

AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES HELD BY MALE
RESIDENTS OF STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA,
TOWARD HOUSING CODES

By

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PREFACE

Opinions and attitudes are evident by the questions concerning housing codes that are frequently argued. Some people claim that housing codes are not constitutional or legal, that they are impossible to enforce, and that they are not necessary for the maintenance of their dwellings. Others think that they are a necessary tool for slum amelioration, prevention, and rehabilitation. It seemed evident that the people of Stillwater, Oklahoma had differing attitudes toward housing codes since a proposed housing code had not been passed into law for a number of years. The purposes of this study are to determine what attitudes toward housing codes in general are held by Stillwater residents and to identify factors that are related to these attitudes.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Housing codes are not new. They may be traced back to the Code of Hammurabi which was in existence in Babylon 4,000 years ago. Legislation regulating housing existed in China about 1,000 B.C. and in Rome during the days of the Empire. Variations of housing codes have been in existence in this country for more than three hundred years, but the first significant milestone in the development of housing codes was the Tenement Act of 1867, later amended in 1901.¹ During World War I, requirements pertaining to housing increased. Veriller's A Model Housing Law, published in 1914, was the first basis used for establishing housing codes. It was not until after World War II, however, that housing codes became an important method of improving substandard housing. In 1952, the American Public Health Association published a model housing code which provided the basis of many present-day codes.

The Housing Act of 1954, which required a city to have a housing code in its workable program in order to be eligible for federal funds or grants under the Urban Renewal Program, has been the major factor influencing the recent adoption of housing codes by many cities. Before the program started in 1955, only fifty-six cities had existing housing

¹Ralph J. Johnson, "The Requirements of a Good Housing Code," The American City, LXX (June, 1955), p. 147.

codes, but by mid 1961, 493 codes had been adopted. At the end of 1964, the total throughout the country had reached 953.²

A housing code for Stillwater, Oklahoma, was first proposed in 1962. Being a university town, Stillwater has an intense housing demand nine months of the year and many vacancies during the other three months. Since many of the rental units are occupied by students of Oklahoma State University, the university administration is concerned about the quality of off-campus housing because it realizes that unless good quality housing is offered students, they will seek education at other institutions where better housing is available.

Although the Department of Urban Development in 1962, approved a proposed housing code for Stillwater, the city commission did not pass favorably upon it at that time. Public interest in the proposed housing code was evidenced by a study of it which was conducted by the League of Women Voters, but the issue was not discussed publicly again until 1965.

After reviewing recommendations made by the League of Women Voters and the Housing Committee of the Chamber of Commerce and following public hearings on the proposed code, the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission passed a revised code late in 1965. The major difference between the original code and the revision is that the original applied to all dwelling units, whereas, the revised code applies to all tenant-occupied housing and to owner-occupied dwellings when a change in

² Housing and Home Finance Agency, 18th Annual Report 1964 (Washington, 1965), p. 323.

ownership occurs. The current status of the amended code is that public hearings are being held by the city commission.

During the five year period from the first proposal of a housing code to the present, many and varied attitudes have been expressed concerning the proposed code. Because the City has not been successful in passing a code, it is reasonable to assume differences exist in opinions or attitudes toward a housing code for Stillwater.

Statement of the Problem

The study is concerned with the attitudes held by male residents of Stillwater, Oklahoma, toward housing codes and with the identification of factors related to those attitudes.

Purposes

The first purpose of the study is to ascertain attitudes toward housing codes which are held by male residents of Stillwater, Oklahoma. The second purpose is to discover if these attitudes vary according to one's tenure status as a landlord or as a home owner or renter. The third purpose is to ascertain if attitudes toward housing codes vary according to other factors, e.g. occupation, education, age, marital status, length of residence in Stillwater, and prior experience with housing codes.

Assumptions

The assumptions of the study are that people have attitudes pertaining to housing codes, these attitudes can be measured, and they vary according to differences in social characteristics.

Hypothesis

Landlords and non-landlords in Stillwater, Oklahoma, differ in their attitudes toward housing codes.

Description of Variables

Independent Variables

The independent variables investigated in the study were defined as:

1. Tenure status: Tenure status was divided into two categories:
 1. Landlord
Those who rent or lease dwellings to others or those who rent rooms in their homes to people who are not family members
 2. Non-landlord
2. Occupation: Occupations were classified as:
 1. Professional, self employed, or managerial
 2. Clerical, sales, or skilled
 3. Semiskilled or unskilled
 4. Unemployed

For analysis, this variable was dichotomized as:

1. High occupation
 2. Low occupation
3. Education: Education was classified as:
 1. Grade School
 2. Junior High School
 3. High School
 4. College

For analysis, this variable was dichotomized as:

1. College
 2. No college

4. Age: Age classifications were:

1. Under 25 years
2. 25-45 years
3. 46-65 years
4. Over 65 years

For analysis, this variable was dichotomized as:

1. 45 years and under
2. Over 45 years

5. Marital status: Marital status was classified as:

1. Single
2. Married with children
3. Married without children

6. Length of residence in Stillwater: Length of residence in Stillwater was classified as:

1. Less than 1 year
2. 2-5 years
3. 6-15 years
4. Over 15 years

For analysis, this variable was dichotomized as:

1. 15 years or less
2. Over 15 years

7. Prior experience with a housing code: Classifications pertaining to prior experience with a housing code were:

1. Have lived in a city that has a housing code
2. Have not lived in a city that has a housing code
3. Do not know if I have lived in a city that has a housing code

For analysis, this variable was dichotomized as:

1. Have lived in a city that has a housing code
2. Have not or do not know if I have lived in a city that has a housing code

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, attitudes toward housing codes, was divided into three categories:

1. Positive attitude
2. Negative attitude
3. Neither positive nor negative attitude

Each respondent was considered to have a positive or negative attitude if his responses followed one of the two patterns. Those participants whose responses did not fit a positive or negative pattern were classified together as having neither a positive nor a negative attitude.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Attitudes and the Measurement of Attitudes

Thurstone defined an attitude as "... the intensity of positive or negative affect for or against a psychological object."¹ He later alters his definition by saying that an attitude is "... the sum total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats and convictions about any specific topic."² This meaning may be simplified by saying that an attitude is the sum total of everything that a man feels or thinks about a specific topic.

