

URBANISATION : A CASE STUDY OF
OVERCROWDING ON CHINESE
FLATS DWELLERS

LATIHAN ILMIAH
BAGI MEMENUHI SEBAHAGIAN
DARIPADA SYARAT - SYARAT UNTUK
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DALAM ANTROPOLOGI DAN SOSIOLOGI

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Finally, a deep heartfelt appreciation to the respondents for being so helpful and cooperative.

SYNOPSIS

The aim of this academic exercise is to look into some of the socio-economic and psychological aspects of high-rise urban living and to discuss the effects of overcrowding, if any, on the Chinese residents. For this purpose, a total of 60 Chinese respondents are chosen as my sample with 30 from each block of the Shaw Road Flats. As this will be an indepth study on the effects of overcrowding, I have employed an exploratory method to gain an insight on the life of the respondents and also to discover the effects, if any, on the life of these respondents that is, in terms of health, family relations, kinship, child development and neighbouring interactions. Later a comparison of the findings of this study with those other related studies carried out in Western countries will be presented.

The First Chapter will touch on the aspect of urbanization generally, the housing situation in Malaysia and Federal Territory, the objectives and contributions of this study and lastly the review of literature. Chapter Two concentrates wholly on the methodology employed with regard to the sample selection, the interview schedule, the interview and the problems encountered during the survey. The social economic conditions of flat dwellers as well as the physical structure of the building is presented in Chapter Three. A discussion in

relation to the effects of overcrowding on several aspects of living will be touched on in Chapter Four whereas the conclusion is included in the Fifth and Final Chapter.

SYNOPSIS

Tujuan latihan ilmiah ini ialah untuk melihat beberapa aspek sosio - ekonomi dan kehidupan psikolopikal dibangunan tinggi dibandar dan membincangkan kesan-kesan penyuhsesak kalau ada, keatas penduduk keturunan Cina. Dalam hal ini, seramai 60 responden keturunan Cina telah dipilih sebagai sample dengan 30 orang dari tiap-tiap satu blok. Oleh kerana kajian ini merupakan suatu kajian yang mendalam keatas kesan-kesan sesak penuh, saya telah menggunakan suatu method exploratory untuk mendapatkan matlummat atas kehidupan responden, iaitu dari segi kesihatan, perhubungan famili, kekeluargaan perkembangan kanak-kanak dan interaksi kejiranan. Kemudian, suatu perbandingan antara hasil kajian ini dengan kajian lain yang dijalankan dinegara Barat akan dipersembahkan.

Bab satu akan menyentuh tentang aspek urbanisasi secara amnya, keadaan perumahan diMalaysia dan Federal Territory, objektif dan sumbangan kajian ini serta suatu kajian perpustakaan. Bab dua pula menumpu perhatian keatas methodology yang digunakan iaitu mengenai pemilihan sample, jadual temu soal, temu soal dan masalah yang dihadapi dalam masa tinjauan (survey) itu, keadaan sosia-ekonomi penghuni rumah pangsa dan struktur fizikal bangunan tersebut akan disampaikan dalam bab tiga. Satu perbincangan berkaitan dengan kesan-kesan penyuhsesak atas beberapa aspek kehidupan akan disentuh dalam Bab Empat - manakala kesimpulan kajian ini pula dimasukkan dalam Bab Lima iaitu Bab terakhir.

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Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER ONE

4.1 Urbanization

Urbanization in developed countries which grew at an unprecedented pace during the nineteenth century has slowed down in the twentieth century with only a low percentage of increase in population density yearly. Whereas rapid growth in the developing countries has been a general feature only since the Second World War. In fact the process of urbanization in these countries is even more rapid than was the earlier process of urbanization of Western Europe and the United States of America (Davies, 1969)

Several attempts have been made by sociologists in defining the term 'Urbanization'. Often, urbanization has come to be understood in the Western World in terms of its 'connection with economic growth', generally being associated with the level of a nation's economic development. (Mc Gee, 1971)

Urbanization is a concept which tends to be confined on one aspect, namely the physical one, whereas in fact, urbanization involves the whole complex of the social, economic spatial, health, administrative and political aspects of a human community concentrated in that comparatively limited living space call city or town.

Hence, to keep pace with urbanization in the cities, an early and careful planning is a necessity to encounter any socio-economic problems that might arise and also to enable the development of a well-organised city with lovely surroundings. Without such planning, this rapid urbanization can give rise to a host of socio-economic and physical environmental problems such as a high rate of unemployment, traffic congestion, environmental pollution, a high rate of vandalism and among the most pressing one, the shortage of housing.

Housing constitutes a basic necessity for the people. It is regrettable however, to note that the housing programmes in developing countries are still in the elementary stage and have not been given its due attention yet because top priority has been allocated to stimulate more economic growth. For example, during the Third Malaysia Plan period (1976-1980), only a sum of 1,705 million ringgit out of the total 31,147.01 million ringgit (only 5.5%) has been allocated for the provision of housing (see *Mingguan Malaysia*, 1st February 1981) Although the allocation for housing programmes has increased during the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-1985), the increment is just a very small proportion and is insignificant of the total allocation which includes in its sectors such as, economic, social security and general administration. As a comparison, it was found that the allocation for the economic sector amounts to 22,764.50

million ringgit or 57.9% of the total Federal allocation for housing programmes in Malaysia. And out of this amount, only 215.1 million ringgit was set aside for providing housing to the mass population in Wilayah Persekutuan (see Fourth Malaysia Year) 1981-1985. Thereby the condition of the housing is usually quite poor because generally, when viewed as shelter or living space only, dwellings tend to be built without regard for their environments.

Yet the true importance of housing lies in the fact that it is a package of services: loan, public facilities and access to jobs, as well as the structure itself. It is an important component of the socio-physical environment whereby human energies are released, enriched and integrated. Here, the housing construction not only increases income, employment opportunities and intensify the utilization of natural resources but also make possible the transition of unskilled labours to semi-skilled or skilled labours. Also, if better housing conditions and home environment is provided, there will be a general improvement in the living condition which can bring about a greater productivity of labour. On the other hand, inadequate and poor housing may have some serious consequences as concluded by Scherr (1970 : 113):

The following effects may spring from poor housing, a perception of one's self that

leads to pessimism and passivity, stress to which the individual cannot adapt, poor health and state of dissatisfaction, pleasure in company but not in solitude, cynicism about people and organisations, a high degree of sexual stimulation without legitimate outlets, and difficulty and household management and child rearing, and relationships that tend to spread out in the neighbourhood rather than deeply into the family.

Therefore the need for adequate housing is now universally recognised and its fulfilment has become a primary function of socio-political systems.

1.2 Housing in Malaysia

Like in other developing countries, Malaysia, now is experiencing a rapid pace of urbanization. The annual population growth has been 2.6% during the 1957-1970 period and 2.8% between 1970-1980. A common view is that the high rate of migrants from the countryside combined with relatively high natural growth rates and low death rates in urban places, creates problems that inevitably results in personal, social, economic and political tensions. The high rate of migration is probably due to the fact that they perceive an opportunity to earn a

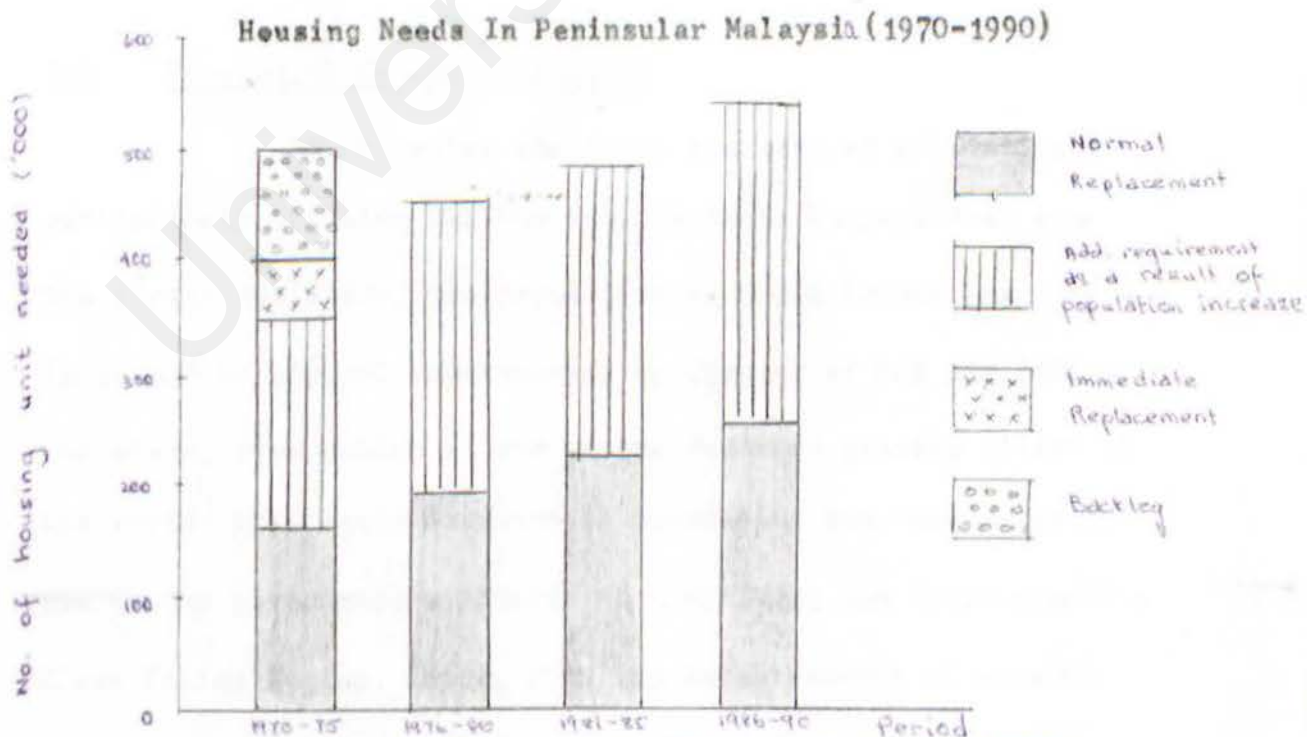
higher income, a more exciting and a better life in the city (see Gugler, 1969, Tedaro, 1969) As this movement of population to urban areas accelerates, the social costs of haphazard growth are certain to rise especially with the swelling of squatter population in and around the cities, as a result of insufficient housing. Thus, shortage of housing has become an enduring feature of the urbanization process and it has raised increasing alarm particularly among the urban administrators and policy decision makers.

At present a growing awareness that this is insufficient is discernible so much so that it has been recognised that the fulfilment of housing needs is a major social objective of national development. The aim is to ensure that all Malaysians, in particular the lower income groups, have access to adequate housing. The Third Malaysia Plan (1975-1980) emphasizes the provision of housing as an important component of the programmes to eradicate poverty (Government of Malaysia, 1976 : 330) This emphasis is also made because housing as a goal has received increased prominence now that development is no longer simply identified with economic growth, particularly since the evolution of a 'basic needs' developmental strategy.

Under the schemes of Second and Third Malaysia Plan, many various types of low-cost housing have been completed which includes in its list high-rise flats, 4-storey walk-up flats

and these low-cost single or double-storey housing. However, this rate of construction still fall short of the housing needs of the people. As an example, under the Second Malaysia Plan (1970-1974), the chief statistician of Malaysia estimated the needs to be between 473,000 and 505,000 units. However, when compared to the estimated construction rate of 68,000 units per annum, it was found that supply fell short of the nations needs by between 26,000 to 61,000 units per annum for the period studied. An estimation for the period 1970-1990 was made by Chander (1977) who review that if housing needs or requirements in Peninsular Malaysia are to be met, then, some 1,740,000 to 2,808,000 units need to be constructed as shows in Diageam 1.

Diagram 1



These units are required not only to cater for the increasing population but also to meet the needs for replacement as well as to cover the backlog in housing stock.

In view of the situation, a compromise was made between the public and private developers during the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1980-1985) whereby the public sector will develop 43.2% of the total construction or 398,570 units of which 176,500 units are low-cost housing. The private sector, on the other hand, is expected to build about 524,730 units or 56.8% of the total Plan targets, of which 90,000 is in the low-cost category. At the same time, prefabrication or industrialised system of construction in the low-cost housing schemes to save time and cut cost will also be introduced under the F.M.P.

