

## **II. BOUNDARIES - THEORY AND HISTORY**

### **1. THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries can be merely lines drawn on a map with no obvious reason for their location or they can be natural physiographic boundaries such as rivers, lakes and mountains. Humans and animals are very territorial and in the absence of natural boundaries they create their own. They outline their space in gradations of sensitivity depending upon the purpose and importance of that space. Generally, we are most conscious of territory that is defined for family or financial reasons. Because they relate to our most precious possessions, our children, schools and school division boundaries are among the most sensitive in our society.

The best and most obvious boundary is known as the physiographic political boundary. These are created when physical features such as rivers, lakes, mountains or the oceans coincide with cultural distinctions. The Pyrenees Mountains separating France and Spain are a good example. Some boundaries can be in this category even if they are not clearly defined physiographic boundaries. They are reinforced and stabilized by acting as functional boundaries definitively separating two cultural groups.

Contrary to most people's perceptions, state boundaries change surprisingly often. In Europe only four boundaries have lasted more than one hundred years. These are 1. France/Spain; 2. Switzerland; 3. Portugal/Spain; 4. Netherlands. All are physiographic political boundaries that have successfully separated people very effectively in the past. Today's engineering capabilities including the construction of roads, passes through mountains and technological connections diminish the physical boundaries. They remain effective because their long time existence has resulted in distinctive cultural divisions.

In Western Canada the most notable boundary is the 49th parallel separating us from the United States. This is certainly not a natural boundary. Were it not for the Customs Offices and road signs, one would never realize that a very important cultural boundary was being crossed.

Within the Western provinces, the Rocky Mountains are a distinctive natural boundary and form the southern portion of the provincial boundary between Alberta and British Columbia. The boundary between Manitoba and Saskatchewan has no natural distinctions. It is noticeable

because of signs on the major highways indicating passage from one province to another. Within Manitoba we have some major rivers and several large fresh water lakes which form natural boundaries. In earlier years ferries were the only means for crossing the rivers which were formidable barriers. Extensive bridge construction has reduced this problem in the last fifty years.

### GENERAL BOUNDARY CLASSIFICATIONS

In order to understand school division boundaries in Manitoba it is essential to know about two general classifications of boundaries, genetic and legal. There are other classifications such as morphologic or geometric, but they relate more to physical characteristics of boundaries. The Commission is concerned about how boundaries are drawn, however, the greater concern is how the boundaries work and influence the lives of people. Lines drawn for administrative purposes should not become lines that separate people. Lines drawn to make society work should not become hindrances to communication and learning. School district boundaries should exist simply to make the system manageable and thus more effective in achieving its objective.

Genetic boundaries, as the name implies, are classified by the conditions that existed at the time those boundaries were initially established. Briefly, these are categorized as follows:

1. Pioneer.....are drawn through totally unoccupied territory
2. Antecedent.....are drawn in occupied territory but before intense settlement
3. Subsequent.....are drawn after occupation of a territory by similar cultures but preceding settlement of people of different cultures
4. Superimposed..... are boundaries drawn over a well established cultural pattern
5. Relict.....are boundaries that no longer exist except in people's minds

Rarely does any boundary fit clearly and individually into one category. Classification systems are models used to simplify reality for easier understanding. They are made up of average conditions. Cultural patterns change and what was a *superimposed* boundary can become a *subsequent* one. When school districts consisted of one school and provided service to small areas of cultural homogeneity they were primarily *subsequent*. The 57 school divisions/districts presently in effect are *superimposed* since they were put in place following the 1959 Review Commission findings after new cultural patterns had been established. Continuous adjustments to these boundaries through applications to the Board of Reference have reflected the changing cultures in some areas. Examples include the boundaries between the Seine River,

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Transcona-Springfield, and Hanover school divisions. Changes of land ownership along these boundaries have precipitated requests for transfers of land from one division to another.

