

(ii)

SYNOPSIS

ECONOMIC STATUS AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

AMONG THE URBAN CHINESE

LIM SU YIN

NO MATRIK: 039127

PROJEK PENYELIDIKAN

BAGI MEMENUHI SEBAHAGIAN

DARIPADA SYARAT SYARAT UNTUK

IJAZAH SARJANA MUDA SASTERA

JABATAN ANTROPOLOGI DAN SOSIOLOGI

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

KUALA LUMPUR

SESI 1983

SINOPSIS

Laporan ini adalah satu kajian tentang struktur keluarga dan perhubungan kekeluargaan dikalangan orang Cina di Kuala Lumpur dengan rujukan khas kepada orang Cina ditradisional China. Laporan ini mengandungi empat bab dan bab pertama adalah pendahuluan. Bab kedua adalah kesusasteraan tentang masyarakat China tradisional, manakala bab ketiga adalah mengenai perjumpaan-perjumpaan kajian luar dan bab terakhir adalah kesimpulan.

Bab pertama menjelaskan tujuan kajian, konsep-konsep yang digunakan, metodologi dan satu ringkasan am tentang orang Cina di Kuala Lumpur.

Bab kedua menumpukan perhatian kepada masyarakat China tradisional dimana satu perbandingan akan dibuat diantara orang tani (peasantry) dan orang aristokrat (gentry).

Bab ketiga adalah mengenai perjumpaan kajian luar dan satu perbandingan dibuat antara struktur keluarga dan perhubungan kekeluargaan orang Cina di Kuala Lumpur dan di tradisional China.

Bab keempat adalah kesimpulan dan tumpuannya adalah tentang perubahan yang telah berlaku dalam struktur keluarga dan perhubungan kekeluargaan serta faktor-faktor yang mengakibatkan perubahan ini.

SYNOPSIS

This report is a study of the family structure and kinship ties among the urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur with special reference to the Chinese in traditional China. This report contains four chapters with the first chapter being the introduction, the second chapter is the literature review, the third chapter is the findings of the field research and the last chapter is the conclusion.

Chapter One explains the aim of the study, concepts used, the methodology and a general outline of the urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur.

Chapter Two focus on the traditional Chinese society in China where a comparison was made between the peasants and the gentries.

Chapter Three is on the findings of the field research and a comparison was made between the family structure and kinship ties of the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur and in traditional China.

Chapter Four is the conclusion and it focus mainly on the changes that has taken place in the family structure and kin relationship and the factors which brought about these changes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
This research report has shown me the many difficulties that will be encountered during a field research and in the actual writing of the report itself. I am indebted to several people for helping me overcome the difficulties and for their encouragement.	vi	
I would like to say here a special thank you to my Supervisor, Puan Azizah Kassim, for her guidance and contributions towards this report. Also not forgetting some special friends who gave me a lot of help during my field research.		6
1.4 Difficulties encountered during interviews		9
To all of them, I would like to say that this report would not be completed without you.		10
1.5 The Urban Chinese in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)		10
Chapter 2: Traditional Chinese Society - A Literature Review		
2.1 Status and Family System among the Gentries		13
2.2 Status and Family System among the Peasants		18
2.3 Kinship Structure among the Gentries and Peasants		22
Chapter 3: The Urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur - Middle Class and Lower Class		31
Chapter 4: Conclusion		49
Appendix A		1 - 10
Bibliography		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>LIST OF TABLES</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Synopsis		ii - iii	
Acknowledgement		iv	11
Table of Contents		v	31
List of Tables		vi	
Chapter 1: Introduction			35
1.1 Purpose of Study		1	
1.2 Definition of Concepts		3	36
1.3 Sample and Methodology		6	39
1.4 Difficulties encountered during interviews		9	42
1.5 The Urban Chinese in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur) - An Overview		10	42
Chapter 2: Traditional Chinese Society - A Literature Review			44
2.1 Status and Family System among the Gentries		13	
2.2 Status and Family System among the Peasants		18	
2.3 Kinship Structure among the Gentries and Peasants		22	
Chapter 3: The Urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur - Middle Class and Lower Class		31	
Chapter 4: Conclusion		49	
Appendix A		1 - 10	
Bibliography			

LIST OF TABLES

PAGE

INTRODUCTION

1.1	Population distribution by ethnic group in Federal Territory in 1970 and 1980	11
3.1	Percentage of families with respect to family size	31
3.2	Mean number of children ever born by respondents family structure monthly income	33
3.3	Mean number of children born by educational level of respondents	35
3.4	Mean number of children born in relation to awareness about family planning	36
3.5	Proportion of male offsprings between the social classes	39
3.6	Residential distance of relatives with respect to family size	42
3.7	Frequency of kin visiting	42
3.8	Relationship between family size and average income with respect to the amount of help given to kins	44

prosperous. But this is not so with the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur today.

To understand the change in attitude towards having a large extended family structure, consideration should be given to the type of economy of the country and also the importance of wealth placed by the Chinese as factors which might affect their family size. The type of economy found in traditional China which was based on agriculture would require a lot of manual labour as everything was practically done by hand. Thus manpower was very important in traditional China. In the case of Malaysia, being a developing country which is industrialising rapidly, the job

ECONOMIC STATUS AND FAMILY STRUCTURE AMONG THE URBAN CHINESE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to make an attempt to see the relationship between economic status and both the family structure and kinship ties among the urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur.

Very little sociological research has been done on urban Chinese and in particular on their family structure and kinship system, hence the writer hope to give a better insight to the understanding of Chinese family structure. The writer emphasized on family structure because traditionally the Chinese in China were noted for having large extended families and they believed that if they had more children, the family would become more prosperous. But this is not so with the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur today.

To understand the change in attitude towards having a large extended family structure, consideration should be given to the type of economy of the country and also the importance of wealth placed by the Chinese as factors which might affect their family size. The type of economy found in traditional China which was based on agriculture would require a lot of manual labour as everything was practically done by hand. Thus manpower was very important in traditional China. In the case of Malaysia, being a developing country which is industrialising rapidly, the job

1.2 opportunities open to its people are vastly different than in traditional China. This difference may affect the type of occupation of the people which in turn would affect their lifestyles and their family sizes. Weber further stressed that an "occupational group" is also known. In this graduation exercise, the writer is of the opinion that an economy plays an important role in determining the size of a family. As the Chinese on the whole are very wealth conscious as well as being status conscious, therefore to talk about their family structure we need to consider wealth as the major factor in their attitude towards the size of their family. Therefore, economic status in this case is defined as the wealth possessed by the individual's, which will bring them status in society.

In traditional China, it was found that the rich were the ones with very large extended families whereas the poor peasants formed stem families. If such correlation between economy and family size is taken as true, then it is to be expected that the rich people in Kuala Lumpur have large extended families and the poor people have smaller families. Whether or not this correlation between economic status and family size is true will be borne out by the findings of the fieldwork.

It in turn would result in the accumulation of wealth which further leads to an increase in status. This concept can be illustrated by the following diagram:

1.2 Definition of concepts

The concept of "status" as defined by Max Weber is determined by occupation and style of life (Jordan: 1971 : 30) and it certainly reflects the concept of status as perceived by the people today. Subsequently, Weber argued that for those who had wealth, in time Weber further stressed that an "occupational group" is also known as a status group and the stratification by "status groups" is on the basis of conventional styles of life (Weber: 1964 : 193).

Weber further went on to analyse the Chinese in traditional China. Weber first deduced that there was a correlation between the and showed how being an official brought prestige and influence and status, economy and wealth with religion when he analysed the Confucianism further strengthens the status consciousness of the implications of the doctrine of pre-destination of the Puritans.

The analysis showed that the Puritans frugal way of life led to the accumulation of wealth and that Western religion made a major influence in the development of Western European Capitalism. As is obvious in present times, religion do not have an important effect on status as compared to traditional days. Economic power

and wealth have a much more important role to play than religion. Thus, his study on the origin of modern capitalism was intended to show that religious ideas do play a vital part in the economic changes and in the rise of a new class through the inculcation of By "family" is normally referred to the biological family though an new attitudes towards wealth, science and work. individual can still be a member of a family through the process of

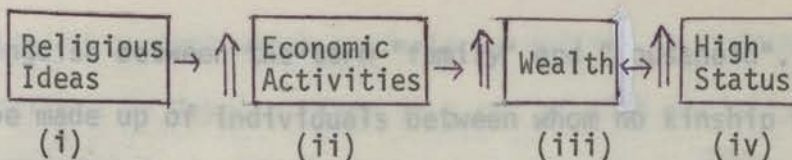
adoption. In the case of adoption, there is no biological ties.

Therefore in his Protestant Ethics, the increase in economic activities results from the Puritan's religious belief in pre-

destination. It in turn would result in the accumulation of wealth which further leads to an increase in status (by↑as shown).