1.3 Housing in Federal Territory

In Malaysia, the rapid increase of population is particularly striking for the city of Kuala Lumpur. Just over the period 1947-1970, the population of Kuala Lumpur has increased by 280,000 representing an average of 6.5 per cent per annum, thus making it one of the fastest growing cities in the world. This rapid increase in population has been largely due to the government's efforts at urbanising the Kuala Lumpur - Klang Valley Region. Later, with the establishment of several industrial and commercial projects, financial, commercial,

industrial institutional and social centre of the country (Tan See Hai and Hamzah Sendut, 1979 : 184)

In 1970, Kuala Lumpur had a total population of 452,000 within its area of 93 square kilometres, giving an average density of about 20 persons per acre and base on the present rate of growth, it is estimated that by 1987, the population growth will reach the size of about 1 million (F.M.P., 1981-1985) In 1976, Kuala Lumpur was expanded to include what is now known as Federal Territory and the area was enlarged as shown in diagram 2. However, even with this enlargement of the area, the problem of housing was still not solved.

In relation to this problem a seminar was organised and conducted in Kuala Lumpur to talk on the topic, 'The Dilemma of Low-Cost housing'. (1977) The speakers were encouraged to give their viewpoints and also suggestion as to how to tackle the problem. One of the guest, an M.P., who was very familiar to the woes of the urban poor, gave a brief account of the problems faced by these people and expressed his viewpoint that the fulfilment of the aims and objectives of the Second and Third Malaysia Plan in terms of housing is very important.

The stress is more on public housing because it involves those who are least likely to be able to own a house of their own. This situation was aggravated since a few years back, where the prices of private housing in Malaysia increased

tremendously, in some areas even by several hundred per cent.

And by looking at the distribution of the household income, it was found that at least 60-80 per cent of the people do not have the capacity to afford or purchase private sector housing.

(1) Hence, the only alternative for these urban poor is to apply for low-cost housing.

Looking at the number of applicants for these low-cost housing, one can truly know the acute shortage of housing faced by the low-income group. At present, there are at least 18,000 applicants on the waiting list, many of whom has applied for at least 5 to 6 times. (2) These applicants are mostly squatters facing eviction by landlords or government, those who are forced out of their rooms or houses by landlords as a result of excessively high rents.

Many suggestions were given during the seminar (1977) to encounter these problems such as:-

- 1) City Hall officials should brush up their efficiency in implementing projects.
- 2) There should be an increase in efficiency of staff.
- 3) City Hall should set up a committee to look into the delay of these projects.
- 4) Joint efforts should be encouraged between the public and private sector in the construction of

low-cost housing.

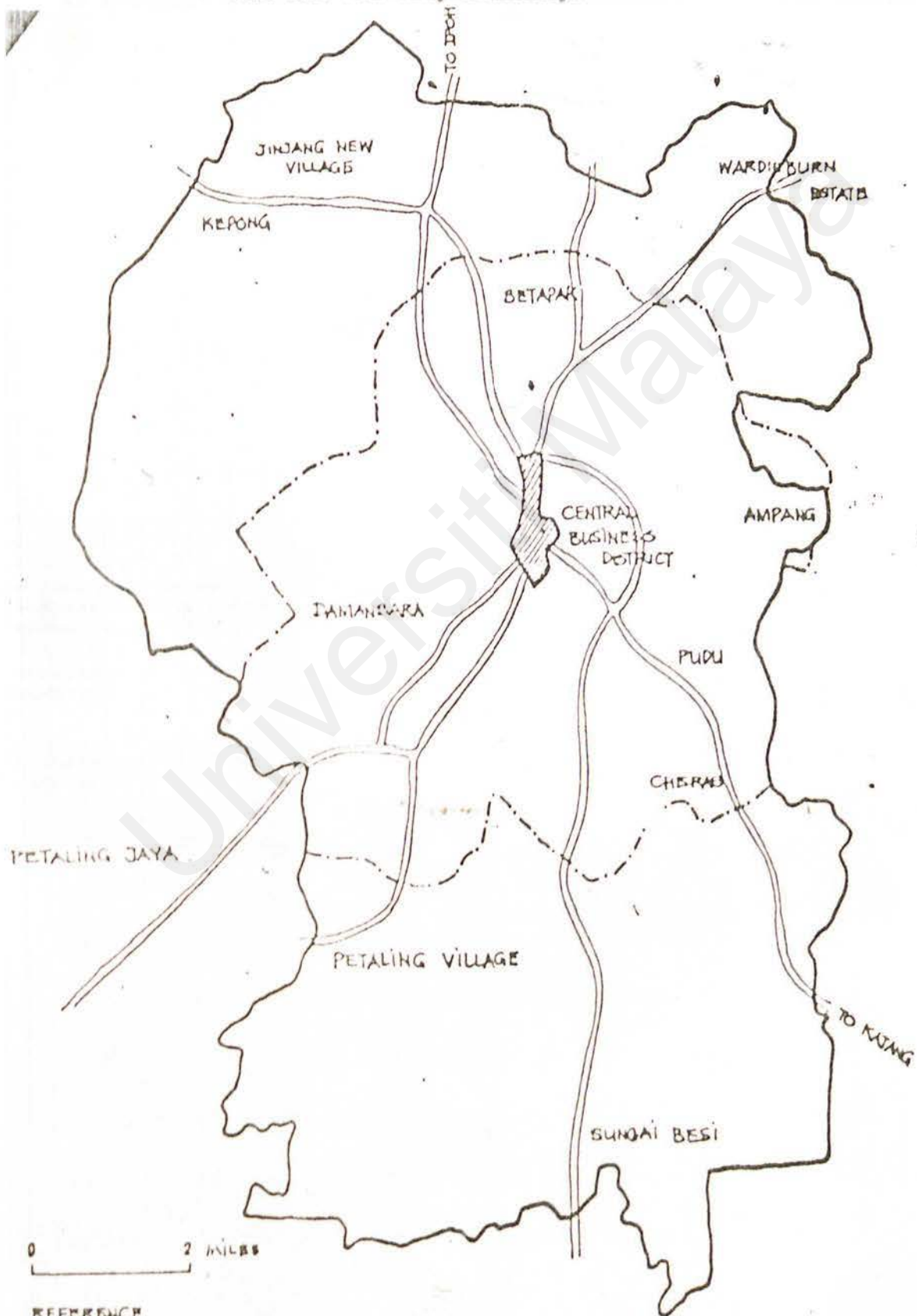
Recently, an exhibition 'Pelan Struktur Kuala Lumpur' (1982) was held in the new City Hall building and several objectives with regard to housing was put forward:-

- 1) To facilitate and encourage the provision of adequate housing of acceptable standard for all income levels.
- 2) To ensure that there is sufficient housing so as to resolve overcrowding and to provide each household specifically each nuclear family and opportunity of having an individual dwelling.
- 3) Minimum accepted standards in terms of construction, provision of amenities and facilities.
- 4) A range of housing in accordance to cost, type and size.

It was hoped that with the implementation of this new plan, it will bring about a favorable change in the present housing situation.

Diagram 2

Map Showing The Present Territory Boundary
And The Old City Boundary.



1.4 The Problem of Overcrowding

One of the most pressing social problems that arises as a result of insufficient housing is overcrowding. The number of occupants of a housing unit according to the space which is available. Overcrowding can be of 2 main types. The first is found when one large family lives in a dwelling which is too small, while the second is found where two or more families have to share a dwelling and thus there are too many people for the number of rooms-multiple occupation. With regard to overcrowding, it has been noted that the Chinatown and its areas around it records the highest population densities in the City, the average for the region's Chinatowns being 350 person per hectare, occasionally rising to over 2,500 per hectare in selated blocks. (Manjit Singh, 1978)

However, it is a very difficult task to measure the true amount of overcrowding as there are various methods of measurement. One of the measurements which is often used is the number of rooms as compared with the number of people. If there are more than 1.5 persens per room, the family is officially overcrowded. In the 1966 census of population (United Nations), a kitchen was counted as a reom if it could be used for eating in. Each married couple and single adult was to have a separate bedroom and only children of the same sex were to share. However, in 1970, the United Nations has again recommended a maximum

standard of 1.4 to 2.2 persons per room in the urban areas and has considered three persons per room as the overall lowest limit to indicate overcrowding. The United States census (1970) uses a ratio of 1.01 or more persons per room excluding bathrooms, hallways and porches, as the point at which people in a household are classified as living in overcrowded conditions. The census classifies a ratio of 1.5 persons per room as severe overcrowding.

As a result of the uncertainty in deciding the standard or measurement of overcrowding, it is often difficult to make a comparison between countries. For example, if one was to follow the standards set by the United Nations, Peninsular Malaysia's overall average of 2.7 persons per room and 2.3 rooms per occupied private living quarters is very well within the United Nation's norms. But compared to the census of United States, the standard in Malaysia will be classified as severe overcrowding. Moreover, the census standards for overcrowding was found to be a bad indicator because it is often taken as an estimate or an average only whereby there exist a great discrepancy between this standard as compared to the real situation. For example, Manjit Singh (1978) has shown that the section of Petaling Street Chinatown, part of Pudu Road Chinatown and the Shaw Road multi-storey flats has the greatest concentration of population in Kuala Lumpur; in which over a quarter of the city's population is found in this section which forms barely one eighth of the city's

total area.

In the 1950's it has been observed in Petaling Street Chinatown that between 50 and 100 persons reside in each shop-house, which is usually 20 feet wide and 80 feet long. (Manjit Singh, 1978) While the majority of the residents, often including the owner, reside on the first floor in cubicles, others sleep on collapsible beds on the ground floor in the passage-way between wares. The beds are folded and hidden in a corner in the morning before the shop opens for business. As such, the proportion of the urban population who live in shop-houses is considerable; it has, in fact, been 'estimated that more than 50 per cent of the urban population in the Federation live in shop-houses'. Besides, segregation and diseases are common in these areas. A medical authority cited that 'the existing type of shop-house is the largest single factor contributing to the high incidence of tuberculosis in this country. The reason for this is that the shop-houses, especially the older ones, in the Peninsular Malaysia are poorly designed and receive inadequate sunlight and fresh air, despite the presence of an air-well at the rear. The high population densities in shop-houses continue even to this day as there are no direct laws to prevent overcrowding (Manjit Singh, 1979 : 47)

Besides this, it should be noted that most living quarters in rural areas have large spaces with little or no

partitioning. In the urban areas, however, most of the occupied private living quarters have room which are less spacious. Thus it was felt that the measurement used that is with regard to the number of persons per room is not a good indicator of overcrowding.

This issue on overcrowding and its consequences has raised much controversy among sociologists who are of different viewpoints. As a result two conflicting hypotheses were raised in which one holds that overcrowding leads to disruptive and disturbing experiences while the others view just the opposite. However, till now, no conclusion can be said as absolutely certain because the results of studies made are in contradiction.

1.5 Objectives of the Study.

As to date, no studies have been done on the aspect of overcrowding in Malaysia. And after reading several articles, I found that it is a very interesting topic and would like to do an exploratory study on it. The purpose of the study is to gather information on the effects overcrowding would have on the socio-economic aspects of the people affected, if possible. I would also like to make a comparison of the results of this study with those that are carried out in the West to see whether there are any similarities or differences over the effect of overcrowding. Hopefully, the information gathered in this study

would serve to draw attention to important environmental consideration when there is any plan for construction schemes.

The study will touch mainly on the socio-psychological aspects of overcrowding. Under the social aspects of overcrowding, I will attempt to find out whether overcrowding has any effect on the social interactions with the neighbours, family activities, husband-wife relationship, parent-child relationships, health, etc

Research into the psychological aspects of overcrowding includes the problem of stress or strains, aggression, traits of insecurity, worry, the tendency towards delinquency and others.

1.6 Contributions of the Study

There are a few important contribution of this research. A study of overcrowding can not only be informative but also very rewarding. It will enable me to probe into the life of these tenants staying in high-rise flats and thus be able to obtain badly-needed insights for future planning especially concerning housing programmes. From the information gathered in such a study, one can also assess the extent of social success or failure of a housing project and to what extent it is justified. This is a very important contribution because good future planning is essential as most of the tenants of the

flats belong to the lower income group who form the majority of the labours in the country. Therefore the success or failure of these people in overcoming the problem overcrowding will definitely have a great impact on Malaysia considering the increasing number of people living in high-rise flats.

Besides this, the research also brings to test the popular hypothesis that 'overcrowding results in disruptive and disturbing experiences (Omer R. Galle, 1973) ^{or} overcrowding do not have any socio-psychological effects on people (Biderman, 1963) And also, since this study is an exploratory study, the information gathered here can be used as a basis or guideline for further research.

1.7 Review of Literature

There has been very few local studies conducted on the living conditions of low-cost housing in Malaysia and none has touch specifically on the aspect of overcrowding alone. From the Statistics Department's census, one can only gather information on the physical aspect of low-cost housing but not on the socio-psychological effects of living in high-rise flats.

