

*The Decentralization of Social Services:
Canadian Responses*

97

By

Diane L. Gray

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THE DECENTRALIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

CANADIAN RESPONSES

BY

DIANE L. GRAY

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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This thesis explores the administrative challenges that the provincial and local governments will have to address in moving beyond the current crisis of the welfare state. The argument that Canada is shifting away from state-centred social policy structures towards a more community based model of social service provision is developed and supported by specific examples from Manitoba and Alberta. Arguments and evidence incorporated into each study will move beyond advocacy and provide reasons for the decentralization and consideration of alternative program delivery methods. The fiscal and administrative decentralization that has occurred to date, has not been accompanied by political decentralization, which is fundamental to community empowerment.

This thesis is based upon the premise that the political decisions to decentralize have already been made, as witnessed through a number of social policy shifts, including the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Because the political rationale to decentralize provides the theoretical framework within which to discuss administrative decentralization, this thesis takes the practical public administration perspective on how to implement the policy changes and create effective administrative systems for doing so.

Conclusions are drawn in the thesis, including the fact that public policy and program design cannot be accomplished effectively by centralized planning or even centralized coordination of planning. However, there needs to be an effective administrative system established so as to avoid potential problems with accountability that may come with a decentralized social service structure. Public servants, and not unaccountable volunteers, should continue to be responsible for the provision and administrative implementation of social policy. A balance can be achieved with an organizational design that establishes policy development and program design at the centre, and policy implementation and program delivery in the field by public servants who exercise their discretion on the basis of delegated authority.

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Decentralized Social Services - An Introduction

Introduction

In the last few years, much has been written about the demise of Canada's welfare state. Academics and newspaper reporters have all discussed the federal government's apparent abandonment of its social welfare responsibilities. Headlines such as "Cuts to Hurt Working Poor," "All Must Share The Pain," and "Erosion of Funds Feared" have underscored the paramountcy of deficit reduction and resulting funding cuts. The purpose of this thesis is not to revisit the golden years of the welfare state, nor is it to specifically lament the withdrawal of federal funding for Canada's social programs, but instead it will focus on some of the specific challenges that all levels of government, federal, provincial, local and Aboriginal, will face in the coming years.

These challenges encompass the inclusion of Aboriginal governments in Canada's political, financial and administrative structures for the provision of services, the devolution of fiscal responsibilities from the federal government to the provinces coinciding with the demise of the Canada Assistance Plan and Established Programs Financing, and the requirement of provincial, local and Aboriginal governments to meet the pressures of responding to an increased need for services with decreased funding. All levels of government must consider the fact that past political structures have concentrated the power for determining policy in the hands of a few, and that demands for inclusion in future political structures by women, Aboriginal people, persons with

disabilities and visible minorities must be addressed. Added to the mix, is the increased utilization of alternative program delivery and financing¹ and the implications that this paradigm shift has for social services. How each level of political administration meets these challenges will ultimately determine the status of Canada's social programs.

This thesis explores the administrative challenges that the provincial and local governments will have to address in moving beyond the current crisis of the welfare state. The argument that Canada is moving away from state-centred social policy structures towards a more community based model of social service provision is developed and supported by specific examples from both Alberta and Manitoba.² Alberta was chosen as a provincial case study because it is a province that is in the midst of implementing a community based model of social service provision. What is key to the Alberta example is the process used in determining the move to community-based social service delivery. Furthermore, this province integrates a number of alternative program

¹The term alternative program delivery and financing is used throughout the thesis to mean the variety of approaches governments are now taking to delivery programs. Alternative program delivery moves service beyond the traditional direct delivery method. For more information on alternative program delivery, please see chapter 3.

²The two studies, Manitoba and Alberta, that are offered as supporting examples are not specific case studies per se. In both situations, but particularly in Alberta, the chapters provide a "snapshot" of events in progress. Because the programs and general direction of delivery is just in the process of unfolding, the information in the studies is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive. They are useful in that they point out potential areas for conflict and concern as evaluated at this time.

delivery structures into their community based model. There is an interest in using alternative program delivery methods by all provinces and the Alberta study serves as an useful example of how the province is incorporating them into a decentralized model of social service provision.

Changes in how Native child welfare is administered in Manitoba are also examined through a case study. This example provides an illustration of the types of problems that can arise in community based delivery structures. Manitoba was chosen as the case example for the decentralization of Native child welfare for several reasons. The first is that First Nation communities in Manitoba have been selected to participate in a pilot project. The project has resulted in a "Framework Agreement" which sets the parameters for the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) and the transfer of jurisdictional authority to First Nation communities for a number of programs, including child welfare. This situation provides an illustration of both administrative and political decentralization. The second reason for selecting Native child welfare in Manitoba as a case study is that the province transferred administrative authority for Native child welfare to regional agencies in the 1980s and has had over 10 years to identify problems and issues. Alberta, while they are in the implementation stages of community based delivery of child and family services, has not yet passed administrative authority for Native child welfare to First Nation communities.

Arguments and evidence incorporated into each case study will move beyond advocacy and provide reasons for the decentralization and consideration of alternative program delivery methods. The fiscal and administrative decentralization that has occurred in both case studies, has generally not been accompanied by political decentralization, which is fundamental to community empowerment. This thesis is based upon the premise that the political decisions to decentralize have already been made and evidence supporting these decision is clearly illustrated in this chapter. Because the political decision to decentralize provides the theoretical framework within which to discuss decentralization, this thesis takes the practical public administration perspective on how to implement policy and create effective administrative systems for doing so. Therefore, while the political direction for decentralization is introduced in this chapter, it is provided for purposes of providing a framework in which to evaluate administrative responses to decentralization.

Overview

This chapter provides an introduction and overview of the financial and political environment in which social policy change is taking place.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for the remainder of the thesis by developing the concept of decentralization, and describes what specific challenges all levels of government will face when meeting the issues associated with the decentralization of social services.

Provincial, local and Aboriginal governments need to be clear, as much as this is possible in a federal system of government, as to exactly what their responsibilities are, whether they have the political authority to implement changes, and what financial responsibilities will be maintained by the federal government or assumed by the other levels. The introduction also specifies the various forms of decentralization that can occur: constitutional, fiscal and administrative. This discussion is particularly useful when analyzing chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 2: Local Government's Response discusses how local communities and governments may be the optimum locale for social policy development. It develops the local government model of service provision and provides examples of community empowerment in the Province of Manitoba. The chapter also offers criticisms of the local development model and identifies problems that could occur when moving away from a state-centred model of social welfare to a more community based model. Chapter 2 lays the groundwork for the next two chapters, that serve as case studies of social policy development and implementation at the local level.

Chapter 3: Alberta's Initiatives introduces the forms of alternative service delivery being utilized in Canada and discusses how the private sector has created a normative paradigm for the delivery of social services. It notes how the province of Alberta has recently decentralized its administrative responsibility for social policy development and

implementation to regional boards. This chapter will provide the reasons for the change and review the progress that Alberta has made in this regard. This study will be compared to the next chapter, a case study on First Nation child welfare in Manitoba.

Chapter 4: The First Nation Child Welfare Model discusses decentralization specifically with regards to Native child welfare. The province of Manitoba has delegated administrative authority to Native Regional Child Welfare agencies for the delivery of child welfare programming.

Manitoba provides an excellent example of problems that can develop when local communities are administratively empowered, yet not all members of a community are included in the decision making process. It also shows how limited decentralization is not sufficient to make substantive changes to social policy.

Chapter 5: Evaluation provides an evaluation of the issues raised in Chapters 3 and 4, in terms of how decentralization has met (or not met) peoples' needs. The analysis used in evaluating the case studies is introduced in this chapter and then applied specifically to the case studies. It is concluded that the initiatives have mixed results, which need to be considered carefully if these measures towards decentralization are to be applied in other provinces. The chapter ties the initiatives presented in chapters 3 and 4 into the larger Canadian context. It concludes that social policy reform is a tenuous and complex

topic requiring political will for successful implementation. Political will with a consideration for accountability and transparency can transform community based structures into meaningful locales for social policy development and implementation.

Social Services Terminology

The focus of the thesis is how the delivery of social services is changing. It is useful to provide a definition of how the term social services will be used. The term social services is used throughout this thesis to encompass income security and personal social services. Income security programs are defined as "any federal, provincial or municipal program having as its main objective the provision of direct financial benefits to individuals and families in Canada."³ Examples include demogrant programs such as old age pensions that pay benefits to citizens in a defined age range regardless of their financial situation.⁴ Demogrant programs are planned and administered by the federal government. An example of the second type of income security program, social insurance programs, is the Canada Pension Plan and Unemployment Insurance, which are again

³Health and Welfare Canada (1987), "Inventory of Income Security Programs in Canada," page 1.

⁴In the 1996 federal budget it was announced that old age pensions would be changed and tied more closely to income.

provided by the federal government.⁵

The third type, income tested programs, includes the Child Tax Benefit and the Guaranteed Income Supplement for senior citizens. Both of these are federal programs but a number of provincially administered income supplementation programs have also been developed. For example, the province of Manitoba provides shelter allowances to single parent families and senior citizens. The fourth type of income security programs is the needs-tested programs, which are administered by the provincial and municipal governments and the costs are shared by the federal government.⁶

The personal social services are programs designed to support individuals and families and protect vulnerable individuals such as children. The personal social services include both statutory and non-statutory programs. Statutory services, such as child welfare programs, are required by legislation, while typical non-statutory programs include counselling, daycare as well as substitute care facilities for those individuals who can no longer remain at home or live independently. Personal social services are characterized

⁵One exception to social insurance programs is Worker's Compensation which is provided by the provincial government.

⁶Until April 1, 1996 the costs were shared with the federal government through the Canada Assistance Plan. The Canada Health and Social Transfer replaces CAP as the federal funding method on April 1, 1996.

by face-to-face interaction between the service provider and the consumer.⁷ The focus of the remainder of this thesis is the personal social services.

Background

In 1994, the federal government announced its intentions to study and revamp Canada's social programs. Proposed plans to bring about massive changes to various programs including unemployment insurance, welfare, job training and child care were released to the general public for input and comment.⁸ The dialogue concerning social programs was welcomed by academics, social activists and the business community alike, all reporting that there was need for revision, albeit for different reasons. The intention was a complete overhaul of Canada's social programs, including federal-provincial financial arrangements. Canadians should recall that a similar exercise was attempted in the late 1970s by Marc Lalonde, but it eventually was discarded. Shortly after this first failed attempt, the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (MacDonald Commission) examined Canada's future economic prospects and nervously admitted that the welfare state might now need restructuring more than it needs

⁷Brian Wharf, "Social Services," *Urban Policy Issues Canadian Perspectives*, Richard Loreto and Trevor Price (eds), (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc.), 1990, pages 170-173.

⁸Canada, Ministry of Human Resources Development, "Improving Social Security in Canada," A Discussion Paper, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada), 1994.

extensions.⁹ The striking result of the MacDonald Commission was that now provincial politicians began to use the language of flexibility and efficiency instead of universality when discussing social programs.¹⁰ Plans for reform were abandoned, just as they were in 1995, when over-riding concerns for deficit reduction and the accommodation of Quebec within Canada took precedence.¹¹

From the outset, the social security review was caught in the tensions existing among three separate agendas: the reform of social policy, the reduction of the federal deficit and the accommodation of Quebec within Canada.¹² The social reform agenda is driven by the conviction that the social programs we inherited from the postwar generation are now out of date and need to be restructured. Key priorities included a coordinated restructuring of unemployment insurance, social assistance, training and education in order to equip Canadians for the global economy and to promote adjustment in the economy as a whole. In addition, our transfer programs needed to be redesigned to more

⁹Canada, "Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada," Volume 1, (MacDonald Commission) (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada) 1985, page 75.

¹⁰Derek Hum and Wayne Simpson, "Reducing Spending and Increasing Equity: How Far Can Refundable Tax Credits Take Us?" Canadian Public Administration, Volume 38, No. 4, (Winter) 1995, page 599.

¹¹Larry Welsh and Sarah Binder, "Reform In The Cards, But It's In The Back Seat," Winnipeg Free Press, March 14, 1995, page A3.

¹²Murray Donnelly, "Federalism Sins Rectified," Winnipeg Free Press, March 14, 1996, page A11.

effectively respond to child poverty and the intense financial stresses being borne by many young families. This broad agenda was developed through a long series of reports and studies over the last decade and has engaged both federal and provincial policy-makers.¹³

The deficit reduction agenda is driven by other imperatives. It reflects the conviction that the level of accumulated federal debt is unsustainable and is eroding the prospects for investment, increased productivity and job growth in Canada.¹⁴ Moreover, the burden of debt-financing is crippling government. In 1993-94, interest payments on the federal debt were \$38 billion, pre-empting one-third of all federal revenues and making budget planning very sensitive to fluctuations in interest rates.¹⁵ The significant growth in personal taxes in Canada during the 1980s has convinced policy makers that there is little room for further tax increases, and attention has therefore focused primarily on the expenditure side. However, as Table 1 makes painfully clear, the deficit which was \$42

¹³Demonstration projects assisting single parents to get "off" welfare and find employment are under way on a jointly funded bases in New Brunswick and British Columbia.

¹⁴Canada, Ministry of Finance, "A New Framework for Economic Policy," (Ottawa: Department of Finance), 1994, page 78.

¹⁵In 1996-97, interest payments on the federal debt have risen to \$47.8 billion. Source: "Budget Breakdown," Winnipeg Free Press, March 7, 1996, page A3.

billion in 1993-94¹⁶ was much too large to be tackled through cuts in discretionary spending alone. In this context, any significant effort to eliminate the deficit puts tremendous pressure on the two biggest categories of program spending: transfers to persons and transfers to other levels of government.

Table 1.¹⁷ Structure of Federal Public Spending, 1993-94.¹⁸

Component	Billions of Dollars
Interest on Debt	38.0
Transfers to Persons	42.4
Transfers to Other Governments	27.6
All Other Spending	50.0
Total	158.0

¹⁶The deficit, due to concerted spending cuts, fell to \$37.5 billion in 1994-95; and \$32.7 billion in 1995-96. Project deficit for 1996-97 is \$24.3 billion. Source Winnipeg Free Press, Thursday, March 9, 1996, page A1.

¹⁷Keith Banting, "The Social Policy Review: Policy-Making In A Semi-Sovereign Society," in Canadian Public Administration, Volume 38, No. 2, (Summer), 1995, page 285.

¹⁸The structure of federal spending is provided for this time frame, so as to put into context the deficit reduction agenda and the justification for how the social reform agenda became sidetracked.

Federal deficit reduction measures have seen the gradual withdrawal of funding. In fact, The Caledon Institute notes that by far the deepest cuts in social programs have been to federal transfer payments to the provinces and territories in the areas of health and post-secondary education.¹⁹ Dan Lett in the Winnipeg Free Press, equates the passing of the fiscal buck as a dance craze sweeping the land, as politicians at the provincial and federal level try to choreograph major spending cuts, job cuts, and reductions in the budget deficits which have become the curse of modern government.²⁰ Political parties, such as Ontario Premier Mike Harris' "common sense revolution", and Ralph Klein's "Alberta Advantage" have been supported by public demand for less government spending, and ultimately less government. At an Institute of Public Administration national seminar in 1994, David Cameron noted:

"that our present straightened financial circumstances appear to suppress or muffle social policy debate at the national level, yet foster public discussion of fiscal policy and incite a good deal of political conflict about the operation of federalism itself."²¹

The debate and discussion over the types of social services government should provide was ultimately displaced by the public's desire for budget-cutting exercises.

¹⁹Ken Battle and Sherri Torjman, "Federal Social Programs: Setting the Record Straight," Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Spring, 1993, page 5.

²⁰Dan Lett, "Governments Pass the Fiscal Buck," in the Winnipeg Free Press, November 15, 1995, page A18.

²¹David Cameron, "Decentralization In An Era Of Fiscal Restraint," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 37, No. 3, (Fall) 1994 page 440.

The third agenda, the accommodation of Quebec within Canada, is as old as the country itself. Nationalist forces within Quebec politics have challenged federal leadership in social policy since the days of the Tremblay Commission in the mid-1950s, and since then politics of social policy in Canada have been fuelled as much by intergovernmental struggles over jurisdiction as by substantive differences over program content.²² Jurisdictional conflicts came to a head again during the constitutional negotiations of the late 1980s and 1990s. In the aftermath of the defeat of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, support for separatism soared in Quebec, and federalist forces in the province responded with a call for significant decentralization, including the transfer of all social programs to the province. The jurisdictional issues simply flowed into non-constitutional politics.

The social policy component of the federal budget tabled in 1995, shifted the balance of the agendas dramatically towards deficit reduction and decentralization. Officially, the budget simply set in place a framework within which social policy reform was to proceed. In practice, however, the new framework leaves only limited fiscal and political room for the reform agenda. "The changes have made the tight fiscal parameters for the reform process explicit, and they have reduced the role of the federal government in the

²²Murray Donnelly, "Breakup Rules Must Be Clear," Winnipeg Free Press, March 15, 1996, page A15.

definition of Canada's social future."²³

The political response to the need for deficit reduction measures includes reductions of real dollars transferred to the provinces for social program spending.²⁴ (See Table 2). Established Programs Financing (EPF) and the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) are to be consolidated into one block grant to the provinces - the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), effective April 1, 1996 and the combined cash transfer is to be cut significantly. Although the changes do not alter the principles set out in the Canada Health Act, several of the conditions embedded in the Canada Assistance Plan disappear in the transition to the CHST,²⁵ leaving provinces with greater flexibility to redefine social assistance and social services. "But free rein over social programs comes at a price: The provinces will lose a combined \$2.8 billion in federal funding this year and \$4.5 billion the next."²⁶ Under this program, the federal government reduces its presence in various areas, such as health care, post-secondary education and the cost-shared

²³Keith G. Banting, *Op Cit.*, page 286.

²⁴Edward Greenspon, "Provincial Cash Transfer Cut By \$700 Million For Two Years," Globe and Mail, March 7, 1996, page A10.

²⁵CAP required that provinces provide assistance unconditionally to anyone in need. This principle is no longer in force, and provinces are now free to make their social assistance recipients work for their benefits. Maintained under the CHST was the principle that provinces can not impose a residency requirement. Since the CHST was announced in the 1995 budget, some provinces have already been pursuing policies that were not allowed under CAP.

²⁶Margaret Philip, "Last Shared Cost Program Scrapped," Globe and Mail, Saturday, March 30, 1996, page A5.

arrangement for social programs provided under CAP, and transfers control for spending in these areas to the provinces.

A review of the intergovernmental agreements known as Established Programs Financing, and The Canada Assistance Plan payments is beneficial to the discussion of the new Canada Health and Social Transfer. EPF, CAP and equalization payments form the basis of the federal government's fiscal transfers to the provinces. Arduous intergovernmental negotiations resulted in the passage of the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act in 1977. The Act brought into operation Established Programs Financing (EPF) which became the vehicle for the federal government to share a significant portion of the costs of provincially legislated programs, with the important exception of the Canada Assistance Plan. Under its complexities, EPF was based:

- (1) Payment of "block grants" based on a per capita amount, equal across the country, which were to grow independently of program costs, in line with growth in the economy as measured by GNP;
- (2) The block grants were funded in two ways: first, by the federal government reducing, by a certain percentage, its collection of certain taxes; this was expressed as the federal government giving up "tax points" to the province. The federal government transferred to the provinces 13.5 personal income tax points (tax points on basic federal tax) and one

corporate income tax point.²⁷ Both tax points are equalized in value in a manner consistent with the national equalization formula. Second, a cash transfer consisting of the difference between the total entitlement and the value of the equalized tax points transferred to the provinces would be made to the provinces.²⁸

3) The federal government insisted that both the block grants and the amounts represented by the conceded tax points be accounted for and publicly acknowledged as federal contributions to meeting the expenditures of provinces in health care.

Under the Canada Assistance Plan, the federal government cost-shared with the provinces, on a fifty-fifty basis, the costs of eligible income maintenance and social service programs delivered by the province.²⁹ The federal government payments reflected the program costs of provincial government which in turn were determined by the needs of the provincial populations and the ability of the provincial governments to provide

²⁷Many provinces feel that the "tax transfer" portion should not be considered a federal transfer. The tax points are now part of provincial taxation and federal taxes have been reduced. The tax points do not enter the federal expenditure or deficit accounts except for associated equalization. However, the federal government continues to count the amount generated by these tax points as a transfer payment.

²⁸Province of Manitoba, 1991, "The 1991 Manitoba Budget," Budget Paper D, page 3.

²⁹In the past few years, the federal government had "capped" CAP to three provinces, Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, reducing their share of the expenditures to approximately 23 cents for each dollar spent by these provinces on social programs.

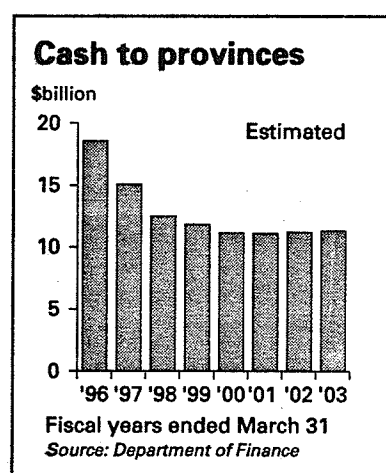
funding.

The CHST block funding arrangement is seen as a way for the federal government to gain control over social spending because the plan eliminates CAP, the last of the major federal funding programs driven by demand.³⁰ A block funding arrangement allows Ottawa to determine funding through a pre-established formula, instead of being vulnerable to fluctuations in the number of people requiring assistance through various social programs. In return for reduced funding, the provinces will receive increased flexibility to determine how their block fund is spent. Increased provincial autonomy vis-a-vis the federal government has long been the goal of many of the provinces. In fact, it appears that the change to unconditional block funding will provide the devolution of power to the provinces that years of constitutional negotiations could not bring about.

³⁰Dan Lett, "Erosion of Funds Feared," Winnipeg Free Press, Tuesday, February 14, 1995, page A2.

Table 2. Cash Transfer to Provinces, 1996-2003³¹

Cash transfers to provinces								
\\$million. Fiscal year								
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Nfld	410	341	281	263	244	239	235	233
PEI	87	71	60	57	53	53	53	54
NS	625	515	429	405	380	377	376	377
NB	489	402	332	314	295	293	293	294
Quebec	5,504	4,583	3,876	3,644	3,406	3,343	3,304	3,275
Ontario	6,271	4,979	4,072	3,860	3,635	3,662	3,720	3,799
Manitoba	730	599	496	469	441	439	440	444
Saskatchewan	624	510	418	396	373	371	373	377
Alberta	1,477	1,173	956	913	867	882	904	934
BC	2,248	1,813	1,517	1,457	1,389	1,408	1,437	1,473
NWT	50	42	36	33	30	29	29	29
Yukon	23	19	17	16	14	14	14	15
Total	18,538	15,047	12,488	11,826	11,129	11,111	11,180	11,303



There are a number of apparent implications to this move to block funding. Jesse Vorst, a University of Manitoba economist, has said that there are very real indications that under a total block-funding system, income assistance programs would suffer because

³¹Globe and Mail, March 7, 1996, page A10.

more money would be directed into areas that are politically attractive.³² Announced as a footnote to the 1995 Manitoba provincial budget, was the projected cumulative loss in federal transfers of \$391 million.³³ Internal government predictions indicate that the new Canadian Health and Social Transfer will shrink provincial resources for social programming by 17 percent the first year and 20 percent the next. In real dollars, this is a loss of \$265 million, from \$750 million this year to \$485 million in 1997-98.³⁴

The Caledon Institute of Social Policy warns that combining the money intended for welfare and social services into the same fund with health and post-secondary education is almost as bad as providing no money at all. It is believed that welfare and social services will get lost in the mix, and will never have the importance accorded to services intended for the general population. Caledon predicts that the end of federal cost-sharing under CAP, by which the federal government was able to compel provincial spending on people in need through its 50 cent dollars, means there will be no more guarantee of a safety net in Canada.³⁵ It has been suggested that the Canada Health and Social Transfer will trigger a war of competing social interests.

³²Frances Russell, "Balanced Budget Bad News for Province," Winnipeg Free Press, Saturday, March 11, 1995, page A7.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴Dan Lett, "Cut First, Mend Later On," Winnipeg Free Press, Thursday, March 7, 1996, page B2.

³⁵Frances Russell, "Balanced Budget Bad New For The Province," *Op Cit.*

Accompanying this form of financial decentralization, is the growing inability of the provinces to make up lost revenues. Growing political concern about provincial deficits and debt is one of the clearest indications of the reality that the federal government has decided to shift responsibility away from Ottawa.³⁶ With the reluctance of Ottawa to engage in substantive social policy reform, serious discussion of the trimming and reforming of social services gets dispersed to the provinces and local communities where the direct encounter between citizen and public service occurs.

Provincial budgets are under severe pressure in their own right, and provincial governments are already engaging in cost-cutting exercises.³⁷ The demise of federal involvement in social policy, traditionally the backbone of national social services, creates a multitude of new challenges for provincial governments. How each provincial government responds to these pressures will ultimately be determined through a combination of ideology, need and ability to pay. For example in Manitoba, the provincial government has committed itself to creating a balanced budget. By passing balanced budget legislation in 1995, the Filmon government reduced the flexibility Manitoba has to respond to short-term and long-term economic developments.

³⁶David Cameron, *Op Cit.*, page 440.

³⁷John Douglas, "Plan Tackle Debt Ahead of Schedule," Winnipeg Free Press, March 7, 1996.

