

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF LOW-COST
REHOUSING IN KUALA LUMPUR

LATIHAN ILMIAH
BAGI MEMENUHI SEBAHAGIAN
DARIPADA SYARAT-SYARAT UNTUK
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SYNOPSIS

This academic exercise is an attempt to study the social implications of low-cost rehousing in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. For this purpose, a total of 40 households, ten Malay and ten Chinese households from each of the Jalan Loke Yew Phase IV and the Jalan Cheras Phase IIA Flats, were studied. The lives of the households in their former squatter areas and in the flats were compared in terms of structural material and design, expenditure, crowding, health, security, distance to major activity areas and children's educational performance. In addition, friendship and neighbourhood patterns, racial attitudes and the advantages and disadvantages of living in low-cost flats were covered.

The First Chapter touches on the background to the Study and review of literature. In the Second Chapter, the author explains the criteria for the selection of flats, households and respondents, the questionnaire, the problems of the interview and the limitations of the study as a whole. The results are presented and discussed in the Third Chapter. Conclusions and suggestions for the solution of various problems are presented in the Fourth and final Chapter.

Investment in housing, especially housing for low-income groups, is generally viewed as a social or political necessity. This is perhaps not surprising, since housing for low-income groups is generally viewed as a commercially CHAPTER 1 proposition in view of the limited ability of these groups to pay. Whatever low-cost housing that have been built, therefore, has almost always been Government - INTRODUCTION sponsored.

Increasingly, urban planners and administrators are being confronted by City dwellers who are dissatisfied with the quality of life afforded by high-rise, low-cost housing schemes. In view of the Malaysian Government's commitment to bring about rapid economic and social development, housing has received considerable attention in the nation's Five-Year Development plans.

One of the most pressing needs associated with rapid growth, as in the case with other cities, is in the area of housing. The availability of adequate shelter in the form of housing is recognised to have an important bearing on the well-being of the population. Low-cost flats owe their origin to pressures arising out of the limited space within urban areas and the need to rehouse large sections of the squatter population. In Kuala Lumpur alone, squatters comprise at least 40%* of the city's population and the problem is further aggravated by the high incidence of rural-urban migration.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is basically to find out the advantages and disadvantages of low-cost rehousing in terms of dwelling

* This figure is based on unofficial records from City Hall structure, health, sanitation, security, noise, distance, expenditure, children's educational performance, friendship patterns and

Investment in housing, especially housing for low-income groups, is generally viewed as a social or political necessity. This is perhaps not surprising, since housing for low-income groups is generally viewed as a commercially unattractive proposition in view of the limited ability of these groups to pay. Whatever low-cost housing that have been built, therefore, has almost always been Government - sponsored.

However, Government funds, too, have to be allocated with a return to investment in mind. This return must be in the interests of the nation. The project's economic expenditure and whatever has been forgone by the nation must be matched with the social returns accrued. In trying to combat poverty and the growth of slums and squatters by providing low-cost flats, the Government would seek to achieve a number of socio-economic objectives in which pursuit it may even have to incur a deficit in its budget. In the case of low-cost housing, the two national goals under the Second Malaysia Plan are to eradicate poverty among all Malaysians - irrespective of race - by providing suitable housing for squatters and low-income families, as well as to promote racial harmony through integrated housing (Second Malaysia Plan). Planning for housing also includes the provision of essential community services and other needs so that new housing complexes can be as self-contained as possible.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is basically to find out the advantages and disadvantages of low-cost rehousing in terms of dwelling structure, health, sanitation, security, noise, distance, expenditure, children's educational performance, friendship patterns and

racial attitudes. This is done by comparing the lives of residents now and prior to rehousing.

In addition, two types of flats, high-rise and four-storey ones, were compared in order to study the advantages and disadvantages related to different number of storeys. For this purpose, the twenty-storey Loke Yew and four-storey Cheras flats were chosen.

It was also hoped to compare the findings of this study with those of other studies.

1.2 Review of Literature

There have been few local studies conducted on the social and economic conditions of low-cost housing in Malaysia. The statistics Department's 1970 Census provides only information on the physical aspects of low-cost housing such as structural conditions, number of rooms, ratio of residents to rooms and national differences. But such data do not tell us much about the socio-psychological effects of living in low-cost flats.

Perhaps, the most detailed study conducted in Malaysia was Wegelin's (1975) cost-benefit analysis of rehousing squatters in the Klang Valley area of Peninsula Malaysia, including Kuala Lumpur. The study covered three schemes of low-cost flats in Kuala Lumpur, in addition to studies on other schemes outside the city, which the author felt were representative types of low-income housing schemes most commonly incorporated in the Government's housing programme in urban areas of Peninsula Malaysia. The three schemes in the Kuala Lumpur area were the 4-storey Jalan Cheras flats, the 20-storey Jalan Loke Yew flats and the 4-storey Kampong Kerunchi flats. The Kampong Kerunchi flats are resided by Malays only whereas the former two are multiracial.

Wegelin (1975, pg.7) notes: 'rehousing of squatters into Government low-cost housing schemes is shown to bring about substantial improvements in housing environment for the rehoused households, not only in physical terms but also as perceived by the residents. The improvements include sanitation, piped water, electricity, security and privacy in a home of their own'. He measured these improvements by comparing the living conditions of the selected households now and prior to rehousing.

With regard to the impact of racially integrated housing on attitudes toward other races, Wegelin found that interracial tolerance was less in the high-rise Loke Yew flats as compared to the Cheras flats. (In the case of Kampong Kerunchi, the effects of integrated housing of interracial tolerance do not apply as it is resided by only one race). The author arrived at this conclusion by using social-distance scale measurements. However, Wegelin did not attempt to account for this discrepancy in the degree of racial tolerance between the two types of flats.

Residents in the low-cost flats also find that their recreational activities are not much influenced by rehousing except in cases where distance becomes a serious problem. In all the three schemes studied in Kuala Lumpur, playgrounds and fields are built within the vicinity of the complex. Wegelin (1975) found that only a minority of residents in high-rise flats complained of lift trouble although the majority complained of noise and other nuisances related to neighbours. Except for residents who had been rehoused near their former place of residence, there were reports of increased problems regarding travelling distance. Increased expenditure, owing to higher

rents, bills and greater travelling expenses, was also reported.

In his summary, Wegelin concludes that rehousing does bring about improvement in the lives of residents because of better housing conditions and the availability of various facilities and amenities.

Another study of interest was carried out in Singapore by Weldon, Weston and Tan (1973) on "Housing and Satisfaction with Environment in Singapore." The focus of the study was on: satisfaction with the flat occupied, including the floor and location; ease of access and nearness to significant activity areas like place of work, markets and schools; and adequacy and quality of basic facilities and services.

The study reported high levels of satisfaction regarding access (accessibility by bus, etc.), location of the estates, basic amenities, cleanliness, physical conditions, recreation and transport services. However, there were complaints regarding noise, heights and distance. Therefore, the findings are similar to those of Wegelin's (1975).

One of Singapore's newest and largest low-cost scheme is Toa Payoh. Although it is located more than five miles away from the city centre, residents have no complaints regarding location and adequacy of basic facilities and services such as markets, shops and clinics due to the fact that Toa Payoh is a self-contained town with its own shopping complex, market and various other recreational facilities. However, the high levels of satisfaction may also be attributable to the fact that the majority of the residents are staying in the flats on a hire-purchase basis and will eventually come to own the units.

The Asia Magazine of April 6, 1975, carried an article on the effects of low-cost housing programmes in Singapore. In Singapore, the emphasis is on home ownership. The housing programme is also designed to help foster community spirit among Singaporeans. The Singapore Government's housing estates are based upon the neighbourhood principle in which a neighbourhood of about 2000 to 5000 families has its own markets, shopping centre, schools, clinics, playgrounds and parks. Each neighbourhood also has about 15% of its total land area set aside - on the fringes - for light labour-intensive industries which can cater to about 20% of the estates' working population. For every three neighbourhoods, planners provide a town centre which provides major services such as a central post office, library, hospital and banks.

One difference between public housing in Malaysia and Singapore is that the latter has gas supply in the homes. Furthermore, Singapore's public housing estates, particularly those constructed since 1965, avoid the drab claustrophobic and human-jungle aspects that mar most comparable Government-built housing developments elsewhere in Asia and the rest of the world (Asia Magazine, April 6, 1975: Pg.14).

A survey conducted by the University of Singapore's Economics Department (Yeh, 1972) indicated that about 90% of the residents find life in the estates satisfactory and about 70% of those interviewed said that their lives actually had improved since moving from their former homes. The most significant improvements revealed in the survey include sanitation, cleanliness and availability of marketing and recreational facilities.

and never get to know any people. It must be noted here that this may be a more serious problem in Britain than in

Perhaps, one of the most important factors contributing to the success of Singapore's low-cost housing schemes and the high degree of satisfaction among residents is that there is no social stigma attached to living in low-cost flats because Singapore's housing programme caters for everyone, from the very poor to the middle class. This is indeed a praiseworthy social achievement.

One study of social activity in new housing estates in England (Carey and Mapes, 1972) gives some insight into the ways in which friendship patterns develop over time amongst housewives in new housing estates. The authors differentiated between 'friend' and 'visit'. The study concluded that fewer sociometric choices tended to be given to people living in end houses. When sociometric choices were compared between people living in end houses and those living opposite each other, it was found that people living opposite each other had more sociometric choices. Thus, Carey and Mapes (1973, Pg.13), on the basis of their results, put forward an hypothesis that "the development of visiting relationships depends upon physical distance, position of dwellings and how well you know your neighbours". There is also some evidence that children provide opportunities for the development of relationships among adults. This finding is of particular interest as this study also looks at friendship patterns among adults and children.

Jephcott and Robinson (1971) carried out a study on some of the human problems associated with multi-storey housing in Britain. Among the disadvantages are the complaints that one could live in a housing block for years and never get to know many people. It must be noted here that this may be a more serious problem in Britain than in

Malaysia and hence may not be directly applicable to the Malaysian setting. Noise was found to be a problem. Among the common complaints are that there are too many families with children and lifts cannot take more than a family or two. There are frequent lift breakdowns and during the rush hours, people have to wait for a long time for the lifts. Although there is good transport and reasonably easy access to shopping areas, there are not enough buses. Shops within the flats are expensive. Thus, there are recommendations that facilities like shops, schools, clinics and churches be within the complex, etc, their numbers, and the types of flats to be studied.

