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The practice of multicultural planning in American and Canadian cities

Abstract

There is a disconnect between academic discourse about urban planning's neglect of cultural diversity and the robust embedding of ethnic cultures in the landscape of North American cities. We assess how planning practice is responding to cultural diversity through culturally sensitive policies adopted by municipalities in selected metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada. Using an index of multicultural policies as the basis of a questionnaire, we surveyed local planning departments in major immigrant-rich metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada. The survey, though limited in scope, yielded revealing findings on planning practice. Planning departments, led by market initiatives and community demands, are accommodating cultural diversity on a case-by-case basis, particularly in large and medium-sized cities. Canadian cities have gone farther in adopting multicultural polices, but American cities are not far behind. Practice is outpacing theory, which is largely occupied with advocating greater sensitivity to cultural differences and emphasizing measures to involve ethnic minorities. We find that planning processes are already responsive to ethnic minorities, but challenges lie in reconciling competing objectives in land use, development, and the provision of community services. This article not only illustrates the state of multicultural planning, but also points to a strategy of reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity.

Key words: multicultural planning, culturally sensitive policies, cultural diversity and urban planning, pluralistic planning.

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The practice of multicultural planning in American and Canadian cities

Introduction

Ethno- racial diversity of urban populations in cities of the US and Canada has reached levels beyond the point of minorities being dotted among white majorities of European origins. Increasingly, these cities and even states are turning into majority- minority areas, where whites are less than 50% of the population and minorities are made up of many groups, from native born Blacks, aboriginals, as well as the second generation and immigrant Latinos, Asians, South Asians, Africans etc. William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institute, concludes from an analysis of the US 2010 census data that of the 50 largest cities, 32 are now majority non-white and among those cities are not only in New York, Los Angles but also in small southern cities such as Austin and Charlotte (Frey2011). Moreover, the minorities are not largely concentrated in central cities but they have a proportionate share of population in suburbs, namely 35% of suburban residents in 100 metropolitan areas are non-white minorities equal to their share in the total population. Canadian cities are also heading towards majority-minority status. Markham and Brampton were already majority immigrant (mostly non-white) cities, Mississauga and Toronto city were at the cusp of majority-minority by the 2006 census as were Richmond and Surrey in the Vancouver metropolitan region. They would have turned into majority immigrant cities by now.

This demographic transformation of the North American cities is realigning the urban economic organization, social structure, ethnic and race relations as well as politics and power. Today's city is a new city on the old foundations. This transformation necessitates

rethinking of both planning theory and the practice. Of course, both the academe and profession are responding to this challenge though somewhat at variance from each other. Under the rubric of multicultural planning or planning for diversity, a substantial volume of literature has emerged critiquing the practice and exhorting planners about equity and responsiveness towards ethno-cultural minorities, particularly asking for the accommodation of their cultural differences, implying that the current practice is deficient on this score. (Sandercock 2003, Burayidi 2000, Pastieau and Wallace 2003, Qadeer 1997,2009, Milroy and Wallace 2004, Reeves 2005, Viswanathan 2009).

Practicing planners write sparingly about their approaches and experiences. Yet they point to the thriving ethnic enclaves and business districts, malls and mosques, fairs and parades, involvement of immigrants and minorities in public policy discussions including the provisions of translation and interpretation services, and the most striking evidence of the inclusiveness of today's cities lies in the parade of ethnic restaurants, music festivals and cultural shows and other manifestations of the multicultural civic life. Professional planners imply that the vibrant multiculturalism of cities is a testimony to their responsiveness to ethno-racial groups' needs[1]. Particularly, urban planning can be credited to have evolved through its responsiveness to immigrants needs (Vitiello, 2009).

The divergence between the discourse of planning theory and urban planning practice regarding the state of responsiveness to the interests of ethno-racial minorities has inspired this article. It attempts to answer empirically the question: how has urban planning as an institutionalized practice responded to the growing ethno-cultural diversity

of North American cities? In order to answer this question, we will briefly review the planning theory (in fact a series of opinions and propositions) and examine what guidance it provides to urban planners. This review combined with empirical evidence will cast light on the relationship between the theory and the practice of urban planning on the one hand, and point out the scope and limits of accommodating ethno-cultural differences in the shared spaces of cities, on the other.

Cultural diversity and equality as the goals of multicultural planning

The discourse about the incorporation of ethno-cultural differences in urban planning processes and policies is rooted in two values: diversity and equality (Reeves 2005, Sandercock 2003). Diversity is the variation of forms in a social, biological or economic system or organization. In our context it is about the recognition of cultural differences and racial identities among people both as individuals and groups. Class, race and ethnicity have been the historical markers of social differences, but recently gender, ability (disability), age and, in some instances, lifestyles have come to be the bases of defining differences in people's needs, identities, and entitlements. Our focus is primarily on ethnic-cultural diversity, which includes both racial and cultural markers, and its bearing on urban planning policies and processes.

Equality is the right or entitlement to equal access and fair treatment in the public sphere, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states clearly: "Every individual is equal before law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or

ethnic origins, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical ability" (Constitution Act 1982). The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. constitution (1868) and U.S. *Civil Rights Act* (1964) as well as many court rulings confer similar rights. Both countries have enacted human rights legislation as signatories to the Universal Charter of Human and Minority Rights. These laws firmly lay down equality as a goal of public policies. Equity, frequently used as a synonym of equality, is the realization of the right of equality and the results obtained there from. One talks of equity when referring to the policies and programmes through which the principle of equality is implemented. It is essentially the result of equal treatment with recognition of differences. Recognition of diversity would be an empty slogan without equity in the provision of public policies, programs, and services and equal access to the planning decision-making processes. This is how diversity comes to be combined with equality as the basis of urban planning's responsiveness to ethnic differences or in other words multicultural planning.

Academic discourse on diversity and urban planning

Paul Davidoff's seminal article, "Advocacy and pluralism in planning" (1965) was the first to recommend addressing diversity of communities and interests through planning, instead of conceiving singular plans in the name of unitary public interest. It laid open the path to the recognition of the divergent goals and needs of Blacks, the poor, and ethnic minorities.

The rise of feminist theories and their influence on planning thought combined with the emergence of large Hispanic, Asian, and Eastern European ethnic communities from the

post-1965 wave of immigration, have extended the definition of diversity to include ethnics, immigrants, women, and gays among the objects of pluralism in planning (Burayidi 2000, Qadeer 1997, Sandercock and Forsyth 1992, Spain 1992, Thomas and Krishnarayan 1994).

The academic discourse largely revolves around two themes: 1) the biases in the dominant paradigms and 2) the advocacy for including the perspectives of women, Blacks and ethno-cultural minorities in planning theory and practice. Leonie Sandercock speaks for many theorists in pointing out "some of the glaring absence in mainstream account of planning history" (Sandercock 2003:45). The excluded interests and perspectives (such as ethno-racial minorities and women) point to the "relationship of planning to power and the power of the system of thought" (Sandercock 2003:45).

Generally, planning theorists are critical of the planning approaches, methods, and practices applied in culturally diverse cities, which would include most North American cities now. Their criticism is built on four sets of propositions.

1. Urban planning is embedded in Anglo-European cultures and elevates their perspectives into universal values, sweeping away cultural differences. Yet culture matters, as Burayidi says, including the cultures of minorities (Burayidi 2000:2). The built environment is culturally inscribed and the planning system is the agency for imprinting it (Thomas 2008). This proposition is sometimes extended to add institutionalized racism and discrimination as other forms of white euro-centredness.

2. The modernist bias of planning theories, emphasizing scientific reason, technical rationality, and what historians call "the Enlightenment tradition," predispose urban planning to ignore diversity of traditions, customs, and cultural values. The rise of citizen participation and community-based modes of planning are counterpoised as the post-modernist answers to the modernist biases of planning processes, as are qualitative methods, discourse analysis and story telling are elevated to be the methods of information gathering (Burayidi 2000, Pestieau and Wallace 2003, Reeves 2005, Sandercock 2003).
3. Cultural differences should not only be recognized, but also expressed in planning policies and programs. Milroy and Wallace maintain that "Ethno- racial diversity is not a separate environmental condition that must be processed through the planning framework. It is the framework and planning sits in it (Milroy and Wallace 2004:4) A vision of multicultural planning should guide practice, in which the goals and values of different communities are fully taken into account. This argument is couched in abstract terms such as, "the right to difference and the right to city…recognizing the legitimacy and specific needs of minority or subaltern cultures… to participate as equal in public affairs" (Sandercock 2003:103).
4. From the above critiques are constructed visions of new planning paradigms that emphasize expansive goals for the profession and prescribe community organizer's virtues, roles and skills for planners. The discourse shifts to their personal qualities and organizational cultures, calling for "new modes of thought and new practices … (shifting away) from outmoded assumptions embedded in the culture of Western planning" (Sandercock 2004: 140). Leonie Sandercock offers a planning imagination

based on four key qualities: i) political- to be alert to the politics of who gets what from their proposals, ii) audacious- daring to break rules, iii) creative – both in the form of offering visionary leadership and in the ability to mobilize creativity of residents, iv) therapeutic- to bring people together for working through their differences. It involves dialogue and negotiations across the gulf of cultural differences (Sandercock 2004 : 134-139). Patsy Healy observes that planners are under pressure not only "to absorb new sensitivities and demands in their thought worlds and practices, but (also) to transform their own cultures" (Healy 2003: 245). Leela Viswanathan demands from planners postmodernist and postcolonial imagination which brings "to the fore ideas about identity and citizenship as associated with colonization, immigration and naturalization…. with conceptions of justice, in particular, the struggles of recognition and redistribution" (Viswanathan 2009: 169).

From these propositions, planning theorists have constructed vigorous critiques of planning practice that form a part of ongoing arguments about procedural planning theory and the processes of decision- making in planning. Even suggestions for making planning systems more responsive to diversity are largely conceived in terms of increasing the participation of minorities in planning processes and powers. In fact, the theorists often use the term planning without any adjectives, such as urban, which define the institutional parameters of the practice. They conceive of planning as a societal planning or some form of generalized community planning. They rarely engage with the substance of urban planning, namely with strategies, policies, programs, and proposals for land use

and development, housing, services, environment, economic development, and transportation in cities and metropolitan regions. Even in terms of the planning process, the arguments of advocates of multicultural planning are dated. The involvement of citizens is now a legislatively mandated part of the planning processes and minorities are not unrepresented. The practice of planning has long been communicative and collaborative (Healey 1997, Innis 1998).

So how does one square the vibrant multiculturalism of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, or Vancouver with critiques suggesting that the interests and needs of ethnic communities have been neglected in the planning practice? What of the thriving Chinatowns, Barrios, India Bazaars, and other ethnic commercial areas and malls, the expanding ethnic economies, the national and religious parades and festivals, the multilingual street signs, and the range of religious institutions in the cities of the US and Canada and slow but steady advance of minority representations in local and regional authorities?[2] There is an obvious disconnect between the theory and what can be seen, heard, or even smelled in our cities.

This is not to suggest that minorities' interests are fully reflected in urban planning outcomes or there are no structural biases against communities of colour, the poor, and the disadvantaged.[3] Members of ethnic groups, like everybody else, are frustrated by the cumbersome, costly, and time-consuming planning processes. Paradoxically, these complaints are themselves partly the result of the extensive participatory requirements of the planning processes, as practicing planners often point out.

Planning theory presents a static view of planning institutions, as well as of the cultures of urban communities. However, both are evolving. Planning institutions are shaped by national and regional legislative and political systems and embedded in the social values and ideologies of societies. They change with socio-political systems. The American planning system has been restructured by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and subsequent national and state legislation and court cases. Equal opportunity laws and fair housing provisions, employment equity and requirements for the equitable distribution of public services have had visible effect. Since 1980s, the conservatives' ideologies are realigning urban planning institutions. Similarly Canadian planning institutions are subject to the country's multiculturalism policy (1971), the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), and the *Multiculturalism Act* (1988), as well as other equity and cultural rights provisions Planning practices operate within the framework of these values and laws. It cannot be discriminatory without being challenged in courts and undermined in the political arena.

Similarly ethno-racial cultures are not static and are continually affected by technology, economy, and interactions with society as a whole and with each other. Processes of fusion, hybridization, and differentiation keep transforming all cultures. The fluidity and dynamism of ethnic cultures has to be acknowledged in assessing urban planning's response to cultural differences. It is a mistake to regard ethno-racial cultures as fixed and always at variance with the dominant values. When minorities are becoming majorities, new challenges of inter-minority relations and mutual recognition are arising.

Finally, an assessment of urban planning's responsiveness to diversity has to take into account competing demands on planners and the multiple objectives of planning policies and programs. Urban planners are answerable to city and regional elected leaders, higher levels of governments, legislative bodies, and diverse local communities. Also they have to make trade-offs among goals of common good such as sustainability, affordability, cost-effectiveness, public health, job creation, fair housing, the reduction of car dependency with the accommodation for cultural differences .

Obviously, diversity cannot be pursued single-mindedly without regard to other goals of urban development. Howell Baum has summed up planners' challenge in accommodating cultural differences in the title of his article, "Culture matters – but it shouldn't matter too much" (Baum 2000). We would rephrase this as Culture matters, but it should dovetail into the common interests and goals of a community as a whole. Accommodating cultural differences should be conceived as a two-way process in which responsiveness to culture is accompanied by the incorporation of common interests in community cultures.

Although planning theory is primarily focused on modes of planning, but there is a growing body of case studies that describe the workings of the planning systems around issues of land uses, housing and community services. They range from development of multicultural places of worship, ethnic malls, neighbourhood and housing (e.g. monster home controversies) policies, programming of community services and, special use permits (Preston and Lo 2009, Poirier, Germain and Billett 2006, Harwood 2005). These

case studies are as much the evidence of the demands and controversies arising from cultural differences as they are the examples of the balancing acts of the planning practice to work through divergent interests, albeit by muddling through.

Two sides of multiculturalism and urban planning

A culture is made up of a web of norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes that serves as a map for the ways of life of a group.[4] The term 'culture' applied to ethnic communities and religious, or lifestyle groups, forming part but not the whole of a society, is of limited scope. It is essentially a (sub) culture embedded in the mosaic making up a national or societal culture. This multiculturalism is evident in the lived reality of the social life in the United States as much as it is an official creed in Canada.[5]

Multiculturalism is a two-sided coin. One side stands for the private domain of family, domestic, and community institutions of distinct beliefs and behaviours in which (sub) cultures operate. The other is the public domain of laws, economy, citizenship, education, technology, official language(s), and environment in which common values, norms, symbols, and even everyday etiquette (such as using subways) reign (Rex 1996). Cultural diversity is complemented by shared but evolving common ground. The construction and reconstruction of common ground, incorporating the interests of minority (sub) cultures, is a necessary part of an inclusive society.

Urban planning plays both sides of multiculturalism. It is expected to meet the culturally defined needs of diverse groups and reconcile them with the common ground of space,

environment, and provision of services and facilities (Qadeer 2009). A city itself is a form of common ground ruled by public interests and collective goods. Here the health, welfare, and satisfaction of some are indivisible from the well-being of others. The expression of cultural differences in the private domain goes hand-in-hand with their reconciliation with the norms, standards, and values of the public domain. Fulfilling these two demands is the challenge of urban planning practice.

Accommodating cultural differences in urban planning

In urban areas, the cultures of ethnic and lifestyle communities are expressed in their preferences for housing, neighbourhoods, jobs, and services. They are also represented in strivings for a fair share of power and participation in civic decision-making. What brings this about is the strategy of reasonable accommodation of cultural needs, often practiced as cultural differences come into clash with the embedded values in planning norms and policies. As proposals to develop synagogues, mosques and Mandirs uncover the tilt towards churches in the planning and zoning polices, the policies and standards are appropriately revised to accommodate these new places of worship (Germain 2009, Agrawal 2009, Hequet 2010)

The strategy of reasonable accommodation has not been formally defined in planning, but it is implicit in planning practice and now increasingly referred in planning reports. . It is based on long practiced legal and public policy doctrines. A demand may be accommodated if it does not cause undue hardship, unreasonable cost, the disruption of an organization or institution's operations, infringement on other people's rights, or the

undermining of security or public order (Bouchard and Taylor 2008:19). Reasonable accommodation is not an uncontested concept. Its critique comes from both the right and left perspectives. For the commentators of the right it is a question of the limits of accommodation and reasonableness. For the left, it is the primacy of the rights of minorities that define both the scope of reasonableness and the extent of accommodation. Arguments range around specific practices; is face veil of Muslim women in public places a right to practice religion freely or stepping outside the boundaries of reasonableness from the perspective of national values of secularism? As the idea of reasonable accommodation has been injected in Quebec's political discourse, it is there that much of debate about it is presently raging (Nieguth and Lacssagne 2009).

Reasonable accommodation has long been the guiding principle in the legislations of occupational health and safety, disability management and educational administration. In practice it is a pragmatic and balanced approach to accommodate differences while maintaining institutional integrity. In urban planning, reasonable accommodation means that the cultural needs of a community should be balanced against common interests of a city as a whole and the criteria of fairness and equity for others. Leonie Sandercock acknowledges common good and maintains that it "must be generated not by transcending or ignoring cultural and other differences (the liberal position) but through their interplay in a dialogical, agnostic political life" (Sandercock 2003:104). Urban planners have the challenge of tacking between the two currents, common good and cultural differences. Paul Davidoff's model of advocacy planning also envisages interest-driven community plans as means of generating value – explicit alternatives to be

debated in the public arena allowing for trade-offs among divergent groups and interests (Davidoff 1965).

Framing planning practice

We may reiterate that our focus is on the institutionalized urban planning. The term "reasonable accommodation" suggests that the urban planning practice should include policy measures to respond to cultural diversity within the parameters of common good and equity for others. These measures encompass the full range of activities that constitute urban planning, namely from procedures to ensure the representation and participation of ethnic communities in planning processes to policies for the provision of culturally sensitive housing, neighbourhood and land use plans, and community services for members of ethnic minorities and immigrants. This is how the needs of multiple (sub) cultures can be accommodated, while advancing area-wide objectives in equitable ways. Using the range of substantive activities that fall in the jurisdiction of urban planning as the basis, we have drawn on the policy index from Qadeer (2009) as the yardstick for measuring the responsiveness of planning departments, see Figure 1[6]. It captures a range of initiatives conceivable in North American urban planning practice and serves as the tool of our survey of culturally responsive planning practices in major metropolitan areas of the United States and Canada. It can also be used as a guide for multicultural planning.

Figure 1 about here

The survey

We followed an empirical approach to assess how urban planning departments respond to cultural diversity. In 2009 we mailed or e-mailed a questionnaire to municipal planning departments of central cities, suburbs and exurban jurisdictions of (selected) metropolitan regions in the United States and Canada. The regions selected for the survey are the first and second tier gateway areas, known in the literature for their diversity. The survey did not include regional or metropolitan municipalities of these Census Metropolitan Areas or Regions. Included in this survey were the municipal planning departments of the component municipalities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Houston metropolitan areas in the United States and Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Montreal metropolitan regions in Canada. All in all, 109 large and small municipalities were contacted by e-mail and followed up in many cases by a second or third wave of questionnaires and calls to the offices of directors of planning. We addressed the questionnaire to the directors or persons in charge of planning in all municipalities asking that it be filled by a managerial level professional fully knowledgeable about the jurisdiction's policies. A total of 42 completed questionnaires were received from 23 U.S. and 19 Canadian municipalities, a return of 38.5%.

It is not a statistically random but a purposive sample. We wanted to measure how some high-immigrant areas are responding to cultural diversity in planning practice. The aim is to get some practitioners' perspectives on what they are doing to accommodate ethno-cultural differences. It is not to generalize for all North American cities .The questionnaire was based on the index of policies shown in Figure 1. Questions were designed to assess the incidence of these policies in municipalities. The questionnaire

also included open-ended questions eliciting comments and elaborations and asked for information such as the percentage of immigrant population in the particular city and some indicator of the economic base.[7] The answers to these open-ended questions have been used to triangulate, confirm and explain the responses to the closed questions and to get some descriptive accounts of measures taken.

The practice of culturally sensitive planning

The responses show a clear pattern in which large cities (those with populations of more than 500,000) have adopted a substantial majority of the 19 policies listed in the index. The mean number of policies adopted is 15.4 (out of a maximum of 19) for Canadian and 12.6 for the American large cities of the sample. Figure 2 shows the distribution of policies adopted by large, medium-sized, and small cities differentiated by the country. These sampled places are within metropolitan regions; "small" usually means an exurban municipality.

Two trends stand out from Figure 2. First, the Canadian policy of multiculturalism is reflected in the higher values of the mean number of adopted policies by large and medium-sized cities, with small municipalities lagging behind. Second, large American cities, though lagging their Canadian counterparts overall, were also following most of the listed policies. American medium-sized and small cities were almost at the same level in terms of adopted policies. All in all, the incidence of culturally sensitive planning policies is related to the size of the municipality and the country in which it is located.

Statistical tests of the significance of these relationships show that U.S./Canadian differences of mean values are significant (0.05 level) for large and medium-sized cities, but not for the small cities.[8]

These observations suggest that the planning practice is fairly responsive in initiating multicultural policies in these cities. We are not witnessing here a striking lag in the initiation of multicultural measures. These responses are not a proof of the outcomes of these measures. For outcomes we have looked at the generalized state of the North American cities regarding their accommodation of diversity.

Figure 2 about here.

The 19 listed policies have been grouped in three clusters. Policies number 1 to 5 relate to factors such as the use of minority language(s), representation and inclusion of ethnic groups in decision-making, and routinely using ethnic variables in analysis. The other two policy clusters are land use and development polices (numbers 6 to 11 and 14 of the index) and policies relating to community services to meet ethnic needs (policies 12, 13, and 15 to 19). Figure 3 provides a cross-tabulation of the incidence of 19 policies according to the size of city and the country. Figure 4 is extracted from Figure 3. It shows the weighted average (standardized mean) of the incidence of policies in the three clusters.[9]

Figure 3 about here

Figure 4 about here

Before getting into specific policies, we want to paint an overall picture by looking at Figure 4 first. The patterns noted above are confirmed by this table. Large and medium-sized Canadian cities use a larger number of policies on average than American cities in all three clusters. Small cities show the reverse pattern.

In terms of the incidence of policies in the three clusters, the differences among them are notable. In all sampled cities, land use and development policies have the lowest level of use. By and large, planning process policies have the highest average values, followed by the policy cluster of community services. Small Canadian cities vary slightly from this pattern in that community services scored relatively high on the mean values.

What this all means is that the sampled cities, specifically the large and medium-sized ones, were following most of the policies that promote the inclusion of the interests and voices of ethnic groups in planning decision-making. This finding goes against the academics' insistence on the neglect of ethnic interests in the planning process. Policies for accommodating cultural diversity in providing community services are the second most common practice among the sampled cities. Land use and development policies have the lowest use of the three clusters. Yet it does not mean that little is being done to accommodate cultural diversity in this area. This will be discussed later.

To probe these patterns further, we examine the incidence of policies individually as shown in Figure 3. None of the 42 cities had adopted any citywide policies for the development of "ethnic neighbourhoods, places of worship, and other cultural

institutions" (policy 7). Such developments, being plentiful, have occurred through market processes and under the rubric of zoning and site plan regulations. The creation of such neighbourhoods and institutions has been worked out on a case-by-case basis rather than by any overarching policies of culturally specific development. The next least-used policy is the deliberate development of ethnic business enclaves or malls, such as Asian malls. In responding to questions on how these commercial developments have come about and what role the city played, only six cities, Chicago in the U.S. and Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Richmond in Canada, indicated that they either designated such developments as special districts or had special commercial policies for them. The other 35 indicated that these developments had occurred within the scope of overall policies with some case-by-case adjustments.

The most frequently used policies are numbers 14, 18, and 11 with frequencies of 30, 30, and 27, respectively, out of 42 (Figure 3). These are policies intended to protect ethnic heritage, including the heritage of indigenous people, promote ethnic art, culture, fairs and parades, signage and street names. Planning departments have varying roles in relation to these policies; some fall directly in their jurisdiction, while for others their role is advisory. For example, in the matter of signage, Montreal must conform to the Province of Quebec's official language laws, which give primacy to French for public signage. San Jose in California, under the rubric of its Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI), gives wide leeway to local communities to set cultural or ethnic identity as a priority goal. Certainly, most ethnically diverse cities have streets and squares named by the ethnic identity of an area, such as Greek Village, Little Italy, or Chinatown. Toronto

had 310 street closures in 2002 for parades and community events. Its Caribana parade of Caribbean dance and music annually draws about a million spectators every year. Responsiveness to cultural diversity is also manifest in community events and initiatives.

Figure 3 supports the observations derived from Figure 2. Policies for cultural accommodation in community services generally show a wide range of usage, ranging widely from 12 to 30 cities out of 42; paralleled by policies for accommodating diversity in planning processes, falling in the range of 19 or 24 cities for each policy. The incidence of land use planning and development policies brings up the rear, in the range of 0 to 19 cities, with 27 being an outlier. The differences by the size of city and the Canadian/U.S. divide are also confirmed by these findings.

We also probed some other relationships, most of which turned out to be weak. A brief summary of those probes is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 about here

We attempted to see whether the proportion of immigrants in the population of a city affects the number of multicultural policies it adopts. We were interested to determine whether the percentage of immigrant is an intervening variable in the relationship between city size or US/Canada location and the number of policies.

The correlation coefficients for the percentage of immigrants relative to the number of policies of cities differentiated by sizes and countries, for six samples controlling for the

city size and the country were calculated (Figure 5). The results show that the percentage of immigrants as an independent variable has either no or very little effect on the number of policies adopted. Certainly the large and medium-sized cities of both countries have low correlation coefficients and are not significantly affected in the adoption of policies by the percentage of immigrants.[10] Small cities are the only ones with a significant correlation between the two variables. It may be that once a certain threshold of immigrant population is reached in case of medium and large cities, variations in the percentage of immigrant population make little difference. Whereas, for small cities falling below that threshold, this variable has some effect. Overall, this analysis suggests that the percentage of immigrants is at best a weak intervening variable, largely applicable to small places.

At this point, we turn to the interpretations of these findings for the broader question of the responsiveness of planning practice to cultural diversity.

Interpretive discussion

What do the findings of the survey mean for the broader discussion of multicultural planning and responsiveness to cultural diversity? We believe they are relevant to the three areas of planning practice.

1. Representation in the planning process

The planning process, by and large, is well attuned to the needs and interests of ethnic minorities. As our survey indicates, this is particularly true of large and medium-sized cities in both Canada and the United States, where ethnic diversity is a structural

condition. Ethnic minorities are drawn into the citizen participatory processes of decision-making, which are now deeply entrenched legally and institutionally in urban planning. Over the years, innovative approaches continue to be forged to involve minorities and other communities of interest more closely in planning processes. From translation and interpretation services, kitchen meetings, public hearings, task forces, community mobilization, and web dialogues to mediation and negotiation among conflicting interests, a host of techniques are employed to involve minorities and other communities.

Examples of the use of innovative techniques for involving citizens, particularly minorities and immigrants, are a staple of planning reports and practitioners' journals such as *Planning* and *Plan Canada*. Vancouver, for example, has a protocol for providing translation and interpretation services. New York's mayor Michael Bloomberg issued an executive order in 2008 for all agencies to provide language help to people who spoke little or no English.[11] Similar practices are followed by most of the large and medium-sized cities we surveyed. Yet it takes resources to employ translators and interpreters. Even then such services can only be provided for major linguistic groups, e.g. Chinese, Korean, Latino etc. but not for all groups which number could run into hundred or more. The point is that citizen involvement is a necessary condition for urban planning exercises and minorities are often actively involved, with support from planners within the scope of resources.

The empowerment of minorities through representation in city councils, planning boards, or planning departments is not, however, coming about in parallel with the increasing number of immigrant ethnics. Breaking into the power structure is largely a political process and not a planning exercise. Minority representation in these bodies is increasing in Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, and Vancouver as the composition of the population changes and ethnic minorities collectively become the majority. The conflict of interests between whites and non-whites or native-born versus immigrants may give way to interethnic political competition and cultural clashes among Latinos, Blacks, Chinese, South Asians, and other groups.[12]

Planning theorists have not moved beyond the narratives of the 1970s and are not taking into account rapidly changing reality. Planning processes are including minorities and responding to cultural diversity to a large degree in cities where the needs are pressing and the infrastructure of participation has developed.[13] The locus of culturally responsive planning lies in substantive issues of land use, development policies, and equity in the provision of services and opportunities. These are the arenas of resource allocation in which competing interests vie with one another and limitations of resources have major influence. The post 2008 era of budgetary deficits is already affecting the overall planning activity in these substantive matters. Ethnic communities' needs are bound to be affected.

2. Equitable cities and reasonable accommodation

We have found a paradox of multicultural practices in land use and urban development, the core area of urban planning. Our survey shows a low incidence of citywide policies for the siting and development of ethnic places of worship, cultural institutions, commercial areas, enclaves, or other spatial manifestations of multiculturalism. Canadian cities such as Toronto, Edmonton, and Richmond have more frequently instituted such policies compared with the U.S. cities in our sample. Yet such developments are plentiful in both countries and are thriving and vibrant assets in many cities. Policies or no policies, cultural diversity has been incorporated in the spatial organizations of North American cities.[14] Relatively low incidence of land use policies in our survey may be a reflection of the land use decision being site specific and thus accommodated through community negotiation processes incrementally and not through city wide general policies and standards.

Cultural accommodation has apparently come about by market and community initiatives on an incremental basis, case by case, through site-specific planning approvals. At the macro level, multicultural planning practice has languished, but at the micro level, it has flourished. Ethnic minorities have created a lively community life in North American cities. This does not mean that their situation is free from problems, including intimations of discrimination. Yet these institutions and identities continue to be incorporated in urban structures.

This is by no means an argument for not bothering with city-wide multicultural policies. The need for comprehensive planning is pressing. The major issues of integrating ethnic

enclaves, commercial areas, and institutions in the urban fabric and reconciling cultural interests with the overarching goals of sustainability, compact urban form, equitable development, good design, economic growth, and fair housing remain to be addressed. A comprehensive set of policies defining the criteria and performance standards of reasonable accommodation have to be forged to allow for mediation among competing cultural and civic goals. It is necessary to establish both the scope and limits of cultural accommodation. The bases of reasonable accommodation have to be explicitly defined in comprehensive planning goals and policies. As a start, sustaining cultural diversity should be among the goals of comprehensive plans and a legal basis for minor variations and rezoning in land use planning, within the scope of public interest, health, and welfare.

3. Restructuring community services and carving a common ground

The differences in access to housing, jobs, good-quality schools, recreation, sports and arts facilities, and cultural services arise both from inequalities of income and of political and social resources on the one hand and cultural and linguistic barriers on the other. Community services are meant to be equitably distributed. Yet ethnic communities and new immigrants regularly confront barriers of cultural predispositions and linguistic inadequacies in getting access to services, in addition to economic and political handicaps. The culturally sensitive mode of delivery of these services is meant to overcome the former biases.[15]

Pertinent to multicultural planning are two values: equality of need satisfaction and uniformity in the provision of services. Practitioners say they cannot play “favourites”

and produce one type of service for one group and another for others. Yet in many services, assumptions about needs are based on historical norms. Feminist scholars have bared many such cultural biases, even in the definitions of a family or household, and pointed out the resulting inequities. Similar cultural biases of what constitutes "need" in recreation, sports, arts, or culture have been found in the provision of such services for multicultural cities.

A city of diverse ethnicities, whose cultural and recreational policies focused only on symphony orchestra and museums, or on baseball diamonds and hockey rinks, is not accommodating the needs of communities, who enjoy Bollywood songs, Latin rhythms or play cricket or bocce. Even the policies regulating funeral services have built-in biases towards Christian rituals to the disadvantage of Hindus, Muslims, and others (Agrawal and Hathiyani 2007). These examples illustrate how cultural assumptions about the form of services affect people's satisfaction. The thrust of multicultural polices in the provision of community services is to uncover such hidden biases and find common ground to equalize outcomes and make pluralistic provisions.

Such changes are happening incrementally both in the market sphere and in the public arena. Wherever ethnic populations have increased in medium-sized and large cities, the pressures of demand have realigned community service policies. Ethnic art and culture are flourishing with the support of cities. Libraries have expanded their multilingual holdings. Ethnic business improvement services are part of many cities' economic

development strategies. In the Toronto area, municipalities have incorporated cricket fields and bocce courts in their park plans.[16] New York and Los Angeles have built cricket pitches. All in all, responsiveness to ethnic diversity can be seen in the provision of services but it is reactive rather than proactive.

Conclusions

Culturally sensitive planning in North America is a work in progress. It is vigorous in large and medium-sized cities within metropolitan regions, where ethnic communities are expanding with immigration, and emerging in small, exurban municipalities. Under the umbrella of national multiculturalism, Canadian cities are more responsive to cultural diversity than the U.S. cities. Yet the Civil Rights movement and lived multiculturalism of the U.S. have resulted in parallel developments in large American cities. New York, Planning institutions, energized by market initiatives, are responding to the demands of diverse communities, more in some places than others. Practice is outpacing theory, which is largely occupied with advocating sensitivity to cultural differences and involvement of minorities.

Our empirical survey of planning practices, albeit of a limited scope, suggests that planning decision-making processes by and large include ethnic interests. The issues that exercise planners relate to balancing ethnic demands against general interests and common objectives, as well as balancing the demands of competing communities. The greatest challenges lie in land use and urban development policies and the provision of community services, where ethnic communities' demands are most concretely expressed.

How do we sustain pluralism in planning policies while maintaining equality of outcomes, without compromising overarching goals such as sustainability, smart growth, fair housing, or job creation? Put differently, how do we construct a common ground that reflects diverse interests, but advances general health, welfare, and environmental sustainability? The complexity of balancing diversity, equality, and public interest is the challenge of planning practice. The strategy of "reasonable accommodation" appears to be the key to multicultural planning. The policy index used in this study has turned out to be a good instrument of measuring multicultural planning practice. It also offers a framework for institutionalizing reasonable accommodation.

Multicultural planning is not a new type of planning. It is not going to be a new idiom of planning. It is largely the strategy of embedding, within the existing planning system, explicit modes of reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and constructing a common ground of objectives, criteria, and standards that balance pluralistic interests. Obviously much more work needs to be done to flesh out this strategy. At present, reasonable accommodation is happening incrementally. It has to be made more explicit and anticipatory.

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Figure 1: Policy Index of Multicultural Planning

1. Providing minority language facilities, translations and interpretation in public consultations.
2. Including minority representatives in planning committees and task forces as well as diversifying staff.
3. Including ethnic/minority community organizations in the planning decision –making processes.
4. Routinely analyzing ethnic and racial variables in planning analysis.
5. Studies of ethnic enclaves and neighborhoods in transition.
6. Recognition of ethnic diversity as a planning goal in Official/ Comprehensive Plans.
7. Citywide policies for culture-specific institutions in plans, e.g. places of worship, ethnic seniors homes, cultural institutions, funeral homes, fairs etc.
8. Policies/design guidelines for sustaining ethnic neighborhoods.
9. Policies/strategies for ethnic commercial areas, malls and business improvement areas.
10. Incorporating culture/religion as an acceptable reason for site- specific accommodations / minor-variances.
11. Accommodation of ethnic signage, street names and symbols.
12. Policies for ethnic specific service needs.
13. Policies for immigrants' special service needs.
14. Policies/projects for ethnic heritage preservation.
15. Guidelines for housing to suit diverse groups. .
16. Development strategies taking account of inter- cultural needs.
17. Promoting and systemizing ethnic entrepreneurship for economic development.
18. Policies/ strategies for ethnic art and cultural services.
19. Accommodating ethnic sports (e.g. cricket, Bocce, etc.) in playfield design and programming.

Figure -2
Adopted policies by the size of cities in the US/Canada

	US Municipalities			Canadian Municipalities		
Policies	Large Cities over 500,000	Medium Cities 100-500,000	Small Cities less than 100,000	Large Cities over 500,000	Medium Cities 100-500,000	Small Cities less than 100,000
Total number of adopted policies	63	91	28	77	58	45
Total number of cities	5	14	4	5	5	9
Mean number of policies per city	12.6	6.5	7	15.4	11.6	5

Source: The Survey

Figure - 3
Incidence of Policies

		No. of Cities adopted a policy						
No.	Policies	US Municipalities			Canadian Municipalities			Total
		Large Cities over 500,000	Medium Cities 100-500,000	Small Cities less than 100,000	Large Cities over 500,000	Medium Cities 100-500,000	Small Cities less than 100,000	
1	Involvement + Consultation	5	7	2	4	3	1	22
2	Representation in Planning Communities	4	7	3	5	2	3	24
3	Participation in Decision-making	5	6	3	4	3	2	23
4	Routinely Analyzing Ethnic Characteristics	4	4	1	4	4	3	20
5	Studies of ethnic enclaves	5	3	1	5	3	2	19
6	Ethnic Diversity as a goal	3	5	1	5	4	6	24
7	City-wide policies for cultural institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Policies/guidelines for ethnic areas	1	1	1	3	2	1	9
9	Policies for ethnic business areas	1	0	0	3	2	0	6
10	Culture/religion for site-specific accommodations	3	4	2	4	3	1	17
11	Ethnic Signage/Streetnames	5	9	2	4	4	3	27
12	Ethnic-specific service needs	4	3	1	5	3	3	19
13	Immigrants special services	4	6	2	5	3	4	24
14	Ethnic heritage preservation projects	5	8	3	5	5	4	30
15	Housing to suit diverse groups	2	4	0	3	3	2	14
16	Providing for Inter-cultural needs	2	5	2	4	4	2	19
17	Promoting ethnic entrepreneurship	2	3	1	4	2	0	12
18	Promoting ethnic art and culture	4	10	2	5	4	5	30
19	Accommodating ethnic sports	4	6	1	5	4	3	23
	Total	63	91	28	77	58	45	

Source: The Survey

Figure - 4
Standardized Means of Policy Clusters

Standardized Means of Policy Clusters per City						
Policy Cluster	US Municipalities			Canadian Municipalities		
	Large Cities over 500,000	Medium Cities 100-500,000	Small Cities less than 100,000	Large Cities over 500,000	Medium Cities 100-500,000	Small Cities less than 100,000
Planning Process (Policies # 1-5)	6.4	2.7	3.5	6.2	4.2	1.7
Land Use and Development (Policies # 6-11,14)	3.6	1.9	2.3	4.8	4.0	1.6
Community Services (Policies # 12,13,15,16-19)	4.6	2.6	2.3	6.2	4.6	2.1

Source: The Survey

Figure - 5
Correlation Matrix

Variables	Sample	Number (N)	r (Pearson Coefficient)	P-value (2-tailed)
Percentage of Immigrant vs. Number of Adopted Policies	All Cities	42	0.533	<0.0001
Percentage of Immigrant vs. Number of Adopted Policies	US Cities	23	0.393	0.063
Percentage of Immigrant vs. Number of Adopted Policies	Canadian Cities	19	0.459	0.048
Percentage of Immigrant vs. Number of Adopted Policies	All Large Cities	10	-0.018	0.960
Percentage of Immigrant vs. Number of Adopted Policies	All Medium Cities	19	0.459	0.048
Percentage of Immigrant vs. Number of Adopted Policies	All Small Cities	13	0.747	0.003

Source: The Survey

[1] These opinions are expressed in planning conferences and in personal interviews. Though there is some evidence in print also see Qadeer 2009. In the magazine Planning, a planning director is quoted as saying, "the whole idea of customer service is based on respecting differences in the population and acknowledging them as positive thing" (Knack 1997). This is a common theme among planners.

[2] For example, a Google search revealed lists of about 100 mosques and 70 temples in the Toronto area; New York has 75 mosques and 30 temples and Gurdwaras; and Los Angeles has 59 mosques testifying to religious diversity of these cities. In each of these cities, new places of worship are being built every year. They would not have come about without accommodation within the urban planning policies.

[3] There is no evidence of pervasive dissatisfaction with the planning systems among ethnic minorities. Public meeting in planning have heated arguments, sometime along ethnic lines, but there is little sense of permanent deprivation among various ethnic communities, except among poor Blacks and immigrants. For example in the Toronto area, every single mosque seriously proposed has been eventually approved, although many were opposed in community meetings, sometime after appeals to the provincial planning board.

[4] There are innumerable definitions of the term "culture." We have taken the most common elements referred in these definitions. For reference, see the entry on culture in Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 2000.

[5] Canada has officially adopted multiculturalism as a national policy and social identity. It is described in the metaphor of a social "mosaic" in contrast to the long-held view of the United States as a "melting pot." Yet, the lived reality of the United States is different. It is an amalgam of cultures with a stronger sense of national identity. That the United States is also a multicultural society is now widely accepted among sociologists and other observers of the American social life. Nathan Glazer, the dean of American assimilation studies, observes, "Multiculturalism must be accommodated whether in schools, in the work places and in public ceremonies" (Glazer 2004:72). Others have described New York, Los Angles as multicultural cities (Davis 2001, Foner 2007, Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996).

[6] Policy index for measuring multicultural policies is increasingly used as a tool of evaluating the effectiveness of multiculturalism. See Soroka, Johnston and Banting 2007.
[7] The questionnaire was pre-tested by a graduate student as part of his master's research work and was reviewed for consistency and clarity (Newman 2008). The survey followed the ethical protocols of survey research (e.g. promising confidentiality) and methodological criteria for validity by framing questions in objective terms and cross checking results with those of the fore mentioned study and other information.

[8] Two sample T-tests were used to compare the probability of mean values of Canadian and the U.S. cities by size for significance. The null hypotheses were rejected at the .05 level for the large and medium-sized cities but not for small cities.

[9] The weighting of means was done to standardize the size of three clusters, as two clusters include 7 policies each and one has only 5, namely, the planning process cluster.

[10] It may be that after a certain threshold level of ethnic population, there is enough diversity of interests to sustain multicultural polices. Any further variations in the percentage of immigrants may have little effect.

[11] The language help was found to be inadequate two years later.

[12] Illustrative examples of inter-ethnic clashes of values include Orthodox Jews' and Caribbean Blacks' differences in Crown Heights, Brooklyn; the conflict between Blacks and Koreans over businesses in poor areas of Los Angeles; and disagreement between Chinese and Muslims over the building of a mosque in Markham, Ontario. (See Lee 2002, Henke and Irish 2004)

[13] The infrastructure of participation includes staff resources for interpretation and translation and negotiations, community organizations and NGOs that advocate ethnic communities' interests, and the ethics of negotiation. This does not mean that there are no dissatisfactions with processes of participation. Minorities are also subject to NIMBYism and a failure to fulfill goals may be described as evidence of discrimination.

[14] A recent and striking example of site-specific accommodation of an ethno-religious institution is the Lower Manhattan Community Board's approval of a 13-storey Islamic centre near the iconic symbol of the current American war on terrorism, Ground Zero of the World Trade Centre. The proposal aroused strong emotions in view of the symbolic value of the site, yet in the end, with the support of Mayor Bloomberg, the Board in a vote of 29 to 1 approved the development of the centre in May 2010. The controversy continues to rages in the media, led by neo-conservative politicians.

[15] For example, if housing code requires that no more than two persons occupy a bedroom, then members of ethnic minorities who live in large, multigenerational families may be effectively barred from rental housing.

[16] In the Toronto area, schools offer equipment and facilities for cricket. There are scores of cricket teams and many tournaments. The city of Toronto has built a cricket field in Thorncliffe Park.