Remmers states that:

"... the term 'attitude' is merely a convenient way of referring to the preparedness that exists within the organism for some future activity. ... such preparedness is neither automatic nor routine, but possesses cognitive and conative aspects differentiating it from habits and reflexes as commonly regarded."³

There is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between overt behavior and attitudes. For this reason when individuals are directly

¹L. L. Thurstone, "Comment," American Journal of Sociology, LII (July, 1946), p. 39.

²L. L. Thurstone and E. J. Chave, The Measurement of Attitudes (Chicago, 1929), p. 6.

³H. H. Remmers, Introduction to Opinion and Attitude Measurement (New York, 1954), p. 5.

questioned concerning their attitudes toward a psychological object, they may not reveal their true attitudes toward it. Attitudes do influence behavior and are a component of it, but they are not necessarily the most prepotent influence. Thurstone says that an individual will not necessarily act in accordance with the attitudes he endorses. Neither is the measurement of attitudes a prediction of what the individual will do.⁴

Attitudes change from time to time and are not constant characteristics of an individual. They are modified or changed by learning experiences. The measurement of an attitude, therefore, does not mean that the attitude will remain constant. Remmers states that attitudes "... may be temporary and changeable and subject to rationalization and deception."⁵

Several assumptions are involved in the measurement of attitudes. Remmers lists four: "... that attitudes are measureable, that they vary along a linear continuum, and that measurable attitudes are common to the group, that is, they are held by many people."⁶ Edwards has this to say concerning assumptions "... there will be differences in the belief and disbelief systems of those with favorable attitudes toward some psychological object and those with unfavorable attitudes."⁷

⁴Thurstone and Chave, p. 8.

⁵Remmers, p. 7.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Allen L. Edwards, Techniques of Attitude Scale Construction (New York, 1957), p. 10.

Opinions which are verbal expressions of attitudes are often the objective evidence by which attitudes are identified. Many methods have been developed and used for measuring opinions or attitudes. One convenient method for large groups is an attitude scale. Goodenough defines it as "a scale designed to show in quantitative terms the degree of favorableness or unfavorableness of regard for a specified person, group or social institution."⁸

Various types of scales have been used; one of which is the a priori scale. In its simplest form, it is a two-point scale where the proportions of agreements or disagreements for a statement are taken as an index of the attitude for a given population.⁹ Qualifying statements such as "strongly agree", "neither agree nor disagree", and "strongly disagree", may be added.

If an individual is found to have positive feelings toward a psychological object, it is assumed he has a favorable attitude toward the object; or if he has negative feelings toward it, he is assumed to have an unfavorable attitude toward the object. Measuring an individual's agreement or disagreement with a number of statements having positive or negative connotations about a specific concept, behavior, or thing is a means of ascertaining his generalized attitude toward the thing.

⁸Florence L. Goodenough, Mental Testing (New York, 1949), p. 545.

⁹Remmers, p. 8.

Housing Codes: Objectives, Constitutionality,
and Enforcement Problems

Objectives of Housing Codes

In the United States, the ratio of existing housing to new units is fifty to one.¹⁰ Many cities in this country have codes which regulate new construction, but fewer cities have regulations for existing housing. A housing code is a means of maintaining a housing inventory. It sets minimum requirements for existing housing and not optimum criteria for new construction.

Ideally, housing codes set standards for the operation and maintenance of existing housing. It is the principle means by which a city can ensure that minimum housing conditions are maintained. To the extent it establishes adequate standards under which dwellings may be lawfully occupied, a code is designed to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. Over the long run, a housing code is a means of slum amelioration, prevention and rehabilitation.

Specific functions of a housing code are: to prevent or delay deteriorating areas from developing into slums, to abate or remove housing nuisances, to prevent the operation of substandard dwellings, and to prevent people who do not care for decent conditions or who are unable to achieve them from maintaining conditions which are a menace to their neighbors, community and civilization.

A housing code sets standards that can usually be placed in three categories: (1) requirements concerning facilities and equipment, such

¹⁰Dorothy Gazzolo, "Role of the Housing Code in Urban Renewal," Public Management, XI (December, 1958), p. 287.

as light, ventilation, sink, bath, garbage disposal, sewage disposal, and water supply; (2) requirements concerning maintenance of the dwelling and of the facilities and equipment, such as sanitary equipment, clean bath, external and internal repairs, and an absence of hazards, dampness, and vermin; (3) requirements concerning occupancy of the dwelling, including general room crowding, area crowding, separation of the sexes, and the combining of living and business areas.¹¹ Occupancy standards may be of three types: a maximum number of persons per dwelling unit, a maximum number of persons per bedroom, and minimum floor area requirements.¹²

Existing housing is regulated somewhat by plumbing, electrical, and fire codes, but such codes are not directed at blight and, therefore, leave unaffected many causes of blight such as overcrowdedness which generally is covered in housing codes. Blight, the physical and structural decay of a city, is characterized by overcrowdedness, dampness, lack of sanitation facilities, and vermin. These characteristics are controlled somewhat by housing codes.

