

# SOCIAL IMPLICATION OF DWELLERS IN PUBLIC HOUSING

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This paper presents a case study of the characteristics, the mode of living and the social status of the dwellers in the two intertwined high-rise public housing projects run presently by the National Housing Authority. The mode of living includes those manners exercised at the apartment and those in relationship with the immediate environs of the dwellers. The study focuses on strategic factors whose implications are relevant to the responsibility of the modern state. The Thai government engages in providing public utilities, order and safety as well as in increasing people's capability to overcome grievances in the society, so too should it be for these projects. In order to satisfy this purpose, the paper analyzes the elements of living vis-a-vis the expectations which would involve any further government policy and action.

## THE DINDAENG-HUAYKWANG PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS

The Dindaeng-Huaykwang Public Housing Projects are in fact separate but are considered intertwined here because of their close proximity, the latter being somewhat the extension of the former. The Dindaeng project is the first and the largest high-rise public housing ever conceived by the government for the low-income families of Bangkok.<sup>1/</sup> It is situated in the eastern section of the middle-ring area of the City of Bangkok. The Huaykwang high-rise project will become even larger when it is completed. It is located about 2 kilometers north of Dindaeng. The two are connected by poor roads lanes.

It was in 1951<sup>2/</sup> that the Public Welfare Department first began their wooden housing project at Dindaeng followed by the Huaykwang project a few years later. The areas were then the garbage dump of the Bangkok Municipality and low ricefields. The construction of 1,088 stilted one storey rowhouses and two-storey duplex houses at Dindaeng and 1,700 of the latter type at Huaykwang had been completed for a decade before the Department found them in a shattered state of affairs and there was no public land to accommodate more people there.

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<sup>1/</sup> several government and semi-government organizations also constructed high-rise apartments for their employees, such as the Army, the Police, the State Lottery Bureau, while the Municipality of Bangkok has a plan to build a number of apartment buildings at Bon Kai in Bangkok.

<sup>2/</sup> Public Welfare Department, "Background of Public Apartment Building Project at Dindaeng Road, Phya Thai District, Bangkok" (mimeograph)

Free-style addition of more rooms to the wooden houses to accommodate more family members as well as their obsolete material, poor maintenance and inadequate public utilities made the project area rapidly deteriorated and the houses run down and overcrowded. The unpaved streets were either dusty or muddy and the drainage system was not properly installed.

An important decision was then made by the Public Housing Committee to introduce the high-rise housing project first to the Dindaeng and later the Huaykwang areas.<sup>3/</sup> The idea was not only to clear the areas' eyesores by shifting dwellers from the Department's poor wooden houses to the new apartment buildings, but also to accommodate more low-income and needy families from various parts of Bangkok. So far construction of about 80% of the apartment buildings at Dindaeng has been completed and inhabited, while only 7 1/2 % of the buildings at Huaykwang have been built and occupied. The National Housing Authority, which was created in 1973 to replace several overlapping government housing agencies, is responsible for the construction of the rest as well as for the operation of the existing ones.

### 1. Project Characteristics

1.1 *The Physical Nature and Facilities:* The projects called for the construction of 64 concrete apartment buildings either five or six storeys high at Dindaeng and 80 five-storey ones at Huaykwang. In addition to the high-rise buildings, 780 shophouses, the number of floors to be determined later, will be built at Dindaeng, while a new shopping center, one secondary school, six kindergartens, several recreational and sports areas as well as parking spaces are envisioned at Huaykwang.<sup>4/</sup> So far these complementaries are yet in the blueprints.

The 54 apartment buildings now completed at Dindaeng are spread along two main and two secondary roads. At one end of the project are the westward road to the city and the starting point of the Bangkok's first superhighway, which leads one to the north and to Donmuang International Airport. At the other end, until recently, was a dead-end street blocking direct movement towards the east of Bangkok. And at the center is a way to Huaykwang area.

There are a large public school, one child day-care center, a movie house, two public health units and two police boxes located in the vicinity. A sports field is about half a mile from half of the buildings. Also located nearby are the local Phya Thai District Office, the National Institute for Training of Skilled Workers, and the Mentally-handicapped Hospital.

The apartment buildings were built in rows and columns according to the shape of the areas with small yards around each, and there is considerable space between the apartment buildings. Each building accommodates either 56 or 80 families depending on the type of building. The groundfloor of all buildings is paved with concrete and left open.

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<sup>3/</sup> This committee had the Minister of the Interior as chairman.

<sup>4/</sup> Public Welfare Department, "Layout Plan of Huaykwang Public Housing Improvement Program" October 8, 1970.

The buildings are of walk - up type with a main hall in front of all units of every floor. An apartment unit includes one large living room, a toilet room water tap, with a kitchen area and a small outside porch used for storage and drying clothes. Each apartment is equipped with electricity, water supply and a closed garbage closet forming common tube for the two apartment units down to the ground floor. The dwellers usually arrange the living room as they like; sometimes dividing it into two or three sections with furniture or screens, sometimes erecting a huge shelf about six feet high to serve as additional sleeping place, and sometimes managing to have the front part of the room set up as a grocery store.

The six apartment buildings now completed at Huaykwang accommodate 80 families each. Two buildings are connected into an N-shaped pair with common stairway located in the middle, and the other stairway located at the other end of each building. There is also a small open space and parking area in front of and around each building. Around the area are a few municipal and private schools, open markets, a youth center, a police station and a fire brigade, a water supply station, an electric power sub-station, and a public health center. A water well is provided for each pair of the apartment buildings.

The 4.50 x 11.00 square meter apartment unit at Huaykwang is larger than that of 3.50 x 11.00 square meters at Dindaeng. In each apartment unit are a large living room, a bedroom, separate toilet and bathroom and a rear porch used as kitchen and clothes drying area. Here again the living room can be divided, but the garbage disposal place is placed for common use at the end of each floor of the building.

Though the architectural plan provides for orderly landscape layouts and access ways to the buildings, the Huaykwang project is located in the middle of an area badly connected to the main highway and streets. The roads and lanes connecting it with these outlets are narrow, snaketailed and in very poor condition. Three bus lines start from Huaykwang. Two of them run through Dindaeng before heading to other places. There is also one bus line which starts from central Dindaeng. The buses are mostly overcrowded at the busy hours.

1.2 *The Residential Requirements* : In order to serve its objective, the Public Welfare Department identified their low-income clients as those whose earnings did not exceed 2,650 baht a month.<sup>5/</sup> The occupants were selected from those employed and well-behaved Thais who had resided in Bangkok more than 6 months prior to date of the application. No age limit or marital status was specified.

The Department made investigation into the causes of the troubles of individual applicants in order to find out which one of the following categories they could be put in. Priority was given

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<sup>5/</sup> 'Regulations of renting the government housing 1965' in Public Welfare Department, *Handbook for Apartment Dwellers*. Bangkok : Pakkret Women's Welfare House Press, 1972).

to applicants with the most serious trouble. The list was arranged in the following manner.<sup>6/</sup> (1) one's house had burnt down, (2) the court had ordered one to move out of the old living place, (3) the government had ordered one to move out of the old living place, (4) the house or land owner had ordered one to move out of the old living place, (5) the rent paid for one's house exceeded 25% of one's income and (6) other causes. The excess demands were eliminated by category priority. When too many applicants remained in each category, a drawing was used.

The demand for public housing in Bangkok grew rapidly. When the Department announced the selection of families to reside in the first set of apartment buildings in 1963, 20,212 persons applied for the 320 apartment units. The number of applicants in later years also exceeded the apartment units available. That is, there were 19,085 applicants for the 656 apartment in 1964; 2,821 for 336 in 1965; 7,819 for 672 in 1967 and 9,196 for 480 in 1968, respectively.<sup>7/</sup>

The rents of the apartment vary from 100 baht and 335 baht at Dirdaerg to 180 baht a month at Huaykwang according to the size of the room and the cost of construction. Additional amounts are charged for use of electricity, water and garbage service.

Many of the low-income families who were selected to inhabit the high-rise apartment buildings had been well acquainted with living in close quarters as they had been in slum areas or in wooden rowhouse style. However, the Department of Public Welfare realized that some adaptability was still needed. It made some arrangements and precautions to have the dwellers in the apartment projects behave appropriately. A leaflet explaining the proper manners of living was distributed to all of the dwellers. The contents stated that:

(1) nuisances such as excess noise, smell and pets were restricted i.e. a charcoal brazier was prohibited and no pets is allowed.

(2) proper use of the apartment was to be observed i.e. no shop or workshop could be set up in the apartment room; no air-conditioner could be installed; fixing nails on the walls other than the places provided was prohibited; no cloth or other materials should be hanged in front or at the back of the apartment unit to produce ugly eyesores, and dwellers were advised to refrain from engaging in dangerous or objectionable activities which would annoy neighbors.

(3) proper use and surveillance of common properties were specified, i.e. no car could be parked inside the building fence; no vehicle or property could be put in the main halls, stairways and the open floors. The ground floor could not be used as liquor drinking place or as a shop of any kind. Dwellers could not throw litter on the floor.

<sup>6/</sup> "Prohibitions of action" in Public Welfare Department. *ibid.*

<sup>7/</sup> Statistics kept by the Chief of the Business Division, Office of Public Housing, Public Welfare Department.