Some of the studies conducted in Malaysia by Wegelin (1975), Weng (1976) and Weston and Tan (1973) have noted that there is a general improvement in the lives of residents in high-rise flats as compared to their previous dwellings. On the

whole there was a high level of satisfaction with regard to the living conditions or social amenities provided except for some who were quite dissatisfied with the public utilities and services offered. One important finding in the above mentioned studies is that interracial tolerance in high-rise flats were less compared to medium rise flats or other forms of low-cost housing.

Although no studies on overcrowding were carried out in Malaysia, quite a number of studies have been done in the Western and some other Asian countries, for example, America, England, Singapore and HongKong. Usually places like HongKong and Singapore are looked upon as ideal places to study this aspect because it truly projects a place that is overcrowded due to the small surface area of the two islands. With regard to this aspect, the authors or sociologists can be divided into 2 groups depending on their viewpoint as to whether or not there are any effects of overcrowding on people.

Louis Wirth, in his study, 'Urbanism as a Way of Life' (1938) carried out in the densely populated city of Chicago says that:

'The distinctive features of the urban mode of life have been described sociologically as consisting of the substitution of primary for secondary contacts, the weakening of bonds

of kinship, the declining social significance of the family, the disappearance of the neighbourhood and the undermining of the traditional basis of social solidarity'.

Mitchell (1976) made a study on high-rise flats in HongKong and came up with a few interesting findings. He found in his study that often to relieve the high densities in the home temporarily, the parents do not discourage their children from leaving the house. This has a clear impact on the parent-child relationship because it tends to reduce the parent's knowledge of and control over children. Besides this, high density housing not only discourages interactions and friendship practices among neighbours and friends but it also has an impact on entertaining practices which is becoming more and more seldom. However, it was found that Mitchell has contradicted himself in his studies whereby the study done earlier in 1971 indicated that overcrowding does not have much effect. Hence, one should be aware of this limitation in Mitchell's studies.

Many other sociologists have also come up with the same or similar conclusion. For example, Omer R. Galle (1973) notes that the most significant elements of density affecting pathologies involving mortality, fertility, dependency, delinquency and mental illness to be persons per room (overcrowding) rather than persons per unit area (density). This was found to be

brought about by the increase in social obligation and the need to inhibit individual desires and lack of privacy which results in irritability, weariness and withdrawal.

In Singapore, Riaz Hassan (1976) found in his study that not only does overcrowding has adverse effect on adults but also on children whereby confining the child in the home will deprive the child of experiencing various natural phenomenon and also stultify his sensory development. All these would eventually affect the children's ability in academic achievements and also his growth of personality.

Furthermore, Burton (1974) in his study indicated that crimes, vandalism and diseases are more likely to be found in overcrowded areas or conditions. Another point is that juvenile delinquent cases are more likely to occur in flats with considerably smaller floor area per person. This was also discovered by the Newcastle - Upon - Type City Planning Department who states that (1974 : 39):

'The most crowded third of the city produced 5 times as many crimes against the person, 4 times as many thefts, 7 times as many people on probation, 3 times as much juvenile delinquency, 5 times as many cases of wilful neglect of children and 5 times as much venereal

do not have any ill-effects on human beings. In a study on Chinese community overseas, Andersen (1972) notes that even though in high-densities so much so that an entire family stays in one bedroom, it can be handled without pathological consequences as long as family functions are properly organised. Mitchell's study on overcrowding in HongKong in contradiction with his later study found that:

Multi-storey buildings, when combined with sharing arrangements, can have negative effects on the emotional health of individuals. These effects, it is conjectured, probably arise from forced interaction among non-relatives, not from densities or large numbers of fellow kinsmen. Large numbers of people in high density housing can be tolerated more easily if these people are one's kinsmen (Mitchell, 1971 : 27)

J. Friedman (1975) who did a study on 'Crowding and Behavior' found that there is no evidence that people are especially anxious nor that they are suffering physical discomfort (as long as they have enough room so that they are not actually touching). They do not perform less well on complex tasks, nor better on simple ones. In fact, under many circumstances they find the experience more pleasant and are less anxious than people under conditions of lower density. In addition, long-term high-density as

disease as the least crowded third of the city.'

In fact, once, a United States Senator warns that population density causes the erosion of trust between people.

Thus, from the above studies, the conclusion made are in support of the hypothesis that 'overcrowding results in disruptive and disturbing experiences'. A general trend can be formed out of these conclusion:

Density → sense of crowding → creates strains and tensions → requirement for relief example: aggression or withdrawal → mental or physical illness.

In spite of the large number of studies with the same or similar results, there are many other sociologists with other findings who disagrees with such results.

Wilner and Baer (1970) found that there is no evidence yet that crowding interfere with a primitive style of life, that because of crowding, family roles and rituals cannot satisfactorily be carried out, that the development of infants and children is severely impaired or that it contributes materially to mental disorder or emotional instability.

Other studies have made more or less similar findings, for example, Schmitts (1966) indicated that as long as education and income are statistically controlled, overcrowding

it exists in the cities is not related to physical or mental breakdown. With other factors controlled, high density is not associated with more illness, higher infant or adult mortality, higher rates of suicide, or mental illness.

In summary, from the studies mentioned above, no definite conclusion can be made on the aspect of overcrowding and its consequences. However one important point that should be noted in these studies is that all of it were carried out in different parts of the countries. Therefore one should take into account the differences in physical and social conditions that exists in these countries.

Footnotes:

- (1) and (2) - These are the datas collected during the survey while interviewing one of the officials from City Hall.

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD AND SAMPLE SELECTION

In this chapter, I will deal mainly with the procedures of the study and also give a brief outlook of the Shaw Road Flats. The following are some of the sections that will be discussed later:

design, sample selection, interview questionnaire, the interviewer and the interview.

After discussing each one individually, I will proceed on with the related problems encountered during the survey.

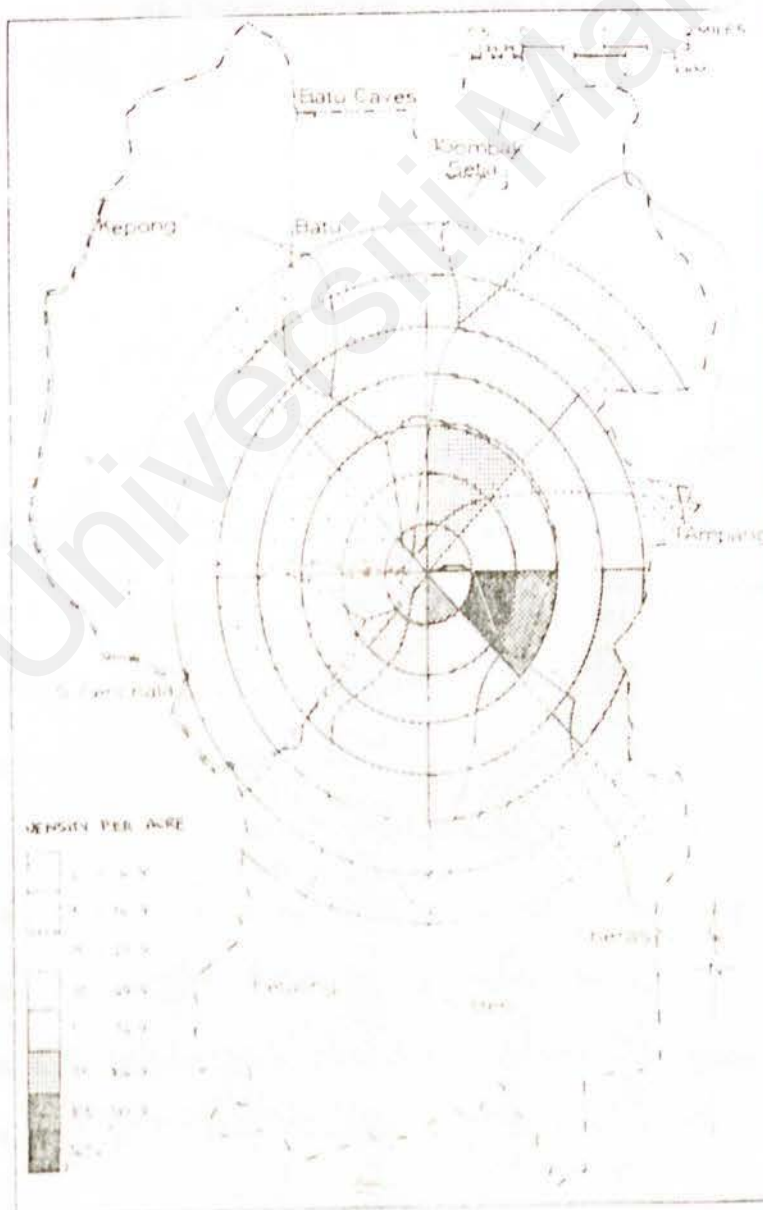
1.2 A general outlook of the Shaw Road Flats

The implementation of high-rise housing projects which began in 1956 was largely due to the intense demand for housing by the vast amount of population (City Hall, 1982) Under these schemes, several high-rise flats were constructed and one of them is the Shaw Road flats. The project was launched in 1967 in which the squatter area in Shaw Road was cleared up for the construction of flats as well as for other projects. The completion of the flats consist of 2 blocks, A and B, with 17 storeys each. On each floor there are 24 housing units thus, making a total of 786 units from the 2 blocks.

These flats are situated in the heart of the city with easy access to shopping centres, entertainment centres, schools and offices. Besides that, it is also included in the sector which has the greatest concentration of population in Kuala Lumpur that is a quarter of the city's population as shown in diagram 3.

Diagram 3

Urban Densities



2.2 The Research Design

According to Selltize, (1959) a research design is 'the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure'. Therefore a research design must be carefully planned in order to discover ideas or insights that are badly needed for the study. There are several methods in which the data or information can be collected:

- a) through observation (participant observation)
- b) interviewing
- c) mail questionnaires
- d) examination of records

However, in an exploratory study, the best method to use is through participant observation or interviewing in which a deeper insight could be obtained. According to Smith H.W. (1971) 'participant observation' includes observing and participating in the events interviewing participants during the events and maintaining stable relationships in the group. In other words, in the community he is studying he ^{must} participate in their everyday life in which he is accepted as a member of the community. In the meantime he can also observe them or ask them questions in relation to the study. But in this particular study, it was found that the participant observation method was not feasible because firstly, the tenants there are very unlikely to take in a stranger

to stay with them no matter how hard one persuades them and secondly, even if one is able to stay with one family, it was not possible for him/her to develop a close rapport with the other neighbours as most of them hardly talk to each other. Hence, only the interview method and general observation were used in the survey while the records or references found on this aspect were used as a guideline in carrying out the survey.

As most of the flats being built are planned as a multi-racial scheme, Shaw Road flats without exception also have a multi-racial composition. There are altogether 786 families in the 2 blocks and the statistics of the total population of the 2 blocks as obtained from the official City Hall (1982) are as follows:-

Block A : 47 Malays, 2084 Chinese, 118 Indians.

Block B : 137 Malays, 2032 Chinese, 162 Indians.

For this research, a sample of 60 respondents from the 2 blocks were studied. As the study is based entirely on Chinese community, only Chinese respondents were interviewed. The number of household interviewed is shown in Table 2.2

Table 2.1

Total No. of Chinese Households Involved In The Study

Particulars	No. of Resp.	%
Block A	30	50
Block B	30	50
Total	60	100

2.3 Sample Selection

2.3.1 A background of low-cost housing schemes

Briefly, the housing problem in Kuala Lumpur was a consequence of its rapid population growth and urbanization. The problem was compounded by the poor economics conditions of most migrants as well as public neglect. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the city was crowded with squatter areas situated in or on the fringe of the city and also slum areas found along Petaling Street whereby the shop-houses were sub-divided into very small cubicles. These areas were characterized by extremely poor housing conditions which were further aggravated by the lack of environmental hygiene, public utilities and communal facilities. (Manjit Singh, 1978)

With the realization of the importance of housing (it not only accelerates urban development and redevelopment but it also enhances social welfare as well as political stability),

recommendations were thus made to improve the housing conditions and alleviate housing shortage for the low-income group. Plans were made to build some low-cost housing whereby the City Hall Municipality's main objective in implementing these schemes was to provide housing for the squatters and those from the lower-income group whom can ill-afford to purchase private-sector housing. The actual implementation of these schemes were accelerated by the problem of housing several hundred homeless victims of a fire in Gembak Lane in 1956.

To date, many housing projects have been completed while many others are still under construction. These low-cost housing that have been completed includes in its list:-

Tun Tan Cheng Lock Mansion, these high-rise flats in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Shaw, Jalan Pekeliling, Kampung Kerunchi, Jalan Bangsar, Jalan San Peng and the recently completed project - Sri Maharaja flats in Jalan Sungei Besi, Sentul, Jalan Cheras and Kampung Kerunchi.

