-prescribed co-ordination of the work of the Standing Committees (Section 33), which has come to mean its review of Standing Committee reports and often the presentation to Council of its recommendations rather than (and in opposition to or revision of) Standing Committee decisions. No doubt these issues will arise in the course of hearings, but they deserve systematic background research as well.

5.0. HOW SHOULD THE EVALUATION BE UNDERTAKEN?

It is not the intent here to prescribe the particulars of a provincial review, or even of evaluation research. Rather, the focus is on how the quality of evaluation can be improved. The first step has been modeled in the preceeding section: systematic examination of what is to be evaluated. What that section did not do was to proceed from initial review of alternative foci to prioritization and selection of evaluation methods. This can only be done by those undertaking the evaluation within particular contexts of time, resources, and agreed upon terms of reference. By this point, it will be clear to the reader that the current Review Committee is constrained from evaluating assessment, and ultimately will be judged at least to some degree on what changes (or lack of changes) to the Act are undertaken as a result of its work. In contrast, the scope of the evaluation pursued in the research of which this Report is a part can be broader in scope, not just to include such aspects of the Act as assessment, but to include evaluation of previous evaluations and of the evaluation process itself.

The second step, then, is to identify the particular goals and the kinds of skills and resources necessary to generate appropriate standards as well as the information to properly assess performance in relation to those standards. For Unicity evaluation, there is only one Act. But there are lawyers and legal draftspersons who might apply their expertise to a professional and detailed commentary on the 688 Sections to the Act. While this dimension of evaluation is in process, the Act should be translated into French, if it has not been already. If so, the adequacy of the translation should be assessed. For institutional performance, systematic primary and secondary research is needed. The fact that researchers were hired to conduct background research on several of the five areas mentioned above is laudatory; the fact that they were students writing their own terms of reference for research and pursuing their subjects mostly on their own was not (this was prior to appointment of the Review Committee).

Innovative primary research can provide systematic evidence of compliance or non-compliance with provisions of the Act. Careful observation and interviewing can document patterns of behaviour and attitudes in the participants at meetings. Investigation of case studies can be very time consuming, and the results can be questioned as to their representativeness. In many different ways, from many different sources, a primary research base should be developed.

At the same time, the standards for evaluation should be set and kept in focus. While the Act cannot be compared with other Acts like it to any great extent, Unicity can be compared with other similar sized cities in Canada, and especially Edmonton and Calgary which have some major similarities with it in administration and

some in legislative organization. As noted above, Unicity should also be evaluated in terms of its stage of development as a large-scale organization, as well as its performance as an innovation. Its social psychology can be researched by systematic interviewing of employees and officials, appointed and elected.

The methods used by the Taraska Committee are suitable for the next stage to be mentioned here: the holding of hearings for interested individuals or groups to make submissions on their concerns and ideas. Unfortunately, that Committee selected from those submissions limited quotations which supported views apparently held or developed by the Committee members. The problem with this approach is that it neglects basic realities which may not emerge in public hearings, as well as a large amount of oral and textual testimony which is "shelved" (as the Committee's recommendations may also be). In the acknowledgements, the Taraska Committee mentions written briefs of "hundreds of pages," "200 hours" of oral presentations, and transcripts of which "ran to over 3,000 pages." Some of these are in the Provincial Library, but access to the main body of materials in the Archives is restricted to those who obtain Ministerial approval. So the evidence, should one wish to consult it, is not readily available. In any case, how representative are the submissions?

A better scenario might be to accumulate background information, both primary and secondary, on the subject matter being focused upon. Then the hearings could initially at least be directed toward consideration of particular foci. General invitations could be given for written submissions, but emphasis might be placed on brevity and point formats.

Another effective way of focusing responses is shown by the White Paper on Unicity issued in late 1970. It served as the basis for public meetings while the drafting of legislation was proceeding. Various alternatives to agreed upon problems should be expressed and responses sought from both experts and the public. Futures evaluations have developed through such technologies as the Delphi technique, and have achieved some degree of success to warrant consideration in testing certain major changes; for example, "what if the Community Committees and Resident Advisory Groups were abolished?" or "what if the Executive Policy Committee's right to supercede Standing Committee recommendations to Council was removed from the Act? " These are the types of questions that might be addressed to experts and civic officials.

6.0 CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

It is with anticipation that we can look forward to evaluations of Unicity, both in the volumes which will follow in this series, and in the work of the provincial Review Committee. Wherever those reviews may take us, and however Unicity may evolve in the future, it is abundantly clear that the last word of evaluation has not yet been written on the experience of Unicity and that much remains to be studied in order to finally reach a satisfactory evaluation of not only where it has been, but where it should be going.

NOTES

1. Examples of this prominence include consideration of the Winnipeg experience by John P. Robarts in his Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto (1976-77) and extensive reference to, and replicating of, Winnipeg concepts by the City of Edmonton in its metropolitan area (1979-81). National references include those in Hickey, n.d., and Higgins, 1977. American interest is exemplified by coverage in Birkhead, 1974 and the remarks of Scott and Jones, 1983. International coverage is found in Gunlicks, 1981 and Rowat, 1980. The innovation context is best stated in Morley, Proudfoot, and Burns, 1980.
2. This was first announced in November, 1982; see "Province to Embark on Major Review of Winnipeg Act," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 November 1982, 3. The composition of the Committee and its terms of reference were announced 28 June 1984. See "Tax Assessment Policy Off Limits for Review Panel," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 29 June 1984, 3. As the headline suggests, the terms of reference excluded Assessment, Part VII of the Act. It will be included in the evaluation which this Report begins. Five areas designated for evaluation are discussed in the section on what is being evaluated.
3. Brownstone and Plunkett give their evaluation of, and opinions about reasons for, the "conservative" nature of the 1977 amendments on pages 138-139.
4. A recently published introduction to this subject is Makuch, 1983. The more comprehensive reference source is Rogers, continuously updated.
5. Examination of the subsequent amendments to the Act does not suggest that this principle was adopted or heeded in most changes to the Act. A paper in this series will address revision of the Act in the light of the research reported in previous Reports.
6. This apparent non-compliance has contributed to what one local official is calling "one of the most critical problems ever faced by the city," involving rollbacks on assessments and taxes for certain downtown properties ("City Plans to Appeal Tax Rollback Ruling," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 29 June 1984, 1).

7. For contemporary introduction to this context, consult Tindal and Tindal, 1984 or Makuch, 1983; see also Plunkett and Betts, 1978.

8. Thus common speech, news media, and some books refer to Canada's metropolitan areas, containing literally hundreds of local governments as "cities." For example, this sense of the word is used by Nader, 1975 and Magnusson and Sancton, 1983. The latter authors focus more on the central cities which give the urban areas their names.

9. What it does involve is beyond the scope of this report, and is the subject of a vast literature. Innovative insights into this problem as well as Lloyd Axworthy's evaluation of Unicity are found in Morley, Proudfoot, and Burns, 1980. Local perspectives on innovative urban problem-solving will be found in other Institute publications.

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