(4) the dweller was also prohibited from transferring ownership, re-renting the whole or part of the apartment to others or to putting other persons in the apartment in his name. He was not allowed to accommodate unregistered people at will. If the dweller wished to make alterations or additions to the apartment, it could be done only with the consent of the Department.

In order to understand more about the dwellers in these public housing units, a 13.5% sample survey was made in June and July 1973.<sup>8/</sup> Of the total number of 4,048 families who then resided in both the Dindaeng and Huaykwang apartment units, 596 were interviewed. The sampling was systematically selected so that they could represent the dwellers presently living in these buildings.

## 2. The Dwellers' Profile

Elaboration will be made first on the profile of those troubled low-income families of Bangkok who succeeded in their bids for places in these public housing under the policy of the Public Welfare Department. The profile of the dwellers is divided into four aspects, namely, (1) the basic characteristics, (2) the background of knowledge, (3) the work and (4) the children in the family.

*2.1 Basic Characteristics:* These include the sex and the marital status of the household leaders and their spouses, the original places of residence and the religious affiliation.

Though the leaders of the family are primarily men, as it should properly be, the status of 21.64% household leaders who are women is worth explaining. These women are both single and married. In most cases their married lives were interrupted by the deaths of their husbands or by separation, either by means of divorce or nondivorce. Since then they took responsibility of taking care of their children by themselves. In a few cases unmarried elder sisters manage to put their younger brothers and sisters in jobs and schools in Bangkok by themselves and become the family caretakers. A few minor or second wives lived alone or with maids in these low-cost apartments, perhaps by re-renting.

6.71 % of the household leaders are single, since there is no rule restraining them from applying for the apartments. The single tenants mostly live with their cousins, brothers and sisters and sometimes their parents. Some of them are farmer migrants who came to seek higher education or better employment in Bangkok and had stayed in whatever place they could. The flats are thus the better places for them.

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<sup>8/</sup> In this connection, the author wishes to express his appreciation to NIDA's research team, especially Mrs. Sinee Kamalanavin, Mr. Tawee Suanmalee, Mr. Nathakhol Khanthajai and Mr. Lekha Vallapaichit who were the major participants.

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The household leaders at Dindaeng and Huaykwang are mostly among the middle-aged persons with 65% aged between 30-49 years. Those of 40-49 years of age constitute the largest group (35.07%), while 30-39 age group came second with 30.7%. In addition there is more of the older than the younger group. That is, 20.13% of 50-59 year leaders, while there are only 6.37% of 20-29 year leaders. The most frequently found age is between 40-44 years, and the ages vary regressively from the median towards both ends of the ranges from "below 20 years" to "over 60 years".

The reason for having less of the 20-29 year leaders is that in many cases, persons of this age bracket are still single and live with their parents, or they have already got married but still live dependently with their parents. They would find themselves in trouble, once their parents' families are too large, or when they get married. Living separately from the parents' house means additional cost of living for the young low-income earners.

The spouse of the household leaders as a whole are younger than the leaders since the most frequently-found age is between 30-39% years of age (43.02%). Those aged between 40-49 years come after with 30.89%. Those are more of the couples with ages less than 30 years (14.88%) than with ages more than 50 years (10.75%), since the women are generally younger than their spouses.

Almost all dwellers believe in Buddhism. This is because Buddhism is the national religion of Thailand. Whether they are serious in practice or not, the Thais would identify themselves with Buddhism. The percentages of other religions held by the dwellers are very small and constitute exceptions, i.e. Catholic = 1.34% and Islamic = 1.34%. At Dindaeng there formerly lived both minorities. There is a Catholic Church located nearby. Around the area there are also some remnants of Islams who have been settled as a minority group in the outskirts of Bangkok for several generations.

In tracing the origin of the dwellers who lived in the high-rise apartments, it is found that a large number of people had migrated into Bangkok, since more than half of them (60.57%) were born upcountry. However about 3/5 of these originated from the central region which is next to and the closest to the Bangkok area. Northerners were the next largest group (9.06%) of migrants who now live in the apartments. The northern and the eastern region groups are almost identical in percentage at 5.70% and 5.54% respectively while the provinces from the south represent only 3.69% of the apartment dwellers. Lastly, although the percentage is significantly small, the two persons (0.34%) who originated from China reminds us that the present Thai also covers some of the nationalized Chinese.

**2.2 Educational Background :** This includes both education and training. The dwellers in the Dindaeng and Huaykwang projects have limited education, since 76.34% of the household leaders consist of the uneducated, primary and the secondary school attendants and graduates. In other words 43.39% of them never went beyond four-year education. With this level of educa-

tion, the dwellers will be more apt to do clerical and unskilled jobs than others. However, there are also groups of better-educated household leaders living amid the less-educated. They are the 10.74 % vocational and 4.53 % university graduates. Three of them (0.50%) even obtained the marvellous M.A. education. Persons of these latter groups have better opportunities to find employment and are paid better in organization jobs.

Education of the spouse is relatively lower than the family leader, for woman was put to stay behind in the last generation. It rarely includes those of university level. On the contrary, a very high percentage (87.41 %) of them do not have education far beyond the secondary school. In fact, almost 62 % of them never went to secondary schools at all. The better educated spouses consist of 7.55 % vocational school and 0.92 % university graduates.

The whole trend of educational achievements of both the household leaders and their spouses indicate to a great extent that most of them come from poor families who could afford only a few years of education. Most of them, being born and raised first upcountry had naturally experienced difficulty getting to schools, either primary education or even more so secondary education school.

Since their education is limited, training has been another way for them to adapt themselves to more kinds of jobs, and thus more chance of getting earnings or better pay. 36.58 % of the leaders and 29.06 % of their spouses in these apartment projects had acquired short-term and on-the-job vocational training. The leaders are engaged in petty trading practices, mechanics (including auto-driving), tailoring, shoe-making, shorthand-typing and accounting. The spouses; popular types of training are women's dressmaking, beautician and food preparation. The remaining percentages of the leaders and their spouses are engaged in miscellaneous jobs and are small.

2.3. *Work:* The work of the apartment dwellers should be correlated with the knowledge and skills the dwellers have.

The dwellers in these apartment projects are very much settled in careers. 87.25 % of the household leaders now work either full-time or part-time. The unemployed constitute less than 4 %; with some (1.68 %) of these now looking for jobs and some are out of work temporarily (in some cases to enter monkhood or to recover from illness, etc.). The rest (11.08 %) who stay at home and do not seek any employment elsewhere consists of a high percentage (8.22 %) of old-aged persons, and a small number said they have to take care of home business.

Despite the authorities' rule that the applicant must have a job and earn not more than 2,650 baht a month, two household leaders are found still going to school.

About half of those working household leaders are in the private sector, which includes business corporations, shops, individuals with their own enterprises, while most of the other half work for the government. These include 13.27 % of the lower-ranked civil servants, 13.27 % of

workers in public enterprises, 8.46% of junior military or police personnel, and 6.35% of government workers.

The last and the very least are three persons (0.58%) who are employed by international organizations and offices of foreign governments as workers.

The nature of work of the household leaders varies. The more important categories are in transportation (19.42%), professional (19.04%), trading and broker business (13.08%), services (12.6%), production (12.12%), clerical work (10.38%) and administrative or operations (8.27%). In general, with the exception of professional and some of the administrative work, jobs do not require much formal education, since they are unskilled, general aptitude or practical work. Some of the higher level skills are obtained by short-term training or on-the-job-training as previously mentioned. Those of the professional group consist mainly of teachers.

For those who are government personnel, 55% are above the lowest official grade. There are equal percentages of third and second grade officials, but there is only one man with first grade rank.

Traditionally woman rarely went to work outside, but here at Dindaeng and Huaykwang public housing, 50.57% of the spouses work and another 8.70% more might not refuse work altogether, but at present they cannot find jobs or are too old or unhealthy to work. As a consequence, the wives who now remained to attend to household functions constitute only 39.82%. There are also two wives who are being supported to study dress-making and beautician and very soon will be employed.

Three-fourths of the household spouses work in the private sector, while the other one-fourth work in government and semi-government organizations, civil and military service. Most of the working spouses in the private sector pursue their own business (38.91%) and it is obviously that "vending" is both the most suitable and popular for the wives of the low-income families. Some of them sell food at the markets and the busy spots; some others set up shops under and around the flats, and some others are hawkers.

The other important careers of the spouses range respectively as follows: professional (teachers and nurses) = 20.36%; home industry, factory workers = 14.03%; services = 8.60%; clerks = 8.60% and laborers = 3.17%.

In the public sector, the official status of the spouse taken as a totality is slightly below the household leaders, since only 45% of them are beyond the lowest grade vis-a-vis 55% of the leaders. However although the percentage is small, this is the beginning of the era when women in urban areas are challenging men in office, as well as in professional jobs.



*2.4 Children in the Family:* The Dindaeng and Huaykwang apartment dwellers are actively generating more population in Bangkok, since nine out of ten dwellers have children. While 41.11% of all the dwellers still have one to three children, the other 33.72% have already had between four to six children and most significant is the fact that up to 14.43% of the dwelling families have already produced more than seven living children. Even though they have to attend to daily work and are surrounded with activities, they are the largest families of Bangkok.