Sample Other studies which provided the starting point for this study include the 1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, and the 1970 Housing Quality and Cement Housing Needs in Peninsular Malaysia prepared jointly by D.S.Gibbons and the Statistics Department of Malaysia.

In summary, although there are some differences in the findings of the various studies reviewed, yet a general trend in the housing situation can be seen. Residents in public or Government-sponsored housing do benefit from better facilities and amenities. Noise and problems related to lifts and heights are common complaints. All in all, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that physical and social conditions in Britain and Singapore are different from those in Malaysia. As such, any cross-cultural comparisons must be made in the light of these differences.

and the two selected flats were selected because they are representative of such types of low-cost flats respectively. However, the two selected flats are from the works of Kuala Lumpur's future housing programme. The research design is summarized in Table III.

Subject	CHAPTER 2	Chapter	Total
	<u>METHOD AND SAMPLE SELECTION</u>		10

This chapter consists of the following sections:

design, sample selection, the interview questionnaire, the interviewer and the interview. In the design, the author will explain the types of subjects, their numbers, and the types of flats to be studied. Sample selection will be on three levels: selection of flats, households and respondents, based on various criteria. Finally, the author will discuss the interview questionnaire, the interviewer and the interview, and their related problems.

2:1 Design

A total of forty subjects from two low-cost housing schemes in Kuala Lumpur were studied. Ten Malay and ten Chinese households from each of the two schemes were studied. It was decided to include only Malays and Chinese in the study because they account for about 90% of the population in the flats. Due to time and financial restraints, it was decided not to include the Indians in the study.

In addition, it was also intended to study high-rise and four-storey flats. Therefore, the 20-storey Jalan Loke Yew Phase IV and the 4-storey Jalan Cheras Phase IIA flats were selected because they are representative of such types of low-cost flats respectively. Moreover, the two schemes form the cores of Kuala Lumpur's future housing programme. The research design is summarised in Table 2:1.

(Tun Tan Cheng Lock Mansions), Jalan C-15 - Kampong Kerunchi. (see map on the map sheet). Under the Second Malaysia Plan, out of a total of \$171.9 million allocated to the development of low-cost housing in the whole country, \$100 million was allocated to the development of low-cost housing in Kuala Lumpur.

Subjects	Loke Yew	Cheras	Total
Malays	10	10	20
Chinese	10	10	20
Total	20	20	40

2:2 Sample Selection

a) Selection of flats

(i) History of City Hall's low-cost housing programme in Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur's low-cost housing programme began in 1956 when several hundreds of families were made homeless by a fire in Gombak Lane. As the victims were mostly squatters belonging to the low-income group, the Kuala Lumpur Municipality constructed low-cost houses to rehouse the victims and this marked the beginning of an ongoing process of providing low-cost housing for the less privileged in the form of flats.

In 1958, Kuala Lumpur's first high-rise low-cost complex was completed in the Loke Yew area. This was the Tun Tan Cheng Lock Mansions. Since then, similar schemes have been set up in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman (Suleiman Court), Jalan Shaw, Jalan Pekeliling, Kampong Kerunchi, Jalan Bangsar and Jalan San Peng, over a 15-year period. In contrast to the high-rise schemes, three complexes of 4-storey blocks of flats were constructed in Jalan Sungai Besi

(Tun Razak Mansions), Jalan Cheras and Kampong Kerunchi. (see map on the following page). Under the Second Malaysia Plan, out of a total of \$171.9 million allocated to the development of low-cost housing in the whole of Malaysia, \$62.5 million was set aside for low-cost housing programmes in Kuala Lumpur alone.

These schemes range from one to three-bedroom units. Rental is based on distance from the city centre. Within a three-mile radius of the town area, rentals for one, two and three-bedroom units range from \$42, \$55 and \$68 respectively. Outside the three-mile radius, rentals for a one-bedroom unit is \$36 while the rental for a two-bedroom unit is \$47.*

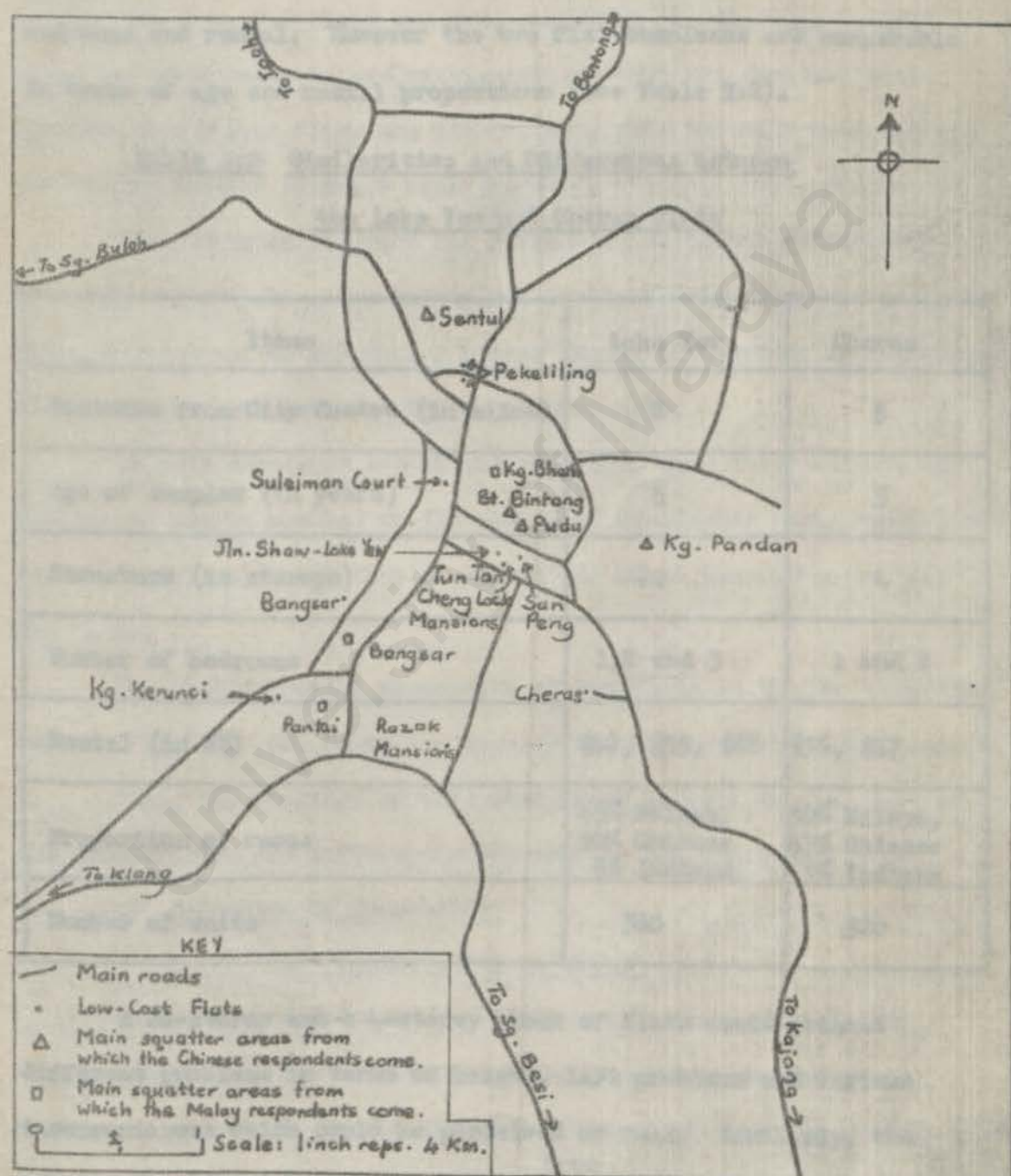
Allocation is made based on the following conditions:-*

- (i) applicant must be in the lower income group (\$300 and below).
- (ii) applicant must be a Federal Citizen and
- (iii) married
- (iv) allocation is by a point system
- (v) squatters evicted from Government land and fire or flood victims are given priority.

All successful applicants are chosen on a first-come first-serve basis or on a basis of extreme urgency as in the case of victims of natural disasters. Applicants have no choice in the allocation of the flats. Allocation of housing units is made as near as possible to the applicant's former home.

* Source - Dewan Bandaraya - Information Handbook, Pgs.47 and 48

MAP 1: LOW-COST FLATS IN KUALA LUMPUR & MAIN AREAS FROM WHICH RESPONDENTS COME



SOURCE: DEWAN BANDARAYA INFORMATION HANDBOOK, p. 8

(ii) Criteria for selection of flats

The Loke Yew and Cheras flats were selected because they differed in terms of number of storeys, location, number of bedrooms and rental. However the two flat complexes are comparable in terms of age and racial proportions (see Table 2:2).

Table 2:2 Similarities and Differences between
the Loke Yew and Cheras Flats

Items	Loke Yew	Cheras
Distance from City Centre (in miles)	2	5
Age of complex (in years)	5	5
Structure (in storeys)	20	4
Number of bedrooms	1,2 and 3	1 and 2
Rental (in M\$)	\$42, \$55, \$68	\$36, \$47
Proportion of races	45% Malays, 50% Chinese 5% Indians	50% Malays, 4.7% Chinese 3% Indians
Number of units	380	320

A 20-storey and a 4-storey block of flats could present different problems in terms of height, lift problems and various inconveniences which could be perceived or real. Similarly, the advantages offered by one may differ ^{from} the other.

Since the Cheras flats are further away from the City centre than the Loke Yew flats, perhaps we can expect the former to face greater difficulties in transport and increased transport expenditure. However, it must be noted that both the complexes are served by public buses. The Loke Yew flats are more accessible as they are located along the main road and are within walking distance from the city. However, the Cheras flats are located away from the main road and are not within walking distance from the city.

The number of bedrooms can affect the residents differently with regard to space and crowding. A single bedroom flat can be quite crowded and hence we may find a higher degree of crowding in the Cheras flats which do not have any three-bedroom units.

If both complexes are of the same age, than the residents in both areas can be matched on the period of residence. This would give them an equal period of time to adjust and adapt themselves to life in the flats.

The similar racial proportion of residents in the two complexes can mean that the residents are exposed to the same racial environment.

Thus, the findings of this study must be seen in the light of the similarities and differences between the two complexes.

b) Selection of Households

(i) Criteria for selection

As one of the main areas of interest in this study is the comparison of children's academic performance prior to and after rehousing, only those households with children who had two or more years of schooling prior to rehousing were selected.

The background information of suitable households was initially obtained by referring to the records of all applicants at the Housing Section of City Hall. This information was obtained from the tenants at the time of application and include such data as size of family, occupation, income, location of former dwelling place and schools, and number of children attending school.

