PLANNING FOR CHANGE: THE WINNIPEG CHINESE

COMMUNITY AND ITS RESPONSIVENESS TO

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

by

Ellen Y. L. Chan

A Thesis

submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master of City Planning

Department of City Planning

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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献给
双亲和哥々

Man wants to live in a society which
gives him not only a sense of order,
security and continuity but also a
sense of forward movement. He wants
the security that only large-scale
social organization can afford but at
the same time he craves the ability
to shape at least a part of his own
destiny. He wants to belong to the
large and massive community while re-
taining both his privacy and the
closeness of immediate personal asso-
ciation. In each case he seeks to
reconcile the values of a mass, urban
society with his personal values,
aspirations and identity (Cherry,
1970:55).

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Last but not least, to my parents and my brother Tony, I dedicate this thesis, for all their love and sacrifices.

ABSTRACT

This is a thesis on social planning. The theme is the responsive-
ness of the Winnipeg Chinese to government services. The objective of the
study is twofold: to examine whether or not the Chinese are benefitting
from the social programs launched by the government, and to consider ways
by which the government services can reach down to this minority group.

Sixty-six Chinese households chosen by quota random sample from
three areas in Winnipeg are surveyed. The aim is to find out their demo-
graphic characteristics, their degree of assimilation, and their level of
participation in government services.

It is found that Chinese living in the core, the periphery of the
core, and Fort Richmond have differential demographic characteristics. But
all of them have exhibited an overall low level of assimilation and parti-
cipation.

The assimilation scale shows that less than 10% of the respondents
are highly assimilated. Among the three areas, respondents in Fort Richmond
appear to have the highest degree of assimilation, and the core the lowest.

With respect to participation, about 70% of the total participation
is on the low end of the scale. Households in the periphery are lowest in
participation, and the core the highest. The study, however, shows that
participation rates vary with different programs: with the highest parti-
cipation being on the old age programs, and none on Social Allowance. Par-
ticipation of the respondents is found to be related to their lack of know-
ledge of the programs, their inadequate understanding of the workings of
bureaucracies and the government system, their negative attitude towards

government and towards public assistance in general, as well as their respective needs and qualifications.

When assimilation is correlated with participation, the scattergram shows that there is no meaningful relationship between these two variables. Similarly, the correlation coefficient also proves the relationship to be negative, weak and insignificant. It is possible that by averaging and aggregating the data through the construction of the two scales, the overall findings have somewhat been confounded by various intervening variables like age and income. This possibility should be investigated by further research.

When other support agencies are investigated, it is found that the Chinese are not receiving assistance from the Chinese organizations or church groups. Instead, a majority of them are still relying on their family members as the chief source of assistance.

The study concludes that the Chinese are not enjoying the full benefits of the Canadian society mainly because there is a gap in the communication and understanding between the Chinese and the government. It is suggested that the gap could be bridged by a process of social learning through increased dialogue between social planners and the Chinese. Several other proposals in relation to individual programs are also recommended.

In this thesis, the Chinese are used as an example of a minority group's response to government services. Canada, being a multicultural society, will continue to face similar problems in other areas. The implications of the study are therefore more penetrable. It shows that in planning, more than just the physical, social or economic elements are involved, with human values and cultural traditions coming into play as well. Planning should therefore deal with the environment in its totality to bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, there has been a call for greater comprehensiveness in the practice of planning, "comprehensive in the scope of subject matter, geographic scale, time scale and in the roles that planning discharges" (Loeks, 1967:349). Gradually, the scope of planning has been expanded to include both physical and non-physical aspects; from an emphasis away from land use and zoning to include areas of concern like income and housing policies, manpower and employment programs, industrial development and pro- grams for the delivery of public facilities and services. These new 'inte- rests' center on aspects which promote the well-being of a community as reflected in social and economic indices, and are equally as important as physical planning for improving the living environment--as both are direc- ted towards improving the 'quality of life'.

The new urban planning (Webber, 1968) is more sensitive to social concerns. There is thus scope for social planning within the larger domain of urban planning. Accordingly, the provision of social services becomes an important item on the planning agenda. Consequently, with the increasing emergence of social concerns, planners often find themselves working closely with categorical assistance programs of the departments of health and wel- fare, education and housing.

