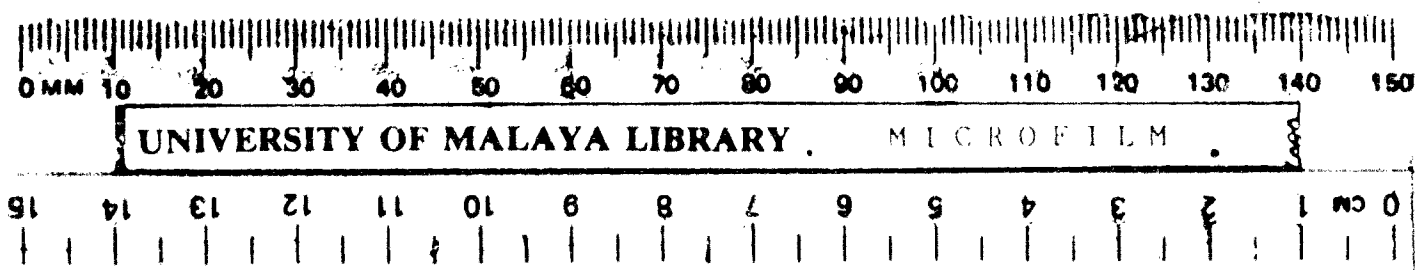


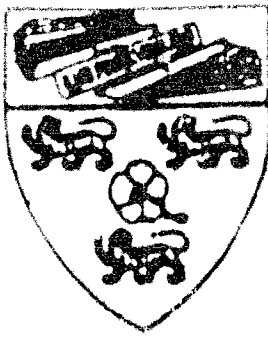
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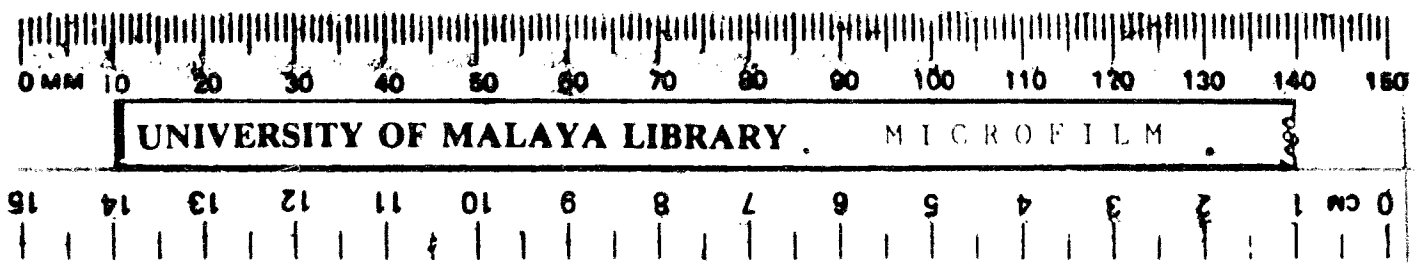
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THE POPULATION OF PENANG

by

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015804

A Graduation Exercise submitted as  
part fulfilment towards the Degree  
of Bachelor of Arts in Economics,  
University of Malaya.

Kuala Lumpur  
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Pearl Chu



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Penang takes its name from the graceful betel-nut palm (pokok Pinang) which is prevalent on the island. The state of Penang consists of the island of Penang, the mainland of Province Wellesley and a few adjacent islands with a total area of 388 square miles. Penang island is about 15 miles long, 9 miles broad and about 108 square miles in area. It lies off the west coast at the northern extremity of the Straits of Malacca. Opposite on the mainland of Malaya lies Province Wellesley which is a strip averaging 8 miles in width and extending 48 miles along the coast, the whole being about 280 square miles. The strait separating Penang from the mainland is in width from 2 to 10 miles.

### I EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Before 1786 Penang formed part of the Malay States of Kedah. The Portuguese knew it at the beginning of the sixteenth century as "Pulo Pinang". The first British contact with Penang was in 1592 when Sir John Lancaster anchored off its southern end.

In the 1770's the East India Company was looking for a suitable place in the Straits of Malacca to serve as a port of call for its ships on the long voyage between India and China. Besides it was anxious to secure its valuable China trade which was in danger as a result of the French war. In Kedah Captain Francis Light, a former midshipman of the Royal Navy had become popular with the Sultan who offered Pulau Pinang in exchange for active intervention against his Siamese enemies. Captain Light recommended its acceptance.

In 1786 Penang was ceded to the East India Company by Sultan Abdullah and Light landed at its fishing village on August 11th taking possession of it on the following day. The island was inhabited only by some Malay fishing folk who lived in the present Tanjong Tokong area. Captain Light set to work to clear a space for a town and a fort. He encouraged his Malay workmen to clear the jungle by firing bags of silver dollars into the forest. The Malays lost no time in cutting down the trees to find the dollars among the roots.

Many settlers came from the mainland and Penang grew rapidly. Chinese and Indian merchants quickly saw the advantages in coming to Penang because it was a free port. In a short time Penang was a busy settlement. Two years after its foundation the population was about 1,000 and by 1804 it was 12,000.

TABLE 1.1

**PEWANG - ANNUAL RATE OF INCREASE  
BY RACE 1801-1964**

| Period      | All Races | Chinese | Malays | Indians |
|-------------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|
| 1801 - 1822 | 7.9       | -       | -      | -       |
| 1822 - 1831 | 4.7       | -       | -      | -       |
| 1831 - 1836 | 2.2       | -       | -      | -       |
| 1836 - 1851 | 1.5       | -       | -      | -       |
| 1851 - 1860 | 1.6       | 4.6     | 0.3    | 4.2     |
| 1860 - 1871 | 0.6       | 0.1     | 0.4    | 2.5     |
| 1871 - 1881 | 3.5       | 6.3     | 1.8    | 3.9     |
| 1881 - 1891 | 2.1       | 2.6     | 1.5    | 2.8     |
| 1891 - 1901 | 0.5       | 1.1     | -0.1   | 0.5     |
| 1901 - 1911 | 1.0       | 1.3     | 0.7    | 2.0     |
| 1911 - 1921 | 0.8       | 1.9     | -0.4   | 0.8     |
| 1921 - 1931 | 1.5       | 2.5     | 0.5    | 0.8     |
| 1931 - 1947 | 2.7       | 2.3     | 1.3    | 0.4     |
| 1947 - 1957 | 2.5       | 2.8     | 2.0    | 1.9     |
| 1957 - 1964 | 2.0       | 2.9     | 2.9    | 2.8     |

**Note:** Population taken at mid-year.

## II POPULATION TREND

The trend of population increase from the beginning of demographic history of the island in 1801 to the present is given in Table 1.1. However, the underlying reasons for population increase before and after the war are very different. Before the war the increase of population was due chiefly to large scale immigration from China, India and Indonesia. During those early days there was frequently an excess of deaths over births - the crude birth rate was high because of the abnormal sex ratio and the death rate being high because tropical disease were not under control. It was the influx of immigrants that caused the population to rise rapidly. Subsequently, however, immigration fell and today migration affects the size of the population very little. Population increase continues because natural increase has taken the place of migrational surplus as the chief factor determining the growth of the population.

The table shows a very high annual rate of increase from 1801

to 1822 about 8 per cent. Under the protection of the British and with the advantages of free trading the Chinese traders who had been going to such places as Malacca, Brunei and Manila found it safer and more profitable to visit Penang instead. But from 1822 to 1851 there was a sharp and continuous drop for a few decades in the rate of increase. In 1819 Singapore was founded by the British and thus Penang as a port of call and free port was seriously threatened. The fall in population increase persisted till 1860 when the rate of increase was almost negligible, only 0.6 per cent with the discovery of tin deposits in 1874 in the Kinta Valley there was an influx of migrants into the Malay peninsula. The trading community in Penang flourished and population increase was rapid especially the Chinese reaching the peak of 6.3 per cent. But with the coming of the Chinese came also secret societies and quarrels. Normal economic activities were hampered and population growth showed a sharp drop to 0.5 per cent between 1891 and 1901.

After this period population took on a gradual increase except for the period of the two World Wars. With more settled conditions the annual rate of increase did not fluctuate so violently as in the 19th century. The rate of natural increase after the war was due to two main factors. First, there has been a decrease in the death rate due largely to the control of tropical disease. In the second place, there has been an increase in the birth rate due partly to a more normal sex ratio. But the natural increase has risen more as a result of a fall in the death rate than as a result of a rise in the birth rate.

Among the three main races the natural increase is rather higher among the Chinese and Indians than among the Malays; the death rate being noticeably lower among the immigrant peoples. The Chinese and Indians are perhaps less conservative than the Malays and so more readily accept Western medicine; the Malay, too, is less often in urban centres where medical attention is most easily available. Moreover, the death rate among Malays is more affected by their age structure which shows a greater proportion of old people. During the period between 1891 and 1901 and World War I there was even a decrease in the annual rate of increase.

## CHAPTER II

### POPULATION STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION

#### I RACIAL COMPOSITION

The position of Malaya as a relatively rich and sparsely populated country within easy reach of the overcrowded countries of India, China and Java, probably made inevitable a mixed population. It is convenient to group the races into four major components, viz. Malays, Chinese, Indians and Other Races. Though this four-fold classification is not perfect it at least affords a fairly satisfactory way of studying the demographic characteristics of the major races in Penang.

It may be said that the Malays are the natives of Malaya subject to the qualification that they are themselves in good part newcomers to the country.

Most of the immigrant Chinese originated from South-Eastern China, from the provinces of Fukien, Kwangtung and Kwongai and the island of Hainan south of Kwangtung. The natural resources of these regions were limited. There was extreme pressure of population on available cultivable land, which eventually forced many to seek a better livelihood overseas. Malaya, among the countries of the Manyang, offered the best prospects to the migrants, not only because of the opportunities for trade and mining, but also because of the policy of active encouragement followed by the British who realized that development would be seriously hampered in this sparsely peopled land without cheap and plentiful labour. The demand for labour was so great that a system of recruitment was established for tapping the south Chinese sources of labour. Immigration was completely unrestricted until the great Depression of the 1930's, and the Chinese continued to flow into the Peninsula in great numbers to trade and to work in the tin mines, and later, in the rubber holdings and other agricultural enterprises.

The characteristic feature of Chinese migration to Malaya was that it was motivated entirely by economic reasons. The Chinese came with but one desire - to make their fortunes as fast as they could before returning to their original homes. Few had any intention of settling permanently. Movements of Chinese to and from south China were therefore extremely fluid, more so as transport was modernized and steamers replaced the old sailing junks. The frequency and directions of these movements were highly geared to the existing state of the economy, periods of economic boom resulting in a net influx of labour and periods of depression causing a return flow of migrants to China. At most times

TABLE 2.1

**PENANG - DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION  
BY RACE 1801-1964**

| Year | Chinese | Malays  | Indians | Other<br>Races | Total   |
|------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|
| 1801 | -       | -       | -       | -              | 10,310  |
| 1822 | -       | -       | -       | -              | 51,207  |
| 1831 | -       | -       | -       | -              | 77,160  |
| 1836 | -       | -       | -       | -              | 86,009  |
| 1851 | 24,188  | 69,680  | 9,753   | 4,293          | 107,914 |
| 1860 | 36,222  | 71,723  | 14,132  | 2,695          | 124,772 |
| 1871 | 36,561  | 75,216  | 18,611  | 2,842          | 133,230 |
| 1881 | 67,354  | 90,131  | 27,202  | 3,558          | 188,245 |
| 1891 | 86,988  | 104,355 | 35,987  | 4,673          | 232,003 |
| 1901 | 97,471  | 103,134 | 37,774  | 5,715          | 244,094 |
| 1911 | 110,206 | 109,937 | 45,901  | 5,332          | 271,376 |
| 1921 | 133,234 | 105,458 | 49,656  | 5,867          | 294,215 |
| 1931 | 169,985 | 111,237 | 53,654  | 6,499          | 341,375 |
| 1947 | 247,366 | 136,163 | 57,157  | 5,635          | 446,321 |
| 1957 | 327,240 | 165,092 | 69,035  | 10,733         | 572,100 |
| 1964 | 399,499 | 201,400 | 83,382  | 12,713         | 696,994 |

there was a constant stream of new immigrants from China landing at the island and making their way inland to the mines and the estates. Thus in 1881 population rose from 36,561 in 1871 to 67,354 almost doubling in ten years. The numbers kept increasing till the First World War put a temporary halt to immigration, but the postwar years were years of prosperity. Hence, there was again an influx of labour into the island up till the general depression of the 1930's. There was widespread unemployment and it became necessary to prevent more labourers from entering the island. In August 1930 the Immigration Restriction Ordinance was enforced where a quota upon the number of labourers who could enter the Straits Settlements was imposed. The Aliens Ordinance of 1933 further restricted immigration of all adult males. From 1934-1938 female immigration was unrestricted but it became necessary to restrict the entry of women also, and this restriction was consequently imposed shortly before the start of the Second World War.

Though the Chinese came to Malaya primarily to make a fortune and return to their homeland few realised this ambition; the majority

TABLE 2.2

**PENANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF  
POPULATION BY RACE 1851-1964**

| Year | Chinese | Malays | Indians | Other<br>Races | Total |
|------|---------|--------|---------|----------------|-------|
| 1851 | 22.4    | 64.6   | 9.0     | 4.0            | 100.0 |
| 1860 | 29.0    | 57.5   | 11.3    | 2.2            | 100.0 |
| 1871 | 27.4    | 56.5   | 14.0    | 2.1            | 100.0 |
| 1881 | 35.8    | 47.9   | 14.4    | 1.9            | 100.0 |
| 1891 | 37.5    | 45.0   | 15.5    | 2.0            | 100.0 |
| 1901 | 39.9    | 42.3   | 15.5    | 2.3            | 100.0 |
| 1911 | 40.6    | 40.5   | 16.9    | 2.0            | 100.0 |
| 1921 | 45.3    | 35.8   | 16.9    | 2.0            | 100.0 |
| 1931 | 49.8    | 32.6   | 15.7    | 1.9            | 100.0 |
| 1947 | 53.4    | 30.5   | 12.8    | 1.3            | 100.0 |
| 1957 | 57.2    | 28.9   | 12.1    | 1.8            | 100.0 |
| 1964 | 57.3    | 28.9   | 12.0    | 1.8            | 100.0 |

remained marrying local women or bringing their families from China making only periodic visits to their mother-land. Therefore through migration in the early years and through natural increase after the war the Chinese population in Penang grew rapidly and by 1911 they outnumbered the Malays. Today they form more than half the population of the island, about 57 per cent while the percentage composition of Malays has fallen from 64.6 per cent in 1851 to only 28.9 per cent in 1964.

The date of the first arrival of the Indians seems to be somewhere in the early 1820's. Indian immigration was closely linked with the agricultural development of the island. There was also a substantial demand for workers to help in the construction of roads. Most of the labourers were immigrants from India and by the beginning of the 20th century the Indian population had increased to 37,774. Unlike the flow of Chinese into the state, the migration of Indians was an organised movement from the start. Until the imposition of quotas on all immigration into Malaya in the 1930's, most Indian labour immigration was of the assisted type, that is, the labourer was paid his passage to Penang by his employer or, later, by the Indian Immigration Committee. The average length of service was three years, so that there was a constant return flow to India as those labourers who did not renew their contracts returned to their original homes. Indian labour migration continued until 1938 when the Indian government put a ban on the migration of all unskilled workers to Malaya.

The net result of Indian immigration into Penang was to increase the Indian component of the Penang population until 1920's it constituted about 17 per cent of the total population. The Indians by comparison with the Chinese maintained a stable proportion of the total population, the percentage range being only about 8 per cent. The Chinese composition rose from 22.4 per cent in 1851 to 57.3 per cent in 1964. As for the Other Races the proportion on no occasion exceeded 4 per cent during the last 110 years.

## II SEX COMPOSITION

In a country where migration has been the dominant factor of population growth, especially where migration was of a temporary nature with no view to permanent settlement one can expect a predominance of males over females in the population. This is true in the case of Penang. In the course of time a slow movement towards a more balanced sex ratio occurred first as the proportion of female immigrants increased, then as the volume of natural increase became larger, and the flow of migration diminished to a negligible trickle. At present the sex ratio of the comparatively settled population in the island is fairly normal with a slight excess of males over females.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 2.3

### PENANG - DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY SEX 1851-1964

| Year | Male    | Female  | Sex Ratio |
|------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 1851 | 65,755  | 42,159  | 1,560     |
| 1860 | 76,339  | 48,433  | 1,576     |
| 1871 | 84,149  | 49,081  | 1,714     |
| 1881 | 122,656 | 65,589  | 1,870     |
| 1891 | 150,445 | 81,558  | 1,845     |
| 1901 | 154,190 | 89,904  | 1,715     |
| 1911 | 167,555 | 103,821 | 1,614     |
| 1921 | 176,942 | 117,273 | 1,509     |
| 1931 | 197,487 | 143,888 | 1,373     |
| 1947 | 253,269 | 213,052 | 1,095     |
| 1957 | 294,419 | 277,713 | 1,060     |
| 1964 | 355,460 | 341,534 | 1,041     |

Note: Sex Ratio: Males per thousand females.

<sup>1</sup>Sav Swei Hock, "The Changing Population Structure in Singapore during 1824-1962". Malayan Economic Review, Vol. IX, No. 1, 1964, p. 93.

In Table 2.3 which shows the trend in the sex ratio, three phrases may be distinguished. Firstly from 1,851 to 1,871 the general movement of the sex ratio was towards greater disparity. This may be attributed to the declining proportion of the more settled Malay population which has relatively balanced sex ratio, and to the increase in the proportion of Chinese and Indians through an influx mainly of male immigrants from China and the India sub-continent. Secondly, between 1,871 and the end of the century the sex ratio was practically stationary at around 1,850 males per thousand females. Thirdly, in the present century a continuous movement of the sex ratio towards parity may be observed. The change during 1901-1921 was caused solely by an increasing proportion of women among new immigrants, mostly wives of immigrants settlers who had developed an increasing tendency to settle permanently in the island; for the period 1921-1941 the change may be attributed to a larger proportion of female immigrants as well as to the growing volume of natural increase. By far the most important reason was the official policy in the late thirties of making "every endeavour to improve the sex ratio among immigrants by means of the Indian Immigration Committee and the Aliens Ordinance of 1933 whereby women were admitted free of quota restrictions until 1938". From 1941 onwards immigration is no longer significant, and the improvement in the sex ratio is attributable to natural increase.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 2.4

PEHANG - SEX RATIO OF THE THREE MAIN RACES 1851-1964  
(MALES PER THOUSAND FEMALES)

| Year | Chinese | Malays | Indians |
|------|---------|--------|---------|
| 1851 | 4,450   | 1,088  | 3,143   |
| 1860 | 2,949   | 1,053  | 3,457   |
| 1871 | 4,884   | 1,030  | 3,078   |
| 1881 | 4,387   | 1,014  | 3,003   |
| 1891 | 3,749   | 1,024  | 2,752   |
| 1901 | 2,971   | 998    | 2,408   |
| 1911 | 2,359   | 994    | 2,460   |
| 1921 | 1,827   | 1,000  | 2,331   |
| 1931 | 1,479   | 1,018  | 2,216   |
| 1947 | 1,074   | 968    | 1,625   |
| 1957 | 1,016   | 969    | 1,565   |
| 1964 | 1,004   | 977    | 1,360   |

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 94.



The sex ratio for the three main races of Penang is given in Table 2.4. The ratios for Chinese and Indians show a common feature in that throughout the whole period there has been an excess of males over females. The significant feature is that while the Malay ratio has remained more or less normal the Chinese and Indians ratios have been extremely abnormal and have tended to move towards normality rather rapidly. In the 19th century the Chinese ratio is more abnormal than the Indian ratio but in the postwar period the Chinese ratio dipped to a level which is even more normal than the Malay ratio. On the other hand, the abnormality of the Indian sex ratio still persists to the present day. The Malay ratio has by comparison remained normal with slight excess of males over females in the early days but during the last 35 years a small excess of females over males.

A feature of Chinese immigration in the 19th century is that for a long time the immigrants did not bring their women with them. This was partly because they had no intention of settling permanently in Malaya and they preferred to leave their wives and children in China. One reason is that the majority of them could not afford to bring their families and another reason is because the authorities in China, though lax in preventing the emigration of males, took precautions to discourage women from going overseas in order to maintain a strong hold on the overseas Chinese and to ensure remittances from them.<sup>3</sup> There is reason to believe that the women enumerated in the early censuses did not come direct from China but were mixed-blood Malacca Baba women.

As the ban on female emigration was lifted in China and as the Chinese community in Penang assumed a more settled nature, an increasing number of women came, resulting in a gradual normalising of the sex ratio. From mid-nineteen-thirties the movement of the Chinese ratio towards parity was accelerated by the increasing volume of natural increase and by the government policy encouraging female immigration through the Aliens Ordinance of 1933 whereby women were admitted free of quota restriction. The flow of migration dropped after the outbreak of war in 1941 and in the postwar years, but the high rate of natural increase continued the process of normalising the ratio. In 1947 the ratio was 1,074 and by 1961 it fell further to almost normal, 1,004 males per thousand females.

Although the Malays include some immigrant elements they have constituted a predominantly settled community, and are therefore in a different position from that of the Chinese or the Indians. In 1947 there was an excess of females over males partly because of the considerably number of males that was killed in World War II. But this excess of females over males is gradually lessening and in 1964 the ratio is 977 males to every thousand females.

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<sup>3</sup>Victor Purcell, "The Chinese in Southeast Asia", London: Oxford University Press, 1951, p. 305.

As in the case of the Chinese, the practice among the Indian community has been for the men of working age to migrate into Penang in search of employment and trade, leaving behind their wives and children in India. Until very recently this practice persisted because the Indians have a lesser tendency to settle permanently. In this lies the explanation for the fact that while the Chinese sex ratio was more abnormal compared to the Indian ratio in the 19th century, it is now very much more normal.

TABLE 2.5

PENANG - DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY BROAD AGE GROUPS FOR THE THREE MAIN RACES 1947-1957

| Age Group | Chinese |         | Malays  |         | Indians |        |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
|           | 1947    | 1957    | 1947    | 1957    | 1947    | 1957   |
| 0 - 4     | 32,563  | 51,817  | 20,788  | 27,491  | 6,964   | 10,670 |
| 5 - 14    | 64,503  | 89,020  | 32,850  | 43,922  | 12,310  | 16,419 |
| 15 - 29   | 60,853  | 82,041  | 35,516  | 40,133  | 15,124  | 16,589 |
| 30 - 59   | 77,728  | 87,184  | 37,989  | 44,859  | 20,768  | 23,304 |
| 60 & Over | 11,719  | 17,090  | 8,974   | 8,667   | 1,954   | 2,047  |
| Total     | 247,366 | 327,152 | 136,117 | 165,072 | 57,120  | 69,029 |

| Percentage |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0 - 4      | 13.2  | 15.8  | 15.3  | 16.7  | 12.2  | 15.5  |
| 5 - 14     | 26.1  | 27.2  | 24.1  | 26.6  | 21.5  | 23.8  |
| 15 - 29    | 24.6  | 25.1  | 26.1  | 24.3  | 26.5  | 24.0  |
| 30 - 59    | 31.4  | 26.7  | 27.9  | 27.2  | 36.4  | 33.8  |
| 60 & Over  | 4.7   | 5.2   | 6.6   | 5.2   | 3.4   | 2.9   |
| Total      | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

### III AGE STRUCTURE

The distribution of population by broad age groups for the three main races for 1947 and 1957 is given in Table 2.5. As a result of rapid overall population growth the number in almost all the age groups recorded an increase within 10 years, the rate of growth being greatest in the youngest group and least in the oldest group. The population structure experienced a shift from predominantly "middle age"

structure to a relatively "young" one as shown by the changes in the proportionate distribution among the various age groups.

The substantial increase in the proportion of population in the youngest group below age 5 is the result of the rising crude death birth rate and, to a limited extent, of the relatively faster decline in mortality at these infant years. There is also a considerable increase in the second age group which consists of children in the school-going age. In terms of fertility, employment and migration, the third group 15-29 constitutes the important and active section of the population, while the next group 30-59 refers more to mature persons of working age and those past the prime of their reproductive life. The falls in the proportion in these two groups are the result of the two-fold effect of the growing proportionate importance at the young age groups and the diminution of immigration to a negligible level. No significant changes were experienced by the oldest age group 60 and over, only a slight increase for the Indians and Chinese and slight decrease for the Malays.<sup>4</sup>

In general the implication underlying the changing population structure is that a smaller proportion of working-age persons would be bearing the burden of supporting an increasing proportion of young dependents. However, it should be mentioned that in the prewar years the young dependency problem was not necessarily light owing to the fact that many immigrants working in Penang contributed towards the support of their children in China and India.<sup>5</sup>

To examine in some detail the type of age structure for each race age pyramids for 1957 are presented in Chart I. The age pyramid for Malays is fairly smooth and normal with a rather broad base indicating the heavy percentage of population in the young age groups. This is because of the high birth rate recorded in the forties and early fifties; but this tendency towards a broader base has been retarded in the last few years by the recent decline in the birth rate which according to latest evidence will continue to fall.

The Chinese age pyramid is less normal than the one for Malays. It has a very broad base again indicating the heavy concentration of the population in the young age groups. There is a slight bulge in the ages 40 to 50 for males and a plausible reason is the result of immigration.

The age pyramid of the Indians offers interesting and significant contrasts to those of the other two races. There is no doubt that the huge bulge at the working ages and the lop-sided nature of the pyramid between the male and the female sections are the two most distinctive features which are caused by the predominance of working-age male immigrants in the prewar days, without any substantial female immigration subsequently as happened in the case of the Chinese. Since large-scale

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<sup>4</sup>Saw Swee Hook, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>5</sup>Saw Swee Hook and Ronald Ma, "The Economic Characteristics of the Population of Singapore, 1957", Malayan Economic Review, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 37.

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emigration of adult males back to India appears unlikely in the future, it would take many decades for these anomalous traits to disappear completely to give way to a normal age pyramid.

TABLE 2.6

PENANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RACE IN ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS 1947-1957

|                    | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| 1947               |        |         |         |        |       |
| Total              | 30.5   | 55.4    | 12.8    | 1.3    | 100.0 |
| City of Georgetown | 11.1   | 72.9    | 13.9    | 2.1    | 100.0 |
| Penang North-East  | 21.2   | 66.9    | 10.6    | 1.3    | 100.0 |
| Penang South-West  | 52.7   | 43.0    | 4.2     | 0.1    | 100.0 |
| Butterworth        | 55.4   | 29.7    | 14.2    | 0.7    | 100.0 |
| Bukit Mertajam     | 44.4   | 45.8    | 9.0     | 0.8    | 100.0 |
| Nibong Tebal       | 36.8   | 42.6    | 20.2    | 0.4    | 100.0 |
| 1957               |        |         |         |        |       |
| Total              | 28.9   | 57.2    | 12.1    | 1.8    | 100.0 |
| City of Georgetown | 11.4   | 72.9    | 13.6    | 2.1    | 100.0 |
| Penang North-East  | 18.7   | 64.7    | 11.5    | 5.1    | 100.0 |
| Penang South-West  | 49.5   | 45.9    | 4.3     | 0.3    | 100.0 |
| Butterworth        | 48.9   | 37.1    | 12.0    | 2.0    | 100.0 |
| Bukit Mertajam     | 42.2   | 48.9    | 8.2     | 0.7    | 100.0 |
| Nibong Tebal       | 39.0   | 41.8    | 18.9    | 0.3    | 100.0 |

#### IV GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION AND URBANIZATION

The racial composition in each geographic districts is shown in Table 2.6. There is no appreciable change of the racial composition in each district between 1947 and 1957 as the percentage distribution of population shows no significant changes. The Chinese constitute the bulk of the total population of the City of Georgetown, in both years being 72.9 per cent. In the early days the reason for Chinese immigration to Malaya was the desire to better their economic status. Thus from the start they have not concerned themselves with agriculture or settle in the country, but have been involved with all types of occupations which brought in monetary rewards - trade and commerce and with occupations in the secondary and tertiary industries. Both secondary production and tertiary activities are most advantages in or about

industrial centres and densely populated areas, for the consumers of manufactured products as well as the mass of specialised servicing are usually urban or suburban people. Towns are the natural loci of these industries.<sup>6</sup> Hence such a great proportion of Chinese in Georgetown.

The distribution of the Indian population is similar to that of the Chinese in that the Indians are concentrated in urban areas. That is why there is a greater percentage of Indians than Malays in the city. Besides Penang was the landing port for the streams of immigrants entering into Malaya. Some stayed on in the city as traders and shopkeepers.

In Penang North-East there is also a heavy concentration of Chinese, as, though this area is not within the municipality of the city it is very much suburban in character. Again in Bukit Mertajam, a rising town, we find a good concentration of Chinese.

The Malays are fundamentally rural. Penang South-West and Butterworth are predominantly Malay. Being, by comparison with the other two races, rather conservative they have remained in the kampong areas cultivating padi and engaging in subsistence agriculture.

TABLE 2.7

PERANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION  
BY ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS, 1947-1957

|                    | All Races | Malays | Chinese | Indians |
|--------------------|-----------|--------|---------|---------|
| 1947               |           |        |         |         |
| City of Georgetown | 42.3      | 15.5   | 55.8    | 45.9    |
| Penang North-East  | 8.0       | 5.5    | 9.6     | 6.6     |
| Penang South-West  | 8.5       | 14.7   | 6.6     | 2.8     |
| Butterworth        | 18.8      | 34.1   | 10.0    | 20.8    |
| Bukit Mertajam     | 13.0      | 18.9   | 10.7    | 9.1     |
| Nibong Tebal       | 9.4       | 11.3   | 7.2     | 14.8    |
| Total              | 100.0     | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   |
| 1957               |           |        |         |         |
| City of Georgetown | 41.0      | 16.2   | 52.3    | 46.4    |
| Penang North-East  | 10.0      | 6.5    | 11.3    | 9.5     |
| Penang South-West  | 8.2       | 14.1   | 6.6     | 3.0     |
| Butterworth        | 19.4      | 32.9   | 12.6    | 19.2    |
| Bukit Mertajam     | 13.2      | 19.2   | 11.2    | 9.0     |
| Nibong Tebal       | 8.2       | 11.1   | 6.0     | 12.9    |
| Total              | 100.0     | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   |

<sup>6</sup>Ooi Jin-Bee "Land, People and Economy in Malaya" London: Longmans, 1963, p. 149.

TABLE 2.8

PENANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN  
AND RURAL POPULATION BY RACE 1947-1957

|       | 1947   |         |         |        |       |
|-------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
|       | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
| Urban | 13.8   | 69.9    | 14.4    | 1.9    | 100.0 |
| Rural | 51.9   | 36.9    | 10.8    | 0.4    | 100.0 |
|       | 1957   |         |         |        |       |
|       | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
| Urban | 13.7   | 70.6    | 13.7    | 2.0    | 100.0 |
| Rural | 56.0   | 33.3    | 9.1     | 1.6    | 100.0 |

TABLE 2.9

PENANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION  
IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS BY RACE 1947-1957

|       | 1947   |         |         |        |       |
|-------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
|       | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
| Urban | 25.5   | 70.9    | 63.3    | 84.7   | 56.2  |
| Rural | 74.5   | 29.1    | 36.7    | 15.3   | 43.8  |
| Total | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   | 100.0  | 100.0 |
|       | 1957   |         |         |        |       |
|       | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
| Urban | 30.4   | 79.1    | 73.0    | 68.5   | 64.1  |
| Rural | 69.6   | 20.9    | 27.0    | 31.5   | 35.9  |
| Total | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   | 100.0  | 100.0 |

Table 2.7 shows the percentage distribution of the main races among the geographic districts of Penang. It shows more clearly the heavy concentration of the Chinese and Indians in the city - over 50 per cent for the former and around 45 per cent for the latter, while the Malays are distributed more in the rural areas. In recent years there has been a small but significant flow of Malays to the urban centres. Although the Malays are still primarily a rural people a number of forces have worked over the years to draw them away from the countryside to the towns. The basic cause has been the rapid growth of the Malay population due to natural increase. In many localities the increase in population numbers has not been followed by a corresponding increase in economic opportunities, with the result that the excess people had to look elsewhere for work. A small proportion migrated to the town. This drift to town is caused not only by the economic factors of population pressure and lack of work in the countryside but also by a general dissatisfaction with rural life coupled with a desire to live in the city and enjoy the superficial pleasures of urban life.

Under the more broad classification of urban - rural distribution in Table 2.8 and 2.9 it can be seen that the urban areas are primarily Chinese while the rural areas are predominantly Malay. The urban centres hold about 70 per cent Chinese while the rural areas accommodate around 55 per cent Malays. In the rural areas there is a considerable proportion of Chinese of about 35 per cent. The Chinese in the rural parts of the island are mainly middlemen and shopkeepers serving the rural community.

The urban drift of the population for the three main races can be seen in Table 2.9. The urban proportion of Chinese and Indians has increased by about 10 per cent and the Malays 5 per cent. On the other hand, the other races mainly Europeans and Eurasians has in recent years moved to the rural areas. Because of the overcrowded conditions in the urban areas the other races especially those in the armed forces have moved to live in the outlying districts especially by the seaside in the Tanjong Bungah area. With the increasing number of housing schemes in the out-of-town areas it will not be surprising that in the future years there will be an increase in the rural population. This suburban drift may occur for the other main races as well when the economy gets more advanced. At present many residential houses have been pulled down to be replaced by offices and firms in the city and residential homes built in the suburbs. Soon like the big cities the population may be working in the city and live in the suburbs.



## CHAPTER III

### FERTILITY

#### I CRUDE BIRTH RATE

One of the simplest ways of studying fertility is by means of the Crude Birth Rate as shown in Table 3.1. But the figures for the nineteenth century and early years of the present century is highly inaccurate as only those who care to report births are registered and recorded. There was no compulsory registration in those days so the figures shown would be an underestimation of the fertility level of the island. The crude birth rate for the nineteenth century is extremely low, below ten per thousand population. One reason that is partially responsible for this low fertility rate is the abnormal sex ratio of the community at that time. Most immigrants were males and as they leave their wives behind fertility rate in those days was bound to be low. However, when the government took positive steps to encourage female immigration the sex ratio gradually moved towards normality, hence the crude birth rate from the beginning of the twentieth century began to increase.

During the post war period the crude birth rate rose to a very high level especially around 1947 when it was 43.3 per thousand. After the war most Asian countries experienced a 'baby boom' where the fertility rate was at its highest level. After that the birth rate showed a continuous decrease and by 1963 it has dropped to 36.2 per thousand.

TABLE 3.1

PENANG - CRUDE BIRTH RATE 1871-1963

| Year | Total Births | Crude Birth Rate |
|------|--------------|------------------|
| 1871 | 820          | 6.2              |
| 1881 | 1,170        | 6.2              |
| 1891 | 2,248        | 9.7              |
| 1901 | 2,480        | 10.2             |
| 1911 | 3,569        | 12.5             |
| 1921 | 4,926        | 16.7             |
| 1931 | 7,057        | 20.7             |
| 1947 | 19,314       | 43.3             |
| 1957 | 22,629       | 39.6             |
| 1963 | 24,633       | 36.2             |

TABLE 3.2

## PENANG - CRUDE BIRTH RATE BY RACE 1947-1963

| Year | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Total |
|------|--------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1947 | 42.4   | 43.6    | 43.7    | 43.3  |
| 1948 | 38.2   | 43.0    | 39.5    | 41.2  |
| 1949 | 43.5   | 43.3    | 39.7    | 42.9  |
| 1950 | 39.9   | 41.4    | 39.4    | 40.5  |
| 1951 | 42.1   | 41.8    | 37.3    | 41.2  |
| 1952 | 40.3   | 43.9    | 38.7    | 42.0  |
| 1953 | 44.5   | 43.8    | 38.0    | 43.0  |
| 1954 | 40.7   | 42.2    | 37.0    | 40.9  |
| 1955 | 40.6   | 41.0    | 38.0    | 40.2  |
| 1956 | 42.9   | 40.9    | 39.3    | 41.2  |
| 1957 | 41.3   | 38.7    | 42.1    | 39.6  |
| 1958 | 44.7   | 37.7    | 42.7    | 40.1  |
| 1959 | 40.8   | 36.4    | 41.5    | 38.1  |
| 1960 | 41.6   | 36.0    | 42.0    | 38.3  |
| 1961 | 41.5   | 36.5    | 40.6    | 38.3  |
| 1962 | 39.6   | 35.2    | 39.6    | 36.6  |
| 1963 | 39.5   | 34.4    | 39.3    | 36.2  |

Table 3.2 shows the crude birth rate by race from 1947 to 1963. For every race compared with Western countries the birth rate is high, highest in 1947, being about 43 per thousand population. The Malay birth rate is the highest among the three main races, never below 38 per thousand in the last 15 years and usually above 40 per thousand. The Indians show a somewhat similar fertility level to the Malays but only slightly lower, around 39 per thousand population. Both the Malay and Indian crude birth rate show only a very slight tendency to drop in the last few years being still nearly 40 per thousand.

The Chinese, on the other hand, though having a high birth rate especially before the 1950's where it is even higher than the two other races, has shown a continuous tendency to fall, so that by 1963 it is only 34.4 per thousand. The Chinese by comparison with the Indians and especially the Malays are much more urbanized. Living in the city they can more easily avail themselves to medical aid for birth control. Besides they are not so conservative as the Malays and are therefore more receptive to family planning movements. The standard of living of the

Chinese is the highest in the state and as the standard of living rises people are less inclined to have a big family. They try to maintain their standard and one way of doing this is to have a small family. Therefore it can be seen that from 1952 onwards the crude birth rate for the Chinese is continuously falling.

## II CHILD WOMAN RATIO

Another measure of the fertility level of a country is the Child Woman Ratio which is defined as the number of children under age five to per thousand women in the reproductive ages 15-49 in the same year. This is a very crude index to gauge the fertility level of a country but sometimes it may be the only one available due to the lack of registration system. As the index is based on survivals of birth and not on births the index may be distorted as there may be a large number of children affected by mortality during the first five years after birth. This factor is especially relevant to Asian countries as infant mortality rates are very high compared to Western countries. Another factor which renders the index unreliable is that there is inevitable underestimation of children in a census. For Penang this is particularly serious because of the Chinese system of reckoning age. One effect of the Chinese system of reckoning is that there is a general systematic over-statement of age at all the ages. This means that some children who is four or five years would be reported as six or seven years and hence not included in the index.

TABLE 3.3

### PENANG - CHILD WOMAN RATIO BY RACE 1947-1957

| Race    | 1947                           |                           |                   |
|---------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
|         | Number of Children Under Age 5 | Number of Woman Age 15-49 | Child Woman Ratio |
| Malays  | 20,788                         | 33,329                    | 624               |
| Chinese | 32,563                         | 58,398                    | 558               |
| Indians | 6,964                          | 10,681                    | 652               |
| Others  | 584                            | 1,570                     | 372               |
| Total   | 60,899                         | 103,978                   | 586               |
| Race    | 1957                           |                           |                   |
|         | Number of Children Under Age 5 | Number of Woman Age 15-49 | Child Woman Ratio |
| Malays  | 27,491                         | 38,633                    | 712               |
| Chinese | 51,817                         | 74,884                    | 692               |
| Indians | 10,670                         | 12,417                    | 859               |
| Others  | 1,376                          | 2,363                     | 582               |
| Total   | 91,354                         | 128,297                   | 712               |

The Child Woman Ratio in Table 3.3 shows that the index is highest for Indians. Not only is the ratio very high but the increase from 1947 to 1957 has been great - from 652 to 859. The Malay ratio though high has a slower rate of increase compared to the Indians. The Chinese has the lowest index among the three main races but its rate of increase from 1947 to 1957 is greater than the Malay's. Though in 1947 it is much lower than the Malay ratio by 1957 it is almost catching up with the Malay figure.

### III GENERAL FERTILITY RATE

The general fertility rate or general fertility ratio is a ratio of total yearly registered births to the population of women of "childbearing age". The purpose is to restrict the denominator of the rate to potential mothers, by excluding all men and large groups of women not "exposed to the risk" of childbearing by reason of age. This is a refinement of the crude birth rate and is a step in the direction<sup>7</sup> of measuring fertility against the proper proportion of the population. However, this rate still suffers from one defect - it does not take into account the difference in the age distribution of women within the reproductive age group 15-49 itself.

TABLE 3.4

PENANG - GENERAL FERTILITY RATE BY RACE 1957

| Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| 176.6  | 169.2   | 235.8   | 97.3   | 176.5 |

From Table 3.4 it can be seen that the fertility rate in 1957 for the Indians is appreciably higher for the Indians than the Malays and Chinese, around 235 per thousand as against about 170 per thousand.

<sup>7</sup>G.W. Barclay, "Techniques of Population Analysis" New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1963, p. 171.

## CHAPTER IV

### MORTALITY

#### I. CRUDE DEATH RATE

As in the case of births, figures for deaths in the nineteenth century are highly inaccurate because of the incomplete registration of deaths. From Table 4.1 it can be seen that the crude death rate at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century was very high, around 21 per thousand population. Death rates were high in those early days because the population was very often subjected to epidemic outbreaks like malaria, typhoid plague and other diseases, and medical facilities offered were very poor. During the two world wars mortality rate was naturally high. But after the second world war there has been a dramatic drop in the death rate. The main reason responsible for the decline of the death rate was the spectacular advance in modern medicine. While the Western countries took a long time and at considerable cost to reduce the death rate, Asian countries could reduce the death rate much faster and at lower cost per head. Asian countries merely have to borrow the results of medical advancement from the Western countries.

In Penang the crude death rate dropped from 19 per thousand in 1947 to only 8.3 per thousand in 1963. With further advances in medical knowledge the fall in mortality ratio is expected to accelerate in the next ten years.

TABLE 4.1

PENANG - CRUDE DEATH RATE 1872-1963

| Year | Total Deaths | Crude Death Rate |
|------|--------------|------------------|
| 1872 | 909          | 6.8              |
| 1881 | 2,225        | 11.0             |
| 1891 | 4,876        | 21.0             |
| 1901 | 5,258        | 21.5             |
| 1911 | 6,055        | 22.3             |
| 1921 | 5,126        | 17.5             |
| 1931 | 4,927        | 14.4             |
| 1947 | 8,482        | 19.0             |
| 1957 | 6,759        | 11.8             |
| 1963 | 5,643        | 8.3              |

TABLE 4.2

## PENANG - CRUDE DEATH RATE BY RACE, 1947-1963

| Year | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Total |
|------|--------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1947 | 25.3   | 15.6    | 18.8    | 19.0  |
| 1948 | 20.5   | 13.2    | 14.9    | 15.7  |
| 1949 | 18.2   | 12.4    | 12.8    | 14.2  |
| 1950 | 22.0   | 13.2    | 14.9    | 16.1  |
| 1951 | 20.9   | 13.4    | 14.3    | 15.7  |
| 1952 | 18.3   | 11.6    | 12.1    | 13.6  |
| 1953 | 17.3   | 10.8    | 11.5    | 12.8  |
| 1954 | 16.1   | 9.9     | 11.1    | 11.8  |
| 1955 | 14.5   | 9.5     | 10.7    | 11.1  |
| 1956 | 16.2   | 8.9     | 10.2    | 11.1  |
| 1957 | 16.3   | 9.7     | 11.9    | 11.8  |
| 1958 | 15.6   | 8.4     | 10.9    | 10.7  |
| 1959 | 11.9   | 8.1     | 10.0    | 9.4   |
| 1960 | 12.8   | 8.1     | 9.3     | 9.6   |
| 1961 | 11.5   | 7.2     | 10.0    | 8.8   |
| 1962 | 11.0   | 7.8     | 10.1    | 8.9   |
| 1963 | 10.5   | 7.2     | 9.0     | 8.3   |

Table 4.2 gives the crude death rate of the three main races from 1947 to 1963. For all three races the trend of the crude death rate has been a general decline with minor fluctuations due perhaps to influenza waves or epidemic outbreaks, but the overall mortality level is a downward trend all the while.

The Malays show a higher mortality level than the other two races especially before 1958 where the crude death rate fluctuates from 25 per thousand to about 15 per thousand. One reason responsible for the comparatively high death rate for Malays is that they are probably more conservative and therefore not so receptive to modern medical facilities. The Malays stay primarily in rural areas where the health services are much poorer than in the towns. In the villages and kampongs not only is health services poor but general living conditions are not healthy. With poor ventilation and sanitation together with poor nutrition, the Malay population is less resistant to disease and hence mortality level is high. But in the 1960's there has been a considerable and significant drop in the death rate so that by 1963 the crude death rate for the Malays is comparable to the Indians. In recent

years in the five-year plans the government has given considerable priority to the rural areas and there has been a great improvement in health conditions in the rural areas.

By comparison with the other two races the Chinese has the lowest death rate. In contrast to the Malays the Chinese tend to concentrate in the city and urban areas where medical aid is more readily available and living conditions more conducive to a lower mortality rate. Especially in recent years the Chinese are generally more educated and are therefore more receptive to modern medicine. In 1953 the Chinese crude death rate has already dropped to 10.8 per thousand while it is only in 1963 that the Malay death rate has fallen to 10.5 per thousand.

The Indian death rate lies midway between the Chinese's and the Malay's. The fall in the death rate occurs earlier than the Malays but not as early as the Chinese. The death rate has fluctuated within a rather narrow range especially compared with the Malays. From 1948 to 1963 the range is only 6 per thousand.

TABLE 4.3

PENANG - INFANT MORTALITY RATES 1947-1961

| Year | Males | Females | Total |
|------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1947 | 109   | 93      | 101   |
| 1948 | 85    | 82      | 84    |
| 1949 | 80    | 64      | 72    |
| 1950 | 94    | 77      | 86    |
| 1951 | 98    | 79      | 89    |
| 1952 | 84    | 68      | 76    |
| 1953 | 86    | 63      | 75    |
| 1954 | 81    | 62      | 72    |
| 1955 | 73    | 66      | 70    |
| 1956 | 78    | 63      | 71    |
| 1957 | 75    | 58      | 67    |
| 1958 | 77    | 58      | 68    |
| 1959 | 59    | 45      | 52    |
| 1960 | 63    | 52      | 58    |
| 1961 | 51    | 41      | 46    |

## II INFANT MORTALITY RATES

Infant Mortality Rate defined as number of infant death under one year of age per thousand live births in the same year is shown in Table 4.3. It is a more sensitive rate than the crude death rate for measuring the mortality of the country. From 1947 to 1961 there is a persistent decline in the infant mortality rate. The main reason is again the advance of medical service. From the very high rate of 101 in 1947 it has dropped to 42 in 1963.

From the table it can be seen that infant mortality is higher for boys than for girls. There is usually more male babies than female babies born, about 1,060 boys to every thousand girls, but this is counterbalanced by a heavier mortality among the boys. Therefore infant mortality rates for boys is usually higher than for girls.

TABLE 4.4

### PENANG - INFANT MORTALITY RATES BY RACE AND SEX 1963

| Sex     | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| Males   | 66     | 37      | 52      | 39     | 48    |
| Females | 51     | 25      | 42      | 33     | 36    |
| Total   | 59     | 31      | 47      | 36     | 42    |

This applies to all the races as illustrated in Table 4.4 especially the Malays with a difference of 15 per thousand. There is also a considerable difference in the infant mortality rate for Indian boys and girls - about 10 per thousand. The Chinese has the lowest infant mortality level among the three races. The infant mortality rate will be higher in areas with overcrowding conditions, bad sanitation, lack of preventive and curative facilities, low income level and mal-nutrition. These conditions apply more to the rural Malay than the urban Chinese hence it can be seen that the Malay infant mortality rate is the highest.

A more refined measure of mortality is the neonatal mortality rate. It is the number of infant deaths under nine weeks of age per thousand live births in the same year. Table 4.5 again shows that infant mortality is highest for Malays and lowest for Chinese with Indians in between and the higher mortality rate for boys compared to girls.

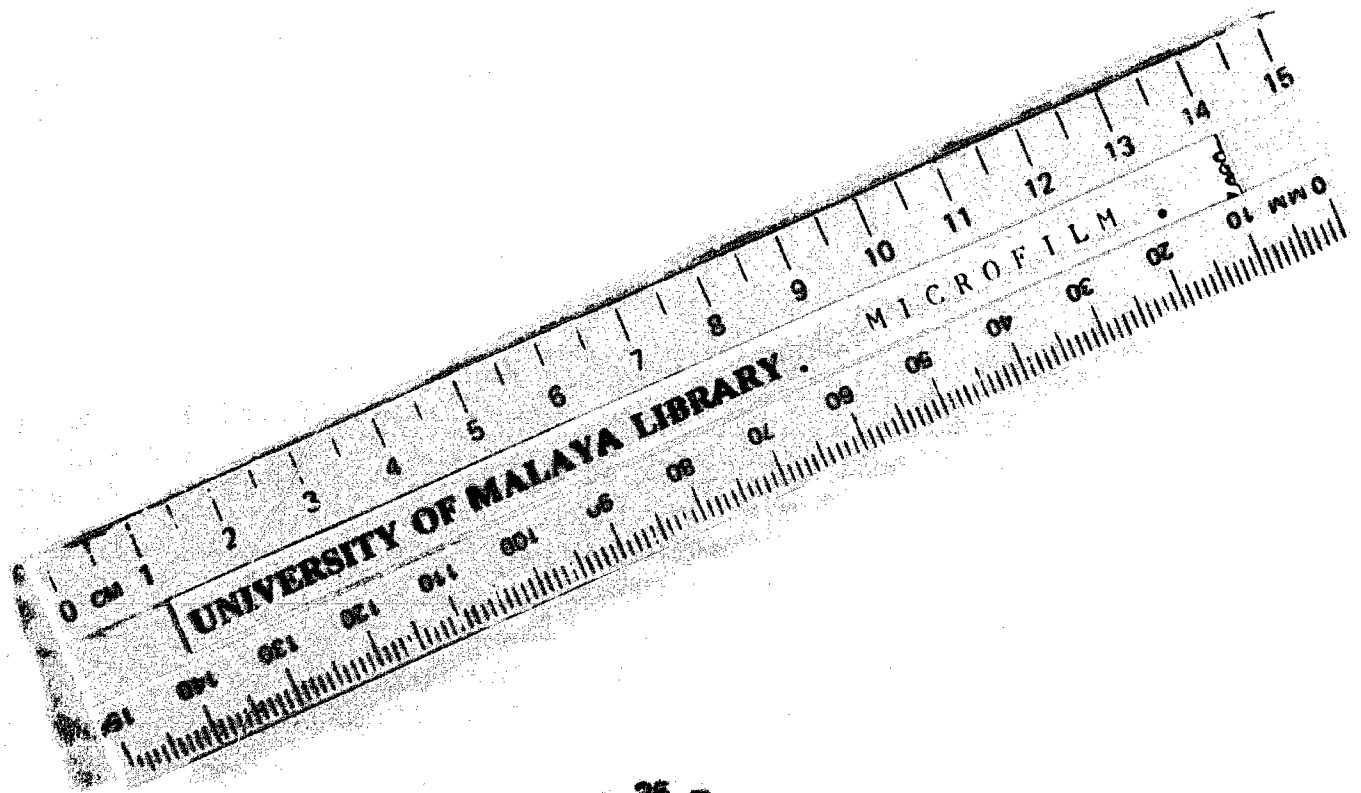


TABLE 4.5

PENANG - NEONATAL MORTALITY RATES  
BY RACE AND SEX 1963

| Sex     | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| Males   | 39     | 25      | 35      | 31     | 30    |
| Females | 25     | 17      | 21      | 16     | 20    |
| Total   | 32     | 21      | 28      | 24     | 25    |

An additional reason for the high infant deaths among Malays is that a considerable proportion of Malay women have their babies born at home. The Chinese tend to have theirs in hospital or maternity homes where the baby is less exposed to death.



# CHAPTER V

## WORKING POPULATION

The total population ten years of age and over is divided into two broad categories of economic activity status - those who were economically active and those who were economically inactive. The economically active population comprises both persons who were actually working during the reference year and persons who were not working but looking for work. The economically inactive population comprises all persons who were not working and not looking for work, like persons doing home housework without pay, students and unpaid voluntary social workers.

TABLE 5.1

PERANG - CRUDE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATE  
1947-1957 BY RACE AND SEX

| Race    | 1947  |         |       | 1957  |         |       |
|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
|         | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total |
| Malays  | 540   | 100     | 316   | 483   | 90      | 278   |
| Chinese | 529   | 87      | 316   | 464   | 84      | 276   |
| Indians | 672   | 132     | 466   | 608   | 94      | 407   |
| Others  | 561   | 125     | 344   | 653   | 125     | 430   |
| Total   | 554   | 96      | 336   | 494   | 85      | 295   |

### I ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATES

Of the total population enumerated in the 1957 Census 30.2 per cent or 168,806 persons are economically active. Table 5.1 shows the crude economic activity rate by race and sex for 1947 and 1957. From the table it can be seen that there are some important differences between the sexes. The rate is about five times higher for men than women. One explanation for the comparatively low rate for women is that a sizable proportion of females are houseworkers and thus not

<sup>a</sup> See Swee Hook and Ronald Ma, "The Economic Characteristics of the Population of Singapore, 1957", p. 31.

classified as economically active. Besides employers' attitudes towards female employment opportunities have always been restricted. The lowest female crude economic activity rate is for the Chinese and the Malays. This is partly because of the economic function of the women in the household, employers' attitudes towards female employment, opportunities for female education and traditional eastern attitude towards female employment. In the West females form a greater proportion of the working population than in the East. It can be seen that the rate for Others is about the highest for females, being 125 compared to 80 for Malays and 84 for Chinese in 1957.

For males the highest rate is for the Indians and Others. These comparatively high rates are a reflection of their immigrant nature. In recent years the Indians are more settled in the state and we can see that though in 1947 they have the highest economic activity rate by 1957 they are behind the Others. All three main races show a drop in their crude economic activity rate. One reason may be attributed to the more settled nature of the population and another may be because of the rise in the educational level of the island. Around the 1940's there was not such great competition for employment as there is now, and thus not a very high educational level is necessary for the attainment of a job. Now the age for leaving school is higher and therefore less working population in the young age groups.

TABLE 5.2

PERANG - AGE SPECIFIC ECONOMIC ACTIVITY  
RATE BY RACE 1957

| Age-Group | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others | Total |
|-----------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| 10 - 14   | 36     | 44      | 93      | 13     | 46    |
| 15 - 19   | 325    | 311     | 430     | 522    | 332   |
| 20 - 24   | 479    | 504     | 592     | 746    | 516   |
| 25 - 29   | 499    | 507     | 650     | 665    | 530   |
| 30 - 34   | 555    | 514     | 715     | 632    | 559   |
| 35 - 39   | 572    | 522     | 756     | 654    | 579   |
| 40 - 44   | 590    | 559     | 770     | 653    | 601   |
| 45 - 49   | 550    | 588     | 768     | 630    | 606   |
| 50 - 54   | 545    | 584     | 766     | 628    | 599   |
| 55 - 59   | 489    | 536     | 673     | 402    | 539   |
| 60 - 64   | 434    | 457     | 549     | 351    | 457   |
| 65 & Over | 310    | 260     | 404     | 206    | 285   |
| Total     | 403    | 400     | 575     | 565    | 430   |

Table 5.2 gives the economic activity rate by age groups for the different races. The Indians show the highest rate and this a reflection of their immigrant nature. This also applies for the Others. But a significant difference for the Others is that in the higher age groups especially from 55 onwards there is a sharp drop in the economic activity rate. The Others, mainly Europeans and Eurasians work in firms and as civil servants and hence pensionable therefore after 55 most of them retire from work. The other three races show a more gradual decline in the high age groups. About one-third of the Malays and Chinese are self-employed and thus tend to work to a higher age.

For all races the highest rate lies in the ages between 40 and 49. This age group represents a more matured and settled population and economic activity rate tends to be comparatively higher.

TABLE 5.3

**PENANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION BY THREE BROAD INDUSTRIAL GROUPS 1947-1957**

|           | 1947  |        |         |         |        |
|-----------|-------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
|           | Total | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others |
| Primary   | 35.0  | 65.5   | 22.3    | 24.7    | 9.9    |
| Secondary | 14.4  | 6.5    | 21.3    | 7.5     | 11.2   |
| Tertiary  | 50.6  | 28.0   | 56.4    | 67.8    | 78.9   |
| Total     | 100.0 | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   | 100.0  |
|           | 1957  |        |         |         |        |
|           | Total | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others |
| Primary   | 30.4  | 58.1   | 21.0    | 20.0    | 4.0    |
| Secondary | 16.6  | 8.1    | 22.9    | 12.0    | 6.3    |
| Tertiary  | 53.0  | 33.8   | 56.1    | 68.0    | 89.7   |
| Total     | 100.0 | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   | 100.0  |

## II INDUSTRIAL GROUPS

In Table 5.3 the industries are grouped under three broad headings. Primary industries are defined to include agriculture (including rubber processing), mining, fishing, hunting and forestry; secondary industries include manufacture, building and construction; and tertiary industries include electricity, gas, water and sanitary services, commerce and finance, transport storage and communication, professional, personal, defence and other services, including government

services not classified elsewhere.

Since the economy of Penang is an entrepot one serving the interests of the Malayan hinterland, it is not surprising that a great proportion of persons earn their living in trade and commerce and allied servicing industries, about 50 per cent are engaged in the tertiary industries in both census years. As a result of growing industrialisation there has been an increase in the percentage engaged in secondary industries with a corresponding decrease in primary industries.

The main proportion of Malays are in primary industries as the Malays are fundamentally rural engaging in agriculture and fishing with a great proportion of their produce for home consumption. There is only a very small percentage in the secondary industries, mainly in building and construction and the manufacture of rattan, mengkuang and attap products, basket-ware and coir mats. The percentage of Malays in the tertiary industries has increased in 1957 from 1947. There has been an increasing number in the services over 8,000 in 1957.

The Chinese are predominantly in the tertiary industries, especially in commerce. There is also a sizable proportion in the services. The rest of the Chinese are about evenly distributed between the primary and secondary industries, about 20 per cent in each. Those Chinese engaged in agriculture are primarily engaged in mixed agriculture and market gardening, and also rubber cultivation. Those in manufacture are mainly in building and construction.

The Indians show a similar tendency to concentrate in the tertiary industries as the Chinese. In fact they have a heavier percentage than the Chinese about 68 per cent. Like the Chinese there is a fairly large number in the retail trade and services. But those in the primary industries are mainly in rubber and a very small percentage in mixed agriculture, fishing or hunting. The percentage in the secondary industries is small but has increased since 1947, especially in the building and construction industries.

The Others are mainly concentrated in the tertiary industries. But the heavy percentage, unlike the Chinese which is due to large numbers in trade and commerce, is due to a very large proportion in the armed forces - almost half the population.

### III OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

The classification is an alternative method of presenting the economic characteristics of the population in contrast with classification by the industry in which the occupation is pursued. To some extent the two classifications overlap, for example, the number of agricultural

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 39, 40.

workers and fishermen correspond to the number engaged in the agricultural (excluding those employed in the rubber manufacturing processes) and fishing industries respectively. The teaching profession can be wholly classified to the education service industry, but the latter includes persons who are not teachers. Clerical workers and labourers on account of their non-specialised services are found in nearly all industrial groups.<sup>10</sup>

TABLE 5.4

PENANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMICALLY  
ACTIVE POPULATION BY OCCUPATION 1957

|   | Total | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others |
|---|-------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| I Professional, Technical and Related Occupations           | 4.6   | 3.8    | 5.0     | 2.6     | 16.5   |
| II Administrative, Executive and Managerial Occupations     | 2.1   | 0.7    | 2.5     | 2.1     | 6.4    |
| III Clerical Occupations                                    | 6.2   | 3.6    | 7.4     | 6.5     | 7.2    |
| IV Sales and Retail Occupations                             | 15.7  | 3.8    | 20.8    | 20.8    | 4.1    |
| V Agricultural Occupations                                  | 28.0  | 56.4   | 17.9    | 13.0    | 2.6    |
| VI Miners, Quarrymen and Related Occupations                | 0.0   | 0.0    | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0    |
| VII Transport and Communications Occupations                | 6.2   | 6.5    | 5.8     | 7.2     | 3.2    |
| VIII Craftsmen, Production Process Work and Labourers       | 21.8  | 11.6   | 25.9    | 27.8    | 6.5    |
| IX Service, Sport, Entertainment and Recreation Occupations | 11.3  | 9.0    | 10.9    | 10.7    | 48.8   |
| X Workers Not Classified by Occupations                     | 0.7   | 0.5    | 0.8     | 0.4     | 2.7    |
| XI Persons Not Working but Looking for Work                 | 3.4   | 4.1    | 3.0     | 3.8     | 2.0    |
| Total   | 100.0 | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   | 100.0  |

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

The occupation pattern of the Chinese and the Indians are remarkably similar except that there are less Indians in the professional, technical and related occupations. The highest percentages of Chinese and Indians are craftsmen, production process workers and labourers and these in sales and related occupations over 20 per cent for each. Again we see that the Malays are overwhelmingly concentrated in the agricultural occupations, about 56 per cent. Unlike the other two races there is a negligible percentage in sales and related occupations. The percentage of craftsmen, production process workers and labourers is only half that for the Chinese and Indians. For the rest of the occupations there is a similar proportional distribution for all the three main races. The occupational distribution for the Others is quite different with almost half in the service, sport, entertainment and recreation occupations and about 16 per cent in the professional and technical occupations. The other occupations have only insignificant percentages.

TABLE 5.5

PERANG - PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMICALLY  
ACTIVE POPULATION BY RACE AND STATUS 1957

| Status               | Total | Malays | Chinese | Indians | Others |
|----------------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| Self Employed        | 32.0  | 39.6   | 33.7    | 18.6    | 6.5    |
| Unpaid Family Worker | 3.8   | 5.1    | 4.2     | 0.6     | 0.6    |
| Employee             | 61.2  | 52.0   | 59.2    | 78.0    | 88.8   |
| Not Stated           | 3.0   | 3.3    | 2.9     | 2.8     | 4.1    |
| Total                | 100.0 | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0   | 100.0  |

IV STATUS

Table 5.5 shows that over 60 per cent of the economically active population are employees. The percentage of employees is especially high for the Indians and this is not surprising as most of the Indians came to Malaya as labourers and workers on estates. Because of the immigrant nature of the Indians the percentage of unpaid family worker is not even one per cent.

Of the three main races the Malays have the highest percentage in the self-employed class. As the Malays are mainly agricultural, most of them have their own plots of land and they cultivate their own padi or rubber thus giving them a comparatively high percentage of

self-employed. Once again the percentage of unpaid family worker is highest of the three races. This is because the Malay women and children help in the padi fields and hence classified as unpaid family workers. The Chinese have one-third of its population in the self-employed group but unlike the Malays who are self-employed on their own agricultural holdings the Chinese operate their own business especially in trade and commerce. One characteristic of the Chinese is that they want to be their own boss and hence with the slightest opportunity they would set up their own business and operate it themselves rather than work for others. But with a higher degree of literacy and a higher education now the Chinese is being absorbed in commercial firms, government occupations and the teaching profession. Thus there is a large percentage of Chinese as Employees. As most of the Others who are in Penang are either in the armed forces or sent over by their firms it is not strange to find that 88.8 per cent of them are employees.



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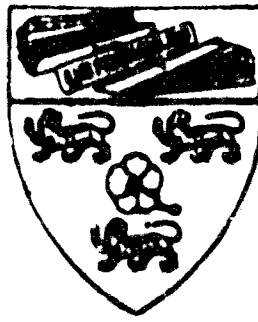
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