Although actual handling of documents was not permitted by City Hall due to the confidentiality of the information, the filing clerks very kindly offered to help select the tenants who meet all the criteria. However, the author was told that there were cases where application is approved although the applicant is not a squatter. This is especially so in the case of the Malays. Therefore, the clerks were informed that, in such cases, households were to be considered suitable provided that they meet the two main criteria, i.e., not less than 4 years of residence in the flat, and households having children of school-going age.

However, problems arose when City Hall was not able to provide a sufficiently large sample population for the Malays in the Loke Yew flats on the one hand and for the Chinese in the Cheras flats on the other. This was due to incomplete and inaccurate records. Some of the applicants had made use of the names of relatives to fill in the application forms in order to gain better chances of selection. In addition, some of the households, who met all the criteria had already moved away and City Hall did not have a complete record of these cases. New tenants who moved into the flats in 1971/72 were not included in the original set of files and the clerks were not free to locate the new files.

In addition, as the study was aimed at comparing the respondents' satisfaction with their previous and present living conditions, it was decided, as far as possible, to select only those households who were former squatters.* Obviously, the life of a squatter is different from that of a flat tenant. As such, a comparison may yield interesting results in various aspects. It would have been desirable to have matched respondents on former dwelling place. However, the original intention to include only squatters was not feasible in the case of the Malays because many of the Malay residents in low-cost flats are not former squatters and this must be taken into consideration when interpreting the data. Many of the Malay residents in low-cost flats are families of civil servants and the police.

Finally, all households selected must have stayed for at least four to five years in the flats. This was to control for length of residence so as to allow the selected households adequate time to adjust to their new life as well as to enable them to make comparisons between their former and present living conditions and life styles.

(ii) The selection procedure

It was decided to interview a total of 40 households in the study - 10 Malay and 10 Chinese in each of the two complexes. Therefore, 20 Malay and 20 Chinese households were covered in the study.

* A squatter is one who lives in homes built on either Government or private land.

Therefore, a door-to-door survey was carried out in order to find more households who can meet the criteria. This survey also enabled the author to double-check on the households selected by City Hall to ensure that they actually met all the criteria. In the process, it was also found that many of the children had either dropped out of school or had already left school and were now working. Thus, these households now do not have any children of school-going age.

The City Hall search combined with the door-to-door survey yielded a final potential pool of 80 households which fulfilled all the criteria from whom the final 40 were randomly selected. The number of potential households for each race in each complex was almost the same. The random method ensured that the selected households were from different floors and from flats with different numbers of bedrooms.

c) Selection of interviewees

For the purpose of this study, mothers were chosen as the most suitable respondents. In the Malaysian context, especially among the lower income groups, many mothers are housewives and are therefore more likely to be available during the day. Fathers and children would either be away at work or at school respectively. The mother is also more likely to be in a better position to answer questions pertaining to expenditure, savings, children's academic performance, distance, cleanliness, health and crowding. The housewife tends to spend more time than her husband in the complex and thus, she has more opportunities for making friends there. Unlike her husband, the housewife, particularly if she is also a mother of young children, may

be largely confined to the complex. As such, the immediate locality is likely to affect her most. In the case of working wives, they were to be interviewed during the weekends.

In the final interview, all but one of the 40 respondents interviewed were mothers. In this one case, it was a grandmother whose daughter-in-law works in another town and seldom comes home.

2:3 The Interview Questionnaire (see Appendix A).

For the interview, a structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire included both open-ended and close-ended questions. A structured questionnaire provides some form of control over the types of questions asked as well as the replies given.

The interview questionnaire was designed to touch on the following problem areas: expenditure and savings, children's educational performance, racial attitudes and friendship patterns, housing conditions and other related problems and disadvantages of flats dwelling. In each case, the author was interested in comparing these items with regard to the households' former dwelling place and now. (For a full text of the interview questionnaire, see Appendix A).

The interviews were conducted in Malay and two Chinese dialects, i.e. Cantonese and Hakka. Since two races were to be interviewed, it is important to bear in mind the problems of cross-cultural research when formulating the questionnaire.

One of the key problems in cross-cultural research is "ascertaining that the questions written in one language are equivalent in meaning to those of another language" (Brislin; 1973, pg.4). To overcome such problems, the technique of "back-translation" was used. The items in the questionnaire were written in English.

Then, an independent biligual translated the English items into Malay and another independent bilingual translated the Malay version back into English. The two English versions were compared and differences in meanings noted. The original English wording was corrected until both the original and back-translated versions were comparable. The Malay equivalents were typed below the English items to make for easy reference (see Appendix A).

The same procedure was employed for the Chinese dialects. However, the English version was translated into the colloquial form of the two Chinese dialects - a form which is commonly spoken by flat dwellers in Kuala Lumpur. The equivalents were written in romanised form but they were not typed below the English items (see Appendix B). Answers were recorded onto the English version of the questionnaire and the interviewer referred to the romanised copy when interviewing.

Attempts were also made to phrase sensitive questions regarding attitudes in as indirect a way as possible. The order of the questions was also considered. "Earlier questions in the schedule may provide the respondent with information of use in answering later questions. Thus, the order of the questions can affect the answers obtained." (Moser and Kalton; 1971, pg.190). According to Oppenheim (1973), "we ought to start off the interview with some easy impersonal questions." Thus, biographical questions regarding former place of residence, period of residence in the flat, age and status of the respondent were asked first before the details such as occupation were asked. In order to reduce suspicion and fear, no names were asked. Only the status of

the household members was looked into. The questionnaire was designed to take not more than an hour for interviewing. This is to counter for fatigue effects on the part of both respondent and interviewer.

Pilot survey: A pilot survey was conducted in both complexes with 13 respondents of both races selected from the potential pool of respondents not included in the final sample. The pilot survey served the following purposes: to gain some idea of the time which the interview would take, to serve as practice for the interviewer, to find out if the questions were reasonable and to see if there were any other problems related to the interviewing. The final questionnaire was formulated after the pilot survey.

2:4 The interviewer

A study by Jerome M. Sattler on the effects of the experimenter's race on test performance revealed strong possibilities that the subjects could have been influenced by the experimenter's race. However, other variables such as age and socio-economic background may have played some part in influencing the subjects' behaviours. (For further explanations, see J.M. Sattler in K.S. Miller and R.M. Dreger (Ed): "Comparative Studies of Blacks and Whites in the United States:" Seminar Press, New York; 1973).

The interviews for this study was conducted solely by the author herself. This created a problem because the interviewer being a Chinese could mean that rapport could be better established with the Chinese respondents than with the Malay respondents. However, in an ideal situation, it would have been more expedient to recruit interviewers of both races so that the interviewer and

interviewees can be matched racially. Thus, the results must be seen in the light of these limitations.

2:5 The Interview

The interview was carried out in an informal atmosphere. The interviewer introduced herself as a university student who was doing a project on the problems of low-cost rehousing. The respondents were assured of the strictest confidentiality and they were told that they need not answer any questions if they did not want to. The interviews were conducted during the day and each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Rapport was achieved with majority of the respondents who were friendly and helpful.

2:6 Summary

This study is basically an exploratory one and a number of situations should be considered. The author is relying mainly on the respondents' perceptions of their environment, both now and before rehousing. Owing to time and financial constraints, the interviewer and interviewees were not racially matched.

Thus, interpretation of the findings should be made in the light of these considerations. This may be due to the nature of this study which is focused on households with children of school-going age.

There were more working mothers among the Chinese households than the Malay households. There were also more skilled Chinese

Throughout the main text, the terms 'formerly/formerly/in the past/provisionally' refer to former places of residence.

The terms 'present/presently/current' refer to present places of residence.

workers than Malays. The majority of the skilled Chinese workers were employed as construction workers, electricians, mechanics and plumbers. There were no Malays employed in these fields. On the other hand, there were more Malays employed in the public sector such

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented and discussed along the line of comparison between former and present places of residence with regard to biographical data, physical

changes, expenditure, distance to major activity centres health, security, children's educational performance, friendship and neighbourhood patterns, racial attitudes and the advantages and disadvantages of living in low-cost flats.

3:1 Age, occupation, income and expenditure

The biographical data are discussed first. This is to provide some information which would be useful when interpreting other findings.

The present data indicate that more than 80% of parents were between 30 and 50 years of age. This may be due to the nature of this study which is focussed on households with children of school-going age.

As can be seen in Table 3.1, more than 50% of households interviewed have total monthly earnings of less than \$400 with the exception of the Chinese in Chinese where 70% reported earnings of more than \$500. Thus, we can see that although the Government gives

Throughout the main text, the terms 'formerly/former/in the past/ previously' refer to former places of residence. The terms 'present/presently/now' refer to present places of residence.

This confirms reports that many

workers than Malays. The majority of the skilled Chinese workers were employed as construction workers, electricians, mechanics and plumbers. There were no Malays employed in these fields. On the other hand, there were more Malays employed in the public sector such as in the police or clerical jobs. In fact, many successful Malay applicants of public low-cost flats are either members of the police force or the civil service. There were also more Chinese engaged in hawking and sales whereas there were no Malays involved in these at all.

Although this is a micro study and cannot be generalised to the whole country, nevertheless the occupational distribution by race do seem to be consistent with the 1970 Census findings that more Malays are employed in the public sector while more Chinese are employed in skilled jobs in the private sector or are involved in sales. Furthermore, the job segregation in terms of race and place can mean that many of the residents do not meet in their working life and therefore the opportunities for mixing will mostly be within the immediate locality of the flats. This may have some implications for friendship formation and interracial mixing.

As can be seen in Table 3:1, more than 50% of households interviewed have total monthly earnings of less than \$400 with the exception of the Chinese in Cheras where 70% reported earnings of more than \$500. Thus, we can see that although the Government gives preference to applicants whose monthly incomes are below \$300, this may not be so in reality. For example, 70% of the Chinese and 40% of the Malay households in Cheras and Loke Yew respectively have earnings of more than \$500 per month. This confirms reports that many

applicants do not list down all their earnings in the application forms. However, over time, many of the households may have more earning members since many of their children may be working now. In general, it can be seen that the Chinese are relatively better off than the Malays.

