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*The Power of Perception: Winnipeg's Image  
at Home and Away*  
A Study of Differing Perceptions of Winnipeg

by Dino Civitarese

Master of City Planning Thesis Submission

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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**The Power of Perception: Winnipeg's Image at Home and Away**  
**A Study of Differing Perceptions of Winnipeg**

**BY**

**Dino Civitarese**

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

**of**

**MASTER OF CITY PLANNING**

**DINO CIVITARESE©1999**

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# *The Power of Perception: Winnipeg's Image at Home and Away*

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## SUMMARY/ABSTRACT:

Winnipeg has not always been blessed with a good image. In fact, the city tends to be viewed unfavourably in other parts of Canada. This is despite the fact that when indicators of its quality of life are scrutinised, the city seems to be deserving of a much more positive image. This study analyses the discrepancy between the city's actual quality-of-life image and that which it should be expected to have. It also attempts to decipher some reasons for the existence of these images and to suggest some policies which planners can adopt to address the discrepancy. Using a number of previously done studies as both methodological and substantive guides, the thesis employs original key informant interviews and content analyses to provide a complete inventory of Winnipeg's quality-of-life image. The result is that certain aspects of the city's image, namely its climate and its economic opportunities, are viewed more negatively than others. It was also determined that the city had strengths (its arts and recreational opportunities, housing costs and the actual state of its economy), some of which were already possessed of a positive image, and some of which were not. Planners, by emphasising the city's positive aspects and creating policies to address the negative ones, can begin to alter Winnipeg's perceptual problems.



Chapter I. INTRODUCTION: Why Image?

The word *image* has many connotations. *Image* is often thought of as something flighty and inconsequential, not worthy of consideration especially in light of a subject's true and much more substantial nature. To use a well-known, if somewhat silly demonstration: if something quacks, it is a duck. Even if people, for whatever reason, think it is some other animal, it does not change the fact that its true nature is that of a duck. Perceptions that suggest otherwise are held to be meaningless and serve only to cloud reality. But, image and perception<sup>1</sup> are anything but meaningless and flighty. They can be very powerful influences on human behaviour. How a subject is *perceived* is critical to the reaction and behaviour of people towards that subject, often playing a more important role than reality. In fact, reality often is not even considered. If people perceive the duck to be a chicken, they will react and behave entirely differently than if they thought the animal was a duck. Using a more concrete, realistic example: if a particular neighbourhood is perceived as unsafe, then people will be afraid to go there, regardless of whether the place is truly unsafe or not. In this case, the *perception* of danger is able to supersede reality - a very strong indicator of the power that perception can hold.

Perceptions and images of places, no matter how accurately or how badly they reflect reality, can profoundly affect the interactions people have with those places, and in turn can impact the place itself.<sup>2</sup> There is a direct connection between image, perception and behaviour, with some scholars even putting forth

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<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this discussion, "perception" can be defined as the sensory process which acts as an intervening filter between people and the environment. "Image" is the resultant mental construct of the perceived environment. In other words, an *image* of an environment is formed through a series of filtering *perceptions* of that environment.

<sup>2</sup>Rapoport, Amos. *Human Aspects of Urban Form*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1977. p. 46.

that all behaviour depends on the image.<sup>3</sup> Image's effect on behaviour influences how a society develops as well. As Boulding states, "the *idea* of progress always precedes development"<sup>4</sup> (my emphasis). Conscious change requires the image. If a person or group of people does not have an image of themselves or their world in some future state, they will never act to reach that state and will remain locked forever in the same condition. To borrow an example from Boulding, Columbus never would have reached North America if he had not perceived the world as being round, thus giving him the inspiration to try and reach the East Indies by sailing west.

The images held by people thus drive, among other things, where they will move to, what city (or parts of a city) they will visit, priorities in planning goals, levels of business investment, and how the urban environment will be organised.<sup>5</sup> The implications for cities and planning are thus quite strong. This is especially true in today's world.

Globalization of the economy, the increasing ease of long-distance communication, and the continued dominance of a Western economy that relies on consumption of goods and resources have made the world increasingly more competitive. Countries and cities vie fiercely with each other to attract to their locale industry, tourists, prestige and ultimately, a better way-of-life for their citizens. This inevitably leads to cities marketing themselves, not as *places* of human settlement or enterprise, but instead as *commodities*. In this way, cities become like any other product or service that is bought or sold.<sup>6</sup> As with other products on the market, the perceptions and images people hold about a product

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<sup>3</sup>Boulding, Kenneth. *The Image*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1956.

<sup>4</sup>Boulding, *op. cit.*, 123.

<sup>5</sup>Rapoport (1977), *op. cit.*, 46.

<sup>6</sup>Baspaly, Michael. *Reshaping Cities for Tourists: A Critique of Urban Tourism Development: Winnipeg Case Study*. University of Manitoba thesis, Fall 1995.

are vitally important in the attempt to sell or promote it, often emerging as the major influences in a buyer's decision.<sup>7</sup> Once again, the potential for image to influence behaviour becomes apparent.

In this atmosphere, cities must then do their utmost to ensure that their image remains favourable to their "buying public": the tourists, businesspeople, and opportunity-seekers that the city is looking to attract or keep. These "buyers" are met with a worldwide market of places that are looking to attract them, and those cities whose image is less than engaging will face the unenviable task of trying to alter the views of their "buying public", often in quite a substantial manner. The implications for how a city must plan for its future and for the needs of its citizens are thus large. If image indeed influences the behaviour of people, then a city with a more positive image would have a completely different set of planning priorities than one with a negative image. For instance, a city could be generally viewed as having a rapidly-expanding market due to a burgeoning population. This type of city would tend to attract a higher proportion of commercial development. Not only would the actual physical developments have to be planned for, but because the demand for development would be relatively higher, the city would quite possibly have more discretion at its disposal in approving developments. This would allow them to craft developments more to their liking, gaining concessions from the developer which could not otherwise be gained. Image thus has clear implications for planning.

This study, *The Power of Perception: Winnipeg's Image at Home and Away*, will focus on the image of one Canadian city and the reasons that have led to the

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<sup>7</sup>Kotler, Philip, Donald Haider and Irving Rein. "There's No Place Like Our Place! The Marketing of Cities, Regions and Nations" from *Futurist*. Volume ?, Number ?, November-December 1993. p. 20.

See also Boulding, *op. cit.*

formation of its image. As a city on the Canadian Prairies, Winnipeg, Manitoba has not been blessed with a particularly vibrant image, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by its citizens and leaders:

*Within Canada, Winnipeg's perception of being an isolated icebox and its historic role as a rail head and stockyards centre have combined to project a moderately negative image that is not accurate but still widely held. A common negative image conveyed through the national media is that Portage and Main is the coldest spot in Canada. The City also suffers from a bland business image... Most business persons recognize that it is a Canadian city but know little more about it.*

*- "City of Winnipeg Economic Development Strategy", January 1990*

*As great a city as it is, Winnipeg suffers from a profound but misplaced inferiority complex.*

*- Dan Lett, column, Winnipeg Free Press, April 17, 1996, pg. A10*

The evidence for Winnipeg's image inherent in these quotes is further bolstered by this researcher's own experiences. Upon learning that I was to leave home in Calgary and continue my studies in Winnipeg, the reaction from friends and family was decidedly negative. Archetypal responses were phrases such as "I've never heard anything good said about Winnipeg." and "What the hell do you want to go there for?" These were often accompanied by remarks about the cold weather, the flat geography, and the "less than robust" economy. Media reports also further added to a negative perception of the city. I could quite honestly say that I had heard little good said about Winnipeg. Not all that surprisingly then, my expectations for Winnipeg were rather low.

Thus, as I drove into town along Portage Avenue, my first real glimpses of Winnipeg were shocking - not from how different Winnipeg seemed from Calgary, but from how *similar* the two cities seemed in at least the physical sense. Other than an overwhelming sense of the flatness of the area, Winnipeg looked like a typical prairie city, or for that matter, many other cities. Strip developments, suburbs that stretch forever, multi-lane roads packed with cars - the features of the twentieth century city were readily apparent in both places. This state of affairs aroused my curiosity. If Winnipeg was in fact so similar to other cities (albeit on an admittedly somewhat superficial initial level), why had it come to inherit such a bad image? Was the image that I had formed of Winnipeg shared by others? Does the image have any effect on the city? Thus began the line of inquiry that would evolve into this thesis.

The study takes a multi-faceted look at Winnipeg's image by asking three questions: What is the city's actual quality-of-life image and how does it compare to what various indicators suggest that image should be? If a discrepancy exists between the two, then why? What can planners do to alter this image?

The focus on quality of life is not random or arbitrary. It is a term which is frequently used and has many interpretations. While these interpretations range widely and can refer to nearly every facet of urban life, at the essence of the term is a regard for how well or how poorly people are allowed to live their lives.<sup>8</sup> As will be demonstrated, the term has strong links to planning, for both planning and quality of life are about providing for the needs of a city's residents. By focusing on this relationship, the study is given a centre and thus becomes more manageable. Concentrating on how well the city allows people to live their lives

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<sup>8</sup>Proshansky, Harold M. and Abbe K. Fabian. "Psychological Aspects of the Quality of Urban Life." from *Quality of Urban Life: Social, Psychological and Physical Conditions*. Dieter Frick, ed. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986. p. 8.

(from a planning perspective), thus permits one to avoid the task of dealing with the countless other aspects of the city which are available for study.

Of course, the quality-of-life image can be broken down into a number of sub-categories or components. Winnipeg might be viewed quite differently by varying socio-economic groups, or even by the same person looking at different aspects of the city. Someone who sees the city as unfavourable in reference to crime may also view it as a wonderful place to obtain an education. These two images are not exclusive of each other or incompatible. They simply reflect the subjective and fluid nature of the topic. Thus, to gain a better understanding of Winnipeg's whole image, a number of these different "sub-images" of quality of life will be presented.

There are a number of components of quality of life that are typically used in similar studies. These include employment opportunities, recreational amenities, climate and affordability of housing. It is these typical components which will form part of the framework of the study, becoming the "sub-images" which will reflect the various aspects of life in Winnipeg. In addition, the study will look at the notion of sense of place as an aspect of quality of life, giving the thesis an element that goes somewhat beyond the hard statistics that are usually employed in other studies of quality of life.

Further differentiation can also be found. Much of the literature dealing with image points to a dichotomy between the image held by those familiar with an area, such as residents or frequent visitors, and that held by outsiders, such as those who rarely or never visit. The study will also explore Winnipeg's image from these two viewpoints, resident versus outsider, to see if in fact a dichotomy exists between the two.

The study is thus based on the following three research questions:

1. What, in the eyes of its residents and its non-residents, is the degree of discrepancy between Winnipeg's evidenced quality-of-life image and the image expected from its actual quality-of-life indicators?

2. Why does this discrepancy exist?

3. What can planners do to bridge the gap?

The first question seeks to both verify the existence and discover the nature of the discrepancy between the city's actual image and the image of quality of life which is to be expected from the base conditions which exist in the city. In order to gauge this discrepancy, it is necessary to delimit exactly what Winnipeg's image is, if only to ascertain how far it strays from what is to be expected. However, this delimitation also serves another purpose. Because the study originated from the researcher's own negative perceptions, the possibility exists that the whole study will have been based solely on those negative perceptions instead of what society-at-large perceives. Since all personal observations are informed by the observer's own values, culture and morals, they may not reflect what is felt by larger society. To combat this, the existence of the images upon which the study was personally inspired must be confirmed and authenticated in the larger societal context. If the images and views of Winnipeg held by the researcher are also present in some larger segment of society, then personal bias is made irrelevant or at least reduced significantly. This can be successfully accomplished by delimiting Winnipeg's quality-of-life image.

The second question goes beyond the recording and comparing of images inherent in the first. Determining why the discrepancy exists allows one to gain deeper insight into the phenomenon. Knowing why images exist also allows one to know if they are the result of human action or inaction, such as poor marketing, or of more "natural" causes that have to do with the normal evolution of a city through history. This type of knowledge is essential if one is to act to improve the

city's image and bring it more in concert with Winnipeg's actual quality of life. Thus, discovering the answers to the second question automatically provides clues as to how planners can act in addressing the problem, and therefore makes answering the third question a simpler task.

The third question is asked in order to guide planners in improving Winnipeg's image. Having determined the state of Winnipeg's image, and the reasons for its existence, the next logical step is to design strategies to address the matter. All the effort put into assessing Winnipeg's current image will have been for naught if some guidance into the future cannot at least be suggested.

Yet, how is a study such as this useful? Primarily, it can be extremely beneficial to a city's promotional groups. By outlining what people think about Winnipeg, both positively and negatively, this research will allow promotional agencies to have a valuable resource at their disposal. They will be able to see more accurately what aspects and images of the city they should be promoting, and what misconceptions and other obstacles they must overcome. Thus, groups such as the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Winnipeg, Tourism Winnipeg and even the City of Winnipeg should find the study useful.

The study could also prove useful as a prototype for similar studies of other cities. Certainly, Winnipeg is not the only city which has perceptual obstacles to overcome. Hopefully, by using the methods contained in this study, other locales with perceptual problems will be able to assess their images in more definite terms and gain some direction as to what problems they need to study more closely.

In an academic sense, the study could be an effective demonstration of the link between image, perception and behaviour, giving a real life example of what is often relegated only to theoretical discussion. Furthermore, image is often thought of in a frivolous, superficial sense and not regarded as a true stimulus for behaviour. By giving some evidence that people will act based on the images



they hold, it is hoped that this "image" of image can be overcome, and lead to other important studies in the field which will encompass other cities and regions.

Lastly, it is hoped that the study, by outlining some of what is positive or negative of the city, can lead the way to change. Images are very resistant to change<sup>9</sup>, and any attempt at instigating change will necessarily be a gargantuan effort. With the state of the city's image revealed, it will hopefully be easier to accomplish the mammoth task of changing and altering views that people have of the city.

As for the work itself, Chapter 2 forms a solid theoretical base for the study. Several topics are analysed: the concept of quality of life and its link to planning; the many theoretical facets of image and perception, including concepts of place identity and place attachment; an overview of existing studies of Winnipeg and its image; and a thorough explanation of the research questions and methodology employed in the study. Chapter 3 gives a brief socio-economic and historical profile of Winnipeg in an attempt to foreshadow possible reasons for the existence of its image. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the study - the actual images people have of Winnipeg taken from a number of different vantage points and settings, set against the quality of life that should be expected from commonly accepted indicators. Chapter 5 concludes the study by attempting to ascertain some reasons for why the discrepancy exists between Winnipeg's image and its expected quality of life, through the use of interviews with key informants. The chapter also lays out some strategies for how planners can act to remedy the situation.

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<sup>9</sup>Boulding, *op. cit.* 8.

## Chapter II. CITY IMAGES: A Theoretical Background

### **A. Is there such a thing as a "true" image?**

In studying image, an obvious argument quickly comes forward. By definition, the subject of image itself is fraught with subjectivity, for everyone who experiences the city experiences it in a slightly different way. A multitude of differing images of Winnipeg thereby arises. The fact that the study arose from a set of the researcher's own personal observations automatically lends some further subjectiveness and bias to the effort. In this atmosphere, it is difficult to say that one, or a set, of these images is more worthy of study than the others – all the "experiencers" have presumably had a legitimate interaction with the city, and thus all the experiences have been lent some degree of validity. Not surprisingly, it then becomes even harder to say that there is one, or a set, of images that are more reflective of reality or that give an accurate representation of Winnipeg. In this light, who is to say what is "right"?

Yet, countless attempts have been made at answering that very question. The effort arises from the importance image can have on behaviour and decision-making, and whether image or reality should be the basis for those decisions. For example, when people feel a need or desire to move to, invest in and/or visit a city, they are faced with choices between a variety of cities. Comparative sorts of questions emerge: how does this city compare to that one? what qualities does this city possess that others don't? what does City A do better than City B? which city will offer me the most? which one's image is most appealing? is one image more "true" than the other?

If one assumes for the moment that image is indeed an impetus for behaviour, then anyone faced with making a decision from a set of choices can logically be assumed to be acting on a series of mental images about the choices

at hand. This inevitably leads to comparisons between the various images presented. Whatever qualities the city exhibits to the decision-maker will be filtered through his or her set of values to form a particular set of mental images about those urban qualities. Those images are then judged against the decision-maker's own checklist of what is good or desired in a city, and the decision is then made.<sup>10</sup>

This idea of an internal checklist for the purposes of comparative analysis is an important one. Based upon the values held by the individual, the checklist allows one to have a personalised and idealised model of the urban environment at hand which is useful in assessing how close (quantitatively and qualitatively) a city comes to one's own very subjective idea of "perfection."

However, the use of an ideal model of the urban environment need not be restricted to the level of the individual. The logic and mode of action can easily be extended to a greater societal scale, appropriate to the study at hand. Since one of the goals of this study is to assess and analyse Winnipeg's image in the eyes of various members of the public, perhaps it is wise to extend the use of an idealised framework to this larger arena as well. In assuming that Winnipeg's image is unfavourable in some aspects, and that it may need improvement to coincide with its expected quality of life, it has likewise been assumed that it has not yet achieved "perfection." The very fact that a negative image of the city exists implies that a more "perfect" state exists as well.

The concept of a perfect, ideal city is not a new one. Historically, every society has built and altered its cities according to what the society values most – its ideals for the "good city".<sup>11</sup> Of course, the idea of what a "good city" is has

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<sup>10</sup>Boulding, *op. cit.*, 11.

<sup>11</sup>Lynch, Kevin. *A Theory of Good City Form*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981. p. 110.

varied throughout history and across different cultures. The Ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato, valued political access. His ideal city was thus limited to about 5,000 households, such that no city would have been bigger than would allow for all landholders to have their voice in a direct democracy. Religious bases for "goodness" also were (and still are) used. For example, the cities of Ancient India were laid out on the basis of the cosmic significance of the mandala, a symbolic circle-within-a-circle design used extensively in Buddhist and Hindu culture. Indian cities were thus formed as concentric rings divided into squares. Further examples can be drawn from every culture and dominant ideology.

It quickly becomes evident that because every society can have a different world-view, countless versions of the "good city" can result. There is no philosopher's stone that will reveal the one true rendering of the "good city." Many scholars have thus been led to criticise the whole concept as obsolete, and the resulting discussion becomes entwined with that of post-modern thought in general: those believing in an absolute version of truth (absolutists, positivists or objectivists) sparring with those who believe all truth is relative (relativists or constructivists).<sup>12</sup>

The relativists see truth as ultimately being unattainable because everything is socially constructed. Nothing is truly reflective of cosmic reality because it has all been shaped by human values, perceptions and attitudes. There is no reality except that which we create. Since nothing is absolutely true and cannot lay claim to being so, then logically every way-of-life, every choice made, and every human belief has value in and of itself. It cannot be rejected as being *wrong* or untrue. It

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See also Helen Rosenau. *The Ideal City: It's Architectural Revolution in Europe*. Third edition. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1983. p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Anderson, Walter Truett. *Reality Isn't What it Used to Be*. New York: Harper and Row, 1990. p. 13.

has truth in that it works for the particular group or individual subscribing to the belief. Truth is therefore subjective and relative.

How does this mode of thinking apply to cities? Since there is no absolute truth, there are therefore no universal rules for the "good city" – "the modern city is determined by the flexible laws of its interior life."<sup>13</sup> Every city is different, created out of its own particular set of circumstances, with its own determinants for what is right, and what is "right" in one city may not be in another.<sup>14</sup>

The argument from the absolutist side holds that this type of relativism is ultimately dangerous if applied to the city. The rejection of the "truth" of the ideal city leads to a surrender to subjectivity: the city cannot get "better" and simply "is what it is." No intervention is therefore necessary or even possible since whatever forces have shaped the city have created an entity that is ultimately "right" for its citizens, and reflective of their values. The justification is thus present to do nothing, even when faced with cities that are obviously less than perfect due to crime, poverty, injustice or any other sort of ill that typically befalls an urban area.

The possibility of justification of all a city's ills leads those who argue against relativism to thereby proclaim that an ideal is necessary, if only to use as a guidance tool.<sup>15</sup> As has already been stated, the *idea* of progress or of some future state typically precedes conscious development and change. If a city is to improve itself, it must have an ideal to aspire to, and a direction in which to channel development and growth. The use of an ideal "good city" model also serves to clarify and expose exactly what is important to a place's citizens.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Rasmussen, Steen Eiler. "Commentary." from *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. Robert M. Fisher, ed. New York: Russell and Russell, 1955. p. 368.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>Bauer, Catherine. "Commentary." from *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. Robert M. Fisher, ed. New York: Russell and Russell, 1955. p. 370.

<sup>16</sup>Spates, James L. and John J. Macionis. *The Sociology of Cities*. Second edition. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987. p. 443.

Simply by virtue of declaring that they aspire to something, the values that those aspirations are built upon become clear and thus open to question, debate, and ultimately change.

Consequently, some form of "good city" seems to be appropriate, despite the arguments that can be made against it. The relativist arguments that every city is different and is formed from a particular set of circumstances, and that what is "right" for one city may not be for another certainly do have an ironic element of truth to them. No one would reasonably argue that every city is exactly the same or that there is an absolute, ideal version of the "good city" suitable and applicable to all places. But neither is it healthy to completely surrender to relativism. As Bauer has implied, there must be something to aspire to, otherwise all manner of wrongs and inequities can be justified.

To some extent, this line of reasoning therefore justifies the carrying out of the study. If negative images of Winnipeg indeed emerge from the research, they cannot be simply accepted as inherent to the city. Any deficiencies must be addressed.

This approach is fundamentally positivist in character, and seemingly runs counter to the intuitively relativist nature of image and quality of life. Image by definition is a result of phenomena being filtered through people's values. It is unrealistic to expect one image to be common to all those who interact with the city. It therefore does not approach the value-free state which positivist thought requires, where we all experience our environments in the same fundamental way. Further, the relationship between image and behaviour, and the theory behind the formation of image are both hard to prove scientifically. It thus seems that the use of a "good city" approach imposes a positivist frame of reference upon what is essentially a constructivist concept.

Still, this imposition is not entirely unjustified, for there are some things which are in fact universal to all people. Ultimately, we all have needs that must be fulfilled. Maslow categorised human motivation as being based on the fulfillment of a hierarchy of needs, from those dealing with pure survival (such as food and shelter) to those dealing with personal growth. These needs are common to all people, and cities must be seen as proficient in the provision of these needs in order for their populaces to develop good images about them. The better the city is at providing for these needs, the better its quality of life. Thus, quality of life may be prove useful as a unifying concept.

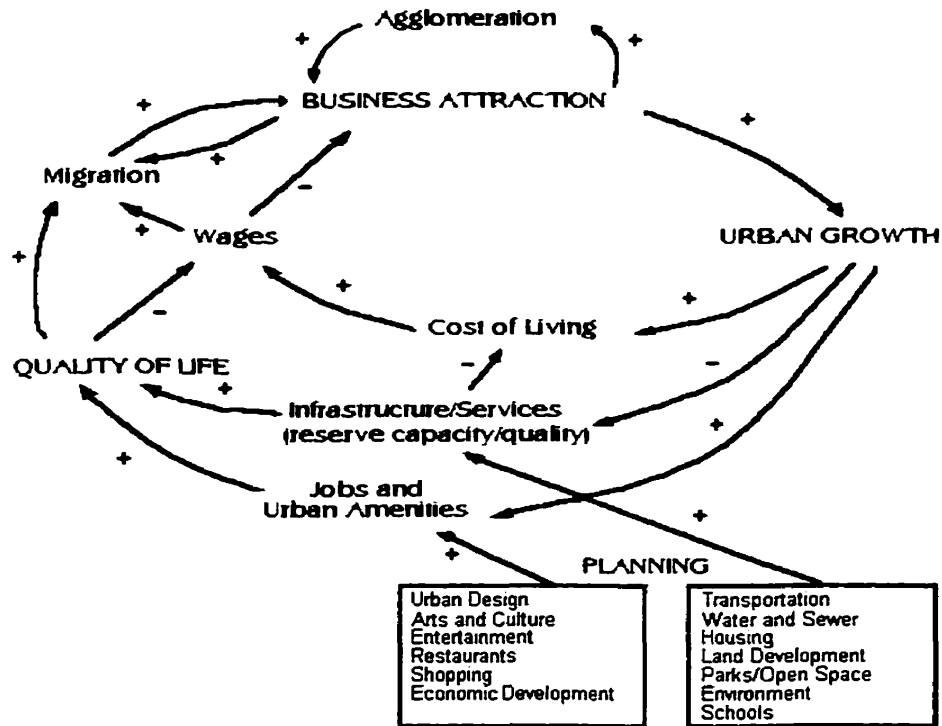
## **B. Quality of life**

The links between quality of life and planning are strong. The necessity of providing for the citizens of a community, and ensuring that urban development occurs in a manner that is beneficial to members of society is at the essence of the planning profession. Likewise, the focus on needs provision is at the core of the quality-of-life concept.<sup>17</sup> Further bonds are formed by the all-encompassing nature of both.<sup>18</sup> Planning tends to look at the city from a comprehensive viewpoint, taking into account numerous aspects of the city when formulating policy and making decisions. The focus of quality of life can be just as wide-ranging. But, the ultimate links occur between the aspects of urban life planners typically address, and the effects that a change in quality of life can impart to them (and vice versa). This relationship is skilfully illustrated by Myers (see Figure 1).

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<sup>17</sup>Frick, Dieter and Hans-Wolfgang Hoefert. "Part D: Man-Environment Relations" from *The Quality of Urban Life: Social, Psychological and Physical Conditions*." Dieter Frick, ed. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986. p. 152.; See also Proshansky and Fabian, *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>18</sup>Myers, Dowell. "Building Knowledge About Quality of Life for Urban Planning." from *Journal of the American Planning Association*. Volume 54, Number 3, Summer 1988. p. 348.



**Figure 1:** *The Relationship of Quality of Life to Urban Planning.* Taken from Dowell Myers, "Building Knowledge about Quality of Life for Urban Planning." pp. 347-358.

Myers is able to demonstrate graphically how planning, by focusing on the areas it traditionally deals with (listed in the boxes), can facilitate improvement in the quality of life in a city. For example, good urban design will improve what Myers lists as "urban amenities", which in turn will improve the city's quality of life. This improvement will attract others to the city, spurring business and population growth. Planners then must deal with the impacts of that growth, and the cycle then begins another revolution. The opportunity to influence and alter a community's quality of life thus becomes readily apparent.

Some would argue that not only is there opportunity for planners to alter quality of life, but that it is a duty of theirs to ensure that their city's quality of life



is as good as possible.<sup>19</sup> With upkeep and improvement of the quality of life as a constant aim, the degree to which a plan or policy achieves this aim becomes the determining factor in whether it should be adopted or rejected.

Whether one believes there is a duty to consistently improve quality of life, or that there merely exists great opportunity to do so, the fact remains that planning and quality of life are inextricably linked. Perhaps now it is prudent to move into a more in-depth discussion of the concept of quality of life itself.

Quality of life shares many traits with the notion of image. Just as with image, the pluralistic nature of the city makes one overarching definition of quality of life impossible.<sup>20</sup> The definition can vary according to whether an individual is a professional studying the city from a particular field of endeavour, a resident of the city, or a part of the municipal government. Additionally, as shown by Myers, these various aspects of the city are elaborately interconnected, and difficult to isolate. Negative components of quality of life may thus affect other components or the entire city. Proshansky and Fabian suggest that in this light, the only real way to define the term is by using the "slice of life" approach, whereby the researcher bases their definition on what their own particular field considers most meaningful.

To planners who are ostensibly acting in the interests of people other than themselves, then the quality of life is about how well or how poorly the city is providing for the needs of those others. This definition is of course rather loose. It can really be applied to any profession. Nurses for example, can define quality of life in their domain by how well or how poorly they can provide for the needs

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<sup>19</sup>Frick, Dieter. "Part A: Overview: Quality of Urban Life" from *The Quality of Urban Life: Social, Psychological and Physical Conditions*. Dieter Frick, ed. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986. p. 2.

<sup>20</sup>Proshansky and Fabian, *op. cit.*, 21.

of their patients. However, implicit in these definitions is the notion of place. Planners are concerned with cities; nurses with hospitals and the like. This demonstrates the importance that *settings* have on quality of life.

Physical settings, such as cities, are favoured or selected based on how well they allow people to conduct certain activities and behaviours.<sup>21</sup> If a setting allows someone to fulfill their needs, it is likewise able to provide a good quality of life for its users. This applies not only to the physical characteristics of the setting itself, but to the social and behavioural aspects of it as well. Physical environments, in being supportive of certain activities, can engender all manner of behaviours and social interactions which become linked to the place itself.<sup>22</sup> Downtowns, for example, allow businesses to be in close proximity to one another, and thus gain the benefits of agglomeration. The higher levels of interaction which take place thus result in downtown areas being seen as the centres of activity for a city. The downtown becomes representative of the city's cultural and business activity, allowing the place and the associated activity to in essence, become one.

It is in this sense that one can begin to see the connection between quality of life and the image. When places become associated with activities, perception comes into play. Experiencing a place – perceiving it – causes one to develop images of it. The physical aspects are filtered through our own values, morals and prejudices and an image of the place results. Good places engender a good quality of life and a good image of the place, and vice versa. Thus, two aspects of

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<sup>21</sup>Rapoport, Amos. "The Use and Design of Open Spaces in Urban Neighbourhoods." from *The Quality of Urban Life: Social, Psychological and Physical Conditions.* Dieter Frick, ed. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986. p. 160.

<sup>22</sup>Frick, Dieter and Hans-Wolfgang Hoefert. "Part D: Man-Environment Relations" from *The Quality of Urban Life: Social, Psychological and Physical Conditions.* Dieter Frick, ed. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986. p. 153.

quality of life emerge. The first deals with the physical aspects of the city. This *objective* quality of life can be measured through actual statistics which gauge how well or how poorly people live. The second aspect is *subjective*, and deals with how the physical aspects are perceived. This aspect of quality of life is therefore measured through the experiences, perceptions and images that the residents (and other users) of a setting possess.<sup>23</sup>

Luckily, this division of quality of life suits the study perfectly, providing a precise theoretical basis for the first research question posed. That question seeks to determine what the degree of discrepancy is between the image of Winnipeg's quality of life and the image expected from indicators of its actual quality of life. This is akin to studying the subjective and objective aspects of quality of life outlined above.

That situation therefore creates a strong justification for employing quality of life as an overarching theme, for it relates strongly to planning and to the specific matters being studied. It is now necessary to delineate and define the other major theoretical component of the study: that dealing with image.

### **C. Image, Perception, Place Attachment and Place Identity**

Two main terms have been used so far in passing: *perception* and *image*. Though often used interchangeably, these two concepts are notably different. As perception and image are very much *mental* constructs, a great deal of the work relating to them has been done by psychologists and more specifically environmental psychologists (those that deal with interactions between humans and the environment). Thus, the definitions that follow are gleaned mostly from

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<sup>23</sup>Frick, Dieter. "Part A: Overview: Quality of Urban Life" from *The Quality of Urban Life: Social, Psychological and Physical Conditions*." Dieter Frick, ed. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986. p. 2.

that field, though other fields, most significantly behavioural geography, also contribute to the discussion.

The term *image* has many meanings and connotations in everyday use. Rapoport has outlined several of these.<sup>24</sup> It can refer to notions or stereotypes held about a particular subject. For example, the city of Santa Fe in New Mexico has a stereotyped image of being adobe buildings done in a "Southwest" style. Image can be used in an advertising or promotional sense, as in the retail sector where certain stores have "high-end" images and others are "discount" stores. Image has also been used in the form of a symbolic metaphor whereby certain traits of a city come to represent or symbolise it. For example, miles and miles of freeways have come to symbolise the city of Los Angeles. There is also the usage of the term as a description of the way people have reacted to the city in question. The description often takes on a very literary form, such as a poem or verse extolling one's love (or disgust) with the city in question.

There are just as many uses of the term *perception*. As stated previously, the term is often used synonymously with *image*, particularly when discussing a city. This is possibly the most common use of the term. For example, statements such as "Winnipeg's image is one of..." and "Winnipeg is perceived as a city of..." both express an opinion of the city in much the same way. There is little in the thinking behind those two sentences to differentiate the two concepts of image and perception. The two concepts are related and thus very similar, yet there are important differences.

Tuan defines perception as "both the response of the senses to external stimuli and purposeful activity in which certain phenomena are clearly registered

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<sup>24</sup>Rapoport (1977), *op. cit.*, 41.

while others recede in the shade or are blocked out."<sup>25</sup> In other words, in experiencing our environments, our brains react in certain ways which alter or filter out parts of that which we experience. Thus, from the very start, our conceptions of the environment that we are experiencing become distorted, for as we perceive that environment, parts of it are being unconsciously filtered out.

The result then is a highly subjective *image* of the environment being perceived. In other words, if perception is defined as a process that acts as an intervening filter between humans and the environment, then image can be said to be the resultant construct which is related to but not the exact copy of the objective environment.<sup>26</sup> It is the picture which comes to mind when the object is not part of current sensory information.<sup>27</sup> Thus, image is in effect a distorted memory, developed through a series of filtering perceptions that have altered the true properties of the object.

At the same time, the image becomes the sum of our knowledge about the objective environment in question. It has been formed through our own set of personal filters, and thus embodies whatever factual knowledge we possess about a subject, any past experiences, and all the values we hold in regard to that subject. This subjective knowledge base, in the form of the image, ultimately guides our behaviour.<sup>28</sup> For example, the knowledge which has been built up in our minds about our city's transportation system – through past experience influenced by our perceptions – determines how we will get to work in the morning. The ultimate selection of which route to take may not in fact end up

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<sup>25</sup>Tuan Yi-Fu. *Topophilia*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974. p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Pocock, Douglas and Ray Hudson. *Images of the Urban Environment*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. p. 29.

<sup>27</sup>Gold, John R. *An Introduction to Behavioural Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. p. 41.

<sup>28</sup>Boulding, *op. cit.*, 6.

being the most direct or least time-consuming. Because the decision itself was based on a subjective image, and not "reality", what we believe to be the shortest route may end being slightly longer but more interesting or scenic. The "reality" of the shortest route ends up playing only a part in our unconscious decision. Similar processes take place with every decision or behaviour that occurs in everyday life.

It is this relationship with our behaviour which forges the link between planning and the image. Because as citizens of a place, we will act on the basis of image, then it is of the utmost importance that planners understand this motivation. The work of planners is based on anticipating how people will behave and what they want out of their city. Knowledge of how and why they make their decisions is thus essential to good planning practice.

We now have a working explanation for both perception and image, and an idea of the relationship between the two. This knowledge must now be applied to the investigation at hand: the image of Winnipeg and the reasons for its development. One of the key facets of the investigation is establishing the anticipated incongruity between the image held by outsiders and that held by the city's inhabitants, and also between the city's actual and expected quality of life images. Discovering the reasons for these incongruities is essential to understanding how and if the images can be changed and how the conflicting images affect people's behaviour.

The most obvious reason for these differing images has already been alluded to. The very nature of image is subjective, and it is thus not very surprising at all to see different people having completely different perspectives of Winnipeg. Each person's set of perceptual filters serves to create a version of Winnipeg that is slightly varied from those of others. This variation, in a more extreme form, can be beautifully illustrated in past descriptions of Leeds, England.

Charles Dickens described it as 'a beastly place, one of the nastiest places I know', while at the same time the city was described by another author as 'one of the grandest poems which has ever been offered to the world.'<sup>29</sup>

Such differing views can be grouped according to people's education, age, sex, or heritage. Social standing can be another basis for differentiation. The same city can be rated highly as a place to invest or make money by entrepreneurial groups, while those lower in economic status, faced with more daily encounters with crime and poverty, may rate the city considerably lower.

Perhaps the most interesting basis for differentiation, certainly in light of this study, is that based on profession. Several authors<sup>30</sup> have pointed out that planners and other city professionals have completely different views of the city from those they serve. For example, professionals tend to see suburbs as monotonous and lifeless, while residents generally see them as extremely desirable places to live in. One study in Detroit reported that eighty-eight percent of residents liked neighbourhoods which professionals judged as unpleasant.<sup>31</sup>

This tendency often leads professionals to make judgements based on what they themselves feel is most important for their fellow citizens. Their concept of what is good or needed in a city is based on values gained through education and professional experience. Citizens in turn often criticise this viewpoint as being somewhat detached from their own real-life experience with the community. Because they live in the community, they believe they know what is best for it.

Both viewpoints are in essence biased and based on the assumption that one group knows better than the other. The more likely case is that both

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<sup>29</sup>Briggs, A. "The Sense of Place" in *Smithsonian Institute: The Fitness of Man's Environment*. Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1970. p. 79.

<sup>30</sup>for example, Leung, Hok-Lin. *City Images*. Kingston: Ronald P. Frye and Company., 1992. pp. 1-7. or Pocock and Hudson, *op. cit.*, passim.

<sup>31</sup>Taylor, N. *The Village in the City*. London: John Teple Smith, 1973.

viewpoints have something to contribute. Regardless, any individual conducting a study with professional implications such as this one should in particular be aware of the possible impact these biases may have.

Visitors and natives are another important pair of groups which come to develop different attitudes. The fact that the first settlers to North America viewed the wilderness as something to be tamed and triumphed over, while the natives saw every aspect of the land as holy or sacred illustrates the impact that familiarity with the environment can have on images of that environment. The innate knowledge of an environment that comes with prolonged experience with it, tends to create full, complex images and attitudes.<sup>32</sup> Places become imbued with deeply important meanings for the people experiencing them, and eventually become part of the person's identity. Visitors and newcomers on the other hand develop only superficial images of those same environments, dealing usually only with aesthetic issues.<sup>33</sup> While these superficial images are no less valid, the "nuances" of the city, neighbourhood, or other physical setting do not tend to reveal themselves. The visitor however is apt to notice things, both good and bad, that have become second nature to natives. In a famous study of Boston's West End, residents still felt a fondness for their neighbourhood, despite its slum nature. What looked decrepit to the outsider was a place of notable attachment for the native.<sup>34</sup>

Related to this is another explanation for differing images - ethnocentrism. In this case, the term does not refer solely to ethnic groups, but to any group of people in a common physical setting. Any group of people tends to feel that their

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<sup>32</sup>Tuan, *op. cit.*, 63.

<sup>33</sup>Tuan, *op. cit.*, 64.

<sup>34</sup>Fried, Marc and Peggy Gleicher. "Some Sources of Residential Satisfaction in an Urban Slum." from *Environmental Psychology: People and Their Physical Settings*. H.M. Proshansky, ed. New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1976. pp. 551-554 passim.



group is superior to all others. This attitude is important in keeping their culture vibrant and ongoing, for it allows them to express themselves and defend themselves against threats. This holds even if the superiority is an illusion. "The ethnocentric viewpoint prevails in most peoples so long as they are isolated and do not have to deal with the existence of others who may be [superior.]"<sup>35</sup> Once a people begin dealing with "superior" peoples, the illusion of their own superiority is gone, and the community suffers what is essentially an identity crisis. This alludes to a possible explanation for Winnipeg's image. As the mantle of Prairie leadership and influence has passed from Winnipeg to Calgary and Edmonton, did the city lose its sense of superiority, the result being the manifestation of a negative image to the outside world? Perhaps, but it must also be remembered that there are many residents of Winnipeg who appear to be quite proud of the city. If nothing else, the ethnocentrism argument serves to reinforce the power which subjectivity holds over the topic.

Yet another explanation for the multiplicity of images comes from the concepts of place attachment and place identity. Place attachment is the process by which individuals assign great personal value to their homes, communities, and other physical settings.<sup>36</sup> When people's attachment to a particular place grows, it becomes part of their identity. "The meaning of place and the meaning of self begin to merge,"<sup>37</sup> the result being that people identify themselves by their attachments. "I am a Winnipegger" and "I am a Prairie boy" begin to take on meanings that go far beyond the simple reference to place – there exists a whole

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<sup>35</sup>Tuan, *op. cit.*, 32.

<sup>36</sup>Gifford, Robert. *Environmental Psychology: Principles and Practice*. Allan and Bacon, 1987. p. 62.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

different layer of meaning beneath those statements that reflect one's attachment and fondness for the referred place.

Place identity has been described as the "contribution of place to self-identity."<sup>38</sup> In other words, place is actually incorporated into one's concept of self, becoming an integral part of the individual's identity. Thus, people begin to define themselves at least partially by the places that have become important to them.

Thus, place attachment and place identity are two things that are inextricably linked, growing out of one another. The two terms are not completely interchangeable. As attachment to a locale grows and strengthens, the value of it to the person becomes more significant as well, and thus becomes part of the person's identity - "place identity." Place identity in this way can be said to be the more "mature" form of place attachment.

What implications does this have for the image of a city? A key part of place identity is symbolism. Through symbolism, people alter their physical environments to reflect their identities and display membership in a group. Countries flying flags, cities taking on monikers like the "UFO Capital of the World", or street gangs delineating their territory through spraying of graffiti are all about groups displaying their place identity through symbolism.

When outside observers express a negative attitude about Winnipeg, they may be in fact reacting to the symbolic display of place identity by the city and its residents. If a city's residents feel that it is not a place worth being in, that feeling will present itself to the outside world through various types of symbolism. It may range from a simple lack of maintenance to a widespread attitude of indifference.

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<sup>38</sup>Hull, R. Bruce IV. "Image Congruity, Place Attachment and Community Design." from *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research.*" Volume 9, Number 3, Autumn 1992. p. 182.

Whatever the case, the outward display of pride, or lack of pride, can influence the way people react.

#### **D. Precedents**

This is not the first study to have been done focusing on Winnipeg's image. Image is something which concerns those involved in the promotion of the city, as well as those who seek to improve the quality of life in the city. As a result, there have been a number of previous examinations of Winnipeg's image that could prove useful in several ways. First, they can provide methodological guides to carrying out this study. One can see what precedents have been set in terms of study targets, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives, and thus judge and learn from them for what they have and have not done well. Secondly, they can provide a wealth of information about Winnipeg's image itself. Presumably, these studies would have come up with their own account of the city's image. They can thus contribute to the new research which will emerge from this study, helping to form a more complete picture.

Therefore, in order to use these precedents as a framework from which to base subsequent stages of the study, one must first do a thorough assessment of them to pinpoint exactly what guidance they can provide. Any original research which is then to be attempted by this researcher will be born out of this assessment.

While there were a number of studies which were pertinent, two in particular were of good use. *The Winnipeg Image Study*, conducted in 1990 by the Winnipeg Business Development Corporation (precursor to Winnipeg 2000 and Economic Development Winnipeg) contained a wealth of both anecdotal and statistical information. It was a two-pronged study which focused on how

Winnipeggers rated their city on a variety of attributes, and also on how business executives from other population centres viewed the city as a place to do business.

The portion of the study which dealt with Winnipeggers asked respondents, via a phone questionnaire, to compare Winnipeg to other cities (of the respondents choice) on a total of 18 attributes. The attributes referred to the city's physical environment, its infrastructure and facilities, recreational opportunities, weather and socio-economic factors (see Table 1). The respondents were also asked which of the attributes they ranked most highly, and what their top-of-mind answers for the best and worst qualities of the city were.

The result was a wealth of quite useful information in the form of statistical charts, indicating exactly what aspects of Winnipeg were viewed positively and those which were not.

Attributes Used in the *Winnipeg Image Study*

a good school system	a positive, optimistic mood about the area's future
<b>a reasonable cost of living</b>	<b>a vibrant economy and good job opportunities</b>
a clean environment	<b>opportunities for outdoor activities</b>
a good place to raise a family	a positive outlook from local papers and television
<b>reasonably priced housing</b>	<b>good cultural opportunities like theatre, ballet, etc.</b>
good public transit system	a place that is relatively crime free
a reasonable level of taxes	<b>access to beaches, lakes, and cottages</b>
professional sports franchises	<b>parks and recreational facilities</b>
<b>good summer weather</b>	<b>good year-round weather</b>

**Table 1:** List of Attributes Used in the *Winnipeg Image Study*. Source: Winnipeg Image Study. Western Opinion Research, 1990.

The second aspect of the *Winnipeg Image Study* dealt with non-Winnipeggers. In this case, 31 interviews were conducted with business executives from firms in Minneapolis, Toronto and Montreal. These individuals came from a number of industries, and were involved to some degree in making site selection decisions for their companies. The respondents were asked not only for their general perceptions about Winnipeg, but also for the city's potential as a

site for their business. Once again, useful information arose, this time in an anecdotal form. Summaries of the interviews gave an indication of what the consensus was in terms of Winnipeg's viability as a business location, as well as further insights into the city's general quality of life.

The other main source of information was the *Urban Canada Report*, conducted by the Angus Reid Group in 1992. This report looked at how the residents of eight major Canadian cities viewed the quality of life in their cities based on a number of preselected attributes. Quality of life was broken down into 12 separate components, which were all analysed individually. Each component of quality of life (see Table 2) was rated by telephone questionnaire respondents on a number of attributes. The ratings for all components were then combined into an overall measure of how each city's residents viewed its quality of life. In addition, survey respondents were asked to name their top-of-mind perceptions of their city's best and worst qualities.

Components of Quality of Life Used in the *Urban Canada Report*

**The Economy**  
Physical Environment  
Social Harmony  
Downtown  
**Housing**  
Transportation  
**Culture and Recreation**  
Crime and Safety  
Services and Infrastructure  
Municipal Politics  
Low Stress  
Attachment to City

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**Table 2:** List of Components of Quality of Life Used in the *Urban Canada Report*. Source: Urban Canada Report: The Views and Attitudes of Residents of Eight Major Cities in Canada. Angus Reid Group, 1991.

The end result was a comprehensive statistical overview of how Winnipeggers viewed their city. Not only was an overall image of quality of life developed, but the ratings of individual components could be judged relative to

each other as to which was most important and which was which was rated most highly. The study also set different cities in comparison to each other, allowing one to view how strong each city's quality of life image was in relation to the others.

Other sources also provided insight into the image of Winnipeg. The *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign was conducted in the fall of 1995 by Winnipeg 2000, and was different in that it was not an academic study. It was an advertising campaign designed to elicit from Winnipeggers their opinions of what they liked best about Winnipeg. Newspaper and radio advertisements were placed, asking residents of the city to enter short written compositions detailing what made them most proud of living in Winnipeg, and what features of the city they most favoured. Winnipeg 2000 then selected several of the submissions for use in an advertising campaign designed to sell the virtues of living and conducting business in Winnipeg. Having access to a good number of these submitted compositions proved to be quite informative. The entered submissions ranged in scope from fairly utilitarian explanations of the benefits of living in Winnipeg to poetic odes to the city. Because the goal of the campaign was to seek out positive results, the submissions were thus overwhelmingly effusive in their praise of Winnipeg. There was thus not much objective information to be found. Nevertheless, the submissions were useful in that they spoke immediately to what Winnipeggers thought most highly of in their city. They also provided a number of illustrative quotes which related the state of Winnipeg's image.

Upon assessment, the previous studies mentioned above<sup>39</sup> were quite able to lend some insight into exactly *what* Winnipeg's quality-of-life image was.

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<sup>39</sup>Other studies done by researchers at the University of Manitoba and Tourism Winnipeg were also consulted, but did not contribute in as substantial a manner to this study in either methodology or in their analysis of Winnipeg's image.

However, they could provide only a basic framework from which to start other phases of the study. Although the statistics, anecdotal information, and the overall picture provided by the combination of the *Urban Canada Report*, the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign and the *Winnipeg Image Study* were beneficial in outlining the state of Winnipeg's image, they lacked information in other areas.

First of all, the aforementioned studies were not able to give a complete image of what non-Winnipeggers thought of the city. Much of their focus was on Winnipeggers themselves, and the study which focused at least partially on non-Winnipeggers (the *Winnipeg Image Study*) did so from a viewpoint which was slightly biased toward the business point-of-view. Thus, a more comprehensive summary of Winnipeg's image to outsiders was needed.

The trio of aforementioned studies analysed also failed to significantly address *why* Winnipeg's image had developed as it had. Little in the way of suggestions were put forth as to the direction that the development and evolution of Winnipeg's image had taken. No reasons became apparent for why people thought of the city the way they did. This material was required if one was to make an attempt at changing the image, if only to discern patterns and processes which had previously been present in the city.

Yet, the *Urban Canada Report*, the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign and the *Winnipeg Image Study* all were valuable aides in providing clues to the appropriate methodology to be used in the carrying out of the original research portions of this thesis. Solid illustrations of Winnipeg's quality of life emerged from all of them, suggesting that similar use of surveys in the form of interviews or questionnaires could produce results of the same quality for this thesis. The above mentioned studies were able to produce an analysis of Winnipeg's image which indicated the city's favourable aspects and those which were not so favourable. They were also able to give a primary introduction to those aspects of the city

with which people were most concerned about. All this was done through the use of survey methods which targeted both the public at large and key informants. Thus, the utility of this specific methodology was apparent. Only the scope of the material covered by these studies required significant change, focusing more on *why* these images had developed rather than *what* they actually were. Addressing these shortcomings by the use of key informant interviews, as in the *Winnipeg Image Study*, thus seemed a logical choice for any new research to be conducted under the auspices of this thesis.

The group of previously-done studies also laid out examples of what attributes of quality of life could be used as the sub-images in this study. Neither the *Winnipeg Image Study* nor the *Urban Canada Report* chose to look at Winnipeg's quality of life as one monolithic image. Both chose to either break down the concept into a series of more manageable attributes, or to alternately focus on one sub-image of quality of life. Thus we see the breakdown into separate categories of economy, crime, residential satisfaction and others (see Tables 1 and 2). The use of sub-images allows one to view them as indicators of the overall quality of life. Of course, any sub-images used in this study must have some basis in the quality-of-life literature. But, further weight can be given to their selection if the sub-images have been used successfully in prior studies.

Precedent is important, but it should not be the sole factor in determining the use of a sub-image. There must also be a strong foundation in both the quality of life literature and that of image. Before one can select the appropriate sub-images for this study, it is thus perhaps prudent to return somewhat to the literature of image and quality of life for some guidance.



## E. Indicator Sub-images

Quality of life is still somewhat of a large general concept to measure on its own. The concept deals with many aspects of urban life; it is used by many disciplines; and it has complicated, elaborate relationships with all those many aspects of the city. In this context, what exactly could be measured to indicate the level of quality of life in Winnipeg?

The solution lies in the use of indicators – components of quality of life which are small enough to measure on their own, and thus give an indication of the status of a piece of the city's total quality of life. A combination of appropriately selected indicators would thus form a surrogate measure of the overall quality of life in Winnipeg. Fortunately, the literature on quality of life, especially as it relates to planning, puts forth a number of suggestions as to what makes an appropriate indicator or sub-image.

First of all, an indicator should have some degree of measurability.<sup>40</sup> For some of the possible indicators, measurability is not an issue due to their easy translation to numerical values. For example, the health of cities is sometimes measured through statistics such as housing starts, unemployment rates, and population growth. While these specific measurements will not necessarily be used in this study, this *type* of statistic is easy to comprehend and compile, and in appropriate cases will accurately reflect the phenomenon being measured. However, the phenomenon being studied here is qualitative by nature, not always lending itself to easy quantification. Many of the components of quality of life to be used are almost intangible, for they deal with psychological and mental concepts (such as sense of place) that are difficult to measure precisely, thereby making the extensive use of exact quantitative statistics impossible. In these cases,

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<sup>40</sup>Lynch, *op. cit.*, 111.

measurability may have to mean judging something simply on a relative "more or less" scale. It may suffice for example, to make the statement that Winnipeg is less conducive to making social contacts than the ideal city.

Another important consideration in selecting sub-images is that of policy relevance.<sup>41</sup> The indicator chosen for study should have some ability to be affected by planning policy, whether directly or indirectly. The concern is utility. A sub-image could be used which are relevant to the city, measurable and fit into the literature of image and quality of life. However, if it is a sub-image which planners (or other policy makers) are not able to affect through policy, there is no point in using them. It is important to note the significance of indirect action however. For example, climate is quite relevant to a city's quality of life, yet there is nothing that a planner can do to change it. Still, planners are able to create and introduce policies that would take advantage of or mitigate the effects of an area's climate. In this way, if a place is plagued by rainy weather, the planner or other policymaker can seek to implement policies which are either independent of the weather's effect, or seek to take direct advantage of it.

Any sub-image or indicator chosen must ultimately be also be researchable. An indicator's appropriateness in this regard could arise from the fact that there already exist a large number of studies dealing with it, or that the nature of the indicator itself makes it amenable to study. The concern is again one of utility, for while other indicators may seem at first to be more relevant, they may not be able to be practically researched.

Aside from these criteria, there was also a desire to represent sub-images from a variety of research perspectives. Thus, some indicators should be easily

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<sup>41</sup>Landis, John D. and David S. Sawicki. "A Planner's Guide to the Places Rated Almanac." from *Journal of the American Planning Association*. Volume 54, Number 3, Summer 1988. p. 341.

researchable through the use of hard statistics which are commonly available (such as unemployment rates) while others should also be "softer", requiring some interpretation and inferential research. In this way, the study will not become either heavily statistical or overly abstract, and a blend between qualitative and quantitative criteria will be achieved.

With these specific criteria now outlined, the actual indicators to be used can now be declared. The first of these is *economic opportunities*, mainly in the form of employment. This measure has been used in many studies, particularly those designed for a more general audience (such as the *Places Rated Almanac*), as an indicator of a city's health. More specifically, the notion was one of those employed in both the *Urban Canada Report* and the *Winnipeg Image Study* (see Tables 1 and 2, bold text). A healthy economy means that a larger proportion of a city's residents are gainfully employed, and are thus having their basic needs met. More importantly, a city with ample employment opportunities typically sees lower rates of poverty, crime, violence and simple dissatisfaction with the city. In this manner, the measure can be used to represent an amalgam of other aspects of the city's quality of life. The level of employment opportunities inherent in a city are also a prime motivator in attracting new residents and migrants. Several studies link economic opportunity to rates of migration.<sup>42</sup> Concrete examples can be taken from the continuing lure of big cities in the third world for rural peasants, the flow of people into Calgary during its boom in the late 1970s and early '80s, or in the current growth of cities in the American Southwest such as Phoenix.

The next criteria to be considered is *housing costs*. This criteria has an immediate relationship to the quality of urban life through its link to the unqualified human requirement for shelter. Housing costs reflect directly on how

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<sup>42</sup>for example: Landis and Sawicki, *op. cit.*, 339.

well a city can provide one of society's basic requirements. Affordable housing ensures that the highest proportion of a city's residents will have proper shelter and protection. The fulfillment of housing needs is a part of many notions of the "good city". It is typically included in statistical analyses such as the Boyer and Savageau series, and also forms a part of what Kevin Lynch calls "vitality": his measure of how well a city provides for what Abraham Maslow refers to as physiological needs.<sup>43</sup> As well, Landis and Sawicki point out that housing is just as significantly correlated with human migratory movement as economic opportunities are.<sup>44</sup> Further, the supply and quality of housing is something that planners can have a direct effect on. When coupled with the use of the concept in the both the *Winnipeg Image Study* and the *Urban Canada Report*, the suitability of housing as a sub-image is assured.

While so far some of the most basic and needs have been dealt with, some higher ones also require addressing. *Sense of place* is something often ignored in the more statistical and popular analyses of places, largely because it is so difficult to quantify. Nevertheless it is an important aspect to any city. The main aspect of sense of place which will be dealt with in this study is how actual residents of the city feel about it, and how the city has or has not come to be a part of their lives. This aspect of sense of place will be denoted as *identity*. As such it relates strongly with the psychological concepts of place identity and place attachment, which are characterised by strong personal feelings associated with the city.

There is another connotation of sense of place that deals with what is felt by non-residents – their sense of what the city is and how it projects or reveals itself to them. This type of sense of place, noted here as *aesthetic sensibility*, is

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<sup>43</sup>Boyer, Richard and David Savageau. *Places Rated Almanac. Your Guide to Finding the Best Places to Live in America*. Fourth edition. New York: Rand McNally, 1993.; Lynch, *op. cit.*, 127.

<sup>44</sup>Landis and Sawicki, *op. cit.*, 339.

much more superficial than that demarcated under identity, and involves more of a reactional evaluation of the city: the kind of "feel" the city has; how well its features can be sensed; how unique it appears. The two distinctions are necessary because of the different natures of the two target groups' experiences. Residents, being intensely familiar with an area, tend to have a deeper awareness of place.<sup>45</sup> Long experience with the place has not only made them extremely knowledgeable about it, but has also grafted onto the place intense personal memories.<sup>46</sup> This level of experience is entirely different than that of the visitor whose encounter with the area is of a much less intimate, intense and prolonged nature, or of someone who has never visited the city at all and whose only experience with it comes from what others relate to him or her.

Sense of place is critical to the fulfillment of what has been called affiliation needs, though this does not necessarily hold for visitors. A good place will inspire feelings of attachment in people. Places are not simply physical entities, but social milieux as well.<sup>47</sup> The social interaction which takes place in a physical environment creates strong associations between life events and the places in which they occur. These associations create place attachment and eventually, place identity, and a strong feeling of belonging to the community. This is critical to keeping people happy and committed to their present community. The necessity for some sort of identity with the physical environment as a component of quality of life is extant through the literature of many disciplines, from psychology to planning.

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<sup>45</sup>Tuan, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>Proshansky, Harold M., A.K. Fabian and R. Kaminoff. "Place-identity: Physical World Socialisation of the Self." from *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. Volume 3, Number 1, March 1983. pp. 60-63.

The second aspect of sense of place, *aesthetic sensibility* bears some mention because of its significance for those who are not residents of Winnipeg. The importance of this sub-image is felt in the fact that it is essential to the creation of part of the city's image. When potential migrants are seeking or evaluating destinations, it is usually some notion of aesthetic sensibility that influences their opinion of the place in question. Unfortunately, it also has little bearing on how well Winnipeg is able to provide for the needs of its own citizens, and so will be mentioned only in reference to non-residents' image of the city as a point of comparison.

The cognitive needs are further served by *arts and recreational opportunities*. This is another factor typically used by those studying quality of life issues<sup>48</sup>, and was utilised in some form by both the *Winnipeg Image Study* and the *Urban Canada Report*. It is in some sense applicable to both non-residents and locals. The presence of a wide variety of arts, culture, sports and recreational opportunities supposedly makes a place more attractive to migrants and visitors. They also have an obvious utility when it comes to the mental and physical health of the city's own residents. Arts and cultural opportunities such as theatre, cinema, concerts and various types of festivals seem at first to be only about entertainment. Yet they provide for the cognitive needs – the need to learn and the need to "contemplate beauty" – and thereby contribute to the mental health of individuals. The physical health of citizens is likewise aided by recreational opportunities in the form of, for example, athletic facilities and parks.

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<sup>48</sup>Pierce, Robert M., "Rating America's Metropolitan Areas." from *American Demographics*. Volume 7, Number 7, July 1985. pp. 20-25.;  
Boyer and Savageau, *op. cit.*;  
Spates and Macionis, *op. cit.*

Much of the literature dealing with the ideal city sees climate as an integral part of the model (for example, Boyer and Savageau, Pierce, Pindell). An amenable climate obviously makes providing for shelter, food and physical comfort an easier task. Places with the most amenable climates will thus attract the most people, and so those places with high humidity, scorching temperatures, or cold and snowy winters tend to be ranked lowly.<sup>49</sup> However, this view has been contested. Landis and Sawicki have suggested that migrants do not make their decisions based on place considerations (such as climate), but instead on the migrants' own demographic characteristics and personal criteria.<sup>50</sup> In this light, climate seems to become irrelevant. Yet, in looking at the images portrayed of Winnipeg in the popular media outside Winnipeg, it becomes obvious that the city's climate is very relevant. These consistently refer to Winnipeg's weather – particularly its winters. Furthermore, an Angus Reid poll shows that climatic factors (denoted as winter and weather in general) are foremost on the minds of Winnipeggers themselves as a trait of their city.<sup>51</sup> To ignore climate as a factor in decisions about Winnipeg thus seems to be a mistake.

With the sub-images now set in place and the theoretical framework established, attention can now be turned to the study methodology which will help guide the thesis towards an answering of the questions at hand.

## **F. Methodology/Research Questions**

At the beginning of this paper, three research questions were posed. Taking into account the theoretical material which has been presented thus far, the

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<sup>49</sup>see Boyer and Savageau, *op. cit.*

<sup>50</sup>Landis and Sawicki, *op. cit.*, 337.

<sup>51</sup>Angus Reid Group. *The Urban Canada Report: The Views and Attitudes of Residents of Eight Major Cities in Canada*, 1991. p. 17.

case for using these questions becomes stronger, and thus will also allow a sound methodology to evolve from them.

The study was inspired by personal observations and experiences which saw Winnipeg possessed of an image that did not seem to match the reality of its quality of life. Through a study of the literature on image, the possibility for the existence of this incongruity was indeed affirmed. Images, by their very nature, are prone to different interpretations and subjective variation. The very fact that we have perceived something alters the view that we have of that object. Thus, it is not surprising at all to find that Winnipeg's actual image differs from that which is to be expected from its quality of life. It is also not surprising to find that differing images can be found when different aspects of the city are analysed, or when the images that distinct groups of people possess are compared.

The literature on image also suggests that there is typically an incongruity between the perceptions of outsiders and those of an area's natives. Once again, this is not unusual because of the different natures of experience each of these groups has with the city. The importance of image to residents themselves is demonstrated by its strong relationship to quality of life, and the perceived ability of the city to meet their needs. The image of Winnipeg possessed by those who do not live there is also important, for it can be one of the main reasons people are attracted to or lose interest in the city. In this way, it certainly forms part of a complex relationship with city growth and development. Thus, a study taking into account the distinct views of Winnipeg expressed by each of these groups, outsider and resident, serves to present part of a varied and inclusive portrait of the city.

The existence of all these varied views of Winnipeg could make study of the subject an arduous and involved task. There are too many possible aspects of Winnipeg and its image to allow for a comprehensive analysis which covers all of



them. However, focusing on Winnipeg's quality-of-life image addresses that problem. The concept of quality of life is varied enough to give a wide view of the city, but distinct enough to allow for a manageable study. This is especially true when the concept is broken down into component images which act as indicators for the whole. By analysing these sub-images and the distinct aspects of the city which they represent, and then combining them, one can arrive at a broad yet still manageable view of the city's quality-of-life image. The use of components is further justified by precedent, as previous studies of image have used the same approach.

Quality of life itself is an appropriate focus for study because of its strong links to the planning profession. Planning is ostensibly about providing for the needs of a city's residents, and ensuring that development occurs in a manner which benefits the most number of people in a community. By being able to affect change in various aspects of the community, planners can have a profound impact on a city's quality of life.

Thus, taking all the preceding material into account, one can arrive at a research question which logically flows from the information presented:

What, in the eyes of its residents and its non-residents, is the degree of discrepancy between Winnipeg's quality-of-life image and the image expected from its actual quality-of-life indicators?

- a) *economic opportunities*
- b) *housing costs*
- c) *sense of place*
- d) *arts and recreational opportunities*
- e) *climate*

Asking this question incorporates the concept of quality of life, something which has strong links to planning and image. As well, it includes varying notions of image: outsider and resident; between various components of quality of life; and between the city's evidenced image and that which is to be expected from the

state of its quality-of-life indicators. This is all supported by a foundation in both the theoretical literature which deals with image and the quality of life, as well as in previous studies which have looked at Winnipeg's image. The variety of the images now being investigated can best be summed up by this matrix, which produces a total of ten separate, though not necessarily completely different images. (Note: the designations *A1*, *B1*, etc. are used only for demonstrative purposes.):

<u>Component Image</u>	<u>Non-resident</u>	<u>Resident</u>
A. economic opportunities	Image A1	Image A2
B. housing costs	Image B1	Image B2
C. sense of place	Image C1	Image C2
D. arts/recreation	Image D1	Image D2
E. climate	Image E1	Image E2

**Figure 2.** *Scope of Images Being Studied*

The remaining task now is to determine how the question can best be answered. This necessarily involves asking several smaller ones. The most obvious of these smaller questions is: what is Winnipeg's image? Determining exactly how people view Winnipeg is essential to assessing how far the city's image is from the expected quality of life. There are a number of ways of arriving at this answer.

First of all, since Winnipeg's image has evolved to where it is now, it is perhaps wise to take a historical view of what Winnipeg's image has been. Understanding how the city's image has developed not only provides context against which to set the present-day image, but it can also provide clues as to how the future development of the city's image should be guided and altered. This discovery of developmental patterns is the main purpose of historical analysis.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*. Third edition. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1983. p. 297.

As such, a review of Winnipeg's image over time will prove invaluable to understanding the phenomenon.

Defining Winnipeg's image has also already been aided by the review of previous studies done on the topic. These studies not only provide clues as to how to carry out the original portions of this thesis' research (see pages 26-31), but the data found in the *Urban Canada Report* and the *Winnipeg Image Study* provided a "headstart" in deriving a comprehensive view of Winnipeg's image.

These two studies were the source of much information. *The Winnipeg Image Study*, conducted in 1990 by the Winnipeg Business Development Corporation (precursor to Winnipeg 2000 and Economic Development Winnipeg) contained a wealth of both anecdotal and statistical information. It provided a two-pronged focus on how Winnipeggers rated their city on a variety of attributes, and also on how business executives from other population centres viewed the city as a place to do business. The *Urban Canada Report*, conducted by the Angus Reid Group in 1992, looked at how the residents of eight major Canadian cities viewed the quality of life in their cities based on a number of preselected attributes. It too provided much in the way of statistics.

Certainly, the amount of information gleaned from these two studies, in addition to that gained from the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign was far more than was originally envisioned, both in quality and quantity. The material gathered was appropriate and representative of the phenomenon in question because it was aggregated data, representing Winnipeg's image from the viewpoint of several groups – exactly the portrayal of data which this study seeks to achieve.

However, some notable gaps still remained. Particularly, the interview portion of the *Winnipeg Image Study* and the submitted entries into the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign were not summarised in any formal manner. Transcripts of both were available, but a statistical summary of *what* exactly was

said and *how many* times it was said in these two materials would provide additional breadth to the delineation of Winnipeg's image. The information needed was essentially present, but not in a summary form which was useful. The most logical way to achieve this summary was to therefore conduct an original content analysis of the materials.

Content analyses are most appropriate for studies of various types of communications, when the goal is to determine exactly what has been said.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the appropriateness of the method was apparent. A content analysis was therefore performed on both of the above-mentioned materials. The first, the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* submissions, consisted of 53 individual entries into a Winnipeg 2000 promotional campaign. This was not the total number of entries received during the campaign, but rather a representative sample provided by Winnipeg 2000. The entries were solicited by Winnipeg 2000 through newspaper and radio advertisements which invited the public to send in their views on what made them proud to live and work in Winnipeg.

The submissions were analysed strictly according to the frequency of responses. Both latent and manifest content was included in the analysis. Thus, the number of appearances of words such as *climate* or *housing* were counted, as were references which dealt with those topics in a more subtle way. This was necessary because of the artistic bent of some of the entries. The more poetic of the entries demanded that the tone of the entry be analysed as well as the obvious words used. Taking these factors into account, the content of the submissions was classified into categories that consisted of the list of five sub-images which have been selected as the basis for quality of life in this study. Of course, not all content fit neatly into these categories, so others were created based on the

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<sup>53</sup>Babbie, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

frequency of appearance. Those categories which failed to garner more than three responses were grouped into a separate "other" category (see Table 6).

The identical procedure was carried out on the transcripts of the interview portion of the *Winnipeg Image Study*. To reiterate, the study consisted of 31 interviews conducted with a variety of business executives who lived in Minneapolis, Montreal and Toronto. Their responses dealt with the image of Winnipeg as a business location. Because the actual transcriptions of the interviews were available, a content analysis allowed for another level of information to be derived from the previously-done study.

The varied research done to this point had begun to see a representation of Winnipeg's image emerge, but thus far all had been directed at finding out what people *actually* think of Winnipeg's quality of life. It still needed to be ascertained what they *should be* thinking based on how Winnipeg performed along various measures of its quality of life. The most logical choice seemed to be to infer an expected image from impartial statistics which measured the city's actual quality of life rather than what people thought of it. Good statistical performances should expect to engender good images. Government agencies such as Statistics Canada or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation routinely gauge the quality of life in Canadian cities, as do other independent research organisations. A wealth of statistics is thus available which assesses Winnipeg's quality of life on a seemingly impartial basis. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that these are not in fact impartial, but that they are more value-neutral than statistics based on image are. While it can certainly be argued, based on discussions already brought forth in this paper, that everything is to some extent biased, these statistics are more value-neutral because they do not gauge opinion, perception or image. They purport to measure an actual, tangible phenomenon. Thus, bias may still exist, but it will be a bias based on the

researcher's own biases, or on some aspect of the research methodology. It will not possess the subjectivity inherent in dealing with image.

Therefore a number of these more value-neutral statistics were used to compare the city's actual quality-of-life image against an image which would be expected from the statistics. The statistics were taken from Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation analyses, and a number of reports done by independent research bodies or media outlets.

Despite all the information obtained from these previous studies, through both the content analysis and the statistics derived by the studies themselves, some information was still lacking. More non-residents' views of Winnipeg were needed. The inquiry to this point had centred on the views of Winnipeggers themselves. In addition, there was a lack of information dealing with the reasons for the existence of a discrepancy between the actual and expected images of the city's quality of life. Thus, the second research question arises:

2. Why does there exist a discrepancy between Winnipeg's quality-of-life image and the image which is to be expected from its quality-of-life indicators?

The possible existence of variations between the actual image possessed by Winnipeg and that suggested by its quality-of-life indicators are predicted by the literature on image and perception. Because image is the result of a cognitive process, it is automatically an alteration of reality, sculpted by the perceiver's values and biases. Thus, at the most basic level, the reason for a discrepancy is apparent. However, what is not apparent is the particulars as they relate to Winnipeg. Since the review of existing studies and literature had not really managed to address this subject, another method was required to obtain the missing information. The method chosen was the key informant interview form of survey.

Surveys in general are used when opinion and perspective are being sought,<sup>54</sup> and thus certainly seem suitable for researching this question. A large scale mail-out questionnaire survey did not seem to be the most effective method because of the requirement for substantial outlays of time and money. Response rates are also traditionally low.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the type of information being sought demanded expert knowledge of the city's image. It would be likely that those who most often dealt with the city's image should be most knowledgeable about its formation. Instead of a mail-out questionnaire to hundreds or possibly thousands of individuals, the goals of the study could be served by interviewing a relative handful of knowledgeable people.

Thus, key informant interviews were chosen as the survey method. It was felt that these types of interviews had a higher potential to capture more "in-depth" answers than a random questionnaire could. The interviews were modelled on those done by Hok-Lin Leung in his book "City Images", in which the questions were quite broad and open-ended. This allowed the interview to be shaped more by what was important to the interviewee, and less by the preconceptions and professional bias of the interviewer. Leung would ask a general question such as "What do you like about Ottawa?" and the interviewee's response would reflect what *they* felt was important, whether it was traffic, lack of crime or the number of ice cream shops. This type of interview allows the interviewer to further pursue a particularly intriguing response, something not possible under the more strict structure of a questionnaire. However, as Leung pointed out, there is still opportunity for bias. The interviewees, once informed of Leung being a planner, tended to shift their answers to more "plannerly" concerns. This

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<sup>54</sup>Babbie, *op. cit.*, 209.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

professional–non-professional bias has been well-documented<sup>56</sup> and is something that all researchers must be aware of. Nevertheless, these concerns are far outweighed by the benefits of this type of interview.

Based upon information gathered from prior stages, the list of potential interview candidates was created. It was during the initial stages of research (such as the literature review) where it grew evident that certain members of the Winnipeg community could be excellent resources for discussing the topic at hand. They were expected to have a high level of expertise about Winnipeg's image, either due to their positions in organisations such as Economic Development Winnipeg or the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, or because of their roles in the community.

The interviewees thus necessarily came from inside the Winnipeg community, and represented many fields of endeavour (see Appendix A). Some of the interviewees came from organisations that deal directly with Winnipeg's image, such as media outlets and some of the city's promotional agencies. Throughout the interview process, material pertaining to all research questions was sought from interviewees, always with the intent of filling any gaps and broadening any information gathered from the literature search. Thus, though the main intent of the interviews was to delve into the *whys* behind Winnipeg's image, should the opportunity have presented itself to discuss other aspects of the study, the matter was pursued.

In general, previous research steps informed many of the selections, through suggestions arising either out of the literature itself, or from individuals involved in the research. As well, the researcher's own growing familiarity with

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<sup>56</sup>for example, Leung, Hok-Lin, *City Images*. Kingston: Ronald P. Frye and Company, 1992. pp. 1-7. or Pocock and Hudson, *op. cit.*, *passim*.



the subject matter lent itself to further suggestions. The result was a list of candidates that had the potential to be rather useful and informative. In retrospect, the candidates did not include come from as wide a group as was originally hoped. Because they were selected as wide a group as was hoped fo

Categorically, the interview respondents came from four groups:

*businessperson/entrepreneur*: respondents from this group were chosen based on their familiarity with the "selling" of Winnipeg as a place to do business, and the use of the city's quality of life as a feature in that marketing. Because much of the material dealt with in this study was supplied, created or sponsored by Winnipeg 2000, a substantial list of possible contacts arose with ties to that organisation. While these individuals were not necessarily members of Winnipeg 2000, they did possess knowledge of the perceptual obstacles to be overcome in regards to attracting a business to Winnipeg and ensuring its continued health.

*public official or member of other public agency*; this group consisted of people who held elected public office, and members of other government-related bodies such as Tourism Winnipeg. They were chosen also because they were involved in the selling and promoting of Winnipeg, but this group possessed less of a business-oriented bias.

*community or volunteer organisation*; again, this group was chosen for its particular viewpoint, in counterbalance to the biases inherent in the other groups. Individuals were selected from various social service organisations and community groups such as the Salvation Army.

*other*; this group consisted of individuals who did not fit neatly into any of the other groups, the prime example being journalists.

It should be noted that the interview candidates were fairly well-rounded individuals, and often could claim membership in more than one of the above

groups. In these cases, they were classified according to their own indication of where they did the most work.

Despite the attempt to target well-rounded individuals and obtain a set of candidates representing a wide spectrum of backgrounds, the list of candidates was somewhat skewed toward a middle-class, entrepreneurial demographic. This was a natural outcome of the way the interview candidates were selected. The list began as a set of suggestions from individuals in Winnipeg 2000. As such, it was inherently biased toward the aforementioned demographic. From this initial list, the set of potential candidates grew according to the process previously mentioned. Even though candidates were sought from other demographic groups, the original influence of the "entrepreneurial" group was difficult to eliminate and was thus more pronounced than would otherwise have been hoped.

The questions which formed the basis of the interviews, like the respondents, were also chosen based on previous research steps. The review of similar, previously-done studies was useful in suggesting several of the interview questions. Because these studies were seeking the same sort of information, the questions used in them were quite compatible with this study. With some modification to the actual wording, some of these questions were thus incorporated into the interview guide (see Appendix A for a copy of the instrument). Other questions were developed out of the literature dealing with image and perception. It should also be noted that the interview guide was just that. The questions on it were deliberately designed to be open-ended, leaving room for certain answers to be explored further. As a result, some of the questions asked during the actual interviews did not form part of the guide. These additional questions were nevertheless inspired and founded on the same solid theoretical foundation and criteria as the other guide questions were.

The instrument itself was divided into two parts. The intention of the first part was to solicit more background information about the candidate, as well as to further broaden the representation of Winnipeg's image that had been obtained through previous steps in the study. Questions 1, 2 and 3 were very open-ended questions identical to those used by Leung in his study of Ottawa's image. The only modification, of course, was the change in the city of reference. Questions 4 and 5 were background questions, designed to gauge the candidates' familiarity with Winnipeg and their own views of the city. Together, the questions in Part I were designed to gain a further insight as to how Winnipeggers viewed the city.

Unfortunately, the questions did not function as designed. The first group of interview candidates was very reluctant to answer the questions in Part I, primarily because of their similarity to questions which would be typically be asked in a more broad-based phone survey. The questions did not seem to match what would normally be used in a key informant type of interview. Further review of the questions determined that this was probably true, especially in light of the high degree of reluctance demonstrated by the candidates. As well, Part I provided no new information that could not be gained from the questions in Part II, or that had already been gathered in assessing the candidate for their suitability for the interview. As a result, Part I was dropped from all but the first four interviews.

The questions in Part II were designed to analyse specifically why Winnipeg had come to develop its particular quality-of-life image. Once again, the questions were kept open-ended in order to solicit top-of-mind responses which would reveal what the candidates held in highest regard. The questions were again based on previous research steps, with Questions 6 and 7 based on questions used in the Leung book. In this case, however, the questions were modified somewhat, and reworded to bring out the candidate's own experience

with how others thought of Winnipeg, rather than what they themselves thought of the city. Questions 8 and 9 were original creations. Because none of the previously-done studies chose to look at why Winnipeg's image had developed, there were no precedents for which questions to ask. Thus, the questions were worded in as simple a manner possible to solicit the desired information.

Question 8 asked respondents to analyse why they felt others thought of Winnipeg in the stated ways, and Question 9 asked respondents their own opinions of what aspects of Winnipeg's image they felt were the most important to address.

Thus, using these questions, the interviews were actually carried out in February and March of 1998. After nine indisposed candidates were eliminated from the list of potential interviewees, a total of 23 interviews resulted. With the combination of the interviews and the various reviews of literature and other content, the somewhat ethereal and subjective topic of Winnipeg's image became much more solid and well-defined, enabling a clear view of the subject to emerge. Analysis could now begin of how to address the discrepancy between the city's actual image and that to be expected from its quality-of-life indicators. Hence, the third research question:

### 3. What can planners do to bridge the gap?

Again, the search for answers to this question is guided by what has already been done. It has already been demonstrated that image is a factor in behaviour, and that the image of a setting's quality of life may affect how it grows, develops and evolves. The link of quality of life to planning has also been demonstrated, and thus makes obvious the impact that planners can have. Based on the answers found in the first two research questions, suggested courses of action will present themselves for planners to improve Winnipeg's image and its quality of life.

### Chapter III. BACKGROUND ON WINNIPEG

Any study of the city of Winnipeg must take into account the city's particular traits and qualities, and where the city stands in time and space relative to the topic being discussed. Especially when dealing with a topic such as image, it is necessary to become familiar with what the city has been, its current qualities, and its future potential. To that end, a brief discussion of Winnipeg's history, socio-economic makeup, and geographic circumstances follows. By undertaking this discussion, it is hoped that broader insight can be gained into how and why Winnipeg's image came to be.<sup>57</sup>

Winnipeg today is a mature city of almost 700,000 people with perhaps one of the steadiest and most diversified economies in Canada. Its history has been marked by its isolated location in the midst of the Canadian Prairies, and by its importance as a hub for transportation in the Canadian West. Through time, the city has had its image evolve; at times seen as a backwater, and at others as the next great city of the West. Whatever the image, it has always reflected the city and its citizens at the time, demonstrating the traits and concerns of the local population.

What is known today as Winnipeg started out as a colony under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company. These first colonists, under the leadership of Lord Selkirk, came to the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in 1812. The area had been the site of several fur-trading posts, going back in time as far as the 1780s, and had also long been a meeting place for the local native tribes.

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<sup>57</sup>It should be noted that this is not intended as a definitive history of Winnipeg. It is simply intended to show the patterns of growth and decline that the city experienced, and how the city has been viewed throughout its history as a result.

In its early period, Winnipeg was not much of a settlement. Agriculture was marginal, as the settlers were unfamiliar with dryland farming techniques.<sup>58</sup> Surpluses were thus difficult to achieve, and even if the farmers should by chance have increased their production above subsistence level, there was literally nowhere to sell their produce.<sup>59</sup> The settlement was extremely isolated<sup>60</sup>, with no direct links to any other significant settlement except via long arduous journeys by boat or canoe, or overland on foot. Furs were the only product which was affordable to transport by these methods, and thus for the better part of their early history, the settlements in the Red River Colony relied heavily on the fur trade for their sustenance.<sup>61</sup>

During this time, a single entity known as "Winnipeg" did not exist in the Red River Valley. Tiny settlements were instead scattered throughout the area. The small group of buildings which had gathered around McKenney's general store at the junction of the area's two main cart routes would become known as Winnipeg<sup>62</sup> (and the cart tracks as Portage and Main). This settlement co-existed with another which had grown up around Upper Fort Garry (where the Hudson Bay fort and government seat were located) and with that of the original Selkirk settlers at Point Douglas, as well as with strings of farms which could be found along the two rivers.

This motley collection of settlements was not of the type to inspire thoughts of future greatness. One observer in 1870 described the Winnipeg area as:

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<sup>58</sup>Klassen, Henry C. *The Red River Settlement and the St. Paul Route, 1859-1870*. unpublished MA thesis, University of Manitoba, 1963.

<sup>59</sup>Artibise, Alan F. J. *Winnipeg: An Illustrated History*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, and National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 1977. pp. 13.

<sup>60</sup>Ham, George H. *Reminiscences of a Raconteur*. Toronto, 1921. pp. 29.

<sup>61</sup>Artibise, *op. cit.*, 11.

<sup>62</sup>Artibise, *op. cit.*, 16.;

Reynolds, G.F. *The Man Who Created Portage and Main (Henry McKenney)*. Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, Number 26 (1969-70). pp. 5-40.

"...rickety-looking shanties that looked for all the world as if they had been dropped promiscuously on the verge of a boundless prairie."<sup>63</sup>

It was therefore not surprising that people thought negatively about the city at this time, if they thought about it at all. The area was not connected in any meaningful way to the rest of the continent, a situation which would not change until railroad links were established to St. Paul in 1878 and to the rest of Canada in 1885. The population was thus fairly small (approximately 1,000 in 1874), and the economy was centred on the fort and the fur trade which accompanied it. If Winnipeg was looked at as a backwater at this time, it was because it indeed was a backwater.

The city's future began to change in the 1870s with the coming of both the railroads and the type of people who came with it – people who were always seeking to turn a profit from the newfound prosperity the railway could bring. When in 1881, it was confirmed that Winnipeg would be part of the Canadian Pacific Railway main transcontinental line, it set into motion the most intense boom period in the city's history. The population of the city went from 6,000 people in 1881 to 14,000 in 1882.<sup>64</sup> The boom was based almost entirely on land speculation<sup>65</sup> surrounding the railroad, and was not dissimilar to the circumstances other Western Canadian centres encountered with the coming of the CPR.

During this period, the population of the now-booming city changed in number and make-up. In its marginal, fur-trading days, the town and area had

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<sup>63</sup>Artibise, *op. cit.*, 23;

Healy, W.J. *Winnipeg's Early Days: A Short Historical Sketch*. Winnipeg, 1927. pp. 21

<sup>64</sup>Artibise, Alan F.J. *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth 1874-1914*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975. pp. 44.

<sup>65</sup>Artibise. *Winnipeg: An Illustrated History*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, and National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 1977. pp. 26.

been populated by a fairly even mix of Metis, English and French settlers.<sup>66</sup> As people flooded in to take advantage of the railroad boom, the population had become increasingly British and Eastern Canadian (particularly Ontarian) in origin.<sup>67</sup>

These new groups of settlers brought with them a more "entrepreneurial" spirit than the previous settlers did, and it was very important to them to see Winnipeg grow and prosper in a business sense. The success of young towns at the time was judged most frequently on the basis of their population and how fast the settlement was growing. This contributed heavily to the creation of a 'growth at all costs', boosteristic mentality among the city's leaders. It would also lead inevitably to a common by-product of boosterism which plagued much of Western Canada during this era: consistently inflated population figures.<sup>68</sup> Rather optimistic figures were regularly concocted by town boosters in order to lay claim to the greatness which was associated with rapid growth. By creating at least a partial illusion of a burgeoning population, it was hoped others would be drawn to the city, and thus allow the city leaders to lay claim to even further greatness.

The claims of the boosters and actions of the speculators had given the settlement of Winnipeg a reputation for confidence. "Optimism and arrogance"

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<sup>66</sup>Carlyle, W.J. "Growth, Ethnic Groups and Socio-economic Areas of Winnipeg." from *Winnipeg: 1874-1974. Progress and Prospects*. Tony J Kuz, ed. Winnipeg: Manitoba Department of Industry and Commerce, 1974. pp. 31.

<sup>67</sup>Artibise, *op. cit.*, 28.

<sup>68</sup>McGowan, Don C. *The Green and Growing Years: The Swift Current Region. 1907-1914*. Victoria: Cactus Publications, 1989. pp. 44.

Boosterism was a phenomenon which involved extensive advertising, lobbying, and the offering of very favourable incentives to potential business or residents, in order to promote growth and development. For excellent discussions of the impact and scope of boosterism in Western Canada see above citation; also Voisey, Paul. *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.



were the hallmarks of Winnipeggers,<sup>69</sup> and the city had gained what was at the time a very positive, if somewhat brash, image.

Though land speculation had led to a short period of intense growth for the city in 1881-82, it was not until the actual arrival of the railroad in 1885 that the impetus for substantial sustained growth had been established. For the next thirty years, Winnipeg experienced the highest population growth in Canadian history, and began to shed its previous image as a backwater. Aided by the claims of the always effervescent boosters, Winnipeg began to attract attention as the "Chicago of the North".

There was some justification for this claim despite the often unrealistic aspirations and insincere assertions of the boosters. With the coming of the railway, many eastern-based companies established a presence in Winnipeg, using it as a service and wholesaling centre. Beneficial railroad freight rates, granted in 1886, were such that companies found it much more economical to ship their goods to and from Winnipeg than other Western centres.<sup>70</sup> Combined with the increasing productivity of western farmers, the resultant spinoffs that occurred in the retail, banking and administrative industries quickly made Winnipeg the dominant centre in Western Canada.<sup>71</sup> The city had literally become the "gateway to the West", controlling the traffic of nearly all the goods and services for the western half of the nation. Quite logically, expectations were high for the town's future, and its potential was not ignored by outsiders:

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<sup>69</sup>Artibise. *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth 1874-1914*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975. pp. 15.

<sup>70</sup>Kuz, *op. cit.*, 9.

<sup>71</sup>Kuz, Tony J. "Metropolitan Winnipeg: Inter-urban Relationships" from *Winnipeg 1874-1974: Progress and Prospects*. Tony J. Kuz, ed. Winnipeg: Manitoba Department of Industry and Commerce, 1974. pp. 10.

*All roads lead to Winnipeg. It is the focal point of the three transcontinental lines of Canada, and nobody... can pass from one part of Canada to another without going through Winnipeg. It is a gateway through which all the commerce of the East and the West and the North and the South must flow. No city, in America at least, has such an absolute complete command over the wholesale trade of so vast an area. It is destined to become one of the greatest distributing commercial centres of the continent as well as a manufacturing community of great importance.*

- William E. Curtis, *Chicago Record Tribune*, 1911<sup>72</sup>

Accordingly, as the town grew, so did its positive image. The nature of the town itself also evolved. What had once been a gathering of shanties surrounding a remote fur trading post had become the pre-eminent centre for the region. It had become a magnet for immigration, and the thousands of people who had come to the city were the driving force behind its growth. A city which in 1881 had a population of about 6,000 numbered 150,000 in 1913.<sup>73</sup> The outlook of the people necessarily became less insular and provincial.

Unfortunately, the flowering of Winnipeg would prove to be brief. By the end of the boom period in 1913, the seeds for a decline in growth had already been planted. Changes in everything from its dominant industry to its ethnic makeup would see the city evolve from its gregarious and brash boomtown nature to a mature, far less volatile city.

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<sup>72</sup>Artibise. *Winnipeg: An Illustrated History*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, and National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 1977. pp. 23.

<sup>73</sup>Wells, Eric. *Winnipeg: Where the New West Begins. An Illustrated History*. Burlington, Ont.: Windsor Publications, Ltd., 1982. pp. 125.

Beginning around 1913, the British/Ontarian portion of the population, for thirty years the city's dominant group, began to experience a decline.<sup>74</sup> (see Table 3) Of course, many people were now calling themselves "Manitobans", accounting for much of the relative decline in the British/Ontarian proportion of the population. However, new immigrants were flooding into the city from parts of the world which were in sharp contrast to Britain or Ontario. The majority of them were Slavs and Jews, with strong cultures very dissimilar to that of the predominant Anglo-Saxon group which had until then maintained near total control of the city's social and commercial enterprises.<sup>75</sup> Because of the strength and distinctiveness of their culture, these newer immigrants were much less easily assimilated. As well, the growth in their proportion of the city's

*Origin of Winnipeg's Population as  
Percentage of Total Population (1881-1961)*

<i>Place of Origin</i>	<i>1881</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>1901</i>	<i>1911</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>1951</i>	<i>1961</i>
Ontario	42.5	28.2	24.6	15.1	11.9	8.8	7.4	5.9	5.2
Great Britain	21.2	28.1	19.4	29.4	28.0	21.8	17.2	12.1	8.3
Manitoba	12.9	21.4	31.5	23.4	35.2	42.3	50.7	55.8	57.5
Quebec	7.1	4.5	3.2	2.1	1.7	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0
Atlantic Canada	4.4	2.9	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.3
United States	4.6	3.4	3.3	4.3	3.9	2.7	2.4	1.8	1.4
Scandinavia	0.4	4.6	5.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.7
Germany	0.5	1.3	1.6	1.4	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.6	2.9
Italy	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.9
Russia/Poland	0.0	2.0	3.4	14.3	11.9	14.7	12.2	11.2	8.4
other Canada	0.5	0.3	0.9	0.8	1.7	2.8	4.7	6.0	6.5
Asia	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4
other	5.7	3.1	4.3	2.9	1.1	1.1	0.9	3.0	5.5
Total foreign-born	32.5	42.7	37.8	55.9	47.6	43.5	35.0	30.3	28.5
Total Canadian-born	67.5	57.3	62.2	44.1	52.4	56.5	65.0	69.7	71.5

*Table 3: Origin of Winnipeg's Population as Percentage of Total Population (1881-1961) Adapted from Alan Artibise. Winnipeg: An Illustrated History, 1977.*

<sup>74</sup>Artibise, Alan F.J. *Winnipeg in Maps (1816-1972)*. H. Dahl, ed. Ottawa: National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada, 1975. pp. 23.

<sup>75</sup>Artibise. *Winnipeg: An Illustrated History*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, and National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 1977. pp. 98.

population created a situation that was entirely new for the city. The hegemony that had once been held by the dominant British and Ontarian groups was no longer, and the influence these two groups held over the affairs of the city was considerably lessened. In short, a substantial portion of the population was no longer willing to accept the 'growth at all costs' manifesto that had come to dominate previously.

The result was a shift in the overall character of the city. The influx of immigrants who were not easily assimilated brought to light, seemingly for the first time, social problems which up to then had been ignored by the city leaders: poverty, a distinct lack of social spending on the part of the civic government, and a propensity for both the rich and poor to segregate themselves from each other.<sup>76</sup> Winnipeggers were forced to look inwards at their own problems, and the city took on a much less brash and arrogant bent than before. These long-festering problems would be part of the cause of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, perhaps Winnipeg's most notable historical event and the incident which would most signal the city's shift away from its previous business-oriented, 'growth at all costs' outlook.<sup>77</sup>

The change in focus naturally meant that the city's growth would slow. However, this decline in growth was caused by a number of other important factors as well. The evolution of the rest of the Canadian West and the development of competing population centres served to direct attention away from Winnipeg. By the early 1900s, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and even Regina and Saskatoon had begun to experience significant growth of their own (see

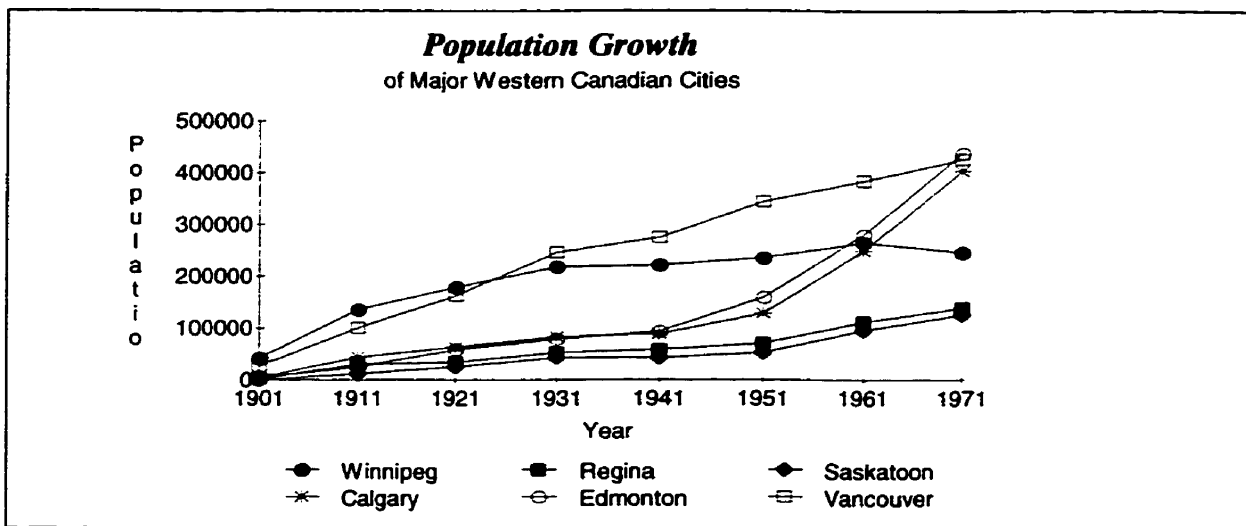
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<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>77</sup>Artibise, *op. cit.*, 114.

Figure 3), splitting up into smaller pieces the hinterland which Winnipeg had previously had for its own.

Loss of its preferential railroad freight rates would remove Winnipeg's advantage as a wholesaling shipment point. The opening of the Panama Canal also ceded much of the city's grain transport market to Vancouver.<sup>78</sup> As a result, Winnipeg's absolute control over the Western Canadian landscape had ended and the impetus for quick and substantial growth had thus been removed. Inevitably, immigration would also slow, as there was less and less reason for immigrants to choose Winnipeg as their final destination. As the city headed out of the World War I years, it lapsed into a period of much slower growth, but also one of maturation – a period that largely continues to this day.



**Figure 3:** Population Growth of Major Western Canadian Cities. Source: Statistics Canada Censuses, 1901-1961.

Winnipeg's future image was seemingly consolidated during the post-World War II years. At a time when other cities were experiencing their time of greatest growth, Winnipeg lagged far behind, and actually lost population (see Figure 3). The large number of immigrants (both from within Canada and from other

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 116.

countries) that had propelled the city's population growth in the past had disappeared, and any addition to the population was now accounted for mostly by natural increase. This pattern of comparatively low growth would continue well into the future and prove to be one of Winnipeg's hallmark traits, along with its infamous winters and isolation.

In fact, it could be argued that these features mark Winnipeg's "natural" image. In a global context, and even on a nation-wide basis, Winnipeg is not a big city. Its relatively small population does not allow it to maintain, develop or attract features that would typically be found in larger centres. Its importance as a commercial market, for example, is lessened by the fact that the local population is relatively small. Furthermore, its geographic location and isolation create a situation where the city tends to be "overlooked" in favour of other cities with more prominent or fortuitous locations. In these circumstances, one cannot realistically expect the city to possess a powerful, popular image. In fact, a historical analysis of Winnipeg's image suggests that except for some brief boom periods, the city has always possessed a rather slight, if not negative image. Only during the period of dominance of the boosters did the city exude the confident vision that allowed it to lay claim to being the "Chicago of the North." The rest of its nearly 200-year history sees it as an isolated outpost on the Canadian Prairie, ignored in favour of other centres.

Viewing Winnipeg in this manner, as a product of its geography and history, helps to gain further understanding of the city. In succeeding sections, the context established here will be essential in assessing and analysing the intricacies of Winnipeg's image, its current fortunes and its prospects for the future.

#### Chapter IV. IMAGE & EXPECTATIONS: Results and Findings

*What, in the eyes of its residents and its non-residents, is the degree of discrepancy between Winnipeg's apparent quality-of-life image and the image expected from its actual quality-of-life indicators?*

From the beginning stages of the study, several hypotheses had been made, and the research designed around them. For example, it was hypothesised that differing images of Winnipeg would be obtained from those who live in the city and those who don't. It was also hypothesised that at least some of the images arising out of the study would be to some extent negative. These expectations and others were realised, but some other unexpected results were also achieved.

##### **A. Economic Opportunities**

The first research question entailed determining exactly what Winnipeg's quality-of-life image was, based on five different sub-images. The first sub-image, *economic opportunities*, is a key factor in attracting people to a city or in being able to keep its residents from leaving. People depend on jobs and a good business climate to ensure that they are able to provide for themselves. As such, a city's image in terms of these opportunities is of key importance. Unfortunately, the analysis of previously-done studies reveals that Winnipeg does not rate very favourably on this count.

The results of the interview portion of the *Winnipeg Image Study*, done by the Winnipeg Business Development Corporation, indicate that the most frequent answer given, out of all positive and negative responses, was that non-residents had little knowledge of the city or that it was not top-of-mind (see Table 4).

Of course, this was a general response, and does not refer specifically to the city's economy. However, specific economic inferences can be still be drawn from this general response when other aspects of this specific study are considered. The *Winnipeg Image Study* interviewed a total of 31 non-resident

<b>Winnipeg Image Study</b>			
<i>Range of Interview Responses by Non-residents</i>			
<b>NEGATIVE RESPONSES</b>	<b>mentions as % of respondents</b>	<b>POSITIVE RESPONSES</b>	<b>mentions as % of respondents</b>
little knowledge of city/not top-of-mind	96.8	stable/average economy or market	90.3
climate/cold	93.5	good place to live	54.8
remote/isolated/lack of proximity to markets	58.1	easy to get employees to move to	54.8
tough to get employees to move to	35.5	generally favourable	48.4
poor economy	22.6	good/healthy economy	41.9
city gets negative reaction out of others	19.4	recreational/cultural opportunities	38.7
lack of critical market mass or population	16.1	low costs (general/labour/facility)	32.3
no natural appeal/dullness of natural environment	16.1	physical environment (clean, natural, good size)	32.3
not enough growth	16.1	good family environment	29.0
same as any other city	6.5	collegial/friendly atmosphere	29.0
not a centre of decision-making	6.5	inspires loyalty in residents	22.6
insular mentality/people deal only with locals	6.5	low housing costs	19.4
lack of skilled labour	3.2	good labour force	19.4
not enough industry infrastructure	3.2	positive work ethic	12.9
will never go back	3.2	educational level/facilities	12.9
		central Canadian location	12.9
		quiet/laid-back feeling	9.7
		good summers	9.7

This figure is a combination of positive and negative responses. In the interviews, individual respondents often viewed Winnipeg's stability as both a negative and a positive, thus making it difficult to separate responses into one category or the other.

*Total number of respondents: 31*  
*Total number of responses: 315*

**Table 4.** Analysis of Responses in the Winnipeg Image Study. based on interviews from: Winnipeg Image Study, Winnipeg Economic Development Corporation, 1990.



business executives for their opinions of Winnipeg as a location for their businesses. The focus of the interviews was thus economic in nature, both in the subject matter and in the traits and biases of the candidates themselves. This allows one to infer that at least partially, the responses of the candidates would also possess an economic slant. When the most frequent response is that the city is not "top-of-mind", one can therefore reasonably consider that a substantial portion of those responses refer to the city's economy. Of course, this type of assumption and inference does not possess the degree of import that a full, unqualified result would, but even so, it is at least a partial indication of the state of Winnipeg's economic image – one that must be corroborated with other evidence.

This additional evidence comes in the fact that nowhere was the city's economy viewed as vibrant, as answers overwhelmingly referred to it as average or stable. (see Table 4) This view, of course, is two-edged. Some of those who saw Winnipeg's economy in this light saw the stability as a positive, since it meant that the city was not subject to the boom and bust cycles that have plagued other cities. In this way, it was a guaranteed, sound market for some industries. Representatives of other industries in search of large, rapidly-growing markets saw the stability as a negative.

The views of non-Winnipeggers with respect to the city's economic opportunities can, on the whole, be summarised as rather lukewarm and indifferent. The views of Winnipeggers themselves were much less so. Surprisingly, they revealed a much more negative image of the city's economy. Results from the consulted sources consistently indicated a lack of satisfaction with the economic opportunities to be found in the city. For example, in the *Urban*

*Canada Report*, Winnipeggers were ranked the second lowest among major Canadian cities in terms of optimism for their city's economic fortunes.<sup>79</sup> In the first portion of the *Winnipeg Image Study*, Winnipeggers viewed their city's economy as one of the lowest ranked attributes of the city.<sup>80</sup>

Even when attitudes towards the economy were not a specific focus of study, Winnipeggers tended to make their feelings on the subject known. When asked about what the city's best qualities were, the economy and related matters (jobs, business climate, etc.) were either ranked lowly or not at all. For example, in the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign (see Table 6), designed to get residents to voluntarily state what made them proud of their city, only about three percent of all recorded comments dealt with economic factors. This is quite telling because those who participated in the campaign were self-selected. In other words, only the people who *already* felt positively about the city took part in the campaign. Yet, even this seemingly favourable group fails to mention the economy as a positive.

In addition, polls conducted by the *Winnipeg Free Press* corroborated these findings. A series of opinion surveys carried out for the newspaper showed unemployment as either the first or second highest area of concern in the city over a period of eighteen months.<sup>81</sup> The surveys of 600 Winnipeg residents, done every three to four months on behalf of the paper, consistently showed employment opportunities as an issue that needed attention during that time

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<sup>79</sup>Angus Reid Group, *op. cit.*, 25.

<sup>80</sup>Western Opinion Research Inc. *Winnipeg Image Study Final Report*. prepared for Winnipeg Business Development Corporation., 1990. p. 10.

<sup>81</sup>Randy Turner, "There, but for the grace of God..." from *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 February 1996. p. A5.; Treena Khan, "Streets, crime top city's ills" from *Winnipeg Free Press*, 24 May 1996. p. A1.; Doug Naime, "Crime anxiety grips city" from *Winnipeg Free Press*, 22 December 1996. p. A1.

frame. It thus becomes apparent that Winnipeggers' image of their city's economic opportunities is less than stellar.

It also becomes evident that a contrast exists between the images held by Winnipeggers and those of non-residents. What is unexpected, and somewhat counter-intuitive is that the city's own residents seem to have a slightly more negative view than non-Winnipeggers. While outsiders tend to indifference, based on the prevalence of middling attitudes and the low standing of the city as a "top-of-mind" centre (see Table 4), Winnipeggers seem to be more purely negative, as cited by their consistent appraisal of the economy as a definite concern.

How does this situation compare with what should be expected from the city? It should be noted that a problem presents itself at this point. Ascertaining exactly what constitutes a high quality of life can be a somewhat difficult task. It is hard to say for example, that an unemployment rate of  $X$  is required for a city to qualify as having a high quality of life. First of all, rarely in the literature is it stated with precision what the exact standard must be in order to achieve high quality. Concrete numbers are usually not employed, often because the phenomenon being analysed is not at all amenable to measurement, but also because of the subjective nature of the topic.

Even if precise standards did exist, the nature of the topic would see the standards vary across different cultures, philosophies and also across socio-economic strata. As well, the broader in scope the concept being studied, the more difficult it is to come up with a specific measurement for it. What remains in many cases then is the use of a relative scale of measurement by which the indicator can be said to be "more or less" approaching a standard which "more or less" reflects a high quality of life. This is by no means perfect, but it does enable one to some elementary assessments.

In reference to economic opportunities then, a city which is possessed of a good quality of life would therefore obviously provide for a healthy level of economic opportunities. Again, it is difficult to give an exact description of what constitutes "healthy", but one can approximate by saying that unemployment rates should be fairly low. Unemployment in this case can act as a proxy for other measures of the economy, for it does in some ways indicate the general overall health of a city.

At first glance, it appears that neither the outsider or resident image of the economy corresponds with Winnipeg's actual economic standing. It is here that the power of perception and image becomes evident. If low unemployment is a standard by which a city's economic opportunities can be gauged, then Winnipeg fares quite well when its reality is taken into consideration. Winnipeg's unemployment rate is quite low in comparison to most of Canada's other major cities (see Table 5). This would lead one to say that Winnipeg is indeed possessed of a high quality of life, and should thus possess a positive image of such. Yet, as demonstrated previously, neither Winnipeggers nor their counterparts outside the city viewed the city's economy as particularly healthy. Winnipeggers saw the economy as a major cause of concern, and outsiders were generally ignorant of the city in economic matters. The *image* in this case is certainly worse what would be expected from the reality of Winnipeg's economic situation.

### 1997 Labour Force Statistics for Selected Major Canadian Cities

METROPOLITAN AREA	LABOUR FORCE (thousands)	UNEMPLOYMENT (thousands)	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)	EMPLOYMENT RATE (%)
Calgary	498.8	30.0	6.0	69.0
Regina	109.2	6.8	6.2	64.3
Edmonton	511.4	35.1	6.9	66.8
Saskatoon	121.6	8.6	7.1	63.9
<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>381.3</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>62.6</b>
Toronto	2442.3	195.8	8.0	62.6
Vancouver	1028.5	87.6	8.5	60.4
Ottawa-Hull	584.2	52.4	9.0	61.4
Halifax	186.6	17.0	9.1	61.9
Montréal	1785.9	195.4	10.9	57.0
Average of 25 Canadian census metropolitan areas			9.2	59.4

**Table 5.** 1997 Labour Force Statistics for Selected Major Canadian Cities. Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, matrices 3483 - 3492, 1997.

#### B. Housing Costs

An altogether different picture emerges with respect to the city's *housing costs* image. The cost of housing is a critical factor in the health and attractiveness of a city, and based on the analysis of previously-done studies, Winnipeggers have a favourable view of the affordability of housing in their city. In a comparison ranking with other cities on several attributes, Winnipeg was ranked highest for "reasonably priced housing."<sup>82</sup> Housing was also seen as Winnipeg's most favourable quality of life factor in the *Urban Canada Report*.<sup>83</sup>

This positive feeling, however, may not be one which resides at the top of people's minds. While housing costs are rated quite highly when specifically referred to, they are not an issue which comes to mind when the question is open-ended, such as in the Winnipeg 2000 *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign (see Table 6). There, housing costs are only rated by about four percent of respondents as being something to be proud of. The image Winnipeggers have

<sup>82</sup>Western Opinion Research Inc., *op. cit.*, 10.

<sup>83</sup>Angus Reid Group, *op. cit.*, 10.

of their city's housing costs thus seems to be generally positive, though possibly only in cases where the discussion of the topic is specifically prompted.

"Proud to Call Winnipeg Home" Campaign  
*Ranking of Most Frequent Responses*

Response Category	Number of Mentions	% of Total Mentions	Mentions as % of Respondents
spirit or sense of community/friendly, accepting people	41	20.0	77.4
arts/recreational/cultural opportunities (inc. restaurants)	24	11.7	45.3
snow/cold/had weather (as a negative)	19	9.2	35.8
multicultural/multi-ethnic nature	15	7.3	28.3
educational opportunities/quality of educ. institutions	11	5.4	20.8
accessibility within city/transport system/low traffic	10	4.9	18.9
affordable housing	9	4.4	17.0
natural environment	9	4.4	17.0
winter (as a positive)	8	3.9	15.1
general quality of life/cost of living	7	3.4	13.2
business environment	7	3.4	13.2
cleanliness of city	6	2.9	11.3
bad response of others about Winnipeg	6	2.9	11.3
big city/small town combination	6	2.9	11.3
safety/low crime	5	2.4	9.4
history/character	4	2.0	7.5
<u>other (3 or less responses per category)</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>8.8</u>	<u>34.0</u>

**Table 6:** "Proud to Call Winnipeg Home" Campaign: Content Analysis of Submissions. Source: Winnipeg 2000, 1996.

Non-Winnipeggers, however, are virtually silent on the matter. The analysis of previous research showed that for non-residents, there existed virtually no image of the city's housing costs. In top-of-mind answers for the interview portion of the *Winnipeg Image Study* (see Table 4), housing was not a frequently cited

response, and even the key informant interviews conducted by this researcher revealed that non-residents of the city had, for all intents and purposes, no opinion at all on the subject. This is not entirely surprising. When considering a city for a relocation decision, housing costs are a factor that would not be taken into account until fairly well advanced into the process. Only those who are already seriously contemplating Winnipeg as a place to live will have made themselves familiar with the state of housing costs in the city. Thus, very few of the respondents would have had Winnipeg at the top-of-mind in this regard.

Comparing these actual images of housing costs to what would normally be expected presents much the same situation as did the review of economic opportunities. Once again, an exact standard for housing costs which would indicate a high quality of life is difficult to provide. There is nothing in the literature on quality of life which says that housing must cost a certain amount to be affordable. Certainly, housing experts have developed various standards for housing affordability. One of the more common ones is that housing costs should equal no more than 30 percent of the resident's monthly income. These standards are open to dispute as to whether they truly reflect the affordability of a dwelling. Despite the absence of a solid standard, the state of Winnipeg's housing costs can still be assessed on a relative "more or less" basis. When the city's housing prices are analysed using statistics from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, it becomes evident that the situation in Winnipeg is fairly positive (see Table 7). The city possesses one of the lowest levels of housing costs of Canada's major cities. Further, Winnipeg has the second lowest housing costs in all of Western Canada, surpassed only by Regina. Thus, in its own geographical realm, Winnipeg rates quite highly indeed. This is particularly interesting considering the disparate images that Winnipeggers and non-residents seem to hold of this particular facet of the city's quality of life. With Winnipeggers apparently quite aware of their

city's high standing, and outsiders quite oblivious to it, there are strong suggestions that image and perception are at play.

*Canadian Housing Costs: Fourth Quarter, 1997*

CITY	New Housing Starts			Re-sales			Combined	
	Number	Avg. Price	Rank	Number	Avg. Price	Rank	Average	Rank
Victoria	586	319000	2	5388	231145	2	239763	2
Vancouver	5072	509323	1	27484	387891	1	406809	1
Edmonton	2944	157069	13	11566	118204	12	126089	11
Calgary	5862	175901	12	17766	134484	7	144759	6
Saskatoon	635	138107	17	3359	88132	19	96077	19
Regina	362	138616	16	3099	76781	24	83249	24
Winnipeg	838	145455	15	9828	86896	20	91589	20
Thunder Bay	162	183740	8	1458	112723	13	119825	13
Sudbury	300	149387	14	2198	108223	15	113167	15
Windsor	1629	184153	7	5171	121088	10	136196	8
London	804	185768	6	6770	127261	8	133472	9
Kitchener	1339	176444	11	4666	134839	6	144116	7
St. Catharine's-Niagara	663	182840	10	2866	121662	9	133156	10
Hamilton	1472	210247	4	10224	142267	5	150823	5
Toronto	10152	298723	3	55779	198150	3	213636	3
Oshawa	1216	183340	9		N/A		N/A	
Ottawa	1439	189980	5	8648	150087	4	155778	4
Hull	528	127000	20	1766	98239	16	104859	17
Montreal	3781	134492	18	21816	111989	14	115313	14
Trois-Rivieres	229	91000	26	853	75700	25	78938	25
Sherbrooke	309	104800	24	903	84800	23	89899	22
Quebec	1006	96200	25	4767	84867	22	86842	23
Chicoutimi-Jonquiere	237	85021	27	1478	72800	26	74489	26
Saint John	217	113167	22	1152	86875	21	91043	21
Halifax	1578	127500	19	5442	118697	11	120676	12
St. John's	524	117500	23	1915	94142	18	99160	18
Charlottetown	229	123300	21	372	97700	17	107454	16

**Table 7.** Canadian Housing Costs. Fourth Quarter, 1997. Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

**C. Sense of Place**

While Winnipeg's image in terms of housing costs can be deemed alternately positive or non-existent, the city has a fairly well-defined *sense of place* image, both among residents and outsiders.

Sense of place has been the subject of many in-depth studies far larger in scope than this. While an in-depth study of the sense of place associated with Winnipeg would likely be of interest, the far more limited scope undertaken in this study nevertheless did provide an accurate portrayal of the subject.



The first aspect of sense of place discussed, *identity*, manifests itself in the level of commitment and attachment residents have to their city. Because it is thus a more ethereal topic, there are few if any statistical measures which are able to accurately reflect it. Unlike housing costs, for example, attachment cannot be directly measured. By necessity, evidence of the level of identity Winnipeggers have with their city is largely anecdotal, having been gained from interviews and from comments found throughout the other documents analysed.

Another way to portray a sense of attachment is to draw inferences from statistics measuring people's desire to move away from the city. If a population is shown to be unwilling to move, it can be inferred that there is some sense of identity and attachment to the place in question.

Using these sources, it is apparent that Winnipeggers have a fairly strong sense of identity and attachment to their city. Many of the studies revealed that the city's residents were generally satisfied with the quality of life and unwilling to move, though there were differences when the data was broken down demographically. One study, the *Urban Canada Report*, showed that Winnipeggers were no more or less significantly likely to want to move away than citizens of other cities.<sup>84</sup> The level of attachment Winnipeggers thus feel for their city does not appear to be extraordinarily high or shockingly low.

However, there are indications that this attachment actually varies with demographic characteristics. The *Winnipeg Image Study* showed that the level of overall desire to stay in or move from Winnipeg varies with age: the older the resident, the less likely they are to desire a move. For people aged 16-34, only eight percent stated that it would be impossible to get them to move away; of

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<sup>84</sup>Angus Reid Group, *op. cit.*, 22.

those aged 55 or older, 42% felt this way.<sup>85</sup> Some of this may be because the older portion of the population is typically less mobile, not only due to the physical effects of aging, but also because of strong family, friendship and employment connections they may have established in the city. What could not be determined through the research, however, is the exact extent to which this "age effect" contributed to the desire to stay in Winnipeg in comparison to other causes, or whether it was comparable to the situation in other cities.

Interestingly, those with lower levels of income and education also expressed less desire to move. Again, this may be because they were less able to move due to the limitations inherent in their socio-economic status, or in fact because the city was more able to provide for their needs and thus create a level of satisfaction such that they would not want to move. Unfortunately, the research as undertaken was not able to determine which was the case, and any subsequent study should seek to address this problem.

This leads naturally into a discussion of the second aspect of sense of place, *aesthetic sensibility*: what Winnipeg "looks" like; how people react to it, its environment and its people; its reputation. Aesthetic sensibility encompasses those aspects of the city which reveal themselves most quickly to the outsider: the most immediately recognisable traits or widely held beliefs (true or false) about the city. It is this kind of superficial, initial, reactionary feeling which creates non-Winnipeggers' image of the city. Not being intimately familiar with the city, they have a completely different (though equally valid) reaction to it, based on what can be called its aesthetic sensibility. It is this sensibility which in part drives their decision-making processes, and thus for example, may make Winnipeg a difficult city to get people to move to.

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<sup>85</sup>Western Opinion Research Inc., *op. cit.*, 34.

Unfortunately, the combination of analyses of previous studies and interviews was not able to lend anything more than a cursory picture of Winnipeg's aesthetic sensibility. This led to more inferences being made than were otherwise planned for, based on comments from the key informant interviews and from other studies.

If the prevailing attitude towards the city's aesthetic sensibility could be described in one phrase, it would be "cold and cultured." The "cold" aspect pertains to the overwhelming number of references to the city's climate that were revealed in nearly every study, making the city's reputation in the outside world one largely based on weather. This climatic aspect will be explained fully elsewhere, and need not be further expounded upon here. The "cultured" portion stems from the fact that some of the key informants brought out as one of the city's defining features a general regard for the city as a place of some historical significance, but more importantly as a centre of cultural import.

The city apparently possesses a reputation for a healthy and vibrant arts and cultural community as part of its aesthetic sensibility. This is a constant selling point for the city's promotional agencies and an undeniable asset according to the city's leaders. While non-residents may be more familiar with Portage and Main than they are with such things as the Royal Winnipeg Ballet or the city's numerous festivals, these features are still undoubtedly part of Winnipeg's sensibility.

A setting with a strong sense of place would be characterised by an ingrained attachment to the city on the part of its citizens, such that the city had become an integral part of each residents own identity. Outsiders, by virtue of their less intimate experience with the city, would deal with Winnipeg much more superficially. Their sense of place would thus be of a more detached nature and focus much more on the city's aesthetics.

Previously, it was noted that Winnipeggers feel fairly attached to their city, though not at a level that is significantly different than that felt by residents of other cities. *Identity* with the city seemed to be strongest amongst older people, and those with less education and income. A city with a high quality of life and strong sense of place should have a more or less universal feeling of attachment present in its citizens, for this would indicate that the city is able to satisfy the needs of the broadest portion of its population. From the evidence at hand, it would appear that Winnipeggers are not universally attached to their city. The very fact that certain segments of the population find the city less palatable than others, and that the overall level of attachment is not significantly different than that felt in other cities, makes it difficult to say with complete assurance that Winnipeg has an overall positive sense of place. Quite simply, the level of attachment needed to indicate this is not present.

This stance is further supported by the image harboured by non-residents of Winnipeg. Restricted as this sub-image is to aesthetic considerations, the "cold and cultured" sentiments held by outsiders do not completely indicate a high quality of life. One could make the show business argument that "any publicity is good publicity", but the fact that remains is that Winnipeg does not have a very attractive image to the outside world because that image is so focused on climate. The more favourable aspects of Winnipeg's aesthetic sensibility, namely its reputation for a healthy arts and cultural community and its historical legacy, do work to the city's advantage, but on the whole, this aspect of Winnipeg's image falls short of portraying a good quality of life.

The city's arts and cultural community therefore plays a part in its sensibility and helps define the city's sense of place, but it is also important in its own right. In combination with recreational opportunities, the arts and cultural community is

essential to providing for the mental and physical health of Winnipeg's citizens, and thus forms a powerful sub-image of its own.

#### **D. Arts and Recreational Opportunities**

Several aspects of the research were able to provide evidence that Winnipeggers have quite a positive image of their city's arts and recreational opportunities. The *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign (see Table 6) ranked these opportunities as the second most positive aspect of the city. As with other aspects of the city which seem to be viewed favourably, the city's promotional agencies featured Winnipeg's arts and recreation prominently in their materials, indicating a generally positive feeling on their part towards this attribute of Winnipeg.

The fact that Winnipeggers hold their cultural attractions in high regard is further demonstrated by their level of participation. Audiences for these attractions, as a percentage of the total population, rank highly in comparison to other Canadian cities, though the difference is not enormous. The city's cultural and artistic attractions drew audiences which encompassed 51.5% of Winnipeg's population, where other major Canadian cities do not rate above 45%.<sup>86</sup>

The enthusiasm demonstrated in the rates of participation is further reflected in the results of the previously-done studies, though a familiar theme comes into play. When Winnipeggers are asked specifically about arts and recreational opportunities, they rank the attribute fairly highly, lending it a positive image. Thus, in the first portion of the *Winnipeg Image Study*, the city ranked very highly on this attribute in relation to other cities.<sup>87</sup> Yet, in top-of-mind

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<sup>86</sup>Winnipeg 2000. *Winnipeg: Best Cities for Business Submission to The Globe and Mail Report on Business Magazine*. April 1996.

<sup>87</sup>Western Opinion Research Inc., *op. cit.*, 34.

answers, arts and recreational opportunities tended to be ranked quite lowly, matching the pattern that had been discovered for the *housing costs* sub-image (see Table 8).

Non-Winnipeggers were once again relatively less positive in their assessment. While Winnipeg's arts and recreational opportunities are seen as generally positive by non-residents, the level of positive feeling appears to be somewhat lower than that felt by residents of the city. In rankings of Winnipeg's best qualities, arts and recreational opportunities rank highly, but not as highly as other aspects of Winnipeg. (see Table 4) There was also some mention of the city's reputation as an arts and cultural centre to be found in the key informant interviews. The end result is that both of the study's target groups seem to have a generally positive view of the city's arts, cultural and recreational opportunities, though this view varies in intensity.

How does the city of Winnipeg's actual quality-of-life image in relation to arts and recreational opportunities compare with what is to be expected from the indicators? Certainly, the existence of a generally positive image suggests that the city is somewhat able to provide in this area. But relatively independent analyses confirm the view. Once again, one can point to the higher participation rates that Winnipeggers have in these activities compared to other Canadian cities. One can also point to the statistics found in the *Places Rated Almanac*, which rate Winnipeg as fifth among all Canadian cities in regards to arts.<sup>88</sup> That study emphasised that bigger centres tended to have higher ratings for the arts. It is thus not surprising to find Canada's largest centres (Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver) rated ahead of Winnipeg. However, Winnipeg is surpassed only by Calgary when

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<sup>88</sup>Loftus, Geoffrey and David Savageau. *Places Rated Almanac. Your Guide to Finding the Best Places to Live in America*. Fifth edition. New York: Rand McNally, 1997. p. 282.

mid-sized cities are taken into consideration, indicating that the city's arts and cultural quality of life somewhat transcends its size. The recreational aspects of the city are somewhat less favourable. Though both Winnipeggers and non-residents have an evidently positive image of this aspect of the city, the indicators imply that this aspect should not be as strong as the arts component. Certainly, there is no evidence to show that Winnipeg is lacking in recreational opportunities. However, its performance in this area is not as strong as it is in relation to the arts. For example, the *Places Rated Almanac* ranks Winnipeg thirteenth of the twenty-five largest Canadian cities, squarely in the middle of the group. Notably, in this position Winnipeg still ranks in the top third of all 351 cities analysed in that study. Notwithstanding the less than spectacular performance recreationally, the city's evidenced and expected quality-of-life images are fairly congruent with each other in this aspect of the city.

#### **E. Climate**

Each of the previously discussed sub-images or indicators revealed at least some variability within each in terms of intensity of feeling, or in the quality or nature of the images held by the study's target groups. Winnipeg's climate was an exception however, in that it was equally and universally loathed.

For nearly all sources, climate was one of the most mentioned and referred-to aspects of Winnipeg, and they were clear in their appraisals. The interview portion of the *Winnipeg Image Study* saw over ninety percent of respondents mention climate as a negative characteristic of the city (see Table 4). Supplementary information from the key informant interviews also showed that non-Winnipeggers associate Winnipeg with an unwelcoming climate. The inference thus seems to be that for those who live outside of Winnipeg, there

exists a strong association between the city and its climate such that one has come to represent the other. Winnipeg in large part has become its winter.

The city's weather thus appears to be the main cause of disenchantment with the city amongst both non-residents *and* Winnipeggers, for Winnipeggers themselves seem to have no better opinion of the climate. In the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign, which sought only to find out what Winnipeggers were *proud* of, ten percent of the mentions were negative statements about the city's weather (see Table 6). In fact, these negative comments were the third most frequently occurring statement in submissions for the campaign – a campaign designed to solicit positive input.

The overwhelming effect of the weather on the psyche of Winnipeg's residents was borne out in the other previously-done studies as well. For example, the *Winnipeg Image Study* showed that 44% of Winnipeggers thought the weather was the worst thing about living in Winnipeg. No other response was able to garner more than nine percent of the population.<sup>89</sup> The *Urban Canada Report* also saw Winnipeggers ranking their city's climate, and more specifically its winters, as the top-of-mind worst quality of the city, more than doubling the rating of the nearest non-climate response.<sup>90</sup>

The climate is obviously a large and significant source of displeasure amongst both the residents and non-residents of Winnipeg. Despite the opinions expressed by some Winnipeggers that the harsh cold climate is likeable, the vast preponderance of evidence shows the opposite to be true. In this case, there is no discrepancy between the image that this aspect of Winnipeg's quality of life has developed, and that which is to be expected from the real-life indicators of the

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<sup>89</sup>Western Opinion Research Inc., *op. cit.*, 26.

<sup>90</sup>Angus Reid Group, *op. cit.*, 22.



situation. There is legitimate reason for the city to claim the worst climate on the continent. Logic also dictates that strictly on a functional human basis, cold weather is harder to cope with than moderate temperatures. It should thus be no surprise to see no discrepancy between the city's image and its expected image. Simply put, Winnipeg cannot claim to have a good quality of life in relation to its winter climate.

## **F. General Comments**

Through the research process, other aspects of Winnipeg's image arose which did not fit into the study's categorical framework, but bear mentioning nonetheless. While they do not necessarily form part of the ensuing sections of the study, they do help to further fill out the picture and answer the question "What is Winnipeg's quality-of-life image?"

The five categories chosen for analysing Winnipeg's image deal with the city's quality of life, but they do so in a compartmentalised manner. The city's quality of life is seen only on the basis of these indicators, and not as a whole. The research revealed that Winnipeg's quality of life, when spoken of strictly in general terms and not broken down into separate categories, is viewed quite favourably by both residents and non-Winnipeggers. The *Urban Canada Report* showed that 68% of Winnipeggers thought the city a "good place to raise family", with this rating ranking Winnipeg third among the cities studied. Further, over 50% of the respondents in the *Winnipeg Image Study* rated the city as a "good place to live."

Another seemingly significant aspect of Winnipeg's image which does not easily fit into the categorical framework is the perceived friendliness and conviviality of Winnipeg's people. All of the reviewed previous studies, and most of the key informant interviews gave at least some indication that Winnipeg's

people were seen as friendly. The *Urban Canada Report*, the *Winnipeg Image Study*, and the *Proud to Call Winnipeg Home* campaign all listed this trait as the best thing about living in Winnipeg (see Tables 6 and 8). There can thus be no doubt as to the contribution of it towards the city's image.

<i>Winnipeg Image Study: Best Things About Living in Winnipeg</i>	
TRAIT	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WHO CITE TRAIT
friendly and relaxed	19
air/environment	12
size	12
central location	5
arts/culture	5
cost of living	5
jobs	4
social/night life	4
economy	4

**Table 8:** Winnipeg Image Study: Best Things About Living in Winnipeg. From: Winnipeg Image Study, p.25

Taking these general views into account, the demarcation of Winnipeg's overall quality-of-life image that emerges from this study can therefore be summarised in the following way:

On the whole, and based on the gathered evidence, Winnipeg's quality-of-life image appears to be somewhat favourable. It is seen by its residents as "a good place to live", with a populace that is friendly and accommodating to both natives and newcomers. Despite this general attitude of satisfaction with the city, Winnipeggers tend to have a slightly more pessimistic image of their city's economic opportunities than outsiders do. The existence of this negative image seems to indicate a lack of confidence in the city's economic status, which in turn

suggests that the economy is a major source of dissatisfaction amongst Winnipeggers. This is in contrast to the apparent health of the city's economy. Also contributing to dissatisfaction is the city's climate, which is almost unanimously loathed, but which likely has good reason to be so.

On a more positive note, Winnipeg's residents seem to have quite a favourable view of the city's arts and recreational opportunities, its housing costs, and the sense of place that the city seems to create. Again, some interesting discrepancies arise in that Winnipeg's actual quality of life in these areas would suggest far more flattering images.

Non-Winnipeggers' view of Winnipeg seems to hinge on knowledge of the city. On the whole, outsiders seemingly only have strong images of the city's climate, which like that held by Winnipeggers themselves is decidedly negative. The other aspects of quality of life all suffer to some extent from what seems to be a lack of knowledge about the city. Winnipeg is not top-of-mind concerning economic opportunities, and the main view of the city's economy is of stability and averageness. This stability is viewed equivocally by non-residents, as there seems to be no consensus as to whether it is a positive or negative feature.

Winnipeg's image in regard to housing costs are also characterised by lack of knowledge. Housing costs are not a factor at all, as non-residents seem to have little to no knowledge of them. The image is thus non-existent.

Arts and recreational opportunities are the only aspect of Winnipeg's quality of life which are seen as unequivocally positive by non-residents. While the image held by Winnipeggers in this regard is somewhat more flattering, non-residents seem to have a generally positive – though certainly not overwhelming – view of Winnipeg. In fact, the city's reputation for a vibrant arts community, combined with the mythic nature of its climate create the dominant image of Winnipeg's aesthetic sensibility. "Cold and cultured" thus are the two

adjectives which non-residents seem to most readily attach to Winnipeg, and form the basis for many people's top-of-mind reaction to the city.

Finally, the city's climate itself is once again responsible for creating the strongest image among non-Winnipeggers, just as it was for residents of the city. Like their counterparts in Winnipeg, non-residents have a wholeheartedly negative image of Winnipeg's climate.

So is completed the inventory of images people actually hold about Winnipeg, and how these images compare to the reality of Winnipeg's situation. The first research question has thereby been answered. The focus now turns to the second question and why the images in existence do not necessarily correspond with what should be expected.

## Chapter V. THE REASONS WHY

### *Why do these images exist?*

At this stage, it can be said that Winnipeg is represented by a set of images which varies with the residency of the study's target populations. The profile of previously-done studies and the literature on image and quality of life has given a fairly firm indication of what exactly Winnipeg's image is and how this image relates to the city's actual quality of life. Most of this comes from the perspective of the Winnipegger, simply because the existing studies and available material tend to focus on that group. The views of non-residents have thus been somewhat underrepresented.

The key informant interviews were conducted first of all to gauge why the discrepancy between Winnipeg's actual and expected quality-of-life image(s) had come to develop. However, these interviews were also useful in providing a way to address the underrepresentation of the images held by non-Winnipeggers. As key informants, these individuals were keenly aware of the images that Winnipeg presents to the outside world, and so before one can analyse why these images exist, one must briefly add the input of the key informants to the images collected thus far.

In regards to the economic opportunities sub-image, most of the people interviewed for this study concurred with the previously-generated image that Winnipeg was very rarely at the top-of-mind in economic matters. Other Canadian centres seem to take precedence in the minds of economic decision-makers, and the largest task of those who promote Winnipeg seems to be simply making people aware of the city and its features.

The key informant interviews did provide for an interesting contrast with the images generated from the study's other sources. A large number of those who took part in the key informant interviews were involved either in the direct

promotion of Winnipeg as an economic enterprise or in the city's political life. Individuals in these domains are almost duty-bound to speak positively of the city. As a result, their opinion of Winnipeg's economic opportunities was considerably brighter than that of other Winnipeggers.

While the analysis of previously-done studies did not rank housing costs as an absolute top-of-mind answer among the city's positive features, these costs certainly were frequently cited as such by those who took part in the key informant interviews. Roughly half of these respondents mentioned Winnipeg's relatively low cost of housing as a strong point in the city's favour.

Many of those interviewed were to some degree involved in the creation of official city policies, and could thus be termed city "leaders". This group especially showed a high level of enthusiasm for Winnipeg's low housing costs, as further borne out by the frequent use of housing costs as a main selling point by the city's promotional entities. A cursory perusal of materials issued by these agencies finds housing costs commonly mentioned as one of the city's best features. This implies a high opinion about the subject amongst the city's elite, for many of those who have an important role in these promotional agencies can also be considered to be among the city's "leaders".

The key informant interviews were perhaps most beneficial in expanding the image of Winnipeg's sense of place, some of it in contrast to the views obtained from the other aspects of the study. For example, several of the interviewees pointed out that people who were not born in Winnipeg – newcomers – tended to be the most fervently positive about the city, and that those who had experienced living in other cities had a higher appreciation for what Winnipeg had to offer.

This attitude amongst newcomers is further borne out by other statements taken from the key informant interviews that Winnipeg is the most difficult city to

get people to move *from* when the possibility of relocation arises. These same sources also point out that the city is most difficult to get people to move *to*. Winnipeg thus seems to be able to engender a strong sense of attachment in those who choose to locate there, even though there is a strong initial aversion and resistance to the city. The level of attachment implied here stands in some opposition to that obtained from other sources (such as the *Urban Canada Report*) which indicated that Winnipeggers were no more or less likely to want to move than residents of other cities. Once again, this might be explained by the professional bias inherent in the answers given by the selected interview candidates. Other factors may also be at work, but further research would be required to move the possibility of their existence from mere conjecture to reality.

The results of the key informant interviews also produced concurring opinions with those gained from the analyses of the previously-done studies in regards to arts and recreational opportunities, as well as climate.

In fact, the interviews revealed that climate is still the city's most negative factor. Its long harsh winters were mentioned by nearly all those interviewed as a major obstacle to be overcome in getting people to consider the city for relocation or investment. The mere mention of Winnipeg seems to trigger a top-of-mind response in non-residents that consists of images of cold and snow.

However, aside from presenting more evidence to verify the images uncovered elsewhere, these interviews suggested reasons for the development of those very images. It should be noted that these reasons are really just suggestions, for the nature of the topic prevents concrete and irrefutable cause-effect relationships from being proven. One is therefore limited to ascertaining these cause-effect relationships through the use of inferences suggested by the anecdotal and statistical evidence presented.

According to the research, Winnipeg's image is somewhat dualistic. There seems to be substantial evidence for both a negative image and a positive one, depending on whether the target group is residents of Winnipeg or non-residents, and which aspect of the city's quality of life is being studied. The image possessed by most non-Winnipeggers can be characterised as one of indifference towards most aspects of the city's quality of life. That of the city's residents is more accurately described as falling along a continuum which ranges from full-fledged negative feelings to wholehearted approval, with economy and climate being at one end of the scale and the other aspects of quality of life at the other. Since Winnipeggers are quite satisfied with most aspects of their city's quality of life, it is perhaps prudent to begin this portion of the study with an analysis of why negative images have arisen for the city's economy and climate, as these seem to be the main sources of dissatisfaction amongst Winnipeggers.

The development of Winnipeg's negative economic image is attributable to a number of factors. One of the most compelling possible reasons is the impact of the city's history. Present-day Winnipeg is a city of secondary importance in Canada. The country is dominated demographically by the large centres of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Because of the impact of these larger cities on the country's economic and political landscape, other smaller cities such as Winnipeg thus almost naturally tend to be seen in a somewhat lesser light.

Despite this, there seems to be genuine dismay among the population that Winnipeg is not considered "top of mind" in reference to economic opportunities. Perhaps this attitude is common to citizens of other towns as well, an indication of boosteristic feelings present in every resident which lead to an expectation of greater status than should normally be the case. However, the history of Winnipeg shows that for the most part, the city has always been regarded as subordinate. In its early days it was never more than an isolated outpost. Even



after its hectic boom period at the turn of the century, it devolved into a city whose importance was restricted primarily to its immediate region. It can thus be argued that except for its boom period, the city has never really had a good image economically.

Taking into consideration this history, it should come as no surprise to find today's Winnipeg faced with a less than vibrant image regarding its economic opportunities. It is not a "top of mind" city because it rarely ever has been. Other justifications for the city not being "top of mind" come from other fronts as well. Several of those interviewed in the key informant interview portion of the study expressed the view that Winnipeg should not expect to be a "top of mind" city because in a larger context it really is not significant. Cities in the 700,000 population range are quite numerous in a North American context, and even more so in a global context. Even within Canada, there are a number of cities of Winnipeg's size, all of them important essentially only on a regional scale. Their economic influence does not spread outside of their immediate geographical area or region, and the larger the purview, the less significant they become. A city such as Winnipeg, though it has great importance in Manitoba or even in Western Canada, thus does not have a "top of mind" image in these larger contexts because its size and level of influence do not really merit it.

The above reasoning applies largely to the image of Winnipeg in the eyes of non-residents. Winnipeggers themselves see their city's economy as more purely negative. One cause for this is what has been identified by many as an inferiority complex. The existence of this complex is claimed by many of Winnipeg's citizens, especially those who are members of the popular media and by many of the city's leaders. These people claim that Winnipeggers instinctively denigrate their city, or automatically regard it as lesser in comparison to other cities. While the existence of this inferiority complex is highly contentious and by

no means a certainty, the very fact that some claim it exists is worthy of some further inquiry. This is especially true considering that Winnipeg's economy actually performs quite well, (see Table 5) and would naturally lead one to believe that Winnipeggers be quite proud of their city.

There are some indications that an inferiority complex may indeed be present. It was revealed in a previous section that newcomers to the city are more fervently positive about Winnipeg than longtime residents are. As newcomers to the city, they would not have been subjected to any hypothetical forces that would create an inferiority complex in long-term Winnipeggers. In a sense they would be immune to the phenomenon. The positive attitude possessed by newcomers therefore suggests that there is something about long-term residency in Winnipeg that may cause the city's residents to view the city more skeptically. It may very well be the fabled inferiority complex which causes this attitude. Admittedly, the evidence is far from overwhelming and is merely suggestive at best, but still provides a stimulating basis for further inquiry.

Other factors, alluded to earlier, may also be at play in this scenario. Newcomers may view the city more positively simply due to their detachment from everyday life in Winnipeg. The literature on image is rife with references to the distinctive experiences borne by those familiar with a place and those who are not. These two groups value Winnipeg differently, imbuing it with different levels of meaning and significance which logically translate into different images of the city. Winnipeggers may view their city's economy more negatively because its good standing is much more significant to them than it would be to a non-resident. Winnipeggers would be much more concerned about the health of their economy than a citizen of another city would be, and thus any perceived poor economic performance would be that much more affective to them.

Another explanation for why Winnipeg's economic image is less than stellar is the larger societal context in which the city and Western society in general finds itself. Though boosterism as it was practised 100 years ago has virtually ceased to exist, the principles upon which it thrived linger on. As in the days of uninhibited boosterism, cities and towns still have their success judged largely by the level and consistency of their growth. Western society generally follows the credo that a city must continually grow in order to survive. Bigger is often seen as better. City leaders revel in booming population figures. Every new subdivision on the outskirts of town is seen as continuing progress. Cities with greater rates of growth are looked at with envy. The obvious implication is that a city which is growing is healthier than a city which is not. Likewise, a city with a high growth rate is healthier than one with a more modest growth rate.

Of course this is a generalisation, and while growth is definitely not a bad thing in itself, it does bring with it certain problems that are sometimes overlooked by those enamoured with the idea. Influxes of people create higher demands on city governments for land, infrastructure, housing, and other public services. This demand is often difficult to meet, and strains the ability of the city to provide levels of service adequate enough to serve people's needs. Bigger cities also have more impact on the surrounding environment. Cities which are *not* growing also have their own set of problems such as decreasing tax bases and stagnant or declining markets for products which make it a less attractive city to invest in. What should be noted is that cities must deal with problems regardless of their level of growth, and should therefore not be judged merely on that basis. Growth is not intrinsically good; nor does it guarantee the onset of a myriad of problems.

Winnipeg has not been a booming city since its heyday at the turn of the century. Since then, its growth has been steady though unspectacular. Other cities have passed Winnipeg in terms of size and economic influence, and because

of the emphasis placed on growth, Winnipeg is now often seen in a lesser light than those cities. This is unjustified, for the city's economy compares relatively well with other Canadian cities. Its unemployment rate is low, and it has one of the most diversified economies in the country.

In addition, Winnipeg's slow growth traits are viewed positively by some entrepreneurs. As mentioned in a previous section, some view the stable, assured market engendered by a slow, steady growth rate as an advantage in Winnipeg's favour. Other entrepreneurs prefer rapidly-growing markets. By virtue of the fact that investors can prefer either stable or burgeoning markets, the notion that the economic health of a city can be determined from its level of growth is invalidated.

So far, it has been solely Winnipeg's economic image which has been dealt with, as it was one of the most negatively-viewed amongst those studied. The other aspect of Winnipeg which was most negatively viewed was the climate. Fortunately, there is a simple explanation for this situation. Quite simply, Winnipeg's climate is seen in a poor light because its winters are undeniably cold, bitter and uncomfortable. In the 1997 edition of the *Places Rated Almanac*, Winnipeg's climate was ranked last of all 351 North American cities ranked. The city's average temperature is the lowest of Canada's major cities. There is thus little doubt that Winnipeg possesses a climate that is inhospitable. Still, the city's climate does not differ significantly from that of other cities on the Prairies. One cannot say that Winnipeg is far colder than any other city, yet its climatic image has grown to near mythic proportions.

Perhaps this is because Winnipeggers themselves wear the harsh climate as a badge of pride. This has been suggested by some of the subjects of the key informant interviews and in various articles and columns. Being able to cope with a climate that is viewed by nearly everyone as the epitome of the harsh winter has

fostered in Winnipeggers a sense of self-respect about the climate. They are proud and resentful of it at the same time, as evidenced by the following quote:

*"And where would we be without the cold? Our cold is ours; we own it. It's communally held like a branch of mythology. It's the best and biggest and deepest cold there is... Our cold transforms us into joyful martyrs... drives us into the sympathetic spaces of theatres and concert halls, bars and restaurants, where we can huddle together and talk about the coldness of the cold, the persistence of the cold, the existential dimensions of the cold..."*

*Carol Shields, "Homing in on Winnipeg", from Canadian Living, August 1992. p. 62*

The attention focused on the city's economy and climate may lead one to think that the city is viewed in a predominantly negative light. This is not the case. As has been shown, Winnipeggers for the most part are quite satisfied with the quality of life in their city and the result is that its image is mostly favourable to its citizens.

The reasons for the existence of these positive images is tied to the framework presented in an earlier section of the paper which claimed that image and quality of life are directly related through the Good City concept. If a city is able to provide for the needs of its citizens, not only do its citizens experience a good quality of life, but by satisfying those needs, the city can also be considered a "good city." The image of the city in turn develops into a positive one. The evidence presented previously shows that Winnipeggers have a predominantly favourable image, though there are certainly areas of concern. These areas of concern are such that they prevent Winnipeg from being considered fully a "good city", but the positive aspects of the city's quality of life obviously point to an

ability for Winnipeg to provide for its citizens – at least in these limited areas. The resultant positive images thus arise out of the ability to satisfy these needs.

There are other reasons for the development of Winnipeg's image, all largely related to the nature of image itself. As seen in the literature, familiarity with a place tends to create deeper feelings of place attachment. Logically, the longer amount of time spent in a place, the more opportunity there is for significant life events to become attached and entwined with the place in which they occurred. In this way, place takes on special meaning and becomes part of a person's identity. The positive view that Winnipeggers have of their city is due in part to this phenomenon. Their sheer familiarity with Winnipeg means that they have been subject to experiences which have deep personal meaning to them – experiences which outsiders simply do not have as much access to because of time and the nature of their interaction with the city.

In fact, much of the difference in images between outsiders and natives and also between the sub-images can simply be accounted for by the varying values, attitudes and experiences that are inherent in each. Image is ultimately shaped by the characteristics present in each segment of society, and because these can vary so widely, it is no surprise that there exist differing images of a single place. Though it may be a simple conclusion, it is nonetheless correct that Winnipeg's image, at the core, is the embodiment of what society has chosen to value and what it has not. Changing its image may thus prove to be a formidable task.

## Chapter VI. CONCLUSION

*What can planners do to bridge the gap between Winnipeg's image and expectations?*

This study began as an inquiry into image. It sought to explain why certain cities became saddled with negative images, and why the same city could be perceived differently by varying groups of people. It also attempted to bring out the importance of image to a city by relating its influence on people's behaviour and on planning. All this was done using Winnipeg as a specific target of the analysis, focusing on that city's image as an example of the above. Were the expectations of the study reached?

Firstly, it was expected that there would arise a variety of images, with residents of the city taking one view of Winnipeg and non-residents another. This indeed proved to be the case, and helped to demonstrate the power of perception. The same city was viewed quite differently by different groups of people. The various environmental, social and psychological traits associated with Winnipeg, through their influence on human perception and hence the image, lead to contrasting images of the city. Granted, the inputs that create the image of Winnipeg in the human mind were not necessarily identical for the two target study groups. Residents and outsiders can experience a city in very dissimilar ways. It is somewhat akin to the old fable about the blind men and the elephant. In trying to identify the animal before them, each blind man touches a different part of the elephant, with the result being that each blind man thinks they have before them a completely different animal, yet no one guesses that the animal is an elephant. They all have touched the same animal, but because they dealt with different parts of it, their conceptions of what the animal before them was were completely different. So it is with the city. Every one who experiences Winnipeg

is a blind man, with Winnipeg playing the role of the elephant. It is thus no surprise at all that the existence of a variation in images was proven.

Also proven was that the city's image was unexpectedly good, especially amongst Winnipeggers themselves. There was enough evidence to suggest that at least in some senses Winnipeg could be considered a "good city" because of its perceived ability to provide for the needs of its citizens and create a good quality of life. This fact is somewhat useful in forming a counterpoint to the more negative image held by outsiders, an image which appears to be largely based on unfamiliarity with the city. Those most familiar with the city, namely Winnipeggers themselves, generally approve of their city, especially when taken from a holistic viewpoint. It is only when the city's image is broken down into specific categories that its weaknesses begin to show through.

However, the existence of these negative aspects of Winnipeg's image cannot be ignored. While Winnipeggers on a general level are satisfied, those facets of the city which are seen in a negative light (economy and climate) need to be addressed because of their stature. The city's economy is the engine by which most of the rest of city life is powered and as such, Winnipeg's economic image is key to its continued health. Climate on the other hand, is important because of the sheer weight of its reputation. The city's climate has almost become synonymous with Winnipeg, and a reference to the city is rare that does not also refer to its climate.

Winnipeg therefore has some aspects of its quality-of-life image which require change or improvement. These images, like others, are formed by a succession of perceptions and filtered messages, which over time coalesce into the resultant image of a particular phenomenon. Any stimulus in the perceived environment results in a message being delivered to an individual. Changing the



image thus involves introducing new messages which challenge, contradict or give new insight into the existing image.<sup>91</sup>

A message, once perceived, can affect an image in several ways. If the target image is particularly strong, the message may be ignored or be rendered ineffectual. Messages may also end up strengthening an existing image. Much also depends upon the values and traits of those holding the image. It is these values and traits, acting as filters for perception, which have helped to form the existing image. Therefore, facilitating a change in an image may require the altering of some of these traits or values.

Taking this into account, what should the image-changing messages be, and how should they be delivered? Answering these questions is essential, for doing so not only clarifies which actions are the most appropriate to remedy the situation, but also more clearly defines what role the planner can play in guiding these changes.

Attention will first be paid to Winnipeg's *economic opportunities* image, as this is one of the most maligned aspects of the city. In seeking to improve Winnipeg's economic image, it must be remembered that the city's actual economic standing does not seem to be in as bad a state as the image of the economy. Because the reality is sound, the core of the problem is thus mainly perceptual. For some of the reasons discussed previously, the more promising reality of Winnipeg's economic situation is not resulting in a correspondingly positive image.

Improving Winnipeg's economic image, and thus the image of its quality of life as a whole, centres once again on the concept of needs. Throughout this paper, it has been maintained that images are formed initially by people's

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<sup>91</sup>Boulding, *op. cit.*, 7-11.

perceived reaction to how well the city is able to provide for their needs. Negative images stem from people believing that the city is not providing for them in a particular sphere. Winnipeggers, despite the apparent health of their city's economy, thus do not believe that the city is proficient enough at providing for them economically. It is this perception that must be changed.

The type of message that would be most effective in this case is a repetitive one. It is precisely the fact that Winnipeg's economy is fairly healthy that should be relayed to the population – not by way of expensive advertising campaigns – but by continued good economic performances. By continually being exposed to the hard fact that their city is performing well economically, the population will be faced with a bombardment of messages which conflict with their current image, and therefore will hopefully encourage change.

The exposure to these messages should be passive and not deliberate. In other words, the facts should be allowed to speak for themselves, with no person or group seeking to "sell" Winnipeg based on its economic performance. Rather, the city's performance should be related matter-of-factly and in as pure a form as possible, with little to no intervention from city agencies. Independent or quasi-independent appraisals of the city's economy (and other facets of quality of life for that matter) undertaken by Statistics Canada, private pollsters or others would be disseminated by local newspapers, electronic media, and by word-of-mouth – just like any other news story or release. The work of disseminating this information would be done simply as a matter of course for these groups, the story of Winnipeg's economic achievements being reported for its sheer newsworthiness.

In this way, the information will be relayed to the public as factual information, and not as part of an advertising campaign which carries with it some negative connotations. Advertisements are designed to sell, and because of this,

do not always focus on the actual conditions which must be changed. Often they are attempts at *convincing* people something is good (regardless of the actual state), rather than showing them that it *is* in fact good. Because of this, they are often burdened by their own negative images, being generically viewed as tamperings with the truth. By using the more passive approach, all this is avoided, and the good standing of Winnipeg's economy is made known.

It may initially appear that this approach amounts to doing nothing other than letting media outlets do what is expected of them. However, this is only an illusion, for a deliberate effort is indeed required to ensure that Winnipeg continues to perform well economically, thereby assuring an adequate supply of positive news to be reported. This is not an easy or simple task, and the complete means for creating these conditions are too involved to be within the scope of this paper. Even so, considering that the current economic reality in Winnipeg is not grave, recommending that current policies be maintained is not a poor course of action, provided that these policies continue to achieve positive results.

By using a repetitive approach, it is hoped that the chances of the image itself being revised will increase. The time necessary to achieve this goal will depend on how deeply entrenched and how resistive to change the current image is. Evidence from the research conducted indicates that the negative economic image is fairly strong, judging by its longevity and its stature as one of the most top-of-mind negative aspects of Winnipeg. However, the image was formed over a long period of time, and may therefore require a correspondingly long amount of time to alter.

One arena where an advertising campaign may in fact work is in reference to non-Winnipeggers. Since the most prevalent trait of non-Winnipeggers was lack of knowledge about the city, then a campaign designed to inform people about it may serve to address the problem. Further, an environment which sees

cities competing with each other to attract people and investment demands that some action be taken to keep the city visible. In some senses, Winnipeg cannot afford to stand by while other cities market themselves to opportunity seekers. Thus, a subtle advertising campaign, focusing on the strengths of Winnipeg brought out by this study, may be able to inform more non-Winnipeggers about the virtues of the city. Again, the campaign should let the facts speak for themselves as much as possible to avoid the appearance of the "hard sell."

Repetition of a message in the manner described above (with respect to Winnipeggers themselves) is one method of altering an image. Another is to provide strong, convincing messages whose effectiveness is due to their intensity. This course of action may be necessary for altering Winnipeg's climatic image. The city's climate is easily its most reviled aspect, with good reason. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that nothing can realistically be done to change the weather. Changing this sub-image thus would once again involve altering the perception of the phenomenon rather than the phenomenon itself. People would need to be convinced that Winnipeg's winters, the main source of discontent, are something to be celebrated and thought of positively. This may already be happening to a certain extent in the reported "pride" that Winnipeggers seem to possess in regard to their ability to survive the winter. As well, the city itself has sought to alter perceptions by calling itself the "Christmas Capital of Canada" and trying other initiatives to make winters more palatable.

The strength and intensity of the city's climatic image demand that any attempt to change the image be just as intense and strong. However, the fact that weather is largely outside human control, and that the negative image is so powerful and heavily ensconced may mean that any attempt to alter this image will have its success in doubt. The depth of effort required to achieve the goal may be too exacting to ensure full success.

Despite the apparent intractability of Winnipeg's climatic image, the study did reveal that there was sufficient cause for optimism in relation to other aspects of the city. This was somewhat of a revelation in comparison to the feelings that characterised the early stages of the study. In those initial stages, it was assumed that the city's quality-of-life images were homogeneously either negative or positive. By breaking down the analysis into sub-categories, it was found that there were aspects of the city's quality of life that were viewed positively. This is a key discovery, for the differentiation between the negative and positive allows one to pinpoint exactly which aspects of the city's quality of life image need attention and which do not.

Winnipeg therefore has strengths from which to build. Its image in terms of arts and recreational opportunities, sense of place, and housing costs, while not overwhelmingly positive are solid enough to create a basis for a strong overall image for the city. What needs to be done is to address the city's weaker points. Some suggestions have been put forth here, but the development of a full program to improve these aspects of the city's image depends on further studies, inspired by this one, which are able to look at each aspect of Winnipeg's quality-of-life image more fully.

Implicit in the entire exercise was the notion that image matters. The paper was partly a response to the attitude expressed by some that image is something flighty and inconsequential, and essentially irrelevant in relation to reality. It sought to bring out the importance and significance of image, and demonstrate the implications it could have on a city, its citizens and its everyday quality of life. While it was soon discovered that the nature of the topic would prevent absolute proof from emerging, the evidence brought forth from the research was enough to suggest to this researcher that image plays a far larger role in the life of a city than the doubters would care to admit. It is hoped that this paper will provide the

impetus for others to continue the search for conclusive evidence of the link between image and behaviour. This, coupled with the knowledge of what the city has in its favour, will be essential to creating a program which will overcome the perceptual obstacles which with Winnipeg is faced.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of Key Informant Interview Material

## APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW MATERIAL

### *Interview Guide*

1. Greeting
2. Ask if information fax was received, and if candidate has any questions about it.
3. Ask if candidate has read statements of Confidentiality & Access to Information, and if they agree to them.

#### PART I

1. Give me a one-word or one-sentence description of Winnipeg.
2. Describe Winnipeg to a friend.
3. What would you say is "good" or "bad" about Winnipeg?
4. How long have you been a resident of Winnipeg?
5. Why did you come to Winnipeg? Have you ever left? Why? (if appropriate)

#### PART II

6. In your experience, what one word or sentence do you think other Winnipeggers typically use to describe Winnipeg?
7. Referring specifically to people who don't live in Winnipeg, how do you think they tend to view Winnipeg?
8. Why do you think people feel that way? (to either or both of Q. 6 or 7)
9. What kind of image do you feel you are fighting against, if any? What do you feel works in Winnipeg's favour?

#### END:

1. Notify the candidate the interview is over.
2. THANKS. Thank the candidate for their co-operation and tell them they were informative.
3. Ask if they know anyone else who might be of help.

## Summary of Responses & Respondents

<u>Category of Respondent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Businessperson/Entrepreneur:	9
Community/Volunteer Organisation:	4
Public Official/Civic Agency:	7
Other:	<u>3</u>
Total	23

Summary of Responses:<sup>1</sup>

### **Businessperson/Entrepreneur:**

Respondent 1

6. "ideal place to live"

7. being on the side of the fence that isn't as green

8a. four seasons; access to many natural areas

8b. not exactly seen as a vibrant city slightly behind the times and step behind the other power centres; the city's relatively small size

9. (for) geographic location; central time zone; affordability: the cost of doing business and cost of living is lower than the rest of Canada; cultural features are its strong selling points.

(against) dealing with the small size of city; lack of vibrancy or at least the perception of it as growth is slower than other cities

Respondent 2

6. high quality of life

7. cold and snowy

8a. excellent cultural amenities; affordability; combination of big-city treats and small-town values; the best of both worlds

8b. it *is* cold and snowy, though not as bad as some seem to think

9. (for) affordability; steadiness of the economy; low business start-up costs; low housing costs; image among businesspeople actually quite good

(against) taxes simply too high compared to other cities; climate is big obstacle to overcome

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<sup>1</sup>The questions in Part I of the interview guide were no longer used after the first four interviews, as they were deemed superfluous. As a result, only responses to Part II of the guide were recorded.

Respondent 3

6. good place to raise family

7. cold

8a. low crime; strong family ties; friendly, volunteer-spirited people; excellent educational opportunities

8b. people see city as cold because it is cold

9. (for) good family environment; affordability (low cost of living and housing); good summertime weather; location at geographic centre of continent creates a lot of opportunity: Winnport, trans-continental highway; good overall entrepreneurial environment

(against) cold climate; lack of knowledge about city; view of economy as stagnant

Respondent 4

6. liveable

7. steady

8a. Winnipeg is the typically Canadian city; unsure of itself but full of potential, though not currently a business centre

9. (for) central location; workforce is educated and experienced; city is also an attractive place to live/raise family; cultural attractions (e.g. Royal Winnipeg Ballet) are world-class; proximity to lakes, forests nearby

(against) attitude of city's own businesspeople that city can't be centre of business outside of Manitoba and illusion of isolation from outside world which no longer holds

Respondent 5

6. Winnipeg is the best place to live in Canada

7. cold - though only for Easterners. those in Western Canada seem less concerned with cold

8a. high quality of life; business environment makes doing business in city easy; city has a little bit of everything - arts community, health research, diversified economy (one of city's greatest strengths)

8b. it *is* cold; though the complaint comes mainly from Easterners; those in Western Canada seem less concerned with the cold

9 (against) Winnipeg has to fight against its own people who seem to be their own worst enemy; often complain more about the city than anyone else; the cold is something that should be celebrated - no sense in creating an image that is artificial. If cold winters are what Winnipeg is about, then that should be turned to our advantage - need to change people's attitude about Winnipeg, not change Winnipeg to make people happy

(for) winter (as above); arts community; health industry; its history; the quality of life is unsurpassed

Respondent 6

6. quality of life

7. cold/weather

8a. excellent place to raise family; housing rates are low, and the city has an excellent educational system

8b. its obviously cold

9 (for) Winnipeg is a challenge - if you can make it here you can make it anywhere; maybe because weather is a character-building experience that creates determined, tough people; city also has a friendly atmosphere; Portage and Main is the historical centre of Western Canada

(against) tough market scares off those who would rather invest in high-growth areas; also makes Winnipeg less attractive

Respondent 7

6. community-minded

7. cold

8a. history of social activism and the concern for society have bound strong social values into today's community

8b. it *is* cold, but with a warm heart

9. (for) generally low cost of living; attitude of people; every city has its strong and weak points; Winnipeg is not usually seen as one of the country's economic hotspots, but the people and the attitude are there for an entrepreneur to have success.

9 (against) most of the city's negatives are superficial and can be easily overcome; climate for example, scares some people off, but doesn't change the city's stronger points

Respondent 8

6. home

7. bad weather

8a. city possesses a good quality of life; crime may be a little high, but other factors outweigh it - housing, education system, pace of life

8b. the weather is bad, but usually not a big deal with investment/relocation decisions - these are influenced more by economic factors, which Winnipeg has in its favour

9 (for) quality of life factors, and the city's economic factors - city has evolved to the point where it is a healthy entrepreneurial environment

9 (against) not top-of-mind in business considerations, which is to be expected for a city of Winnipeg's size

Respondent 9

6. good place to live

7. "Winnipeg" in a derisive tone

8a. affordability: housing, rent and facilities are all affordable; proximity to natural amenities such as the rivers and lakes; friendliness of people and their willingness to help their fellow man

8b. most people know very little about city; what they do know is influenced by media reports of crime and cold and they tend to fixate on those aspects of the city; people tend to look for more favourable cities

9 (for) affordability - low cost of living; physical environment; the fact that most know little about the area leaves the "place to ourselves"; attitude of people

9 (against) cold, lack of positive media attention

## **Community/Volunteer Organisation:**

### Respondent 1

6. great place to live

7. out of the way

8a. because it is! friendliness of people gives city a small town feeling; creates an environment where it is easy to make connections and feel part of the city

8b. isolated; Winnipeggers are on their own to some extent; tends to make them conservative and slow to accept change; city is never at the leading edge

9 (against) isolated mentality makes it tough to compete sometimes with other cities; the cold maybe also contributes to isolation - "hunkering down" effect; cold certainly scares people in other parts of Canada off.

9. (for) friendliness of people; conservative nature of people helps maintain its link to past because people are less willing to accept change for change's sake; friendly environment brings out the best in people to succeed.

### Respondent 2

6. "home" in a generic, warm, fuzzy kind of way

7. sleepy

8a. not sure *exactly* why, but the city's quality of life likely has something to do with it. There is a lot to like about living in Winnipeg: general friendliness of the place, seems to inspire strong connections with the city.

8b. city is off the beaten track: not much growth happening and it is not that big a city, so there is not much reason for it to make news. The only time it seems to make news is when something bad happens like crime or the flood.

9 (for) the spirit of the people makes it a friendly, homey kind of place; its reputation for a good quality of life

9 (against) crime; winter; perception of the town as stagnant

### Respondent 3

6. community

7. full of spirit

8a. people of Winnipeg are very supportive of each other; community means a lot to them: the reaction to the flood and the Jets rally, level of volunteerism found in town proves they are a dedicated group

8b. those same events (as described above) got national coverage and showed everyone else what Winnipeggers always knew

9. (for) obviously the spirit of the people: gives strength to make other parts of the city work; nothing that can't really be done if Winnipeggers set their mind to it

9. (against) sometimes, others only hear the bad about Winnipeg and tend to focus on it: economy, crime. City needs to emphasise the many positives it has



Respondent 4

6. vibrant

7. cold and snowy

8a. city is so diverse: many cultures are present; varied arts and cultural community; restaurants; quality of life

8b. climate is a problem in winter; people who don't live here don't realize how good the summers are

9. (for) diversity; number of different festivals which take place year-round; everybody is included; community spirit; the people of Winnipeg are our most important resource

9. (against) people's perception of winter - causes many people to overlook the city; the economy is probably not as strong as it could be; crime is becoming a bigger problem.

## **Public Official/Civic Agency:**

### Respondent 1

6. "a great place to be"

7. Portage and Main or cold is all that people seem to know

8a. one of the most affordable housing price structures in Canada; access to natural areas (lakes); culture: variety of restaurants; small commute times; cost of living in general

8b. to be expected (kind of) - Winnipeg does not have the glitz or size of other cities, and is victim of its climate and geography

9. (for) quality of life is unsurpassed; pace of life is slower than more glitzy places; strong cultural tradition; people are more willing to help one another; kind of city which really "grows" on people

(against) economy is seen as depressed even though it isn't; the type of city which must be experienced to be appreciated; its negative points tend to scare people off from experiencing it

### Respondent 2

6. great city

7. in Western Canada, there is a positive feeling; in Eastern Canada, city is snubbed and has negative perception

8a. most people who live here like the city; its quality of life satisfies people no matter what; cost of housing; amenities - sports and cultural

8b. Winnipeg winters; city's small size; not top-of-mind; negative perception also due to elitist type of attitude in East

9. (for) location in Central time zone; housing and utility costs; arts and cultural community; reorganising of the city government; clean air; good neighbourhoods; "best kept secret in Canada"

9. (against) property tax levels - high level without a resource base; winters; Winnipeggers are their own worst enemies

### Respondent 3

6. life here is better than most people think

7. cold

8a. town is somewhat forgotten; pushed aside in people's minds by other cities which get more attention; town doesn't have as brash an attitude as other cities - tend not to "toot own horn"; keeps people from seeing city as great as its own citizens do

8b. cold - what can you do?

9. (for) slow and steady growth - no boom/bust cycle; unwillingness of people to leave city once settled and familiar - commitment - creates excellent atmosphere; community spirit

9. (against) cold, but there is not much that can be done; lack of positive exposure in national media; Winnipeg is a well-kept secret and people tend to go elsewhere

Respondent 4

- 6. Winnipeg is its people (grit and determination)
- 7. "Winnipeg" in an unfavourable tone
- 8a. Winnipeggers have spirit and mettle, as demonstrated during the flood
- 8b. winter is primary reason for people not wanting to come to Winnipeg; tends to affect people's thoughts of city
- 9 (against) climate, overwhelmingly so
- 9 (for) ability to change winter from a negative to a positive - emphasise city as a winter playground; transport link - Central time zone and location used to form part of a "trade corridor"; arts and culture - multitude of cultural groups in city help in dealing with international markets; tough market - good training ground for executives; volunteer base without parallel

Respondent 5

- 6. multi-dimensional
- 8a. it has a large number of advantages. The arts community is one of the strongest in the country. It also has a rich history that is lacking in other cities, especially in Western Canada.
- 7. cold. But also seen as a historical centre, though not to the extent that it could be.
- 8b. bad public relations, lack of advertising, especially in regards to tourism. Winnipeg can be a larger attraction than it is with the proper campaign.
- 9. (against) lack of knowledge people possess of the city is the problem. The positive features are here if more people were made aware of them. Not enough work is done to sell the good things about Winnipeg.

Respondent 6

- 6. community-minded
- 7. less favourable
- 8a. spirit of community; real willingness to help out
- 8b. the weather; isolation from other major centres
- 9. hardest city to get people to move to; perceptions are changed when people actually experience or visit the city; then city becomes hardest to get people to move away from; biggest boosters of city are those who have moved to city, not those who have lived there their whole life

Respondent 7

- 6. great quality of life
- 7. stagnant and cold
- 8a. low housing costs; beauty of its natural environment (rivers, elms (except for the canker worms), warm summers); friendliness of people
- 8b. economy is not really a problem, but is seen that way by others; not that many housing starts in comparison to other cities seen as a sign of a poor economy - that is changing because the economy is really improving: Manitoba has one of the fastest growing economies in the country; climate also always a problem with Winnipeg.

9 (against) the climate, especially in winter; property taxes are high compared to areas outside city and makes it difficult keeping people in the city;

(for) low cost of housing; overall image of the city's quality of life makes it attractive to those who are willing to look past the problems with climate; everyone who has ever come here has been more than satisfied with the quality of life here.

## **Other:**

### Respondent 1

6. uncompetitive

7. cold

8a. high taxes; low number of housing starts; slow growth economy - growth has not happened since Panama Canal according to some; perception of high crime; some media factors, pleading guilty himself to whining about the cold

8b. climate is not idyllic; Winnipeggers themselves tend to complain, why expect different from others

9 (for) city has lots of resources; cultural strengths; quality of life factors; preservation of old buildings in Exchange District has happened because of slow growth - something to be said for slow growth

9 (against) people tend to fly over Winnipeg when conducting business in Western Canada, heading to Calgary or Edmonton instead; brain drain of young professionals to other parts of country and the States

### Respondent 2

6. good place to live, but not as good as other places

7. cold

8a. inferiority complex; Winnipeggers seem to have a misplaced sense that the city is not as good as other places; a fragile psyche

8b. weather is cold, just like most Canadian cities - no great mystery

9 (for) quality of life: restaurants, arts and culture; city has good reason to feel good about itself

9 (against) not exactly top-of-mind in citizens of other cities,

### Respondent 3

6. good place to live

7. cold

8a. has all the amenities; low cost housing; healthy physical environment

8b. Winnipeg's climate is just as cold as the rest of the country, but the winter seems to have taken on a life of its own - maybe because Winnipeggers complain so much and have made it a badge of honour; Winnipeggers are hardest on themselves - new arrivals are most enthusiastic about living in the city

9 (for) excellent quality of life; arts and cultural facilities like the ballet and theatre - among the best in the world for a city its size

9 (against) attitude of Winnipeggers; there seems to be an inferiority complex; media portrayals of crime in city are not flattering; winter's image