## THE LIVING MODE AND STATUS OF APARTMENT DWELLERS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

Apartment living is a modern way of life, in that a large number of people live close to one another in multi-floored building. It is different from living in the rural society or in the early days of the city's growth. In rural society a few people live in a large open field, while in the urban areas, people are used to living in one or two storey houses, huts, shacks or boats. Such are built either close or far apart in temporary or permanent form. For the low-income families, living in a cleaner looking, more durable and well-equipped apartment is certainly a new phenomenon for them. Apartment life exhibits a pattern of behavior which is different and worth being noted. This study investigates the living mode of these apartment dwellers and the status of the dwellers in terms of income earned and property possessed. The relationship which the dwellers have with their neighbors is expected to reveal how the dwellers interact with one another when they have to live in this kind of housing.

### 1. Living

The manner of living is being examined in regarded to (1) the length of residence, (2) the daily use of the apartment, (3) the size of the family and (4) the child rearing methods.

*1.1 Length of Residence :* The dwellers vary in their living experience at the apartment according to the time of moving into the completed buildings which have been constructed successively. These combinations of experience will be useful in reflecting widely their feeling and perspectives towards the mode of living and the status change.

The dwellers' length of residence in the apartment obtained from the survey are as follows:

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TABLE 1

Number of years in the apartment	Percentage of families
Less than one year	11.07
1-2 years	21.48
2-3 „	14.43
3-4 „	10.91
4-5 „	6.37
5-6 „	11.41
6-7 „	4.70
7-8 „	4.86
8-9 „	9.23
more than nine years	5.54

These numbers may be different from the original settlement numbers, since a few of them left for one reason or another and some illegal settlements could exist out-of-sight.

1.2 *Daily Use of the Apartment* : The low-income families in the apartment projects used the place intensively during the weekdays and on the holidays. The more time they spend in the apartment, the more the apartment is meaningful to them.

For all the dwellers, only 20.77% of the household leaders and 25.79% of the spouse have to go to work everyday, although many of these work for certain hours of a day only, leaving extra hours to go back home or elsewhere. But besides this group, the dwellers spent the usual days at the apartment. These can be divided into four categories :

Firstly there are a little more than half of the household leaders and almost half of the spouses who have one or two day holidays a week, which are the usual office, corporation or factory working practices. The second group (13.93% of the leaders and 35.57% of the spouses) spent at least more than two days a week as holidays. Among them 95% of the leaders and 98% of the spouses stay home everyday. The third group consists of the 16.95% leaders and 8.39% spouses who reported uncertain holidays in a week. Part of them are the unemployed who stayed home most of the time, and another part of them have irregular time off as their careers in taxi driving or construction works would permit. The fourth group consists of the 28.80% of the household spouses who did not answer the interviews and consists largely of the unemployed housewives who stay home.

Thus, as a whole, from one third to one half of the leaders stay home more than the standard urban working day, while more than 85% of the spouses, most of them women, stay home more than two days a week.

Being urban workers, employees or career people, the dwellers have to apportion part of their lifetime outside home to work.

During the weekdays :

1. about 50% of the leaders and 60-90% of the spouses stay home at least 13 hours a day, or
2. about 87% of the leaders and 70-97% of the spouses stay home at least 10 hours a day.

Taking into account the travelling times to working places in Bangkok, 10 or 13 hours, spent outside the home are regular for most of the Bangkok people.

Thus, in general the household leaders will still stay at the flat more than half of their daily life, while their spouses spend much of their time in and nearby the apartment building.

During the holidays the number of household leaders and their spouses who stay home all the time account for more than half of the dwellers (53.52% leaders and 79.40% spouses), while the rest shopping and some of them to entertainment and recreation places. Yet 88.09% of the the leaders and 93.82% of the spouses stay home for more than 10 hours a days. In other words about 60% of the household leaders and 84% of the spouses regularly will not leave the apartment more than 5 hours on the holidays.

1.3 *Size of the family* : It should be noted firstly that not all the dwellers at the Din-daeng and Huaykwang projects live only with their immediate family. A considerable number of them (one-fourth) live with other families as well, and 64.43% accommodate persons other than their sons and daughters. The average size of the apartment family at present is approximately 7 persons. This might not be desirable from the point of view of the planners or the objective of the housing authorities. What forced the dwellers to do so is that they are low-income families which cannot afford to construct a second house in Bangkok. Also since many of them are from upcountry, their relatives and parents will like to come to Bangkok and stay with them for various purposes. However, many of them intend to move out from the first family of the apartment once they have the chance.

Secondly, to look further, about 61% of the dwellers are large families of more than 5 persons. What appears to be the distinctive characteristic of the dwellers in these public housing projects is that 18.79% of all the families are families of 10 or more persons. Some families among this accommodate up to 17 persons. For them they have no better alternative but to live together, but their daily lives must be very crowded.

1.4 *Child Rearing Methods* : 91.61% of the dwelling families in these public housing units have a child or children to take care of. Of these, families with two children are the most frequently found. Others have three children (15.27%), one child or four children (each 14.76%) and five children (11.07%). Families which have more than six children under their surveillance account for 15%. This would certainly be very burdensome for the family leaders.

A greater part of the children go to school. The distribution of children in the family according to the age groups and schooling are reported in the following tables.

TABLE 2

	Aged below 7 yrs.		Aged 7-12 yrs.		Aged 13-19 yrs.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family without child or children	295	49.50	269	43.46	228	38.25
Family with child or children	296	49.66	322	55.70	364	61.08
- 1 child	133	22.31	242	23.83	130	21.81
- 2 children	108	18.12	107	17.95	114	19.13
- 3 "	39	6.54	62	10.40	88	14.76
- 4 "	12	2.01	12	2.01	23	3.86
- 5 "	2	0.34	8	1.34	6	1.01
- 6 "	-	-	1	0.17	2	0.34
- seven and more	2	0.34	-	-	1	0.17
No answer	5	0.84	5	0.84	4	0.67
Total	596	100.00	596	100.00	596	100.00

This table further supports the fact that most of the apartment dwellers are middle-aged persons. Here there is a large percentage of families (61.85) with children in the teenage bracket which confirmed that their married lives have been established at least thirteen years.

It also shows that as they grew older, fewer of them have children. (That is, there are fewer children aged below 7 years than those aged 7-12 and fewer children aged 7-12 years than aged 13-19 years).

The age differences mean different treatment and attention to be given by the parents. A considerable number of children (82.00%) at the flats are now in school. The rest (18%) includes children both of pre-school age, the dropouts and those who have already completed the 7 year compulsory schooling.

As the table below shows, it is the children aged between 7-12 years who go to school almost completely. The remaining few are dropouts. The number of dropouts is feared to be much more in the teenage group. 12.09% of the teenage children are not in school at present. This number consists of dropouts and those who have satisfied the compulsory education require-

ment. This considerable number of out-of-school teenagers causes a big burden in raising them in a productive way. The low percentage of children below age 7 years, on the other hand, is not alarming, since they are pre-school age children.

TABLE 3

	Children aged below 7 yrs.		Children aged 7-12 yrs.		Children aged 13-19 yrs.	
In school	173	59.12	319	99.07	320	87.91
Not in school	123	40.88	3	0.93	44	12.09
Total	296	100.00	322	100.00	364	100.00

In addition to this, there are persons over 20 years of age who are in school in about 15.10% of all the families in Dindaeng and Huaykwang apartments. These persons are pursuing higher or vocational education, which have promised them a brighter future and career.

There are at least four ways of rearing pre-school children by the apartment dwellers. The first and the foremost way is the 49.16% families who raise their children by themselves. Secondly, 12.42% of the apartment dwellers have sent their children to the Child Rearing Centers of the Pibul Prachasant Secondary School at Dindaeng or the Community Center at Huaykwang. Thirdly, 8.90% put their children in the hands of or alternatively raise them with their cousins or employed maids at home, and fourthly, 2.35% hire baby-sitters or ask someone outside home to take care of their small children.

Due to the physical layout, the people of the apartment buildings have found it convenient to let their children spend their time as follows:

(1) for those children of pre-teenage years (4-12 years), the area in and around their flat is the most suitable for them. Most of the time 31.38% of them will play in the room, 26.17% in the open space under and around the flat building and 20.64% in the main halls and stairways. Virtually no children of these ages go elsewhere.

(2) most of the teenage children are in the school years, and have to do their homework. It was found that 60% of all the teenagers will come down and play under and around the flat, or they will simply stay around the main halls and stairways.

## 2. Financial Affairs

The low-income families of Dindaeng and Huaykwang apartments, as defined by the Public Welfare Department, maintain their exclusive financial features which are yet unknown.

Such features will be described here in the following aspects: (1) the sources of their income, (2) the levels of their income, (3) the management of their finances, (4) the installment purchase and (5) the properties owned.

2.1 *Sources of income* : Though most of the apartment dwellers have jobs, only 64.04% of the household leaders and 42.53% of their spouses have the most stable income of a monthly salary. This is believed to be most stable because of their often lengthy contracts or tenure in office.

The rest more or less unstable sources are daily income, daily, weekly and fortnightly wages or piecework wages. The second largest group of the household leaders (18.46%) obtained daily income, and the third largest group of the leaders (7.69%) obtained daily wages. Both means that the leaders obtain money only when they work, and in many cases the income from such manner can vary much. It also reminds us that many of these groups of people are taxi drivers and laborers. As for the spouses, an equivalent number of them (42.53%) obtained income daily, as much as they obtained a monthly salary. This shows that while some of the women went to work outside, because their educational knowledge permit them to become teachers, clerks or nurses, the other number of women with little or no education have to strive for their survival working more appropriately as vendors, in petty jobs, as beautician assistants or dressmakers.