Table 3:1 Combined household earnings

Range of earnings per month	Malays (Nos.)		Chinese (Nos.)	
	Loke Yew	Cheras	Loke Yew	Cheras
less than \$200	1	3	2	-
\$201 - \$300	2	4	2	2
\$301 - \$400	2	1	2	-
\$401 - \$500	1	1	3	1
\$501 and more	4	1	1	7
Total	10	10	10	10

However, earnings do not necessarily reflect savings. One of the aims of this study is to find out whether people living in low-cost flats benefit economically in the sense that they now save more. It is possible that residents in low-cost flats may find that their expenses have increased. Therefore, it is of interest to find out whether the increases in expenditure are due entirely to inflation/^{or} to other factors or a combination of factors. The

All of the Chinese households, who were interviewed, came from

respondents were asked whether they were saving more now or at their former places of residence and why.

Table 3:2 Rehousing and its effects on expenditure

Present expenditure as compared to previously	Loke Yew (%)	Cheras (%)
greater	60	50
about the same	15	-
less	25	50

As shown in Table 3:2, more households in Loke Yew than in Cheras reported that their expenses have increased. However, half of the respondents in Cheras reported increased expenditure while the other half found that they are now saving more. The respondents attributed their increased expenditure to higher rents, bills, being unable to save on poultry, vegetables and fruits and inflation. Formerly, they were able to rear poultry and plant vegetables and fruit trees. They also have to buy fuel now while formerly they could collect firewood. These were the disadvantages arising directly out of rehousing. There were also more children going to school now. The most popularly cited reason for increased savings is that there are now more earning members.

Thus, the social returns accrued from the provision of low-cost flats may be weighed down by increases in expenditure.

3:2 Effects of rehousing on the physical environment

A. Structural changes

All of the Chinese households, who were interviewed, came from

from squatter areas where they lived mainly in wooden houses with zinc roofs. Three-quarters of the Malay households interviewed formerly occupied similar types of houses in squatter areas. There are more former Malay squatter families in Cheras than in Loke Yew. This is because the Cheras Phase IIA flats were completed just after the 1971 floods in Kuala Lumpur and Malay squatter victims were almost all rehoused in the Cheras flats. The non-squatter Malay families were mainly from one-bedroom police flats. Although no direct questions were asked concerning satisfaction with structural material and modern conveniences in the flat, nevertheless, considering that the majority of the selected households were former squatters who lived in wooden houses with zinc roofs, we may expect a high level of satisfaction with regard to structural material and modern conveniences.

B. Number of bedrooms, rent and extent of crowding

A person's level of satisfaction with regard to space can be determined by the number of bedrooms which he is used to having in his former home. Therefore, if formerly there were less bedrooms than now, the present home would not be seen as being crowded and vice versa.

Table 3:3 Number of bedrooms by race - past and present

No. of bedrooms	Malays (%)		Chinese (%)	
	Former	Present	Former	Present
1	65	45	40	30
2	30	30	20	60
3	5	25	20	10
4			10	
5 and more			10	

As shown in Table 3:3, less Malay households are occupying single bedroom units now as compared to previously. Therefore, it may be expected that the level of satisfaction among the Malays with regard to space, in their present homes, will be high. On the other hand, the level of satisfaction among the Chinese with regard to space, in their present home, may be lower as compared to previously. This is because 90% of the Chinese households now occupy single or double bedroom units as compared to only 60% previously.

The above suggestions are based on the reported data regarding number of bedrooms occupied in the flats and in the former homes. It would be interesting to compare these suggestions with the respondents' perception of crowding in both their former and present homes. However, perception of crowding is subjective and relative to the number of bedrooms which the respondent has been used to having in her former home.

Table 3:4 shows that more Malay respondents perceive their former dwelling units as being more crowded than their present dwelling units. On the other hand, marginally less Chinese respondents viewed their former dwelling units as being more crowded than their former homes. This finding again suggests that the perception of crowding is subjective and relative to what people have been used to in the past. On the whole, more respondents perceived their former homes as being more crowded than now.

owned squatter huts with more than two bedrooms while the majority of the Ioke Yew Chinese households formerly rented one or two bedrooms in squatter huts.

Table 3:4 Crowding as perceived by respondents by race -
past and present

Respondents' perception of Space	Malays (%)		Chinese (%)		Total	
	Former	Present	Former	Present	Former	Present
crowded	65	40	45	50	55	45
about the same	25	35	20	30	22.5	32.5
not crowded	10	25	35	20	22.5	22.5

It is also of interest to study the differences in the perception of crowding between Cheras and Loke Yew, both now and previously (see Table 3:5). The data show that more respondents in Loke Yew than in Cheras perceived their former houses as being more crowded in contrast to their present homes. On the other hand, more Cheras respondents complained of crowding in their present place as compared to their former one. This may be due to two reasons. Firstly, there are only one-and two-bedroom units in Cheras whereas in Loke Yew, there are three-bedroom units as well. Therefore, there is no resident in Cheras who owns a three-bedroom flat. Another reason is that the majority of the Chinese households in Cheras formerly owned squatter huts with more than two bedrooms while the majority of the Loke Yew Chinese households formerly rented one or two bedrooms in squatter huts.

(i.e. \$36, \$42 and \$48) - 34 - only only 37.5% of households were paying less than \$30 in rental monthly. Formerly, only 12.5% of the

households were paying rents of more than \$50 while now, 30% of the households are paying similar rents (Table 3:5).

Table 3:5 Crowding as perceived by respondents by area:
past and present

Space	Loke Yew (%)		Cheras (%)	
	Former	Present	Former	Present
crowded	65	30	45	60
about the same	20	25	25	40
not crowded	15	45	30	-

There were also complaints that the allocation of flats was not always according to family size. Perhaps City Hall should look more closely into application for flats and allocate them in accordance to family size in addition to income.

Table 3:6 Rentals : past and present

Monthly rental	% of households	
	Former	Present
below \$30	25	-
\$31 - \$50	12.5	70
\$51 - \$70	2.5	30
\$71 - \$90	7.5	-
above \$90	2.5	-
no rent (own homes)	50	-

As can be seen from Table 3:6, half of the households, who were interviewed, formerly owned the houses they occupied. Seventy percent of the households are now paying rents ranging from \$30 to \$50

(i.e. \$36, \$42 and \$47) while formerly only 37.5% of households were paying less than \$50 in rental monthly. Formerly, only 12.5% of the households were paying rents of more than \$50 while now, 30% of the households are paying similar rents (i.e. \$55 and \$68).

Thus, there are more households paying higher rents now as compared to previously. This can be seen as an increase in expenditure. In fact, increase in rents was cited as one of the disadvantages of rehousing. When asked whether, in view of the facilities enjoyed, they considered their present rentals reasonable, all the respondents replied in the affirmative. Higher rents would, thus, appear not to have contributed to dissatisfaction.

C. Sanitation, lighting and water supply

Sanitation: The respondents were asked to compare sanitary, lighting and water facilities in their former and present homes. Although the households which were formerly renting a whole house had individual toilets, all the households which were formerly renting rooms had to share sanitary facilities. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents volunteered information that their toilets were outside their houses. Sharing of sanitary facilities has important health implications because of the greater probability of contracting diseases. Eighty percent of the former homes had either pit or bucket latrines. In contrast, all low-cost units have flush toilets that are exclusive to the use of the household and within the flat. Thus, we can see an almost 100% improvement in sanitation when people are rehoused in flats.

It was reported a high incidence of crime and vandalism in their former squatter areas. There was very little occurrence of crime and vandalism in the areas where the Malay

Lighting: With regard to lighting, more than 75% of the respondents said that kerosene lamps were the sole form of lighting in their former homes. In contrast, all the households now have electricity.

Water Supply: The majority of households formerly obtained water from stand pipes, wells and shared pipes whereas presently, piped water is available in all homes.

Thus, rehousing into low-cost flats has brought about substantial improvements in sanitary, lighting and water amenities.

D. Ventilation, pests, security and noise

Ventilation: All the respondents interviewed in the two areas said that ventilation in their present homes is good whereas only 27.5% reported likewise for their former homes.

Pests: Only two respondents in Loke Yew complained of sandflies in their present homes whereas more than 90% of the respondents in both areas complained of the existence of rats, mosquitoes and flies in their former homes.

Security: It is commonly known that crime and vandalism rates are high in squatter areas. Although the respondents said that there have been a few cases of robbery within the flats, the data indicates that the incidence of crime and vandalism within the flats, in both Loke Yew and Cheras, is very low. The work of vandals was mostly confined to dirtying of walls and tampering with lifts; there were no reported breakages of any sort. On the other hand, more than 90% of the Chinese respondents reported a high incidence of crime and vandalism in their former squatter areas. There was very little occurrence of crime and vandalism in the areas where the Malay

households were formerly staying. This difference may be attributable to the greater amount of co-operation in Malay areas and to the presence of thugs in most Chinese squatter areas.

The lower incidence of crime and vandalism in low-cost flats as compared to squatter areas may be due to the following reasons:-

- 1) low-cost flats are less easily broken into in view of the stronger doors, windows and walls.
- 2) it is also more difficult to escape easily or to rob unseen in a building in which escape routes are limited to stairways and lifts.

Generally, the respondents in both areas expressed a feeling of security; they felt that they were less likely to be attacked in a flat. Although there have been recent newspaper reports of cases of girls being molested in lifts, the Loke Yew respondents said that there have been no such cases in their building. They did not express concern over the matter as they felt that they could overcome the problem by not going into empty lifts.

However, although there has been a low incidence of crime in both Cheras and Loke Yew, nevertheless unofficial police reports indicate that the incidence of crime is higher in 4-storey flats than in the multi-storey ones, probably due to easier ways of escape in the former. It may be that Cheras is a less notorious and more isolated area than Loke Yew. In this respect, it would be interesting to compare the unofficial police reports with Newman's (1973) three-year study of the crime rate within and without public housing buildings in

* This information was obtained informally from police personnel

New York City. Newman found that high rise equals high crime. The crime rate increases with building height and was twice as high in high-rise buildings (13 to 30 floors) as in walk-ups (up to 5 floors). Newman attributes this phenomenon to the anonymity in interior spaces in high-rise buildings. Residents cannot distinguish strangers from other residents and it is also difficult to observe what is occurring in these spaces. In contrast, in walk-ups, an individual knows his neighbours. The differing conditions in Malaysia and the United States may account for this difference between Newman's findings and unofficial police reports. For example, the degree of anonymity in high rise public housing may be lower in Malaysia than in the United States. The structural designs of the building may also differ.

Noise: It is evident from the data obtained that rehousing has given rise to increased problems related to noise. More than 90% of the respondents complained of an increase in noise in the flats as compared to their former dwelling units. The present findings are consistent with those of Wegelin (1975), Weldon, Weston and Tan (1973) and Jephcott and Robinson (1971). On the whole, more respondents said that they have learned to live with the perpetual noise and, in view of all the advantages and facilities afforded by low-cost flats, they said that the noise did not bother them too much.