Social planning, to Qadeer, "consists of assessments, programs and policies addressed to solve adjustment problems or to promote socio-cultural development in an area, particularly of the disadvantaged group" (Qadeer, 1977:91).

1

The ultimate role of social planning is urban planning to assess people's needs and problems, identify social organizational goals and inequalities, particularly those arising from physical and economic developmental activities, and to formulate policies and programs to meet these needs and obtain a wholesome integration of social, economic and physical environment (Qadeer, 1977:93).

The functional scope of this type of planning is thus

. . . on the demand, distribution, responsiveness, priorities and modes of delivery (both locational and operational) of social services . . . . the outcomes sought in these cases are not merely sites and zones for parks, schools and health centres, which have been the conventional expression of social concerns in urban planning. The concern is both locational and organizational. The outputs of the social planning approach to these issues are policies and programs (Qadeer, 1977:92).

The social objective of equity means that it is desirable that services provided by the government reach down to all groups in the community.

The practice, however, is often more complicated than the theory, especially in a multicultural country like Canada which has "within its boundaries no less than thirty ethnic groups which compete for the various economic and political resources in society" (Comeau and Driedger, 1978:2). While it is difficult, not impossible, to cater for the specific needs of each group, it should be the goal or objective of an egalitarian society that the basic needs of all groups be satisfied.

What then, are the needs of the person who moves from one culture to another, leaving the familiar and approaching the unfamiliar? As in all of us, the basic need is to survive. So much is inherent in this one concept: the need to belong, encompassing the need for recreation, and for spiritual nourishment; the need for food, shelter, and clothing, giving rise to the need for employment and the need for education. Basically, then, the immigrant expresses the same needs as the average Canadian citizen. However, because of his different cultural background, his different language, the individual differences of ability in coping with the newness of Canadian urban living, the immigrant may be unable to achieve satisfaction of these needs without special assistance from governmental and voluntary agencies (MacGregor, 1967:8).

Therefore, services for ethnic groups require special study and thought, as recommended by a study on the accessibility of social services.

> These were the new Canadians born in another country and usually using
> a language other than English for general communication. Very few of
> these individuals were users of [agency] service. It may have been
> that members of the various ethnic groups were self-sufficient, and
> therefore, were not in need of help. It may also have been that be-
> cause of language difficulties, strange new customs, and problems of
> finding one's way around in a large city, that needs were not being
> met. This matter [must] be looked into by future research (Lechman;
> Norlander; Stewart; Wehner; and Wice, 1971:78-79).

This study centers on one of the oldest ethnic groups in Canada: the

Chinese. With a long history of tradition behind them, they "present an in-

stance of unusually persistant social isolation and preservation of Old World

values and institutions" (Lyman, 1968:52).

Among the Chinese, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the moral

code of patience, endurance, obedience, diligence, thrift, filial piety, res-

pect for elders and loyalty to the family and its interests. Traditionally,

they are known for being industrious and frugal. Work is a virtue, and being

idle is taken as a sign of indolence. For most Chinese, especially the older

generation, the reason for emigration was largely economic, perceiving as

they did, that Canada could offer them a better chance of improving their

economic conditions. Some also left their homeland because of unstable poli-

tical situations, while others came to Canada initially as students and then

remained. Still, a large number emigrated to Canada to join families and

relatives who were here before them. But whatever the reason, they knew that

work, hard work, was necessary in order to establish themselves in an alien

country. Thus, "the Chinese work ethic prefers any employment over idleness

or public dole" (Sung, 1976:6).

The Chinese are, at the same time, family- and collectivity-oriented.

Like other immigrant groups, they tend to settle where they have close ties,

because "the decision to migrate will often depend on the existence of network

ties in a particular city" (Craven, 1973:26). Their networks of contact thus

permit them to practise the Confucian philosophy which "emphasizes collective family responsibility enforced by the sanction of shame" (Norris, 1971:47). Their family loyalty is expressed in kinship units, and the basic everyday needs are usually dealt with within the framework of the clan in which a sense of shared collective responsibility and mutual loyalty are the central values. When a person needs help he would present his problem to the family society and ask for assistance. Thus, welfare and education are always matters of lineage concern, and they seldom turn to outside sources for help.