The reduction in federal transfer payments will further limit the choices the government has in responding to shortfalls. As Paul Thomas aptly points out, budgetary processes are already riddled with pressures from interest groups anxious to obtain or to protect the benefits received from government. With the creation of a fixed pool of money, the lobbying will intensify. Groups that are better organized, better financed and more politically sophisticated will have the advantage. Social policy groups will be more vulnerable to cutbacks, especially since governments have already cut their core funding to engage in advocacy work.³⁸ The Manitoba government is forcing itself into a situation where it will have to make major cuts in social program areas, or off-load some of its financial burden onto municipalities and non-profit organizations working in the community.

Combining the reduced federal transfer payments with the balanced budget legislation forces the Manitoba provincial government to be more creative in how it provides social services to its clients. One answer could be simply to slash social spending and lay-off civil servants.³⁹ However, the general public's responses to proposed cuts to health care in the province have been met with outrage and antagonism. The gap between public

³⁸Paul Thomas, "Bill A Simple Solution," Winnipeg Free Press, Thursday, March 16, 1995, page A7.

³⁹A telling example is the proposed contracting out of home care services in Manitoba. Over 1600 home care workers will be laid-off through the process. The money that the government saves by contracting out services will be due to the lower wages paid by private sector home care companies.

expectations and governmental capacity to maintain existing social programs is large and growing. How successfully governments are able to communicate to the public the fact that they can no longer afford certain services will determine future expectations. A politically astute government will need to offer the public more than cutbacks, it will need to construct a way to meet the growing challenges of our economic and social system.

The welfare state was not constructed in a single day, nor was there a ready consensus amongst Canadians that the federal spending power was the appropriate instrument of intergovernmental cooperation in social policy. One should not expect that the new realities facing social policy will yield immediate consensus on the appropriate solution, nor should one despair that we will be unable to find consensus through incremental experimentation and accommodation. There needs to be a will, however, at all levels of government, to engage in meaningful discourse about what policy actions could be taken to provide steps in the right direction.

Chapter 1: Decentralization As A Canadian Concept

Introduction

During and following the recent constitutional "crises" witnessed through the demise of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, the federal government and many provincial governments began to engage in discussions and debates about administrative reform. While less attention has been drawn to these reforms because they are administrative and jurisdictional in nature, the outcomes may be as pervasive as proposed constitutional change. Evert Lindquist at an Institute of Public Administration national seminar in 1994, noted how current reform initiatives are often depicted as decentralization and yet should not be confused as such.

"There is a tendency, given the current trends in thinking about public management, to depict the general direction of these changes as decentralization and power-sharing. It is true that many reform initiatives call for a shift in focus towards service, partnerships, delayering of management hierarchies, investment in human resources through training and development, and an emphasis of leadership and new organizational cultures ... Behind the rhetoric and themes of the new public sector management is the reality of fiscal restraint and dramatic restructuring."⁴⁰

The imperatives of controlling government deficits and reducing debt produce their own form of coercion; when governments downsize bureaucracies and eliminate programs it is rarely considered a cooperative and empowering exercise. Paul Thomas at the 1995

⁴⁰Evert A. Lindquist, "Recent Administrative Reform in Canada as Decentralization: Who is Spreading Around What to Whom and Why?" Canadian Public Administration, Volume 37, No. 3, (Fall) 1994, page 416.

Institute of Public Administration national conference, noted during his presentation on problems with the new public management theories, that any reference to a new public management philosophy during "rightsizing", "streamlining" or "workforce adjustment" initiatives will likely be seen as political rhetoric.⁴¹

The logic of decentralization is derived first and foremost from the fact that while government is a single entity, it must also pursue activities which by their very nature require a measure of particularity. The provision of social services constitutes the general character of public policy and programs, but at the specific delivery level there is much that is particular, even unique to them. It is in this context that the concept of decentralization is developed. Decentralization occurs when government actors possessing authorities are willing to grant discretion, delegate authorities, or share responsibilities with other actors, inside or outside the government and its public service, in order to accomplish certain tasks. At the heart of the issue is the distribution of power and authority: we thus speak of organizations being more or less centralized or decentralized in order to portray just where authority and power reside in a particular structure. In doing so we recognize that both power and authority are relational.⁴²

⁴¹Paul Thomas, presentation "The Happy Face Models of the New Public Management," IPAC National Conference, August, 1995.

⁴²Peter Aucoin and Herman Bakvis, The Centralization - Decentralization Conundrum: Organization and Management in the Canadian Government, (Halifax:

Those who advocate decentralization see a "centralized" system where power is situated at the centre, usually controlled by a few. In other words, individuals, organizations and communities not at the centre do not have authority, discretion or exercise control over their own affairs. In this view, the centre is incapable of monitoring and comprehending the diverse reality beyond its immediate confines and, as a result, imposes counterproductive and rules and controls. The centre loses sight of what and who is to be served, becoming more interested in means than the ends, because means are more familiar. The desire to remedy these problems constitutes the case for administrative and political decentralization.

Decentralization is often advocated as an alternative, promising a set of governance arrangements more conducive to determining local needs, encouraging innovation and responsiveness to citizens, and furthering autonomy and democracy. Conversely, those who advocate centralization derive their logic from the belief that for government to function as an integrated, coordinated unit, centralization must occur.

There are minimally two views on decentralization. The first sees decentralization as a territorial concept: national and many provincial governments are confronted with the

Institute for Research on Public Policy), 1988; or Donald Savoie, Regional Economic Development: Canada's Search for Solutions, 2nd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto), 1992, page 10.

challenge of managing diverse communities in large land masses; our history is replete with examples of political leaders engaged in delicate regional balancing acts. We therefore talk of the centre in relation to the periphery. In Canada, there is a myth that federalism is essentially decentralization.⁴³ As Canada is federal country, there are complications surrounding the legislation and administration of social programs, because some programs are federal, some are provincial and some involve municipal governments.⁴⁴

It is obvious that the concept of decentralization is limited by this first viewpoint. Decentralization is more than administrative grappling over who will offer the services, in Canada it directly concerns the assignment and exercise of authority among levels of government.⁴⁵ With four different levels of government competing for resources, interests and programs, decentralization can become a very complicated issue.

⁴³For a detailed discussion of this issue in the context of the federal government, see Peter Aucoin and H. Bakvis, *Ibid.*

⁴⁴For more information see F. Strain and Derek Hum, "Canadian Federalism and the Welfare State," Jacqueline Ismael (ed), The Canadian Welfare State: Evolution and Transition, 1987.

⁴⁵Richard Simeon, "Considerations on Centralization and Decentralization," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 29, No.3, (Fall) 1986.

Decentralized Social Services - Chapter 1

The British North America Act (1867) sets forth those responsibilities to be dealt with by provincial legislatures in Section 92. Section 92 lists among the responsibilities of the provinces, charities and charitable institutions, hospitals and municipal institutions. Such institutions administered all the existing public responsibilities in social welfare and health care. Accordingly, welfare and health, in general, are authoritatively considered to be within the domain of the provinces.⁴⁶

While the provinces have the constitutional authority to enact social services, the federal government has also been involved in many welfare, health and housing programs, all without constitutional amendments changing the allocation of powers. Over the years, the argument was used that the provinces cannot provide the desired services or level of programs without the financial help of the federal government. "To overcome the Constitutional barrier, appeal has been made to the implicit power of the federal Parliament to spend its resources in ways not explicitly forbidden."⁴⁷ This so-called spending power is located in the wording of Section 106 of the Constitution Act, which allows the "Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada" to be appropriated by the Parliament of Canada for the public service.

⁴⁶Frank McGilly, An Introduction to Canada's Public Services, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc.) 1990, pages 26 and 27.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, page 30.

Scott in "Our Changing Constitution" acknowledges that the use made by the federal government of the "spending power" has given rise to some controversy. In general terms, the question is this: when the federal government gives the provinces money to fund programs that are within provincial jurisdiction, but in doing so imposes conditions that necessarily affect what the provinces are free to do, is the federal government actually imposing its preference in areas that are supposed to be the provinces' business?⁴⁸ Scott puts it benignly when he says, "Ottawa learns to induce where it cannot command, and federal policy is made by bargains with provincial governments."⁴⁹ Peter Hogg concludes that "... the sum total of all of these programs amounts to a very heavy federal presence in matters which lie within provincial legislative responsibility."⁵⁰

In summary, the jurisdictional division of powers between the federal and provincial governments is established by constitutional decisions involving both levels of government in ways that do not involve the federal government as the superior level nor the provincial level as the subordinate. A decentralized federal system of government,

⁴⁸Scott, "Our Changing Constitution," in The Courts and the Canadian Constitution, W.R. Lederman (ed), 1964, page 29.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, page 28.

⁵⁰Peter Hogg, Constitutional Law In Canada, (Toronto: Carswell Publishers), 1977, page 69.

in other words, is one in which there is a relatively significant degree of authority granted to the provinces; but these units are not subordinate to the national government.⁵¹

A second interpretation offered by Evert Lindquist in his article, "Recent Administrative Reform in Canada as Decentralization," is more consistent with the revolution in public management thinking and the idea of power-sharing.⁵² This viewpoint, Lindquist suggests, is that for many public servants, the periphery is not limited to the regions beyond the centre, but also includes the panoply of actors inside or those hovering just outside the boundaries of their organizations. The latter may be the citizens or organizations that a government agency is mandated to serve and include entities with the potential to deliver programs and services for a government, including for-profit firms, non-profit organizations, other governments, crown corporations, and private citizens. An equally important set of actors with whom power can be shared is located inside the boundary.⁵³ Mintzberg in "Design of Decision-Making System: Vertical and Horizontal Decentralization," points out that decentralization may entail granting greater latitude to

⁵¹Aucoin and Bakvis, *Op Cit.*, page 11.

⁵²See Osborne and Gaebler, "Decentralized Government: From Hierarchy to Participation and Teamwork," in Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector, (New York: Addison-Wesley), 1992, pages 250-279; or Barzelay and Armajani, Breaking Through Bureaucracy: A New Vision For Managing in Government, (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1992.

⁵³Evert Lindquist, *Op Cit.*, pages 418-419.

front-line staff to deliver services to clients, or it may involve a more conventional form of power-sharing that occurs when senior managers delegate authority to managers further down the chain of authority. These alternative forms of decentralization may proceed in tandem with the external decentralizations noted above and with each other.⁵⁴

Each of these viewpoints assigns a different meaning to the notion of the periphery. Lindquist explains that the territorial interpretation sees the centre as the "capital" and the periphery as the "region," whereas the public management interpretation casts the centre as the "apex" and the periphery as the zone around the formal boundary of the organization.⁵⁵ However, these interpretations are not inconsistent with one another, and the interaction between them helps to clarify the meaning of other terms often invoked when discussing decentralization. Centralization occurs when most of the responsibility for policy-making and implementation resides not only in the capital but also at the apex of the organizations. Decentralization, the sharing of power, occurs when responsibilities for aspects of decision-making are shared elsewhere in the organization or with actors outside its boundaries. Partnership more specifically refers to sharing authorities and

⁵⁴H. Mintzberg, "Design of Decision-Making System: Vertical and Horizontal Decentralization," The Structuring of Organizations, (Toronto: Prentice-Hall), 1970, pages 181-213.

⁵⁵Evert Lindquist, *Op Cit.*, page 419.

responsibilities by a government with other governments, citizens and private sector organizations.

Deconcentration or "territorial decentralization,"⁵⁶ occurs when regional structures or headquarters are established away from the capital. However, deconcentration may occur with or without concomitant delegations of authority - that is, public servants not at the apex, and actors working at the boundary may feel no more empowered than they did before.⁵⁷ In fact, after a review of the responsibility of relocated units, Kenneth Kernaghan concluded that few relocations have required or resulted in the delegation of policy-making authority.⁵⁸ The concepts of decentralization and deconcentration must be understood in relative terms as no system is completely centralized nor completely decentralized and deconcentrated. The debate usually revolves around the appropriate

⁵⁶Brad MacKenzie, "Decentralized Social Services: A Critique of Service Delivery," Continuities and Discontinuities The Political Economy of Social Welfare and Labour Market Policy In Canada, Johnson, McBride, et al. (eds), (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1994, uses the term territorial decentralization in a way that is similar to the public administration term "deconcentration."

⁵⁷For more on deconcentration see B.C. Smith, Decentralization: The Territorial Dimension of the State, (London: George, Allen and Unwin) 1985.

⁵⁸Kenneth Kernaghan, "Representative and Responsive Bureaucracy: Implications for Canadian Regionalism," Peter Aucoin (ed), Regulatory Responsibility and the National Administrative State, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1985, page 38.

balance of resources and whether key tasks should be carried out from the centre or in the field.

It would be a mistake to ignore the degree to which deconcentration is and can be a factor in the decision to decentralize, however. Indeed, in the public sector, where government services in most cases, require or are most effectively provided by way of some degree of personal contact, deconcentration is closely linked to decentralization.⁵⁹

While it is useful to provide a broad definition of decentralization and the terms that are often used in conjunction with the concept, it is often difficult to apply them to actual developments in administrative reforms. To make progress, it is useful to identify a policy sector (see case studies in Chapters 3 and 4) and then determine in whose hands authorities and responsibilities for designing, managing and modifying the programs and policies rest. For the purposes of evaluation (Chapter 5), six areas will be addressed in terms of decentralization: scanning to determine needs; designing policy frameworks and developing options; designing particular programs to implement policy interventions;

⁵⁹Aucoin and Bakvis, *Op Cit.*, page 16.

financing of programs; managing and monitoring program delivery; and evaluating and redesigning programs and policy frameworks.⁶⁰

Obviously, it will be a complicated exercise to determine which actors inside government (central agencies, departments or field offices), across governments (federal, provincial, local and Aboriginal), and in the private sector are involved in each stage. The complexity may increase further when the arrangements change over time, and proposals for reform within a sector may simultaneously centralize and decentralize different authorities. For example, if a province centralizes financing of a program, but decentralizes responsibility for administering the program, is that decentralization or centralization? Or, if a government unilaterally introduces a reform against the wishes of a different level of government or community, one that eventually leads to decentralization, does that qualify as power-sharing or decentralization?

A second source of complexity emerges from governance systems themselves. When a level of government decentralizes, devolves or delegates authority to other levels of government, through new administrative agreements, changes to long-standing agreements, constitutional change or the withdrawal of funding, it can affect the power

⁶⁰These six areas were introduced by Evert Lindquist (*Op Cit.*, page 421) as useful tools in evaluating decentralization activities.

relationships at the receiving level. What is at issue is less the process of decentralizing but rather the outcome or impact.

A third point of complexity is closely related to the last. Decentralization is often cast as a process of liberation, associated with the need for self-determination, autonomy, and recognition of the need for governance systems to respond to the diverse needs of citizens. This is not always the case. A vision in which policy makers determine the investments and time required to create a new system of administration is required. Metcalfe and Richards in Improving Public Management suggest asking the critical question "What kind of controls and management processes should be instituted to assure overall direction at the same time as effective delegation."⁶¹ Decentralization does not always occur with the optimum amount of planning and will not always achieve the desired results. Furthermore, decentralization may occur simply as a tool to offload financial responsibilities to another level of government. Savoie alerts us to some of the risks involved in moving towards a more decentralized system in "Government

⁶¹L. Metcalfe and S. Richards, Improving Public Management, (London: Sage), 1987, page 79.

Decentralization: A Review of Some Management Considerations."⁶² These will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 2.

Types of Decentralization

Constitutional / Political

In a paper prepared for an IPAC national seminar on decentralization issues, David Cameron noted that in Canada there are three types of decentralization: constitutional; administrative; and, fiscal. Formal constitutional amendment,⁶³ assigning increased responsibility to provincial jurisdiction, is a rare event in Canada.⁶⁴ Given that constitutional change has been relegated to the "backburner" following the demise of the

⁶²Donald Savoie, "Government Decentralization: A Review of Some Management Considerations," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 28, No. 3, (Fall) 1994, pages 440-446.

⁶³It should be noted that significant changes have occurred in Canada as a result of judicial decisions. It is not within the scope of this thesis to explore these changes however.

⁶⁴David Cameron notes that there have been very few constitutional amendments of any kind affecting the division of powers. However, amendments expanding the authority of Parliament, such as unemployment insurance (92[2A]) or pensions (94A), have been much more in evidence than amendments expanding the authority of provincial legislatures, such as natural resources in 1983 (92A). David Cameron, *Op Cit.*, page 433.

Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, this paper will focus on administrative and fiscal decentralization.

Political decentralization refers to the redistribution of political power and policy making authority.⁶⁵ While political decentralization on the surface seems similar to administrative decentralization, it is unique in that the locus of responsibility has shifted from one authority to another. An example of political decentralization provided in this thesis, occurs through the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in Manitoba and the transfer of jurisdictional authority to First Nation communities. While the process has not yet reached the stage of political decentralization, this is the ultimate goal.

Administrative

Administrative decentralization is defined as a level of government delegating its responsibility for a particular function to another level of government. For example, the federal Parliament transfers administrative responsibility for the execution of various federal functions to the provinces, often through interjurisdictional agreements. In administrative delegation, decentralization is normally the outcome of negotiations

⁶⁵Brad MacKenzie, "Decentralized Social Services," *Op Cit.*, page 98.

between the two orders of government, which include agreements on the terms and transfer of dollars, and in some cases, people. The outcomes are planned and intended.

Fiscal

The flow of money between two levels of government has been of central importance in shaping national programs and defining the role of government in general. Indeed, fiscal arrangements were a central component to setting up Confederation in the first place. What is of concern is the flow of money from the federal government to the provinces in recent years and what is changing for the future.

In the past, the federal - provincial fiscal transfers typically have been composed of some mix of the following elements: cash or tax room (the latter involving the federal government reducing its tax burden and the provinces raising theirs by an equivalent amount); grants with or without some program conditions; and cost-sharing or block funding (the latter involving a federal transfer whose amount is not dependent upon the level of provincial contribution).⁶⁶ It is not the purpose of this thesis to explore the complexities of these transfers, rather it is of concern that elements of fiscal decentralization impact upon various provincial, local and Aboriginal governments and

⁶⁶David Cameron, *Op Cit.*, page 435.

that changes in the form or amount of fiscal transfers can have great impacts on other levels of governments, specifically with regards to social programs.

"Despite the fact that many ... Canadians tend to look to Ottawa to play a greater role, the reality of the last few years is that the federal deficit and debt burden is driving Canada into unprecedented decentralization."⁶⁷ Recent experience with respect to established programs based on federal fiscal transfers has shown that both the transfer and the withdrawal of federal money can be decentralizing in its impact. While the transfer of federal money from one jurisdiction to another can be centralizing in its impact if it is accompanied by the imposition of federal conditions and controls, in the absence of such conditions, it clearly entails a degree of decentralization. The Established Programs Financing arrangements that began in 1977, which moved specific fiscal transfers away from the principle of cost-sharing, vested greater freedom of action in the provinces by providing an assured stream of funds on an unconditional block-funded basis.

Similarly, the Canada Health and Social Transfer provides for increased fiscal decentralization by allowing the provinces to make specific decisions relating to the

⁶⁷Thomas J. Courchene, "Forever Amber," Rearrangements: The Courchene Papers, (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press), 1992, page 53.

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funding of social services, post-secondary education and health care. Unconditional block funded dollars increase the provincial sphere of authority and decrease federal control, specifically leading to fiscal decentralization. However, it is also true that the withdrawal of federal money from the transfer system forces greater responsibility on the provinces if the service in question is not politically expendable. The move from conditional grants and shared-cost programs to unconditional block funding to a reduction in federal fiscal transfers is a move in the direction of decentralization.⁶⁸

The fiscal decentralization that is occurring in Canada today, raises several important questions. Is decentralization necessarily a good thing? Further, what objectives are being met by transferring or sharing power? It is these questions that ultimately need to be addressed in a substantive discussion on social policy reform. What is stated by the government to be a move towards improved service quality through the decentralization of administrative authority, can appear to the public as a reduction in levels of service

⁶⁸ The elimination of CAP by combining these expenditures with EPF transfers allows the federal government to off-load responsibility for social programs. Ultimately, this can be viewed as decentralization on several counts. First, if the provinces react by cutting back or redesigning social programs, it becomes "decentralization" in the sense that these former national programs are progressively being determined at the provincial level. Second, and this is closely related to the first, how does the federal government maintain standards if the cash transfer falls significantly? The maintenance of standards will be more fully discussed in chapter 2.

coupled with yet more bureaucratic obfuscation.⁶⁹ The administrative and financial decentralization that has occurred to date lacks a coherent philosophical base shared broadly across political communities. Without clear direction, decentralization will simply be more of the same: a revamping of the administration, coupled with program cuts and a reduction in services offered.

Overview Of Decentralization In Manitoba And Alberta

While this chapter has introduced the concept of decentralization at a general level, it is also prudent to lay the groundwork for the two case studies that follow in subsequent chapters. Manitoba and Alberta, while both affected by the federal government's fiscal decentralization, have opted to respond in different ways. Alberta, as will be clearly outlined in chapter 3, has taken the concept of decentralization to the local community level. Manitoba, on the other hand, is grappling with the decentralization of health care to the local level, yet has not provided a long-term vision for the delivery of other social services. The second case study, found in chapter 4, concerns the administrative decentralization of Native child welfare in Manitoba in the context of political decentralization of authority through the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs

⁶⁹David Cameron, "Summary of Discussions," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 37, No. 3, (Fall) 1994, page 388.

and Northern Development. This illustration provides a clear example of the intricacies involved in the decentralization process and how these problems can directly impact citizens.

This section offers an overview to recent provincial initiatives in both Manitoba and Alberta that may be interpreted as administrative decentralization. The focus of the thesis is the decentralization of social services, but it is important to consider the whole political and fiscal situation in both provinces before evaluating various social policy changes.

Manitoba

The Manitoba government is struggling to contain its deficit. In April, 1993 the provincial government enacted legislation that required government employees to take ten non-paid days of leave during the last six months of the year. This set a precedent that continues to be practised. Similar concessions were made by employees working in health, education and crown corporation sectors. In 1995, the provincial government also passed balanced budget legislation, requiring all ministers to spend within budget limits. Inside the civil service, deputy ministers now work with expenditure envelopes

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determined by Treasury Board, but have more freedom to make choices within those envelopes.

Efficiency and effectiveness concepts, along with notions of increasing managerial freedom, began developing a higher profile in the late 1980s and continue to date. Better Methods, part of the Service 1st, A Quality Initiative is moving to stage two, implementation in April, 1996. This project has been designed to identify areas and processes that could be made more efficient. Since 1992, the government has begun to implement special operating agencies (SOAs); these entities within departments are granted greater autonomy and discretion in return for being evaluated on performance in a discernible line of business, and must be committed to increasing efficiency and service quality. As of April 1996, there are likely to be as many as fifteen SOAs in the Manitoba government.

A number of decentralization initiatives have been spearheaded by the Manitoba government. The first was the dispersment of approximately three hundred provincial employees to rural areas throughout the province. This process took place over a three year period, beginning in the early 1990s. "The rationale was to increase accessibility of rural residents to service, to enhance regional input into decision-making, and to

provide more economic opportunity outside of Winnipeg."⁷⁰ However, ongoing fiscal restraint has resulted in the reversal of some moves, while some other positions have been eliminated.

Another administrative reform process that resulted in decentralization was announced in 1992 as the Quality Health Action Plan. The plan embraced consolidating services in various districts through the creation of Regional Health Councils, decreasing citizen's reliance on hospitals and emergency departments, developing a range of alternative health services, including community health centres, and increasing family and community involvement. The move from a hospital based, centrally regulated system requires new institutions. A Crown Corporation is being established to provide policy and coordination. Regional Health Councils will undertake local planning while increasing public participation. In conjunction with the Quality Health Action Plan, is the de-institutionalization of patients from mental health hospitals. Through a multi-year plan, community supports were to be established that would eventually replace institutions.

In March 1993, over two hundred hospital beds were closed and budgets have been decreased yearly since this date. The public demanded to know why the government had

⁷⁰Evert A. Lindquist and Karen B. Murray, "Canadian Administrative Reform During the Early 1990s," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 37, No. 3, (Fall) 1994, page 475.

not kept its promise that it would ensure that community health centres, in both urban and rural areas, had been established before significant budgetary cuts were made to the system. The deadline for implementing rural health care reform was extended and funding for home care services was cut in 1994. This clear gap between rhetoric and action was reinforced by other cuts in social services and education budgets. Recently, a Treasury Broad document outlining the province's plans for contracting out home care services was leaked to the media and opposition parties. The political response has been that contracting out services increases co-ordination and flexibility of service and is congruent with the plan for community based health care. The maintenance of the home care contracts will be provided by the Crown Corporation responsible for the Regional Councils.

Alberta

Alberta has been a position of restraint in order to remedy the imbalance between expenditure levels and resource revenues, which had declined significantly since the mid-1980s due to low international prices on oil.⁷¹ The 1993 provincial election involved party platforms relating to the mounting debt and the need to maintain current rates of taxation. Ralph Klein and the Progressive Conservative Party won the election and the

⁷¹Lindquist and Murray, *Ibid.*, page 471.

premier committed his government, through legislation, to the elimination of the deficit by 1997.⁷² One result of this commitment was the appointment of a Government Reorganization Secretariat to look for methods of cutting costs and increasing efficiencies. It also has as part of its mandate the exploration of privatization possibilities, contracting-out, and partnerships with private business and other levels of government.

Concomitant with drives to improve efficiency is rising interest in service quality. Significant interest is emerging in the concept of "one stop" provincial offices, where several departments are housed in a single office in order to serve clients through a single access point. Service quality goals are also evident in the government's "community-based" economic development strategies known as "Seizing Opportunity." The key premise is that competitive challenges can only be met through innovation, cooperation and partnerships at the local level. One example is joint trade and tourism promotion where the government works in coordination with the private sector. Another important theme is that duplication, overlap and regulatory burdens must be reduced in different sectors, and this requires harmonizing the policies and programs at all levels of government.

⁷²Incidentally, not only is the province meeting its deficit reduction promises, it has realized a profit of \$570 million for the fiscal year ending in March, 1996. Source: Premier Ralph Klein's Televised Address, January 29, 1996.