3:3 Problems of transportation

The respondents were asked whether the transport facilities as well as fares were improved, about the same or worse than in their previous places of residence.

Table 3:7 Transport facilities and fares

Changes in transport facilities and fares	Loke Yew (%)	Cheras (%)	Total (%)
better than in previous residential place	55	35	45
about the same	40	50	45
worse than in previous residential place	5	15	10

Table 3:7 presents a generally positive picture with regard to transport facilities and fares with only 10% of all respondents saying that the present situation is worse than that in their former places of residence. On the whole, there is a high level of satisfaction with regard to the availability of transport and fares in their present place.

More Loke Yew than Cheras respondents reported that transport facilities and fares had improved as compared to their former place of residence. This may be due to the fact that the Loke Yew flats are more accessible and served by more buses. The Loke Yew flats are also within walking distance from the city centre whereas the Cheras flats are located about half a mile away from the main road and are not within walking distance from the city. There are also fewer bus services for the Cheras flats.

Although it is the Government's policy to rehouse applicants in such a way that they would come to live closer to their places of employment, schools, hospitals, shopping and recreational centres,

this is very seldom achieved in practice. In fact, more often than not, distances increase and the accessibility to these essential facilities deteriorate with rehousing. Perhaps, one way of solving the problem is to increase the number of buses serving the two areas, particularly Cheras.

Table 3:8 Rehousing and reported increases in distance to various activity centres

Increase in distance to:-	Loke Yew (%)	Cheras (%)	Total (%)
places of work	15	40	27.5
market	50	20	35
shopping centres	25	35	30
schools	25	60	42.5
playfields	-	-	-
cinemas	45	25	35
places of worship	35	20	27.5
clinic or Government health centre	60	50	55

Distance depends more on the respondents' subjective perception rather than on the actual length of travelling distance even though length of travelling distance is one of the important criteria for judging distance. Thus, although the data show increases in distance to various activity centres, it does not necessarily mean that the flats concerned are in poor locations. This is because the respondents' perceptions of changes in distance are relative to what they have been accustomed to in their former dwelling places. For example, 50% of Loke Yew respondents claimed that the distance to

market has increased. This is because the majority of them formerly lived within walking distance to the market whereas they now have to take a bus. On the other hand, workers from Cheras will have to travel

A greater increase in distance to places of work and to schools in the case of the Cheras respondents is due to the fact that the flats are located about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Kuala Lumpur and about 2 to 3 miles from most of the schools attended by their children.

In the case of playfields, there are playgrounds just below the flats and thus, there is no increase in distance to such areas. The provision of playgrounds within the complex is important in the sense that the children have better and easily available recreational facilities. Moreover, parents are less worried when their children go out to play because there is less fear of accidents and children wandering too far away. Parents can often keep an eye on their children by looking out of the balcony. An important implication of the availability of playgrounds within the complex is that they may help to promote interracial mixing among the children, a point to be discussed again.

It is common for people to have a family doctor whom they may continue to consult even though they have moved away to another place. In view of this, we can perhaps understand why more than half of the respondents in both areas reported an increase in travelling distance to clinics or Government health centres. The data also indicate that more Malays visit Government health centres and hospitals as compared to the Chinese who generally visit private clinics. Although no direct questions regarding family planning were asked, some of the

respondents in Loke Yew said that they practise family planning since the Government Maternity and Child Clinic is located within the complex. On the other hand, mothers from Cheras will have to travel about two miles to reach such a centre. These findings suggest that it may be useful to set up such clinics in low-cost complexes.

Therefore, with the exception of playfields, in both areas, there have been reported increases in distance to various activity centres. Although the actual increases are not very great, nevertheless the residents are affected by the increase in terms of travelling time and expenses. The fact that the Cheras flats are further away from the town centre, no doubt, explains the higher increases in Cheras as compared to Loke Yew.

3:4 Rehousing and Changes in Family Health

Great emphasis has often been placed on improvement in health as a result of improved housing. Table 3:9 shows that all but one respondent reported improvement in health as a result of rehousing. This perceived improvement is probably due to better ventilation and cleanliness, availability of piped water and improved sanitation. As noted previously, sharing of toilet facilities increases the probability of contracting diseases. Formerly, all the residents, who rented rooms, had to share toilets whereas now, all the toilets are of the modern flush system and exclusive to the use of each household. Furthermore, the danger posed by infectious diseases would be greater when there is overcrowding in rented rooms, common sitting rooms and kitchens. However, the reported changes were not compared with the children's school reports due to the Education Ministry's

Table 3:9 Rehousing and Perceived Changes in Family Health

Changes in health as compared to previously	Loke Yew (Nos.)	Cheras (Nos.)	Total
better	19	20	39
about the same	1	-	1
worse	-	-	-

3:5 Rehousing and its effects on living conditions

Rehousing has led to a high level of satisfaction with living conditions. Only one respondent in Loke Yew reported that her family's living conditions have remained unchanged since coming to stay in the flats.

3:6 Impact of rehousing on children's educational performance

Another area of interest in this study is whether rehousing has contributed to progress or deterioration in the children's education. Changes in school performance were measured by comparing average academic performance in the years prior to rehousing and now. This was done by looking at the perceived changes as reported by the mothers and actual academic results as reported by the mothers, often with the help of their children. It is important to note that the reported academic results in the years prior to rehousing may not be accurate as it has been four to five years since then and the mothers and their children may not be able to remember the actual academic results. Moreover, the reported changes were not compared with the children's school reports due to the Education Ministry's

policy of retaining the reports in the schools. Furthermore, although the children in Loke Yew and Cheras were matched on socio-economic background both now and prior to rehousing and they now share the same housing environment, individual characteristics like age, sex and intelligence were not considered. It may be possible that changes in the children's academic performance may actually be due to these factors in addition to the effects of rehousing. However, the respondents were questioned as to whether any of their children were receiving or had previously received private tuition or had attended kindergarten so that allowance for the effects of tuition and kindergarten could be taken into consideration when interpreting the data. But perhaps what is more important is the perception of the respondents because when people perceive an improvement, it suggests that they are satisfied.

Table 3:10 Changes in children's educational performance

Changes in educational performance	Reported (%)		Perceived (%)		Total	
	Loke Yew	Cheras	Loke Yew	Cheras	Reported	Perceived
improved	50	70	70	80	60	75
about the same	40	25	10	15	32.5	12.5
worsened	10	5	20	5	7.5	12.5

Perception is subjective and hence the perceived answers may not correspond with the children's actual performance. Thus, when we compare actual data and the perceived data, as seen in Table 3:10, there may be a discrepancy. In a way, having two sets of data enables

us to compare both statements regarding actual as well as perceived changes.

In comparing the reported educational performance of the children prior to rehousing and now it was found that there were more children who had actually made improvements in their studies.

Respondents attributed improvements in their childrens' education to the following reasons (in order of preference):-

- 1) a generally better environment with good ventilation and cleanliness.
 - 2) better facilities like electricity.
 - 3) for those who were formerly renting rooms, a family of the Malay household house of their own means greater privacy and more space. The mothers can also maintain a stricter control over their children's movements.
- On the other hand, parents who perceived a decline in their childrens' educational performance complained that noise and the attraction of the nearby playground as well as too much mixing have led to a decline in their childrens' educational performance.

On the whole, rehousing into low-cost flats would appear to have a positive impact on childrens' educational performance.

3:7 Impact of rehousing on friendship patterns

It is of interest to examine the impact of rehousing on the maintenance of old friendships and the formation of new ones. For instance, do people still keep up their friendships by travelling great distances to visit old friends or do they feel that the expense, time and distance do not justify regular visits and hence seek new

friends in the flats? Do they feel that it is more practical to have new and close friends in the flats on whom they can depend in times of need rather than travelling some distance to seek the help of old friends?

Generally, about 70% of the respondents reported that their children's closest friends live within the complex. This suggests a high adaptability level.

More Cheras than Loke Yew respondents reported that their closest friends live within the complex. We may get a better picture if we look at the areas from which the respondents of the two complexes come (see Map 1). In the case of Cheras, the majority of the Malay households in the study came from Kampong Bharu, Pantai and Bangsar while the majority of the Chinese households came from Kampong Pandan and Sentul. Thus, the Cheras respondents live among old friends; their closest friends live not only within the complex but are old friends as well. In the case of Loke Yew, however, both the Malays and Chinese came from a variety of areas and, thus, may be expected to need more adaptation than their counterparts in Cheras.

Since both the Cheras and Loke Yew respondents are matched for period of residence, the greater variety of places from which the Loke Yew respondents come explains, at least in part, the fact that more Loke Yew than Cheras respondents have close friends outside the complex. Although people are generally mistrustful of changes, the data indicate a high level of adaptability.

3:8 Effects of racially integrated housing on attitudes

One of the aims of the Government in providing racially

integrated housing is to foster greater inter-racial tolerance among the residents. It is therefore of interest to see how far and through what channels (e.g. schools, children, visits) this aim has been realised. If the findings reveal that certain channels are more popular than others, then perhaps greater efforts should be taken to develop these channels. Education, too, may be an important initiator of racial mixing, especially if we consider the educational background of the children and compare this with the racial composition of their friends.

Nearly 90% of respondents said that they came from areas which were either dominated by at least one ethnic group or settled solely by one ethnic group. This ethnic compartmentalization in their former places of residence may not be able to promote as much interracial mixing and tolerance as may be possible in a racially integrated housing scheme where close physical contact between various races is inevitable.

This study briefly deals with two aspects of racially integrated housing : reported differences in social contact and differences in attitude toward other races. A common criticism is that public housing in the form of flats is not conducive to neighbourliness as the residents tend to be confined to their flats. Thus, of interest also is the extent of neighbourliness. Neighbours in this study are arbitrarily taken to include those families living two to three doors away on either side of the respondent.

Table 3:11 How well respondents say they know their neighbours

responses	Malays (%)		Chinese (%)		Total	
	Loke Yew	Cheras	Loke Yew	Cheras	Loke Yew	Cheras
well	70	100	60	70	65	85
not very well	30	-	40	30	35	15
not at all	-	-	-	-	-	-

The impact of multistorey housing on the extent of neighbourliness is clear. As shown in Table 3:11 more than two-thirds of the respondents, with the exception of the Chinese in Loke Yew, reported knowing their neighbours well. No respondent said that she did not know her neighbours at all. The respondents who said that they did not know their neighbours well were asked why this was so. The most frequently cited reasons (in order of frequency) were that:-

- 1) they seldom visit each other.
- 2) they were not free.
- 3) they were afraid of offending their neighbours.
- 4) they were afraid that they would mix with the wrong neighbours.
- 5) they were afraid that too many exchange visits might rob them of their privacy.