The significance of crowded housing condition has been shown by Chapin¹³ and Loring¹⁴ who found overcrowdedness as a factor contributing

¹¹Gilbert R. Barnhart, Local Development and Enforcement of Housing Codes (Washington, 1953), p. 6.

¹²Dorothy Gazzolo, "Municipal Housing Codes," Public Management, XXXVIII (May, 1956), p. 107.

¹³F. S. Chapin, "The Psychology of Housing," Social Forces, XXX (October, 1951), p. 12.

¹⁴William C. Loring, Jr., "Housing Characteristics and Social Disorganization," Social Problems, III (January, 1956), pp. 160-168.

to family and personality instability and disorganization. Plant's¹⁵ and Glueck and Glueck's¹⁶ studies revealed a relationship between crowded home life and the psychological manifestations of juvenile delinquency.

Demerath maintains that people need good social-psychological housing as well as good biological housing.¹⁷ Bauer maintains that housing must promote mental and social well-being as well as health per se.¹⁸ Miserable and disreputable housing conditions may do more than spread disease, crime, and immorality, they may suffocate the people's spirit and make living an insufferable burden; hence, the conditions under which the people live have an influence on their mental, physical, and social health. The elimination of insufferable conditions is the ultimate objective of housing codes.

The federal government requires a city to have four types of codes -- plumbing, electrical, building, and housing -- before it can receive federal funds for urban renewal. Each of these codes is perceived as an important tool for the conservation and rehabilitation aspects of urban renewal programs. Although many cities have grown without having an Urban Renewal Program, they have missed many indirect benefits, such

¹⁵J. S. Plant, "Some Psychiatric Aspects of Good Living Conditions," American Journal of Psychiatry, IV (March, 1930), pp. 845-860.

¹⁶Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, Family Environment and Delinquency (Boston, 1962).

¹⁷N. J. Demerath, "The Housing of the Psyche," Mental Hygiene, XXXV (July, 1951), pp. 410-417.

¹⁸Catherine Bauer, "The Provision of Good Housing," American Journal of Public Health, XXXIX (April, 1949), p. 462.

as minimum standards for maintenance of human habitats which are attendant with the program.

Controversies Over Constitutionality of Housing Codes

The strongest public support for and the least resistance to is accorded legislation concerned with tenant housing or housing in slum areas. Millionaires and well-to-do citizens resent the idea that their housing needs regulation. This resentment exists because they feel such regulations attach a stigma to their property, therefore, they are more inclined to oppose a housing code. Many of these same people, however, feel it is desirable for the slums to be controlled or regulated. Veiller believes that, to be effective, a housing code must apply to all dwellings; and it should apply in large cities first, then in smaller ones, and ultimately to every section of a state.¹⁹

A zoned housing code is probably the most effective means for preventing deterioration and for regulating all housing. Under a zoned housing code, higher standards of maintenance and repair are required in areas of good housing, and in the slum areas the codes are relaxed. One advantage of maintaining the physical conditions of a good area is that investment is encouraged and financing continues to be available.

Because two areas would not receive equal protection of the code, the constitutionality of this type of code is subject to question under the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment. Housing codes have been held discriminatory in the case of *Bailey vs. People*, in

¹⁹Lawrence Veiller, A Model Housing Code (New York, 1920), p. 16.

Illinois in 1901, and in the case of *Brennan vs. Milwaukee* in 1953.²⁰ A zoned housing code may be upheld as a less serious violation of the equal protection clause in that it would more thoroughly protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the people in areas of good housing for if in such areas only the practical standards defined for slums were enforced, then any area of good housing eventually would become a blighted area. Generally, zoned codes are upheld as constitutional if they promote the purposes of protection of health, safety and general welfare through two different objectives of slum amelioration and slum prevention.²¹ Since zoning ordinances requiring a building in a particular area to be erected by certain specifications usually are considered constitutional, it is also reasonable to have a zoned code requiring a building in a particular area to be maintained according to certain specifications.

The major problem to be resolved in defining a housing code is that of establishing standards high enough to effectively control blight without making compliance unreasonably difficult or economically unfeasible. If standards are too high, they will be nullified by disregard and judicial decision. If they are higher than the minimum necessary for purposes of health, safety, and morals, questions of

²⁰"Administration and Enforcement of the Philadelphia Housing Code," University of Pennsylvania Law Review, CVI (January, 1958), p. 440.

²¹"Municipal Housing Codes," Harvard Law Review, LXIX (April, 1956), p. 1121.

constitutionality are raised.²² A housing code may be declared unlawful, therefore, if it is more drastic than is necessary to abate the conditions, if the owner is not given an opportunity to repair, or if emergency conditions or nuisances to life do not exist.²³

According to Gazzolo, one of the basic principles of local government is "... a man's right to declare his home a castle is subordinate to the general health and safety of the community ..."²⁴ The legality of a housing code comes under the police power of the city since enforcement is related to the protection and promotion of health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the people. Under police power, restrictions which are reasonable, not discriminatory and not arbitrary may be imposed on the individual to promote the general welfare, health, safety, and morals of the community.²⁵ The enforcement of housing codes does not come under the power of eminent domain for the property is not usually taken for public use and the owner does not receive payment as compensation for the property.

Under the fourteenth amendment, the defendant must have the right to appeal for he cannot be tried without due process of law. A review

²²Richard E. Carlton, Richard Landfield, and James B. Loken, "Enforcement of Municipal Housing Codes," Harvard Law Review, LXXVIII (February, 1965), p. 840.

²³Ibid., p. 832.

²⁴Dorothy Gazzolo, "Role of the Housing Code in Urban Renewal," Public Management, XL (December, 1958), p. 287.