Since the Chinese are inwardly directed towards the family, they are often portrayed as apolitical and apathetic, socially passive, and resistant to anything unfamiliar. At the same time, there is an innate fear and suspicion of the government--as an old Chinese saying goes, 'never enter a government office when alive and never go to hell when dead'; thus the government office is equated to hell. They will try to avoid as far as possible any dealing with a government agency.

This reaction is partly the result of the discrimination that they or their elders have experienced in the early stages of their immigration history. "It does not take a long memory to recall incidents of discrimination either in employment, education, housing or dealing with government" (Grange Community Storefront Newsletter, 1974:2); they were excluded from participation in any form of political, social and economic life, and were offered minimal social welfare services only by a few Mission Houses or Churches. A network of community organizations was therefore developed as a measure to meet the vital needs of its population.

> The original purpose behind most of these organizations was mutual assistance and protection for the Chinese, who, as individuals, would have found it difficult to cope with the problems presented by their early life in Canada.
> As a result of their system of mutual help, the Chinese have seldom,

if ever, depended on public or private charity, they have always looked
to their own people in time of sickness and unemployment or when they
were in legal or financial difficulties (Canadian Family Tree, 1967:57).

Past studies have indeed shown that the Chinese do not participate

in activities and programs to the same degree as the other ethnic groups. Ko

pointed out that the old generation of Chinese immigrants in Toronto "depend

on whatever meagre savings they have stored up in the past. Not many of them

know how to go about applying for welfare assistance even if they were eli-

gible" (Ko, 1963:46). Another study of a Chinese community in Toronto con-

cluded that the Chinese have a limited knowledge of health care; 75% to 82%

have not heard of some of the services available to the public in general;

although an average of about 65% have heard of some of the income security

programs, only a very small proportion of these have used programs like

Unemployment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Guaranteed Income Supplement

and Public Assistance (Ke; Yen; and Yeung, 1976:27 and 35).

Findings of these two studies thus serve to indicate that the Chi-

nese are a group almost 'unreached' by government information and services.

As the Task Force on Government Information reports on the 'unreached'

groups,

> . . . they do not take part in Canadian society as the rest of us
> know it . . . . they have little or no contact with the government of
> Canada, and very little—or no—information about its programmes.
>   Not only are these outsiders unreached by government, they are
> also unheard. Often fearful, frequently suspicious of the 'government',
> they do not know how to put their case. And when they try to put their
> case, in the right words, to the right person, all often they find they
> are talking to someone who neither knows their language, nor cares (To
> Know and be Known, Report of the Task Force on Government Information.
> Vol. II, 1969:283).

Similarly, MacGregor observed,

> There are several underlying factors which are basic to the success or
> failure of agencies in meeting [the] needs [of the immigrants]: a know-
> ledge of the various ethnic backgrounds; an understanding of the immi-
> grant's language and an ability to communicate; contact with ethnic

communities to determine the needs as expressed by the immigrants; acceptance of the responsibilities to provide services, even if such provision necessitates modification in agency policy (MacGregor, 1967:8).

The present study is an attempt to assess the extent to which the above can be said for the Chinese in Winnipeg. With an understanding of the Chinese community: their history, background and degree of assimilation as well as the factors affecting their levels of participation, it is then possible to assess if the government programs are adequate vis-a-vis the needs of this immigrant group. Such findings can then provide the basis for planning future social action programs designed to meet their needs and permit them equal opportunities to participate in benefits and resources of the society at large.

This thesis begins in Chapter I with a review of the social planning tradition, and the increasing concern for social issues in planning today. This is followed by Chapter II which sets forth the construct of the thesis, the research problem, and the variables it aims to explore. The methodological approaches of the study are expounded in Chapter III. Chapter IV gives a historical perspective and describes the current status of the Chinese in Canada and in Winnipeg. An analysis of the research findings is detailed in Chapter V, focusing mainly on the assimilation and participation aspects of the Chinese in Winnipeg. Chapter VI synthesizes the major conclusions, puts forward a number of proposals, and draws certain implications for planners and the profession in general.

"City planning today stands challenged, 'to stay relevant to the changing needs of the society'" (Brooks, 1970:38). Migration is a phenomenal trend of the world today, problems associated with the migrant groups are some of the major social concerns, and hence deserve special attention.

Planners must assume their share of responsibility and tackle the problems, for in the main, their primary task is "to work vigorously for the establishment of equal opportunity for all men to participate fully in their society" (Davidoff, 1964:130).

CHAPTER I

PLANNING IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

Planning in Transition[1]

The major premise of this thesis is that policies which seek to

change the physical environment, via architectural and site planning, have

little impact on the behaviour patterns and values of people. Therefore,

"planning which aims to improve living conditions must address itself to

the significant causal elements of these conditions, which are usually eco-

nomic, social and political" (Gans, 1968:ix).

According to Gans,

Planning is a method of public decision making which emphasizes
explicit goal choice and rational goals-means determination, so that
decisions can be based on the goals people are seeking and on the most
effective programs to achieve them. In theory, city planning should
be an application of that method to cities, but in practice, it has
been an art plied by a profession dedicated to a set of narrowly archi-
tectural goals and to land-use and design programs for realizing them
(Gans, 1968:vii).

Traditionally, the narrow focus of planning has prevented planners

from analyzing the elements of planning from a social perspective. They

were not consciously aware of the fact that much of the conventional content

of city planning—housing, transportation, recreation, public facilities and

services—can contribute directly to social goals such as equality of oppor-

tunity, participation in community life, alleviation of poverty, and access

to jobs and services.

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[1]adapted from Erber (1970).

Historically, however, planning had been sensitive to social concerns. Modern planning evolved with a strong social orientation; its origin can be traced back to the demand for social reforms at the beginning of the past century when there were "deep-rooted concerns for the conditions of urban life" (Webber, 1973:95).

"The changing physical, economic and social conditions of the nineteenth century stimulated agitation and the growth of radical reform movements on many fronts" (Cherry, 1970:18). In Britain, reform movements were prompted by the urban changes of the Industrial Revolution, the philosophy of humanitarianism, and the political ideologies of democracy and social equality; while in the United States, the Americans were "disturbed by the urbanization of their previously agrarian nation and the coming of the poor European immigrants, and about the slums, high crime rates, and socialist movements that appeared after their arrival" (Gans, 1970:242).

Against a different urban context, efforts were made by many reformers "in the search for new social arrangements, social happiness, or simply a much-needed improvement in the standard of urban life" (Cherry, 1970:10). Practical community experiments and philanthropic endeavours such as Robert Owen's New Lanark, Sir Titus Salt's Saltaire, Col. Edward Akroyd's West Hill Park and Cadbury's Bournville were carried out in Britain. Elsewhere in Europe and the United States, similar ideals at community building were manifested in developments such as the model villages of the Krupp family in Germany; the workers' colonies in France, Italy and Holland; and the Pullman community near Chicago.

Planning in the nineteenth century therefore began as a community-based movement and an attempt at "a comprehensive exercise with integral social objectives" (Cherry, 1970:44). But despite the underlying good intentions and the social orientation, these early utopian movements were discounted as being

overly idealistic and simplistic; Glass is of the opinion that these utopian

reformers

> . . . saw social conditions and relationships in terms of black and
> white, and in terms of straightforward interactions. They believed
> firmly that environment directly determines human character and social
> structure--and that their recipe for the reform of environment . . . had
> universal validity and would assure that men everywhere live happily
> ever after (Glass, 1973:55).

With a deep conviction in the ideology of environmental determinism,

these early planners thought that environmental changes could prevent major

social changes and social upheaval. They hoped that by physical planning,

they could ameliorate the deteriorating urban conditions, eliminate the slums,

break up urban ghettos, restore order, and in general, contribute directly to

the welfare of the individuals. Nonetheless, the utopian reformers, with

their search for the ideal and a moralistic view about environment improve-

ment, marked the beginning of planning in its social aspect.

The century-long movement in community experiments culminated in the

works of Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes at the turn of the century. Both

"acknowledged the importance of recognizing social needs and of providing the

opportunity to meet them" (Cherry, 1970:33). Howard, in his Garden City move-

ment, infused two strands of thought into practical planning, "one, that people

have a right to determine the management of their environment, and secondly,

that choices increase the real standard of living" (Everseley, 1973:79). Simi-

larly, planning, to Geddes, "is not a matter of design, or construction, but

of adapting the physical environment to the changing needs of modern society

. . . . people came first, it is on their needs that [one] must build or re-

build . . . cities" (Everseley, 1973:80).

Howard's 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow' represented a powerful expression

in man's search for a new urban form to replace the old. The Geddesian influ-

ence which saw the evolution of cities as following the five stages of polis,