More Chinese than Malay respondents said that they were not free. It was also observed that the Malay families appeared to be less busy than their Chinese counterparts. They were seen more often in each other's houses. On the other hand, the Chinese families tend to remain indoors most of the time, especially those who lived on the upper floors. This

difference may be attributable to the higher crime rate in the former Chinese squatter areas as well as to the greater sociability among the Malays.

On the other hand, respondents who reported knowing their neighbours well often cited the following reasons (in order of frequency):-

- 1) exchanging visits, especially during the festive season.
- 2) they help each other in times of need.
- 3) their children visit and play with each other.
- 4) sometimes they share food and necessities.

The data suggest that the major channels through which the respondents get to know their neighbours are exchange visits, mutual help and the friendships of their children. There are also racial differences with regard to the reasons given. For example, more Malays than Chinese respondents considered mutual help, sharing of food and necessities and exchange visits during the festive season as some of the ways in which they get to know their neighbours well. This may be a reflection of Malay Kampong life which places emphasis on co-operation. Thus, the background of the Malays may have influenced their present habits and values. On the other hand, the Chinese seem very adamant about maintaining their privacy and claim that knowing too many neighbours may deprive them of their privacy due to frequent visits.

Table 3:11, which shows differences in neighbourhood patterns, both by race and by area indicates that more Malays than Chinese and

more Cheras than Loke Yew respondents reported knowing their neighbours well. Although the numbers are too small to yield any conclusive findings, nevertheless, the racial differences observed do suggest some interesting trends. From the interview data and from the author's observation, the Malays seem to make friends more easily and exchange visits more often than the Chinese; it would appear that the Malays are more friendly towards their neighbours than the Chinese. Throughout the interviews, the Malays appear to be more free and Malay respondents were often found in a neighbour's home. The Malays too have a tendency of leaving their doors open. In contrast the Chinese were often busy indoors and most Chinese homes had closed doors. Closed doors can be a barrier to communication and hence the formation of friendships. As noted previously this racial difference may be due to conditions in their former places of residence. The Chinese in squatter areas often kept their doors locked because of the higher incidence of crime there. On the other hand, the Malays in the kampongs tend to be more cooperative regarding the question of security and hence their doors are kept open more often. The Malays are also more sociable. The greater sociability of the Malays was cited as a contributory factor.

More Cheras than Loke Yew respondents report knowing their neighbours well. If the Malays are more sociable than the Chinese, then there should have been more Malays in Loke Yew reporting knowing their neighbours well. However, fewer Malays in Loke Yew than in Cheras answered in the affirmative. Thus, a probable explanation for this intra-racial difference lies, at least in part, in the

structural design of the buildings.

As compared to a twenty-storey block of flats, a four-storey block creates a more closely knit and cosier atmosphere. These factors may help to facilitate the formation of friendships. The smaller number of storeys does not obstruct vision vertically. People find that they can greet their neighbours easily from their own floors. In the limited area, people find that they know almost everyone. Moreover, in a four-storey block of flats the residents feel that they can wander safely along the corridors to visit a friend. Parents are also not afraid of leaving their doors open for their children to run and play along the corridors and even to run into a neighbour's house. In passing, it is suggested that children can be good initiators of friendship formation, as can be seen from the number of respondents who cited the friendships of their children as one of their reasons for getting to know their neighbours well (a point to be further discussed in a later section). It is also convenient to visit friends as there are only a few flights of steps to climb.

On the other hand, a twenty-storey block of flats is a huge structure in the eyes of the residents. It is unsafe to wander along the corridors because of the height. It was also observed that doors were often kept locked; hence people seldom get a chance to greet each other through the open door. Children are not allowed to run and play along the corridors and are kept indoors more often. There is, thus, less opportunity for the children and their parents to get to know each other. The greater number of storeys and long waits for the lift may also deter residents from visiting friends living many floors away often.

The data also indicate that the neighbours, with whom visits were most frequently exchanged, were not restricted to those living on the same floor. In Loke Yew, however, 80% of the Chinese respondents said that the neighbours with whom they most frequently exchanged visits were from the same floor, furthermore 40% of them claimed that they only knew Chinese families well. This finding is consistent with the earlier finding that a sizeable number of the Loke Yew Chinese do not know their neighbours well.

In contrast, only one Malay respondent in Loke Yew claimed that she only visited and received Malay neighbours. This may suggest that the Malays adapt better to racially integrated housing schemes. Alternatively, since they were interviewed by a Chinese, it is possible that the Malays gave more polite answers.

Table 3:12 Extent of interracial mixing : present as compared to previously

responses	Malays (%)		Chinese (%)	
	Loke Yew	Cheras	Loke Yew	Cheras
mixing more with other races	70	80	70	70
moving here has made no difference	30	20	30	30
mixing less with people of other races	-	-	-	-

Although a high percentage of respondents said that they were mixing more with people of other races at their present dwelling places as compared to previously, it would nevertheless, be noted that the majority considered mixing as 'getting acquainted' and that such

mixing does not necessarily lead to social visits and close friendships.

It is however possible that the respondents are now more aware and tolerant of the other races. The most common reasons given for the greater interracial mixing (in order of frequency) are as follows:-

- 1) they meet on the corridors, lifts, staircase,
buses and in the market.
- 2) they get to know the parents of the friends of
their children who study and play together.
- 3) they live on the same floor and block.
- 4) receiving invitations to open-houses during the
festive seasons.
- 5) they get to know their fellow-tenants through
associations and the rukun tetangga.

The present findings suggest that racially integrated housing can

bring people of all races closer together. The residents are inevitably brought closer together when they live in the same block of flats and meet each other frequently in common activity areas.

When the residents meet in the market place or on buses, they find that they are not strangers and may perhaps then do their marketing or travel together. These, in turn, foster closer relations. Integrated housing may not generate immediate rejection of ideas of racial

prejudice or discrimination but at least, it may promote greater interracial awareness and tolerance. It may also be said that children are an important link in the formation of interracial friendships. This observation is consistent with an earlier one in which many of the respondents said that they get to know their

neighbours through their children.

On the other hand, the majority of the respondents who felt that moving to a racially integrated housing complex has made no difference to the extent of interracial mixing gave the following reasons (in order of frequency):-

- 1) fear of mixing as they do not understand the customs of other races and thus may offend them.
- 2) they personally do not like to mix with other races.
- 3) the language barrier.
- 4) they fear that too much familiarity may lead to quarrels and unwanted interference.

Respondents were also asked about their views on their children mixing interracially.

Table 3:13 Mothers' attitudes toward interracial mixing

Mothers' responses interracial mixing	Malays (%)		Chinese (%)		Total
	Loke Yew	Cheras	Loke Yew	Cheras	Loke Yew and Cheras
I like it and would encourage it	70	80	50	70	67.5
I do not bother	10	20	30	30	22.5
I do not like and would discourage it	20	-	20	-	10

Table 3:13 shows a generally positive picture with two-thirds of all respondents saying that they like and would encourage their children to mix interracially.

Table 3:13 also shows that a high percentage of respondents in Cheras had positive attitudes. None of the Cheras respondents had

negative attitudes with regard to their children mixing interracially. In Loke Yew, however, 70% of the Malay and only 50% of the Chinese respondents had positive attitudes and 20% of both Malay and Chinese respondents actually had negative attitudes.

By questioning the respondents on who their children's closest friends were, it was possible to get some indication of the racial composition of such friendships. Eighty percent of all respondents said that their children's closest friends come from the same complex; 55% indicated that their children's closest friends were those who lived in the same complex and go to the same school as their children. Less than 10% reported that their children's closest friends were of the same race while 37.5% claimed that their children's closest friends were of all races. In two cases, the children still maintained close friendships with friends in their former place of residence. Most of the children who attended English-medium (national schools) have friends of all races. The fact that many Chinese and some Malay children attend vernacular schools may explain the fact that some of the children's closest friends are of the same race (see Table 3:14).

Table 3:14. Medium of schools attended by the children from all the selected households

Medium of school	Malay (Nos.)	Chinese (Nos.)
Vernacular	8	31
National Type	56	33

Finally, an overall picture of the implications of racially integrated housing was obtained by asking the respondents about the advantages and disadvantages of staying in a multi-racial housing

complex. The main advantages the respondents cited (in order of preference) were:-

- 1) it gives both the adults and children a chance to get to know and mix with other races (67.5%).
- 2) they make more friends, regardless of race (10%).
- 3) the adults get to know each other through one another's children. (6.7%)
- 4) an integrated, closely knit complex enables them to understand the lives of others and to live with them in harmony. (6.7%)

With regard to the disadvantages, respondents said that they find the housing complex to be a little too integrated and thus it is difficult to adjust to everyone. Each race has its own customs and habits. For example, the Indians and Malays tend to be a little too noisy in the morning when they pound their spices. The noise can sometimes be heard by those living above and below. This is especially so during the Puasa (fasting) month. The Malays too can be quite noisy when they take their early morning bath. The Chinese, on the other hand, tend to tune their Redifusion sets a little too loud. There was also a comment that Indians can be a little dirty at times whereas the Malay are the cleanest among the three races.

In summary, there were more positive than negative comments with regard to life in integrated housing complexes. The respondents felt that they had to adjust themselves to an environment that is completely different from their former places of residence. The residents come from areas where the dominant race was the same as their own whereas now they have to live in a multi-racial complex. Such

complexes provide greater opportunities for social contact among the races since there is physical proximity.

Thus, racially integrated housing may have important implications: greater contact possibilities and racial tolerance. Overall, there is a high degree of adaptation and racial understanding. People do not see a situation in which they have to live with other races as being a problem but rather as a matter of how well they can adapt themselves. On the comparative level, a marked difference in racial attitude is noticed between the respondents in Loke Yew and Cheras. Thus, the objective of providing racially integrated housing would appear to be achieved although the tenants in Cheras would appear to have adapted themselves more favourably in this respect than their Loke Yew counterparts.

3:9 The advantages and disadvantages of living in low-cost flats

Finally, respondents were also asked to list what they considered to be the general advantages and disadvantages of living in low-cost flats. The answers may suggest the physical, social and racial implications of the Government's low-cost housing programme.