In Winnipeg the logic of the school division boundaries as cultural boundaries has been largely eroded over the years as neighbourhoods experienced an out-movement of one ethnic group and the influx of others. School divisions such as Seine River, Red River, Mountain, White Horse Plain and St. Boniface were designed mostly on the basis of ethnic origin. They have experienced considerable change in the last thirty years due, primarily to intermingling of diverse groups and growth of bedroom communities. The establishment of a francophone school division in 1994 is the result of an aggregation of twenty schools across the province which transcend all geographical boundaries.

Legal boundaries can be real or fictitious. They are legally defined both on the map and in the real world or they exist legally on the map but are effectively ignored. While school division/district boundaries are legally constituted and are defined on maps, they can in some cases be fictitious if they are effectively ignored. In many cases, especially where good cooperation exists, boundaries are ignored. They exist legally, but only for administrative or tax collection purposes.

#### BOUNDARIES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES

Boundaries other than those of physiographic origin exist purely for administrative purposes. Administrative structures are necessary as support for systems and ideas but they can also become impediments. Many of the problems associated with boundaries come from the rigidity of administrative structures which operate by policies and defined rules. An irony in this situation is that rules are designed to make a system work, yet when a group decides to "work to rule", it usually means that the system slows down and in some cases stops functioning.

Boundaries can either keep people in or keep them out. School division/district boundaries as administrative lines apparently do both. School divisions are reluctant to lose students to a neighbouring division because they also lose the provincial grant available on a per student basis. Divisions are sometimes reluctant to accept students from a neighbouring division without the payment of residual fees since the special levy taxation on the home property is paid to the home division. The provision of education without the supporting tax base is, correctly, seen as costly to the receiving division. There are numerous instances where good relations exist between divisions and cross-border issues are of limited consequence. The Commission heard of situations where lack of cooperation between divisions worked to the detriment of students.

### IDEAL BOUNDARIES

Ideal boundaries are ones that have evolved from or are based on human behaviour. For example, an eastern Canadian university built new buildings on its campus but did not construct sidewalks between them the first year. Instead, they waited until winter and then staked out the pathways that students created in the snow. The following summer they built the sidewalks in accordance with the natural pedestrian patterns. Obviously these pathways avoided natural barriers and connected most directly the points of interaction on campus. If one had the ideal circumstances, we would be able to construct highways and superimpose school division boundaries in the same way - i.e., totally in accordance with natural transportation patterns. However, the ideal is not possible since many boundaries that already exist have both recognized natural interactions and some forced unnatural interactions which, over time, have become accepted. People respond and adjust to these existing boundaries and though they may have protested when the boundaries were first established, they usually fight to prevent change at some point in the future.

### VAGUENESS OF CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

In today's society, there are very few situations where a line can be clearly defined as a cultural divider. In most cases a transition zone is more appropriate. For example, there is no point at which a boundary could be drawn that separates French speaking Quebecers from English speaking Ontarians. Moving in either direction you find a gradual change in the percentage of English or French speaking residents. The same applies here in Manitoba where the interface of singular ethnic areas has become blurred substantially through the years. The Norwood/St. Boniface area and the francophone communities along the Red River south of Winnipeg and the Mennonite communities in the Southeast area present good cases in point. Originally settled by distinct ethnic groups, the boundaries between these areas have become blurred over the years. The ethnic boundary lines are now more difficult to define and even more difficult to place on a map.

### PROLIFERATION OF BOUNDARIES

In the hierarchical administrative system that exists in Manitoba, as in most other jurisdictions, it is necessary to have boundaries for administrative and taxation purposes. There are many sets of boundaries and they overlap in surprisingly complex ways. Dozens of sets of boundaries exist in the Province and the majority of them are based on groupings of municipalities. There are 202 municipalities which form the smallest building blocks of administration.

Even if we consider only the regions defined by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments, we find layer upon layer, area upon area, all operating in the same space and for the same people. Actually, only a few of these multiple sets of boundaries directly affect the citizens. Most boundaries are crossed daily by people without knowing that the boundaries exist. For example, most people would be unaware of the zones defined by the Highways Department and were it not for signs at the borders of municipalities, most would not know that they were changing municipal jurisdictions. It is not essential that the boundaries of any of these many regions coincide, but in many cases it would be logical because they all deliver services to the same people. The more knowledge people have about governing infrastructures, the more they will know about those forces that influence their lives. With a multiplicity of boundaries incorporating the delivery of a variety of services, the public can be excused if they are often unsure about where responsibility lies.