Under these schemes, the biggest housing unit is a 3 bedroom unit while the rest is either a 2 bedroom unit or a single bedroom unit. The City Hall officials considered the hall in each unit as a room also, thus, instead of a single bedroom unit, it is considered as a two room unit. The charge or rent for these units depends on the distances to town and also on the

number of bedrooms. With regard to the Shaw Road flats, after some alterations in the rental scheme, the present rate for a single bed-room unit is \$42 instead of \$36. While a 2 bed-room unit costs \$55 instead of \$47.

As the construction rate was unable to meet the demands of the people, certain criterias have been set up in the allocation of tenants. Only these applicants who can fulfil such criterias have the chance of being chosen. These criterias are as stated below:-

- 1) must be a Malaysian Citizen.
- 2) must be married
- 3) applicant must be from the lower-income group.
- 4) do not possess any land or house.
- 5) squatters evicted by landlord or government, flood or fire victims.

However a few of these criterias have been revised again that is:-

- 1) must be married with children. Those who have 4 children and above will be given a 2 bed-room unit.
- 2) the income must be low depending on the size of family and also the working members of the family who can contribute to the total income.
- 3) First choice will be given to squatters, fire

or flood victims.

In fact, nearly 70% of all the new flat units are reserve for the people of this category.

As for the rest of the applicants, they are chosen on the basis of 'first come first serve' once they have fulfilled the required criterias. All these successful applicants have no say whatsoever in the choice of the flats or units allocated to them. However the City Hall officials are trying their best to allocate the applicants to places nearest to their previous home.

2.3.2 Criteria for selection of flats

After gaining some knowledge of the flats both from observation and also data gathered from the City Hall, I have shown Shaw Road flats as the area of study. There are several reasons why this particular flats are chosen as the ideal place to study. Firstly, as stated before, these flats are found in the sector which has the greatest concentration of population which is an ideal place to study overcrowding. As the requirement of this study is Chinese respondents and that the race composition here is Chinese as a majority, it not only fulfil the requirement but it can also be a representative of the whole because of the high percentage of Chinese there. Also, since there are so many possible respondents, even if some were unwilling to answer, I can still turn to the next who is more willing to participate.

Furthermore, as the flats were completed in 1967, it means that most of the tenants have stayed for quite some years. Since the study is trying to find the effects of overcrowding, a lapse of some years is needed before one can see its effects. Also, many sociologists have linked overcrowding to high-rise flats in which they indicated that it is more likely to occur especially to these tenants who stay on the upper floors where getting out is an inconvenience if the lifts are out of order. This was found to be quite a frequent case in the Shaw Road flats and thus was more ideal as the place to study. Besides this, as the units of these flats are small that is either a one bed-room unit or a 2 bed-room unit, overcrowding will be more likely to occur.

Therefore, after considering all the above reasons, I find that Shaw Road flats is a suitable place for my research.

2.3.3 Selection of Households

As the main purpose of this study is to gain an insight view on the life of the people and whether overcrowding has any effect on their lives, only those households who can fulfil certain criterias are chosen. These households should have children either studying, working or pre-school. There should be at least 3 persons staying in one unit and should have stayed there for a few years.

It was hoped that the information on the background

of the tenants could be obtained from the records in City Hall that is information with regard to the size of the family, monthly income, occupation, number of persons staying in the unit, number of children studying and working, etc..... However, later, it was found that it is quite impossible to get the exact data of the new tenants ^{as they} are not recorded down. Besides that, some of the tenants when they first applied for the flats, used false data to apply so as to gain a better chance of securing a unit. Therefore the selection of household will have to wait until the actual interview takes place to decide whether they meet the above criteria.

2.3.4 Selection of Interviewees

The initial plan was to interview household heads but it was found to be not feasible because household heads have to wait in the day-time and sometimes they also take up part-time jobs during the night. Because of the difficulty in getting them for interviewing during the day-time or even sometimes during the night and also because of the inconvenience to interview them at night as it might be dangerous walking around alone, I decided not to interview the household heads.

Instead, housewives were found to be more suitable as the respondents of this survey. As most of the tenants here are from the lower-income bracket, most of the housewives

especially these with children have to stay back to look after them and only a number of them might take up a light job that can be done at home, for example, baby-sitting, sewing clothes and others. There are also in a better position to answer because they are more knowledgeable about matters pertaining to expenditure, savings, children's academic performance, cleanliness, health, etc..... In addition, from a few studies done, housewives are indicated to be more likely to be affected by overcrowding as they are usually confined inside the four walls of the unit. As a result, in the final interview, all the respondents were housewives.

2.4 The interview schedule

For this survey, a structure interview schedule is used. A distinction should be made between a schedule and a questionnaire here. In actual fact, the difference between these two lies in the method of filling the form containing a set of questions. A questionnaire is 'self-administered' whereby the respondent fills the answer onto the questionnaire himself. A schedule, on the other hand, refers to a form of questionnaire which is generally filled in by the researcher or the interviewer himself. (Tandon BC, 1979 : 94) It is one which poses definite, concrete and pre-ordained question to the respondents. It is

prepared in advance and not set at the time when questions are being posed before the respondents. Only sometimes additional questions may be framed and asked when some clarification is needed or some more information is to be sought from the respondent. Both open-ended and close-ended questions are used in this schedule. (Refer to appendix)

Close-ended question is one in which the questions are set in such a manner that it leaves the respondents with only a few alternatives to answer. What is really meant here is that a few answers are prepared and the respondents have just to choose one of these answers which may be of 2 types:-

- 1) One in which answers such as yes or no are given.
- 2) the other in which a few answers are given as a choice.

Open-ended questions is one in which respondents have full choice of using his own language, expression or viewpoints. They are not restricted by fixed answers as those found in close-ended questions. Each respondent is encouraged to explain or express herself clearly the way in which he or she feels most apt.

Both these types of question serve their purpose in the survey. I have used close-ended question for obtaining data on the personal characteristics of the respondent and her family

which is more towards the form of statistics, whereas open-ended questions are used in circumstances where answers have to be planned out of the respondents or cases where respondents are required to give their viewpoints or feelings over something.

This interview schedule was designed to touch on the following sections:-

- 1) savings and expenditure.
- 2) present living conditions pertaining to attitudes towards interracial mixing, neighbourhood relations, friendship patterns, noise, cleanliness and others.
- 3) relationship in the family itself especially with husband and children.
- 4) knowledge of childrens' activities, academic performances and health.
- 5) housing conditions and the problems that are faced in relation to family, neighbours and others.

In designing these questions, efforts are specially made to ensure that questions forwarded to respondents would not in any way arouse ambiguity in the part of the respondent. Besides this, attempts are also made to phrase sensitive questions regarding attitudes or personal matter in as indirect a way as possible. According to Oppenheim (1973), 'we ought to start off

the interview with some easy impersonal questions'. Hence, usually biographical questions are phrased first before asking the more personal questions.

The original questionnaire was formulated in English. However it was later found that it was not feasible because most of the Chinese respondents are either illiterate, Chinese educated or lowly educated, hence, not able to understand fully the question phrased in English. Therefore I have translated it to a Chinese dialect, Cantonese, so as to enable communication to take place easier. This questionnaire was designed to take not more than an hour during the interview to counter for respondents and interviewer.

Pilot Survey:

In relation to pilot survey, Jagdish Prakash (1979 : 108) suggest that before the questionnaire is given a final shape, it is always advisable to carry out a pre-test. The pilot survey/pre-test becomes necessary where there is inadequacy of the literature on the subject to be studied. Pretesting is needed to select the items for final schedule or questionnaire. Pretesting refers to preliminary interviews on the proposed survey with a view to find out soundness of the draft questionnaire and its design. It is often necessary to undertake pretesting to avoid confusion, wastage of money and energy and to arrive at correct

conclusion and better results of the survey, Thus, in actual fact, a pilot survey not only helps with the actual wording of questions but also with such procedural matters as the design of a letter of introduction, the ordering of question sequences, and the reduction of non response rates.

Hence, in this research a pilot survey was conducted in which a few samples was chosen to test out the questionnaire. The most important thing here is to test whether the questions constructed is suitable or not, whether it is relevant to the aim of the study. This pretesting enables me to find out the mistakes which might have crept in the formulation of the questionnaire. In addition, it serves the purpose of gaining some idea as to how long the actual interview would take in completion with one respondent. Furthermore, with the testing actually taking place, one can take note of the problems that might arise during the interview and also it serves as a practice for the interviewer.

2.5 The Interview

An interview has been referred to as one of the important and powerful tool for the data collection especially in the field research connected with the social problems. (Prakash, 1979 : 110) It implies a personal interview in which the interviewer and the respondent carry on a conversation face to face

and discuss on the problems that might arise. It helps in the collection of primary data which may be quite reliable and useful. Sometimes, such an interview may be conducted in a casual manner in which case the respondent may not even be aware of the fact or it may be quite formalized whereby it might require special physical facilities to carry on the process of the interview.

In this study, the interview was carried out by myself during the long term vacation that is between the month of April and May. Usually the interview was conducted either in the morning or in the afternoon and at times both the morning and afternoon. However, sometimes the interview would last until in the very late evening depending on the respondent's willingness to participate. Even when no interview was carried out that day, I would go to the flats and walk around or talk to a few people of whom I knew so as to project a more familiar face with my respondents. During the interview which sometimes takes place in the house itself or at the doerside, I was able to do a bit of observation of the place in general and also on the childrens' activities.

Before the interview begins, the interviewer takes some time in introducing herself as a University student and explain the purpose of the study. The respondent were reassured again and again that the interviewer is not doing any kind of work or spy for the government but rather an academic exercise

for the fulfilment of her degree course. After gaining their trust, I tried to glean as much information out of them as possible but always bearing in mind not to provoke them with sensitive issues or provoke their anger. The interview usually last for 45 minutes to an hour depending on the respondent. Sometimes the respondent was so happy to find someone to talk to that they would go on and on for hours. However, in general, the respondents are seldom that cooperative. At times, the respondents would just refuse to continue with the interview right in the mid-half. If possible, sometimes, I would just add a few questions to as the respondent's children.

During this survey, 'accidental sampling' was used that is if one respondent refused to answer, instead of pestering her, another respondent will be chosen until one of them is willing.

2.6 The Problems of the Survey.

Like most studies, this research is not without its' problems. From the very start till the end of the survey, many problems have been encountered and I have tried my very best to minimize it as much as possible.

During the pilot study, I found that there were quite a number of questions that were irrelevant and thus, have to make a few alterations. For example, under the heading 'Place

of Origin and Environment' in the schedule, question number one was found to be almost similar to question number three and hence, have to be cancelled. Question number two, 'How long did you live there', was found to be irrelevant to the study because it is of more importance to know the number of years the respondent is staying in the present place rather than the previous house. The question does not bring any value to the study. Also under the heading 'Views and attitudes', question number thirteen was cancelled because the question implies the same meaning as found in question number fourteen. It thus became a repetition. And the same goes for question number fifteen and sixteen.

In the morning, the housewives were usually very busy doing housework, marketing, preparing food for the children who have to attend afternoon classes and others. Most of the time, they would either take a nap or continue with other chores after completing the above mentioned ones. Therefore, sometimes I encounter the problem of getting hold of a respondent who is free and willing to answer the questions.

Also, as most the tenants are highly suspicious of strangers, when approached, they either refuse to answer directly and just shut the door or they answer reluctantly. For example, in one case, the respondent was very reluctant to answer and to show her feelings out, the respondent sat at a far corner of the house to answer my questions while I was standing outside

the door, hence, making it very difficult to hear what she said. Although there was a large composition of Chinese in the flats, however, during the survey, I found that many doors were locked indicating that either the tenants were out or at work. At times the tenants with their doors closed would ask through the door the purpose of the visit and after knowing it would just give a curt 'no' reply and walk off or they would give an excuse for not answering.

And as stated before, some would just refuse to continue with the interview in the mid-half and thus, have to cancel the whole interview schedule. With regard to the interviews held in the City Hall to get information on the tenants in the flats, the Flats itself, the government's policy in terms of housing and others, the officials were very cooperative whereby a lot of data was gathered. However, problem that arose here was in the availability of these officials because they were very busy most of the time. But anyway, I finally did manage to interview them after several trips to the City Hall.

As I am relying completely on the answers of my respondents in this study, it is very difficult for me to control the degree of reliability and truthfulness in the answers given. Thus, the interpretations of the findings should be seen in the light of these limitations.