The theme of local empowerment is evident in two key sectors. The government is moving away from delivering health services in hospitals located in urban centres and is emphasizing community based alternatives, such as community health centres and strategies to prevent illness. Mental health, home care and community care services are being governed in both rural and urban areas by regional health boards. Following the implementation of community health boards, is the design of a community based system of social service provision. Regional boards will be responsible for planning and implementing community designed services in the realm of child and family policy. This area will be the focus of a case study in chapter 3.

The province has began "empowering" local governments by granting them "spheres of jurisdiction" rather than delegating specific authorities. The idea is to reduce legislation and to give local governments a degree of flexibility when confronting new problems. Of course, the provincial government also wants municipalities to assume financial responsibility for their new areas of authority and meet provincial standards in environmental protection, roads, inspection, permits, waste management, and local assessments.

Conclusions

Governments at all levels are in a state of transition. It is often difficult to distinguish between genuine impulses to decentralize and restraint under the veneer of decentralization and power-sharing. However, what can be stated definitively, is that social services in Canada are no longer in a pattern of convergent downsizing; they are in the midst of fundamental reorientation, where governments and the programs they deliver will be qualitatively different in the next five years. It is too early to predict where restraint measures and management reforms will take us in terms of distribution of power and responsibilities for serving the public once the deficit and debt problems have been addressed. It is unfair to say that the ideas guiding specific reforms are solely inspired by the need to reduce government deficits - many have been floating around for years, and not all in public administration venues.⁷³ The fiscal situation is simply providing the opportunity to put some of those ideas to action, admittedly not under the best of circumstances.

This thesis will capture some of the elements of decentralization that are occurring with respect to social service development and provision. It will provide two case examples and evaluate the administrative reforms that have taken place. Furthermore, it will

⁷³See for example, Brian Wharf, Communities and Social Policy in Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc.), 1992.

provide a basis point for the future analysis of decentralization from a public administration perspective.

Chapter 2: Local Government's Responses

*"The nation state is becoming too small for the big problems of life,
and too big for the small problems of life."*

Daniel Bell, sociologist

Introduction

There has been speculation by politicians, public servants, social workers, academics and client groups that social services are best designed and implemented at the community or local level. Within Canada's federal system, local governments play a role in the delivery of a wide array of public services and, to a lesser extent, the formulation of the associated policy frameworks. Social policies in Canada have been largely developed in national and provincial governmental frameworks, yet their consequences are played out and experienced in local communities. Local governments are currently not responsible to any great extent for the design of social policy for their citizens mainly due to constitutional arrangements and the manner in which the welfare state in Canada developed, leaving considerable power in the hands of the federal and provincial governments.

Incongruencies between national policies and the people they are designed to serve, are well illustrated at the local and especially the urban level. High levels of unemployment and the growing numbers of families and individuals on welfare are examples of the inappropriateness of federal and provincial policies. Traditionally, senior levels of

government have designed and implemented homogeneous policies with regards to all the individuals in Canada. Brian Wharf, in Communities and Social Policy in Canada, makes the critical argument that while senior levels of government have and should retain a responsibility for social policy, in the past problems have arisen when these governments plan for communities instead of with them.⁷⁴ The resulting programs have frequently been ineffective and inappropriate.⁷⁵

A growing body of literature makes the claim that a potentially powerful way to improve the effectiveness of social policy is to concentrate on local delivery units. Williams⁷⁶, Pressman and Wildavsky⁷⁷, Lipsky,⁷⁸ and Brian Wharf⁷⁹ among others, have suggested that by providing sufficient resources to these units, delegating appropriate responsibility and authority to them, and including the staff and consumers of these units in the policy

⁷⁴Brian Wharf, Communities and Social Policy in Canada, *Op Cit.*, page 20.

⁷⁵This argument is convincingly supported by the failure of child welfare programs established by the federal and provincial governments without the involvement of First Nation people. This example is discussed in length in Chapter 4.

⁷⁶Walter Williams, The Implementation Perspective, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1980.

⁷⁷Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, Implementation, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1984.

⁷⁸Michael Lipsky, Street Level Bureaucracy, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), 1980.

⁷⁹Brian Wharf, Communities and Social Policy in Canada, *Op Cit.*

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process, social programs will potentially be improved. The term community based social services has come to describe the capacity of the local community to influence policy and service response.⁸⁰

This chapter will develop the idea that a significant challenge for both the redesign of social services and the ability of local governments to respond to citizen's needs, will be to find the optimum match of services and finances in a rapidly changing system. The central issue is whether increased involvement on the part of community organizations and local governments would actually improve social services. The chapter will overview some of the benefits of decentralization as well as identify specific problems that could accompany a decentralized system.

Benefits to Decentralized Social Services

Canada is not a homogenous society and through immigration and the continuing trend towards urbanization, there is growing heterogeneity of the population. Canadian communities, as they absorb increasingly heterogeneous populations, have had to ask questions about the purposes and goals of basic social institutions. One compelling argument for the development of local social policies is the current crisis of the welfare

⁸⁰Brad Mackenzie, "Decentralized Social Services" *Op Cit.*, page 98.

state. It is envisioned, whether rhetorically or not, that by minimizing federal bureaucratic influence in social services, a better "fit" will be made between the server and the recipient. There is a need for cultural sensitivity and input into policy design so that decision-making occurs at the point of contact closest to the actual implementation of policies and programs.⁸¹

A second reason supporting decentralization is that the prevailing pressures are for decentralization and privatization as federal and provincial governments attempt to minimize their deficits. Most western governments have sought to reduce public expenditure, particularly on social services. This reduction in social service programming has been attributed to the speculation that the demand for services is inexhaustible - no matter what level of service is provided, organized groups of potential beneficiaries will campaign for improvement and extension. The effect is "overload," an incapacity of state revenues to meet escalating demand.

Concomitant with the drive to download social responsibility, is the rising impulse to have local / municipal governments or newly created regional agencies pick up the slack. It is apparent that there are at least two forces behind the move towards community driven service provision: decentralization precipitated by other levels of government

⁸¹Aucoin and Bakvis, *Op Cit.*, pages 91-92.

struggling to contain their deficits; and the argument that national social policies do not meet the needs of Canadians. Added to the mix, is the reality that the federal government no longer has the political will nor the finances to provide universal social programs. Specifically, the implementation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer demonstrates the federal government's willingness to disentangle themselves from the provision of social services.⁸²

The pressing need for the development of social policies that fit the needs of the citizens they are designed to serve, has arisen at a time when the federal and provincial governments are reluctant to reform their social programs, but are searching for alternative program delivery methods or are offloading responsibility for social services onto other levels of governments. While reforms are not occurring in an optimum fiscal environment, local community agencies in coordination with municipal / local governments are potentially the best suited to design social policies that meet local needs. This could solve the paradox that has always plagued social policy reform; the design of social policy has been the responsibility of senior levels of government, yet social problems are felt directly in local communities.

⁸²The term disentanglement has come to describe the process of the changing roles of governments in the provision of social services. Specifically, it is used to explain the withdrawal of the federal government (and in some cases the provincial governments) from the provision of public services.

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Donald Savoie states in his article, "Government Decentralization: A Review of Some Management Consideration," that "decentralization of government activity is regarded by many as holding important advantages over centralized administration."⁸³ By bringing program delivery closer to the population, it has been argued, you invariably make government more sensitive to the people. Similarly, it has been stated, that the quality of government service is likely to be better when programs are being delivered at a community level, rather than centrally administered from a capital region. It has also been speculated that government decentralization offers important advantages for improving the quality of services in a country as large and regionally diverse as Canada is. Not all regions require the same type of social programmes, and decentralization offers the opportunity for a better match of service to community or regional needs.

Communities and Social Policy

The drive to reinvent the local community as a focal point of the delivery of social services and even the creator of policy, must begin with a revised concept of what a community actually is. Brian Wharf distinguishes a community as a "network of individuals with common needs and issues. This directs attention to the two essential

⁸³Donald J. Savoie, "Government Decentralization: A Review of Some Management Considerations," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 28, No. 3, (Fall) 1985, page 440.

characteristics of communities - relationships and needs."⁸⁴ These characteristics can be expressed by a group living in a geographically defined area such as a town or city, or by those sharing values, history, an economic base or a governing structure. Community, thus, is not merely defined as those residing in a politically designated geographical area that is presided over by an elected local government, but extends to include the individuals who comprise the citizenship. The type of social policy required to fit the needs of a community's citizenry demands the involvement of citizens.

Repairing and adapting our current system of social service delivery to every new circumstance is no longer working. Keeping the premise of the welfare state that has been passed on to us, Canadians must re-think the processes by which social services are offered and create another system to bring Canada into the twenty-first century.

In order to redesign services to make them more effective, consideration must first be given to the social policies that provide the parameters for program development. Titmuss in Social Policy: An Introduction, contends that social policy is all about social purposes, choices, and the conflicts between social purposes and choices which have occurred at the governmental level, the community level and the individual level. At each level, by acting or not acting, by opting in or contracting out, we can influence the

⁸⁴Wharf, 1992, *Op Cit.*, page 16.

direction in which choices are made.⁸⁵ Key to this argument are three points. The first is social purpose which means a direction or the way in which policies are delivered (for example, institutional vs. community). The second is choice and conflict between choices. Both values and ideology compete for the allocation of scarce resources spent on social services. Finally, the third element is participation which includes opportunities to influence the social policy process.

Further distinctions concerning social policy are made by Lindblom. He defines the grand issues of policy as those that focus on the distribution of income and wealth, on the distribution of political power and on corporate prerogatives. In contrast, ordinary issues include such topics as the governance of child welfare services, de-institutionalization, the development of community support programs and the emergence of the healthy community movement.⁸⁶ Obviously, grand issues of policy impact upon ordinary issues of policy, and Chapter 1 of this thesis provides numerous examples of how federal fiscal policy impacts upon provincial and local government social policy. This interconnectedness provides the framework in which social policy is developed in Canada. With that said, the focus of the thesis is on ordinary issues of policy because it

⁸⁵Richard Titmuss, Social Policy: An Introduction, (London: George Allen and Unwin), 1974, page 131.

⁸⁶Charles Lindblom, "Still Muddling, Not Yet Through," Public Administration Review, (November/December) 1979, page 523.

is more reasonable to assume that community based organizations have the potential to bring about change to this type of policy.

Background

The period since the Second World War has witnessed the increasing importance of social services such as health care, education and social assistance. This is not to undermine or detract from the centralizing role the federal government has played in the past in areas that are constitutionally provincial responsibilities. One of the major trends in recent years is the declining role of the federal government and the increasing role of provincial governments.⁸⁷ While the role of the provincial governments has strengthened considerably at the expense of the federal government, the position of local governments during this period has remained stable.

Until the late 1960s, the prevailing conventional wisdom in local government, municipal or urban planning was that local politicians' influence was limited to physical concerns. The focus of city politicians has long been on economic and land development, suburban construction and more recently inner-city renewal or revitalization. Unfortunately, most

⁸⁷David Siegal, "The Financial Context for Urban Policy," Urban Policy Issues Canadian Perspectives, Richard A. Loreto and Trevor Price (eds), (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc), 1990, page 15.

local government politicians aim their policies towards buildings and physical infrastructures, rather than towards those who reside in the buildings or use the transportation routes. Social policies have generally been seen by local politicians as the jurisdiction of either the federal or provincial government with some notable exceptions. In Manitoba,⁸⁸ Ontario and Nova Scotia, welfare payments are made by municipal governments in both rural and urban areas, at least on a short-term basis. For the most part, however, social services were and have continued to be delivered and financed by senior levels of government.

The late 1960s brought forth an era of citizen protest and community organizing across the country. Many factors fuelled this movement and competing philosophies quickly emerged as to how priorities should be determined and how citizens should be involved. During the late 1960s and into the 1970s, there was a tendency on the part of all levels of government to bury the true social and economic problems with money and programs. The net effect of this largesse was that communities and individuals received short-term economic benefits that ended with the funding. Not only did individuals themselves suffer, but community groups and action committees began to disperse and fall apart.

⁸⁸In Manitoba, the province has announced that it will move to take over city welfare, ostensibly to cut bureaucratic overlap and provide better coordination the City of Winnipeg's training and employment opportunities. This merger is currently entering Phase 1: The Business Case Model in April, 1996. Proposed implementation is January 1997.

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A second effect of government funding was that people and communities became dependent upon financial transfers for the solution to their social and economic ailments. The withdrawal of federal and provincial support for programs and community funding is still continuing and is now referred to as financial decentralization. What in reality is occurring is that programs are being eliminated, funding disappearing and those who need it most are being hit the hardest.⁸⁹ New solutions that involve innovative answers to age-old problems need to be developed.

Potential for Decentralized Social Services

While most social policy decisions have traditionally been at the senior government level, communities and individuals have always been involved in the implementation of policy or have felt its effects.⁹⁰ Local governments, while hesitant to be responsible for social policy for their citizens, have already been involved in the delivery of public services. Hospitals, ambulance services, public health nurses, garbage pick-up and disposal,

⁸⁹Recent announcements (March, 1996) by the Manitoba government informed the public that certain welfare recipients could face cuts up to 10% of their current benefits. Furthermore, single parents, with children over six years of age will now be considered employable and are at risk of having their benefits cut if they do not identify themselves as wanting employment. (Announcements noted in the Winnipeg Free Press, March 12, 13, and 15, 1996).

⁹⁰Richard Titmuss, Social Policy: An Introduction, (London: George Allen and Unwin), 1974, page 131.

education of children, counselling, and even the payment of income maintenance all effect the local government and are affected by it.

Recently, some municipal governments have shown an interest in taking a more active role in social policy programming. The present situation is that the majority of their interest in social policy remains in the realm of social planning departments. The areas of current involvement include planning for healthy communities and de-institutionalization. First Nation band and tribal councils compare to local governments in the sense that they provide an equivalent legal function for their community members. Furthermore, in several provinces, First Nation councils have taken control of native child welfare and are leading the way in a proactive approach to social reformation at the local level.⁹¹

This new approach by leaders of the First Nations is concomitant with a revival in the interest in community organizations. Homogenous social policies and the realization that the federal governments policies have not only been ineffective but actually harmful, has led to arguments for the restoration of First Nations control over their own communities. Former reform has been incremental at best and has left not only First Nations people feeling alienated but manipulated. First Nation control of those policies and institutions

⁹¹This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

that affect their citizens is still a pilot project that has not yet been fully implemented. However, it is innovative and has arisen at a time when new programs and policies are desperately needed. The devolution of administrative control to First Nation communities for Native child welfare will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Municipal counsellors, like leaders in First Nation communities, need to understand that the nature of their position involves a responsibility to their citizens, not just their properties. The election of a counsellor should make that individual concerned with the social problems, resources and requirements of the community. Politicians at all levels of government are elected locally, that is they are first and primarily members of their own communities. A responsibility to one's community should be developed through cooperation amongst all elected officials in a given locality. Cooperation in terms of planning and funding is not an unique concept, nor should its importance for potential development be minimized. Programs such as the Core Area Initiative in Winnipeg involved funding and cooperation at all three areas, as well as participation by local community organizations and voluntary groups.

Cooperation between politicians and bureaucrats at all levels of government, and including such community members as teachers, principals, ministers, chamber of commerce members, local business owners, presidents of voluntary social organizations and others could function to potentially solve local problems. The involvement of

concerned individuals who know and understand the concerns of the local environment and its membership could be integral to designing policies that could lead to the reformation of our social state. A consideration for inclusive policies is fundamental to establishing a true revolution in social policy construction. Inclusive policies would take into account the needs of women, children, Aboriginal, the elderly, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and persons with alternative lifestyles, as well as the multicultural milieu in which the discussion for future proposals is developed in.

Concepts such as First Nation control of child welfare, the development of healthy communities and de-institutionalization, all require well developed front-end servicing units at the local level. Active participation and organization is necessary to meet the requirements of community servicing and social policy implementation. Therefore, support for an expanded role at the community or local level comes from a variety of sources including the "common-sense view that those closest to a problem should have some way of contributing information about the problem - its scope, impact and the effect of current programs."⁹² Empowerment of the delivery units, through enabling communities to ascertain the effectiveness of social policy programs, is critical to the development of constructive policies that meet the needs of the community and its citizens.

⁹²Brian Wharf, Communities and Social Policy In Canada, (Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stewart, Inc), 1992, page 22.

Decentralized Social Services - An Overview

Health care, income maintenance and security, and state involvement in education are all pillars of the welfare state.⁹³ These are three areas that have all been implemented at the municipal level to a limited extent and have in the past required cooperation amongst more than one level of government. The following overview shows that there currently exists some interest in allowing local municipal governments to undertake social policy planning and servicing.

Health care is regulated by the Canada Health Act (1984) and has been funded through Established Programs Financing since 1977. The legislation provides the authority for the federal cost-sharing of medical care, as well as hospitalization costs. Beyond the required adherence to the principles of Canada's health care system, the provincial governments develop and maintain their own individual health care systems. In order to maintain adherence to the principles of the Health Act, the federal government reduces its transfer payments to provinces whose health authorities have allowed policy that deviates from the standards.⁹⁴

⁹³Peter Woolstencroft, "Education," Urban Policy Issues, Richard A. Loreto and Trevor Price (eds), (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart), 1990, page 146.

⁹⁴Frank McGilly, An Introduction To Canada's Public Social Services, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc), 1990. See Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Municipalities in Canada do not have a public health function per se, and only two out of the ten provinces allow for local governments to play a role in health care. Alberta and Ontario have strong local government roles in public health, with local boards of health that have varying degrees of local political accountability.⁹⁵ In B.C., Sask., and Manitoba, the urban centres have boards of health accountable to the municipality, while in the rural areas, the province provides the service directly.

Recently, provincial governments have begun discussing the concepts of community health care services and addressing the growing costs of the current health care system. A reliance upon institutional care has spiralled provincial medical expenditures and is leading governments to seek alternative measures. Alternative service delivery is being sought for a number of services related to health care. One example of a type of alternative service delivery is the Manitoba government's recent proposal concerning the delivery of Home Care Services.⁹⁶ Home care is not governed by the Canada Health Act,

⁹⁵Trevor Hancock, Bernard Pouliot, and Pierre Duplessis, "Public Health," Urban Policy Issues, Richard A. Loreto and Trevor Price (eds), (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart), 1990, page 190.

⁹⁶ The announcement was made in the Winnipeg Free Press, February 27, 1996. The article, "Health Services for Sale," noted that the Manitoba government is interested in contracting out its \$70 million a year home care programs to private and non-profit nursing companies. Government home care currently provides so-called core services in home-making, attendants, nursing and some medical supplies free of charge. Health Minister, Jim McCrae also noted that core services would remain funded by government, but clients would pay direct fees for certain unspecified services. Government home care has been the subject of public complaint due to its

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and the province is able to use its discretion to provide these type of services more efficiently and effectively. The contracting out of these services, the provincial government believes, will allow for competitive bidding, more flexibility and greater community involvement. Home Care Services, which allow the sick and the elderly to remain in the home, is just one method of alternative health care that can be implemented at the community level.

Many provincial governments are in the process of discussing the holistic concept of community with regards to healthy public policies in the areas of health care and community servicing. While still at the deliberation stage, this idea would allow for greater diversity with regards to community design and implementation of the policies affecting local citizens. An example of how provincial governments are moving the provision of health care services to the community level is the creation of regional health boards in Manitoba.

Under a proposed system, ten rural and regional health authority boards will be created and will report to a provincial Crown Corporation. In turn, the boards and the Crown Corporation will be responsible for contracting out services to nursing companies,

cumbersome bureaucracy, inflexible schedules and fragmented services. McCrae said that these concerns, combined with the pending federal transfer payment cuts of \$367 million for health and social services over the next two years, are forcing the province's move.

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coordinating information systems, as well as overseeing case management and handling customer complaints. The Department of Health will remain responsible for setting standards and policies for services as well as allocating funding.⁹⁷ The decision to de-institutionalize mentally ill or handicapped patients through the closure of large hospitals, is a further example of such a change in social program delivery by provincial governments.⁹⁸

The trend towards decentralization and de-institutionalization exemplifies the need for municipal and local governments to move beyond their current fixation on the delivery of hard services which include core responsibilities of land development, physical infrastructure building and servicing as well as local boosterism. Local government's policies may affect the lives of citizens in their municipality or region more immediately than federal policies. Rural and urban bussing policies for students, zoning and re-zoning decisions, garbage pick-up and the development of land-fill sites are all examples of how decision-making at the local level can have enormous ramifications on individual lives. Unfortunately, municipal governments have allowed their policy agendas to be dominated by business and physical concerns in their localities. Furthermore, provincial

⁹⁷Alexandra Paul and Kevin Rollason, "Home Care Privatization Radical Surgery For System," Winnipeg Free Press, February 27, 1996, page A3.

⁹⁸ Unfortunately, the requisite funding in communities has not been as forthcoming as the discourse on downloading of responsibility.

governments can control the focus of municipal itineraries through the provision of conditional grants. Given the history of federal and provincial government involvement in the provision of social services, there have been few examples of community social policy development beyond what has been mandated by senior governments.

It has been contended that the development and implementation of social policy through local governments could be beneficial to Canada's citizens. Income security programs is one type of social service that is still delivered at the municipal level in three provinces. Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario all retain municipal involvement to some degree in urban areas. In Manitoba, short-term income assistance is also provided by rural municipal governments. The financial implications for municipal governments if they are to continue to provide income maintenance payments is staggering. The City of Winnipeg recently announced that as of April 1, 1996, it will have to reduce the amount of welfare paid to families with children.⁹⁹ This is the direct result of the federal government's withdrawal from the Canada Assistance Plan and the move to provide block funding for

⁹⁹As of April 1, 1996 welfare benefits for eligible children in the City of Winnipeg are being reduced. City of Winnipeg officials are quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press, February 29, 1996, page A6, as saying that the reduction is due to the start of a new block funding arrangement between Ottawa and the provinces for health, social services and post-secondary education. The rate reduction was forced by the expiry of a three year old cost-sharing agreement with Ottawa. This particular agreement came about after the Manitoba government announced in 1993, it would only support province-wide minimum welfare rates that were far below the rates Winnipeg paid. To preserve the higher rates, the city had struck a cost-sharing deal with Ottawa.

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all social services through the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). Until April 1, 1996, the City of Winnipeg was responsible for paying 20% of all payments made to social assistance recipients. The federal government, through CAP, reimbursed the City 50%, and the provincial government reimbursed the City 30% of monies spent on social assistance expenditures. By transferring money through an unconditional block fund, the CHST gives the province increased power in deciding how they will allocate funds for social programs.

The desire to provide social assistance payments with some uniformity across the provinces needs to be juxtaposed against the inadequacies of municipal budgets that are primarily financed by property taxes and conditional grants. Therefore, while the majority of social programming may be best provided at the local level, senior governments must continue to maintain or even offload income maintenance payments from those municipalities that currently make them. The province of Manitoba has announced the administrative centralization of the City of Winnipeg and the province's income assistance branches.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, this move does not extend to fiscal

¹⁰⁰The project is in preliminary stages. Implementation date is projected to be early 1997.

centralization and the City of Winnipeg will continue to pay its portion of the income assistance payments, to the citizens eligible for municipal welfare.¹⁰¹

Wharf's position is that

"provincial ministries should only be responsible for the following functions: determining overall policies in services such as child and family welfare; allocating funds; operating specialized province-wide services; establishing standards of service and monitoring performance."¹⁰²

This system allows local governments flexibility in handling individual situations, while at the same time, keeps the provincial government involved in such crucial areas as funding, supervising, and monitoring. Provincial governments will want to maintain minimum standards of service. Supervision is tantamount to ensuring that local governments do not become lax in continuing to innovate and implement appropriate services. In order to continue to provide services for those people most deserving in the community, funding by senior governments can not be withdrawn. The greatest concern for municipal governments is that senior governments will continue to disentangle themselves from the provision of social services and not provide the necessary funding for local governments to create community programmes.

¹⁰¹Telephone Interview with Juergen Hartmann, program manager, Social Services Department, City of Winnipeg, February, 1996.

¹⁰²Wharf, *Op Cit.*, page 181.

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Provincial governments cannot become completely uninvolved in community policy development. There remains a constant need for monitoring, policy development, and of course funding. It has been argued that the development and implementation of social policies at the local level could cause overlap and result in the need for more funding rather than deficit reductions. This is a valid concern that could be mitigated by the allowance for new arrangements in cost-cutting ideas. Local governments or local subcommunities will be best able to determine the need for subsidized day care spots, the amount of community home or lodge care for the elderly, as well as addressing concerns in public safety. An actual fit between need and the provision of social policy will help cut costs by eliminating excess programming.

Problems Associated With Decentralization

The purpose of this section is to identify problems that are associated with the decentralization of social services. Though these difficulties do not completely mitigate the potential benefits associated with decentralization, they do provide an appreciation of some of the problems and considerations that need to be addressed in planning to decentralize government operations.

This section has been further subdivided to address problems that may be specific to administrative decentralization and political decentralization. While political

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decentralization will often face all of the problems associated with administrative decentralization, this form of decentralization may also bring with it other concerns.

Problems With Administrative Decentralization

The first consideration is cost and funding. The cost of social services partly depends upon the scope of the programmes involved in meeting social policy goals. However, while decentralization can involve cost-savings by streamlining programmes to meet local needs, in other areas costs can actually be increased. Regardless of the type of programs offered, certain administration costs are often higher in decentralized operations. Costs for travel, communication and relocation all must be considered and factored into budgets. Furthermore, during periods of transition, duplication may be necessary so that while the new organization is being established in the receiving community, the centralized organization continues to operate as a back-up to ensure that an acceptable level of services is maintained.¹⁰³

Another important consideration in looking into the possibilities for the decentralization of social services is the need for obtaining staff commitment.¹⁰⁴ Though it is possible to

¹⁰³R. Chartrand and A. Clayton, "Planning a Relocation: The Project Matane Experience," *Optimum*, Volume 8, No. 2, 1977, pages 19-30.

¹⁰⁴Donald J. Savoie, "Government Decentralization," *Op Cit.*, page 442.

staff a number of positions through local hiring, it is highly desirable to have some employees relocate with their units so that a sense of continuity is maintained in the organization. It is also highly unlikely that the kind of expertise with the required experience in government operations will be available in smaller communities to fill a number of management and professional positions.

Obtaining staff commitment is vital to a successful decentralization program, but it is important not to overlook the relevant client groups and non-government organizations. Consultations should take place with the program's client group whenever consideration is given to decentralize the organization delivering the program. Consultations with the client groups and interested associations should take place over such things as the preferred locations for new offices and what impact the changes are likely to have on program delivery and level of services.

A third important consideration associated with administrative is deciding on the scope of the decision-making authority that ought to be decentralized. Whatever level of decision-making authority that is decentralized, there will be a need to establish new management processes and new forms of communications. The distance between regional offices in a decentralized organization will pose new management problems. Good communication strategies and the implementation of management information systems is critical to the success of decentralization.

Problems of control and accountability also need to be addressed in putting together a decentralized plan. Decentralization will invariably disrupt traditional control systems and issues of transparency must be addressed not only for the politicians to feel comfortable with the new system, but the public and clients as well. "The political environment in which governing takes place is normally regarded as the most centralizing determinant of public administration."¹⁰⁵ This occurs for three reasons. First, ministers, individually and collectively, wish to receive credit for decisions they perceive will be to their partisan advantage. Visibility is crucial if such advantage is to be secured. The second major reason the environment is normally regarded as a centralizing determinant stems from the obvious desire to avoid political embarrassment. Cautious ministers will prefer not to delegate even when this means a considerable workload for their office. Third, ministers wish to be seen as responsive to public demands, special interests, their individual electoral constituencies and their political party. Ministers must appear to be in charge and this creates a tendency towards centralized decision-making.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Aucoin and Bakvis, *Op Cit.*, page 90-91.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Problems With Political Decentralization

Traditional criticism for the decentralization of services and the empowerment of local communities has tended to focus on the disappearance of community. Community strength, citizen participation and involvement, and the willingness of locally elected officials to become involved in providing social policy for their citizens are all tantamount to creating sound social policy. While this argument does have face validity, in reality, most communities are already responsible for providing specific services. Canada's public education system is delivered on the premise of local school boards involving the active participation of community members. Daycare, senior's services, recreational activities are other examples of programs that are implemented at the local or regional level by community members.

A second major concern is the maintenance of standards. There is resistance to the idea of decentralization from those who assume that government should provide public services or enforce regulations according to "national" standards and policy criteria. Concomitant with the discourse on accountability and transparency is the discussion that has centred around how national or provincial norms or standards are going to operate with regards to social policy. If such norms or standards are to exist, they are going to have to be the result of federal-provincial-local cooperation, and not by the virtue of the federal government imposing standards on the provinces. The federal government is

quickly losing the fiscal and hence, political, capacity to impose standards, but has yet to propose any alternatives.¹⁰⁷

Changes to the maintenance of standards could create an ad hoc approach to the availability of programs and wide variances in spending.¹⁰⁸ While there is reason for concern that the demise of the welfare state also means the erosion of national and even provincial standards, the premise underlying the decentralization of social services is that programs can be tailored to meet community needs. Community requirements will vary widely from region to region as well as province to province. Decentralized social services actually encourages differences in programmes, funding and availability and proponents believe that it is these differences that encourage creativity and innovation. Innovation and creativity, in turn, can lead to cost-effectiveness and greater efficiencies as well as more effective responses to community problems.

¹⁰⁷Reg Alcock, Winnipeg Liberal MP for Winnipeg South, has said that federal studies have shown that since Ottawa began block funding post-secondary education in 1978, most provinces, including Manitoba, have not kept up their end of the support. In 1978, the federal government shared funding for post-secondary education with the provinces on a 50-50 basis. Since going to block funding, only Quebec now pays more than 50 percent of the cost. In all other provinces, the federal government has assumed the greatest burden for funding post-secondary education. Manitoba, for example, now contributes only, 24 percent of its total post-secondary education costs, Ontario 32 percent and British Columbia 33 percent. Dan Lett, *Op Cit.*, page A2.

¹⁰⁸While there are potential Charter implications associated with this problem, it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss them.

While most social services can be tailored to meet community needs, specific social problems know no boundaries and are found in all communities in the country. The pressing issues of poverty, the lack of affordable housing, alcoholism and crime need concentrated efforts by the federal and provincial governments. In the past, federal and provincial governments have developed social policies and programs in response to these problems. For their part, local governments have not been willing to take on the responsibility for social policy. Their reasons have included a lack of funds, the recognition that social problems are complicated and a conviction that these problems are the responsibility of senior governments.

This conviction had its origins in the Great Depression when municipal governments clearly lacked the capacity to respond to the devastating effects of nation-wide unemployment. Somewhat reluctantly, the federal government resumed responsibility for coping with the impact of the depression, but this stance was gradually replaced with one of leadership in developing Canadian health and social welfare programs. Recently, however, the reluctance to provide funding or increase their role in health and social programs has returned.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹Brian Wharf, Communities and Social Policy, *Op Cit.*, page 20.

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An important criticism of creating local social policy comes from Andrew Sancton (1986). He contends that allowing local governments to take control of social services would mean only one thing - cutbacks. "Since social services are always consumed by a powerless minority and paid for by a sceptical majority, the dangers involved in opening up the private world of the social services to the local democratic process are obvious".¹¹⁰ Sancton captured two of the gravest concerns associated with the decentralization of social services. The first is that there is no guarantee that allowing local or regional agencies to administer or provide social programs would guarantee greater equality of access. In fact, it has been suggested that the local arena is more easily "captured" by business and other special interests than the provincial or federal level is. This argument is supported by the typical agenda of local governments - economic development and infrastructure construction or renewal. Municipal governments are not the only local governments that can be captured by specific interests. Chapter 4 of this thesis depicts how in some First Nation communities, the social welfare agenda has been captured by political purposes.

¹¹⁰Andrew Sancton, "Municipal Government and Social Services," an unpublished paper, Department of Political Science, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, 1986, page 61.

Closely related to the criticism that local agendas can more easily become captured by competing interests is the concern that decentralization may result in "acute localitis."¹¹¹ Montgomery notes that there are several symptoms of this disease, including the tendency for a relatively small group of elites to exercise a disproportionate share of influence, and for communities to be insulated, isolated and resistant to new ideas, thus becoming complacent about unacceptable social conditions.

The first symptom described by Montgomery is that a relatively small group of elites may exercise a disproportionate share of influence on the social programs in a given locality. The example developed in Chapter 4, shows that First Nation women do not have an equal share of influence with regards to child welfare decisions made in their communities. In the article, "Feminism and First Nations: Conflict or Concert," Leslie Brown, Cindy Jamieson and Margaret Kovach discuss ways in which First Nation women are "silenced." They refer to the way dominant First Nations community members effectively silence women, as well as self-silencing, a problem that has arisen as a result of internalized oppression.¹¹² Not only are First Nation governments dominated by men, but municipal governments also tend to have a uneven proportion of men and women.

¹¹¹John Montgomery, "The Populist Front in Rural Development: Or Shall We Eliminate The Bureaucrats And Get On With The Job?" Public Administration Review, (January/February) 1979, page 59.

¹¹²Leslie Brown, et al, "Feminism and First Nations: Conflict or Concert?" Canadian Review of Social Policy, No. 35, (Spring) 1995, pages 72-75.

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Therefore, parallel to mainstream politics, men have effectively silenced women by monopolizing the political leadership and political structures.

Closely related to who has control of the political agenda is the concept of how scarce resources are allocated. At the local level, competition for these resources can become intense. Previously in the chapter, the three elements introduced by Richard Titmuss as key to social policy development and implementation were overviewed. The first is a purpose or a direction. Decentralized social services tend to focus on implementation of programs in a community setting. The second element is choice and the potential for conflict that may arise between choices. This refers to the fact that social policy is really about compromise between conflicting values. Rejean Laundry, in "Biases in the Supply of Public Policies To Organized Interests," notes that policy decisions produce allocations of values.¹¹³ In an environment of conflicting interests and competing resources, there are invariably winners and losers. At the local level, resources are even more scarce, and conflicting interests will be more evident.

While local governmental authorities are not eager to undertake new responsibilities, and for the most part decentralization is perceived to be simply downloading or "a rhetorical

¹¹³Rejean Laundry, "Biases in the Supply of Public Policies to Organized Interests: Some Empirical Evidence," Policy Communities and Public Policy in Canada A Structural Approach, William Coleman and Grace Skogstad (eds), (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd.) 1990, pages 291-293.

tool to cut services,"¹¹⁴ paternalistic federal policies have tended to neglect some of Canada's most important citizens. Some feminist academics like Caroline Andrew, suggest that inclusive policies could be best designed through the municipal agenda, even more adequately than by senior levels of government. Andrew, in Political Arrangements, Power and the City, suggests that the pressure placed by the networking of women's groups is especially suitable for influence on the political systems of urban areas. She further contends that "municipal politics have always included the provision of concrete services and the necessity to work out in detail the relationships between different services directed to the same population."¹¹⁵

A concern for women's issues and family needs is a key element in the undertaking of social services by local government in Canada. Women, children and the elderly tend to be the groups directly influenced by social policy change. Income maintenance payments, daycare, education, adequate health care, recreation programmes and facilities, affordable housing, and public safety are services that are critical to this segment of our population. Thus, municipal and other local governments must be aware of the needs of the individuals and families that they will be servicing in their new undertakings. As already

¹¹⁴Caroline Andrew, "The Feminist City," Political Arrangements: Power and City, Henri Lustiger-Thaler (ed), (Montreal, Quebec: Black Rose Books), 1992, page 116.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, page 114.

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stated, an awareness that social concerns may be more likely heard at the local level, lends credence to the argument that not only will the trend towards decentralization increase local government responsibility in the area of social and community services, but also be constructive for the creation of a truly inclusive community.

The latter symptom of "acute localitis", insulated and parochial communities, is graphically illustrated by a case of child abuse and neglect in a small community in rural Nova Scotia. Brian Wharf in "Social Services" describes the case and referred to the fact that parents, relatives and other members of the community were aware that child abuse and neglect had existed for years.¹¹⁶ The charges were finally laid by a newcomer to the area who commented that incest had been an accepted way of life for the 300 families living in the community. To detect this symptom of acute localitis, provincial legislation must contain standards of performance in the fields of service such as child welfare, and an accreditation system needs to be put in place to ensure that agencies perform in a competent fashion.

The second element of the concerns offered by Andrew Sancton, and closely associated with the first, is cutbacks. Many local governments currently suffer significant fiscal problems and as a result they will always be beholden to the provincial government for

¹¹⁶Brian Wharf, "Social Services," *Op Cit.*, page 186.

maintaining financial support to social programs.¹¹⁷ Transfer payments are made to local governments by federal or provincial governments and they tend to take the form of conditional or unconditional transfer payments. There are three main reasons for the provision of transfer payments - fiscal gap, interjurisdictional spill-over, and fiscal equity.¹¹⁸ Fiscal gaps have emerged between local government expenditures and local government own-source revenue because the main form of local government own-source revenue, the property tax, has not been a particularly buoyant source of revenue. At the same time, local governments have been forced to cope with expenditures generated by increasing urbanization and demands for improved services.

Inter-jurisdictional spill-overs or externalities occur when expenditures made by one locality benefit other jurisdictions. Municipal councillors are reluctant to spend money on programs that benefit other jurisdictions. However, the provincial government is aware that these expenditures are necessary for the good of the entire province. Therefore, it provides a conditional transfer to offset this spill-over and so encourage municipalities to spend more on this service.

¹¹⁷Andrew Sancton, "Municipal Government and Social Services," (London: Department of Political Science, University of Western Ontario), 1986.

¹¹⁸David Siegal, "The Financial Context for Urban Policy," *Op Cit.*, pages 25-28.

The third rationale for inter-governmental transfers, concern for fiscal equity, arises because of differences in the abilities of local governments to raise funds. Municipalities with large, stable industrial and commercial tax bases can raise sizable amounts of revenue through the property tax. Municipalities with weaker tax bases or higher costs are often forced to impose unduly high mill rates on residential property owners. Provincial governments usually step in to reduce this problem by providing transfers to the municipalities with the weaker tax base.

One of the major problems with provincial transfers from the standpoint of local governments is that the province has absolute control over the level of these payments. Thus, they can change significantly from year to year, depending upon political priorities. The largest proportion of conditional transfers from provincial governments to municipal governments are for programs in the areas of education, health, transportation and communications. Conditional transfers, in recent years, have often taken the form of the provincial government cost-sharing the program, i.e. each fifty cents of municipal expenditures results in one dollar of total expenditure on the program. This makes programs that receive conditional transfers more attractive than those that do not.¹¹⁹ But in turn, such transfers can result in municipal governments shifting their priorities to attract these payments.

¹¹⁹David Siegal, *Op Cit.*, pages 26-28.

When this occurs, municipalities are conscious that they are vulnerable to shifts in provincial priorities. The provincial government could be very interested in a program for a number of years and encourage local governments to develop extensive delivery systems on which local citizens become dependent. Later, provincial priorities could change, resulting in a reduction or total withdrawal of provincial funding for this service. However, the municipality can not shift gears so easily because it has an extensive delivery system in place and a clientele that has come to rely on the service. Often the municipality must continue to provide the service, but without provincial assistance.

Another problem with conditional transfers is evident. The transfer of funds can tend to muddle accountability. Stripped of all the administrative trappings, a transfer payment is basically one level of government spending money raised by another level of government. If the service is not provided properly, whose fault is it? Did the government making the transfer provide too little funding or impose inappropriate conditions? Or did the recipient government use the funds unwisely? It is difficult for a citizen to know which government should be held accountable for problems in this type of situation.¹²⁰

¹²⁰Richard Loreto and Trevor Price, Urban Policy Issues Canadian Perspectives, (Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stewart, Inc), 1990, page 8.

Conclusions

Local governments have the capacity to innovate and create interesting new methods of empowering local citizens in self-help methods. Local government leaders, in coordination with other members of local communities, need to ascertain specific needs within their area and be able to implement constructive responses. Counselling for crisis prevention, as opposed to treating with crisis intervention; job training and educational opportunities instead of unemployment cheques; recreation programmes for physically or mentally challenged people in distinction from inactivity and institutionalization; adequate daycare facilities to provide quality care for children so as to allow mothers to find employment and get off social assistance; and recreational activities for youths who are currently hanging out on the streets of urban centres are all areas that local government leaders can explore.

What appears to be needed is a newly conceived model of local government. While provinces continue to tightly control the finances and activities of municipalities due to what has been termed the "constitutional insignificance of the municipality," local governments are generally blessed with less ideological conflict. The absence of political parties could aid in the conception of a governmental framework that is more cooperative rather than conflictual in nature. A conceptual model of local government would be multicultural in nature in order to respond to the needs of Canada's heterogeneous

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communities. It would also be inclusive so as to allow women, children, the elderly, the financially disadvantaged, the disabled, people with alternative lifestyles among others to have a voice in the formation and implementation of policies. Local government needs to be more about community and a community's citizens than the land that is included in its political boundaries.

Social policy and the provision of personal social services can be adapted to the cooperative style of governing. Local government could create a portfolio of social services within its mandate. Thus a particular official or group of officials would liaison with other community members to create a framework that would be adaptable to its citizens. Many people in a community are already involved in the provision of social services. Ministers provide counselling, religious organizations may offer shelter or food banks, teachers and educators offer counselling to younger members of the community, recreation directors create activities for all those active, senior's coordinators offer Meals on Wheels and transportation for seniors, among other important community members. Community organizations exist even without mandate from government, yet they have no political empowerment. What is also lacking is coordination of those groups that currently act as social facilitators in an area.

The involvement of citizens in the reinvention of the community as the locale for social policy is paramount to the delivery of equitable policies. Provincial governments have

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to be willing to continue to fund necessary income maintenance programs such as welfare, and relieve those municipalities who are currently providing these payments of their burden. Local governments must develop a responsibility for their citizens not just their citizen's property. A social responsibility includes caring for others and developing methods of self-help and mutual aid. This chapter provides a starting point for further exploration into an undeveloped yet important future consideration in social services.

Chapter 3: Alberta's Initiatives

Introduction

The health, education and social welfare programs which have taken shape through this century are a source of pride to Canadians and envy to many nations. In recent years, however, economic pressures have contributed to the retrenchment of federal involvement in social programs. At the federal level, the Government of Canada is implementing the Canada Health and Social Transfer to replace the Canada Assistance Plan and other social program financing. At the provincial level, governments across the country are in the process of "rethinking" or redesigning their services.

The previous chapter focused on the issues concerning decentralization, mainly from a local government viewpoint. It reflected on how decentralization could be used to provide more effective social programming and delivery. This chapter provides a counter-point to Chapter 2 by introducing the concept of decentralization from a public administration or political management perspective. It discusses how the twin imperatives of cost reduction and managerial freedom are also driving the move towards decentralization. Unfortunately, while decentralization is often portrayed as one aspect of reinventing government, it may not always be the panacea for social-ills. In fact, when decentralization is accompanied by reductions in fiscal transfers, it will not likely

accomplish the social and political goals it is implemented to meet.¹²¹

The twin themes of managerial freedom and administrative decentralization, as advocated by both the federal and provincial governments, are not new developments. In 1962, the report that emerged from the Glassco Commission underscored the potential benefits of both. This report has generally been regarded as the major turning point in modern federal administration, given the deregulation of central controls over departmental management that followed.¹²² The concepts of managerial freedom and decentralization in the public sector have been based in part on the private sector corporate model. The private sector has in effect created a normative paradigm for the delivery of social services in many provinces. As governments attempt to become more efficient and business-like in their operations, they are emulating private sector models. Increased managerial autonomy and decentralization have long been the central themes of the corporate paradigm and thus, in part, account for the increased interest of provincial and

¹²¹The province of Alberta is decentralizing its delivery of child and family services at the same time as the government is drastically cutting expenditures in social services. Published plans to cut public education funding by \$238 million, post-secondary education funding by \$206 million, health care by \$748 million, family and social services by \$328 million, and municipal grants by \$87.8 million. Tony Clarke, "Public Services and the Provinces - Alberta," In The Public Interest, The Value of Public Services, Steven Langdon, Judy Rebick, R. Warskett (eds), (Maple Pond, Ontario: Voyageur Publishing), 1994, pages 77-79.

¹²²Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer), 1962, Volume 1.

local governments in pursuing these dimensions for policy implementation.

There are also specific political and government factors involved in the plans and proposals for enhanced managerial freedom and decentralization in public administration. Politically, there are increased demands for a more accountable political state. These demands almost always arise from the perception that the administrative state is one in which public servants, the non-elected arm of government, have significant power, as distinct from authority, in the process of governance.¹²³ Some advocates for managerial freedom believe that "a more accountable state would acknowledge accountability problems by delegating authority to managers in as precise a manner as possible, and then holding them accountable for its exercise."¹²⁴

The governance factors involved in planning for decentralization and managerial freedom constitute a response to at least two factors. On the one hand, the fiscal restraints of the modern state require that managers have greater flexibility in the use of expenditures precisely because there are fewer resources available to meet demands. On the other hand, organizational responsiveness in times of "environmental turbulence," when

¹²³O.P. Dwivedi, (ed), The Public Administrative State in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1982.

¹²⁴Acois and Bakvis, *Op Cit.*, page 3.

coupled with a political environment characterized by a high degree of regional diversity, demands organizational decentralization. In both unitary and federal states this feature of contemporary political environments has produced a marked de jure or de facto devolution of authority to lower levels of government: provincial, regional, Aboriginal and municipal/local.¹²⁵

The provincial government in Alberta, under the leadership of Premier Ralph Klein has been searching for ways to decrease public spending in social services while increasing responsiveness to consumers. Alberta, like many other provinces is grappling with ways it can more effectively and efficiently deliver social services. However, unlike the other Canadian provinces, it has gone much further in its efforts to "reinvent" the way government provides its services. From a public management standpoint, "productive management and responsive decision-making have become central issues in public administration" because of the importance of the administrative state in the governance of social programs.¹²⁶

The spatial dimensions of public administration have become especially critical as

¹²⁵Richard Simeon, "Comments on Centralization and Decentralization," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 29, No. 3, (Fall) 1986, pages 445-461.

¹²⁶Peter Aucoin and Herman Bakvis, *Op Cit.*, page 2.

governments reflect on the effectiveness and efficiencies of their social services. Kernaghan and Langford make the argument that the public seems to have a fairly clear idea of what is meant by efficient and effective service. In essence reliable, competent, quickly delivered, relevant and responsive programs. They go on to note that while these two values may appear straightforward to the public, they are often less clear to public managers.¹²⁷ One of the reasons they are often unclear is because of the conflicting signals received on the meaning and importance of efficiency and effectiveness.

To the auditors, financial officers, central controllers, and other players in the program evaluation industry, efficiency and effectiveness are technical values, used to measure organizational performance and assist in the process of holding public servants accountable for their actions. Efficiency within this context, becomes little more than a measure of labour productivity, while effectiveness is a reflection of the impact of a program on its stated objectives.¹²⁸ The cost-oriented approach to efficiency and effectiveness is the driving force behind many policy decisions which often have the effect of reducing and eliminating services to the public.

¹²⁷Kenneth Kernaghan and John W. Langford, The Responsible Public Servant, The Institute for Research on Public Policy and the Institute for Public Administration in Canada, 1990, page 119-120.

¹²⁸J. Cutt, "Accountability, Efficiency and the Bottom Line in Non-Profit Organizations," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 25, (Fall) 1982, pages 311-331.

The Alberta government, at a time when it is reducing expenditures to child and family services, has embraced the concepts of community based design and delivery of child and family services and has begun implementing a model that is radically different than any other implemented in Canada today.¹²⁹ Coinciding with the establishment of regional agencies that will be transferred responsibility for the implementation of child and family service policy is the utilization of alternative program delivery methods. The next section will provide an introduction to the concept of alternative program delivery which will set the stage for the case study on Alberta.

¹²⁹See Table 1 as an indication of budget cuts. Source: Province of Alberta, Budget 1996.

Table 1. Spending Profile, Province of Alberta, Millions of Dollars¹³⁰

	Comparable 1993/94 Actual	Comparable 1994/95 Forecast	1995/96 Budget	1996/97 Target	1997/98 Target
A. Spending - Operating Target					
General Revenue Fund					
Income & Employment					
Programs	974.5	749.4	757.5	738.7	721.2
Child Welfare Services	164.0	164.2	178.8	192.0	194.9
Services to Persons					
with Disabilities	236.0	243.8	253.5	261.4	276.5
Day Care	73.8	74.5	63.7	60.2	60.2
Office for the Prevention of					
Family Violence	7.8	10.4	7.8	7.8	7.8
Children's Advocacy	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7
Commissioner of Services					
for Children	0.0	0.4	2.1	2.1	2.1
Aboriginal Affairs	5.9	6.6	7.5	7.3	7.3
Metis Settlements					
Transition Commission	6.3	6.0	5.3	4.7	4.7
Metis Settlements Appeal					
Tribunal	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.9
Balance of Department	61.0	59.3	63.2	62.6	61.4
Statutory Expenditure	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
Total Operating	1,561.3	1,347.0	1,372.2	1,369.4	1,368.7
Projected Reductions		(214.3)	25.2	(2.8)	(0.7)
B. Spending - Capital Investment Target					
Ministry	3.6	2.0	1.0	0.4	0.4
Business Plan Revenue Proposals					
Federal Government cost sharing revenue changes resulting from Three-Year Plan	588	525	525	522	523

¹³⁰Source: Province of Alberta, Provincial Budget, 1996.

Alternative Program Delivery and Financing

Part of the pressure that not only the Alberta provincial government, but other provincial governments and the federal government face, is derived from a combination of demands. These demands include the need to reduce deficits and accumulated debt; deliver services and provide the types of service that citizens want in the manner they seek; and, provide a range of services consistent with the willingness of citizens and corporations to bear certain levels of taxation.¹³¹ It is in this context that governments have been actively reviewing their programs. They are considering whether to continue delivering those programs and, if so, whether they can be delivered in more effective, less costly, and potentially more responsive ways.

The banners under which Canadian governments undertake such reviews to restructure their service delivery are numerous and vary considerably across jurisdictions. They include outsourcing and contracting out, partnerships, privatization, commercialization, empowerment, downsizing, delayering, decentralization and devolution. Whether or not governments emphasize one approach over another, it is useful to view all of these initiatives as part of an important paradigm shift.

¹³¹KPMG, "Canadian Governments and the Search For Alternative Program Delivery and Financing," A Preliminary Survey, (KPMG Centre For Government Foundation and IPAC), October, 1995.

It is often practical to consider the numerous names and approaches under a blanket heading known as alternative program delivery. The concept of alternative program delivery and financing embraces a wide range of activities, some of which are familiar while others constitute more recent innovations. What is a new occurrence is that contemporary political governments appear not only to have the political will, but also popular support for significant policy and program changes. Two additional developments have served to make the search for alternatives even more compelling. The first is that citizens are more demanding about the quality of service they receive. Second, governments are in a good position to respond to these demands because of the opportunities created through emerging technology.¹³²

KPMG in "Canadian Governments and the Search For Alternative Program Delivery and Financing," groups different program delivery and financing alternatives into three broad categories. These groupings are reflected in Table 2.

¹³²*Ibid.*, page 2.

*Table 2*¹³³

Grouping Program Delivery and Financing Alternatives	
<i>Finding New Management</i>	
■	devolution
■	privatization
■	elimination
■	mergers
<i>Internal Changes</i>	
■	new leadership, culture and expectations
■	new organizational structures and processes
■	increased productivity with new information technologies
■	shared systems or contracting out the systems
■	improved financial management
<i>External Changes</i>	
■	commercialization and cost recovery
■	shifting administrative instruments
■	private or public partnerships to improve delivery
■	contracting out service delivery

Some alternative delivery initiatives, titled Finding New Management in Table 2, shift the ultimate responsibility for restructuring to the private sector, to other governments, to new management within the public service, or they eliminate a function without working to find any substitute. Another category of initiatives, Internal Changes, groups

¹³³*Ibid.*, page 3.

those attempts to improve the internal organizational frameworks within government in which programs are delivered. This may involve appointing new leaders, adopting new organizational structures or taking advantage of new information technology, shared systems or approaches to financial management. Such reforms may not be visible to clients and citizens, but may improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations. A final set of alternatives provides visible changes to clients and citizens in the form of user fees, different instruments for delivering programs (i.e. shifting from subsidies to tax credits), or relying on different providers to deliver services.

The program delivery groupings are relevant to this chapter as the Alberta government is devolving authority for child and family services to Local Authorities. Coinciding with this development is the increased utilization of privatization and cost recovery projects, private and public partnerships to deliver programs, as well as contracting out the actual delivery of child welfare services. A more indepth evaluation will be found in Chapter 5, which will explore what alternative service delivery may mean for social services.

The remainder of this chapter is a case study which provides an overview to the changes that are proposed in Alberta. The implementation stage has yet to begin, therefore the chapter focuses on the process involved in the design of the new community based model of social program delivery. Conclusions are made at the end of the chapter that tie some

of the proposed changes to concerns related to decentralized models of social service provision.

Background to Decentralization in Alberta

The province of Alberta is widely acknowledged to be a leader in the downsizing and reshaping of government.¹³⁴ Despite the ambitious reform of government, there is no central coordinating point pushing for alternative delivery. The budgetary goals adopted by the government encourage each department to pursue change differently. Several government services are being privatized or provided through outsourcing and partnership agreements. It is in the context of massive restructuring and rethinking of how the government of Alberta is going to provide its services, that the decentralization initiatives emerged.

In November 1993, the Government of Alberta appointed a Commissioner of Services for Children with a mandate to design a new integrated,¹³⁵ more effective and

¹³⁴In 1993, the number of government departments was reduced from 23 to 17. Moreover, 50 agencies, boards, commissions and funds will have been merged or disbanded by March, 1996.

¹³⁵"Laying the Foundation, A Guide for Planning Children's Services in Alberta," Handbook 1, Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children, Province of Alberta, June 1995, defines integrated service delivery as bringing all levels of

community-based system of support to children and families. The appointment of the Commissioner was the first step in the change process intended to be fundamental in its impact on expenditures, structures, services and outcomes. The main thrusts of the reforms include:

- ▶ clear provincial policy direction, high expectations, and a spirit of innovation, creativity and re-invention;
- ▶ reduction of the kinds of services delivered directly by government - a clear rationale is required for those services that the government continues to deliver;
- ▶ value for money - elimination of wasteful or unnecessary administration or activity;
- ▶ existing organizations, structures, agencies and even services may no longer be necessary, affordable or desirable.¹³⁶

The decision to redesign services for children and families is not just a component of a broad government reform initiative. It is a response to a growing dissatisfaction with the inability of service systems to adapt and respond to the needs of children and families.

government, private, non-profit, and volunteer services together at the community level to minimize duplication of effort and improve access for, and responsiveness to, children and families in need (page 31).

¹³⁶Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children, "Planning and Implementing A New Approach To Services For Children and Families, Beginning The Transition," Province of Alberta, page 1.

"For some time government, service organizations and individuals have recognized the need for fundamental changes to the way we provide children's services. Over the years governments have assumed more and more responsibility for 'solving' social problems."¹³⁷

The remainder of this section describes the Alberta provincial government's logic in determining the need and extent of the reforms. This information has been presented in order to provide an overview of the process leading up to the implementation and will be more fully evaluated in Chapter 5.

The Alberta government announced that the growth in government services has reinforced an assumption that more means better ... that as more programs are created, and more resources are assigned to those programs, this should unquestionably lead to better quality of life. The belief is part of the assumption that the result of the growth in government services has been a growing dependence on government when what parents need, in the majority of cases, is help in developing their capacity to help themselves. It has been argued, in fact, that as economic and social factors have taken their toll on the family, so have the very systems and services which have been established to help children and families.

¹³⁷Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children, "Focus On Children: A Plan For Effective, Integrated Community Services For Children and Their Families," Government of Alberta, November 1994, page 3.

This view holds that the helping professions and the government's service systems have unwittingly helped to undermine the family, and have created obstacles to strengthening the family and the community. The professionals who work within the child and family service systems, particularly large ones, provide solutions that often tend to be inadvertently imposed, rather than developed with families. In the process, families may well receive the message that they are powerless and incapable of finding their own solutions. What families need, in the majority of cases, is help in developing their capacity to help themselves.

The existing service system also tends to focus on individuals to the exclusion of the family and extended family. This approach fails to acknowledge that the family situation is often part of the child's problem, and it conveys the powerful and harmful message that the family is irrelevant. In many cases, in order to help a child, it is necessary to address issues and problems of the family as a whole. The "child within the family" and the "family within the community" are the new focuses of Alberta's services.

The current system in Alberta includes of range of services provided to children and families through government departments, schools, social service agencies, health centres, the justice system, volunteer and other organizations. The underlying assumption to the change in Alberta is that incremental adjustments will no longer yield the required

levels of improvement in quality and cost-effectiveness. Nor will they improve the well-being of families in Alberta. The government of Alberta believed it necessary to redesign their *approach* to providing services.

Between December 1993 and June 1994, more than 3,300 Albertans, from 65 communities, provided their views on children's services to the Commissioner. The Commissioner's office and interim working groups held approximately 250 meetings across the province. In addition to these meetings, Albertans made 212 submissions to the Commissioner. The findings of the consultations are detailed in a background paper called "Finding a Better Way: The Consultations and Research Leading to the Redesign of Children's Services in Alberta."

The consultations indicated overwhelming public support to transform the existing system so that it provides community-managed, integrated and more prevention-focused services. In fact, the consultations focused on the fact that communities are in a much better position than large government organizations to understand the needs of children and families, and to design flexible, effective responses to those needs. Government, the consultations concluded, should restrict its activities to developing overall policy, setting service standards, monitoring results and providing adequate and equitable funding for

community delivery of services.¹³⁸ In addition, Albertans also indicated that integrated planning and delivery of children's services would reduce the fragmentation and gaps in current services. If services were made easily accessible, and were provided through a "one-window" access, professional staff could respond with more creativity to the needs of children and families.

Another major goal of community based children's services should be enhanced prevention and early intervention services. Families need help before they reach crisis, and before the family's resources are completely exhausted. Early intervention helps communities become more self-reliant and successful in solving problems before they escalate.

As Alberta is a multi-cultural province, effective services must acknowledge the diversity of cultures and recognize that there are many different traditional views of the family. While only nine percent of Alberta children are Aboriginal, almost fifty percent of the children in the care of Child Welfare are Aboriginal. Children in Aboriginal communities experience a higher incidence of health problems and disabilities, as well as a lower level of educational attainment. The Commissioner was told very clearly that current services have not been successful in improving the health and well-being of Aboriginal children.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, pages 3 and 4.

Aboriginal people shared the same goal of integrated and community-based services. They expressed that programs must value their culture and be sensitive to local situations and conditions. Involvement with Aboriginal people must also recognize their self-government objectives. Many Aboriginal communities noted that they want to move toward governing their own children's services.¹³⁹

As well as consulting with Albertans, the Commissioner researched other areas, and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches. Jurisdictions from across Canada, the United States and other parts of the world face the same challenges with respect to social policy. In Alberta's assessment of other jurisdictions, they concluded that the jurisdictions that have tried to improve social services by simply promoting coordination and by adding more programs to the existing mix of government services, have not been successful.

A key component to effective change, in their opinion, appears to involve actually integrating policy development and the delivery of social services. The purpose of integration is to remove organizational barriers, budget conflicts and gaps in services. Another finding from the experience of other jurisdictions is the importance of involving communities and parents in the redesign of service delivery. To be successful, service

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, page 5.

redesign requires shared responsibility for setting service goals and delivering services. It must also allow for a wide variation in the content of local initiatives. Finally, research into other jurisdictions also noted the critical role that evaluation plays in service redesign. The only true measure of success is positive results for children and families. The volume of services, is not by itself, a measure of success.

*The Proposal For Decentralization and Alternative Service Delivery*¹⁴⁰

Following months of consultation and research, Mike Cardinal, Minister of Family and Social Services in Alberta, announced a new approach to delivering children's services. The key points to the approach are that:

- communities have the best understanding of their local needs for children's and family services;
- communities can play a valuable, positive role in planning and delivering their own children's services; and,
- communities want responsibility for children and family services.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰For an overview of the milestones in the decentralization process please see Appendix A.

¹⁴¹Officer of the Commissioner of Services for Children, "Laying the Foundation, A Guide For Planning Children's Services In Alberta," Handbook 1, Province of

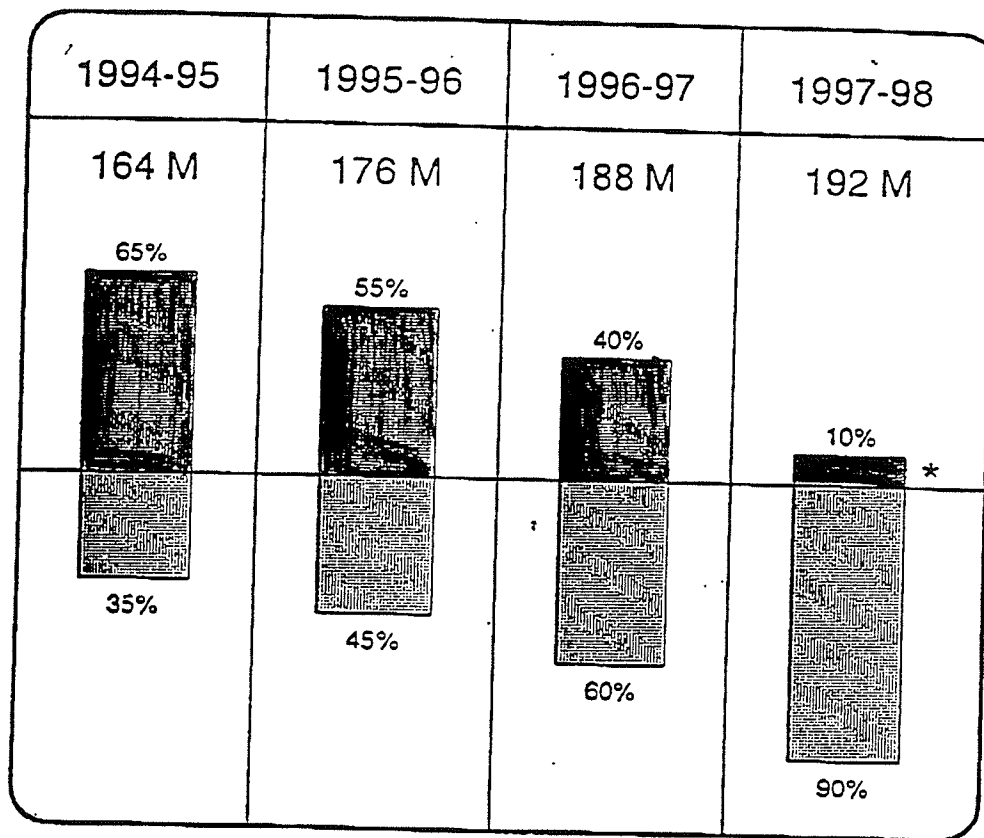
To support the new way of providing services, the government will establish 17 service areas (See Appendix B) with boundaries the same as the Regional Health Authorities. Within each service area, a Regional Steering Committee will be appointed to co-ordinate a community planning process to develop a Service Plan for the region. Based on the Service Plan, a Local Children's Service Authority will be established to administer the new system in the region.

Four areas of change were identified to effectively redesign children's services: community delivery, early intervention, Aboriginal services, and integrated services. The first area of change, community direction, means that government will gradually move out of the direct delivery of children's services. Communities will assume this role through a transition period that is estimated to take three years.¹⁴² Communities include service recipients, family members, and concerned citizens and they should be involved in all aspects of planning, decision making, service delivery and monitoring. This includes the development of processes which involve family and community members in critical decisions about children, particularly where these decisions may result in the removal of a child from family or community.

Alberta, June 1995, page 6.

¹⁴²See Table 3. Source: Province of Alberta, Provincial Budget 1995.

Table 3. Province of Alberta, Child Welfare Budget¹⁴³



 Services Delivered by Government

 Services Delivered by Community

* Government will remain responsible for Policy, Legislation, Monitoring & Evaluation

¹⁴³Source: Province of Alberta, Provincial Budget, 1995.

Government will assist communities to plan, integrate and monitor children's services and continue to be responsible for legislation, standards, funding, monitoring and evaluation. An emphasis will be placed on providing services to children in their own families and communities. The Action Plan proposes that new Local Authorities be established for designing and managing all children's services in their area. Agencies should deliver these services based on contracts tendered through an open, competitive process. In order to test new program ideas, pilot projects should also be funded.

Early prevention, was identified as a second key area of action. Early intervention programs will be created to reach out to children and families before a crisis occurs. A key element of this proposal is that families and communities are expected to help and support each other to ensure children and youth remain safe and healthy. Energies must be redirected to help families in a proactive way, rather than through crisis intervention. The province of Alberta has committed to Early Intervention Program funding over the next three years. Half of the funding will go to programs for Aboriginal children.

For Aboriginal families, programs involving community healing circles and the participation of elders have also demonstrated their effectiveness. By increasing early intervention programs over the next three years, there will potentially be a significant reduction in the number of children in care in residential facilities, foster homes,

correctional centres and group homes. The cost savings in these areas over the next three years should be redirected to early intervention programs. In the long term, effective early intervention programming will reduce the overall costs of providing children's services.¹⁴⁴

Closely related to early prevention programs is the third key area, Aboriginal services. The planning and delivery of children's services will be more culturally sensitive with greater involvement from Aboriginal communities. Coordinated programming and close working relationships will be encouraged between all Aboriginal people and Regional Steering Committees.

Finally, the fourth important area of action is integrated services. By integrating children's services at the community, regional and provincial level, the diverse needs of children will be better met. Integrating services will improve access, responsiveness and will reach goals not achievable by one group alone.

¹⁴⁴Commissioner of Services for Children, "Focus on Children, A Plan for Effective, Integrated Community Services For Children and Their Families," Province of Alberta, November, 1994, page 11.

*Structures*¹⁴⁵

Community Working Groups

These are the groups that will develop a preliminary service plan for their communities, First Nation communities, settlements, or areas of a city within each of the 17 regions. The process can be taken on by existing groups or new groups that will have to be established. Working groups may include: children and families; children and family advocates; elders; clients (current and previous); community representatives from various geographical points within a region; trained professionals who work with children; contract service providers, their networks and associations; community volunteers and board members; donors, charity board members and representatives from not-for-profit organizations; sponsors and funding bodies for programs and services; organizations that provide training; professional organizations; cultural, spiritual and religious organizations; and, business.

¹⁴⁵ "Redesign of Children's Services, A Precise;" Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, Province of Alberta, January, 1996; and "Laying the Foundation, A Guide for Planning Children's Services in Alberta," Handbook 1, Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children, Province of Alberta, June, 1995.

Phase 1: The Preliminary Service Plan

The beginning of the service planning process involves a detailed analysis of each community in the region. The focus must be on the needs of children and families.

The process involves community working groups developing a plan which:

- ▶ determines vision, goals, outcomes and action plan for the region;
- ▶ builds on the four key areas of change: community delivery, early intervention programs, Aboriginal services and integrated services;
- ▶ assesses the current needs and gaps in services for children and families;
- ▶ ensures community involvement at all levels of service planning including: Who was consulted; How communities were consulted; The feedback and recommendations received; What effect this consultation had on the plan?

From the preliminary service plans produced by working groups, the Regional Steering Committee prepares a preliminary Regional Service Plan and submits it to the Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children for review.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶"Redesign of Children's Services, A Precis," Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, Province of Alberta, January 1996.

Regional Steering Committees

Regional Steering Committees, appointed by the Minister of Family and Social Services, are responsible for developing the service plan for their regions. Their job is to design and co-ordinate a process within their region that engages residents through working groups in various communities to propose service plans.

A Steering Committee, composed of approximately 14 to 17 members including two co-chairs appointed by the Commissioner of Services for Children, must establish working relationships and communication processes with the working groups that keeps the development of plans as open as possible and continually weaves together the work of the groups and communities so that a regional plan evolves. The Steering Committee must ensure groups are working within a framework of the service planning handbooks, legislation and government standards.

Phase 2: The Regional Service Plan

Upon approval in principle of the preliminary plan, the Regional Steering Committee will develop a service plan which:

- ▶ builds on the Preliminary Plan;

- ▶ describes the provision of children's services;
- ▶ ensures compliance with provincial policy and standards;
- ▶ co-ordinates children's services between regions;
- ▶ co-ordinates children's services with other authorities providing social services (e.g. Regional Health Authorities);
- ▶ is within the funding range provided.

The more detailed service plan for the Redesign of Children's Services at the regional level is then submitted to the Commissioner of Services for Children for government approval.¹⁴⁷

Community Facilitators / Aboriginal Facilitators

The facilitators are employees of the Commissioner of Services for Children. Their role is to support the total planning process. This includes assisting co-chairs and members of Steering Committees and community work groups in developing service plans.

Children's Services Authorities

Once the service plan has been approved for a region, a Children's Services Authority

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*

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will replace the steering committees and will assume responsibility for developing business plans, allocating funds, inviting and evaluating service delivery proposals, managing overall services and maintaining community involvement in identifying priorities and refining the planning processes.

Phase 3: The Business Plan

The business plan is the responsibility of Children's Services Authorities. It will outline the details of how the service plan will be implemented. Therefore, it will cover the following components: types of services and programs and projected outcomes; budgets; human resource planning; training; organizational structures; facilities'; specific implementation plans including contract management, client involvement, and ongoing community input; and, detailed evaluation procedures including outcome measurements.¹⁴⁸

Conclusions

The quality and delivery of social services have become especially important in this era

¹⁴⁸"Redesign of Children's Services, A Precis," Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, Province of Alberta, January 1996.

of social transformation and fiscal deficits. Most governments have been slow to understand the nature of the problem and have reacted with reductions in funding and other restraint measures, that are cost-effective but do not respond to real needs. Canada has a social safety net that was developed in the 1960s to respond to the problems of that decade; but it has become increasingly inadequate for the much higher levels of economic insecurity that prevails in the 1990s. The answer is not to scrap all of our existing programs; it is essential to maintain a social safety net; but there is a need to restructure policy and programs to deal with contemporary problems.

At stake in the transformation of how Alberta provides its child and family services is the notion of quality and delivery. The Children's Service Authorities (Local Authorities) are given the responsibility of developing and implementing business plans and determining service providers. The service providers will be contracted by the Local Authority to provide child and family services to the communities. Alberta is decentralizing social services as well as introducing contracting-out and a variety of other alternative service delivery units. In essence, the question is not whether the private sector can more cost-effectively deliver a service, their goal is to make a profit, it is whether they will provide the best service to the community. Advocates of privatization and alternate service delivery will argue that because these organizations must compete, the private sector is forced to provide good service in order to win or keep the contract

and customers. The shift from public services provided to citizens, to private services sold to consumers is a very important paradigm shift and one that will have a large impact on public administration.

This paradigm shift has important implications for universality, standards, and the quality of service provided to customers. Overton says that although there is some variation in the ways in which the provinces have responded to the federal retrenchment, there are also some similarities. All have pursued, albeit at different rates, privatization, voluntarism, and greater local responsibility. Much of the welfare burden has been shifted to private charities.

Food banks, soup kitchens and clothing depots have become institutionalized means of meeting human need. In addition to reducing the federal deficit at provincial expense, this shift of child and family services from public to private auspices creates a different set of government principles for social services.¹⁴⁹ Functionalists purport that it does not matter if the provision of social services is by public/private or a mix of the two. However, the private sector, by relying on charity and voluntarism, cannot ensure that people will have adequate income of standard of service.

¹⁴⁹J. Overton, "Dissenting Opinions," Perception, Volume 15, No.1, 1991, pages 17-21.

In striving for efficiency, financial accountability, consumer choice, and less dependence on the state, Brad MacKenzie argues that consumers will be expected to purchase services from a range of options. This fundamental change is part of the return to a residual model of welfare, where government is more concerned with cost-containment and accepts responsibility for only those in absolute poverty.¹⁵⁰ Given the experience of Alberta in coping with declining revenues and the political imperative to reduce the scope of government, the effects of restraint measures can be perverse.¹⁵¹ Alberta is poised on the brink of a major reorganization of the way it provides social services to its citizens. Chapter 5 will propose some of the likely outcomes of such a change.

¹⁵⁰Brad MacKenzie, "Decentralized Social Services," *Op Cit.*, page 100.

¹⁵¹John W. Langford and Kenneth J. Hoffman, "Fear and Ferment, Public Sector Management Today," Canadian Public Administration, Volume 29, No. 4, (Winter) 1996.

Appendix A

Milestones: November 1994 - January 1996

The following are key activities that have taken place since the plan for the Redesign of Children's Services was announced in November 1994.

- ▶ The plan to Redesign Children's Services was announced by the Minister of Family and Social Services.

- ▶ The Commissioner of Services For Children was mandated to design a new, integrated, more effective and community based system of support to children and families.

- ▶ Seventeen Planning Regions were established with the same boundaries as Regional Health Authorities.

- ▶ Deputy Ministers' and Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committees of partnering departments (Family and Social Services, Health, Justice, Education, Community Development, Aboriginal Affairs) were established to provide

leadership and address issues.

- ▶ A series of public meetings across the province explain the redesign initiative and invite public participation in the planning process.
- ▶ A general letter goes out through the media to all interested citizens and advises them of the process for selecting co-chairs and members of Steering Committees in all regions and requests volunteers and nominations.
- ▶ Steering Committee co-chairs were appointed by the Minister for the seventeen regions; there is at least one Aboriginal co-chair in each region.
- ▶ Service Plan Handbook #1 ("Laying the Foundation: A Guide for Planning Children's Services in Alberta") was published.
- ▶ Baseline information for each of the 17 Planning Regions was published ("Getting to Know Your Community").
- ▶ Hundreds of volunteers, through existing groups or new working groups set up, began to develop preliminary service plans for their communities.

- ▶ Early Intervention Program Funding Guidelines for Children's Services in Alberta were announced.
- ▶ The Early Intervention Program Funding Guidelines for Children's Services in Alberta were announced.
- ▶ The Early Intervention Program, Guide Books for Applicants Part 1 and Part 2 (explanation of program and process for submissions) was published.
- ▶ A special RITE long distance number was put into operation for the Early Intervention Program.
- ▶ A Provincial Advisory Committee was established to guide the development of standards for children's services.
- ▶ Approximately 100 applicants were invited to submit detailed proposals for funding under the Early Intervention Program.
- ▶ Members of Regional Steering Committees were appointed and initial orientations were conducted.

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- ▶ In September, 1995 a newsletter was established to provide updates on what is happening in the redesign of children's services across the regions and through the Commissioner's office.

- ▶ A Council of Regions was established in October 1995 to provide advice to the Commissioner concerning the redesign of children's services. There was representation from each of the 17 planning regions.

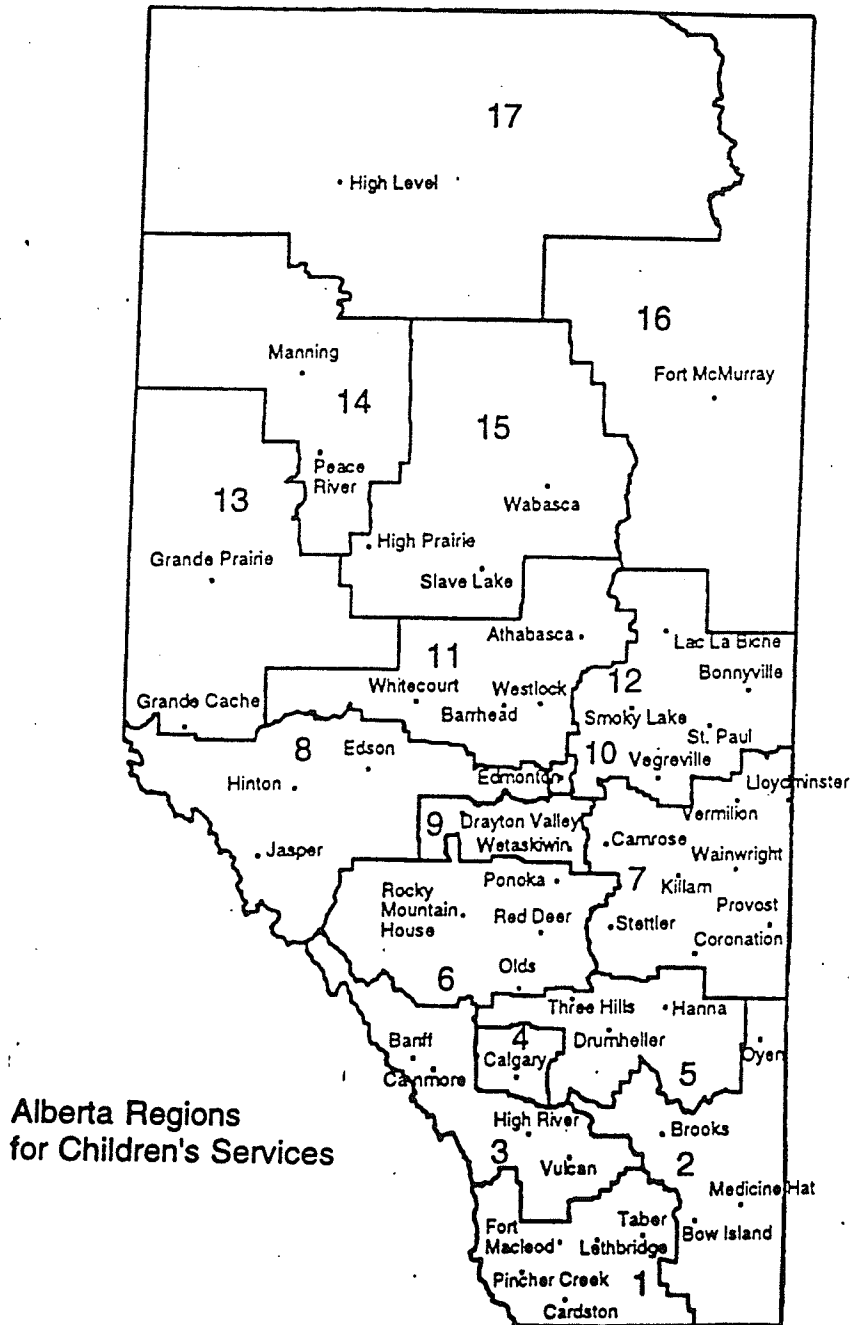
- ▶ The first issue of the newsletter "Focus on Children" was distributed in November 1995.

- ▶ To date, 29 applicants have been approved for funding under the Early Intervention Program. The successful applicants represent different regions of the province.

- ▶ Enabling legislation to provide for the establishment of Children's Services Authorities is being prepared in consultation with partnering departments and Steering Committees. It is expected to be tabled in April, 1996.

Source: "Redesign of Children's Services Precis," Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families," Province of Alberta, January, 1996.

Appendix B



Source: Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, "Guide For Applicants - Early Intervention Program Funding," Province of Alberta, May, 1995.

Chapter 4: The First Nation Child Welfare Model

Introduction

As noted in Chapter 2, social policies in Canada have largely been developed in national and provincial governmental frameworks, yet their consequences are played out and experienced in local communities.¹⁵² Local governments are currently not responsible to any great extent for the design of social policy for their citizens. An ill-fit between national policies and the people they are designed to serve is well-illustrated at the local level, especially for First Nations people. High levels of unemployment, marked dependencies on income transfers, high suicide rates among First Nations' youth, as well as the increasing numbers that are incarcerated by the justice system are all examples of the inappropriateness of federal and provincial policies to First Nations people. "Native peoples have struggled against sustained attempts by the state to reduce their status ... and against the persistent inability of Canadians generally to appreciate their unique position."¹⁵³

This chapter proposes the idea that First Nations' social problems, with specific regards to child welfare, are best dealt with at the local level by community members who are

¹⁵²Brian Wharf, Communities and Social Policy In Canada, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart) 1992, page 20.

¹⁵³Frances Abele, and Daiva Stasiulis, "Canada as a 'White Settler Colony': What About Natives and Immigrants?" The New Canadian Political Economy, Wallace Clement and Glen Williams(eds), 1989, page 240.

capable of ascertaining the needs and concerns of their people and implementing practical consensual solutions through self-government initiatives. The argument is made that while the delivery of child and family services could be more integrated and inclusive under future First Nation self-government, the dual-bilateral and tri-partite system of social service policy development and delivery in Manitoba, has social, political, jurisdictional and financial problems. These need to be closely examined in order to provide for meaningful community solutions.

A community-based model of government, that includes the voices of women in the decision-making processes, would be a step in acknowledging the important social and political contributions that women have to make.¹⁵⁴ In reviewing some of the current problems of the Native CFS agencies, this chapter suggests that the dominant patriarchal non-Aboriginal culture shapes First Nations leaders' opinions about the role women play in their communities. The result has been a polarization pitting social concerns against political aspirations. As a case study of decentralization of social services, the chapter provides a glimpse of some of the problems associated with community delivered child welfare programs. It focuses on the process by which First Nation Child and Family Service Agencies were given the mandate to deliver child welfare services and more specifically on the power struggles that can arise when local governments are given

¹⁵⁴ Personal Interview with Kathy Mallett, director of Original Women's Network of Winnipeg, January 13, 1995.

control of implementing social service policy. While some of these problems have been exacerbated by the political struggle First Nation communities face in achieving self-government, it is worthwhile to examine and evaluate (Chapter 5) these issues.

First Nations Women and Self Government

Since the early 1980s in Manitoba, social services have undergone a transformation with regard to First Nation children. There had been significant concern displayed over the high number of Native children removed from their homes and placed in white foster care or adopted into white homes in what has now been referred to as the "sixties sweep."¹⁵⁵ The response to the outrage and politicization of these events by Native women's groups was the decentralization of child and family services in the early 1980s and the creation of regional Native Child and Family Service (CFS) agencies (see Appendix A for a current list of Manitoba's Native CFS agencies). Tripartite or dual-bilateral agreements¹⁵⁶ were drawn up between the federal government, provincial

¹⁵⁵ Report of the First Nation's Child and Family Task Force, "Children First Our Responsibility," Manitoba, November 1993, page 15.

¹⁵⁶ Agreements signed with First Nation Regional Agencies have generally taken the form of a tripartite agreement involving the federal government, the provincial government and the First Nation Tribal Council. In the early 1980s, before policy was established, the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council entered into two complementary but separate bilateral agreements with the province of Manitoba and the federal government. Thus, the term "dual-bilateral" was established to refer to this form of agreement.

government, and First Nation communities, giving these agencies the mandate to provide child and family services in their geographical jurisdictions.¹⁵⁷ The perceived solution to the problems that contributed to the cultural genocide of First Nations was the implementation of provincial social policies by First Nation regional agencies.

These political and social changes have often been considered a part of the larger project for First Nation self-government in Manitoba, and have had an enormous impact on the personal lives of the people residing in the communities. Aboriginal women's groups, social workers, bureaucrats, academics and journalists have all asked questions concerning the social implications of the move toward First Nation self-government, especially as it relates to women and children. This chapter, in addressing the need for community development initiatives, will discuss a few of the pressing issues which surround the current system of First Nation delivery of Child and Family Services. It will be noted how certain problems could either be intensified or resolved through the true self-government and the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) in Manitoba. Particular attention will be paid to the concerns of First Nation women that have been expressed through interviews conducted in research

¹⁵⁷ The one exception to this rule has been the Sagkeeng First Nation which has been practising non-mandated Child and Family services to the community of Fort Alexander since the 1970s and falls under the authority of the Eastman provincial regional office (a non-native CFS regional office).

for this paper.¹⁵⁸

To date, there has been little credence or academic attention paid to First Nation women's control over social services or input into self-government initiatives. Native women's groups have been vocal in their criticism of self-government where it entails the further domination of First Nation men over the lives of women and children.¹⁵⁹ They want the opportunity to have their voices included to balance the social requirements of their families and the politics of self-government.¹⁶⁰

The basis of this chapter is an analysis of current literature, interviews with representatives from First Nations child welfare agencies, First Nations women, First Nations leaders, as well as the provincial and federal bureaucrats directly involved in the restoration of jurisdictions through the dismantling of DIAND. Through this assessment, a better understanding is gained of the social and political communities that have

¹⁵⁸The author interviewed 22 First Nation women from a variety of First Nation communities. The women were contacted by the author with the assistance of the Indigenous Women's Collective, and live in a number of different First Nation communities throughout Manitoba. While the selection was not completely random, the opinions attributed to interviews are those of these women and not the author. Their names have not been included in the bibliography so as to protect their anonymity. Throughout the text, the interviews will be referred to numerically.

¹⁵⁹Personal Interview with Kathy Mallett, director of the Original Women's Network of Winnipeg, January 13, 1995.

¹⁶⁰Interviews with First Nation women, interview numbers 1-20.

developed with regards to First Nations' social service delivery and the negative impact the social and political divisions have had on members of First Nation communities.

The Dismantling of DIAND

The concept of self-government emerges from Native history and aspirations. Native peoples have a unique political and constitutional position,¹⁶¹ "yet they recognize that their marginality can only be dealt with by capturing a degree of political power which, has hitherto, been denied them."¹⁶² Throughout the period of political and administrative subordination to the federal government, First Nations have retained strong memories of political independence; moreover, the bitter experiences of colonialism have kept alive in their souls a vision of self-determination - a sovereign government by their people.¹⁶³ The claim for self-government is that it is an inherent right, pre-existing the arrival of Europeans and the cultural, political and economic domination that followed.

For First Nation people, the self in self-government means more than delivering

¹⁶¹Frances Abele and Daiva Stasiulis, *Op Cit.*, page 241.

¹⁶²John Loxley, "The Great Northern Plan," Studies in Political Economy, No. 6, (Autumn) 1981, page 162.

¹⁶³Menno Boldt, Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 1993, pages 87-88.

programs and administering policies designed by other governments and non-Aboriginal people.¹⁶⁴ It means defining, through the practice of policy development and implementation, how First Nation governments can be used to come to terms with important problems and objectives in Native communities.¹⁶⁵ To administer the programs as designed and financed through a residual model of social welfare¹⁶⁶ is to merely replace the existing non-Aboriginal Department of Indian Affairs with a Native one. There is a need to move away from the paternalism¹⁶⁷ of the current system to support

¹⁶⁴Winnipeg Council of First Nations, "A Position Paper on the Dismantling of The Department of Indian Affairs and Urban Self-Government," Presented at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Conference on Self-government, 1994, page 18, notes that the mere dismantling of Indian Affairs and systems would not be "self-government" per se, but rather "self-administration."

¹⁶⁵Frank Cassidy, "Aboriginal Governments in Canada: An Emerging Field of Study," Canadian Journal of Political Science, Volume 23, No. 1, 1990, page 80.

¹⁶⁶In the book, Alternatives to Social Assistance in Indian Communities, Frank Cassidy, and Shirley B. Seward (eds), Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1991, there is the assertion (page 4) that current programs in place to serve First Nation's are based on the residual model of social welfare, which is the dominant one in Canadian society. The model is keyed to the administration of individualized social assistance transfers to people who have failed for whatever reasons to meet the minimal demands of the market. The interventionist policies designed by the provincial government with regards to child welfare have been constructed in a similar fashion. The situations that warranted intervention in the past ended with children being removed, not just from homes, but from entire communities. As with social assistance, First Nations have asserted that these measures are completely culturally inappropriate and have demanded that a more holistic, community-based approach be adopted.

¹⁶⁷Chief Ovide Mecredi, Alternatives to Social Assistance in Indian Communities, *Ibid.*, pages 4-5.

for First Nation self-government.¹⁶⁸ According to the director of Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, George Munroe, the dismantling process also means empowering the people in communities to take control over their communities' problems and find solutions.¹⁶⁹ It means giving women and children a voice in the development process.

In Manitoba over the last few years, close attention has been paid to issues surrounding the dismantling of DIAND and the restoration of jurisdictions through First Nation self-government. This focus is understandable, given the importance of the agreements. Nevertheless, it has shifted attention away from other worthy issues, some of which are critical for true self-determination. These areas include CFS and the development of delivery of other social services in First Nations communities. Both the ability of a non-Native government to implement policies and attitudes in First Nation communities continue to make it difficult to develop culturally appropriate programs.

As Vern Morrissette, et al.¹⁷⁰ argue, the process of colonization involves creating

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*, page 8.

¹⁶⁹Personal Interview with George Munroe, Director of Ma MaWi, Winnipeg, February 15, 1995.

¹⁷⁰Vern Morrissette, Brad McKenzie, and Larry Morrissette, "Towards an Aboriginal Model of Social Work Practice Cultural Knowledge and Traditional Practices," Canadian Social Work Review, Volume 10, No. 1, (Winter) 1993, page 94.

dependency through: structural measures such as removing Aboriginal people from their land through treaties and the implementation of reserve system; cultural measures such as displacement of traditional forms of governance with representative democracy and an authoritarian model of leadership; social and economic measures such as the creation of a welfare economy; and, the devaluation of traditional spirituality and knowledge through the residential school system, the health system and the child welfare system.

During the course of economic and political development in Manitoba, the foreign "white" system imposed itself on the Native economy. The sociopolitical culture as determined by non-Native political structures and economic activities became the basis of colonialism and colonial relations.¹⁷¹ The colonial exploitation of Native society over the years, resulted in a transformation of the social relationships that caused the subjugation of First Nation women. First Nation men in Manitoba became responsible for the production of commodities in the fur trade and the development of mercantile capitalism and in doing so, assumed the role as provider of the family. First Nation women were thus encouraged and even forced to become dependent upon men.¹⁷² The

¹⁷¹Ron G. Bourgeault, "The Indian, the Metis and the Fur Trade, Classism, Sexism, and Racism in the Transition from 'Communism' to Capitalism," Studies in Political Economy, No.5, 1981, page 50.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, page 55. For an indepth review see Sylvia Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties: Women in the Fur Trade Society, 1671-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd), 1980.

Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba noted in their "Report on the Discussion of the Inherent Right to Self-Government," that

the role of the political order of European societies lay in the positions held by men who owned property, and their ability to generate a strong financial position for themselves. This role did not require the involvement of women. In fact, women and children were considered part of the property held by men.¹⁷³

Morrissette et al. make the connection between the colonization policies of the Canadian government on First Nation's people and the adoption of a colonial attitude among elements of the Aboriginal community itself. They state that "this [has] contributed to the high level of internalized violence within Aboriginal communities, particularly against women and children, and the failure of Aboriginal leaders to address this issue adequately."¹⁷⁴ Therefore, First Nation women are not only battling the non-Native society for respect and recognition of their concerns, they must also fight for these issues with men in their own communities.

While Morrissette and his colleagues develop an understanding of colonialization and its impact upon First Nations communities, they do not address the patriarchal overtones that are both implicit and explicit in policies such as the Indian Act and the effects that these

¹⁷³Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba, Inc., "Report on the Discussion of the Inherent Right to Self-Government," submitted by Courchene, Eileen Joyce, September, 1994, page 6.

¹⁷⁴Morrissette, et al., *Op Cit.*, page 94.

influences have had upon First Nation men and their attitudes towards women. Sections of the Indian Act continue to refuse women the right to own reserve housing or property. By assigning a male as head of the household, The Act naturally subordinates the woman and makes her dependent upon a man for subsistence.¹⁷⁵

"Women have never been completely excluded from public life; but, the way in which women are included is grounded, as firmly as their position in the domestic sphere, in patriarchal beliefs and practices."¹⁷⁶ The band councils and Indian government structures in place are creations of the federal government for the purpose of administering federal transfers and programs. These structures are completely rooted in the colonial and patriarchal traditions of the Indian Act, and serve to generally exclude women from having a political voice within their communities. The conditions of unrestrained power and an atmosphere of no-rules was engendered by generations of colonialism, the Indian Agent and the Indian Act. When the Indian Agents left communities, many First Nation leaders were thrust into positions of power within their communities and nations with a virtual blank cheque on decision-making in the community.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵Carol Pateman, "The Public/Private Dichotomy," The Disorder of Women (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press) 1989, page 123. While Pateman is not specifically referring to these circumstances, she develops the theory of the universal dichotomy between private and public in civil society itself.

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, page 132.

¹⁷⁷James Wastasecoot, The First Perspective, April, 1995, page 2.

John Loxley, in "The Great Northern Plan," discusses the replacement of the Indian Agent by Native federal employees. By virtue of their new position they now occupy a contradictory position within their communities.¹⁷⁸ They are mainly male employees who hold positions of authority as granted by the federal government, but are not policy-makers. The conflicting pressures of the state's desire for accountability and the communities' need for more flexibility in policies and financial spending, places these people in a nebulous position. They may be considered part of a neo-colonialist agenda because they are responsible for the implementation of state policies and programs, while they also struggle to appear responsive to their own communities.

In many communities, the male-dominated Native leadership has hidden and perpetuated problems of child abuse.¹⁷⁹ In order for problems of violence and abuse to be addressed at a community level, a zero tolerance policy on violence must be adopted by the chiefs and councillors. Sharon Carstairs, former Liberal Party leader of Manitoba, stated that "the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) has got to be more open about what is happening on reserves. Collective rights end up being only the rights of its male

¹⁷⁸John Loxley, *Op Cit.*

¹⁷⁹Dave Rider, "Native Kids Can't Be Protected," The Winnipeg Sun, Tuesday, May 26, 1992, page 5. Also discussed in interviews with Kathy Mallett, Director of the Original Women's Network, January 13, 1995 and social workers from Anishinaabe Child and Family Services and West Region Child and Family Services, February 14, 1995.

members."¹⁸⁰ It is not enough to simply restore jurisdictional authority to First Nations' governments. A process of empowerment for women and their communities will need to occur to allow for true community development and the acceptance of responsibility for current problems. While these problems have been the result of policies of paternalism, subordination and colonialism, all community members need to work together to ascertain solutions that will help communities and people to heal.

The restoration of jurisdictions to First Nations is, in essence, a political step towards self-government. The Framework Agreement, signed on December 7, 1994, occurred with the objective of establishing a formal, binding process between the Minister [DIAND] and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs for the purpose of restoring to First Nations governments the jurisdictions consistent with the inherent right to self-government.¹⁸¹ The dismantling of DIAND is symbolically important for the communities and the AMC, as complete administrative control will be transferred from the federal government to the communities. However, for the Chief and Councillors in First Nation communities to be more than administrators of other governments' policies, they need the authority to pass their own laws and policies within their jurisdictions. Furthermore,

¹⁸⁰Ruth Teichroeb, "Child Protection the 'Big Issue,' McCrae Asserts," The Winnipeg Free Press, January 6, 1992.

¹⁸¹"Framework Agreement: The Dismantling of DIAND, the Restoration of Jurisdictions to First Nations Peoples in Manitoba and Recognition of First Nations Governments in Manitoba," December 7, 1994, Winnipeg.

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the political symbolism of the dismantling process needs to be juxtaposed against the patriarchal systems existing in many communities, where political interference into social affairs by First Nation leadership is commonplace.¹⁸²

It is the lived reality of First Nation women that they, more so than the men in the communities, are involved with local and provincial authorities whose jurisdictions include health, education and child welfare.¹⁸³ Not only have these areas been perceived by the political leadership in provincial and federal governmental structures as appropriate for women, it has enforced a structural reality on the role First Nation women play in their own communities. Kathleen Jamieson has articulated that First Nations women experience multiple jeopardy: they are women, and they are Native. They not only face white male governments but also male-dominated Native organizations.¹⁸⁴ For women to have a role in self-government and for communities to be truly involved in development initiatives they need to free themselves from the social - political division that has been imposed upon them by a colonist society and work to overcome the dichotomy. Women need to be perceived as having an important role to

¹⁸²Expressed in interviews 1-16; 19-22.

¹⁸³Expressed in all 22 interviews.

¹⁸⁴Kathleen Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: The Evolution of a Native Women's Movement," *Atlantis*, Volume 4, Number 2, 1979, pages 157-178.

play in community development and be accorded equality in treatment and attitudes.¹⁸⁵

The Current Child Welfare System

This section reviews some of the problems that are inherent in the current Native child welfare system in Manitoba. First, the problems surrounding constitutional responsibility are noted; next, the conflicts between centralization and decentralization are introduced; then the need to define an urban mandate is discussed; and finally, this section overviews the over-riding financial implications of the dismantling process and the need to make social considerations politically relevant. While a few of these factors could be resolved through the dismantling process and the restoration of jurisdictions, others could be intensified if credence is not given to their existence. Unresolved constitutional and jurisdictional issues are over-riding concerns. These include the federal government's devolution of responsibilities to the province for standards' maintenance and child welfare policy development, and arguments over who is ultimately responsible for First Nations' families and children. Obviously, the objective of self-government is to resolve these constitution and jurisdictional issues. What this essentially means is that the current jurisdictional wars will be solved when First Nations regain control and authority over

¹⁸⁵Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba, Inc, "Report on the Indigenous Women's Perspective in Manitoba for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's," submitted by McKay, Celeste, August, 1993. This report provides a synopsis of Indigenous women's viewpoints on self-government and other initiatives.

their own lives.

While the federal government has consistently refused to pass Indian child welfare legislation,¹⁸⁶ it still retains exclusive constitutional authority to enact legislation with respect to First Nations. Section 91 (24) of the Constitution Act of 1867, gives exclusive legislative authority for Indians and lands reserved for Indians to the federal government and the federal government has used this in the past to enact The Indian Act. This relationship was also referred to in section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982, which affirmed Aboriginal and treaty rights. The Indian Act, with the exception of education and limited health regulations, is silent on social services. Section 88 permits provincial laws of general application to apply to Indians on the Reserves, unless these laws are inconsistent with federal legislation. Provinces legislate under section 92(13) of the Constitutional Act of 1867, which sets out the provinces exclusive jurisdiction in property and civil rights. Although the federal government has the constitutional authority to enact special legislation in Indian child welfare matters, it chooses not to do so, as child welfare is considered to be a provincial responsibility. The policy of the Department of Indian Affairs has been to secure agreements with the provinces and the territories to

¹⁸⁶Personal interview with senior provincial civil servant, Department of Family Services, February 13, 1995.

deliver child welfare services on reserves.¹⁸⁷

While the provincial government is responsible for provision and service standards with regards to First Nation child welfare, the federal government provides the financial support for child welfare in First Nation communities. The provinces and the federal government currently do not agree over which level of government is responsible for funding child welfare initiatives for First Nation families off-reserve. Child welfare is provided primarily by the provincial government, but is partially financed by the federal government through the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Chief Dennis Pashe notes "that the lack of resources and services which denies healing ... is the result of a game of political football played between the federal and provincial governments."¹⁸⁸

The jurisdictional complexities for the provision of social services to First Nation's peoples have resulted in the fragmentation of many programs. The federal position that services and programs to Natives residing in First Nation communities must be accommodated within existing federal-provincial jurisdictional arrangements and practices has resulted in gaps in programs and services. With regards to child welfare, provinces

¹⁸⁷Barbara Pimento, "Native Families in Jeopardy - The Child Welfare System in Canada," Occasional Papers in Social Policy Analysis, No 11, Department of Sociology in Education, Toronto, 1985, page 1.

¹⁸⁸Chief Dennis Pashe, "Debit Audit Seen as a Ploy," Winnipeg Free Press, Thursday, February 9, 1995, page A7.

have enforced their statutes in such matters as custody and removal of children from First Nation communities, while non-statutory services, such as counselling and family support have been available inconsistently to Native families who live in First Nation communities.¹⁸⁹ Further problems have arisen because Ottawa and the province both refuse to assume financial responsibility for non-mandated services in the communities. Therefore, while there is adequate funding for crisis intervention into families, there is little or no funding for prevention-related activities.¹⁹⁰

Federal preference has been for the delivery of social services through institutions accredited under provincial jurisdiction¹⁹¹ or to provincial standards as is the case with child welfare.¹⁹² The approach developed in Manitoba required that First Nation's regional agencies meet the provinces service delivery standards and implement provincial policies on child welfare. Native agencies are incorporated through agreements with the province and the federal government that are either tripartite or dual-bilateral. They

¹⁸⁹Gary Schaan, "Holistic Social and Health Services in Indian Communities," edited Johnson, Andrew, McBride, Stephen, et al, in Continuities and Discontinuities The Political Economy of Social Welfare and Labour Market Policy in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 1994, page 114.

¹⁹⁰Interview with a social worker for West Region Child and Family Services, February 14, 1995.

¹⁹¹For more information on this see J. S. Frideres, Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts, (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall) 1988, pages 260-295.

¹⁹²Gary Schaan, *Op Cit.*, page 114.

receive their mandate through an order-in-council. As the situation currently stands, all of the regional agency agreements have expired (they were originally for three years) with the exception of the Cree Child and Family Caring Agency which signed an agreement in 1993.

While the tripartite or dual-bilateral agreements are required in the existing legislation,¹⁹³ they are not actually the incorporating instruments. An order-in-council and a subsequent schedule allows the Minister, with the approval of Cabinet, to enter into agreements with Native bands or tribal councils for the incorporation of the band or council to become an agency and provide services under the Child Welfare Act. Although the schedule allows for individual bands to form child welfare agencies, the province prefers to sign with tribal councils.¹⁹⁴ The provincial rationale behind not mandating individual bands to implement provincial child welfare practices is that there is more service accountability, policy coordination and economy of scale with regional boards.¹⁹⁵ Currently, seven regional agencies exist in the province of Manitoba: Cree Child and

¹⁹³Government of Manitoba, The Child and Family Services Act, 138/91, amended December 1, 1993, outlines the agencies incorporated to fulfil the provincial child welfare mandate.

¹⁹⁴The one exception to this was the creation of Awasis which involved three tribal councils and three independent First Nation communities.

¹⁹⁵Personal Interview with senior provincial civil servant, Department of Family Services, February 13, 1995.

Family Caring Agency; Awasis; West Region; Anishinaabe; Intertribal; South-East; and Dakota Ojibwa. (See Appendix B for a map and geographical picture of each agency's mandate area).

The term jurisdiction is used by the provincial government to define the geographical area for which CFS agencies are mandated. In the case of CFS agencies, the term is used to denote the First Nations' claims for service provision for its membership for the purpose of administering the child protection mandate.¹⁹⁶ The current system, while an improvement over the past white centralized CFS system, should not be taken as a concrete example of First Nation self-government. The policies are still the outputs of the government of Manitoba even though they allow for some cultural flexibility. In the current system, accountability is generally directed to the government, not to the people in the communities.¹⁹⁷ With a primary financial focus on intervention, there is neither adequate flexibility nor finances to develop more holistic and culturally appropriate practices.

¹⁹⁶Peter Hudson, and Sharon Taylor-Henley, "Linking Social and Political Developments in First Nations Communities," in Rebirth Political, Economic and Social Development in First Nations, Anne-Marie Mawhiney (ed), (Ontario: Laurentian University, Institute of Northern Ontario Research and Development) 1993, page 51.

¹⁹⁷There are exceptions, however. In some communities there have been measures of community accountability established; community child welfare boards and Tribal Council Boards, for example.

Three separate inquiries into First Nation's child welfare have recently come to light. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (1991)¹⁹⁸, the Desjarlais Inquest (September 1992)¹⁹⁹ and the First Nation's Child and Family Task Force (November 1993)²⁰⁰ all examined the Native child welfare system and produced reports that differed in their treatment of the subject. In essence, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and the First Nation Child and Family Task Force both recommended that increased decentralization and further moves towards First Nation self-government were necessary to deal with the underlying causes of violence, abuse, and neglect in Aboriginal society. The Desjarlais Inquest, however, recommended that further accountability and centralization was necessary for protection of First Nation children.²⁰¹

Georgina Crate, director of Intertribal Child and Family Service Agency, noted that there must be responsibility, ownership and accountability for and by the First Nations for the quality of care, policies and standards that are provided.²⁰² Only through community

¹⁹⁸Province of Manitoba, "Aboriginal Justice Inquiry," 1991.

¹⁹⁹Province of Manitoba, Department of Justice, "The Desjarlais Inquest," 1992.

²⁰⁰Province of Manitoba, Task Force for First Nations Child and Family, "First Nation Child and Family Task Force Report," November, 1993.

²⁰¹Province of Manitoba, Department of Justice, "The Desjarlais Inquest Report," September, 1992.

²⁰²Georgina Crate, "Grassroots and Power," The Winnipeg Sun, May 8, 1992, page 23.

accountability and the desire to address such problems such as violence and abuse can healing begin. Policy development by the provincial government, along with the centralization and strict accountability for the past, was not effective in solving child welfare problems. There is no indication that returning Native child welfare to a centralized, strictly controlled environment would solve the problems that are inherent in the system. Therefore, while accountability and political interference are both problems under the current provincial child welfare system, the process of empowering communities through self-government, to address problems by designing programs and policies that meet their needs, is a more effective way of ensuring ownership and accountability for the system.

The second problem that has arisen in the Native CFS agencies is the conflict that occurs between the regional offices and local control by the chiefs.²⁰³ Tensions arise when individual bands demand control of CFS in their own communities yet the regional office wants central control for reasons of accountability - both in terms of policy implementation and financial responsibility. This pull between the political dichotomies of centralization and decentralization has led to claims of political interference in social services and direct conflicts of interest. Criticisms have been voiced by urban Aboriginal women's groups and First Nations women that First Nation leadership has emphasized

²⁰³Interviews with all First Nation women (1-22).

political goals at the expense of service goals and they fear that achievement of self-government would continue to concentrate power in the hands of the chiefs - who are predominately male.²⁰⁴ The point emphasized by the women was that they favoured regional control of child welfare, which would hopefully offset the domination of the chiefs in local social matters.²⁰⁵

The following events occurred in Manitoba in 1992 that underscored the notion of a centralization - decentralization conundrum.²⁰⁶ Because some children in care had died, while others had been allegedly left or placed in potentially abusive homes, Aboriginal women's groups and the province publicly accused some chiefs of complicity and political self-serving interference. The chiefs responded by accusing the province of ulterior motives, specifically for disguising its failure to act on the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and attempting to discredit aspirations for self-government. Finally, one of the Aboriginal women's groups publicly expressed its doubts about self-government and whether or not women and children would be protected by it.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴Hudson and Taylor-Henley, *Op Cit.*, page 52.

²⁰⁵Interviews 3-5; 7-18; 21-22.

²⁰⁶The phrase centralization - decentralization conundrum was used by Peter Aucoin and Herman Bakvis in their book The Centralization - Decentralization Conundrum: Organization and Management in the Canadian Government, (Halifax, Nova Scotia: The Institute for Research in Public Policy) 1988.

²⁰⁷Hudson and Taylor-Henley, *Op Cit.*, page 54.

The situation that occurred in 1992 between the chiefs and the provincial government underlines the battle that First Nation women face. The concern of both the chiefs and the provincial government was saving face and avoiding political embarrassment. Choices were made within communities that were political in nature; the chief or band council interfered in social decision-making processes by insisting that children remain in potentially abusive situations because of who the family was related to.²⁰⁸

First Nation women have been and continue to fight against patriarchal structures in government, in their own communities, and in society. First Nation women have successfully fought against aspects of the patriarchal Indian Act and won the right to keep or regain (if previously lost) their Indian status with Bill C-31.²⁰⁹ Yet other aspects of the Indian Act still remain extraordinarily patriarchal - with men being the owners of the property and houses in most communities. The chiefs and other men in the communities who support political goals over social goals reinforce the divisions between men and women. Ultimately, there is a dichotomy between the First Nation women who struggle

²⁰⁸Interview with Kathy Mallett, Director of the Original Women's Network, January 13, 1995; social worker from West Region Child and Family Services, February 14, 1995 and interviews 6, 12, and 14 with First Nation women.

²⁰⁹For more information on this, see Enough is Enough Aboriginal Women Speak Out, as told to Janet Silman (Toronto: The Women's Press), 1987. Bill C-31 is an amendment made to the Indian Act which allows for First Nation women and children to regain their status which they previously would have lost through marriage to a non-status man.

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for social goals and service provision and men who desire to achieve political self-government. Unless these two elements can be successfully accommodated there will be no unity in the political front to secure self-determination.

George Munroe has noted that Aboriginal women do have a valid concern in fearing that certain chiefs will utilize the political mechanism of self-government to increase their own personal power. However, he worries that divide and conquer techniques have been successful in separating the Aboriginal community.²¹⁰ Communities must join their social ("low road") and political ("high road") forces,²¹¹ in order to provide for meaningful change and achieve self-government.

While there is a need to unite the political and the social in terms of self-determination and accord social goals greater respect, social policy must also be kept appropriately separated from political aspirations for women to feel powerful and comfortable in their own communities.²¹² The patriarchal Indian Act and the dominant white culture have been instrumental in reshaping Native attitudes towards women and the role they play in their communities. As in the non-Aboriginal society, the power of the political orders came

²¹⁰Personal Interview, George Munroe, February 15, 1995.

²¹¹Hudson and Taylor-Henley, *Op Cit.*, page 54.

²¹²Interviews 1-8; 11-18; 21 and 22 with First Nation women.

to lie with men, leaving women and children to be considered the property of men. The colonization processes undertaken by policies of the Canadian government, have caused discord, adversarial attitudes and dysfunctional communities.

For women to feel secure under self-government, their voices need to be included. The current band council system is an extension of DIAND to which the Chief and Council are responsible.²¹³ Many women are concerned that the "restoration of jurisdictions" will merely concentrate more power in the hands of a few chiefs. This could have a further negative impact on their lives and the lives of their children. The establishment of a Women's Directorate, as advocated by the Indigenous Women's Collective, would allow First Nation women to be guaranteed participation in self-government initiatives.²¹⁴ The Directorate would be designed to ensure the active involvement of First Nation women, both on and off-reserve, in all matters directly affecting them. The Women's Directorate would be accorded input equal to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs on both political self-government and community development initiatives. It would involve First Nation women in the decision-making process through referenda and the Directorate would encourage women to organize and form their own First Nation women's community councils. Through these initiatives, the Directorate would provide women a

²¹³Indigenous Women's Collective, *Op Cit.*, 1993, page 27.

²¹⁴Indigenous Women's Collective, *Op Cit.*, 1994, pages 44-48.

strong voice alongside the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and it would encourage political accountability and participation in self-government.

Accountability to an authority above the community political leadership must also be developed both in terms of self-government and current child welfare programs. The Cree Nation Child and Family Caring agency (1993), Manitoba's newest agency, built into their tripartite agreement the mandatory exclusion of the chiefs and the band councillors from the regional authority. South-East Child and Family Services has also developed policy that prevents the chief or members of the council from sitting on the board of the agency. These two agencies are the exceptions, however. Other agencies, such as Anishinaabe and Intertribal have publicly declared that political interference has caused conflicts of interest. The Dakota-Ojibway Child and Family Services was singled out in the Desjarlais Inquest as requiring the separation of politics from its social agenda. Native women's groups and the First Nation's Child and Family Task Force indicated that a Native directorate should be established to act as an appeal mechanism when conflicts occurring in agencies.

The final challenge for Child and Family Service provision under self-government is the need to develop a practice for urban areas.²¹⁵ Rosalee Tizya, in Aboriginal Governments

²¹⁵The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry states that there are approximately 32,000 treaty people in Winnipeg. Census Canada estimates this figure to be 45,000. Winnipeg Free

and Power Sharing in Canada, notes that the Indian Act system has left off-reserve Natives dangling between the jurisdictions of the federal and provincial governments. The federal government has limited its responsibility to on-reserve Indians, while provincial governments have argued that all Aboriginal peoples are a federal responsibility.²¹⁶ Currently, all child-welfare agencies operate in a defined geographical area. Several First Nation CFS agencies feel that they should be given a mandate to operate on an outreach basis in urban centres. Other urban social agencies want a mandate to provide an increased spectrum of services.²¹⁷ While the jurisdictional problems²¹⁸ concerning which level of government will be responsible for urban Aboriginals will no longer be an issue with First Nation self-government, the requirement for intervention in certain CFS cases poses a geographical problem. The current urban agencies are not mandated by the province, and provide voluntary services in a status blind manner.

Press, June 13, 1994.

²¹⁶Rosalee Tizya, Aboriginal Governments and Power Sharing in Canada, Douglas Brown (ed), summary of proceedings of a conference at the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, February, 1992, page 21.

²¹⁷Personal Interview, Wayne Helgason, Executive Director of Winnipeg Social Planning Council, President of National Association of Friendship Centres, January 20, 1995.

²¹⁸Indigenous Women's Collective, Op Cit., August 1993, page 25, discusses the fact that for women living off-reserve, the issue of self-government is more complex in terms of jurisdictional debates (for example, child welfare issues, etc.) than it is for women living on reserve.

Will urban Native CFS agencies have to be devised to overlap with the current non-Aboriginal CFS authorities or will existing CFS agencies have their mandate expanded to allow them to operate in an outreach capacity to off-reserve members? Native CFS agencies have attempted to extend their mandate to off-reserve members in the past, causing conflict with provincial CFS agencies. For example, one case concerning outreach services referred to provincial court in 1991, concluded with the ruling that the current child welfare legislation does not legally extend Native agencies' mandate off-reserve.²¹⁹ Also many First Nation people residing in Winnipeg or other areas of the province, do not belong to a specific community in the province. This would necessitate the creation of an urban or provincial Native child welfare agency to fulfil the function of providing child welfare to families off-reserve. These new Native agencies, if designed, would have to define exactly who would be eligible to receive their services - would eligibility apply to status Indians or would child welfare services be provided on a status-blind basis? These two issues remain problematic in outlining concerns for urban CFS.

Conclusions

The federal government now actively recognizes First Nation self-government. It has a

²¹⁹Zena Olijnyk, "Judge's Ruling: Native Groups Denied Jurisdiction," Winnipeg Free Press, May 10, 1991, page A1 and A5.

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framework agreement in place to dismantle DIAND in Manitoba and the government currently devolves 85% of its administrative authority in areas such as education, social assistance, and child and family services to First Nation communities and agencies.²²⁰ These measures need to be accompanied by steps to provide for autonomy with regards to CFS and alternative approaches to social assistance, both of which are tied intrinsically and holistically to the social and political components of self-determination.

Will the dismantling process create true self-determination and afford First Nation communities the ability to take control of community development? The federal government is very anxious to hand First Nations' people self-government. In an era of deficit reduction and cutbacks to social programs, would any government increase funding to a marginalized group of people? Concerns have been raised that this may be the foreshadowing of an off-loading of fiscal responsibility. The federal government, since the 1980s, has been slowly cutting programs and services²²¹ and many First Nation leaders and women believe that the economic and social situations in many communities will get worse before community development initiatives have any impact upon the

²²⁰Personal Interview with Grand Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, February 24, 1995.

²²¹Murray Angus, And the Last Shall Be First: Native Policy in an Era of Cutbacks, (Toronto: NC Press Limited) 1991, page 23 poses that Native people will inevitably be among the victims of any cuts in government spending because they are already a marginalized group in Canadian society - demographically, regionally, economically, politically and racially.

problems.

The dismantling process is being positively received by the federal government because it may be able to relieve itself of long-term financial responsibility to the communities - most of which are suffering from poor housing, inadequate hospitals and educational facilities, and basic amenities such as running water or electricity. The transfer of responsibility would leave Ottawa appearing less politically accountable for First Nations' people and communities. Greater local control will result in Native people controlling their own futures, but unless funding levels are stabilized or increased, the restoration of jurisdictions may worsen current circumstances.²²² Furthermore, there is rampant corruption and nepotism in many communities - a sentiment echoed by all the women interviewed.²²³ The chiefs concerned have a political power that is seldom challenged. Women do not want this type of unaccountable, corrupt patriarchy to be given even more power through self-government.

In many First Nation communities people still react with fear to the suggestion of self government, not because they do not understand what it means, but because they fear the consequences of greater power being concentrated in the hands of one or a few people

²²²*Ibid.*, page 27.

²²³Interviews 1-22.

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in their First Nation under present conditions.²²⁴ Women have been side-lined, dependent upon the chiefs for determining whether they will get housing, or even whether they, or another family member will be employed in one of the few positions available in the communities. Their lack of control over their own lives is reflective of the lack of control First Nation people have had over their lives for 125 years. The patriarchal community structures have been established and encouraged by the dominant white political culture for the administration of treaty lands and do not constitute traditional political cultures or norms. The result has been the pitting of women and their social concerns against men and their political aspirations. There is a real need for these social and political goals to meet and work together for community development.

Community oriented and decentralized social services have the greatest potential for addressing problems common to the delivery of child and family services. However, only an emphasis on participatory democracy, which integrates the communities' social and political goals, can allow for increased accountability in the communities.²²⁵ If this condition is not met, self-government will fail to adequately address many of the problems of the system it hopes to replace.²²⁶ The first priority of First Nation leaders

²²⁴James Wastasecoot, The First Perspective, April, 1995, page 2.

²²⁵MacKenzie, Brad, "Decentralized Social Services: A Critique of Models of Service Delivery," Continuities and Discontinuities, *Op Cit.*, page 106.

²²⁶*Ibid.*, page 108.

should be to build viable communities²²⁷ that will enable policy-making to address the inherent problems in child welfare administration.

²²⁷Indigenous Women's Collective, *Op Cit.*, September 1994, page 39.

APPENDIX A

DAKOTA OJIBWAY - mandated since July 1981; serves 8 bands; and had 420 children in care in 1993. Head office is in Brandon, Manitoba.

ANISHINAABE - mandated in March 1986; serves five bands and had 229 children in care (1994 statistics). Head office is in Ashern. Anishinaabe divided into two in 1988: **EAST - INTERTRIBAL** and West - **ANISHINAABE**.

SOUTHEAST CHILD AND FAMILY - mandated since April 1983; serves 8 bands; and had 257 children in care (1994 statistics). Head office is in Winnipeg.

WEST REGION CHILD AND FAMILY - mandated since September 1985; serves 9 bands; and had 244 children in care as of September 1993. Head office is in Dauphin.

AWASIS AGENCY OF NORTHERN MANITOBA - mandated since July 1984; serves 26 bands; and had 649 children in care (before **SWAMPY CREE CHILD AND FAMILY** was formed).

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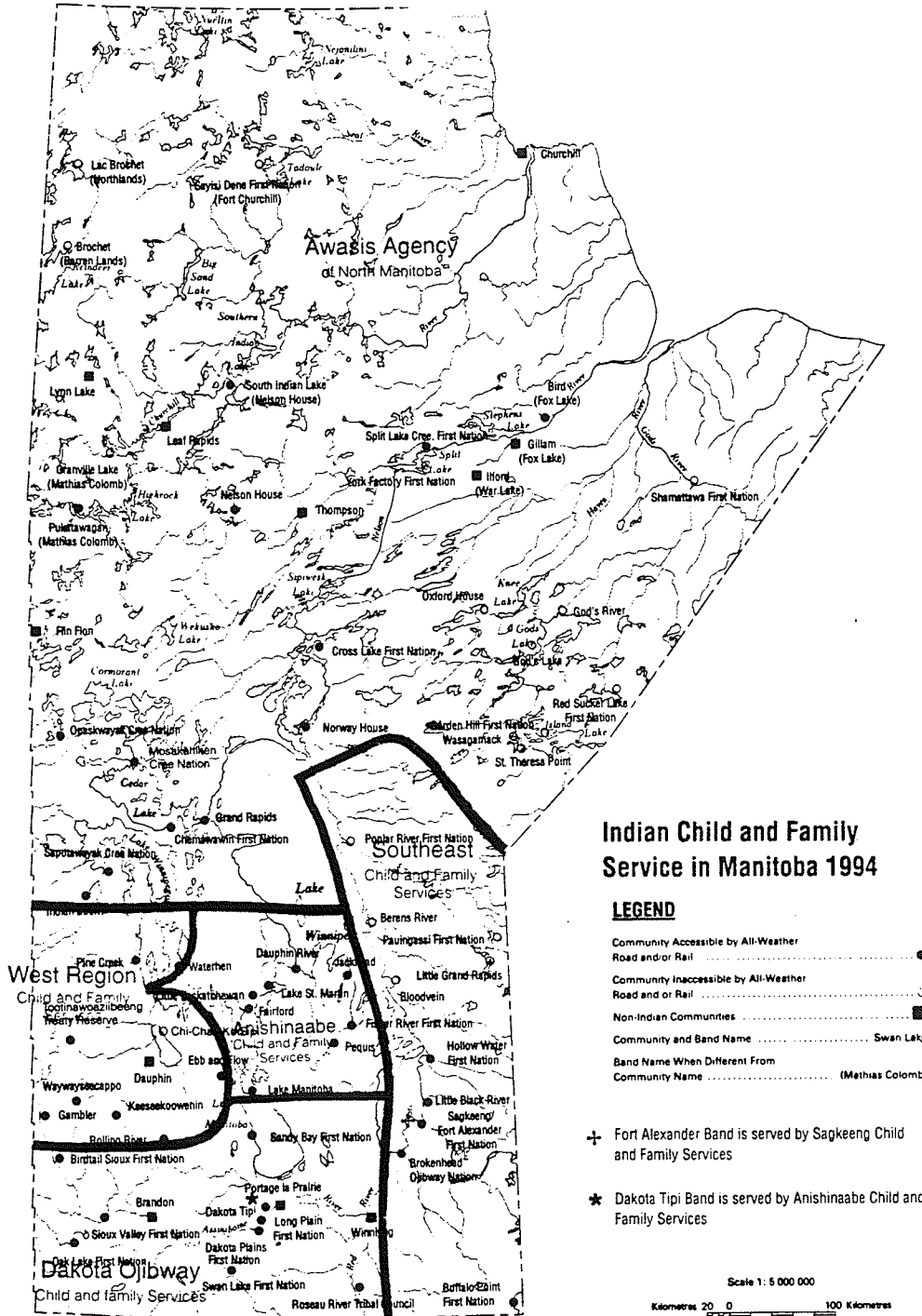
THE CREE NATION CHILD AND FAMILY CARING AGENCY - mandated since December 1, 1993; serves 8 bands; (no recorded statistics on children in care as of yet). Head office is in The Pas.

SAGKEENG CHILD AND FAMILY - non-mandated agency that provides social services in Sagkeeng First Nation (Fort Alexander) which has been incorporated since November 1976. It is part of the Eastman provincial regional office.

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APPENDIX B

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada



Indian Child and Family Service in Manitoba 1994

LEGEND

- Community Accessible by All-Weather Road and/or Rail
- Community Inaccessible by All-Weather Road and/or Rail
- Non-Indian Communities
- Community and Band Name
- Band Name When Different From Community Name (Mathias Colomb)

- + Fort Alexander Band is served by Sagkeeng Child and Family Services
- * Dakota Tipi Band is served by Anishinaabe Child and Family Services

Scale 1: 5 000 000
Kilometres 20 0 100 Kilometres

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Chapter 5: An Evaluation

Introduction

On April 1, 1996, the federal government implemented the Canada Health and Social Transfer. This change is important for several reasons. First, it signals that the federal government is no longer willing to be an active partner in the provision of social services in Canada.²²⁸ Second, it offers a window of opportunity to create new and effective methods of delivering social programs. Provinces are already implementing radical changes to their social service programs in their 1996 budgets²²⁹ and attributing the changes to the implementation of the CHST. While most provinces are cutting their social services,²³⁰ education,²³¹ and health spending and attributing these cuts to the loss

²²⁸Thomas Courchene, Presentation, Canadian Social Welfare Conference, University of British Columbia, June, 1995.

²²⁹For example, the province of Manitoba announced that it was going to encourage welfare recipients to find employment. Single employable people, childless couples, and single parents with children over six years of age will have to accept available employment or risk having their benefits reduced by as much as \$100 per month. Part of the supports which will be put in place to assist people in returning to work will be subsidized day care and training programs. Source: Paul Samyn, "PCs Want Welfare Moms To Work," Winnipeg Free Press, March 13, 1996, page A1; and Alice Krueger, "Youth NOW Means Training For Young People On Welfare," Winnipeg Free Press, March 15, 1996, page A4.

²³⁰Both the province of Alberta, which is reducing Family Services spending by 12%, and the province of Manitoba which is cutting the Family Services budget by \$10 million, are examples of provinces concerned about transfer payment reductions.

²³¹The province of Manitoba is reducing its public education funding again in 1996, and is blaming the CHST. Source: Manfred Jager, "School Taxes Hiked," Winnipeg Free Press, March 13, 1996, page A3; "Trustees Bitter Blame Province," Winnipeg Free Press, March 13, 1996, page A3.

of the Canada Assistance Plan and the fifty-cent federal dollars it paid, they have been given increased flexibility in how they spend their transfer payments.

Welfare and social service costs are the primary responsibility of the provincial governments from a constitutional perspective. The federal government is involved by virtue of its spending power; in 1994-95, Ottawa spent an estimated \$8 billion on Canada Assistance Plan related expenditures.²³² The federal government is also involved marginally in service delivery to designated populations for which it has clear constitutional authority - for example, status Indians and Inuit, prisoners in federal correctional institutions, immigrants and veterans.

There has been little substantive debate in Canada about how to reform social services in an efficient and effective manner. In fact, social services have always been the "poor cousin" of social policy. Social services typically are treated in a residual, last resort fashion - much like the enabling legislation that supports them.²³³ The reasons for the neglect of this subject are unclear. Part of the reason arises from the fact that the term "social services" tends to be a generic phrase which encompasses a wide range of

²³² Sherri Torjman, "Is CAP In Need Of Assistance?" A New Social Vision For Canada? Keith Banting and Ken Battle (eds), School of Policy Studies, Proceedings of a Conference Held At Queen's University October 17, 1994, Kingston, Ontario, page 99.

²³³ *Ibid.*

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disparate activities - including child care, child welfare, personal supports, counselling and income support payments. The delivery as well as the dimensions of social services are incredibly diverse throughout the country. For example, services may be decentralized and delivered by a private agency with users charged for the services or services may be centralized and provided by a government department on an as needed basis. Within any given area of service there are combinations of government, voluntary organizations and professionals in private practice.

In addition to social services' vast scope, there are problems in assessing their impact. While their costs and caseloads can be tracked, it is difficult to measure their effect on individuals, families and communities. Yet social services are no less important than other public services and will become increasingly significant in the future, given labour market and demographic trends.

Chapters 3 and 4 introduced two policy sectors: child and family services in Alberta and Native child welfare in Manitoba. Chapter 3 noted how Alberta is in the process of reorganizing social services in that province, including the increased utilization of alternative program delivery options. The decentralization of child and family services to local authorities has important implications for the long-term administration of child welfare programs. Conversely, Chapter 4, with its emphasis on Native child welfare in Manitoba, discussed the process of administrative decentralization that has been in place

since the 1980s and showed how there has been ample time to discuss the problems and potential solutions. One such solution is of course, self-government, and the First Nations in Manitoba are involved in the "restoration of jurisdictions" which will ultimately result in true political decentralization.

This chapter will provide a sectoral evaluation of the two policy areas introduced in previous chapters. Based upon a recommendation by Dr. Evert Lindquist, the following approach will be utilized in determining if decentralization has occurred. For the purposes of evaluation six areas will be addressed in terms of decentralization. It is important to determine in whose hands the responsibilities for these areas rests: scanning to determine needs; designing policy frameworks and developing options; designing particular programs to implement policy interventions; financing of programs; managing and monitoring of program delivery; and, evaluating and redesigning programs and policy frameworks.²³⁴

Scanning To Determine Needs

In Alberta, the provincial government requested citizens' views on how the present system of Children's Services could be improved to better serve and protect children at

²³⁴Evert Lindquist, *Op Cit.*, page 421.

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risk and their families. Through advertised requests and a consultation process, the Alberta government asked for input from Albertans on how to improve their social service system. More than 3,300 Albertans from 65 communities offered a response. The responses included the message that "leadership and responsibility should be returned to the community."²³⁵

While consultation may seem like a credible move by the province of Alberta, there have been concerns raised that this process did not really include the clients of Children's Services.²³⁶ The "consensus" reached by Albertans included only 3,300 of the province's 2,500,000 citizens. This does not necessarily invalidate the entire consultation process, but it begs the question, who was consulted? Furthermore, because the province was able to draw its own summaries and conclusions from the consultations, it is conceivable that the published results closely coincided with the provincial government's desired outcome.