This concept can be illustrated by the following diagram:

functions of the family is in the biological and social reproduction if a society is expected to continue. However, one should



For example, a tenant is a member of a household as he stays in the same dwelling unit but he is not considered a member of the family as there is no biological ties with the household head. On the other hand, in the biological family, kin and familial relations

are thought of in terms of physical descent and members of a family need not be living together in the same dwelling unit. Weber further went on to analyse the Chinese in traditional China and showed how being an official brought prestige and influence and Confucianism further strengthens the status consciousness of the official.

Two more terms need to be clarified pertaining to family. One is

the term "nuclear family" and the other "joint family". Nuclear family is most frequently used to refer to a "group consisting of a man, woman and their socially recognised children", whereas "joint family" exists when "two or more lineally related kinfolk of the

same sex, their spouses and offsprings, occupy a single homestead and are jointly subject to the same authority or single head".

By "family" is normally referred to the biological family though an individual can still be a member of a family through the process of

adoption. In the case of adoption, there is no biological ties between the parents and the child.

Sometimes a joint family is also referred to as an extended family but an extended family is a dispersed version of the joint family.

The members of the constituent groups of an extended family do not all live together in one dwelling. They usually live close together and engaged in common activities. The "family" that is meant by the functions of the family is in the biological and social reproduction of a society is expected to continue. However, one should

distinguish between the term "family" and "household". "A "household" may be made up of individuals between whom no kinship ties exist but live together in one dwelling unit". (Encyclopedia: 1968: 302).

For example, a tenant is a member of a household as he stays in the same dwelling unit but he is not considered a member of the family as there is no biological ties with the household head. On the other hand, in the biological family, kin and familial relations are thought of in terms of physical descent and members of a biological family need not be living together in the same dwelling unit.

Two more terms need to be clarified pertaining to family. One is the term "nuclear family" and the other "joint family". Nuclear family is most frequently used to refer to a "group consisting of a man, woman and their socially recognised children", whereas "joint family" exists when "two or more lineally related kinfolk of the same sex, their spouses and offsprings, occupy a single homestead and are jointly subject to the same authority or single head" (Encyclopedia: 1968 p301).

Sometimes a joint family is also referred to as an extended family but an extended family is a dispersed version of the joint family. The members of the constituent groups of an extended family do not all live together in one dwelling. They usually live close together and engaged in common activities. The "family" that is meant by the title of the topic refers to the biological family.

The third concept which needs to be defined is "kinship". Kinship as defined by Raymond Firth is a set of ties socially recognised to exist between persons because of their genealogical connection, that is, in terms of relationships thought to be created between them by marriage and/or procreation of children. (Firth: 1969 p3).

1.3 Sample and Methodology

The area chosen for the survey is Kuala Lumpur as it is one of the main urban centers and also due to its close proximity to the writer's residence. This made it easier for the writer to travel around in order to carry out the interviews. The sample used in this survey consists of 30 urban Chinese households in Kuala Lumpur. The writer categorised all the households into two social classes that is, the middle class and the lower class. Selection of the respondents into the respective social classes are based on the income and job criterion but more emphasis is on the job criterion. Therefore, only those holding professional jobs are classified as middle class and the hawkers are classified as lower class.

This is because there may be some middle class respondents who may not have a very high income but they have the paper qualifications which is regarded by society as possessing a high status and they use more of their mental capability than their hands in the course of their work and the combination of these two would give them a higher status over the lower class.

(ii) The educational level and income of respondents

For the lower class, though some may have a higher income than the middle class but their type of job requires them to work more with their hands than making use of their mental ability. Moreover, most of these people do not have paper qualifications thus the writer classify them as lower class.

For each social class, the writer has to interview 15 household heads with the following limitations, that is, the household head must be a male and must be married. As there is no age limit for the respondents, the writer could interview any Chinese males as long as they fulfill the conditions and falls within one of the two categories.

The writer used the questionnaire method for the survey and the questionnaires contained both open-ended and close-ended questions. The writer decided to have some questions close-ended as this would make matters much easier for the respondents especially pertaining to questions relating to income where generally most respondents would not like to state the exact amount. Therefore, with the close-ended questions they would be more willing to identify the range of their income. With the open-ended questions, the respondents can feel free to respond to them. The set of questionnaires used by the writer is structured along the following points, that is:

- (i) The household composition
- (ii) The educational level and income of respondents

(iii) The relationship between the respondents and their relatives.

The fieldwork was carried out during the university's three months vacation over a period of two months, that is, from the middle of March till the middle of May. The duration of the field work is limited to two months as the writer has to prepare the questionnaires and also requires some time for analysing the data. As the duration for the field work is so short, the writer could only managed to have a small sample of respondents which definitely could not represent the total urban Chinese population. During the field work, the writer approached the respondents by first identifying herself as a student of University of Malaya and that this survey is a research report for the Department of Anthropology and Sociology. Throughout the interviews, the writer constantly reassured the respondents that their answers would be strictly confidential. The writer had to go to the market place to interview the lower class respondents and the interviews were conducted entirely in Cantonese as the respondents do not know English. There was some reluctance on the respondents part in answering the questions but through a lot of persistence by the writer, the interviews were finally completed.

As for the middle class respondents, the interviews were carried out at the offices of the respondents and it was usually held during Saturdays which was a half day for the office workers. English was used throughout the interview. Even with this group,

the writer too encountered some reluctance on their part in answering the questions. However, with some persistence, the writer managed to interview all the number of respondents that was required. enough to answer all the questions asked by the writer but these were few compared to the rest.

1.4 Difficulties encountered during interviews

During the course of the research, many problems were encountered and the major ones were in interviewing the respondents. After the writer has overcome the initial problem of getting the required number of respondents, the writer had to face the major problem in getting the interviewees to talk. Most of them were very reluctant to answer the questions as they said that the questions were too personal and that the writer was trying to pry into their personal lives. The respondents commented that the questionnaire was too long and that the writer was wasting their time. The writer had to explain the purpose in conducting this survey to the respondents a number of times and that their answers would not be revealed to anyone else but they still seem very sceptical.

1.5 The Urban Chinese in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur) - an overview

Most of the respondents were not too happy when the writer asked them about the particulars of their household members and they seem even more annoyed when we came to the section on their income and expenditure. They wanted to know the necessity of these questions in relation to family structure and the writer had to explain that these questions were important as the writer was considering from the aspect of economy in relation to family structure.

Most of the answers given were very evasive and there was a suspicion that some answers given were fabricated by the respondents. Fortunately, for the writer there were some respondents who were friendly enough to answer all the questions asked by the writer but these were few compared to the rest.

Throughout the interviews, be it with the middle class or the lower class, the writer could not really achieved close rapport with the respondents, as most of them do not like to be questioned on their family life and some do not even bother to elaborate on their answers. Perhaps this was attributed to a certain extent by the writer who encountered some difficulty in the translation of the questions into Cantonese for the lower class group. During the process of translation, perhaps the actual meaning of certain questions were lost and the writer had to spend a considerable time explaining to them what was actually meant by the question. Thus valuable time was lost due to this.

1.5 The Urban Chinese in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur) - an overview

Malaysia is a multi-racial country of three major ethnic groups, that is, Malays, Chinese and Indians. The Chinese accounts for 33.8% of the total population. The Chinese are mostly located in urban areas as intra-urban is their most pre-dominant form of migration and in the Federal Territory (otherwise referred to as Kuala Lumpur) they form the largest ethnic group.

*Refers only to Chinese males

As the focus of the survey is only on Kuala Lumpur, the writer has extracted only the data pertaining to Kuala Lumpur (from the 1980 Population Census) which show the population distribution by the ethnic group of Peninsular Malaysia in 1970 and 1980. This data is shown in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1
Population distribution by ethnic group in FT in 1970 and 1980

Ethnic Group (numbers in thousands)						
Area	Year	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others	Total
Federal Territory	1970	373.9	158.9	107.4	8.1	648.3
	1980	477.6	305.4	127.8	8.8	919.6
	Revised 1980	507.5	320.0	140.2	9.4	977.1
Urban	1970	1491.9	694.9	324.2	28.9	2539.1
	1980	2049.1	1545.1	448.4	30.5	4073.1

Therefore, the population of Chinese in Kuala Lumpur is 507,500 (revised 1980) and the table indicates that the increase in the population within a period of 10 years is very fast.

In general, the Chinese being in an urban area are mostly engaged in the professional and business field where 66%* of the Chinese

*Refers only to Chinese males

belong to these two categories and only 8% of the Chinese are working as junior government servants while 25% of them are distributed over other white collar jobs (Survey Research Malaysia).

The percentage just quoted refers only to a very general distribution of the economic stratification of the Chinese. It is rather difficult to give the specific type of occupation of the Chinese as they are diversified over a wide range of jobs.

and in social scientific literature that the typical residential family in non-industrial societies is large, that is, three to four generations. Favourite example is traditional China". (American Sociological Review: 1967 p349). Therefore, the traditional household is supposed to comprise of the father, mother, all their sons, their unmarried daughters, their sons' wives and children and for as many generations as possible. Generally, in one household there is at least three generations living under one roof. But this is only the ideal case which refers mainly to the gentry households, therefore, it does not imply that all the households in traditional China has this type of ideal family structure.

We need to take into consideration the two different social classes in traditional China, that is, the peasants and gentries. Normally the gentries were the ones with large extended family structure. Sociologists such as Francis Hsu and Lang argued that economic limitations prevented other than the well-to-do to set up such a

CHAPTER 2 - TRADITIONAL CHINESE SOCIETY

2.1 Status and Family System Among the Gentries

The term "traditional China" actually refers to "pre-20th century China". It is a popular belief that traditional China is ideal for a joint family where every member of a particular family stays in one large household of great generational depth. This fact has been supported by some sociologists such as Thomas Burch. To quote Burch "Impression is common place both in the popular mind and in social scientific literature that the typical residential family in non-industrial societies is large, that is, three to four generations. Favourite example is traditional China".

(American Sociological Review: 1967 p349). Therefore, the traditional household is supposed to comprise of the father, mother, all their sons, their unmarried daughters, their sons' wives and children and for as many generations as possible.

Generally, in one household there is at least three generations living under one roof. But this is only the ideal case which refers mainly to the gentry households, therefore, it does not imply that all the households in traditional China has this type of ideal family structure.

We need to take into consideration the two different social classes in traditional China, that is, the peasants and gentries. Normally the gentries were the ones with large extended family structure.

Sociologists such as Francis Hsu and Lang argued that economic limitations prevented other than the well-to-do to set up such a

family system. (American Sociological Review: 1967 p349). Therefore, in this case, only the gentries had this type of family structure as they form the rich families in the village. Thus, the "traditional" gentry family was patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal and their family structure consists of many generational depth of three to four generations.

The gentries themselves too were subdivided into two groups, that is, the members of the officialdom and the local gentries. Generally, the power would be in the hands of the officials from the bureaucracy but the local gentries do have some influence too. As the officials were normally from another district, they had to rely on the goodwill of the local gentries to help them carry out their activities in the village. The local gentries normally come from families of prestige and their main function was to serve as a mediator between the officials and the peasants should disputes arise between them. This was because the gentries through their educational background were the only ones who had social contacts with the officials of the bureaucracy. Thus the peasants turn to the gentries for help as they, being illiterate would not know how to deal with the officials. The gentries generally demand some form of payment for this service and the peasants usually present the gentries with gifts which at times they could hardly afford. Thus, corruption and exploitation of the peasants were generally one of the ways where the gentries accumulated their wealth.

generally had a bigger preference for male offsprings as they trace

The gentries had been inculcated that they must exhibit a strong drive towards success to bring glory to their ancestors and family to maintain their social position. The gentries considered that this could be achieved by obtaining a place in the bureaucracy and to do so, they must pass the civil examination. Therefore, the gentries view education as a very important factor in their effort to achieve success. The fact that the gentries were able to pursue an education was due largely to their economic position. The gentries were mostly landowners who do not cultivate their own land but rent it out to the peasants. They derived their income through rentals from their land and their other major sources of income were through graft practices. Therefore with their wealth, they need not do any hard labour and it was thus possible for them ^{to} pursue a leisurely and gentleman's way of life. Consequently, the sons of the gentries had ample time and money to obtain an education which would further enhanced their status in the society. This would influence their family structure to a certain extent.

As was mentioned earlier, "traditional" gentry family normally consists of three to four generations and this large extended family structure was considered the ideal type of family structure to exist in "traditional" China.

The gentry family being very much patriarchal and patrilineal generally had a bigger preference for male offsprings as they trace

their descent only through the male line. The general aim was to have as many male offsprings as possible which was both a fundamental religious and ethical command and the earnest desire of the gentry (Chow: 1966 p108). Therefore, sons were considered overwhelmingly important to the family in all major sphere, that is, economically, religiously and symbolically. The males were required to retain the properties belonging to the family, to perpetuate the family name, honour and family fortune. These were considered the important duties of a son thus preferential treatment were given to them over daughters.

This preference for sons was one of the reasons that resulted in the large extended family structure of the gentries as they normally like to have many sons and due to their wealthy status, they could afford to support their numerous sons and also daughters. Should any one of their sons attained glory, the family's standing too would be greatly increased.

The parents earnest desires for posterity can be seen in their anxiety to see their sons married and in their happiness at having children and grandchildren. The traditional Chinese thinking considered that the more children and grandchildren they have, the more prosperous they will be. Therefore most gentries want their children to have an early marriage.

Due to this indoctrinated idea of the importance of sons in the

minds of the Chinese, a gentry would normally take a concubine particularly in the case of the failure of the first wife to produce a male heir. normally do not advocate a division of their households because it would mean the division of the family properties.

Since the children of concubines were fully legitimate, concubineage were used to maintain the line of descent. This pattern of taking concubines would further enlarged the households of a gentry as most gentries would take more than one concubine. The usual policy during that time was to have all the wives and concubines together with their respective children and personal maids stay together in a large ancestral house which has been in the family for generations. Therefore, in the ancestral house, there would be many subdivision of households of the various wives and concubines of the gentry. This practice contributed to the large extended household of a gentry family. A gentry could have this arrangement because it was within his means to do so.

and erect a new household of their own. Whatever future

Since the gentries were wealthy, they lose fewer children in death because they could afford to give their offsprings enough nourishments to survive their childhood unlike the peasants. Most of their children managed to reach adulthood to continue the family line and due to this, the gentry households generally had at least three generations. In the gentry households, there was assimilation of non-kinsmen and they were taken in as maids and orderlies to help in the running of the household. As the ancestral house of the gentry was usually very large, they needed many servants to take care of it thus they accept non-kinsmen as part of their general

household. rank. The peasants were also the weakest and most unprotected group in the whole village.

The gentries normally do not advocate a division of their households because it would mean the division of the family properties. As the properties were handed down from their ancestors, it only signifies the achievements of their forebears and they attached sentimental values to it and try to keep it within their own family. A division of the properties would eventually result in the reduction of power and status of the family and might result in the breakup between the various siblings. Therefore, the gentries encouraged extended family structure to ensure that the family properties were kept within the family so that their family could still maintain their power and status in the village.

But should a division takes place, the brothers separate their direct descendants and their wives and children from the others and erect a new household of their own. Whatever future dealings with their brothers would be done as though they were strangers to each other. Therefore, a division of the household was greatly discouraged by the older members of a gentry household.

2.2 Status and Family System Among the Peasants

The peasantry forms a group which represents the majority (that is 80%) of the population in a village in "traditional China" but nevertheless, in the power and status hierarchy, they lie at

the lowest rank. The peasants were also the weakest and most unprotected group in the whole village. In a sense there were no ideal peasantry patterns in the Chinese culture. The peasantry pattern differs from gentry pattern only because the peasants lack the means, most notably, the economic means to adopt the lifestyles of the gentry. This was because the peasants were mostly poor farmers who managed to live on a subsistence level and definitely could not emulate the lavish lifestyles of the gentries. Besides, the majority of the peasants were illiterate and lack economic means, therefore, they found difficulty in elevating themselves to the status of a gentry. Thus, their potential change was held in check by the fact that they do not have the economic, social opportunities nor the talents necessary for enhancing their social status and therefore, their family continued to do the same things as the generations before them. Therefore, majority of them were still engaged in agriculture and manual labour and their general situation did not offer strong incentives to personal accomplishments and improvements. Though the large joint family was considered the ideal family structure in "traditional" China but the peasants were prevented from carrying it into practice mainly because the high mortality

rate struck them more heavily than the gentry family. More of their children died and fewer lived to adulthood and to old age to become grand parents and great-grandparents. This high mortality rate was due to their economic position as most peasants being farmers could barely survive on a subsistence level. Therefore, they could hardly afford to give the members of the family enough nourishments to survive. Eventhough the peasant tried to emulate the gentries by trying to have a large joint family but they generally end up as a stem family. (A stem family consists of the father, mother, a son and his wife and children). sons leave their homes, the importance

of filial piety and ancestor worship patterns were too deeply Therefore, poverty appears to be the main determinant of the peasant family structure because during really bad times, some peasants resort to female infanticide to eliminate the number of mouths they had to feed or they would sell their children especially girls to the gentries as maids (Freedman: 1958 pg 28). The peasants only considered getting rid of girls because of their preference for males. Males, whether among the gentry or peasant family were considered important. But their social

mobility was hindered by their lack of education. Education for However, when there was more than one son in the family, it was necessary that the others leave or that most or all of them forgo marriage. This was because the peasants (if they could afford it) usually own a very small piece of land and by Chinese rules of inheritance, the oldest son was generally ascribed an extra portion

associated with his responsibilities for maintaining the ancestral shrine which passed to him alone among his brothers, but this extra share aside, all brothers had equal claims to the land (Freedman: 1958 pg 22). But due to the fact that the land was too small to be divided and they generally lived on a subsistence level it was not possible to divide the land equally between all the sons. Thus, the land was normally left to the eldest son and the rest of the sons leave to look for other jobs. This leaves the eldest son with the parents and thus results in a "stem" family. Eventhough the rest of the sons leave their homes, the importance of filial piety and ancestor worship patterns were too deeply ingrained for parents to be cut loose from their sons and the cultural emphasis on posterity and the necessity of continuance of the family line was too great to allow the possibility of parental rejections of all the sons.

2.3 Apparently, there was a vast difference in the family structures between the gentries and peasants eventhough the peasants tried their best to emulate the ways of the gentries. But their social mobility was hindered by their lack of education. Education for the sons of peasants was out of the question because their families could not afford to support them due to their economic position and also being farmers, most peasants could not afford to spare their sons' time to enable them to attend school as their services were very much needed in the fields. A large degree the peasant family was economically self-sufficient in both production

For the sons of poor peasants, they could not hope to get into the hierarchy of the gentries through the civil examination but they try to do so through other channels. Therefore, it usually took the peasants several generations to attain the gentry status. But generally, the only way for them to do so was through other channels such as the army, secret societies, illegal trade and sometimes even through robbery. (Chow: 1966 pg57). To do so, the peasant must be ruthless and smart as these methods were hazardous. "China was carried out by the co-operative efforts of a single family group". (Levy: 1963 p209). In the peasant. Therefore, in "traditional" China, the social mobility of the peasants were limited and their economic position prevented them from achieving many things and also caused the disruption of their family structure. Most of them remained as farmers and continued to live the way their ancestors used to do. and everyone worked as a unit as they cannot afford to have any member not working.

2.3 Kinship Structure Among the Gentries and Peasants as a family unit

The basic unit of kinship solidarity is always the family unit but in "traditional" Chinese society, it was also the basic unit of solidarity for the entire society. To deal with the kinship structure in "traditional" China, four major factors were considered that is, economy, social, religion and politics. except perhaps for some neighbourhood co-operation. This was because the peasants. In "traditional" China, the peasants were the major determinants of the economic structure of the society. To a large degree the peasant family was economically self-sufficient in both production

and consumption. This was because most of them were engaged in agricultural production where they obtained their food directly from their own fields for their own consumption.

For the peasant household, every member of the family was involved in economic production thus there exist a strong bond between them because each member of the family performed a specific function. As commented by Levy, "the vast majority of production in 'traditional' China was carried out by the co-operative efforts of a single family group". (Levy: 1963 p209). In the peasant household, there usually exists a division of labour where the men would usually tend to the fields while the women folks would take care of everything in the house and during the growing season, they too would help the men in the fields. Thus, each member had a specific function to perform and everyone worked as a unit as they cannot afford to have any member not working. Hence, the members of a peasant household worked as a family unit for their own consumption and this reinforces their relationship with each other because they were inter-dependent on each other. Since they form such a tightly closed family unit, generally they had very little contacts outside of the family except perhaps for some neighbourhood co-operation. This was because the peasants spent a considerable number of hours toiling in their fields and the days of respite were few. Contacts with neighbours were mainly due to some help required or given in the agricultural

production. If the family members do enter some form of non agricultural production, it was ordinarily done on a family basis and if not, was likely to be done on a neighbourhood basis.

For the gentries, being in a managerial position, they had more. According to Levy, "the average peasant in China rarely went further away from home than the local market. If the peasant went further afield than the local market, (he) found himself in an alien world and one into which without some entree through a friend or relative (he) stood little chance of entering successfully". (Levy: 1963 p212). Therefore, social contacts for the peasants were limited and it further added to their own interaction with members of the family and their economic self-sufficiency was of great importance to their family structure.

Therefore, even though the gentries had an extensive kinship. In contrast, the degree of self-sufficiency of the gentry families was quite limited. In the production of income, the gentry did not contribute directly by their own efforts in any household labour although they did perform managerial tasks. Most of the gentries were landowners, thus they need not cultivate their own land but rent it out to the peasants. In terms of consumption and production, the gentries had to depend on others which in turn increases their contacts with outsiders. The gentries spend less time on production than on consumption where they could afford to indulge in activities which in the eyes of the peasants were considered idle like tea-drinking, womanising, etc. This type of activity was only associated with the rich because they had the

time and money to do so while the peasants had neither time nor money.

For the gentries, being in a managerial position, they had more contacts with other people but this contact excludes the women and usually lies in the hands of a single individual, that is, the "chia-chang" (which means the head of the family). Therefore, interactions in the gentry family was limited to men only with the women hardly taking part at all. The relationships in the gentry household were very much controlled by the "chia-chang" as he had the final say in everything. Their relationship with kins were not tied down to agricultural production but to the properties of the family where each member had a share to it. Therefore, eventhough the gentries had an extensive kinship structure but it would not be so integrated as each member especially the males had sufficient money to pursue their own interests since they need not work for a living. Generally in the gentry household because each member tried to obtain all the family properties, there was usually a lot of personal bitterness and fighting between the members of the family, forcing the disunity among the family.

Generally, the peasant family would form a closer and tighter family unit because they knew that they had to depend on each other for survival unlike the gentries where each member usually pursued his own personal interests.

The religious activity in China which is the ancestor worship is also oriented to the kinship structure of the society. The major purpose of ancestor worship was to strengthen and perpetuate the kinship organisation and also in the integration and perpetuation of the kinship group.

Families would generally hold religious services every seventh day for seven weeks. There would also be scripture. The importance of ancestor worship in the Chinese family life was indicated by the ancestral altar in the main hall or room in every house, the altar that held a number of wooden spirit tablets each of them representing a dead ancestor. The presence of these tablets, the ever-burning lamp in front of them that radiated a warm glow, the incense and candles that were periodically offered to them, the religious ceremonies that were performed for them, all suggested that the symbols of the dead continued to occupy a place in the family activities of the living. This was because the primary concern of the ancestors was for the family and one's primary duty was to honour the ancestors. One honours the ancestors by improving the condition of the family and by maintaining its patterns and its unity.

It signifies the wealth and influence as well as the status of. Essentially, ancestor worship may be viewed as being composed of two major parts, that is, the mortuary rites which immediately followed death and sacrificial rites which maintained the long-term relationship between the dead and the living. The mortuary rites were performed mainly because the Chinese do not accept the finality of death, that is, they consider the dead as merely

passing on into another world and the elaborate acts during the ceremony was used to confirm this fact. The Chinese families would usually burn personal belongings of the dead such as clothing, etc to enable the departed to use them in the next world and the well-to-do families would generally hold religious services every seventh day for seven weeks. There would also be scripture chanting services performed by hired Buddhist and Taoist priest. This mourning rites serve a dual purpose, that is, such demonstrative ritualistic acts serve to reaffirm the ties and solidarity of the family organisation, at a time when death had taken a member of the family and also to implant the idea that the dead still lives on in the family. Therefore, the rites also reaffirm the feelings of filial piety by children towards a deceased parent and also in ensuring the kinship ties between them.

Normally for the rich families, to reinforce their social and economic position, they generally invite all their relatives and friends to participate in the funeral procession and a big feast. It signifies the wealth and influence as well as the status of the bereaved family. There would only be a handful of mourners at the funeral procession of a poor peasant and there may be no feast later on due to their economic position and this reflects their status. But from this, it was assume that the people who attended the funeral were truly those who felt some strong kin ties with the departed and came to pay their respects. In the

case of the gentries, there could be two possibilities, that is, the people who attended were really sincere and wish to pay their last respects or they attended because there would be a big feast for them later on. This would reflect on the unity of the rich households.

Another aspect of ancestor worship was the sacrificial rites and it would be more elaborate on such family occasions as the anniversary death date of the deceased, the first and 15th days of the Chinese month, etc. Normally, there would be offerings of tempting dishes to the departed in front of the altar and the poor peasants would try to emulate the gentries in their elaborate ways. This sharing of the sacrificial food in the presence of the ancestors who had returned for the occasion serves to strengthen the kinship ties and solidarity among its members in a sacred atmosphere as they felt that they truly were a part of the family.

But when the kinship group grew fairly large, that is, as members multiplied over the generations, the contact between them became infrequent and the strength of the relationship would be reduced. In traditional Chinese society, the level or gradation of mourning obligations depended on the kinship level of the ancestor, that is, the more remote the ancestor, the larger the group of descendants and the less binding would be their social obligations between the members.

Therefore ancestor worship serves as an integrating and stabilising function of the family system in Chinese society. The reasons for going through all the rites was to bind the family members together and by gathering together for the rites was to show the community the solidarity of the kins and to keep alive the consciousness of an individual that he is part of the same ancestor group. Besides uniting the living, ancestor worship also united the dead and the living. The living were inculcated with the idea that the dead were still very much a part of the family and would oversee the conduct of the existing members of the family and help in an invisible way in their kins struggle for happiness and prosperity. As the traditional Chinese society was patriarchal, the power usually lies in the hands of the father, the "chia-chang". The "chia-chang" is the person who holds the power of life and death over family members and was institutionally justified in using force to implement his orders. He uses this power to instil stability and filial piety in the family to obtain compliance from family members.

In Chinese families, the compliance and filial piety given to a "chia-chang" was quite voluntary and failure to observe them would disrupt the family harmony. This power wielded by the "chia-chang" especially of a gentry household over his children was to unite them and to prevent a division of the family property whereby their status and wealth too would be divided.

Therefore in traditional Chinese society, they regarded the "chia-chang" as holding the key to the unity of the family as he was the one who controls his family. Therefore he was able to integrate the family and reduce the possibility of conflicts within the family and among kins. Where the peasants were concerned, it was unnecessary for the "chia-chang" to use strict control over his children as there was hardly any property to divide and some even encouraged their sons to try some other work. Therefore in traditional Chinese society, several factors contribute to their kinship system and the degree of unity among kins between the peasants and gentries differs. the writer has categorised the family sizes of both social classes into two categories; that is, family with less than five children and family with more than five children. The data is tabulated into Table 3.1 where the percentage of the middle class and lower class families which falls into each category of the family size is shown.

Percentage of families with respect to family size

Family size	Middle class (n=15)		Lower class (n=15)	
	%	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents
Less than five children	80.0	12	60.0	9
More than five children	20.0	3	40.0	6
Total	100.0	15	100.0	15

Table 3.1

CHAPTER 3 - THE URBAN CHINESE IN KUALA LUMPUR

- MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER CLASS

This chapter on the urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur is the focal point of the research report as the analysis of the data from the fieldwork would indicate whether the assumption made by the writer is valid, that is, economic status has some influence on the family structures and kinship ties of the urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur.

To facilitate an easier and more systematic discussion, most of the data has been tabulated and this will also make it easier for the reader to see the comparison between the middle class and the lower class.

To begin with, the writer has categorised the family sizes of both social classes into two categories, that is, family with less than five children and family with more than five children. The data is tabulated into Table 3.1 where the percentage of the middle class and lower class families which falls into each category of the family size is shown.

Percentage of families with respect to family size

Family size	Middle class (n=15)		Lower class (n=15)	
	%	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents
Less than five children	80.0	12	60.0	9
More than five children	20.0	3	40.0	6
Total	100.0	15	100.0	15

Table 3.1

Table 3.1 shows that the majority of the families of both social classes have less than five children. Eventhough a large percentage falls in the first category but between the middle class and lower class, a larger proportion in the middle class group has less than five children whereas the lower class group has a larger proportion with more than five children.

Table 3.2

The table above indicates that the lower class tend to have a bigger family size than the middle class.

Respondents monthly income	Middle Class			Lower Class		
	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of children	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of children
\$1,000	46.7	3	2.6	53.3	3	3.4
\$1,000-2,000	46.7	3	2.6	53.3	3	3.4
\$2,000-3,000	46.7	3	2.6	53.3	3	3.4
\$3,000-4,000	46.7	3	2.6	53.3	3	3.4
\$4,000-5,000	46.7	3	2.6	53.3	3	3.4
\$5,000	46.7	3	2.6	53.3	3	3.4

As has already been explained in the literative review, the family size of the Chinese in traditional China is large especially for the gentries and for the peasants, their family size too could be large if they have the economic means to support it but since they do not have, therefore, their family size is reduced in comparison to the gentries. Therefore, it is more a matter of circumstances than by choice that their family size is smaller. In comparison to the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur, their family size is definitely smaller than those in traditional China and their family size is smaller by choice because they do not want to have a big family. As has already been mentioned, Table 3.2 shows that the correlation assumed by the writer to exist between the middle class and lower class, the lower class have a larger family size. This difference in the family sizes between the middle class and lower class could be attributed by certain variables such as their income bracket, educational level, etc and subsequent discussions would show whether these variables definitely affects the family sizes.

majority of the middle class respondents fall within the \$1,000-\$2,000 income bracket and their mean number of children is 2.6 but for the lower class respondents, their majority falls within the first income bracket and their mean number of children is 3.4 which is higher than the majority in the middle class. But if the writer considers the

The writer will first consider the income variable in relation to family size and the data is illustrated by table 3.2 where the relationship of the respondents' income to the mean number of children is shown. The mean number of children is meant to be the average number of children born into each household.

Table 3.2

Mean number of children ever born by respondents monthly income

Respondents monthly income	Middle Class			Lower Class		
	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of children	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of children
\$1000	-	-	-	53.3	8	3.4
\$1000-2000	46.7	7	2.6	46.7	7	4.3
\$2000-3000	20.0	3	4.0	-	-	-
\$3000-4000	26.7	4	3.0	-	-	-
\$4000-5000	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$5000	6.7	1	3.0	-	-	-
Total	100.0	15	-	100.0	15	-

Table 3.2 shows that the correlation assumed by the writer to exist between the income level and family size is valid. To prove this point, the writer considers the majority of the sample, that is, majority of the middle class respondents fall within the \$1,000-\$2,000 income bracket and their mean number of children is 2.6 but for the lower class respondents, their majority falls within the first income bracket and their mean number of children is 3.4 which is higher than the majority in the middle class. But if the writer considers the

same income bracket for both social classes, that is, between \$1,000 - \$2,000, the mean number of children of the lower class is still higher than the middle class which indicates that lower class families do have a bigger family size than the middle class. the lower class their family size can never be as large as the family size of the gentries.

Income has also been cited by the respondents as the major determinant of family sizes and the general consensus of the respondents from the middle class is that they prefer a smaller family so that their children can lead a better life than them. To quote a middle class respondent, "(I) limited the number of offsprings to two considering the formidable tasks in their upbringing (monetary wise)so that they would not have to suffer and can enjoy life better". But a lower class respondent said that "the more children, the more income". These two statements show the difference in attitude between the middle class and lower class towards children where one considers too many

children to be a liability while the other group considers to be an asset. But besides the income factor, environment too is said to play an important role in determining family size as they want their children to grow up in a good home environment.

Therefore, the situation here seems to be a reversal of the situation in traditional China because in traditional China instead of the richer families having a smaller family size, the richer ones (that is the gentries) had a larger family size. This could be due to the different situation that exists in traditional China because having a large family was considered the ideal form of family structure and everyone

tries to have a big family and it also indicates the family's wealth and status as it requires a large sum of money to maintain a large household. But in Kuala Lumpur, a large family is never considered as an ideal form of family size and even for the lower class their family size can never be as large as the family size of the gentries.

Besides considering the income level, the writer will also consider the educational level of the respondents as the educational aspect too has its influence in determining a person's family size. Table 3.3 shows the relationship between educational level of the respondents and their mean number of children while Table 3.4 shows the relationship between family planning and family size.

Table 3.3

Mean number of children born by educational level of respondents

Educational level of respondents	Middle class			Lower class		
	%	No of respondents	Mean no of children	%	No of respondents	Mean no of children
Never been to school	6.7	1	7.0	13.3	2	4.0
Less than 6 years	6.7	1	8.0	60.0	9	3.7
6-12 years	40.0	6	2.7	26.7	4	4.0
More than 12 years	46.6	7	2.0	-	-	-
Total	100.0	15		100.0	15	

Table 3.4

Mean number of children born in relation to awareness about family planning

Family Planning	Middle Class			Lower Class		
	%	No of Respondents	Mean No of children	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of children
Have heard of it	86.7	13	2.3	40.0	6	4.5
Have never heard of it	13.3	2	7.5	60.0	9	3.2
Total	100.0	15		100.0	15	

It is certainly obvious that a middle class respondent has a higher educational level than the lower class respondent as shown by Table 3.3. For the two categories "never been to school" and "less than 6 years of education", the mean number of children of the middle class are 7.0 and 8.0 respectively but if consider the number of respondents involved (that is, only one respondent), it is an inaccurate representation of the two categories. Table 3.3 reveals the difference in educational level of the two social classes which in turn affects their family size (that is, mean number of children). If consider the "6-12 years" of educational level bracket, the middle class has a mean number of best children of 2.7 while the lower class has a mean number of children of 4.0. This lower average in family size of the middle class could be attributed to the Western influence as most of them are English family educated and they have adopted the Western idea of having a smaller,

would tend to have a more liberal attitude towards things such as

family size. Even those lower class respondents having "6-12 years" of education actually have an educational level until Form 3 or less and they are mostly Chinese educated where they could still have some of the ideologies that exist in traditional times pertaining to family size, though these ideologies may slowly disappear in future.

The writer form a correlation between Tables 3.3 and 3.4 as the difference in educational level may lead to a difference in the extent of the awareness of the respondents towards family planning. 86.7% of the middle class and only 40% of the lower class have heard of family planning with the result that the mean number of children of the middle class being only 2.3 while the mean number of children of the lower class is 4.5 which indicates that this awareness of family planning do have some influence towards an individual's family size.

Most of these respondents do practise some form of family planning such as the ovulation method which is regarded by a middle class respondent as healthy and safe and the contraceptive pills, etc. When the respondents were asked on their opinion towards family planning, several similar reasons were given such as "(It) is very useful as it teaches us to plan our family well so that (we) can enjoy life better and also the children would not suffer. Believe that (we) should give the best to the children" or "teaches us to have a better planning for the family as it is difficult to provide for a large family". Therefore, it can be said that there is a correlation between the educational level, family planning and family size as a person with a higher educational level, would tend to have a more liberal attitude towards things such as

family planning and they would be less afraid to try it as they would be more aware of its consequences. For the lower educated people, generally they are afraid to try anything new as they fear that it may harm them.

A comparison with traditional China would reveal that these two factors, that is, education and family planning has no influence at all over the family size as family planning was a thing unheard of during traditional times. Besides education was only limited to the gentries but even then there was no correlation between their family size and education as their family size was governed by wealth and status of the family. This enabled the family wealth to remain within the family and for them to retain their high status. For the peasants, these two factors too had no effect on their family size as it was determined more by economic factors than these.

from generation to generation as sons are considered important in the perpetuation of the family name. Table 3.5 shows the proportion of But these two factors are important these days in contributing to a reduction in the family size. Education nowadays are not limited to the rich along as in traditional days. The people nowadays generally have at least several years of education and the women are much more educated now. This results in more women joining the labour force as most do not want to waste all their years of education and this limits their time in looking after their children. Therefore, many of them want to limit the size of their family and they do so by adopting some of the methods advocated by family planning such as the contraceptive pills. Hence, there is a correlation between education and family planning. (that is

46.7%) falls within the first category indicating that this preference

Table 3.5
Proportion of male offsprings between the social classes

Number of Sons	Middle Class		Lower Class	
	%	Number of Respondents	%	Number of Respondents
No sons	46.7	7	6.7	1
At least 1 son	26.7	4	40.0	6
2-4 sons	13.3	2	53.3	8
More than 4 sons	13.3	2	-	-
Total	100.0	15	100.0	15

Another aspect of the Chinese which may influence their family size is their desire to have sons. This traditional ideology has been passed down from generation to generation as sons are considered important in the perpetuation of the family name. Table 3.5 shows the proportion of sons found in both social classes.

The traditional ideas of the importance of sons has not been forgotten. In the middle class, 46.7% of the respondents do not have any sons at all and only 13.3% have between 2 to 4 sons. But for the lower class, only 6.7% do not have any son and 53.3% have between 2 to 4 sons. Thus, there is a big difference in the sex preference between the middle class and lower class which results in the difference in their family structure. This is because the desire for male offsprings could result in an increase in the family size and this is evident for the lower class category. For the middle class, a higher percentage (that is 46.7%) falls within the first category indicating that this preference

has declined more in the middle class families than the lower class families. For the middle class, this sex preference is no longer a reason for having a large family though this may still be the case with the lower class.

In comparison to the Chinese in traditional China, where this sex preference is one of the important factors in influencing their family sizes for both the gentries and peasant households, this preference has declined for the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur, though the decline is greater for the middle class than the lower class as indicated by table 3.5.

This decline in the sex preference for their offsprings is not because the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur do not prefer to have any male children but because they realised that having too many children would entail a formidable task in their upbringing (especially monetary-wise).

The traditional ideas of the importance of sons has not been forgotten by the modern Chinese but the desire for male children is superseded by the need to limit the family size. This is because the importance of a female offspring is now being accepted by many modern Chinese parents and they consider children of both sexes as equally important. Some parents do not really bother whether they have a male or female child as long as their desired number of children is fulfilled. They no longer behave like the Chinese parents in traditional China where the couple would keep on trying to have a male child.

Table 3.6

Thus, feelings of family continuity are not as strong as in traditional times, especially among the younger generation Chinese. It cannot be

said that the Chinese now are less religious just because they do not really bother about family continuity.

The writer is of the opinion that the continuity of family name for the modern Chinese is not of prime importance because they are too involved in their personal lives and career and their effort to earn a living. Therefore, economic factors prevent them from having a large family to continue the family line.

Residential distance of relatives with respect to family size	%	No. of Respondents	Mean no of Children
Living in town	33.3	5	2.2
Living out of town	66.7	10	4.0
Total	100.0	15	

To deal with the inter-relationship between the respondents and their kins, the writer considers the distinction between the relatives that live in town and those that live out of town and also the frequency

Table 3.7

of kin visiting. The data for these has been tabulated into tables

3.6 and 3.7 respectively. The writer feels that this is necessary as the frequency of kin visiting would throw some light on the extent and the type of relationship between the respondents and their kins and this frequency too would in a way be determined by the geographical distance of the kins.

Frequency of kin visiting	%	No. of Respondents	Mean no of Children
Often	33.3	5	2.2
Once a week or more	33.3	5	2.2
Once a month	33.3	5	2.2
A few times a year	33.3	5	2.2
Never	33.3	5	2.2
Total	100.0	15	

Table 3.6
Residential distance of relatives with respect to family size

Residence of Relatives	Middle Class			Lower Class		
	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of Children	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of Children
Relatives living in town	93.3	14	3.0	86.7	13	3.2
Relatives living out of town	6.7	1	2.0	13.3	2	4.0
Total	100.0	15		100.0	15	

Table 3.7
Frequency of kin visiting

Kin Visiting	Middle Class			Lower Class		
	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of Children	%	No of Respondents	Mean no of Children
once a week/more often	46.7	7	3.0	-	-	-
At least once a month	-	-	-	-	-	-
A few times a year	53.3	8	2.9	100.0	15	3.8
Never	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	100.0	15		100.0	15	

From table 3.6, a large proportion of the respondents (that is, from both middle and lower classes) has kins living in the city which should cause the frequency of kin visiting to be more frequent but this is not so as reflected in table 3.7. The middle class respondents appear to have a much more frequent visit to their kins than the lower class as the lower class normally visit their kins only several times a year as shown in table 3.7. It must be stressed that the visits are normally limited only to close kins like parents and siblings.

The lower class respondents said that their infrequent kin visiting is due to the nature of the job as they normally have to work the whole day. If they do not work on a particular day, they would not have any income for the day, thus they have very little time to visit their kins often. Eventhough the middle class respondents have a more regular kin visitation, they also cite several factors which would deter them from visiting their kins more often, that is, lack of time due to work commitments, the distance involved and lack of common interests with their kins, etc.

	Middle Class				Lower Class			
	% of Res-	No. of Res-	Avg. Income	Mean No. of Children	% of Res-	No. of Res-	Avg. Income	Mean No. of Children
Parents only	20.0	3	\$3266	4.3	-	-	-	-
Parents and siblings	40.0	6	\$1980	1.7	20.0	3	\$1000	4.6
Does not help	-	-	-	-	13.3	3	\$700	5.5
Total	100.0	15			100.0	15		

Therefore, since the factors cause a reduction in the frequency of kin visiting, another way in which they can maintain control is through letters or by telephone. But these methods would reduce the amount of face-to-face contact with their kins.

Most of the respondents normally visit their kins during festivals like Chinese New Year and on "special occasions" such as weddings and birthdays. These are the times where everyone tries to visit their

siblings and parents and normally during such occasions, gifts are exchanged to reinforce their relationship. These are the times where work commitments are pushed aside and everyone joins in the celebration. Generally among the Chinese, these are the occasions where links are maintained with kins as on other days, everyone would be too busy with their own work.

As the relationship between the respondents and their kins are already established from table 3.7, we need to look into the type of help given to the various category of kins in relation to the respondents average monthly income.

Table 3.8
Relationship between family size and average income with respect to the amount of help given to kins

Help given to kins	Middle Class				Lower Class			
	%	No of Res-pondents	Avg Income	Mean No of Child-ren	%	No of Res-pondents	Avg Income	Mean No of Child-ren
Parents only	20.0	3	\$3266	4.3	-	-	-	-
Parents and siblings only	40.0	6	\$1580	2.6	66.7	10	\$667	3.2
Parents, siblings and other kins	40.0	6	\$1980	1.7	20.0	3	\$1000	4.6
Does not offer any help	-	-	-	-	13.3	3	\$700	5.5
Total	100.0	15			100.0	15		

Table 3.8 shows the relationship between the average monthly income, the mean number of children (that is, family-size) and the proportion of help given to the various categories of kins. By first considering the middle class category, all the respondents do offer some sort of help to their kins and they do so out of a sense of obligation as they feel that they should as they are part of the family. 40% of the respondents offer help to their distant kins besides close kins like parents and siblings. They admitted that they do so mainly out of humanitarian grounds. To quote a middle class respondent, "(I) feel that should help them as it is within our capacity to help them. In future, we may need them to help us so it is right to help them when they need help". But this ability to extend aid (that is, monetary) to their kins too depends on their average income and family size. For example in the first category, though the respondents have a higher average income (that is, \$3,266) but they too have a larger family size (that is, 4.3) (which is high compared to the other categories) and they only extend help to their parents only. Therefore, eventhough an individual may be earning a high salary but if he has a large family then monetary-wise he can only offer limited help.

They also tried to boost their standings before their parents by showering them with gifts and helping them in any way they can. The peasant households, they too would try to help their parents and siblings. Even then a large percentage (that is 66.7%) claim that they would help their parents and siblings should any crisis arised eventhough it may be a small amount as their average income is only \$657.

Generally non-monetary aid or favours are frequently exchanged between kins and the most common being babysitting. Especially for the middle class respondents, where both husband and wife are working, they normally ask their kins to look after their children as they generally rather trust their kins than engage a babysitter who is unknown to them. In return for this, a payment would be given to their kins.

In times of illness, we generally turn to our kins to help us find some cures especially for those who believe in traditional medicine. Even for those who believe in modern medicine, when they find that their illness is not cured by modern medicine, they generally seek their kins in helping them find a cure from traditional Chinese herbs.

In the case of the Chinese in traditional China, the writer assumed that aid would definitely be given to parents as filial piety is regarded as a virtue and nothing is more terrible than disobedience and neglect of parents. Strong feelings too could exist between the siblings but it could be broken by rivalry especially in the gentry households where each tries to outwit the other to inherit the family properties. They also tried to boost their standings before their parents by showering them with gifts and helping them in any way they can. In the peasant households, they too would try to help their parents and some would even borrow from money-lenders to help their parents in times of financial crisis.

For the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur, most of them are more willing to

The daughters-in-law were supposed to be subservient to their mother-in-law where they must never answer back when reprimanded. Thus the family and hence, there is a sense of obligation and responsibility. Conflicts between mother and daughters-in-law would not cause a breakdown of the extended family structure.

The writer obtained two different opinions of the respondents pertaining to the question whether industrialisation has affected the extended family structures. Some respondents said that industrialisation has no effect on family structure and it is all up to the individuals whether they want to maintain an extended family or a nuclear family. Some agreed that industrialisation has disrupted the extended family structure.

Therefore, after studying all the data, it can be deduced that economic factors (that is, base on income), education, sex preference etc., plays an important role in determining the family size and also the kinship relation of the urban Chinese. The data proved that the lower class group generally have a larger family size as compared to the middle class. Therefore, the findings have shown that the assumption of this survey is valid.

The writer is of the opinion that industrialisation does not totally disrupt the family structure. It merely reduces the household composition due to migration of the people to the city. This is because close ties can still be maintained with family members even though it may be through letters or by telephone. It is felt that the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur are forming nuclear family to avoid having conflicts with members of the family. By having a separate household, they can at least maintain an amicable situation with family members. Conflicts with in-laws would be one main reason why after marriage, the new couple set up their own household as each party may try to assert their authority on the other and these conflicts are brought out in the open.

In traditional China, the conflicts were very much subdued as the parents had the ultimate authority and everyone must obey his authority.

The daughters-in-law were supposed to be subservient to their mother-in-law where they must never answer back when reprimanded. Thus conflicts between mother and daughters-in-law would not cause a breakdown of the extended family structure.

Therefore, after studying all the data, it can be deduced that economic factors (that is, base on income), education, sex preference etc, plays an important role in determining the family size and also the kinship relation of the urban Chinese. The data proved that the lower class group generally have a larger family size as compared to the middle class. Therefore, the findings have shown that the assumption of this survey is valid.

This change in their ideas is mainly due to the influences that they received from their society. It is without doubt that the Chinese in the two societies are exposed to different influences and cultures which affects their ideas towards family size. The influences that the Chinese in traditional China were exposed to were mostly orthodox ideas which has a strong basis in their religious beliefs. Their religious beliefs normally states that one must follow all the rules laid down by their ancestors. The Chinese during traditional days do not question the relevance of the rules as they were taught never to question the authority of the elders. Therefore, in matters pertaining to family structures and the continuity of the family line, sons are generally desired by elder generation, therefore they are expected to produce as many sons as possible so that the continuity of the family would be preserved and also to ensure that family properties be retained within the family. It was considered

CHAPTER 4- CONCLUSION

At the outset of this study, it was mentioned that an attempt would be made to find a correlation between economic status and family structure among the urban Chinese. The aim of the present study was therefore to clear this question by specifying the changes that has taken place to the family structures since traditional times. From the preceding chapters, it should be apparent that the family structure of the urban Chinese in Kuala Lumpur has undergone a significant change. One of the most important factor in the changes of the family structures between the Chinese in traditional China and in Kuala Lumpur is due to their change of ideas.

This change in their ideas is mainly due to the influences that they received from their society. It is without doubt that the Chinese in the two societies are exposed to different influences and cultures which affects their ideas towards family size. The influences that the Chinese in traditional China were exposed to were mostly orthodox ideas which has a strong basis in their religious beliefs. Their religious beliefs normally states that one must follow all the rules laid down by their ancestors. The Chinese during traditional days do not question the relevance of the rules as they were taught never to question the authority of the elders. Therefore, in matters pertaining to family structures and the continuity of the family line, sons are generally desired by elder generation, therefore they are expected to produce as many sons as possible so that the continuity of the family would be preserved and also to ensure that family properties be retained within the family. It was considered

a great sin and a terrible shame to lose all the properties that was acquired by their ancestors. Since sons were considered to be the only ones who can maintain family properties and who can carry out the responsibilities of the family effectively, preference were given to them in everything especially in education. Girls during those days were only seen and not heard and they have absolutely no say in family matters and were not considered important enough to be given an education. In the first place, they were considered as "shibenhua" (literally unprofitable goods) to their parents because they were lost to the family for good the moment they get married and all the money spent on them is wasted.

The Chinese in Kuala Lumpur are influenced by many factors and this mixed influences induced them to have a different concept towards the size of their family. They would not be keen to have very large families as it is very difficult to maintain a large family. It is generally assumed that the majority of the younger generation Chinese do not know the significance of the traditional customs. As most Chinese are English educated, they are much more receptive to the ideas of the Western people and thus regarding the family size, they generally try to limit to two or three children only. Besides, the majority of the Chinese parents do not really bother about the sex of the child as long as their desired number of children is fulfilled because the importance placed on sons has been greatly reduced although they would be happy if they do produce a son.

that a large family would demand a considerable amount of attention from the parents and also additional expenses. Since most parents are working

Most modern parents generally treat both their male and female offsprings as equal. The idea that only boys are capable of carrying the family responsibility has been dispelled as they feel that the girls can do just as well as the boys. The importance placed on sons has been reduced especially now that the girls are gaining recognition both in their work and education which is no more reserved for males alone. As the parents realised that their daughters can do just as well as their sons, they give them equal treatment and there are some who are just contented with having only daughters. With this change of attitude, the Chinese parents are no longer intent on having sons and this helps in some way to reduce the size of the family of most Chinese in Kuala Lumpur.

This change in their ideas could be attributed to the difference in the education that they received. In traditional China, the general form of education was based mainly on the teachings of Confucius and on the classics. The teachings of Confucius normally advocate filial piety to parents and ancestors and one must always obey and follow the advice of elders.

The education received by today's Chinese do not only focus on moral issues such as filial piety to parents and ancestors but the range of the educational syllabus are much more diversified than in traditional China. As a result, they are much more receptive to other ideas especially pertaining to family sizes. It also brought about the awareness that a large family would demand a considerable amount of attention from the parents and also additional expenses. Since most parents are working

time is something which they do not have, subsequently, they need to rely on their kins to take care of their child. This normally entails some monetary payment and too large a family would mean a drain on their resources. Also most educated parents would think of the welfare of the child first thus few children are desired.

mobility of the individuals, hence there is no limit to their mobility. Another factor that contributes to this change in the family structure of the Chinese lies in the nature of their economy. In traditional China, agriculture was their only type of economy and therefore requires a lot of manpower to work the fields. This forces members of the family to stay together in one dwelling unit as they had to work together as a unit in their economic production. Males were therefore preferred as farming involves mainly heavy work. Their division of labour designates the males to work in the fields while the females stay at home and deal with the housework. In the economic sense, the work of the men were considered more important as they were the one who brought in income compared to the work of a woman. This too shows the importance of men to a Chinese family in traditional China.

In terms of mobility, the Chinese in traditional China were less mobile as their work was tied to their fields and they cannot possibly leave their fields unattended and embarked on a journey. Moreover, farming appeared to be the only occupation that they know thus obtaining other job was difficult. Besides, searching for greener pastures seldom crossed their minds as they seemed to be contented with farming. This lack of mobility can also be due to the indoctrination of the teachings of Confucius which states that a son must never leave his parents' house.

while they are still alive. Leaving home is considered an unfilial act. Therefore, they never venture beyond their village.

Due to industrialisation, the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur have a much more diversified range of jobs to choose from and this encourages the mobility of the individuals, hence there is no limit to their mobility. As a result of industrialisation, more and more female are joining the labour force and sons are no longer considered the only ones who can have this earning capacity. Unlike in traditional China where physical strength being the vital factor in agriculture, males were desired and considered more superior than females, what is more important now is not so much of physical strength but rather skills and intelligence. In this, the females can be just as good as the males and thus industrialisation too has helped in changing the Chinese ideas towards the status of a female. This in turn helps to reduce the family size of the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur. With this change of status for girls and the fact that the need for sons has been superseded by economic needs, small nuclear family is the prevalent type of family structure in Kuala Lumpur.

The need for security during old age induces the Chinese in traditional China to have many sons thus forming a large family. They hoped that during their old age, their sons would take care of them. Daughters were considered lost to the family after marriage and thus ceased to be a functioning member of the family. Their obligations after marriage are towards their husband's family and thus should not bother about the affairs of her own family. Thus responsibility of looking after their

aged parents falls on the sons and it was considered a sin to neglect one's parents in traditional China. the form of money. Eventhough there are some inheritance in the form of properties like houses but This dependence on sons is not so important for the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur. Most parents have personal savings in the banks and a substantial sum is kept aside for their old age whether or not their children are willing to take care of them. Besides, some do obtain some money through their pensions and if used sparingly would be sufficient for them. There are those who are far-sighted enough to invest their money in properties like houses which would be rented out thus providing a source of income for them. These various ways reduces the dependence on their children although most of them would like their children to take care of them. At present, girls too support their parents and even after marriage they are not cut off entirely from their family as in traditional China but still maintain contact through visitings. There are some who even give a sum of money to their parents each month as a way of thanking them. This shows that a female can be just as important as a male and the Chinese parents in Kuala Lumpur do not need to have sons nor a large family to take care of them during their old age. Large families are no longer a source of security for them. they do not really bother whether they have any sons to continue the family line. Hence this feeling The difficulty in the division of property would also induce members of the family to stay together. Most form of properties in traditional China are mainly lands, therefore to have an equal division would be rather difficult as land is not a liquid asset. Thus, to reap any profits from it, they must all stay together to manage the land and make it

productive. Compared to those days, inheritance nowadays could be easily divided as it is usually in the form of money. Even though there are some inheritance in the form of properties like houses but their properties can be rented out and the rent thus received can be easily divided. Therefore all the members of the family are not forced by economic circumstances to stay together and they can just leave after taking their share of the inheritance. An interest in the family's inheritance need not induce everyone to stay together and this results in a smaller household composition.

It must be remembered that feelings of continuity in traditional Chinese minds is very strong and it is considered a shame to the family if the family line is not maintained. During those days, strong family loyalties was expected from each member of the family but this family loyalty is slowly diminishing for the modern Chinese. Most of them are much too influenced by Western ideas that some let their parents take care of themselves while others even put them in old folks home. Fortunately, this tendency is still not as prevalent here, however loyalty towards parents and ancestors are definitely not as strong as it used to be. Therefore, they do not really bother whether they have any sons to continue the family line. Hence this feeling of continuity has been superseded by the needs of the parents to live a much comfortable life by having less children.

There are of course exceptions. Some do have strong family loyalties and place importance on continuing the family line, but even for these

people they would not try to have that many children as the Chinese in traditional China.

Undoubtedly, changes have occurred in the family structures of the Chinese as no society can remain constant through time. It is hoped that the present study has revealed some of the factors which brought about these changes and also the correlation that exists between economic status and family size of the Chinese.

try to have that many children as the Chinese

have occurred in the family structures of the
y can remain constant through time. It is hoped
dy has revealed some of the factors which brought
and also the correlation that exists between
family size of the Chinese.

APPENDIX A

Name of Respondent:

Address:

Longest Place of Residence:

	Name of Household Name	Rel to HH	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Duration of Stay	Religion	Place of Origin		Occupation			
								District	State	Full Time	Income \$	Part-Time	Income \$
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
0													

Occupation of Respondent

Children staying elsewhere	Address	Reasons for staying away	If schooling state expenses per month	If working state monthly contributions to family
Place of work				
Age when first started				
Salary				
Occupation of Spouse				

Type of work	Place of work	Salary
Number of dependents:	Children	
	Relatives	

Level of Education

Monthly Expenditure

	Respondent
No education	
Standards 1 - 6	
Forms 1 - 3	
Forms 4 - 6	
Tertiary level	

Medium of education:

English

Chinese

Malay

Occupation of Respondent

Income	Present Job	Previous Job
Type of work		
Place of work		
Age when first started		
Salary		

Occupation of Spouse

Type of work	Place of work	Salary

Monthly Expenditure

	\$
Transport	
Food	
School	
House rent/Mortgage	
Insurance	
Miscellaneous	

Total Household Income (Monthly)

Income	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Less than \$1,000	No <input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000 - \$2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$2,000 - \$3,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$3,000 - \$4,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$4,000 - \$5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000 - \$6,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$6,000 - \$7,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$7,000 - \$8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$8,000 - \$9,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$9,000 - \$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than \$10,000	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1) Do you feel that your income sufficiently covers your entire expenditure?

2) Do you require your children to help you in your work?

Yes ☐

No ☐

State reasons:

- 3) If the children help in the family business, are they given any monetary reward?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you do not have any close relatives in Petaling Jaya, then
If yes, state the amount per month: _____

If no, in what way do you reward your children for helping you in your work?

- 7) On what occasion do you visit your relatives?

- 4) Do the children contribute to the monthly income?

Weekends	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>			
No		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Illness					
When on leave					
State reasons: occasions					
Others					

- 8) What are the occasions when you go to your relatives for help?

- 5) In your opinion, do you think it is a good idea having a married son/daughter staying with you?

Never	
In financial trouble	
Illness	
To get job or business opportunity	
Others	

6) Do you have any relatives staying in Petaling Jaya? you for help?

Never	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
In financial trouble	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you do not have any close relatives in Petaling Jaya, then where are they?

Illness	
To get jobs or business opportunity	
Others	

10) Would you help these relatives when they need help?

7) On what occasion do you visit your relatives?

	Yes	No	Reasons
Festivals			
Weekends			
Illness			
When on leave			
Special Occasions			
Others			

8) What are the occasions when you go to your relatives for help?

Never	
In financial trouble	
Illness	
To get jobs or business opportunity	
Others	

9) What are the occasions when your relatives come to you for help?

Never	
In financial trouble	
Illness	
To get jobs or business opportunity	
Others	

10) Would you help these relatives when they need help?

13) Have you heard of family planning?

	Yes	No	Reasons
Brothers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sisters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cousins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
In-laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nephews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nieces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Uncles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Aunties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

14) Do you agree with the concept of family planning? (please explain)

11) Do you have closer contact with relatives on your father's side or your mother's side?

12) Do you have equal interaction with all your relatives?

Yes
No

If the answer is no, what are the factors which causes you to mix more only with certain relatives?

16) Do you agree that constraint of space is one of the deterrent to the increase in family size? (please explain)

13) Have you heard of family planning?

Yes

No

If the answer is no, would you consider increasing the size of the family if you do not have a bigger house?

If yes, state the origin of the information:

Friends

Newspaper

Radio/TV

17) What factors in your opinion would determine the size of the family?

14) Do you agree with the concept of family planning?(please explain)

18) Do you agree that urbanisation has disrupted the extended family structure? (please explain)

- 15) Do you practise the modern methods of family planning? in an urbanised area? (please explain)

Yes

☐

No

☐

State reasons:

- 16) Do you agree that constraint of space is one of the deterrent to the increase in family size? (please explain)

If the answer is no, would you consider increasing the size of the family if you do not have a bigger house?

- 17) What factors in your opinion would determine the size of the family?

- 18) Do you agree that urbanisation has disrupted the extended family structure? (please explain)

- 1) Burch, Thomas, "The Size and Structure of Families: A Comparative
- 19) Do you agree that kinship ties can still be maintained in an urbanised area? (please explain)
1967 pp 347-363.
- 2) Chow Yung-Jeh, Social Mobility in China, Atherton Press, NY, 1960.
- 3) Firth, Raymond, Families and Their Relatives, Routledge and Kegan Paul, NY: Humanities Press, 1969.
- 4) Freedman, Maurice, Lineage Organisation in Southeastern China, The Athlone Press, 1958.
- 5) International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, ed. David Sills, Macmillan Press, NY, 1968.
- 6) Karl Marx: Economy, Class and Social Revolution, ed. Z A Jordan, Great Britain, 1971.
- 7) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology
(translated, edited by H H Gerth and C Wright Mills)
Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, G Britain, 1964
- 8) Levy, Marion, J Jr, The Family Revolution in Modern China, Octagon Books Inc, NY 1963.
- 9) Nye, F Ivan and Berardo, Felix M, The Family - Its Structure and Interaction, The Macmillan Company, NY, 1973

BIBLIOGRAPHY Robert F. The Modern Family, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc.

- 1) Burch, Thomas, "The Size and Structure of Families: A Comparative Analysis of Census Data", American Sociological Review, Vol 32, 1967 pp 347-363.
- 2) Chow Yung-Teh, Social Mobility in China, Atherton Press, NY, 1966.
- 3) Firth, Raymond, Families and Their Relatives, Routledge and Kegan Paul, NY: Humanities Press, 1969.
- 4) Freedman, Maurice, Lineage Organisation in Southeastern China, The Athlone Press, 1958.
- 5) International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, ed. David Sills, Macmillan Press, NY, 1968.
- 6) Karl Marx: Economy, Class and Social Revolution, ed. Z A Jordan, Great Britain, 1971.
- 7) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology
(translated, edited by H H Gerth and C Wright Mills)
Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, G Britain, 1964
- 8) Levy, Marion, J Jr, The Family Revolution in Modern China, Octagon Books Inc, NY 1963.
- 9) Nye, F Ivan and Berardo, Felix M, The Family - Its Structure and Interaction, The Macmillan Company, NY, 1973

10) Winch, Robert F, The Modern Family, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc,
USA, 1963