CHAPTER THREE

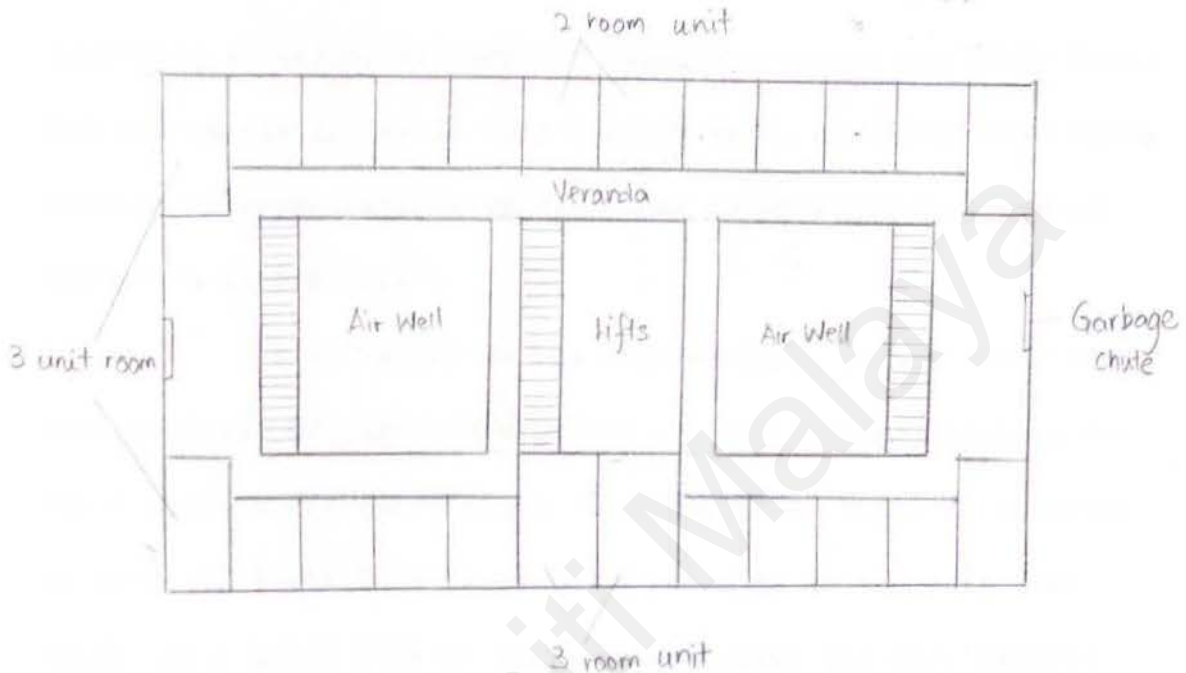
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FLAT-DWELLERS.3.1 Physical Condition of Flats

Public housing is designed to provide low-cost and low-rental housing for low-income groups who cannot afford the cost of renting or purchasing private housing because of the distortion of the private housing market. The design of these public housing is mostly high-rise buildings because it is thought to be cheaper and also occupy minimum space. Planning was made in such a way that these buildings are located near to the tenant's previous homes to ensure minimal ill-effects might arise as a result of relocation.

In general, the most distinguish characteristic of these flats is the smallness of the housing unit provided. On every floor there are eighteen 2-room units which actually means one room a hall and the kitchen and the rest are 3-room units with 2 rooms, a hall and the kitchen. The 3-room units are located at the corner lots and beside the lift. The smallness of each unit is characterized by its total area which is 420 sq. feet for a 2-room unit and 500 sq. feet for a 3-room unit. For example, the second room in the 3-room unit is so small that after putting in

a double-decker bed and a small cupboard, there is practically no place to sit at all. However, in spite of the smallness of the unit, ventilation received through the balcony, kitchen and room windows is quite good.

On the whole, in terms of the physical structure, there is an overall improvement as compared to the tenant's previous homes which is either a single rented room or poorly built houses in squatter areas. They can now enjoy the privacy in the home and a higher level of satisfaction with regard to the social amenities provided such as water, electricity, sewage, garbage disposal in the sense that they no longer are compelled to share such amenities with their neighbours or other tenants as in their previous homes. This increase in satisfaction among residents of high-rise flats are also shown in the studies of Wong Yoke Ying (1976) and Lucy Ng (1980) Below is a diagram which illustrates the general structure of the flats.

Diagram 4Structure of the flat.

These structures are constructed in such a way that the only form of light that the inside of the building receives is through the airwells as elsewhere are blocked by the four walls. Thus, only these corridors of the upper floors which received much sunlight are bright whereas the corridors on the lower floors are always in dimness. In fact, the 3 flight of staircases provided on each floor are in perpetual darkness all day through as a result of the 2 blocks of wall on either side, thus, blocking out any light that might seep through. A constant source of problem which causes much dissatisfaction among the residents is the breakdown of lifts and telephone facilities due to vandalism.

This finding is however, in contrast with the study of Wong Yoke Ying (1976) whom also made a study on high-rise flats as well as medium-rise flats. She indicated that the incidence of crime, robbery and vandalism within the flats (Loke Yew and Cheras flats) is very low. In fact, she found that there were no reported damages or breakages in relation to lifts or telephone facilities.

With regard to the surroundings, it was found that the provision of parks, playground and recreational centres for the residents are very scarce. The playground which is situated in front of Block B is found to be too near to the main road which has a heavy flow of traffic throughout the day. Besides that, this place was also frequented by vandals and bullies. Thus, a majority of the tenants do not allow their children to play there unless accompanied by some elders. Though there are very few shops within this housing estate, the locality of the flats which is in the heart of the city enabled the accessibility to facilities and services such as entertainment centres, schools, shopping complexes, etc.....

3.2 Biographical Data of Households

The biographical data of households will be discussed first as it is an important determinant of the lifestyle of the tenants in which it affects not only the attitudes of the people

but also the social relationship between them. Therefore the information gathered here may be useful and invaluable to this study.

As stated before, due to the inconvenience in interviewing the household heads, only housewives are chosen as my respondents. In addition, since the objective of the study is to find out the effects of internal density which requires a minimum of 3 persons staying in a 2-room unit, only these households with children were studied.

3.2.1 Income Distribution of the Family

Under the New Economic Policy (see Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975) the strategy of poverty eradication called for a pattern of development which provides opportunities for the poor to participate effectively in the growth process and share in the benefits of development. The programmes implemented for expediting the process of poverty eradication during 1971-80 included the provision of improved inputs and facilities in existing agriculture areas, the absorption of poor households into modern agriculture and other sectors through accelerated creation of productive employment opportunities and the provision of social services and amenities such as education, health, housing, water and electricity. In Peninsular Malaysia, the incidence of poverty was targetted to decline from 49.3% in

1970 to 15.7% in 1990, to be attained through a rapid socio-economic development with significant participation of the peer (Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1980-1985).

In view of the implementation of the policy, it was hoped that the findings could show whether there is an overall improvement in their quality of life. Several questions with regard to factors such as level of education, work, total income and household size were asked of the respondents. From the interview, I found that nearly 30 per cent of the household heads were originally from the People's Republic of China who migrated to Malaysia in the early twentieth century and they have no formal education at all. In fact, as shown in Table 3.2, very few of these household heads that is only 25 per cent of them reached secondary level of education whereas the rest (75 per cent) have only either primary or no education altogether. And the reason given for this was that they could not afford to get an education as in these days, it costs quite a large sum of money and also, they do not have the time to spare for education because they have to work and help to supplement the family income.

Table 3.1Level of Education of Household Heads

Level of education	% of resp.
No formal education	33.3 (20)
Primary education	41.7 (25)
Lower Secondary	15 (9)
Upper Secondary	10 (6)
Total	100

This findings are further supported by a study done by Yung Yuet Hing (1967) on the contributions of the Chinese to education in the Straits Settlements (1900-41). She reveals that during the 1930's the party politics and intrigues in China and the Japanese invasion caused many Chinese whom are either homeless or poverty stricken peasants to flee or migrate to other countries. As most of these migrants even found difficulties in earning a living in China, a level of education is very much lacking in these people as they do not have the time nor the money to pay for it. Thus, when these migrants came over to Malaya, most of them only started off as a labourer or other similar jobs which do not require any skill or qualification such as mine workers, factory hands and others. A majority of these migrants were still very patriotic towards their motherland

and hence only treated Malaya as their temporary home. Their main intention or ambition then was to make money and later send it to their family or to return to China with their accumulated wealth altogether. As a result, most of these migrants have neglected the education system provided then, except for a small minority who were really interested.

As a result of this low-level of education among the household heads, it was found that within a short period of a few years they have changed many jobs with the hope to get a better or higher paid one. Around 80 per cent of them are at present employees of private sectors, 10 per cent of them are self-employed or working in a family concern and the rest are employees of the Government sector.

Table 3.2

Income Distribution of Household Heads.

Monthly household income	No. of household	%
> \$900	7	11.7
\$701 - \$900	6	10
\$501 - \$700	12	20
\$300 - \$500	35	58.3
Total	60	100

Table 3.3 clearly demonstrated that the lower income groups are the main beneficiary of public housing. Owing to the fact that employment is based on achievement in education, nearly 60 percent of the household head earn an income of less than \$500 while only 11.7% of the rest have the income of more than \$900. Most of these household heads who earn below \$500 are lowly-educated or illiterates whom are engaged in jobs which seldom requires skill or a high level of education such as factory workers, taxi-drivers, clerks, vendors and others. The chances of their promoted to higher positions are almost nil whereby the only consolation they get is an annual increment of not more than \$50 to their meagre income. However, there are a few exceptions whereby a small minority of group (16.7 per cent) who were able to earn above \$500. Most of them were mostly engaged in hawking or other family business in which the monthly income is fluctuatable depending on the period of boom or recession and also the weather. In spite of this, if taken as a average, the calculated monthly income of these people are well above the \$500 margin. On the other hand, those who earn more than \$900 are mostly engaged in skill jobs which either needs experience or both experience and qualifications such as technicians, mechanics and others. Thus, they were able to enjoy a much better position than the earlier mentioned ones.

From the statistics given in Table 3.3, it was

calculated that the average monthly income of these households is \$540. The small table 3.3 below shows the improvement in the level of income among the Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia for the past few years. (These people/community who formed the bulk of the poor are the lowest 40% of households in the size distributions of income).

Table 3.3

A comparison of the level of income for the past few years.

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1982</u>
Chinese Community	\$135.93	\$247.27	\$280.11	\$540.00

Sources: Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980)

Fourth Malaysi Plan (1980-1985)

As shown in Table 3.3, the mean monthly household income for the Chinese Community has increased from \$135.93 (1970) to \$247.27 (1976). By 1979 it had increased to \$280.11 which is more than a 100 per cent increase from the level in 1970. And if one is to compare the findings of the average monthly income of the households in this survey to the data above, it was found that the income of \$540 in 1982 represents an increase of around 93 per cent of the level in 1979. This increment in the level of income for the past few years signifies an improvement in the income position of this community. However, though there is a marked

increase in the level of income of the household heads as compared to the level of the previous years, it was found that this did not allowed them to enjoy an improvement in their quality of life. This was mainly due to the increase in inflation rate or rather the standard or cost of living which is much higher compared to the earlier years. Therefore, although the total earnings of the family increased as a result of the raise in pay and the additional working members in the family, there were no significant increase in the savings. In fact, the expenditure was many times higher than before.

It was found that these respondents who formerly stayed in squatter areas were most affected by the inflation rate because formerly, they were able to grow their own fruits and vegetables, rear poultry, use oil lamps and firewood and do not have to pay rent. Hence, they were able to save quite a sum monthly but now they have to spend for the above items. Only these respondents who formerly rented rooms were satisfied with the expenditure as it was of not much difference compared to the previous expenditure.

In view of the significant increase in expenditure, some housewives enlightened their husband's burden by working. Due to the fact that most of these housewives were lowly-educated or with no education background at all, they could only take up part-time jobs which do not require any paper qualifications such

as baby-sitting, washing clothes, sewing buttons, tailoring, or making cakes and other feedstuff to sell. These are among the more common jobs taken up by the housewives.

3.2.2 Household Size

The household size and the number of rooms are found to be a good determinant in the measurement of density and the degree of overcrowding because man, like other social animals, uses space for his various activities. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that spatial features of the physical environment play an important role in patterning behavior.

For generations, it has been a tradition or rather a belief of the Chinese that the more children one has (especially boys), the more prosperous one will become. Even when one is old, he doesn't have to worry because his children will take care of him and when he dies, there'll be someone who will continue to burn offerings to him. Hence, in these olden days, whether one is poor or rich, most of them prefer to have a large family. Although in this modern urban industrial society, the trend is changing whereby most people nowadays would prefer to have small families, there are still quite a number of Chinese who could not thrust away the old tradition and thus, prefer to have a large family.

Table 3.5 clearly demonstrates that most of the Chinese in the flats still hold on to the old tradition in having

large families.

Table 3.4

Household Size

Household size (no. of persons)	No. of household	% of household
3 person	3	5
4 person	15	25
5 person	18	30
6 person	10	16.7
7 person	4	16.7
8 person	5	8.3
9 person	2	3.3
10 person	3	5
Total	60	100

Table 3.5Number of Families

Household size (no. of person)	No. of household	No. of families
3 person	3	3
4 person	15	15
5 person	18	20
6 person	10	12
7 person	4	4
8 person	5	6
9 person	2	3
10 person	3	5
Total	60	68

From the first Table (Table 3.4), the data indicated that 70% of the respondents have large households that is between 5 - 10 persons whereas only 30% have small households. This household size here takes into account everyone who stays in that particular housing unit at the time of the interview. After further analysis, it was found that a few of the households have more than one family. The difference between a household and a family is that 'a family' is made up of either members of one generation (only husband and wife) or members of two generation

(parents and their children), which actually means a nuclear family. On the other hand, 'a household' may consist of one or more families whom might be their kins/non-kins.

As shown in Table 3.5, the data reveals that out of the 60 households, chosen as my sample, there were altogether 68 families. As a result of the limited space, a majority of these households only consists of one family and seldom have more than one family. Hence, it was found that there were only 8 households (13.3 per cent), 7 of them (11.7 per cent) have their parents staying with them while only one of these households have their grandchildren staying with them. This was because they felt responsible for their parents' well-being as they are old and quite incapable of taking care of themselves. However, in the case of their children and grandchildren, most of these households encourage their children to stay elsewhere especially after marriage, firstly, to avoid further congestion or crowding in the housing unit and secondly, they could now fend for themselves and be independent.

The officials from City Hall said that the allocation of families to different housing unit depends largely on the size of the family and the monthly income. Only those families with at least 5-6 members and earning around \$500-\$600 shall be considered for the 3-room unit whereas the 2-room units will be given to these families with 4 members or below. However, judging from the

above table whereby 70% of the households have large families, it is obvious that the present housing unit is not enough to accomodate most of the households staying in 3-room units whom I've interviewed, ^{where} there are at least 7-8 members staying there while nearly 50% of the 2-room units have more than 4 members staying in. Hence, it was of no surprise to find that nearly 90% of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the housing unit.

Questions with regard to family planning were posed to the respondents. It was found that most the housewives who are in their late 40's and 50's were either not aware of such planning or they were very much against it. In fact, a few of the respondents, who have small families wished that they could have bigger families but due to the financial incapability in supporting them and the smallness of the unit, they decided against the idea. Already now, most of the residents are experiencing household crowding through the lack of privacy and the insufficient space. As there are not enough rooms, the children usually have to sleep in the hall or cramp in with their parents in the small room. Even the hall has to be used for various purposes such as studying, entertaining, sleeping and others. (Such occurances are common in Japan whereby due to the low-standard of housing, nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ of the households in Osaka stay in a 1-room apartment or houses). Therefore, it was not surprising to hear that most of these respondents

expressed their wish to shift to other low-cost houses with better surroundings. However, the thought was very much dampened by the financial difficulties faced by the family and also the inexorable rent or prices of the houses nowadays. Hence, to lighten the problem, parents usually encourage the sons or daughters who are old enough or are married to shift elsewhere. The consequences of this internal crowding will be discussed later in more detail.

3.3 Sanitation and Ventilation

On the whole, when asked about the sanitation of the housing unit itself and the flats in general, a high level of satisfaction were given except for one factor. The residents find that it is very unhealthy to have the toilet in the kitchen itself. Also those who stay in the corner lots were very unsatisfied with the placement of the garbage chute which lies just beside their home. The main reason was that when people are careless in throwing rubbish where some of it are strewn all over the ground, it will rot and become smelly. In addition, it also attracts pests such as flies and rats and thus, is very unhygienic.

With regard to ventilation, it was found that only these respondents staying in the upper floors were satisfied as

as it is windy and cooling in the evening. However, those who are staying on the lower floors especially those facing the main road are very unhappy about it because the amount of dust and dirt that settles in their home daily is terrifying. It not only creates extra work for the housewives but it is also harmful to the health. To counter this problem, a number of these housewives prefer to shut the balcony door and the room window to prevent dust from entering but it results in the stuffiness of the home. Hence, either way, these housewives will still have to face the problem.

CHAPTER FOUR

EFFECTS OF OVERCROWDING

In the past few decades, empirical research into the relationship between one of the spatial features of physical environment, density and behavior has acquired renewed urgency as a result of the accelerated growth rate of the world population and urbanization. The research into this problem has proceeded both at macro and micro levels. At the macro level the main focus has been on the implications of high density (as measured by number of persons per room or square feet per person) on the family and community life. (Riaz Hassan 1977 : 120-121)

A number of studies have been done on this aspect and have emerged with conflicting results. The findings of several of these studies carried on relatively recently showed that certain dimensions of crowding may have a serious impact on selected aspects of family functioning and organisation. For example, H Lewis (1961) found that household crowding is positively related to incidence of family conflict and negatively associated with parental supervision of children. Russel Murray (1975) also suggested that members of a crowded family will experience a greater degree of mutual interference, inhibition and antagonistic

encounters. On the other hand, after a general review of various human situations in order to gain knowledge of the possible hazards to life and health under conditions of overcrowding, Biderman and his associates have indicated that:

Physical crowding per sq. is not regarded as fruitful unitary concept for examining the differences between high and low casualty events. For most of the range of densities, physical crowding has significance only in an interdependent relationship with many other variable features of the entire situation including environmental, structural, temperal psychological and social features.

(1963 : 192)

Similarly studies by Winsborough (1965), Gillis (1973), Garnahan and his associates (1974), among others, have found the relationship between population density and various forms of social pathology to be weak. Mindful of all the difficulties involved both studying social psychological effects of crowding (internal density) and in making generalizations from a small sample, I nevertheless undertook an exploratory study of selected social-psychological aspects of crowding in the 2 blocks of flats.

To date, many sociologists (Mitchell, 1976, Riaz

Hassan, 1977) have suggested that the person most affected by internal density is the housewife and the children. The most appropriate reason for this is that housewives spend more time in their home than in any other single place with regard to the amount of work they have to do daily. The children, the second person to spend the most time at home are seldom allowed to go anywhere except school. Thus, my main focus in this study will be on them.

Table 4.1

Respondents' responses to the spaciousness of the unit.

View with regard to spaciousness of place	% of Respondent		Total %
	Yes	No	
Room	6.7 (4)	93.3 (56)	100
Hall	11.6 (7)	88.4 (53)	100
Kitchen	5 (3)	95 (57)	100
Toilet	1.7 (1)	98.3 (59)	100
Balcony	15 (9)	85 (51)	100

During the survey, one of the common view among the respondents is their dissatisfaction in relation to the spaciousness of the housing unit as shown in Table 4.1 They find that the present units that they are staying are insufficient to the needs of the family and expressed their wish to get a bigger

unit such as the 3-room unit flats that have just been completed in Jalan Kenanga. In fact, if one is to examine the data on household size with that of the number of rooms per housing unit, it can really show the acute or pressing need of the respondents for a bigger unit or house. As now, when compared to the census of the United States, for crowding, the respondents especially those with large families (10%) which consists of 5 members and above are experiencing a severe degree of overcrowding. For example the situation of having at least four members staying in a one-room unit have far surpassed the standard set by the census stated above. Hence, it would be much worse with bigger or larger families.

Further analysis of the data given shows that the place disliked most by the respondents is the toilet cum bathroom whereby 98.3 per cent of them complained of the difficulty in getting work done there. For example, bathing the child is quite a difficult task because the design of the toilet cum bathroom is more likely to fit for only one person. Thus, the cramped situation caused of two person standing in the toilet does not permit them to move around with flexibility. The same goes with washing clothes. On the other hand, the place least disliked by these respondents is the balcony (85% of them) The reason given is that a balcony, to their viewpoint is not very important.

Although they don't deny the advantages in having a balcony (eg. hang clothes, look at the scenery, sitting there as a form of relaxation, etc.....), they however, placed more emphasis in having a bigger room and hall which they think is more important and useful.

The resulting consequence of the lack in space is the occurrence of 'use crowding'. 'Use crowding' is a term used to indicate the condition of limited space whereby a place has a multipurpose function. This is to say, a place is used for other purposes besides its main function. For example, in this study, as a result of the lack of rooms, the hall which besides being used for entertaining and dining, it also serves the purpose of providing a place for sleeping.

4.1 Effects on Family Relations

As a great deal of human life is lived within the family's dwelling unit, it is natural that the setting and condition of housing have attracted considerable attention, especially the sociological and social-psychological effects of these aspects on the family and its members. Focus has frequently been directed to the aspect of overcrowding or high internal density in order to ascertain its effects on family functioning and organization especially after various studies revealed a

wide range of social effects of high density. A study by Grueberg (1954 : 880-903) found a disproportionate number of first admissions of psychoses associated with residence in urban high density areas. Besides this, it was also pointed out that there is a significant association between high density city areas with recent study claims that household crowding is associated with greater incidence of sibling quarrels, and also with the increasing use of physical punishment by parents.

From the information gathered in this study, it was found that family conflict or quarrels between sibling occurs very frequently. It usually arises over the issue of the usage of the toilet cum bathroom. As there is only one toilet cum bathroom in each housing unit, there is usually a rush for the toilet especially when there are a lot of working members in the family. Most of them after a day's work would like to have a cool bath and relax. But as they return at around the same time, the usage of the toilet will be on a 'first come first serve' basis. Hence, when one has an 'emergency' need for the toilet or when the person using the toilet take a long time, the frustration in waiting often leads to antagonistic encounters between one another. Similarly, the need for a changing room will also ends up with the same consequence if both the toilet and the room are occupied. Besides this, due to the lack of space, the utilities or equipments in the home are usually reduced to the bare minimum and

hence, everything is on a 'share' basis. This basis of 'sharing' has often lead to quarelling or angry exchange of words because there is bound to be some dissatisfaction on the part of one or both parties. The situation is aggravated or become more severe in large families as there will be more people competing for such facilities or utilities.

In relation to the housewives activities, respondents were asked whether they have enough rest, privacy, peace and quiet at home. Generally, the daily routines of housewives includes preparing breakfast, morning shopping, preparing lunch, cleaning the flat and preparing dinner for the family. And while doing all that, taking care of young children, if she had them, and 'keeping an eye' on the older ones. Hence, these housewives seldom have much leisure time to themselves. The data of this study indicated that these respondents who have many small children or with a baby are less likely to have much rest or privacy to themselves.

On the other hand, the vice-versa happens if these children are independent enough or working. Nearly 60 per cent of the housewives complained of the lack of privacy and rest. While the rest of the respondents (40 per cent) were quite satisfied with the present situation. These complaints are not without its roots as proved by several reasons found. Firstly, whenever, there are a lot of children around, there is bound to

be an incessant amount of demands on the part of the children which requires their mother to fulfil, for example, asking for feed, drinks, toys, permission to go out and play, thus taking up a lot of their mothers' time. Secondly, it is unlikely that the housewives can relax while their children are playing outside the home because they are worried over the child's safety all the while. The chances of resting or relaxing is quite slim for those housewives who have a baby around because he/she will wail whenever he/she is hungry or want anything else irregardless of the time that is whether it is daytime or in the night. Only when the baby is asleep, can the housewives take a few moments of sleep.

Table 4.2

Various types of part-time jobs taken up by housewives

Types of job	No. of resp.	% of res.
baby sitting	3	5
tailoring	2	3.3
sewing buttons	1	1.7
washer	2	3.3
selling cakes/local cakes	1.	1.7
making tea/coffee in offices	1	1.7
Total	10	16.7

The other reason for not having enough privacy and rest is that some of these housewives have to take up part-time job to supplement to the family income. The table 4.2 above shows the number of respondent taking up such jobs and also the various types of jobs that they are doing. They only represent 16.7 per cent of the total respondents that is to say only 10 out of the 60 respondents are taking up part-time jobs. It was found that the most common type of part-time job is to baby-sit. Usually this type of job is taken up by those respondents who have a small family only because firstly, the question of enough space is less intense in small families, secondly, it is more lively to have a baby around as they have only a small family and thirdly, they need the money. However, the less common ones are jobs such as sewing buttons, selling cakes because it not only takes up much of their time in the home but also outside the house, for example, they have to prepare the cakes and then have to sell it, and the profit or revenue each month is not certain at all.

Hence, it can be seen that the afore mentioned jobs are all very time consuming. The only advantage in most of these jobs is that it can be done in the home itself. However, in spite of this advantage, the strain on the respondents are more intense as they are being more tied down or confined to the home as a result of the tremendous work that lies ahead of them. Many a

times, these respondents volunteered that they find themselves easily get heated up by the noise and argument inside or outside the home due to the tension built inside them as a consequent of the lack in hours of sleep or overwork themselves. At times, unless they are seriously ill, the respondents still have to do the daily routine work. Only when they cannot handle the amount of work, their kin or relatives will be called in to help them.

In terms of the relationship between the respondent with the husband and also the children, it was found that nearly 50% of the respondents admitted that there are often arguments between the family members. However, there was nothing serious which would bring about physical blows. Only at times, when the children are beyond control, do these housewives resort to physical punishment which is very seldom. Other than that the respondents claimed that they have a close relationship with their husband and children.

Therefore, the above mentioned findings would appear to support those of Beeth and Edwards (1967) study in that crowded conditions was found to be associated with greater incidence of sibling quarrels but the consequence or its effects are very modest. There is, however, no sign of anything as drastic as indicated by Gruberg in which he claims that the admission of psychoses is associated with residence in urban high density areas or that there is a significant association between high density city areas with high suicide rates.

4.2 Effects on Health

It has always been presumed that if a place is congested and overcrowded, the resulting consequence is it affects the health of a person in the sense that diseases are more likely to breed and spread under such conditions. However, in the light of empirical evidence concerning the health of the tenants in these flats, it has become clear that if a person really takes good care of himself and keeps the place clean, diseases or sickness are very unlikely to breed even in very congested place.

Several questions with regard to the cleanliness of the flats and health of the respondents was asked. Most of the respondents (90%) remarked that on the whole, the two blocks of flats are quite clean and are certainly not a breeding ground for any types of diseases. However, the situation inside the housing unit itself might be quite different depending on the attitude of the resident towards hygiene. In some cases, the home of the respondent was so packed with things all over that it looked more like a warehouse than a home. The situation was aggravated by the large amount of people staying in, especially during the night where all of them cluster together to sleep. This usually brings about an atmosphere of stuffiness which is very bad for the health. Besides this, in such congested conditions, if one of the family member is to acquire any type of sickness that is contagious for

example, 'flu', the chances of another member catching it is rather high unless one really take special precaution. However, it was lucky to note that only 3 respondents (5 %) have such living conditions in their house.

Generally, as stated before, the respondents and their family do not suffer any serious ill-health. Most of them only suffer minor health problems such as headaches and sleeping trouble. Even that it seldom occurs except in these families where family conflict often takes place or those families whom have a lot of worries.

4.3 Effects on Kniship, Friends and Former Neighbours

Many sociologists once subscribed to the view that primary relationships were doomed in modern industrial and urban society. It was presumed that, because bureaucratic organisations are more effective than primary groups in achieving goals, conditions in modern urban industrial society are antithetical to primary relationships. However, in the light of empirical evidence about the persistence of primary group structures, it has become clear that under the impact of modern urban industrial society they do not dissapear. (Eugence Litwak, 1969 : 465-481) However, Goode (1963) is of another different opinion. He proposed that a common set of influences (the social forces of industrialization and urbanization) is affecting every known society. Even

traditional family systems in such widely separate and diverse societies as Papua, Manus, China and Yugoslavia are reported to be changing as a result of these forces, although at different rates of speed. The alteration seems to be in the direction of some type of conjugal family pattern that is, toward fewer kinship ties with distant relatives and a greater emphasis on the 'nuclear' family unit of couple and children.

The main purpose of this section therefore is to explore and find out whether there is any change in the contact with kinship and friends and whether it is affected by overcrowding. To assess the impact of overcrowding on primary contact, the respondents were asked straightforwardly about the changes, if any which they had experienced in their contacts with kins, former neighbours and friends and the reason for these changes. Forms of social contact here may include letters and phone calls besides visiting. Table 4.3 below shows the percentage of increase or decrease in social contact with kins, friends and former neighbours.

Table 4.3

Percentage of increase/decrease in social contacts

Frequency in social contact	Contact with kins	Contact with friends	Contact with former neighbours
No change in social contact	25 (15)	10 (6)	8.3 (5)
Change in social contact:			
Increase	16.7(10)	13.3 (8)	10 (6)
Decrease	58.3(35)	18.7 (49)	81.7 (49)
Total	100	100	100

The data above indicates a great change in the contact between the respondents with their kins, friends and former neighbours. The most significant change here is the frequency of contact with friend and former neighbours, (76.7%) of the respondents reveals that they experienced a decrease in the contact with their friends whereas (81.7%) of them experience this with their former neighbours. They now either seldom or do not contact their friends and former neighbours at all. Even the contact with their kins is very much lower or less. In fact, only a small percentage of them still maintain their usual contact or increase the frequency of contact with their friends, neighbours and kins. The reason for the decline in contact will be discussed in more detail later.

Questions asked of the respondents included, 'how frequent do you visit or contact your parents, relatives and friends' It is also of importance to note whether the infrequent visits is caused by overcrowding or by other factors. The table below shows the frequency of visits made by respondents back to their hometowns.

Table 4.4

Frequency of visits made to hometowns.

Frequency of visits (contacts)	No. of resp.	% of resp.
3-4 times a month	2	3.3
5-6 times a year	4	6.7
Twice a year	8	13.3
Once a year	12	20
Only during festival and special occasions	13	55
Never	1	1.7
Total	60	100

Note: festivals and special occasions means going back for festivals which may range from 1-6 times a year.

The above findings revealed that a majority of the respondents (around 55%) only return to their hometowns for festive or special occasions such as Chinese New Year, parents'

birthday, weddings or death of close kins. Some of these respondents only visit their kins once or twice a year unless they stay near to each other whereby they can go more frequently. In fact only 11 per cent of the respondents visit their kins quite frequently that is around 3-4 times a month or 5-6 times a year. The reason behind this was because either their kins stay in the same flats or they stay very near to them, thus, making it easier or more convenient for the respondents to visit them. In addition, this close distance which does not require or incur much expenses also allows them to make these visits more frequent.

Though the data collected from the 2 tables indicates that there is a decline in the frequency of visits or contacts with their kins and friends, it cannot be taken to mean that there is a distortion of kinship ties or social contacts. There are a number of reasons contributed by the respondents as to why there is a decrease in the frequency of contact:-

- 1) These housewives find that they do not have any free time to spend especially those who take up part-time jobs.
- 2) For these respondents whose kins stays in other states or places far away, it is difficult for them to travel so far because of the load of work to do and the children to care for.
- 3) It is very difficult for the household head to get

leave especially for a few days.

- 4) As most of these housewives are illiterate or lowly-educated, it is difficult and troublesome to contact their kins, friends or former neighbours through a third party in writing the letter.
- 5) Also contact through telephone is also quite troublesome because one has to go down to the public phone to make a call which is often mishandled or destroyed by vandals.
- 6) Finally, the tight income situation of the family does not permit them to spend money on travelling, and other expenses occurred during their visits as often as they would like.

In fact, even the frequency of visits made by relatives and friends have also decreased because most of the festivals or special occasions are now being held in the homes of the respondent's kins (such as single or double storey houses, squatter areas, bigger units of housing, etc.) as it was found to be more appropriate compared to the flats. The most obvious reason behind this is that the spacing of housing unit can hardly accommodate any more person other than the respondent's own family. Hence, generally, these kins and friends who visits them seldom spend the night there unless there is no other alternative.

Although the process of urban development resulting in overcrowding and other socio-economic problems have led to a general decrease in contact with kins and friends, it cannot be concluded that there is a dislocation in kinship ties as postulated by Parson and Wirth (1949). The yearly rush home or the frequent visits during festive and special occasions showed the eagerness of the respondents to be with their kins and it is a good indication of the bonds of kinship that still holds. The most important finding on this aspect is that as opposed to the study of Raven (1967) and Michelson (1970) who claims that limitations of living space in apartments or high internal density adversely affect social interaction among friends and neighbours and in some cases it results in severe reductions in such interaction, the findings of this survey shows that overcrowding is only one of the many factors which causes the decline in frequency of contact between the respondents with their kins and friends. The fact is that there is no body of convincing evidence that household crowding is wholly responsible for the severe reduction in contact.

4.4 Effects on Child Development

Several studies have been carried out in United Kingdom and United States on the aspect of overcrowding and its impact on child development. The general conclusion drawn from

these studies is that the child coming from a crowded home environment exhibits a high level of over aggressive behavior and an underlying trait of insecurity. These findings have been further supported by a more recent study by Russell Murray (1975) of primary Four and Five children in Great Britain which show that children from crowded houses tend to be more aggressive, impulsive and extroverted.

Although one cannot deny the fact that certain consequences of high internal densities may be valid cross-culturally, it would be naive to assume that all the findings of these studies can apply to other countries. However, in a recent study done by Mitchell (1971) in HongKong, it was found that high internal density does have a clear impact on parent-child relationships. Most parents in crowded homes seldom discourage their children from leaving the house because it temporarily relieves the high internal density in the home. And the consequence is that it reduces the parent's knowledge of and control over the children.

In this section, I would like to discuss the results and see whether there are any effects of overcrowding on children as stated in the afore mentioned studies. With regard to the children's activities, it was gathered that not all families allowed their children to play outside the home. However, it was observed that most of the children from large families tended to

play outside as compared to these children from smaller families. There are several reasons given by the respondents for allowing the children to play outside the house:-

- 1) These housewives feel that confining the child inside the home is very bad for the child especially during their developmental stages. Due to the limitations of socializing with other people or children, these children might grow to become a withdrawn person with traits of insecurity.
- 2) Some housewives who have a lot of work to do especially those taking part-time jobs find that they are allowed to run around with much freedom.
- 3) At times, the situation in the house which is filled with noise and tension, compelled the housewives to allow their children to play outside so that it can momentarily relieve the uptightness and stress in them.

Though these 56.7% of respondents allowed their children to play outside, they usually restrict the children to certain places only in which the respondent's feel that it is safe enough. This is especially found in cases whereby the child is below 12 years old because the housewives feel that these children are still not independent enough and have to be taken care of. Only when he grows older, is he being allowed more freedom. However, in

spite of this restricted zone of places allowed, it was found that most of these housewives have only some rough idea of the place and activities their children were engaged in but they could not be absolutely sure of it. In general, the common place that the children play are as shown in Table 4.5

The findings indicated that the most common place allowed by the respondents for their children to play in is along the corridors just outside their home. This decision was made because it ensures the capability of the housewives to keep an eye on the children when the front wooden door is opened without the necessity of being with them. But in actual fact, it was found that the surveillance and control over the children are becoming less as a result of the influence by the friends on the children. The other places mentioned are discouraged because of the difficulty in keep an eye on the children and the fear for the safety of the children as well as the fear that undesirable incidences might occur.

Table 4.5

The play places of children as allowed by respondents.

Various places	No. of resp.	%
Inside home	26	43.3
Along the corridor	25	41.7
Playground/ground floor	4	6.7
Staircase	3	5
Other places	2	3.3
Total	60	100

Out of the total number of respondents, 43.4% of them do not allow their children to play outside unless accompanied. Several reasons that are given are as follows:-

- 1) Some of the neighbour's children are very naughty, disobedient and rude. Hence, these respondents are afraid that their children will be influenced by them.
- 2) The housewives are also afraid that the children while playing might end up fighting which most probably will bring about displeasure and enmity with the neighbours.
- 3) These respondents perceived the outside environment as dangerous unattractive for the children because

there are a lot of vandals or 'bad elements' outside who might reach their children undesirable things.

In fact, all of them have the same view or opinion that is the inside of the home is much more safer and secure as compared to the outside because it at least ensured that the children would not get into any fights or mix with bad company.

Touching on the academic performance of the children, it was found that internal crowding is a constant hindrance to children's staying whereby a majority of the respondents reveals that their children only perform averagely or below average in school. There are a few possible reasons which might help to explain the above situation.

Firstly, owing to the smallness of the flat it was found that most the the respondents' children do not have a fixed place to study. The limited spacing plus the low income of the respondents do not permit them to buy a study table for each of their children. Thus, in most families only when the dining table is available, these children will have a table to study in, if not, they will have to resort to sitting on the floor or bed to study. The discomfort caused by such a situation greatly deters a child from studying.

Secondly, the lack of privacy due to the frequent visits by friends or relatives or the frequent movements of other

family members itself caused a lot of distraction for the children. The situation is worse if the intentions of these visits is to have a game of mahjeng which is a common past-time activity in these flats. The clashing of the mahjeng which is deafening at times can easily distract the child's concentration in his studies.