The Commissioner reported that parents and communities want an active role in the redesign of services and in the responsibility for the well-being of their children. He noted that communities best understood the problems and issues experienced by local children and families and could determine the best ways of responding to them.

²³⁵Office of the Commissioner for Children's Services, "Redesign of Children's Services A Precis," Province of Alberta, January, 1996, page 2.

²³⁶Calgary Herald, editorial, February 14, 1996.

Government programs were not designed for this flexibility and had overlooked the positive role communities could play in protecting and helping children.²³⁷ As a result, the province of Alberta is advocating and implementing a community driven approach for the redesign of children's services.

A community based approach, as articulated by the province of Alberta is distinct from the community development planning process. The community development planning process of problem articulation and identification is the process whereby what may initially be perceived as the problem - by those who first identify it - is articulated so that a large number of people in the community perceive the problem and recognize its linkages to other elements in community life. The community based approach also has as its goal broad community involvement and support, but it does not ensure that those who experience the problem actively participate in solutions. While they may go along with whatever action occurs, those experiencing the problems will not have had a part in formulating or implementing an action plan.²³⁸

²³⁷Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, "Redesign of Children's Services A Precis," *Op Cit.*, page 2.

²³⁸David Smith, "A Community Development Approach to Health Planning," First Person Plural, (Montreal: Black Rose Books), 1995, page 90.

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The Alberta government is using the language of the community development approach,²³⁹ but it is not facilitating this type of process. Alberta is instructing individuals, families and voluntary organizations to identify social problems as community problems and work together to find solutions. The process of evaluating needs and implementing effective programs has traditionally been the jurisdiction of the provincial government. By accepting "ownership" of the problems, Alberta believes local authorities will find effective solutions and at lower costs.

Community development is an activity with two characteristics. First, the action is initiated by a local group to meet the needs or interests of the local group. Second, the group perceives the problem as their problem and mobilizes resources to deal with it.²⁴⁰ This characterization shows quite clearly how Alberta is not using a community development approach, as the government is imposing a local authority structure for service delivery. Community development approaches are characterized by the community self-identifying problems, not having a level of government identify problems

²³⁹Pat Armstrong, "Unravelling the Safety Net: Transformations in Health Care and Their Impact On Women, " Janine Brodie (editor), Women and Canadian Public Policy, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company), 1996, page 136 talks about how government has been successful in appropriating the language used by women's groups and other community development associations. She cautions against accepting their words at face value and suggests an examination into how they are being used.

²⁴⁰David Smith, *Op Cit.*, page 93.

as local concerns. The process being employed in Alberta may be more closely associated with a community based approach to social service delivery.

Once the government determined it was moving towards community based delivery of services, Phase 1: The Preliminary Service Plan was put into action. This process included a detailed analysis of each community in a given region. It involved community working groups developing a plan which determined vision, goals, outcomes and action plans for the region; it assessed the current need and gap in services for children and families; and it offered the opportunity for community involvement. The community working groups were encouraged to consider how voluntary organizations (i.e. church groups) or families wanting to assist in the provision of services could be included in their plans.

Some Local Authorities, composed of volunteers, may respond in the manner that the province is articulating, with increased voluntarism and the elimination of services that have been provided by professionals or their replacement with local service providers. Other Local Authorities, may fall apart under the pressure of the increased work load caused by the amount of voluntarism required to make the new system work. Or members of the Local Authorities may begin to feel that the problems of the community are not as important as their own problems, or that of their families. If community

members do not identify with the type of problem or the extent to which it impacts upon their lives, they are not as likely to mobilize resources to find solutions.

The new normative paradigm created by decentralization, privatization and the increased utilization of alternative program delivery methods all contribute to the perception that little attention has been given to questions of equity, justice, or entitlement. The private sector, by relying on charity and voluntarism, cannot ensure that people will have an adequate income or standard of service. Only governments can guarantee rights. The private sector or local community may not pick up the slack left by the government's withdrawal from social welfare. In fact, available evidence points the other way.²⁴¹

When the language of the community development approach is invoked to encourage community involvement in the delivery of social services, there may be some initial excitement generated. What will soon become evident to the people in the communities is that the language is used as a ruse to disguise the true meaning of the decentralization - cuts to services. Once communities are "empowered" and are responsible for providing services to themselves, provincial funding cuts will have been effectively offloaded onto the communities. Since 1991/92, the Alberta government has cut spending to family and

²⁴¹Robert Mullaly, "Social Welfare and the New Right: A Class Mobilization Perspective," *Continuities and Discontinuities*, *Op Cit.*, page 86.

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social services by over 25%.²⁴² While spending will be increased to child welfare by \$50 million over three years,²⁴³ this money is directed at project based early intervention activities, and is not available across the system.

With regards to Native child welfare in Manitoba, needs are generally determined at the local level through the Band or Tribal Council and filtered up to the Native Child Welfare Regional Agency. The problem is, of course, that the province and the federal government also do their own assessment of needs, and filter them back down. The conflicting assessments interact at the Native Child Welfare Regional Agency. Unfortunately, since the provincial government determines mandated programs based upon their understanding of child welfare needs and the federal government determines funding based upon the provincial government's mandated programs, the analysis done by the band or Tribal Council is often irrelevant for funding purposes. The scanning is useful, however, when First Nation communities have additional funding that allows them to implement preventative or culturally appropriate programs.²⁴⁴

²⁴²Province of Alberta, Provincial Budgets 1990-1996.

²⁴³1995/96 - \$10 million; 1996/97 - \$20 million; 1997/98 - \$20 million. Source: Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children, "Early Intervention Program Funding Guidelines For Children's Services in Alberta," Province of Alberta, Part 1, May 1995.

²⁴⁴Interview with a social worker, Anishinaabe Child and Family Services, February 14, 1995.

Through the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, First Nation communities in Manitoba will be given jurisdiction for the provision of child welfare services. Since child welfare has been identified as one of the "fast track" items, it is conceivable First Nations will have authority for their own child welfare programs shortly.

Designing Policy Frameworks and Developing Options

In both case studies, the design of policy frameworks is centralized at the provincial level. However, in Alberta, community working groups are responsible for developing options for the types of services that are delivered within the frameworks. With respect to Native child welfare in Manitoba, agencies are encouraged to develop culturally appropriate options for prevention-related programs. In order for there to be some degree of standardization or level and type of service offered throughout the province, policy frameworks need to be developed through the provincial government. Furthermore, because child welfare policy is based upon legislation and involves the safety of children, there is a need to keep the ultimate responsibility centralized.

The province of Alberta has recently announced that it will be tabling new child and family service legislation. The new legislation, which will be based upon the redesign

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of services to be delivered from a community level, is expected to integrate more than one dozen pieces of legislation currently relating to children's services.

As previously mentioned, the dismantling of DIAND, will have implications for the delivery of child welfare programs, but also for the design of associated policy frameworks. While the province currently has jurisdiction over child welfare, the federal government has been the level of government responsible for First Nations people. Under self-government, First Nation communities in Manitoba will be responsible for the design of culturally appropriate policies and programs as well as the allocation of budgetary dollars for necessary services. Given the concerns that many First Nation women have with respect to self-government,²⁴⁵ there will need to be some resolve to the power and political disputes occurring in the communities.

Designing Particular Programs To Implement Policy Interventions

In Alberta, During Phase 2: The Regional Service Plan, programs are being designed at the local level through service plans and filtered up to Regional Steering Committees for approval. This phase prescribes that upon approval in principle of the preliminary plan,

²⁴⁵Interviews with 22 First Nation women; Kathy Mallett, Director of the Original Women's Network; and, social worker for Anishinaabe Child and Family Services Agency.

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the Regional Steering Committee will develop a service plan which: builds on the Local working groups preliminary plan; describes the provision of children's services; ensures compliance with provincial policy and standards; coordinates children's services between regions; coordinates children's services with other authorities providing human services; and, ensures the plan is within the funding range provided.

These programs designed through the service plan may be provided through professional agencies, the public sector, the private sector or through voluntary organizations. In fact, all of the working documents provided to help community working groups in their evaluation of the types of programs needed in their area encourage the use of voluntary and private sector organizations.

The lack of a coherent planning structure in program design is obvious. Although the province's mandate is to provide coordinated and integrated child and family services, the structure does not permit, let alone facilitate, this kind of planning. Each community will complete an inventory and articulate their wishes about a number of specific projects. However, each community working group does this in isolation from other working groups. Given the multi-dimensional factors involved in social services, the need for a new way of thinking and planning has become essential and must be reflected in the structure of the planning authority. Local working groups are responsible for

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designing the type of services they feel their community needs. On what basis are they prioritising services: visibility, crisis intervention, or cost?

In Manitoba, preventative and culturally appropriate programs are developed through the Regional Native Child Welfare Agencies. Crisis intervention and other mandated services are determined centrally by the provincial Department of Family Services. Ironically, there is little federal funding for any programs that are not mandated by the province. Some funding is provided for support services and is used to provide counselling and prevention services. Therefore, if the Agency chooses to provide these types of services, which include counselling and other prevention aimed programs, they must do so at their own expense.

Financing of Programs

In Alberta, the community based service plans are filtered up to one of the seventeen Regional Authorities which will consolidate the local service plan to form a regional business plan. The regional business plan is approved by the Office of the Commissioner. Provincial funding will be provided to the Regional Authorities based on key factors such as child population, numbers of high-needs children and other socio-economic elements. The Regional Authority will distribute funds among its communities

based upon methods for fund management put forward in the business plan. Local service plans will be the basis of funding for service agencies.

Decentralization of the budgeting process is important because it is the critical component for governments in the determination of a service strategy. Line employees cannot be creative in their understanding of client needs and preferences if they are never permitted to participate in determining the range, quality and mix of services to be provided. In Alberta, the actual service providers are not going to be given the opportunity to participate directly in budgeting and prioritising of programs. Instead, they will act in an advisory capacity to Local Authorities who are under no obligation to take their advice.

The Alberta government has earmarked additional funding for prevention programs; \$25 million for Aboriginal children and \$25 million for other Local Authorities' projects.²⁴⁶ This funding is approved on a project specific basis and is reviewed yearly. A focus on prevention related activities and programs is laudable, in fact it may help the Alberta government meet its long range targets of reductions in spending on social services. However, when funding is limited and is awarded on a project specific basis, programs are not likely to be coordinated or integrated into a larger plan for prevention activities.

²⁴⁶Office of the Commissioner of Services For Children, "Early Intervention Program Funding Guidelines For Children's Services in Alberta," Part 1, May, 1995, page 2.

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A further concern related to project funding is that the "piece meal approach" does not provide services equally to all families in need in the province. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, an inconsistent availability of services and benefits has possible Charter implications. Project funding tends to favour "short-term, quantitative results" styles of projects rather than long-term qualitative programs that may produce more benefits but they are not readily discernible. The insecurity of project funding also means that funding can be easily withdrawn, possibly leaving the community to continue offering the program at their own expense.

Funding social programs specifically designed for small geographic areas does not reduce overlap and decrease costs. Because funding is allocated based on local service plans, there is a real concern that needy people will fall between the "funding cracks." Once the government has allocated its funding to Local Authorities, any additional programs will be at the cost of the local community. This is obviously a problem given that the people composing local authorities are volunteers, and are not necessarily the best suited for determining the types of programs that will meet the needs of children and families. When services cannot be funded provincially, or due to the project funded strategy adopted for programs, financial support is not renewed or approved, the local community authority may be pressured to provide the service voluntarily, or see someone in need in their community go without.

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The government of Alberta is in the process of offloading cuts to social programs on individuals and organizations in communities. Community based services will help to eliminate the "notion" that the province has an obligation to provide social services to its citizens, which will in turn keep costs down.

Decentralization necessarily implies varying standards of service, which in turn raises important questions about equity and accountability. Services may be more integrated and coordinated in one local authority than in another. Furthermore, different communities may have different levels of willingness to take on increased volunteer activities. Should citizens in a province have different levels of service? Just as importantly, should citizens in different provinces have varying standards of service?

In Manitoba, Native child welfare in First Nation communities is financed by the federal government. The complexities of this issue were discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Suffice to say, that budgets are presented to Native Child Welfare Agencies who must allocate their spending accordingly. By basing funding on mandated services, the federal government has effectively constrained Native Child Welfare Agencies from offering culturally appropriate prevention activities.

Managing and Monitoring Program Delivery

In Alberta, the management and evaluation of program delivery by service agencies will be handled by the Local Authorities. They are responsible for ensuring that mechanisms are developed in every community "to ensure that the safety and security of children is a priority, that services are accessible and effective, that performance of service providers is monitored and evaluated and that all opportunities for streamlining administration are vigorously pursued."²⁴⁷

Phase 3 of Alberta's plan to decentralize social services involves community management. It is proposed during this phase that communities assume responsibility for the long-term management of their own services. As the transition is completed, the provincial government will have fully transferred the responsibilities for the allocation of program funds and human resources to the newly created Local Authorities. The provincial government's role at that point would be to provide overall direction and to maintain responsibility for policies, funding, monitoring and evaluation.

²⁴⁷Province of Alberta, Commissioner of Services For Children, "Focus on Children A Plan for Effective, Integrated Community Services For Children and Their Families," November, 1994, page 22.

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After gaining experience in service planning and implementation, the Local Working Groups will be invited to make proposals to become Local Authorities. Local Authorities will assume responsibility for developing business plans, integrated service plans, and managing overall services. The members of Local Authorities will be drawn from a range of organizations and individuals, including parents, service recipients, volunteer associations, youth groups, cultural organizations, local government, business people, sports groups, charitable organizations, service clubs, citizens, and RCMP and police departments. Service providers and individuals who will be funded through the local service plans will play an *advisory* role to Local Authorities. The authorities will be accountable to the provincial government.

In Manitoba, the Regional Child Welfare Agencies are responsible for implementing and ensuring child welfare programs adhere to provincial legislation. They have been delegated authority through tri-partite and dual-bilateral agreements between the Tribal Councils, the province and the federal government. In this regard they have achieved administrative decentralization.

The move to decentralize decision making and to free "Local Authorities" or "Regional Agencies" from too much central control holds implications for accountability. In Canada, our political accountability system is underpinned by the principle of ministerial accountability. The notion of empowerment and reducing central control raises

fundamental questions about how the principle will apply in the future.²⁴⁸ Though it is being increasingly challenged, the principle of ministerial responsibility still makes the minister accountable for both policy and administration. In traditional settings, the minister can secure an explanation for why things have gone wrong from a bureaucracy based upon hierarchy.

When communities or individuals are being "empowered" it is usually prudent to ask who has the power, and what are they going to do with that power. In chapter 2, a concern about power and political struggles related to questions of who has the right to put forward demands, of who can speak in the political arena was discussed.²⁴⁹ Chapter 4 then provided a glaring illustration of what can happen when political power is not shared equally between all members of a community. Decentralization to Local Authorities, will bring about changes to the power structure in the community, or even exacerbate existing ones. If clients, First Nation people and women are not given the opportunity for input into program design, decentralization will not achieve its goals.

²⁴⁸B. Guy Peters and Donald J. Savoie, "Managing Incoherence The Coordination and Empowerment Conundrum," Canadian Centre for Management Development, Research Paper No. 16, July, 1995, page 29.

²⁴⁹Jane Jenson, "Gender and Reproduction: Or Babies and The State," in Studies in Political Economy, 20 (1986) pages 9-46.

Often clients have been marginalized because they are seen as dysfunctional or not striving hard enough. When people are part of a "devalued or powerless community," they tend to absorb the identity. Our system of service delivery has been effective in creating labels for the users and clients of the system. It will be a challenge to include them in the decision-making process, but they can bring valuable insights to the type of services that can best help them.

The push towards empowerment of Local Authorities and removing decision-making constraints could be a very dangerous move. The individuals and organizations comprising Local Authorities all participate on a voluntary basis. There are significant legal implications concerning the management of provincial money by voluntary organizations. This concern for accountability extends beyond fiscal transparency. Considering that Local Authorities will be "responsible" for the monitoring of child welfare service agencies, it would seem logical that these authorities be comprised of professionals, people who are capable of making informed and educated decisions. Child welfare involves children who may have been in abusive or neglectful situations, and by design requires trained professionals to make the "hard" decisions of whether a child should remain in the home or not. The proposal for Local Authorities in Alberta, requests volunteers from community members who may have little or no experience in dealing with children and families in trouble. If there was an error in judgement about the service provider or program offered, how could the provincial government politically

hold the Local Authorities accountable? In fact, recent child welfare legislation introduced in Alberta, proposes that Local Authorities will not be held accountable for actions or decisions made in good faith.²⁵⁰

Evaluating and Redesigning Programs and Policy Frameworks

As previously mentioned, the province of Alberta will remain ultimately accountable for the community based Local Authorities. The province will maintain its role in funding, evaluation, program and policy redesign. The Department of Family and Social Services is introducing performance measures as part of its long and short term planning. These measures will become central to planning and evaluating Department programs. Three groups of measures are particularly relevant in determining success: Program Outcomes; Program Outputs; and Efficiency Measures.

Program Outcomes will be based on the Department mission of "helping families to be responsible and accountable; helping adults to be independent; and keeping children safe." Alberta has determined that they can measure their programs by determining whether or not they have an effect on three key areas: safety and security of children;

²⁵⁰Janice Tibbetts, "Critics Flay Child Welfare Plan," Winnipeg Free Press, April 3, 1996, page B2.

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safety and security of persons with disabilities; and client self-sufficiency. Some of the measures for program outcomes will be:

- Percentage of day care centres which meet government standards;
- Percentage of children who stay free from injury or neglect following department intervention;
- Percentage of children in the custody of Child Welfare whose needs are being satisfactorily met in their placement;
- Supports for welfare caseload per 1,000 population;
- Proportion of closed welfare cases that remain closed for 12 months;
- Percentage of agencies serving persons with disabilities that meet government standards.

Program outputs refer to the actual goods and services the Department delivers. Program outputs will be measured in a number of ways. Some examples are:

- Percentage of error-free files;
- Ratio of training placements to total welfare caseload;
- Percentage of children requiring "face-to-face" contact with a social worker;
- Percentage of cases involving Aboriginal children where placement is culturally appropriate.

Efficiency measures are identified by the Department as ways that meet the Department's goals of efficiency, responsible fiscal management and cost control. Examples of efficiency measures include:

- Cost per case load for child welfare;
- Percentage of variance between budget allocation and expenditures;
- Administration and support costs per capita;
- Department expenditures as a percentage of provincial expenditures and GDP.²⁵¹

With respects to child welfare in Manitoba, the evaluation, redesign of programs and policy frameworks is also done centrally by the province. The Native Agencies are currently given a mandate to implement policy, not design it. The province is responsible for legislation, policy, standards and evaluation. Through the dismantling of DIAND, the responsibility for children in First Nation communities will be politically decentralized to First Nation governments. While the federal government is dismantling its administrative structures, it will still retain constitutional responsibility for First Nation people.²⁵² Conversely, the provincial government claims the authority to enforce child welfare legislation for all children in the province. The jurisdictional conflicts may not

²⁵¹Province of Alberta, "Alberta Advantage," 1995/96 - 1997/98, Family and Social Services, pages 18 and 19.

²⁵²First Nation people challenge this by stating that their right to self-government is pre-Constitutional.

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be easily ended, even with political decentralization. A further complicating factor, as noted in Chapter 4, is the number of First Nation people residing off-reserves or in urban centres. The province and the federal government do not agree on who will provide services to these people. Self-government, if it extends to urban areas, may solve this jurisdictional conflict. On the other hand, if fiscal decentralization does not occur at the same time as political decentralization, First Nations government may not be able to afford to provide services in urban settings.

Conclusions

What does this review tell us about the trend towards decentralization of social services in Canada? The first is that often when the administrative decentralization of program delivery occurs, the centralization of evaluation, funding and the design of policy frameworks occurs simultaneously or else is never relinquished. The second, and perhaps more important conclusion, is that social services are being decentralized, but the fiscal imperative for doing so appears more compelling than any concern for client needs.

There are two focuses that have been of concern to this thesis. The first is fiscal decentralization and the issue of which level of government ultimately pays for social services. The second is administrative or political decentralization and the issue of who actually delivers the services. With respects to fiscal decentralization, Canadians are

witnessing reductions in federal transfers to the provinces, money that is used to fund social services. The CHST in turn is being invoked by the provinces to legitimize their own social service cutbacks. Cuts to programs like education, are being felt at the local government level. School boards are having to raise education taxes to offset provincial funding cuts.

Fiscal decentralization can have enormous ramifications for how programs are delivered. As shown in Chapter 1, the federal government does not have constitutional jurisdiction for social services. However, due to the nature of their spending power, they have had a heavy influence in the provision of social services. The decision to disentangle themselves from the direct funding of social services by withdrawing federal finances, is ultimately decentralizing in its impact. The provinces will have to prioritise the services they choose to deliver and cutback or offload other programs. Provincial cutbacks can also be decentralizing, as municipal governments often have to continue essential services like public education, even with less provincial funding.

The second focus of this thesis has been who actually delivers the service. Two case studies depicted how the decentralized delivery of social services can be associated with a number of problems. In public administration the search for more effective and efficient service providers is ongoing. The decentralization of social services and the increased utilization of alternative program delivery methods appear to be the way of the

future. As with any change, there are some important considerations that need to be addressed before blindly accepting decentralization as an effective redesign of social service delivery.

Robert Mullaly writes that restructuring is moving the Canadian welfare state further away from the notion of citizenship (equality of entitlement) to one based on class (inequality of entitlement). He goes on to note that this restructuring has been underestimated by many because it has not been accompanied by the "bombastic language of Reagan or Thatcher" and because the parameters of the welfare state have always been defined too narrowly.²⁵³ For example, focusing on aggregate government expenditures for social services led Jenson to find no attack on the welfare state, only corrosion.²⁵⁴ Expenditures on social services may actually be rising as a result of high unemployment. Thus, conclusions about social expenditures alone may be misleading. They tell us nothing about the new normative paradigm being adopted for the delivery of social services in Canada.

The new "corporate" paradigm that stresses efficiency, effectiveness and empowerment is having an effect on how services are provided. It is fashionable and accepted in an era

²⁵³Robert Mullaly, *Op Cit.*, page 77.

²⁵⁴Jane Jenson, "Different But Not Exceptional: Canada's Permeable Fordism," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 26, No. 1 (1989), pages 69-94.

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of fiscal restraint to adopt such a paradigm and approach to public administration. Social services are generally concerned with the redistribution of social costs and benefits, and in terms of personal social services this involves the issue of access to needed services. Privatization and concern for holding down costs are likely to reduce equity and social justice.²⁵⁵

Decentralization and a community based model of government are not a panacea for all of our social problems. In fact, few things are. What this form of social service provision does offer is increased flexibility and the opportunity to tailor programs to fit local needs. In determining whether a government will move more towards a more decentralized form of social service provision they need to clearly weigh the benefits against the multitude of "what ifs." When Aucoin and Bakvis used the term "centralization - decentralization conundrum" they were addressing the hard question of finding the appropriate balance between the two models of organizational design. They advocate a "tight-loose" pattern of centralization - decentralization whereby there is a tight or centralized direction over the major policy area, and loose or decentralized discretion and autonomy over the ways to achieve policy goals.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵Brad McKenzie, *Op Cit.*, page 105.

²⁵⁶Aucoin and Bakvis, *Op Cit.*, page 5. See also Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, In Search For Excellence, (New York: Harper and Row), 1982, pages 318-325.

There are important lessons to be learned. The first is that public policy and program design cannot be accomplished effectively by centralized planning or even centralized coordination of planning. This is not simply because Canada is such a big country, nor that the Canadian political system is a federal one. Rather, it is due primarily due to the fact that the Canadian socioeconomic order is complex and diverse and our political economy is highly regionalized. Our geographical size contributes to our regionalized political economy; and our federal system serves to institutionalize several dimensions of it. The complexity and diversity of our socioeconomic order extends beyond the regionalization of our political economy. Regional and local cultures, although often exaggerated in their variations, do exist and create differences in demands for state intervention in socioeconomic affairs.

This is not to argue that Canada is unique in these respects; indeed most, if not all, advanced democratic countries are confronted by such complexity and diversity. Nor is it to argue against planning by government. Rather, it is to suggest that improved planning for policy development and program design requires a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the forces at play in the socioeconomic and political orders, including their own regional dimensions. This is unlikely to be achieved if regional or local information is not incorporated into the planning process.

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The second lesson is that centralization and decentralization as factors in organizational design can be mixed in ways that do not require a rigid division between policy on the one hand and operations on the other, with the former centralized and the latter decentralized. Rather, there needs to be a tight-loose configuration whereby policy development and program design are established for the government at the centre and policy implementation and program delivery are managed in the field by public servants who exercise their discretion on the basis of delegated authority.

Public servants or employees of local governments, and not volunteers, should continue to be responsible for the delivery of social services. This is a critical factor in a decentralized organizational design. Even if the actual services are provided by a spectrum of alternative delivery methods, public servants who are specialized in the social service field, need to be employed for monitoring, evaluating and designing the service.

In order to complement the delivery of services, local authorities composed of volunteers could act in an advisory capacity to the decentralized units. This form of organizational design would improve upon the Alberta government's proposals by maintaining political accountability as often governments are much more comfortable with an organizational design that builds in clear concepts of accountability. The use of local governments or public servants offers clear accountability for the province and will help meet some of

the public's demands for a transparent state. Voluntary organizations spending provincial funds (that were in part transferred from the federal government through the CHST) occludes transparency.

Policy development and program design should involve strategic regional input; policy implementation and program delivery in the regions should involve centre-regional interaction over policy interpretation. This tight-loose configuration implies that mutual adjustment constitutes the norm for decision-making. Regional or local officials are not simply let loose with delegated authority to do so as they please; but neither is decision making or coordination so tight that direct supervision or complete standardization is imposed on regional or local officials.

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