Because some of the apartment dwelling families are not well paid, about one-fifth of the household leaders are actively seeking other sources of income to supplement the living requirements of their families. They work at a second place or perform second career. In some of the cases even the spouses now help their husbands in working extra time for extra income.

2.2 *Levels of income* : Most of the apartment families in these two public housing projects are not too hopeless in career. Those who are somewhat miserable or poor are those who have large families.

The largest group of the household leaders (26.34%) earn between 501-1,000 baht a month, the next important group (26.01%) earns 1,001-1,500 baht a month and the third largest group (13.76%) earns 1,501-2,000 baht a month. Three groups together (from 501-2,000 baht) form the very large majority (66.11) of all the income earners. While there are some families whose leaders do not earn at all (10.78%), or can earn a little (5.03%) (less than 500 baht a month), there is also 3.35% of the apartment dwellers who earn more than 4,000 baht a month. The latter people are perhaps the construction contractors or the businessmen who usually made good profits. The families of the unproductive leaders have to find ways to support their families. This is done by working wives or relatives who stay with them in the apartment.

On the average the wives earnings are below the leaders' and there is a greater number of the wives who have no income (47.83% vs. 10.78% of the leaders). The two most significant groups of the wives in terms of income earning capabilities are those who earn between 501-1,000 baht a month (20.14%) and those who earn less than 500 baht a month (15.33%).

One third of all the families are also subsidized by other members of the family. The large number of the total family income (75.17% of all the families), is concentrated between 501--2,500 baht a month.

As mentioned earlier, the dwellers in these two public housing projects have large families. The average size of the family is almost seven persons. The average per capita income per month of the Dindaeng family is calculated at 230 baht and of the Huaykwang is 301 baht.

2.3 *Management of financial affairs* : At these levels of family income, 78.52% of the Dindaeng and Huaykwang families at the apartment buildings did not have any savings. More than half of those without savings (52.50%) mentioned that they could not live on these earnings and had to resort to either one or two means, 70.30% of them had to get loans, with interest; 45.00% obtained interest-free loans; and 30.50% had to have their properties mortgaged occasionally. Other means include: selling properties; asking for money from parents or bosses; using the money saved; seeking additional jobs; postponing payment; buying goods on credit; and asking for advance money from employers.

The work companions, the neighbors, the saving cooperatives, and the welfare fund program of the office constitute the more useful sources of financial assistance extended to the apartment dwellers in time of need. They account for 36.79%, 36.12% and 24.75% respectively. Other small sources include commercial banks, other persons and cousins.

Except for the saving cooperatives and the welfare fund program, though, the other main sources of financial assistance from work companions and neighbors as well as from some other small, but desperate sources, in most cases, call for higher rates of interest than the law permits. The most frequent high rates of interest paid by the dwellers are: 10% a month (24.75%), 20% a month (21.40%), or 10-20 % per month (6.02%). The highest rate ever paid by the dwellers was between 36-40% a month. The percentages of those dwellers who paid the highest rates will be much more had it not for the availability of the saving cooperatives and the office's welfare fund program, which usually offer loans with low interest rate to their members. Together with the commercial banks, friends and relatives who charge them a minimum level of 1-4%, these sources of fund are perhaps a big help for about 25% of all the dwellers who sought loans.

2.4 *Savings and Investments* : For those dwellers who have some monthly savings, they prefer to deposit it with the bank (74%) or keep it at home (70%). The high percentage of those having the bank accounts should receive attention, since the bank has always been the novelty for the low-income people in this country. This contributes to the popularity of the government's saving bank and also to the limited success of some commercial banks.

The other dwellers have chosen to invest their money in different methods, but the most popular one appear to be "the money pool" sharing method, whereby a group of participants, put in equal sums of money and bids each month for the right to take the pool money. The bidder has to offer and pay the highest rate interest to get the pool of that particular month. Another sig-

nificant means is to invest the earned income in the installment purchase of land, home or other properties. This amounts to 34.38% of those dwellers who have savings.

The installment purchase is quite popular among the apartment dwellers. Of all the dwellers now living in these public housing units, 33.59% of them have experience in installment purchase either now or in the past. The most popular items to be purchased under this method range respectively as follows: Television (9.56%), Refrigerator (6.21%), Land (5.20%), Sewing Machine (4.03%), Electric Fan (2.52%), Furniture (1.85%), Motor Car (1.68%), and some smaller items, such as clothing.

2.5 *Properties* : The dwellers do not have the right to possess the apartment rooms, but they do have their own properties in order to make their living in the apartment a more convenient one. Some of them have prepared to have their own land and homes in the future. Since they do not have enough money to do so, they have to wait until such time when they are entitled to the land they have begun to purchase by installment.

The properties they own become the necessities of their daily lives in the apartment style of living. They vary in terms of degree as follows:

TABLE 4

Items	Families with properties	Total Families	Percentage of families with properties
Radio	521	596	87.42
Television	478	596	80.20
Electric Fan	474	596	79.53
Sewing Machine	276	596	46.31
Refrigerator	236	596	39.60
Automobile	45	596	7.55
Bicycle	31	596	5.20
Motorcycle	24	596	4.03

The necessities are concerned with the time they have to pass and with the comforts and conveniences of daily life while staying at the apartment. Living in the apartment room can be dull if there is nothing to change the mood and atmosphere. Radio and television appear to be the most wanted by the dwellers for this purpose. Although the radio price is much cheaper than the television, the television offers more dimensions and types of entertainment for all ages. It should be noted that the television has been able to penetrate into a large number of Thai urban people of this income bracket.



Next to these two items appears to be the items which make their lives more comfortable; the electric fan to relieve warm weather while being inside the apartment, and the sewing machine for the woman to pass their free time as well as for the family to earn their living. It is equally important that today apartment dwellers have already aspired to items such as refrigerators, which not long ago was said to be one of the luxurious items. The refrigerator is now accessible to quite a large number of dwellers although the price is still high. Even more surprising is the fact that 8 of the dwellers now possess their own automobile. The automobile is very expensive in Thailand, and can be acquired only by high and middle-income people. A car is both a status symbol and a necessity for most of the Bangkok people, but since most of the dwellers own used or taxi cars, the automobile is more of a necessity than a symbol.

The industrial goods which have become the necessities of life of the urban people also cover some percentages of bicycles and motorcycles. The bicycle is a cheap and convenient means to travel but only to nearby places. It is dangerous to ride it around the city, since Bangkok now accommodates a large number of wildly-driven cars. The bicycle is more appropriately used for children around the flats. On the contrary, the motorcycle is mostly chosen as the alternative travelling and merchandise loading means by the smaller income earner. It is not exorbitantly expensive, and yet it can substitute for the automobile in many instances.

### 3. Neighbor Relationships

The neighbors of the apartment dwellers are those who live in the same floor or in the same building. Since apartment living fosters close relationships, it is useful to understand the interaction of the dwellers.

Close proximity creates some acquaintances and disturbances. More than two-thirds of the dwellers have known or been acquainted with the floor neighbors, while only 20.81 % with the flat neighbors. Naturally the level of acquaintance with those who live in different floors of the same building is lower because there have less chances of having face-to-face meeting.

The relationship of dwellers is the function of communications with one another. The more frequent and intensive the relationships are, the more likely that they would talk to one another and become more and more acquainted. Here in the study there are more of them who just greet than who are intimate with one another.

The most frequent means of making acquaintance mentioned are in the following order of importance : talking to or visiting or trading with one another (22.83 %); assisting each other whenever they have a chance to (19.09 %); having their child or children play together (14.61 %); exchanging courtesy food or loaning belongings (13.98 %), etc. Also meeting one another at the ground floor, the bus stop, or some other places are the beginning points of becoming acquainted.

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The obstacles and reasons for their being unable to be known to or acquainted with one another are: do not have enough time to meet others (56.64 %); have not found it necessary to make friends with others (16.16 %); do not want to be known or acquainted (10.12 %). Also 6.83 % of the dwellers said that they have known one another before in the flat, but their friendship is not going smoothly because they have different habits. The last 2.23 % group of the dwellers broke their friendship by quarrel.

The dwellers' reasons for terminating friendship or being cool in making friends are that (1) they do not like their neighbor's rough conversation or manner, (2) their neighbor always disturbs them with too much noise, (3) their children have frequent quarrels with one another, (4) their neighbors like to keep to themselves, (5) their neighbor usually turns on radio or television too loudly, (6) their neighbor does not return the money or object which he has borrowed and (7) their neighbor sets up gambling place in his apartment. In addition to these there are smaller miscellaneous causes which force them to stay away from one another.

In summary, the neighbor relationships are approximately capitulated as follows:

TABLE 5

	Same floor	Same building
(1) in good terms	17.45%	4.03%
(2) slightly connected	45.81%	16.78%
(3) not connected	36.74%	79.19%
of this about 1/3 are more or less amicable with one another		

#### THE DWELLERS AND THE ENVIRONS

The living conditions of the apartment dwellers also depend on the wider community to which they have to interact. The Public Housing projects have provided some other facilities to ensure basic social needs, and the dwellers themselves have to spend another portion of his time in the community for working and social purposes. Favorable environment can foster better quality of life and vice versa. Although they are categorized in the same way, the apartment dwellers consist of people from different places, and different levels of income and attitudes. There are also other people who live around and who can either influence or shape their lives better or worse.

In this connection, this section is devoted to explore how the dweller's environs do with the dwellers.

## 1. Safety

People want safety both for their lives, body and property. The safer the neighborhood, the happier the dwellers. In the more crowded communities of Bangkok like Dindaeng and Huaykwang, one should expect and be aware of social dangers.

1.1 *Safety of Life and Body*: This means the danger posed to the dwellers while they are outside the apartment room. It is worthy to note that the public housing projects there provide the dwellers with safe surroundings, since very few of the dwellers ever experience life or body harm. The low percentage of aggression to the dwellers is because the apartment projects are located near the main roads and the busy spots.

Some of the unsatisfactory cases reported are those of being provoked or annoyed by the teenagers hanging around, drunks or delinquents of older ages. Some few complaints are also filed in regard to the threatening manner of the bill collectors of the home safety guards, when the dwellers refuse to pay them the fees. The guards are privately run, with the permission of the Public Welfare Department, and hired on a voluntary basis. Thus, there are some dwellers who do not agree to pay for the safety service. The most serious case is the dweller who was forced at knife's point to hand over property.

1.2 *Safety of Property*: However, the danger posed on the dwellers' property is to be concerned about. About 25% of the dwellers reported that their apartments had been broken into or their properties stolen. This is very alarming since it means that stealing can happen to one in every four apartments. About 16.11% of the families have experienced it at least one time, while about 6% experienced it more than once. In most cases, clothing was lifted by hooked from the hanging places behind the apartments. There were also robbers who climbed down from the top floor of the apartment buildings. A few apartments were broken into when the owners left them unwatched. The high percentage of stealing in these apartment buildings is perhaps due to the fact that there are many poor or unemployed persons roaming around the area.

## 2. Working Place and Accessibility

As mentioned earlier, a great number of household leaders (85.91%) and more than one-third of the spouse are now working. They have to go out to the working places from and to the apartment in a routine manner. Thus travelling to work is an important aspect of life in the urban living. Three aspects are involved in this matter: the place of work, the travelling time and the travelling mode.

2.1 *Place of Work*: The Dindaeng and Huaykwang apartment building projects are located in Phya Thai District, which is surrounded by Bangkok in the north, Dusit and Pratumwan in the West, Bangrak and Prakanong in the South and Bangkok in the East. Due to the rapid urbanization of Bangkok, the area has become one of the middle areas of the city. The greatest number of the household leaders (23.99%) work in the local district, while Pranakorn which is quite distance from Phya Thai is surprisingly the second most frequently found (10.07%)

working place for the dwellers. It might be that many dwellers used to live in Pranakorn District. Since the Bangkok Municipality Headquarters and several large government agencies are located there, Pranakorn might perhaps offer many working places for the low-income families, and it is by chance that job opportunities there were found by many of the apartment dwellers.

The other important employment places are : Phra Khanong (7.05%), Prathumwan (6.71%), the nearby district, Bangrak (5.37%), Dusit (4.86%), and Pomprab (4.03%). Going to work outside Phya Thai takes some time especially in today's crowded traffic of Bangkok. In addition there are 5.30% who work outside Bangkok.

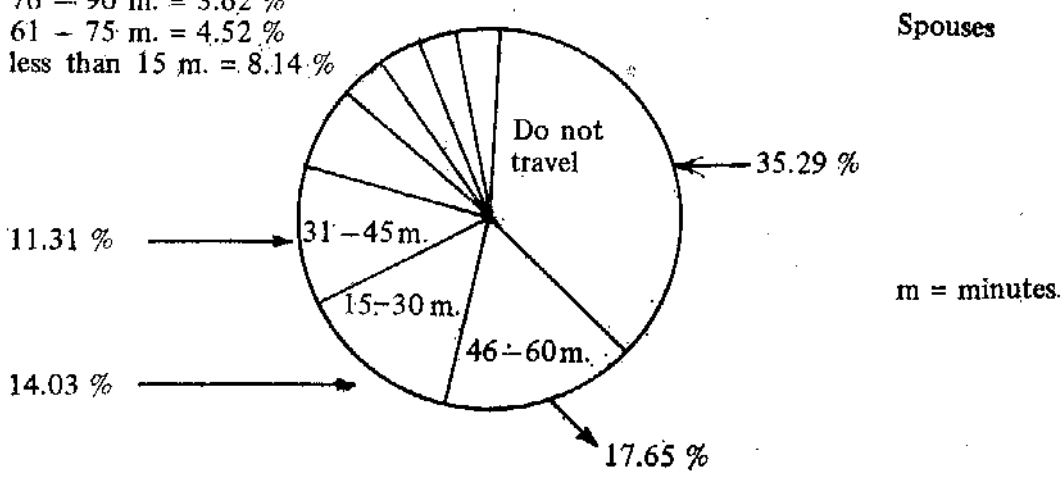
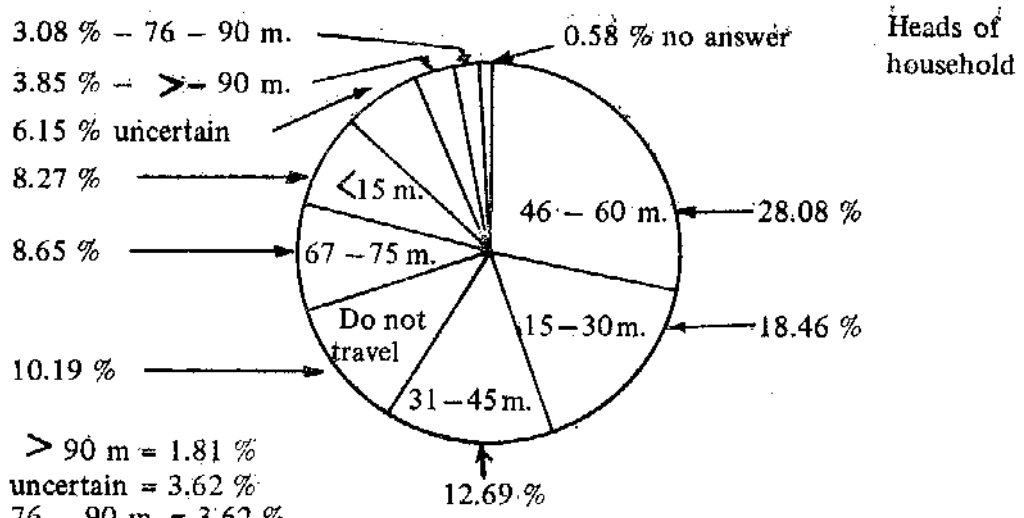
The spouses work almost completely in Phya Thai District, since most of them are food vendors, construction workers, dress-maker, beauty-advisors or temporary workers. The rest of them work in 10 other districts and other provinces.

*2.2 Travelling Means:* Bus is the most important means of transportation for the Din-daeng and Huaykwang dwellers. Two-thirds of the working household leaders and the spouses usually travel by bus to the working place, while other unemployed persons will use the service occasionally.

The three next important means for the household leaders, each of which constitutes a much smaller number are: self owned car, motorcycle or bicycle = 10.00%; office bus or van = 6.54% and walking = 5.96%. Taxi is mainly used both as a supplementary means or on special occasions by some of them.

In addition to travel by bus, the spouses walk to the working places, since many of them have jobs only in nearby places. The other means of transportation they use are almost the same as the household leaders and the numbers are small.

*2.3 Travelling Time:* With approximately 16% of the household leaders and 60% of the spouses who did not answer or reported indefinite travels, it evidently appeared that most of the leaders and the spouses (24.50% and 6.54%, respectively) spent between 46-60 minutes per trip. About one-fourth of the household leaders and 3% of the spouses spend less than 15 minutes travelling time. The variations of time spent by the dwellers can be graphed as follows:



> 90 m = 1.81 %  
 uncertain = 3.62 %  
 76 - 90 m. = 3.62 %  
 61 - 75 m. = 4.52 %  
 less than 15 m. = 8.14 %

Heads of household

Spouses

m = minutes.

Taking into account the fact that the projects are located in the middle part of the city the time required for travelling to work of the dwellers is long. This reflected the fact that the urban life of Bangkok today is complicated and the traffic congestion remains a major problem.

### 3. The Use of Community Facilities and Service

The dwellers of the public housing projects have available some facilities which were erected and are offered by the Public Welfare Department, and by other government agencies and non-government groups which are located nearby. In this connection the contribution of these facilities and service to the dwellers were investigated and ascertained.

**3.1 The Schools:** A high percentage (60.40%) of the dwellers in the apartments have taken some advantage of the existance of the several primary and secondary schools which are located in the Dindaeng and Huaykwang vicinities. They have put either one or all of their children in these schools.

Those 17.62 % of the public housing families who have sent their child or children to schools outside the areas have their own reasons.

The first group (18.50 %) did not have confidence in the quality of education these schools can offer and the unsatisfactory environment of the vicinity. The second group (18.11 %) had put their children in other schools before they moved into Dindaeng or Huaykwang, and it was not worthwhile to transfer them to the local schools. The third group (7.48 %) sent their children to outside schools because the children were able to pass the entrance examinations given by those schools. The fourth group complained that the school fees in the area are still too high for them. By sending their children to schools outside the area as they have done, they do not have to pay for any school fees for their children.