Besides this, as most of the children sleep in the hall together, one of the problem that arises is the difficulty in studying late during the nights. The lights on while studying will disturb the others who has to get up early for work or morning school. And vice-versa these who get up early will in turn disturb the others from their sleep. Hence, many of these children complained of lack of sleep most of the time.

Another reason is that as some of the respondents' children are given too much freedom to play, the consequence is they lost interest in their studies as their mind will be more on the thought of playing and enjoying themselves rather than concentrating on their studies. However, the most important reason here is the attitude of the parents towards their children's studies or future. It was found that most of the lowly educated or uneducated respondents especially those from large families were more interested in their child on going out to work than to study. The fact is they do not place any importance in their children's academic performance and sometimes even discourage their children from studying so that they can go out

to work and help to supplement the family income. As a result, it was found that most of the children from large families (3 out of 5) feared quite badly in school. Most of these children who failed their Form 3 or Form 5 for the first sitting did not attempt another time but went out to the working field.

Therefore, the findings here are in support of these studies done by Mitchell (1971) and Riaz Hassan (1977), that is internal crowding weakens parental control over children and adversely affects children's academic achievement.

4.5 Effects on Neighbouring Interaction

The term 'neighbour' as employed in this study literally means 'people living nearby' which embodies both the people living next door, a few doors away, living on the same floor as well as on other floors. This neighbouring interaction here not only characterizes the physical proximity but also the social proximity among the residents of the same floor and of other floors as well.

Though it was hoped that multi-storey housing would help to foster neighbourliness not only among the same race but also among other races as indicated in the Second, Third and Fourth Malaysia Plan, however, as shown in Table 4.6, it was found that nearly two thirds of the respondents do not know their neighbours well.

Table 4.6Relationship with neighbours

Relationship	No. of resp.	%
Very well	2	3.3
well	19	31.7
not very well	39	65
Total	60	100

The remaining 35% of the respondents said that they either know their neighbours well or very well. After some further probing, it was found that these neighbours that they know well were either staying next to them or were their former friends or former neighbours. It was noted that these respondents seldom mix with tenants who stay in other floors unless they already know each other and also they seldom mix with tenants of another race. On the other hand, several reasons were given as to why they do not know their neighbours well:-

- 1) They do not trust or were not on good terms with neighbours.
- 2) They were too busy with their own work to bother about others.
- 3) They seldom meet or visit each other.
- 4) They prefer to keep to oneself. In fact most of the

residents had their doors closed most of the time.

5) Communication problems especially among different races.

6) As most of them were very dissatisfied with the unit in relation to the spatial allowances, they do not regard it as an ideal place to stay but rather as a temporary home only. Thus they find that there was no necessity in knowing the neighbours as they will shift off sooner or later.

7) Also because some of the tenants in these flats are squatters from different areas, conflict might arise. Thus, they seldom mix with their neighbours.

However, the most important reason here is that some of the respondents themselves were not willing to strike a friendship with their neighbours. They were highly suspicious of everyone and do not trust other people much. In fact most of the time they would rather rely on themselves. This situation most probably brought about by the stress, strain and tension faced by the respondents persuades them to belief in self-sufficiency and non-involvement as ideals and makes contacts among neighbours appear superficial and sometimes unnecessary or undesirable. It was noticed that many of the respondents kept their doors closed during the daytime and only in the evening and night, when their

are back from work, will they open it. Besides this, these respondents were found to be more open and friendly when their husband are around. The most likely reason for this change is that they feel safer and more secure with a man around the house. However, for some respondents, the closing of the door gives them a sense of privacy which is a welcome relief from the prying eyes of friends, neighbours and the bothersome salesman. This was especially so in cases whereby the respondents are poor. They do not wish others to see their shabby house.

Though these respondents prefer to keep to themselves at times, they do make some contact with their neighbours once in a while. Below is a table showing the different kinds of interaction that takes place between the respondents and their neighbours.

Table 4.7

Types of neighbourhood interaction

Various types of interaction	No. of resp.	%
Greet one another only	23	38.3
Brief talk with one another outside the flats	15	25
Visit one another	11	18.3
Go out with one another	9	15
Confide personal problems	2	3.4
Total	60	100

The data from the table above indicates that the most common type of interaction that takes place among the respondents with their neighbours is greeting one another only whenever they meet each other at eyes level. Whereas 25% of them would just stop and have a brief talk with one another. These respondents claimed that they like to maintain this interaction only at a superficial and impersonal level as they value their privacy very much. In fact, they do not wish to have a close relationship with their neighbours because they did not want to feel obligated or dependent on their neighbours.

However, the rest of the respondents (36.7%) felt quite differently. They felt the need to establish a close relationship with their neighbours as it is beneficial to them not in terms of material gains but social gains. As most of them are confined in the house daily, life to them are boring at times and the only outlet to it is through interacting with their neighbours. These respondents feel that through this interaction, they can ease away the tension or stress that they were facing at that particular moment. Besides that, in having one or some close friends, they can at least help them to forget their worries or problems momentarily.

To ascertain the effect of spatial proximity on neighbouring interaction, respondents were asked where the interaction usually takes place. The places named are shown in

Table 4.8

Table 4.8Places of interaction

Social space	No. of resp.	%
Inside respondent's home	8	13.3
Outside the corridor	31	51.7
Inside friend's home	12	20
Others (outside lift, way to market, etc.)	9	15
Total	60	100

As indicated in the table above, interaction takes place less in the homes, respondents and their friends as compared to other places. This is probably due to the lack of space or congested condition of the home. However, it was found that these respondents who have a close friendship with the neighbours usually invite them to their place or go over to visit them. This is because they felt that they can have more privacy there especially when they are discussing over personal problems far away from these prying ears of the gossipers. However, among all the places given, the most prominent place for neighbouring

interaction is still the common corridor. These interactions are mostly at a superficial level only and as most of these respondents do not wish to establish a closer or deeper relationship, they seldom invite their neighbours in except for special occasions such as birthday, festivals, weddings, etc..... They usually talk of something impersonal and never really taking an interest in the conversation. The other reason for the choice of the common corridor as an interaction place is that the respondents while conversing can at the same time keep an eye or a look-out on their children playing around there.

Thus, the general conclusion which can be drawn from this data is that only a small minority engaged in more intimate and intense neighbouring interaction. For the great majority interaction tends to be at a lower level of intensity.

This finding was found to coincide with the findings of Mitchell's study (1971) which reveals that high internal density discourages interaction and friendship practices among neighbours and friends.

4.6 Incidence of Vandalism and Delinquency in Shaw Road Flats

In most countries, as the growth rate of the world population and urbanization increases or accelerates, it was found that the reported crime and delinquency rate also increased simultaneously. For example, at the 1964 Tepeka Conference

conducted by the World Federation for Mental Health, it was found that where rapid modernization takes place, juvenile delinquency become prevalent. (Lucy Ng, 1980 : 51) The general conclusion drawn is that the behavior of an urbanite is largely determined by the level of adaptation a person has for situation like overcrowding or urbanization. The increase in human interactions under conditions of high density, as a result of aggregate living, was found to deform daily life on several levels, impinging on role performances, destroying family cohesion, the evolutions of social norms and others (Milgram, 1967)

Thus, the social contacts in high density situation tend to become secondary rather than primary, segmental rather than integral, utilitarian rather than emotional. All the traditional norms or actions are lost and are instead replaced by rational action or thought. The power of social-control mechanisms declines and given way to increased formal control - the control of law, police, courts, jails, regulations and orders. The breakdown of informal social control ~~as~~ has been shown to be largely responsible for increased personal disorganization as manifested in juvenile delinquency, crime prostitution, alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness, suicide, social unrest and social instability. (Hauser, 1968 : 10) These are some of the consequences of urbanization found in Western countries are experiencing.

Although the data obtained from the official record of City Hall and also the office in Shaw Road flats showed that the present crime rate in these flats is very low, but during my survey, many of the respondents (80%) complained that there were a lot of petty thefts, extortion and vandalism occurring in and around the flats. Vandalism is a common occurrence, especially in flats because the enormous amount of inhabitants there tend to limit the possibility of the tenants knowing each other well except for just a small group. Thus, a person can easily remain anonymous without the fear of being recognized. Besides this, the lack of co-operation among the tenants in these flats where the motto for them is 'mind your own business', further encouraged these vandals to be more daring in their actions. They are mostly responsible for the breakdown of lifts, drawings of obscene pictures on the walls, dirtying the walls, scraping new paint of the lift doors and bullying small children.

As the drug abuse increased, the rate of extortion and petty thefts have also increased which was partly responsible for the attitude of the residents in closing their doors and not allowing their children to play outside. Young boys or school drop-outs are the usual prey of the drug addicts and traffickers as they can be easily influenced or tricked. As it was highly unlikely that the respondents would admit that their children are vandals even if it is true, no estimation or conclusion can be

made that is with regard to the effects of overcrowding on vandalism and delinquency. However, one thing that I am absolutely sure about is the rate of such crimes are still quite high.

Thus, the finding here is found to be in opposition with those of Lucy Ng (1980) in which she indicated the frequency of such offences have been reduced sharply by the implementation of the 'Rukun Tetangga' scheme.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study is an exploratory study focussing on the aspect of overcrowding and its' effects on the Chinese community in Shaw Road flats. In this chapter, a comparison between the results of this study with those of other related studies will be touched on briefly and then a final conclusion will be made later.

From the results presented earlier in this study, it was found that there is no denying that overcrowding does have its effect on people. However, when the results are compared to those done in Western countries, the effects of overcrowding on the life of these tenants is very mild or minor although they have surpassed the standard ratio for overcrowding as determined by the United States census. This census classifies a ratio of 1.51 persons per room as severe overcrowding but in actual fact the ratio in this Shaw Road flat is more than 2 persons per room.

So far, the effects of overcrowding that can be detected from the respondents are firstly, the lack of control over the children and secondly, the decrease in neighbouring

interaction. However, these effects are not as serious as those found in Western countries, for example, in the case of children, there is an increase in juvenile delinquency.

In addition, many Western Sociologists (Gruenberg, 1954, Omer R. Galle, 1973) suggested that as a result of high internal density, housewives when are confined in the flats will face many psychological problems such as emotional illness, hostility, solitude, etc..... When compared to the findings of this study, it was found that all the afore-mentioned problems did not arise. Instead the only effects visible on these housewives is just a bit of tension, stress and headaches which definitely did not lead to anything as serious as mental illness, suicide or others.

Another of the visible effect of high internal density is the decrease in neighbouring interaction. This finding is found to coincide with the findings of Mitchell (1971) who states that the limited space of the housing unit does not encourage neighbouring interaction. Besides that, though this study shows that there is a decline in the frequency of visits to kins, it does not mean that there is a dislocation in kinship as suggested by many sociologists (Raven, 1967, Michelson, 1970) The findings here indicates that the decrease in the frequency of visits to kins is caused by many other factors besides overcrowding.

Therefore one can see from the above discussion that there are many differences or contradictory evidence in this study as compared to other related studies. In relation to this, Riaz Hassan (1978), suggested that frequently, the most serious problem is that different studies use different methodological techniques which to a great extent influence their empirical findings, thus, producing different evidence altogether.

Besides this differences in methodology, the fact that the effects of high density in human population are often difficult to ascertain with a reasonable degree of certainty remains. The reason being that, unlike the lower animals, man is a cultural animal, and, what is more, a culture-producing one. And it is culture which often enables him to evolve forms of adaptations to conditions of high density to avoid its extensive and harmful effects. Furthermore, the presence of modern medical and social welfare services, also artifacts of human culture, can effectively ameliorate many of the ill effects of crowding which, in lower animals under similar conditions, produce pathological consequences. (Riaz Hassan, 1978)

Thus, the effects of overcrowding depends largely on the culture of a person or the country, because in certain cultures and also considering climatic conditions, a large number of persons per dwelling or room may be found to be quite acceptable and even desirable. For example, Mandelkes and Montgomery (1973) found that in some Asian cities, there is a

deal more tolerance for living in close proximity to others than exists in Western cities. For example, Indian and Malay families are found to be able to tolerate close proximity or high internal density more as compared to Chinese families.

Lloyd B (1966 : 167) also suggested that the need for privacy and feeling of being crowded are culturally based. He pointed out that people who grow up in large family compounds are socialized not to seek privacy and take sharing of sleeping rooms by several people for granted. For example Hake (1977 : 144) reveals that space is a relatively unimportant consideration for Africans although most of them have large families. In fact, if given the choice they prefer to 'eat well and sleep crowded' to economize on space. However, as a comparison, Western prefer to have a room to themselves whereby space and privacy is very important to them.

Hence, the general conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that though overcrowding does have its effects on the lives of people, the intensity of such an effect depends largely on the culture and individual.

As this study is only taken from a very small sample, it is hoped that more affirmative results could be given in the near future.

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