PHYSICAL MAPS AND MENTAL MAPS - Physical maps detail the boundaries of actual jurisdiction and these boundaries have either a physiographic or a political base. Mental maps have no physical basis and are formed by mental images of our world, country, region, town or any other space that actually determines how we behave and think. Usually these images do not reflect the real situation. They are based exclusively on individual perceptions that are strongly influenced by culture and location. A typical mental map exists for people who live in the so-called "north end" of Winnipeg. This area has no specific geographical limit with which everyone agrees, and thus it has different boundaries and dimensions for different people. It is, however, a recognized mental map and is used frequently in conversations and has a diverse, distinct cultural history of its own.

DISTANCE - ABSOLUTE AND COGNITIVE

Distance is a major factor in influencing our mental maps. It is also a major factor in size of school divisions in large, thinly populated regions of rural Manitoba. Familiar road or topographic maps have scales that indicate distance in absolute terms and we usually use actual kilometers or miles as a measurement of distance. However, in our lives we more often speak of distance as it relates to time and ease of travel. Ask a Winnipegger how far they live from work and they will invariably give you a time response. Ask rural students how long their bus route is and they will likely tell you how long they spend on the bus rather than the distance travelled. In fact, most would not even know the actual distance of the route. Of course, the time in both instances varies depending upon the mode of transportation but each answer will be based on the individual's commonly used mode.

PRESENT SIGNIFICANCE OF BOUNDARIES

Trends in technology are tending to reduce the significance of boundaries. Better transportation and communications move and connect people more quickly and bring them together much more easily than in the past. This trend will continue. Distance and boundaries can be overcome in many ways but boundaries themselves will likely always exist. The challenge is to make them as unobtrusive as possible.

**CONCLUSIONS ON THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BOUNDARIES**

- Boundaries are essential lines that facilitate administration. However, they can also become a hindrance. Often the structure becomes more important than the goal.
- Goals, functions, needs and composition of societies change inside and outside the boundaries. A system must have the flexibility to accommodate these changes without losing sight of the objective.
- The goal of the Commission was to design administrative boundaries and systems which create the least resistance to the provision of a good education.
- The Commission wants to remove or weaken boundaries as barriers that impede rather than enhance educational opportunities.

## **2. HISTORY OF SCHOOL DIVISIONS/DISTRICTS IN MANITOBA**

Education in Manitoba has seen many changes in the composition and the number of school districts across the Province despite the fact that school divisions have changed very little since 1959. The over-riding factors in the expansion and contraction of school divisions/districts have been the expansion and movement of population within the province. To fully understand the configuration of the actual 57 divisions and districts, one must go back to the early origins of education in this province.

In the fall of 1871, only one year after Manitoba became a province, the Government passed an act establishing a denominational public school system. This meant that education within the 24 school districts at that time was to be carried out by elected members at the local level. A Board of Education was established for the whole province. This Board was divided into two sections: one section was responsible for the Catholics who were predominantly French speaking and the other was responsible for Protestants who were predominantly English speaking. The Government funded each sector equally.

A large influx of immigrants rapidly changed Manitoba's population causing a shift in the demographic equilibrium between English speaking Protestants, and French speaking Catholics. Equal funding for both sectarian groups was no longer appropriate and in 1875 a pro rata (student population based) funding formula was introduced. In eight short years, 1871 to 1879, the Manitoba Education system had grown to include 99 Protestant schools with 3,614 students and 27 Catholic schools with 1,658 students.

The Public Schools Act of 1890 abolished the denominational public school system. The Act was strongly contested by the Catholic and French population in Manitoba. In two instances, litigation against the Act reached the Privy Council in Great Britain. Following the federal election of 1896, a compromise known as the Laurier-Greenway agreement was reached between Manitoba and the Federal Government which permitted the establishment of bilingual schools. The system of small school districts continued throughout this period although attempts at consolidating smaller districts were promoted by the Government of the day.

Reacting to a certain amount of opposition to bilingual schools, the Provincial Government of Premier Norris abolished this system in 1916. In essence, English became the only language of instruction in Manitoba schools. In a period of 25 years, Francophones lost both the right to

control their schools and the use of their language in the classroom, not only as a language of instruction but also as a language of studies.

Following this change in legislation, the Francophones decided to form a provincial education association ("Association d'Éducation des Canadiens-Français du Manitoba") to help preserve the French language in their schools. Although clandestine, this association had the role of a provincial department of education for French instruction. It developed the curriculum for French instruction for all grade levels, held yearly exams from grades 4 to 12 and published results in the local French newspaper.

There were no radical changes in education between 1916 and 1944. The two predominant features of this period were the single room school and the expansion in the number of school districts. The districts averaged roughly 20 square miles in area. Their number reached a remarkable high of 2,094 in 1924. The fact that most school districts were comprised of only one school reflects the problems of travel in the early days. As transportation improved and the demands of society increased beyond the capabilities of the single room school, small school districts began to consolidate. In 1945, there were 1,875 small school districts in operation, administering the affairs of 2,098 small schools across Manitoba.

In 1944, a committee on education called the "Special Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Education" was established. Its mandate was to enquire and report on:

1. Administration and financing of the public school system;
2. Equalization of educational opportunity throughout the province;
3. Technical education in light of the present-day and post-war needs;
4. Provision for and control of admission of students to various faculties at the University of Manitoba; and
5. Any and all matters relating to the above, including curriculum, training of teachers and post-war education.

In its final report, the committee recommended the creation of larger school administration units. It considered that such units could provide a greater degree of equality and educational opportunity, particularly at the secondary level. Following these recommendations, the Public Schools Act was amended to permit the establishment of larger administrative units. In 1947, the first 'large area', Dauphin-Ochre, was created. The pilot project was not imitated by other small school districts for fear of losing local autonomy and due to the cost of implementing such a system. Most francophone school districts were opposed to the idea of consolidation because they feared the loss of control over the curriculum, the instruction of religion and language which



they could quite easily ensure through the small local districts and through their own provincial education association.

Various attempts at consolidation and change continued over the years but local resistance essentially ensured that the status quo was maintained until the late 1950s. Increasing pressure for educational changes led to the establishment of the "Manitoba Royal Commission on Education" in 1957. This Commission, also known as the McFarlane Commission, whose mandate was to examine education in its entirety, submitted its preliminary report in August, 1958. The Commission recommended that the Province be divided into 50 to 60 school divisions. A commission was to be created for the establishment of the boundaries for the administrative units. These divisions were to have jurisdiction over secondary education while the small school districts were to retain the responsibility for elementary education. Legislation amending the Public Schools Act was passed in the fall of 1958, part of which created the School Boundaries Commission, which became known as the Monnin Commission.

The Boundaries Commission's mandate was to delineate the boundaries of the new administrative units and indicate the wards within each of these divisions. In creating these divisions, the Commission considered division size, assessment, population, student population, transportation and communication. Social and religious customs were also important factors in the delineation of boundaries.

In January of 1959, the Commission recommended 46 school divisions. Major francophone communities were grouped into five divisions: White Horse Plain, Mountain, Seine River, Red River and St. Boniface. Areas with large German populations were also grouped, e.g., Hanover School Division. Although the Government accepted the recommended divisions, the electors of each division had to deliver a positive majority vote in order for each division to be organized. In February of the same year, referendums were held in most of the proposed divisions and were successful in all but four (Stanley, Rhineland, Boundary, Hanover). Thirty-seven of the recommended rural school divisions together with all urban divisions were formed by April, 1959.

An adjustment period followed between 1959 and 1966. Subsequently, all 46 divisions would become part of the new system. Although the creation of the new administrative units only gave jurisdiction over the secondary level of education, efforts were made to encourage small districts to consolidate. The major reasons for consolidation at the elementary level included hopes for

better quality education, increased opportunity for elementary students, better educational facilities and the benefits of a larger tax base.

In 1963, the Michener Commission presented its report on the organization and financing of municipal governments. One chapter of the final report was reserved for the organization and administration of the public school system as well as its financing. The report indicated that one of the most important problems that local governments were facing was the cost of education. The Commission suggested that costs be spread as generally as benefits throughout the province in contrast with the old system by which costs were borne only by the property taxpayers of each locality. The financing of education by a public school levy and a special levy as we presently know it originated from these recommendations.

The Government did not act immediately on the recommendations made by the Michener Commission. After consultation with various education associations, the Government amended the Public Schools Act in the spring of 1966. The amendments called for the nomination of a superintendent, a stronger financial input by the Provincial Government in the funding of education as well as the dissolution of small districts and their integration into larger administrative units.

Of the 48 existing divisions at the time, ten already conformed to the requirements of the amendment and the fate of the other small districts was to be determined by ballot. The referendums held in March 1967 showed a vote in favor of the dissolution of the small school districts in a majority of school divisions. A second round of referendums in December of the same year led to the inclusion of 11 more school divisions into the unitary family. Although consolidation had been accepted by the public in general, many small rural areas opposed such changes in fear of losing their small local school. The francophone communities were divided on this issue. Many feared losing their small elementary schools and local autonomy. In December 1966, the Minister of Education proposed amendments to the Public Schools Act to permit French as a language of instruction under conditions. Francophones had lost this right in 1916 and over the years had gained the right to teach French as a subject at all levels. Only six days after the referendum was held the Government passed a bill permitting instruction in French for social sciences and the Français course and other minor courses to a maximum of 50% of instruction time. It wasn't until later in 1970, that the francophones were given the right to teach in French up to 75% of the school day.

During 1966, the Government also established a Boundaries Review Commission (Smellie Commission) to review the viability of small school divisions. This Commission concluded that

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regionalization would provide improvements for education. Its plans to meet the long-term needs included a broadened economic resource base and more control by elected officials. The Commission prepared a provisional plan which was released to the public in August 1969. In its proposals, the Smellie Commission suggested increased standards as to the minimum number of students for schools. Based on an inventory of facilities, building conditions, school capacities, locations and transportation time, the Commission selected sites where viable schools should exist and where schools should be phased out.

In October and November 1969, the Commission held public hearings throughout the province. The responses to the Commission's proposals were not favorable. There was considerable opposition in communities with strong French or German ethnic concentrations which were at risk of losing their schools and communities. The new proposals would have destroyed divisions that had been created based on ethnic homogeneity and threatened the capability of maintaining certain language programs if small areas were engulfed by larger divisions.

In its final report, the Commission concluded that only a regional system built around existing school divisions would offer the best combination of pooling of resources and retention of local planning control over the education system. It therefore recommended that regional boards be formed with elected representatives from the boards of the constituent school divisions. The recommendations put forth by the Smellie Commission were never implemented due to the controversy that accompanied them.

There have been very few changes in division boundaries since the Monnin Commission boundaries were implemented in 1959. Changes have mostly been made through transfers of land along division boundary lines via application to the Board of Reference. The only recent significant change that has had an effect on other divisions has been the newly formed Francophone School Division.

A Supreme Court of Canada decision in March 1990, which applied to all provinces, interpreted Section 23 of the Charter of Rights as granting official minorities the right to manage and control their own schools, where numbers warrant. In March 1993, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed and extended its 1990 ruling to Manitoba. In May of the same year legislation was introduced setting in motion the process for the establishment of the newest division. The Francophone School Division No. 49 initiated its operations in September 1994, as one of the 57 existing school divisions and districts that form the basis of the 1994 Boundaries Commission review. Thus 34 years have passed since the majority of existing school division and district boundaries were established.

### **3. THE PRESENT DIVISION/DISTRICT CONFIGURATION**

The Commission Discussion Document published in November, 1993 listed the following school division/district configuration:

47	School Divisions
6	Remote School Districts (Churchill, Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, Mystery Lake, Snow Lake, Sprague)
3	Special Revenue School Districts (Pine Falls, Camp Shilo, Whiteshell)
<b>56</b>	<b>Total Divisions and Districts as of November, 1993</b>

Since November, 1993 there have been three alterations to that configuration:

1. Pointe du Bois - It was discovered that although the special revenue district of Pointe du Bois No. 1696 had not appeared on Departmental listings for several years and although the school had not been operated since 1983, it did in fact still legally exist as it had never been dissolved. The town site is owned and operated by Winnipeg Hydro and 21 children are transported by Winnipeg Hydro bus to Lac du Bonnet within Agassiz School Division No. 13, which in turn educates the children and bills Winnipeg Hydro for the service.
2. Camp Shilo - This was a special revenue district operated by the Department of National Defense on the military base at Shilo, 10 miles east of Brandon. Effective August 29, 1994 Shilo schools, 435 students and land assessment were transferred to the Brandon School Division No. 40 and the district was dissolved.
3. Francophone School Division - A new school division began operating on September 1, 1994 including 4,268 students at twenty schools across the province which had elected to join this new division governed by a new Francophone School Board.

After the above changes, the division/district configuration as of September 1, 1994 is as follows:

48	School Divisions
6	Remote School Districts (Churchill, Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, Mystery Lake, Snow Lake, Sprague)
3	Special Revenue School Districts (Pine Falls, Whiteshell, Pointe du Bois)
<b>57</b>	<b>Total Divisions and Districts as of September, 1994</b>

**EXISTING SCHOOL DIVISIONS/DISTRICTS & HEADQUARTERS**

No.	Division Name	Division Headquarters	No.	Division Name	Division Headquarters	
1	Winnipeg	Winnipeg	29	Tiger Hills	Glenboro	
2	St. James-Assiniboia		30	Pine Creek	Gladstone	
3	Assiniboine South		31	Beautiful Plains	Neepawa	
4	St. Boniface		32	Turtle River	McCreary	
5	Fort Garry		33	Dauphin-Ochre	Dauphin	
6	St. Vital		34	Duck Mountain	Winnipegosis	
8	Norwood		35	Swan Valley	Swan River	
9	River East		36	Intermountain	Grandview	
10	Seven Oaks		37	Pelly Trail	Russell	
12	Transcona-Springfield		38	Birdtail River	Crandall	
48	Frontier		39	Rolling River	Minnedosa	
49	Division scolaire franco-manitobaine		40	Brandon	Brandon	
			41	Fort la Bosse	Virden	
11	Lord Selkirk		Selkirk	42	Souris Valley	Souris
13	Agassiz		Beausejour	43	Antler River	Melita
14	Seine River	Ste. Anne	44	Turtle Mountain	Killarney	
15	Hanover	Steinbach	45	Kelsey	The Pas	
16	Boundary	Dominion City	46	Flin Flon	Flin Flon	
17	Red River	St. Pierre-Jolys	47	Western	Morden	
18	Rhineland	Altona	<b>No.</b>	<b>Remote District</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>	
19	Morris-Macdonald	Morris	2264	Churchill	Churchill	
20	White Horse Plain	Elie	2309	Snow Lake	Snow Lake	
21	Interlake	Stonewall	2312	Lynn Lake	Lynn Lake	
22	Evergreen	Gimli	2355	Mystery Lake	Thompson	
23	Lakeshore	Eriksdale	2439	Sprague	Sprague	
24	Portage la Prairie	Portage la Prairie	2460	Leaf Rapids	Leaf Rapids	
25	Midland	Carman	<b>No.</b>	<b>Special Revenue District</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>	
26	Garden Valley	Winkler				
27	Pembina Valley	Manitou	1696	Pointe du Bois	Winnipeg	
28	Mountain	Notre Dame de Lourdes	2155	Pine Falls	Pine Falls	
			2408	Whiteshell	Pinawa	

Figure 3

Maps of Divisions and Districts as they presently exist can be found later in the report on the following pages:

Winnipeg divisions.....	Page 136
Southern divisions.....	Page 138
Remote and Special Revenue districts.....	Page 140
Frontier School Division.....	Page 142
Division scolaire franco-manitobaine.....	Page 91