In addition to these there are also some other reasons which should be noted. Some (67.72 %) required other kinds of education which are not offered by the Dindaeng and Huaykwang schools, such as vocational, specialized or higher level education. Some have special relationships with the schools they have their child or children in. Some found it more convenient for them to put their child or children in schools which are located near their offices. Lastly, there are some who left their children in the care of cousins who live elsewhere.

It is obvious from this information that the Dindaeng and Huaykwang projects accommodate some very low income families, who could not afford school fees, and some low-income families who have enough income and ambition to send their child or children to the schools they viewed as good schools.

For the children who go to schools outside the areas, their schools are spread out in more than twenty Bangkok Metropolis districts and outside of Bangkok which means considerable travel time for them. The more important locations of the schools can be listed as follows.

TABLE 6

Name of District	Location	Percentage of children in school
Phya Thai	Local	54.33
Dusit	Neighboring	39.76
Phra Kanong	Neighboring	19.29
Phra Nakorn	Farther-west	17.72
Pratumwan	Neighboring	16.14
Bangkapi	Farther east	13.39
Bangkhen	Neighboring	12.20
Yannawa	Farther-south	7.48
Outside Bangkok	Farther	7.48
Bangrak	Farther -south	7.09

3.2 *The Child Care Centers* : The two existing centers have been able to serve 11.75 % of the families in Dindaeng and Huaykwang projects, while about 26.27 % families do not have small children. The majority of the families still maintain the traditional way of raising small children at home. The children are mostly taken care of by their own mothers, and to a lesser degree by relatives and maids. This can be done since a great number of housewives do not go to work outside. Some of them open shops nearby and are still able to look after their children who play around. There are a few of them also who hired or asked someone outside the home to care for their babies elsewhere.

The dwellers appeared to know well about the availability of this service in the area, and except for a very few of them, they did not express any dissatisfaction over the service of the center. They just have their own time to take care of their children or find other more convenient places to leave their children.

3.3 *The Youth Center* : About half of the dwellers know that the Public Welfare Department runs a youth center. However not many of their children have joined the center's program. Many of those whose children have participated in the center activities or who know some information about it expressed indifference (26.01 %) or a satisfactory (20.63 %) opinion of the service. Only a few of them (3.69 %) wanted more efficient service, more kinds of service and more control of delinquent boys in the center. The other half of the dwellers who do not pay attention to the youth center are those who are hard pressed by career, have no child or children or prefer to have their children stay within sight.

3.4 *The Public Health Centers* : Two locations of this service--one permanent and one mobile--are available in Dindaeng, and are also accessible by the Huaykwang dwellers. About half of the dwellers have used this community service, and more than 5 % of them have sought the service more than one time. Most of the requests were on mother and child care. The dwellers have a very good impression of the service, although there are about 7 % who felt that the service of the center would be much more satisfactory to them if more personnel were provided and more adequate treatment which arose when the centers were overcrowded could be provided. The capability of the center to attend to only a limited number of patients per day occasionally aroused suspicions of the dwellers that some privilege was given to some persons.

3.5 *The Association* : A privately-run Welfare Association of Huaykwang appears to have operated limitedly up to the present time, since it involves less than 5 % of the dwellers in both housing projects. Besides, about one-third of these 5 % have used the service of the association without becoming member. On asking their opinion of this association a large number of the dwellers did not have any idea about the efficiency of the operations. However there are a larger number of the dwellers than the members who thought that the association is a wanted institution, while another 2.00 % of all the dwellers are still not confident in the association.

3.6 *The Markets* : The dwellers go shopping at any of the Dindaeng and Huaykwang markets, because they are close to the apartment buildings. The 8 % exception group shops at

some other places mainly because those places are located near their offices or are on the way home. Some of this exception group occasionally go to other larger markets in order to find more variety of food as well as for leisure enjoyment.

#### 4. Recreational Activities

To live in modern apartment in modern society in itself creates a unique pattern of life, since the arrangements of the living place and environment are different from what formerly existed. This also influences the dwellers in choosing the suitable recreational activities. Here some of the activities of the dwellers are investigated.

4.1 *Movie Going* : Movies, a western convention, has now become popular among 68.46 % of the apartment dwellers. However, for 24.49 % of this group it is not regular entertainment, since they go to a movie not more than once a year even though there is one movie house at Dindaeng. For those who aspire more regularly to go to a movie, 25.50 % of them have gone several times a year and 18.00 % go to see a movie at least once every month.

4.2 *Public Parks* : In Dindaeng and Huaykwang, there is no park and in Bangkok there are only a few parks, yet approximately 60 % of them are found to have enjoyed going to a public park, including the Dusit Zoo, for recreation. The park is normally less expensive than the movie theatre, but going to the park is not a regular function and once a year appears to be the most frequent for many of these 60%.

4.3 *Educational Sightseeing* : Sightseeing in Bangkok is also an activity of 45.98 % of the apartment dwellers. They did it when they had holidays. The average is thus once a year, but there is also an exception of 1.34 % of the dwellers who enjoy it so much that they would spend two or three times a month for this purpose.

4.4 *Musical Attendance* : Music is comparatively less popular than the above-mentioned recreational activities, partly because the apartment dwellers already have radio or television in their apartments and partly because the most popular music of all for them is the Thai Folk Song which has been promoted mainly in the festivals. One third of the dwellers have attended music performances, and two times a year is the most frequent among them. There are very few of them who would attend music performances once or twice a month, simply because music is not offered that often.

4.5 *Sports* : Sports is as popular as educational tours. With 42.11 % fanciers, it lies between the movie-going and recreation in the public park on one hand, and music on the other hand. There are sports contests both in the area and outside the community. The contests in the Dindaeng compound are arranged annually by the Municipality of Bangkok, while the National Stadium is about half an hour away by bus. The majority of the sports enthusiasts enjoyed it several times a year.

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4.6 *Up-country Trips* : More dwellers experienced going upcountry for a pleasure trip. This accounts for up to 64.26 %. This high percentage points to the fact that most of the dwellers are from upcountry, so they found making the trip to their home province or district a most worthwhile one. They did it once a year (21.31 % of them), once in a few years (17.79 % of them), or at least twice in a year (17.79 % of them). There are a few of them also who made very frequent trips of 3, 4 or more times a month.

4.7 *Merit-making* : The apartment dwellers still maintain strongly the traditional Thai practice of participating in the Buddhist religious affairs. More than 96 % of them have participated and more than 90 % of them practised it more than twice a year. However, the activities did not require much time or effort. For the most part they would contribute donations to the Kathin or Pha-pa rites, and some other times they participated in giving food to the monks on the annual festival days set up by the community. Some families did it on their own memorable day, such as a birthday, the priesthood celebration of their family member, or the house-warming day, etc.

### *STATUS CHANGE AND THE ATTITUDES OF THE DWELLERS*

The purpose of the public housing projects is to enhance better and orderly living among the low-income families who live in urban areas. Those who are fortunate to be selected to live in the apartment units would experience a more or less new way of life. They must face changes in the manner of living and socio-economical status, and they have to adapt themselves to the new situation. Following are matters concerning those changes and their opinions on their new homes and environment. To evaluate the benefits and inadequacies of the projects, a survey of their needs is also made.

#### 1. *The Changes*

1.1 *Reasons for moving into Bangkok*: In accordance with the Department's regulations, the dwellers had certain kinds of trouble in regard to their former living places, and hence were entitled to the public housing. Among them are migrants who had come from various parts of Thailand. These persons gave as reasons for moving to Bangkok that they (41.00%) wanted better living; they (29.09%) wanted better and higher education; they (11.63%) had to follow their parents, cousins or leaders of the family to Bangkok; they (10.80%) were transferred to civilian or military service in Bangkok and so on. After that they found Bangkok a more familiar place to live in and earn their living, even though they might not have a good place to live.

1.2 *The impact of changing the living place*: A majority of the dwellers should be much better off in living in the apartments, since many of them (approximately 30%) used to live in sub-standard housing before. There were about 44.29% of them who referred to their former living places as slums, while about 25% of them were persons who were evicted from the undesirable

wooden housing units. The other 30% includes those who had lived with relatives, or who rented other people's houses or whose houses were burnt down. Since some of them used to live in better places, they (2%) would feel that they lost some status in living in these apartment buildings with the poorer people.

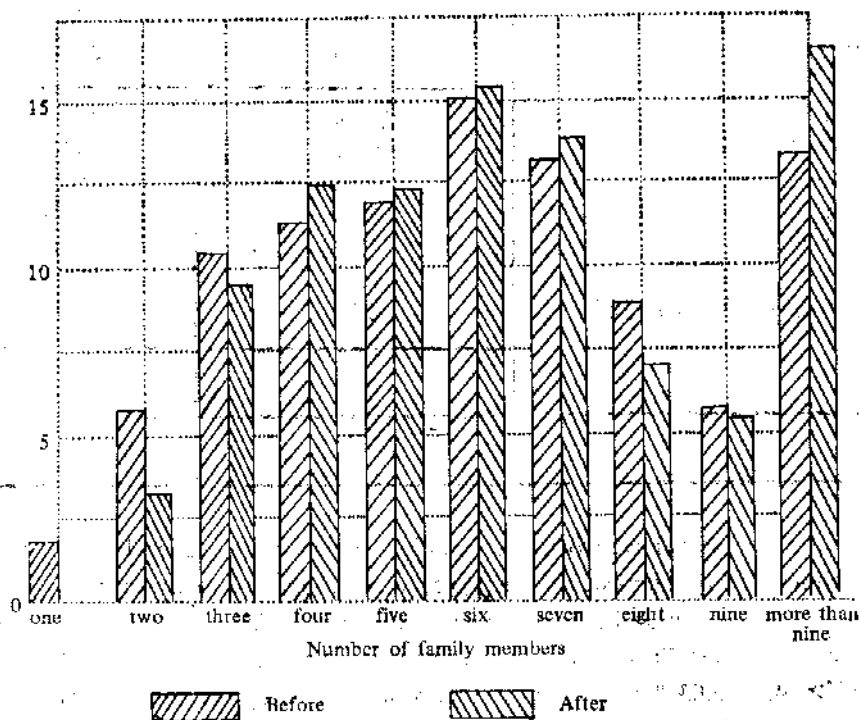
Changing the living place could change the status for some dwellers. 16.78% of the dwellers complained that by changing the living place, they found it inconvenient or impossible to perform their or their family's careers which are so meaningful to them. This is understandable since some of them have to travel a longer distance to work, and many of the families could not open shops while living at the flats.

**1.3 Comparison of status before and after:** Status change is studied further in terms of the change in the number of family members, of children, of the levels of incomes of both the household leaders and the spouses and in health.

Since they are still in the productive age the apartment dwellers have larger family size after moving to live in the housing projects. Before moving in, there are 43.62% of the families whose members numbered less than five, but at present that percentage dropped to 39.09% families. On the other hand, there are more of the larger-sized families. Presently there are 60.91% families with more than 6 members compared to 56.38% at the time of moving in.

The change in the family size can be presented in chart as follows:

**FIGURE 2**



The larger size of the family is attributed significantly to the birth of more children after moving to the apartments. Before moving in, there were 16.78% of the families with no children but now that percentage has dropped to 10.07%.

Before there were 64.10% small-sized families, but now the percentage has increased to 67.45%. The number of the bigger-sized families has also increased from 16.49 to 21.81%.

In general, the dwellers are also better off since they moved to the apartments, even though there are more non-earning household leaders. The latter would be seasonal workers. Before moving in, more of the leader earned less than 1,000 baht a month than at present, but now there are more of the household leaders who earn more than 1,000 baht a month than in the past. Also in each higher income bracket, starting from 1,001-1,500 baht a month, there are more family leaders than in the past as follows:

TABLE 7

Income bracket of family leaders	Before	After
no income	6.54 %	6.88 %
1-500 baht/month	7.72	4.53
501-1,000 "	39.43	26.68
1,000-1,500 "	23.99	25.67
1,501-2,000 "	10.07	13.76
2,001-2,500 "	3.52	6.21
2,501-3,000 "	1.85	3.69
3,001-3,500 "	1.51	2.18
3,501-4,000 "	1.18	2.35
4,001 - and above baht/month	2.18	3.35
no answer	2.01	4.70
	100.00	100.00

More of the spouses have work now than in the past, and in general the spouses appear to earn more income than in the past. For instance, there are more housewives who earn an income of less than 500 baht a month. In other higher income brackets, the drop in the percentage of spouses who earn between 501 - 1,000 baht and between 1,001-1,500 baht a month at present (i.e. 15.94+5.37% > 14.77+5.03 %) can very well be compensated by the gains derived from those in the income brackets of 1,501 baht a month upwards.

The following are details of the comparison of income of the spouses

TABLE 8

Income bracket of spouses	Before	After
no income	34.22 %	22.48 %
1-500 baht a month	9.73	11.24
501 - 1,000 ,,	15.94	14.77
1,001 - 1,500 ,,	5.37	5.03
1,501 - 2,000 ,,	1.34	3.02
2,001 - 2,500 ,,	0.34	0.50
2,501 - 3,000 ,,	0.34	0.34
3,001 - 3,500 ,,	—	0.17
3,501 - 4,000 ,,	—	—
4,001 - 4,500 ,,	—	—
no answer	32.72	42.45
	100.00	100.00

While the majority of the dwellers found that living in the apartment made them feel better (30.53%), or not so different (57.38%) in terms of their health, 12.08% of the household leaders felt their health was worse. It is possible that some of them are getting older, but another groups of them refer to their efforts of going up and down the stairway, or that living in the closed brick apartment unit is against their psychological wills.

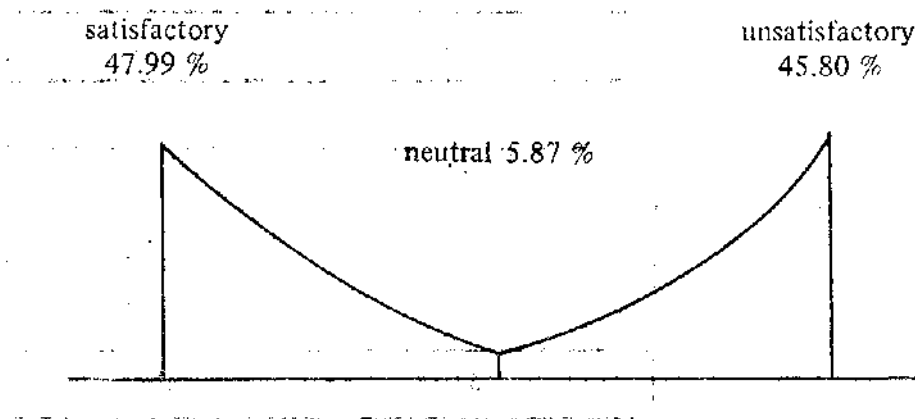
1.4 *Adaptability* : In general the dwellers did not experience serious problems of adaptability, though some minor remarks were expressed by 26.06% of them. They mentioned that they found living in the apartment unit too contained and uncomfortable. They lack fresh air and open space. Living together with many families in the same apartment building means that they have to interact with one another very intensively. Sometimes it is very difficult to get along smoothly with all of them, and it will create tension as soon as a bad impression and conflict arise between neighbors.

Two other types of remarks are (1) those concerned with the difficulty of going up and down the stairway, especially for those who live on the top floor or of older age, and (2) those concerned with excessive noise from neighbors. Especially those who are sensitive to nervous breakdown suffer most.

## 2. Evaluative Perspectives of Dwellers

As the dwellers gained experience in apartment living, they gave us more concrete ideas of what they thought are the adequacies and efficiencies of the project policy, characteristics and administration as follows:

2.1 *Opinions on the Apartment Layout* : The dwellers of the public housing projects are divided in regard to their views when asked about the suitability of the apartment and its arrangement. Their ideas could be written in the form of a curve which appears normal as follows:



However, the unsatisfactory attitudes expressed in general are not so acute as to be totally intolerable. They simply assist us in pointing out that if improvements can be made, these should be the main foci:

The more important ideas are concerned with the following:

1. the apartment unit is too small (25.20%)
2. to put the cloth drying place in the room is not suitable (15.05%)
3. the room is not well ventilated (8.88%)
4. the room is rather dark. There is not enough light in the room (7.33%)
5. much noise could penetrate the walls (6.88%)

and the other complaints of less importance concern the toilet, the kitchen, the garbage tube, the ceiling, the room screen and the door.

It is highly probable that many of the dwellers who felt that the room is too small are now accommodating too many members in their families, as it was earlier found in this report.

The greatest number of the dwellers (36.41%) felt that the existing apartment unit is most appropriately suitable for 4 members, while another 31.21% thought that 5 members are tolerable. And 8.05% considered 6 members can still live together suitably.

More than sixty percent of the apartment dwellers would prefer to pay higher, but proportionally calculated, rent, if they are provided with larger apartments. This means that the expansion of the family size or the betterment of their earnings have enabled them to make better choices and changes.

These reasons were substantiated by the fact that at present 12.76% have thought of finding a new place because their family size became so large; and 9.05% because they now have better income, and could afford a better living.

20.13% also specifically mentioned that their members in the family are seriously thinking about finding houses of their own.

The dwellers prefer to live more on the first and the second floors of the building, while the third floor is the least preferred among them. The lower floors are easily accessible, and the highest floor offers the most privacy. In case the high-rise apartment building was equipped with an elevator, the dwellers would be equally in favor of all floors.

*2.2 Opinions on Upkeep and Utilities :* The upkeep here refers to the cleanliness of the flat, the water supply, the lighting in the main hall, the stairway and the groundfloor, and the garbage disposal place and service.

About half of the dwellers are not satisfied with the flat maintenance and cleanliness. They blame the dwellers for not having paid enough attention to avoid loitering and causing damages to the public place and property. The others referred to the upkeepers themselves. There are insufficient upkeepers and some of the present upkeepers are not paying proper attention to their duties.

Although the projects consist of high-rise buildings, the water supply service is very satisfactory. Some of the dwellers who have given opinions complained essentially about the breaking down of the water pumps, while the contamination of water and slow running of water pose only minor problem.

Also the dwellers view the fixtures and the placement of public lighting in the flat building as highly satisfactory. The main problem appears to be that these lighting fixtures were too often destroyed or robbed. Only a small number of dwellers wanted more lighting.

About 20% of the dwellers expressed concern over the garbage disposal and service. The problem arose mainly from delayed collection of garbage, for bad smell which sneaks from the disposal room and the defective equipment. They remarked that there should be a sewage tube running from the garbage room which is located on the groundfloor to the sewage line, and the disposal cap in their room is easily broken or becomes rusty. Here also the neglectful habits of the dwellers have partly contributed to the troubles.

*2.3 Opinions on the environment :* There are 28.52% of the dwellers who preferred their former living place to the apartment unit. Their reasons are that their former houses were larger than the apartment; there was some space around the house for living and leisurely purposes; they were their own houses (but not the land); they liked their former neighbors; their former houses were within easy reach of work, the marketing, schools and other place; they could engage in small business in front of their houses or shelters; they preferred wooden and rowhouses, and they did not have to pay water and electricity fee or if they had to pay, they would pay a small amount.

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However, the majority of the public housing dwellers mentioned the benefits of the apartment unit instead of the defects. They pointed out that the apartment living is more healthy, sanitary, quieter and safer from fire hazard, thieves, hoodlums and traffic accidents.

However, the environment at Dindaeng and Huaykwang area appear to be bad for children and youth. There are quite a number of children who are exposed to drug addicts. There are delinquent who are not taken care of by their parents, and there are youth who like to gamble.

This phenomenon is a serious one since quite a large number of dwellers have agreed on these three causes. 62.42% of the dwellers agreed that the youth in the area have contacted drug addicts, and 38.59% of the dwellers thought that there was a large number. 76.51% of the dwellers found that the youths contracted bad habits from friends, and 45.64% among them thought that many youths are now delinquents. 68.96% of the dwellers mentioned that the youth in Dindaeng and Huaykwang are persuaded to gamble, and 36.58% thought that many of the children now did. The problem of youth becomes a great concern in the future. The causes of the problem lie on the fact that many poor families in the area cannot afford to look after their children closely or to send all of their children to high school. Also a large number of ill-bred children could pass on bad habits to friends who play around them.

2.4 *Opinions on dwellers* : The dwellers thought that in general their neighbors are very cooperative and they are able to maintain some mutual assistance. For the 17.78% of those who are not yet satisfied with their neighbors, such dissatisfactions are derived both from their own attitudes and background, and from their neighbors. The apartment projects still contain a mixture of low-income families with different backgrounds and with a different degree and kinds of problems. However, the trouble-makers seem to express themselves more on the public property than on the individual neighbors, as the following table shows:

TABLE 9

	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	No answer
1. taking good care of public property	19.97 %	41.11 %	38.75 %	0.17 %
2. taking careful attention in keeping public places and the building clean	26.68	43.46	29.86	-
3. taking serious notice of the regulations	26.18	45.30	28.02	0.50
4. taking serious notice of not making nuisances	19.97	53.02	26.84	0.17
5. not being aggressive towards neighbors	37.58	47.65	14.26	0.51
6. willing to compromise with neighbors	37.75	52.52	9.56	0.17
7. do not interfere with other peoples' business	58.05	35.54	6.54	0.34

2.5 *Opinions on community facilities*: The majority (62.58%) of the dwellers felt that their problems could respectively be arranged as follows:

TABLE 10

	Most Serious	More Serious	Serious	No answer
1. Safety service	10.40 %	4.20 %	0.84 %	84.56 %
2. Improvement of apartment unit or living regulations	9.56	2.52	0.84	87.08
3. Youth problems and lack of playgrounds	7.21	2.68	0.34	89.77
4. Inadequate bus service	6.38	1.17	1.68	90.77
5. Unemployment problems of dwellers, including lack of place of business	4.86	2.35	0.17	92.62
6. Cost of living	3.86	1.85	0.33	93.96
7. Bad roads and drainage	3.53	12.01	0.50	93.96
8. Traffic problems	2.52	0.50	0.17	96.81
9. High rent	2.52	0.50	0.17	96.81
10. Educational facilities	2.35	2.68	0.17	94.80
11. Lack of right of the apartment	1.34	0.17	0.34	98.15
12. Public Health	0.84	1.51	0.17	97.84
13. Public Telephone	0.16	0.34	0.34	99.16

### 3. The needs expressed

The dwellers, after years of experience with the apartment projects have expressed their needs. They thought that if the government will fulfil these needs, the projects would be perfect ones. Such needs on the addition or improvement of the facilities and services are as follows:

TABLE 11

	First Priority	Second Priority	Third Priority	No answer
1. Police protection	12.92 %	5.37 %	1.17 %	80.54 %
2. Cooperatives, stalls and markets	12.25	3.02	0.84	83.89
3. Schools	6.88	4.02	0.34	88.76
4. Bus	4.36	1.68	1.68	92.28
5. Children's playground, sports field, public parks and open space	4.36	2.52	1.01	92.11
6. Public telephone	4.30	2.18	0.50	93.29
7. Public health including family planning service	3.86	2.52	0.67	92.95
8. Employment service and training	1.51	0.84	0.17	97.48
9. Road and drainage	1.00	0.84	0.17	97.99
10. Recreational facilities including library and youth service	0.84	1.51	0.34	97.31
11. Parking place	0.67	—	—	99.33
12. Association	0.50	0.34	0.50	98.66



In addition many dwellers (78.61 %) pointed out that some services should be carried out by the Public Housing Authority as part of the projects. Such services with top priority are as follows:

(1) Public Telephone	22.18%
(2) Safety Protection	20.97
(3) Cooperative (or shops selling goods at cheaper prices than the markets)	19.46
(4) Pawnshops	6.75
(5) More service personnel	2.12

Other needs of minor significance are playgrounds, business places, parking space, letter boxes, elevator, public property for loan and fire protection equipment.

### CONCLUSION : THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS IMPINGED UPON THE GOVERNMENT

The provision of public housing for the urban people who used to live in slums, depressed and public areas went a step further in this country with the introduction of the high-rise apartment buildings at these two locations. Although it was a new experience to both the public authorities and the dwellers, the design and management of the projects appear satisfactory to all but a few who live in the apartments now.

In terms of physicals setup, the Dindaeng and Huaykwang high - rise public housing projects serve the purpose of providing a higher standard of housing for the people. The apartment buildings are strong, sanitary, well-equipped and well-located in the middle part of the city. However some of the buildings began to deteriorate and become filthy, which needs the authorities's action in repainting. The authorities might take this opportunity to campaign on the co-operative basis in order to strengthen the sense of belonging and togetherness among the dwellers.

It is observed that although all the dwellers were defined as low income by the Public Welfare Department, the income range is still wide. There are some very poor dwellers whose ways of living are rather difficult and who own cheap living facilities, and there are some other groups who equip their apartments with nice-looking furniture and possess several electric appliances. A number of them are even able to own cars, which are relatively expensive items in this country. There are some who attempt to have their ends met by recruiting members of the family to prepare miscellaneous items for sale. Many sell some fruits and food around and take whatever job they can and there are those whose career and incomes are secured, and who aspire to a higher standard of living. Hence, the needs and attitudes of the apartment dwellers are sometimes different.

It must be kept in mind that the Dindaeng high-rise project was neither a comprehensive project nor an enclaved one. The Public Welfare Department built the public housing, then added one or two community facilities, and then the flats. It did not conceive the project in relation to

employment sources nor has serious consideration been given to how the low income families will pursue their career once they have moved to the apartments. The Department assumed that all the dwellers had enough income when they were allowed to settle in the flats. As it appeared, many low-income families are very concerned about the ways they can earn their living and to improve their social status. Thus, it is believed that some of the original dwellers have now moved out with considerable amount of money in exchange for tenant rights. The Department will be able to slow down this movement if they will provide the dwellers with small business places where the dwellers can earn their living, or supplement their family incomes which are minimal in many of the families, with these additions.

As they are a large group of people living together in the packed apartment buildings, problems involving social relations tend to arise. There is a great number of children and youth in the public housing projects, which will become the main social elements in the future, but they are now vulnerable to contracting bad habits either from their families or from outsiders. At present the bad guys and the illegal traders have successfully led more and more children and the youth astray, and it is also suspected that insufficient means of earning income might contribute to inducing some dwellers to engage in illegal activities. Thus, the role of the public authorities should be directed towards these undesirable elements of the environment. The call for public safety is thus on the top list.

The fathers and the mothers themselves are also pressured by the competitive atmosphere of the urban life. Not only do they have limited capability to oversee their children, but they themselves have to strive for their families' status and need some relaxation. They spend much time in travelling to work and at the working place and the only place to relax after working hours is most possibly in the apartment. If the Department will consider having a large public and recreational park for them, (as well as for others of course), in the vicinity, where the dwellers can safely bring their families in the evening or on holidays, it will be very beneficial for the tensed families.

As many of them also become affluent, they look for better lives. They possess several items of household properties. Many of them send their children to a higher level of education. They want modern facilities, such as cooperatives, public parks, public telephone and public library. Whether the government will provide the complete auxiliary facilities to the flat projects or to leave them with the barest minimum will be up to policy. The urgent need is for the government to concentrate on the desperate and if they are successful in promoting the morale of the dwellers, the community in general will be a more impressive one.

The Huaykwang project which followed the Dindaeng one appears to be better designed to cope with the problems the Dindaeng project is facing. It has plans for more playgrounds, schools, and a large shopping center. However, the role and the programs of the public authorities as stated are also highly relevant.

There is one more major problem which appears to require a wider scope of cooperation than the National Housing Authority can effectively manage alone. That is the problem of over expansion of family size. The apartment units have been designed for a certain number of family members. When these levels are exceeded, then living is uncomfortable and several problems ensue. This will involve family planning policy, government housing policy and national urban policy working in concert.

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