3:10 The main advantages of living in low-cost flats as cited (in order of frequency) were:-

- 1) there are good and adequate facilities (70%).
- 2) they are clean and bright (70%).
- 3) they are airy and the ventilation is good (35%).
- 4) they get to know and mix with other races (35%).
- 5) the location and environment are good (27.5%).
- 6) there is no security problem (27.5%).

The main disadvantages of living in low-cost flats as viewed by the respondents (in order of frequency) were:-

- 1) the problem of noise (82.5%).
- 2) lift failures (65% of Loke Yew respondents).
- 3) increased expenditure because they are now no longer self-supporting in items like poultry, fruits and vegetables (45%).
- 4) higher rents and bills (42.5%).
- 5) lack of privacy (40%).
- 6) flats are unaesthetic because of the lack of greenery and variation in the design of the flats.
- 7) problems arising from heights - among the Loke Yew respondents (30% of Loke Yew respondents).
- 8) there is not enough space for functions like weddings and funerals (22.5%).

It would appear that, from the reasons listed above, the advantages of living in low-cost flats far outweigh the disadvantages. This indicates a high level of satisfaction.

3:10 Summary

Low-cost rehousing has brought about improvements with regard to structural material and design, cleanliness, health, ventilation, security, and amenities like sanitation and electricity. However distance to major activity areas has increased. Rehousing has resulted in heavier expenditure in terms of higher rents, bills and the need to buy things which the residents were formerly able to produce for themselves. Crowding is less of a problem among the

Malays as compared to the Chinese. In terms of area, the degree of crowding in perceived terms is lesser in Loke Yew than in Cheras.

There is a favourable picture with regard to the impact of rehousing on children's educational performance, as perceived by their mothers.

The majority of respondents reported that their closest friends live within the complex, suggesting a high adaptability level. However,

neighbourhood patterns differ by race and area, with more Malay than Chinese and more Cheras than Loke Yew respondents reporting that they

know their neighbours well. Rehousing has also generated greater awareness and tolerance among the various races. In general, there

is a high level of satisfaction with the life afforded by racially integrated low-cost housing and the advantages far outweigh the

disadvantages.

looking at structural material and design, expenditure, children's educational performance, health, security and distance to major activity centres in former and present places of residence, friendship and neighbourhood patterns, racial attitudes and the advantages and disadvantages of living in low-cost flats.

It was found that, as compared with the former home, low-cost housing certainly offers better facilities in terms of structural material, sanitation, general hygiene, electricity, ventilation, all of which must, at least in part, have contributed to actual and perceived improvements in health and living conditions as well as children's educational performance. These findings are consistent with those of Negelin (1975), Weldon, Wenton and Tan (1975), and Yeh (1978).

Although there is a high level of satisfaction with regard to access and location, nevertheless, as compared to their former places

disadvantages with regard to the security problem in both Cheras and Loke Yew, nevertheless, according to unofficial police reports indicate

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, a summary of the general findings is presented. The findings are compared with those of other related studies. Differences by race and dwelling area are also considered. The implications of the study for future research are discussed as well as suggestions for improvements in the various problem areas.

A total of forty households, ten Malay and ten Chinese households from each of the twenty-storey Loke Yew and the four-storey Cheras flats, were covered in the study. The author studied a range of topics looking at structural material and design, expenditure, children's educational performance, health, security and distance to major activity centres in former and present places of residence, friendship and neighbourhood patterns, racial attitudes and the advantages and disadvantages of living in low-cost flats.

It was found that, as compared with the former homes, low-cost housing certainly offers better facilities in terms of structural material, sanitation, general hygiene, electricity, ventilation, all of which must, at least in part, have contributed to actual and perceived improvements in health and living conditions as well as children's educational performance. These findings are consistent with those of Wegelin (1975), Weldon, Weston and Tan (1973), and Yeh (1972).

Although there is a high level of satisfaction with regard to access and location, nevertheless, as compared to their former places differences with regard to the security problem in both Cheras and Loke Yew, nevertheless, according to unofficial police reports indicate

of residence, the present places of residence have, on the whole, incurred heavier travelling expenses. This is particularly so in the case of the Cheras flats which are located further away from the city centre than are the Loke Yew flats. Increases in travelling expenditure were also noted by Wegelin (1975) and Weldon, Weston and Tan (1973). The increases in travelling expenditure may be attributable to the fact that most of the residents have come to live further away from the city centre as a result of rehousing. There are also a few earning members of the households studied who have changed their jobs since moving to the flats and their new places of work are now further away from their homes.

Expenses have also increased, not only because of inflation but also because of the payment of higher rents and bills, and the need of having to buy poultry, fruits and vegetables which the respondents were formerly able to produce for themselves. This can be said to amount to a higher cost of living. Similar findings were reported by Wegelin (1975) who studied the implications of low-cost rehousing in the Loke Yew, Cheras and Kampong Kerunchi flats in Kuala Lumpur.

There is a general feeling of security among the respondents. The incidence of crime and vandalism in the flats is lower than in the former squatter areas of the respondents. The incidence of crime and vandalism was higher in the Chinese than in Malay squatter areas. This discrepancy may be attributable to the presence of more thugs in Chinese squatter areas as well as to greater cooperation among the Malays. Wegelin (1975) also concluded, from his findings, that there is a very low incidence of crime and vandalism in the flats he studied as compared to that in squatter areas. Although there were no reported differences with regard to the security problem in both Cheras and Loke Yew, nevertheless, according to unofficial police reports indicate

that the incidence of crime appears to be higher in the 4-storey Cheras flats than in the 20-storey Loke Yew flats. This discrepancy may be due to the easier escape routes in the former and also to probable location in a more notorious and more isolated area. However, the police reports would appear to run counter to the findings in Newman's (1973) study of crime rates in public housing areas in New York City. Newman found that high-rise equals high crime, probably because of greater anonymity in the high-rise buildings. This discrepancy between Newman's (1973) findings and the unofficial police reports may be due to the different situations in Malaysia and the United States.

Racially integrated low-cost housing can have a strong potential for the fostering of racial harmony owing to the proximity of the people to one another. When people of various races of similar socio-economic backgrounds live close together in the same block of flats, there is a greater likelihood of them being brought closer together and becoming more aware and tolerant of the other races. In a well-known study, Deutsch and Collins (1951) found that when black and white Americans of the same socio-economic group were housed in integrated buildings, the whites had more positive attitudes towards the blacks. The extent of neighbourliness, inclusive of interracial neighbourliness and friendship formation, in this study, is encouraging. These findings are consistent with those of Wegelin's (1975) study. Wegelin found that there was more interracial mixing in the multiracial Loke Yew and Cheras flats which he studied as compared to the respondents' former squatter areas. However, Wegelin did not find any increase in interracial mixing in the monoracial Kampong Kerunchi flats resided by Malays.

Although at present there is only greater interracial awareness and tolerance, nevertheless it may be suggested that in the years to come, there may be greater interracial mixing.

There were also differences in racial attitudes and neighbourliness by race and by area. More Malay than Chinese and more Cheras than Loke Yew respondents mix interracially and know their neighbours well. The racial differences may be attributable, at least in part, to the situational differences in the respondents' former places of residence as well as to the greater sociability among the Malays. The area differences may be explained in terms of the number of storeys as well as the areas from which the respondents come. A similar finding with regard to a lesser degree of interracial mixing in Loke Yew as compared to Cheras was expressed by Wegelin (1975). However Wegelin offered no explanations for this discrepancy.

From the findings, it would seem that children are an important link in friendship formation among the parents since parents often get to know one another through their children. The location of the playgrounds within the complex also serve to bring children of all races together.

The main advantages of living in low-cost flats are the modern conveniences, cleanliness, ventilation and the opportunity to mix with various races. On the other hand, the main disadvantages are noise, problems due to heights (for Loke Yew residents only), high rents and bills, unaesthetic appearance of the flats and the need to buy things which they were formerly able to produce for themselves.

However the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages and on the whole there is a high level of satisfaction with the life afforded by low-cost rehousing.

The study reveals some interesting trends. However there are a number of limitations. The numbers are too small for any valid generalizations to be made. The Indians and other minority ethnic groups were not included in the study and hence the effects of integrated housing on racial attitudes cannot be generalized to the overall situation in the Country. It would have been ideal to include the Indians and other minority groups. Restraints on time and resources did not permit the study of children's school reports, the households' doctors' reports, and police and employment files. As such, the reported data may not be entirely reliable. The perceived data are relative to the respondents' previous and present experiences. Moreover, the race of the interviewer may have affected the outcome of the interviews. The Malays may have given polite answers because they were interviewed by a Chinese. Conversely, the interviewer may have had better rapport with the Chinese respondents. Thus, the present findings must be seen in the light of these limitations.

It is suggested that future studies on the benefits of low-cost rehousing should look at all types of flats, that is, high-rise, medium-rise and four-storey flats, as well as the racial component of the flats. Perhaps too, the studies should cover more areas in Malaysia for a more balanced view and also to see if there are state or national trends. There is a need for efforts to be made to match the interviewer and interviewees racially in order to generate optimum

rapport.

When rehousing is urgently needed for a large number of people, low-cost housing offers the most effective answer. However, even if the housing needs of the low-income group are met, it is necessary to reflect on past efforts. Where there are shortcomings, improvements and modifications should be considered and suggestions offered. Improvement of the lot of the people should take place side-by-side with the promotion of interracial tolerance.

Perhaps, the most urgent problem with regard to high-rise flats pertains to heights and its associated problems of lift failure. Lift breakdowns inconvenience many people, especially the old, sick and young. Although the respondents in the two areas of study did not complain about the problems regarding breakdown of water supply, nevertheless these problems have occurred in other high-rise complexes in Kuala Lumpur.* These problems are further aggravated by lift failure for the residents would have to climb countless flights of stairs a few times a day to fetch water. According to the respondents as well as the Public Relations section of City Hall, the Maintenance and Service Unit find it difficult to attend to these problems immediately. City Hall complains that lift failures are often due to the work of vandals. There have been considerations of having lift attendants but City Hall has turned them down because it is uneconomical, considering the already high cost of providing low-cost housing. On the other hand, City Hall has decided to solve the problem permanently by concentrating its efforts on building flats of not more than five storeys because

* information obtained from newspaper reports and the
Public Relations Officer of City Hall.

the higher the number of storeys, the more the problems.*⁽¹⁾ This will be a useful undertaking as there is still adequate land in the country to accommodate medium-rise and four-storey flats. However, for the needs of the present high-rise flats, it would perhaps be useful to study the efforts of Singapore's Housing and Development Board's Essential Maintenance service which gives prompt 24 hours attention to breakdown of lifts, water pumps, sanitary and electrical faults, and to emulate its successes as well as to learn from its setbacks.