²⁵Robert A. Bergs, "Aesthetics as a Justification for the Exercise of the Police Power or Eminent Domain," George Washington Law Review, XXIII (June, 1955), p. 733.

in 1956 of municipal housing codes revealed that the Federal Court and three states have "... established a 'well-nigh conclusive' presumption in favor of economic legislature attacked on substantive due process grounds." In the remaining states, legislation has been upheld if it was reasonably "... related to the protection of public, health, safety, morals and general welfare."²⁶ No cases invalidating a housing code provision on due process grounds was uncovered in the course of the review.²⁷

Whereas, little question remains regarding the relationship between housing codes and health, safety, morals, and general welfare; some question exists concerning the legality of housing codes related to aesthetic qualities. Some housing professionals think a housing code is inadequate if it only makes a structure safe and provides a place where human life may exist. They think for a housing code to be adequate, it must include some requirements pertaining to the aesthetic qualities of the dwelling.

Many courts recognize aesthetic considerations as being within police powers. In the case of *Berman vs. Parker* in 1954, Justice Douglas stated "... it is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled."²⁸ Prior to the *Berman* case aesthetic considerations could

²⁶"Municipal Housing Codes," Harvard Law Review, LXIX (April, 1956), p. 1118.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 119.

²⁸Bergs, p. 731.

not be the primary or only justification for exercise of police power. In the future, more courts will probably consider aesthetic and possibly comfort and utility within the justification of the police power. Aesthetic qualities are a proper part of a housing code in that a housing code, when properly enforced, can prevent an area from becoming blighted and hence becoming an ugly sore which robs the city of its charm.

Enforcement of Housing Codes

The effectiveness of housing codes depends upon the formulation of adequate minimum standards and upon the satisfactory solution to problems of enforcement and administration. Deficiencies in enforcement are the principal reasons a housing code does not accomplish its intended purposes. These deficiencies may be caused by a poor public image of code enforcement, lack of coordination among officials, extended times between the notice of violations and settlement of cases, an insufficient number of inspectors, or inadequate laws.

Inspection of a dwelling for housing code violations without a warrant may constitute unlawful search and seizure of the fourth amendment. According to the fourth amendment, the occupant has the right to bar entry. In the case of *Frank vs. Maryland* (1959), the Supreme Court sustained conviction of the homeowner who refused access to inspectors.²⁹ In the case of *District of Columbia vs. Little* (1950), the regulation was upheld that a warrant be required if entry is refused.³⁰ This requirement seems justifiable since "... protection of

²⁹ Carlton, Landfield and Loken, p. 808.

³⁰ "Municipal Housing Codes," Harvard Law Review, LXIX (April, 1956), p. 1125.

community health would not seem to necessitate a greater infringement of individual privacy than does protection against crime."³¹ It has been suggested by Carlton, Landfield, and Loken that it is in predominantly owner-occupied neighborhoods where objections to entry are most likely to occur. There is uncertainty among those in the legal profession as to whether or not an inspection violates the right guaranteed an absentee landlord by the fourth amendment.³²

Another dispute is centered around determining who is responsible for the violation -- the landlord or the tenant. One practice is to charge the one in direct control of the unit within which a violation exists. It is the responsibility of the tenant if he has exclusive control of the cause of the violation. If not, then the owner is regarded as responsible, however, the landlord should not be forced to make repairs for destruction of the property by a tenant. In Chicago and New York, the landlord is more often prosecuted than the tenant.³³

The existing landlord-tenant law provides the tenant with few practical methods for inducing the landlord to maintain his premises. In some cases the tenant can refuse to pay rent, make the repairs and deduct the cost from the rent, or move. It is the opinion of Carlton, Landfield, and Loken that a change in the landlord-tenant law to read: "Suspension of the duty of the tenant to pay rent when uncorrected

³¹Ibid.

³²Carlton, Landfield and Loken, p. 809.

³³Ibid., p. 811.

housing code violations exist," would raise the standards of much tenant housing.³⁴

In a few incidences, the tenants, not the landlords, are the ones who object to code enforcement because they fear enforcement of the code would mean an increase in rent which would raise their rentals above the level of their means; hence, they would be forced to move.

Summary

A review of the literature revealed that a housing code is a means of regulating existing housing through requirements for facilities and equipment, maintenance, and occupancy. It is a means of slum amelioration, prevention and rehabilitation and a means of alleviating conditions harmful to people.

Opinions and attitudes toward housing codes are evident through the questions which are most frequently argued concerning housing codes. Some people are against a zoned code for they claim that it violates the equal protection clause of the fourth amendment. Others claim that it gives more thorough protection of the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the citizens since it has different requirements for various areas.

Other arguments are concerned with whether or not the occupant has the right to bar entry to an inspector without a warrant, and whether or not the landlord or the tenant is responsible for violations. Also, the legality of a housing code may be questioned if the defendant is not given due process of law guaranteed in the fourteenth amendment.

³⁴Ibid., p. 846.

Because a housing code promotes the health, safety, general welfare of the community, the enforcement of a housing code is under the police power of the state. In recent years there has been some argument as to whether or not a housing code may be justified if it promotes the aesthetic qualities of a community.

Generally speaking, from the public, as a whole, there is little resistance to a housing code for tenant occupied dwellings in slum areas. Owners, however, are resistant toward codes regulating their dwellings, and they often bar entry to inspectors. Although the constitutionality of a housing code is often questioned, it is upheld if it has been properly written and enforced and has as its purpose to promote the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the citizens.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Development of Instrument

A questionnaire distributed by mail was the means used for collecting data for the study. This method of obtaining data was selected because of limitation of time.

In preparing the instrument, the investigator talked with people having special interest in the passage of the housing code prepared for Stillwater and attended public hearings on the proposed code. From these observations, a list of thirty expressed attitudes toward housing codes was compiled. Approximately fifteen people were asked to respond to these statements by "strongly agreeing," "mildly agreeing," "neither agreeing nor disagreeing," "mildly disagreeing," or "strongly disagreeing" with them. When this pre-test revealed that respondents either "strongly agreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statements, the other three levels of agreement were eliminated.

Following the pre-test, statements were clarified, and some were eliminated. Twenty-four statements, twelve expressing negative attitudes and twelve expressing positive attitudes, were selected to comprise the instrument for measuring attitudes. Six people whose attitudes toward housing codes were known to be either very positive or very negative toward codes were then asked to respond to the statements,

and their patterns of response were analyzed. The twenty-four statements were refined and became the final instrument used in assessing the dependent variable, attitudes toward housing codes. These statements pertained to housing codes in general, not to the specific code proposed for Stillwater. Nine additional statements pertaining to the independent variables were included in the instrument.

Selection of the Sample

Men residents, excluding students of Oklahoma State University, were defined as the sample. Students were excluded from the sample on the premise that they would not have sufficient knowledge of a housing code. In addition to the difficulty of obtaining names and addresses of women residents, the investigator used as a rationale for limiting the sample to men the premise that the male viewpoint would prevail in households comprised of husband and wife. Furthermore, it seemed advisable to avoid the complications attendant with having both sexes represented. Controlling the variable of sex to include only males simplified the analysis.

Names and addresses of men residents were obtained from the November, 1965, Stillwater, Oklahoma Telephone Directory. Each name was assigned a number after which a table of random numbers was used in choosing the sample of 500 respondents.

Description of Respondents

Data in Table I describe the respondents according to the social characteristics: occupation, education, age, marital status, tenure

TABLE I
DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Social Characteristics	Per Cent
OCCUPATION	
Professional, Managerial, or Self Employing	77.1
Clerical, Sales, or Skilled	11.4
Semiskilled or Unskilled	4.0
Unemployed	6.9
EDUCATION	
Grade School	4.0
Junior High School	1.7
High School	18.9
College	75.4
AGE	
Under 25 Years	7.4
26-45 Years	45.1
46-65 Years	35.4
Over 65 Years	12.0
MARITAL STATUS	
Single	13.1
Married With Children	70.3
Married Without Children	16.0
TENURE STATUS	
Own Dwelling Unit	74.9
Rent Dwelling Unit	25.1
Landlord	22.9
Not Landlord	77.1
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN STILLWATER	
Under 1 Year	8.6
1-5 Years	30.3
6-15 Years	18.9
Over 15 Years	42.3
PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH HOUSING CODES	
Lived in City With a Housing Code	41.1
Never Lived in City With a Housing Code	29.1
Do Not Know if Ever Lived in City With a Housing Code	28.6

status, length of residence in Stillwater, and prior experience with a housing code.

Of the 175 respondents returning the questionnaire, over three-fourths of them have professional, managerial or self employing types of occupation, have a college education, own their home, and are not landlords. A very small percentage had lived in Stillwater for less than one year. The larger proportions of respondents have resided in Stillwater between one and five years and over fifteen years. Over one-half of the respondents had either never lived in a city having a housing code or they did not know if they had ever lived in a city where such a code existed. Over two-thirds of the respondents were married and had children and the remaining one-third were either single or married without children. Approximately one-half were under forty-five years old and one half over forty-five.

Data in Table II show each social characteristic analyzed in terms of the other social characteristics. The following relationships were found to be significant according to the Chi-square Test.

As would be expected, the majority of the landlords own their home while the majority of those who are not landlords are renters; and, as could be expected, education was found to be related to occupation. People classified as having a higher occupation, as a whole, own their homes rather than rent. Age was found to be related to tenure status, whether or not the respondent owns or rents his dwelling unit and is or is not a landlord. The respondents who have lived in Stillwater for a shorter length of time rent, are not landlords, and are younger. The respondents who have not had prior experience with

TABLE II
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Social Characteristics	Own	Rent	Landlord	Not Landlord	Occupation		Education		Age		Length of Residence in Stillwater		Total
					Higher	Lower	No College	College	45 Years and Under	Over 45 Years	15 Years or Less	Over 15 Years	
Per Cent													
TENURE STATUS													
Landlord	27.5*	9.1*											22.9
Not Landlord	72.5	90.9											77.1
OCCUPATION													
Higher	81.7*	65.9*	77.5	77.8									77.7
Lower	18.3	34.1	22.5	22.2									22.3
EDUCATION													
No College	22.1	31.8	25.0	24.4	16.2*	53.8*							24.6
College	77.9	68.2	75.0	75.6	83.8	46.2							75.4
AGE													
45 Years and Under	38.9*	93.2*	32.5*	58.5*	53.7	48.7	46.5	54.5					52.6
Over 45 Years	61.1	6.8	67.5	41.5	46.3	51.3	53.5	45.5					47.4
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN STILLWATER													
15 Years or Less	48.1*	86.4*	27.5*	66.7*	58.1	56.4	46.5	61.4	76.1*	37.3*			57.7
Over 15 Years	51.9	13.6	72.5	33.3	41.9	43.6	53.5	38.6	23.9	62.7			42.3
PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH A HOUSING CODE													
Have Lived in City With a Housing Code	39.2	48.8	28.2*	45.5*	45.2	28.9	19.0*	48.9*	51.1*	31.3*	53.0*	26.0*	41.6
Have not Lived in City With a Housing Code or do not Know	60.8	51.2	71.8*	54.5*	54.8	71.1	81.0*	51.1*	48.9*	68.7*	47.0*	74.0*	58.4
N	131	44	40	135	136	39	43	132	92	83	68	107	

* Significant at .05 level or above

a housing code are landlords, have attained a lower educational level, are older, and have lived in Stillwater for longer periods of time.

Treatment of Data

According to the number of responses which followed a pattern, an individual's attitude was considered as positive, negative, or neither positive nor negative. A respondent's attitude was considered as positive or negative if his response pattern contained no more than seven responses which did not conform to one or the other patterns. A binomial table¹ was used in determining the number of responses which should follow a pattern in order for an individual's attitude to be considered as positive or negative. If more than seventeen responses failed to conform to either pattern, the individual was classified as not having a definite attitude.

Frequency counts and percentages were obtained for: (1) the respondents' general attitude patterns analyzed by each of the independent variables, e.g. tenure status, occupation, education, age, length of residence in Stillwater, and prior experience with a housing code; (2) each of the twenty-four statements pertaining to attitudes; and (3) the seven statements pertaining to the independent variables. Where differences emerged, the responses were further analyzed in terms of the independent variable, landlord or non-landlord. The Chi-square test was used to ascertain independence between the independent and dependent variables.

¹Sidney Siegel, Series in Psychology, (New York, 1956), p. 250.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS

Data in Table III show the percentages of the respondents who followed the various attitude patterns.

TABLE III
GENERAL ATTITUDE PATTERNS

Attitude	Number	Per Cent
Positive	153	87.4
Negative	7	4.0
Neither Positive nor Negative	15	8.6
N = 175		

Of the 175 respondents, more than four-fifths were judged to have positive attitudes toward the statements, that is, their responses followed the positive pattern for the statements. Only four per cent followed the negative pattern, and the responses of 8.6 per cent did not follow either the positive or negative patterns.

There are two possible reasons why such a large proportion of the general attitudes followed the positive pattern: (1) the instrument did not equally measure positive and negative attitudes; or (2) a larger proportion of those classified in the higher educational and

professional classifications returned the questionnaire and thereby participated in the study.

As shown in Table IV, a representative sample of the Stillwater male population according to occupation and education was not obtained. Approximately three-fourths of the sample were classified in the higher occupational and educational categories, whereas less than two-fifths and approximately one-half respectively were thus classified by the census.

TABLE IV
COMPARISON OF THE SAMPLE WITH THE 1960 CENSUS

Characteristic	Sample	Stillwater 1960 Census
	Per Cent	
OCCUPATION		
Professional, Managerial, Self Employed	77.7	38.0
All Others	22.3	62.0
EDUCATION		
College	75.4	56.0
High School	18.9	22.0
Grade and Junior High School	5.7	22.0

In Table V, the data show individual attitudes analyzed according to the respondent's tenure status, occupation, education, age, length of residence, and prior experience with housing codes.

It appears that owning or renting a dwelling unit is not related to one's attitude toward housing codes. A larger proportion of positive attitudes and attitudes which are neither positive nor negative are found among those not classified as landlords, however, the

difference is not great enough to be significant. More of the higher occupation than the lower occupation respondents have positive attitudes, but again the difference is not significant. Even fewer differences emerged according to age.

TABLE V
GENERAL ATTITUDE PATTERNS ACCORDING TO
SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Social Characteristic	Attitude Patterns			Total
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
	Per Cent			
TENURE STATUS				
Own	75.2	71.4	73.3	74.9
Rent	24.8	28.6	26.7	25.1
Landlord	20.9	42.9	33.3	22.9
Non-landlord	79.1	57.1	66.7	77.1
OCCUPATION				
Higher	80.4	57.1	60.0	77.7
Lower	19.6	42.9	40.0	22.3
EDUCATION				
No College	19.0	85.7	53.3	24.6
College	81.0*	14.3*	46.7*	75.4
AGE				
Under 45 Years	54.2	42.9	40.0	52.6
45 Years and Over	45.8	57.1	60.0	47.4
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN STILLWATER				
15 Years or Less	62.1*	14.3*	33.3*	57.7
Over 15 Years	37.9	85.7	66.7	42.3
PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH HOUSING CODES				
Some	47.0*	0	6.7	41.6
None	53.0	100.0*	93.3*	58.4
N = 153		15	7	175

* Significant at .05 level or above

Educational level, length of residence in Stillwater, and prior experience with housing codes (i.e. whether or not one had ever lived in a city having a housing code) are the variables that seem to be most related to the attitudes of the respondents. The higher the education level, the more frequently positive attitudes were expressed. Of the respondents considered to have a positive attitude, over eight-tenths have a college education while less than two-tenths of those having a negative attitude have had this much education. Respondents who have lived in Stillwater for over fifteen years tend to have either a negative attitude or an attitude which is neither positive nor negative while those who have lived in Stillwater for less than fifteen years tend to have a positive attitude. All of those having negative attitudes have never lived or do not know if they have ever lived in a city having a housing code.

Data in Tables VI and VII show the frequency with which respondents agree with each of the positive and each of the negative statements. The three positive statements with which over nine-tenths of the respondents agree are: (1) "I believe a housing code should apply in all situations where either the individual occupant's or the public's health and/or safety is endangered"; (2) "I believe that a housing code helps to increase the monetary value of a person's property"; (3) "I think, in the long run, a housing code helps improve the beauty of a city." The positive statement which was agreed with least frequently was "I believe it is possible to enforce a housing code."

The negative statements which were disagreed with most frequently are: (1) "I think the only thing a housing code does is to give more

TABLE VI
AGREEMENT WITH THE POSITIVE STATEMENTS

Statement	Agreed With Statement	
	Number	Per Cent
I believe a housing code should apply in all situations where either the individual occupant's or the public's health and/or safety is endangered.	164	93.7
I believe a housing code helps to increase the monetary value of a person's property.	158	90.3
I think, in the long run, a housing code helps improve the beauty of a city.	158	90.3
I believe a housing code offers protection to me as an individual citizen.	157	89.7
I would rather live in a city which has a housing code than in one which does not.	152	86.9
I think a housing code will help keep my neighbor's property from decreasing the value of my property.	150	85.7
I believe a housing code helps to control the deterioration of buildings.	149	85.1
I think a housing code is legal.	145	82.9
I think a separate housing code is necessary even though some of the regulations may be included in other codes.	143	81.7
I think a housing code should apply to all dwellings, owner-occupied and tenant-occupied.	143	81.7
I think a housing code is for the good of everyone.	140	80.0
I believe it is possible to enforce a housing code.	136	77.7

TABLE VII
DISAGREEMENT WITH THE NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

Statement	Disagreed With Statement	
	Number	Per Cent
I think the only thing a housing code does is to give more business to builders and construction companies.	169	96.6
I think the only thing a housing code does is cost people extra money.	168	96.0
I think a housing code is a set of regulations thought up by the rich to force upon the poor.	167	95.4
I think a housing code should apply only to property offered the public in mass, such as motels and hotels.	162	92.6
To me a housing code should apply only in situations which endanger the individual occupant's health or safety, not the public's health or safety.	159	90.9
I think a housing code gives the city the right to destroy my home.	159	90.9
I think a housing code is just one more thing to increase my taxes.	155	88.6
I think a housing code should apply only to rental and lease dwellings and to property offered the public in mass, such as motels and hotels, but not to owner-occupied dwellings.	148	84.9
To me a housing code is an infringement on my individual property rights.	148	84.9
I believe a housing code causes people to lose their homes if they cannot afford to make the necessary improvements.	145	82.9
I believe a housing code should apply only to rental or lease dwelling units.	138	74.3
I believe a housing code gives too much power to one person, the inspector.	130	74.3

business to builders and construction companies"; (2) "I think the only thing a housing code does is cost people extra money"; (3) "I think a housing code is a set of regulations thought up by the rich to force upon the poor." The two negative statements least frequently disagreed with are (1) "I believe a housing code should apply only to rental or lease dwelling units"; and (2) "I believe a housing code gives too much power to one person, the inspector."

Data in Table VIII show that when the statements were analyzed in terms of whether or not the individual is a landlord, a significant difference emerged only in regard to the statements: "I think a housing code is legal" and "To me a housing code is an infringement on my individual property rights." Whereas, the groups did not differ in the direction of their responses to each of the two statements, the proportion of responses indicating agreement or disagreement with the statements differed. Those not classified as landlords agree more frequently than do the landlords with the statement, "I think a housing code is legal." On the other hand, the statement "To me a housing code is an infringement on my individual property rights," was agreed with more frequently by the landlords than by their counterparts.

TABLE VIII

DIFFERENCES IN RESPONSES MADE BY LANDLORDS AND NON-LANDLORDS

Statement	Respondents Who "Agree"		
	Landlords	Non-landlords	
	Per Cent		
I think a housing code is legal.	71.8	90.0	.01*
To me a housing code is an infringement on my individual property rights.	25.6	11.9	.05**

* Significant at .01 level

** Significant at .05 level

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study is concerned with people's attitudes toward housing codes and with identifying factors related to their attitude. The purposes of the study are to ascertain people's attitudes toward housing codes and to determine if these attitudes vary according to tenure status, occupation, education, age, marital status, length of residence, and prior experience with a housing code.

The hypothesis of the study is: landlords and non-landlords in Stillwater, Oklahoma, differ in their attitudes toward housing codes.

A random sample of 500 male residents of Stillwater, Oklahoma, excluding students of Oklahoma State University, was chosen as the sample. A total of 175 men responded by returning a questionnaire used for measuring attitudes.

In responding to the questionnaire, participants were asked to "agree" or "disagree" with twenty-four statements pertaining to attitudes toward housing codes. Nine additional statements were included to ascertain the variables; occupation, education, age, marital status, tenure status, length of residence, and experience with a housing code.

The dependent variable, attitudes toward housing codes, was analyzed by each of the independent variables. The Chi-square Test

was used to determine independence between the dependent and independent variables. Computations were made by the Computing Center at Oklahoma State University.

Conclusions

1. An overwhelming majority (87.9 per cent) of the respondents revealed a positive attitude toward housing codes; therefore, it appears that residents of Stillwater have positive attitudes toward housing codes. The higher the educational level, the shorter the residence in Stillwater, and prior experience with housing codes the more positive were the attitudes toward codes. Attitudes, therefore, seem to be related to educational level, length of residence in Stillwater, and prior experience with housing codes.

2. Attitudes expressed by landlords and non-landlords were similar. The two differed in regard to whether or not a housing code was thought to be legal and to be an infringement on the individual's property rights.

Implications

Even though the City of Stillwater, Oklahoma, has not been successful in getting a housing code accepted within the last five years, it appears the residents of Stillwater have a positive attitude toward housing codes in general since positive attitudes were expressed by a large majority of the respondents. This may mean that people who have negative attitudes are more successful in blocking passage of the code than are those with a positive attitude in getting one enacted into law.

One explanation for an emergence of a large majority of positive attitudes may be that a representative sample of the male population of Stillwater was not obtained. A larger proportion of those classified in the higher educational and professional categories returned the questionnaire and thereby participated in the study. Another explanation may be that the instrument did not equally measure positive and negative attitudes.

Since the length of residence was found to be related to the attitudes, it may be that the respondents thought of the instrument as pertaining to the proposed code for Stillwater, even though the statements referred to housing codes in general. If the respondents had not projected the meaning of the proposed code into the instrument, it does not seem likely that length of residence would have had an effect on their attitudes.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations relative to further studies directed toward housing codes:

1. A larger study, including a more equal distribution of the population according to occupation, education and tenure status, be conducted to see if the same attitude patterns emerge.
2. A comparable study, using the data obtained after the passage of a housing code in Stillwater, be conducted to see if the attitude patterns indicated in the study would be typical also after the passage of a housing code.
3. The validity and reliability of the instrument for measuring attitudes toward housing codes be established.

4. A study be conducted using the condition of the dwelling unit as one of the independent variables.

5. A comparable study, measuring residents' attitudes toward the specific housing code proposed for Stillwater, be conducted to discover if the residents' generalized attitudes found in this study and their attitudes toward a specific code are related.

6. The findings from the present study be used by city officials in conducting an informal educational program concerned with housing codes. This type of information may be useful in the writing, passing and enforcing stages of a housing code.

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APPENDIX

Dept. of Housing & Interior Design
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
February 2, 1966

Dear Sir:

In view of the fact that a housing code is being proposed for Stillwater, I have become greatly interested in how people really feel about housing codes in general. At the public hearing on February 28, you will have an opportunity to openly express your feelings about the proposed code for Stillwater, but right now I would like to know your feelings about codes in general.

As part of my studies for a graduate degree, I am asking a random sample of Stillwater residents to answer a questionnaire, one of which is enclosed. The data obtained from this questionnaire will be used only for writing a thesis report which is required for a master of science degree in Housing and Interior Design at Oklahoma State University.

Your name will in no way be connected with the study since I have no way of knowing who returns a completed questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. For the purposes of the study, it is important that you answer the questionnaire according to how you really feel about housing codes. By a housing code, I mean a set of minimum standards for existing housing.

You will help me tremendously if right now you will take the few minutes required to complete the questionnaire and return it to me immediately, and I will be most grateful for your kind participation in my study.

Sincerely,

Bonny Lay

Listed below are statements pertaining to how people might feel about a housing code. If you agree with the statement, circle the A. If you disagree with the statement, circle the D. You should have only one answer for each statement.

- A D 1. I think, in the long run, a housing code helps improve the beauty of a city.
- A D 2. I think a housing code is for the good of everyone.
- A D 3. I believe that a housing code helps to increase the monetary value of a person's property.
- A D 4. I believe it is possible to enforce a housing code.
- A D 5. I believe a housing code should apply only to rental or lease dwelling units.
- A D 6. I believe a housing code gives too much power to one person, the inspector.
- A D 7. I think a housing code is legal.
- A D 8. I think a separate housing code is necessary even though some of the regulations may be included in other codes.
- A D 9. I think a housing code is a set of regulations thought up by the rich to force upon the poor.
- A D 10. I believe a housing code should apply in all situations where either the individual occupant's or the public's health and/or safety is endangered.
- A D 11. I think a housing code should apply only to property offered the public in mass, such as motels and hotels.
- A D 12. I believe a housing code offers protection to me as an individual citizen.
- A D 13. I believe a housing code causes people to lose their homes if they cannot afford to make the necessary improvements.
- A D 14. I think a housing code will help keep my neighbor's property from decreasing the value of my property.
- A D 15. To me a housing code is an infringement on my individual property rights.
- A D 16. I think a housing code is just one more thing to increase my taxes.

- A D 17. I think a housing code should apply to all dwellings, owner occupied and tenant occupied.
- A D 18. To me a housing code should apply only in situations which endanger the individual occupant's health or safety, not the public's health or safety.
- A D 19. I believe a housing code helps to control the deterioration of buildings.
- A D 20. I would rather live in a city which has a housing code than in one which does not.
- A D 21. I think the only thing a housing code does is cost people extra money.
- A D 22. I think the only thing a housing code does is to give more business to builders and construction companies.
- A D 23. I think a housing code gives the city the right to destroy my home.
- A D 24. I think a housing code should apply only to rental and lease dwellings and to property offered the public in mass, such as motels and hotels, but not to owner occupied dwellings.

Please check the appropriate answers.

Occupation: ☐ Professional, Self Employed, or Managerial
☐ Clerical, Sales, or Skilled
☐ Semiskilled, or Unskilled
☐ Unemployed

Highest completed level of education: ☐ Grade School ☐ High School
☐ Junior High School ☐ College

Age: ☐ Under 25 years ☐ 46 - 65 years
☐ 25 - 45 years ☐ Over 65 years

Marital Status: ☐ Single (Unmarried, Divorced, Widowed)
☐ Married with children
☐ Married without children

Tenure: Do you rent or own (or are buying) the house in which you live?
☐ Own (buying) ☐ Rent

Do you own any dwellings that you rent or lease to others? ☐ Yes
If yes, do you have: ☐ 1 rental unit only ☐ No
☐ 2 - 5 rental units
☐ 6 - 15 rental units
☐ Over 15 rental units

Do you rent any rooms in your home to people who are not family members? ☐ Yes If yes, do you rent: ☐ 1 room only
☐ No ☐ 2 - 5 rooms
☐ Over 5 rooms

Length of residence in Stillwater: ☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1 - 5 years
☐ 6 - 15 years
☐ Over 15 years

Have you ever lived in a city that has a housing code? ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

VITA

Bonny Gay Lay

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES HELD BY MALE RESIDENTS OF
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