Another problem related to heights is the safety of children and the incidence of suicide. To increase children's safety, it may be useful to increase the heights of the railings in the balconies and the common corridor. The parents, on their part, should keep stools, chairs, tables and boxes from the reach of the children so that they cannot use these objects for climbing over the railings. If the railings were raised, then perhaps the residents may keep their doors open more often. This in turn may help promote neighbourliness. There have been many cases of suicide in high-rise flats.* Many suicide victims are non-residents. Perhaps, someone can be stationed at the entrance to the flats and any stranger or suspicious-looking person entering the flat should be questioned. In this way, the would-be suicide victim as well as would-be thieves may be detected. The residents too can have special identification cards to differentiate them from strangers.

Although no respondent brought out the problem of fire hazards, the threat is very real. In high-rise flats, there should be adequate

*⁽¹⁾ information obtained from the Public Relations Officer of City Hall.

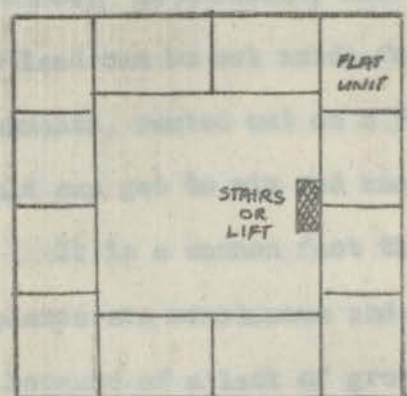
* information obtained from newspaper reports.

fire prevention facilities, e.g., fire extinguishers in every corridor, adequate stairways for escape, escape chutes, sprinkler system and a roof that is flat and wide enough for helicopter landing. It is evident that the fire-fighting services of the City's Fire Brigade should be equipped to deal with fires in twenty-storey flats.

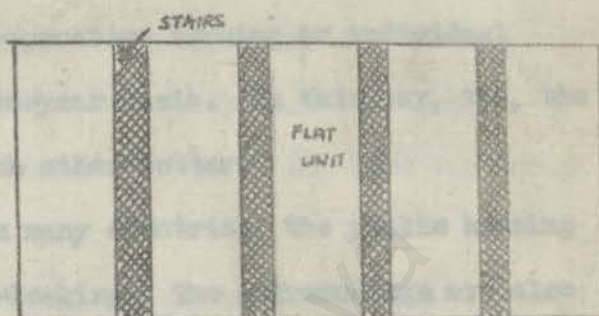
Another major problem is noise. Noise can affect a person's mental health. According to Y.S.Foong (1964), it is essential to design flats not only in terms of outlook and spaciousness but also in accordance with various climatic, social and economic requirements. For example, flats should be designed in such a way that the least amount of noise will penetrate through. According to Foong (1964), with regard to the noise problem, either the staircase or vertical core access type (see Figures 1: a and b respectively) is probably the best answer to alleviating the noise problem. On the other hand, the corridor access type (see Figure 1: d) aggravates the problem. Our Malaysian low-cost flats are also of the corridor access type but the two corridors are separated by a courtyard (see Figure 1: e). From the financial viewpoint, perhaps the balcony access type may be the best solution (see Figure 1: c). In this design, there is only a single row of units on one side of the common corridor, in contrast with the corridor access type where there are units on both sides. Another suggestion for the solution of the noise problem is to construct flats with thicker walls or even semi-soundproof walls. Although the latter is an expensive undertaking at present, nevertheless it may be realised in the near future.

There are other less urgent problems. As long as the basic essentials are satisfied, these may not seem to be very pressing.

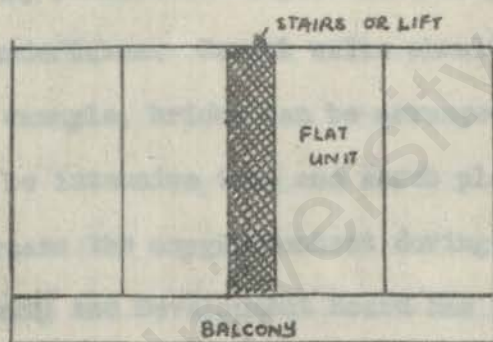
FIGURE 1: EXAMPLES OF FLAT DESIGNS ACCORDING TO FOONG (1964), p. 64



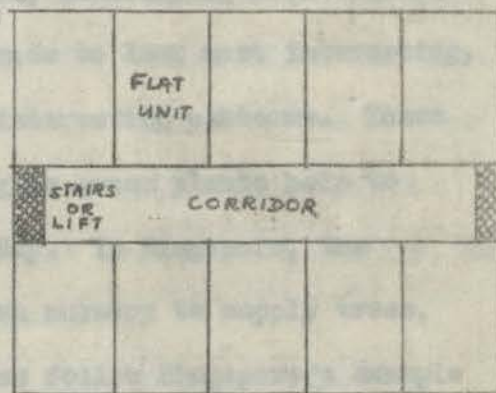
(a) VERTICAL CORE ACCESS TYPE



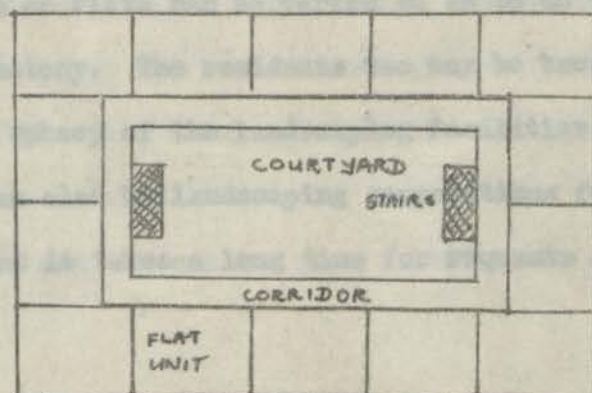
(b) STAIRWAY ACCESS TYPE



(c) BALCONY ACCESS TYPE



(d) CORRIDOR ACCESS TYPE



(e) TYPICAL MALAYSIAN EXAMPLE

For example, it is a common complaint among the respondents that they are now unable to grow fruit trees and vegetables and to rear poultry, as compared to what they were able to do in their former places of residence. As a result, more things have to be paid for. Perhaps some land can be set aside for co-operative farming or individual allotments, rented out on a year-to-year basis. In this way, too, the people can get to mix and know each other better.

It is a common fact that in many countries, the public housing complexes are monotonous and drab-looking. The surroundings are also dry because of a lack of greenery around. In many low-cost housing complexes, grass paths can take the place of uninteresting cement walks. An absence of greenery not only makes the place look dry but hot as well. With regard to this problem, landscaping efforts should be undertaken. Cement walks should be made to look more interesting, for example, bricks can be arranged in interesting patterns. There can be intensive tree and shrub planting as green plants help to increase the oxygen content during the day. In Singapore, the Housing and Development Board has its own nursery to supply trees, shrubs and flowering plants. We can also follow Singapore's example of having a Complex garden, swimming pool, ponds and artificial waterfalls and fountains. Within the complex too, the design of different blocks of flats can be varied so as to do away with the drabness and monotony. The residents too may be brought closer together if the upkeep of the landscaping facilities is left in their hands. There can also be landscaping competitions for flats.

At present it takes a long time for requests for larger units

With more rooms to be considered. There are some small families living in either two-or three-bedroom flats while there are many large families living in single-bedroom flats. Although the authorities may be busy with the numerous applications, nevertheless they should give priority to the needs of large families for bigger units. In this respect, a Transfer Committee should be set up to deal with such matters. In so doing, they can establish a happier and more contented flat-dwelling community.

Although there are shops and markets at most of K.L.'s low-cost complexes, these facilities are for the most part inadequate as the residents still have to travel to the city to get essential commodities. Perhaps, hawker centres and shopping complexes can be set up at the housing complexes. These would also serve to give the area a more interesting look. With more shops, supply will exceed demand and there will be more competition, thus reducing prices. Residents too will be able to find everything in one place. Perhaps too, schools, cinemas and places of worship can be built within the complex. In this way, we can have a self-contained flat-dwelling community.

At present, there are no areas that have been set aside for light industries as compared to Singapore and Hong Kong. If such a programme were to be undertaken, then perhaps many residents can find employment in such industries. In addition, low-cost housing is presently meant only for the lower income group. Perhaps if the flats were to be opened to other income groups, the social stigma of low-cost housing can be reduced.

These, then are the various ways in which the physical and social

conditions in low-cost flats can be improved. Efforts must be made to look into existing shortcomings in the Government's low-cost housing programme and improvements considered. Perhaps too, once initial integration has taken place, further efforts can be made to promote greater interracial tolerance. This is because if there were no follow-up efforts, then the objective of integrated housing would be lost. Associations like welfare, community, games, cultural and housewife associations can be setup. In this way, members of various races can be drawn together. Activities like sports meets, baby shows, film shows, and parties for residents during the festive season can be organised. Through sports and games children can bring parents of various races together when the parents compare and talk about the activities and performance of their children. In addition efforts can also be made to set up tuition centres, kindergartens and creches in low-cost flats. This can help promote racial harmony among the younger generation. Creches too can be of a big help to working mothers.

Thus, it is evident that it is necessary to build not just housing complexes but also a wide range of supporting infra-structure services including schools, clinics, markets, recreation grounds as well as provide adequate facilities and suitable design. It will be equally important to encourage the development of light industry and to open the low-cost housing programme to other income groups. Once the effects of integrated housing or racial harmony are seen, further efforts should be taken up to promote even greater interracial tolerance. The Government too must be aware of the problems faced by the residents and strive to reduce or solve them.

From the financial point of view, rehousing of squatters into low-cost flats would not seem to be very attractive to the Government. However, the higher returns from a national social point of view clearly call for increased Government investment in this field of housing. It is important to understand that social gains at the expense of economic gains will benefit the nation in the long-run. Perhaps, through the housing policy, the Government may also have made some headway in achieving its twin goals of eradicating poverty and promoting racial harmony. Difficult though it may be to generalise for only two diverse case studies, tentative suggestions are offered. It appears that high rise flats may possibly be less attractive than medium rise flats in terms of promoting interracial tolerance and neighbourliness and problems related to lifts and heights. Low-cost flats as a major form of housing for the low income group is no temporary phenomenon but one that will come to stay in this country.

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Total

Total

Other related work as well as business.

manent/temporary/part-time
up/tidak tetap/separuh masa

of income: