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Report No. 4

REPORT OF THE IPS
FORUM ON THE CENSUS OF POPULATION 1990

by

Yap Mui Teng (editor)

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THE INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES

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September 1991

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Policy Studies held a forum on the Census of Population 1990 at the Hon Sui Sen Memorial Library Auditorium on 27 July 1991. The purpose of the forum was to discuss the results of the 1990 census which was the largest national statistical exercise ever carried out in Singapore. The IPS forum, in particular, was the first occasion in which a group of specialists was invited to share their knowledge and insight into the early findings of the census published by the Department of Statistics in the <u>Advance Data Release</u> in May 1991.

The forum, chaired by Professor Tommy Koh, Director, Institute of Policy Studies, was divided into two segments. The first consisted of presentations by the six invited speakers and the second a "Question and Answer" session. The speakers and topics of the presentations were as follows:

1. "Summary of Census Findings" by Dr Paul Cheung, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics, Ministry of Trade and Industry;

2. "Comments on Demographic and Social Characteristics" by Dr Yap Mui Teng, Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies;

3. "Comments on Education and Languages" by Dr Ong Chit Chung, Chairman, GPC on Education and Member of Parliament, Bukit Batok;

4. "Comments on Economic Characteristics" by Dr Tan Kong Yam, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Business Administration, National University of Singapore;

5. "Comments on Mode of Transport" by Dr John Keung, Manager (Physical Planning), Urban Redevelopment Authority; and

6. "Comments on Housing and Household Characteristics" by Mr Lim Hng Kiang, Chief Executive Officer, Housing and Development Board.

To encourage wider discussion of the census results and the issues raised during the forum, the IPS has decided to publish the text of the presentations and a synopsis of the the Q&A session.

SUMMARY OF CENSUS FINDINGS

by

Paul Cheung
Chief Statistician
Department of Statistics
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Introduction

May I first of all take this opportunity to thank the Institute of Policy Studies for organizing this symposium. As the government agency responsible for the census, the Department of Statistics realizes the importance of the 1990 census as a statistical benchmark for Singapore. This benchmark enables us to assess the social and economic changes of the last decade as well as to anticipate future trends and changes. The census data therefore must be carefully examined and widely discussed. For this reason, this forum, with the help of the experts on this panel, gives us an invaluable opportunity to assess the census data and their policy implication.

My job this morning is not to burden all of you with another statistical overview of the 1990 census results. Some of you were probably in the audience when Mr Mah Bow Tan gave a synopsis of the findings or perhaps watched the television version of Census '90. Many of you may even have bought a copy of our Advance Data Release publication. Certainly by now, you would be familiar with the report card of how Singapore compares with herself 10 years ago. I believe the panellists will fill in the details later.

In my presentation this morning, I will focus my attention on three general observations. These are my personal views based on my own interpretation of the data available to me thus far.

1.   Narrowing Ethnic Differences

The census data have shown that Singapore residents, on the whole, are much better off than a decade ago. There are significant improvements in educational attainment, literacy, housing conditions and home ownership. The workforce has also upgraded with a greater proportion in higher-skill, better-paying jobs.

The Rise of the Middle Class

Underlying this broad based socio-economic development is an important trend of convergence among all ethnic groups in their socio-economic achievements. What has been very visible in this convergence is the rise of the middle class in all three major ethnic groups. With the bunching in the middle, the inter-ethnic socio-economic differences observed in the past are much reduced now. Let me give some examples on the rise of the middle class and its manifestations.

First of all, the improved standard of living is now enjoyed by all ethnic groups. For example, 54% of the Chinese households, 43% of Malays households and 49% of Indian households live in quality housing (private houses and flats and HDB 4-room of larger flats). The 11-percentage point difference between the Chinese and the Malays is much smaller than the 15-percentage point observed in

1980. Proportions of home owners are equally high among these ethnic groups (90% for the Chinese, 94% for the Malays, and 85% for the Indians).

Secondly, the rate of improvement in educational attainment has been significant for all ethnic groups in the past decade. The proportion with secondary or higher qualifications about doubled for the Malays (14% to 30%). With better education, we now have greater homogeneity in the literacy level which is 90% for the Chinese, 92% for the Malays and 93% for the Indians.

Shared Middle Class Ideology

If the emergence of the middle class is reducing ethnic differences in socio-economic achievements, I would further argue that the middle class ideology and manifestations are also shared among the ethnic groups, leading to a convergence at the socio-psychological level. Middle class attributes such as concern for career advancement, emphasis on education, and a more Westernised life-style and leisure pursuits seem to be common across all groups. In a survey conducted in 1987 by the Straits Times, 74% of the Chinese, 75% of the Malays and 78% of the Indians considered themselves as having middle class lifestyles. The census data on lifestyle and leisure activities are not ready but I would guess that the profiles may not be very different across ethnic lines.

Let us consider the use of English at home as an indication of a certain life style orientation. All three ethnic groups show a similar pattern of change in their language used at home as their educational level improves. Use of English at home is much higher among the younger and better-educated, no matter whether they are Malay, Chinese or Indian. Among graduates aged 25-39 years, 49% of

Chinese, 35% of Malays and 63% of Indians use English as the predominant household language. In comparison, the proportion using English among those with below secondary qualifications is only 7% of the Chinese, 3% of the Malays and 23% of the Indians.

Ethnic Differences Still Remain

Of course, old differences in religion still remain along ethnic lines. Practically all Malays are Muslims, while the majority of the Indians still identify themselves as Hindus and the Chinese as Buddhists or practising ancestor worship and other traditional Chinese beliefs.

While all ethnic groups have progressed significantly, some started off with a lower base and therefore have further to climb to achieve an identical earning or occupational profile. The Malays and Indians have done very well in the last decade and their speed of progress is comparable to that of the Chinese. But they still lag behind in moving towards the higher ends of educational and occupational attainment. For example, only 5% of the Malays have higher than secondary qualifications compared with 12% for the Indians and 16% for the Chinese. Because of their lower educational attainment, both the Malays and the Indians are also slower than the Chinese in upgrading their occupational structure. Only about 10% of Malay workers and 12% of Indian workers hold professional and technical jobs compared with 18% of Chinese workers.

Class Distinctions within Ethnic Groups

With the narrowing of ethnic differences, I would argue that social class differences have become more important within each ethnic group and for the

whole society. Although we now have a large middle to upper class, a small portion of each ethnic group still remains in the underclass. About 7% of Chinese households, 6% of Malay households and 12% of Indian households live in HDB 1-or 2-room flats. Most of the heads of these households have low educational attainment and hold low-skill jobs. The profiles of these groups are very similar across ethnic groups, suggesting that being in the underclass is more a function of individual circumstances rather than of ethnic background. While ethnicity may no longer be an important stratifying factor in our society, education may have emerged as the most powerful factor in determining one's position in the society.

2 Role of the State: Potentials and Limits

It has often been mentioned that the census results is a good report card on the changes in Singapore. The question that follows is whether the changes are products of a natural evolution of the society, given good work ethics and the continuing development of the economy. If it is a case of natural evolution, then the unknown social forces generated from the aggregation of individual efforts should be given the sole credit.

But can the collective efforts of individuals explain the speed at which ethnic groups have progressed and the homogeneity of the attainment over the last ten years? Fundamental to the success of individual efforts is facilitation by favourable circumstances. Favourable circumstances could, of course, be God-given as when good weather produces a bumper crop. But, more often, favourable circumstances are man-made. In Singapore, government facilitation has borne fruits as shown in the 1990 census results.

Facilitation by Government

I believe the government has played a major role in creating opportunities for advancement by all ethnic groups. More schools and junior colleges have been built and tertiary education facilities expanded. Thus, we are assured of an education of at least secondary level, depending on our own aptitude. With the comprehensive public housing programme and easy mortgage terms, we have a wide choice of comfortable, affordable homes. There are also ample employment opportunities as the government's careful management of the economy sustains a healthy inflow of foreign investment and steady economic growth.

More importantly, the government has adopted a policy of equal opportunities for all, regardless of creed or race, whether in education, work or housing. This means that all of us could take advantage of available facilities, without any group being favoured or discriminated against. The 1990 census findings confirm that this egalitarian policy has served us well.

Limits to Government Help

However, social change in some areas seems to be beyond the influence of government policy, and natural social evolution is continuing unabated. The singlehood problem has persisted, among older, better-educated females and among older, less-educated males. The problem among the better-educated could have been worse if not for SDU, SDS, and SPS which have succeeded in matching up many couples. However, the marriage problem is interesting in pointing out that while massive government intervention may be able to solve bread and butter problems such as housing, education and jobs, its intervention may be less

effective in complex social issues where personal choice is the predominant factor. There is a lesson to be learnt here. In this regard, we may have to learn to accommodate certain social changes, rather than trying hard to reverse them.

3   <u>Beyond a Middle-Class Singapore</u>

As Singapore becomes a middle-class society, we now need to find a new leading edge that would bring us to the next stage of advancement. So far, the socio-economic transformation has been rapid and it has been easy for us to upgrade ourselves to a better life. Economists have noted that it is easy for Singapore to get this level of GDP. But, from here to go on to the level of the developed nations, it is going to be far more difficult. For the economy to move to a higher level, we need a new industrial structure with high technology and innovative products.

<u>Changing Status Symbols</u>

At the level of individuals and families, our wants will change as we enter middle-class status and our basic needs for food and shelter are met. What then is the leading edge that middle class families are looking for to better themselves and to distinguish themselves from the others? In a 1987 survey conducted by The Straits Times, ten items considered as conferring middle-class status are : washing machine, insurance policy, magazine subscription, car, tertiary education, current account, overseas travel, air conditioner, microwave oven and owning

shares. Clearly, most of these are so common now that they are no longer differentiating social status any more.

In our resource-scarce society, the predominance of the middle class would have severe implications on resource allocation and cost escalation. It may not be possible to meet every need for one car in each household, tertiary education for each child and so forth. Given the physical and cost constraints on acquiring more physical assets, we can expect, as is happening now in Japan, a shift in personal and household consumption towards purchase of more discretionary goods such as expensive personal accessories, overseas holidays, and costlier leisure pursuits.

New status symbols will emerge to redefine the social stratification system. We can also expect a keener competition for desired goods as the pool of competitors has expanded in size. The recent debate on golf club membership is an excellent case in point where the new money is trying to get into the good life of the old money.

How to Measure Prosperity

As education, income and housing attributes become more and more homogeneous among the population, we cannot continue to depend only on GDP, literacy rate and other traditional indicators of prosperity and development to measure improvements and changes over time. Our expectations and aspirations have changed with our higher standard of living, with new concerns on personal fulfilment and the environment. We will therefore need new yardsticks to measure not just the level of living but also the quality of life. How to measure prosperity will be an important challenge when we plan for the next census. We may indeed

need to consider items such as owning shares and antiques, bank deposits abroad, local or overseas country-club membership and multiple property ownership. On the intangible side, socio-psychological perceptions of the quality of life may need to be considered.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

by

Yap Mui Teng
Research Fellow
Institute of Policy Studies

1   Introduction

My comments will be on demographic and social characteristics. Before I proceed, I would like to point out that my comments are based solely on the findings reported in the Advance Data Release published by the Department of Statistics in May.

2   What the Census Says

The 1990 Census gives us the first complete population count in ten years - - the last census was held ten years before, in 1980. In the interim period, population estimates are made based on administrative statistics (such as the birth and death registration statistics) as well as sample surveys.

The 1990 census, in particular, confirmed for us a number of things we have been saying about the population:

3   Population Ageing

First, the census confirmed for us that the population is ageing (Table 1). The average age of the population has risen. Both the number and proportion of the elderly (aged 60 and older) in the population have also increased. As the government considers population ageing to be one of the challenges facing

Singapore in the years ahead, the census provides an opportunity to study in detail the characteristics of the elderly (a census monograph is being prepared on this subject). However, for policy making and planning purposes, I would suggest that study also be made of the future elderly (i.e. those currently in their fifties, and perhaps even those in their forties) as they are likely to be quite different from the present elderly.

4   Smaller Family Sizes

Second, the 1990 census confirmed that family sizes have shrunk (Table 2). This shrinking of family sizes can be found among all three major ethnic groups, although Malay women continued to have the largest number of children and Chinese women the smallest number (Figure 1). The decline in family sizes was, of course, the cumulative result of the decline in the number of births over the last 25 years or so.

However, the women who are currently in their thirties and forties reached their reproductive ages during the period of the anti-natalist policy (1960s-1980s), hence they are likely to have been influenced by the two-child family norm that was heavily promulgated at that time. Perhaps if the population's reproductive goal is to be changed towards larger family sizes, the government might be more successful if it targeted at the younger population.

5   Ethnic Composition

The ethnic composition of the population below age 10 reflects the ethnic differential in fertility over the last ten years (Table 3). The ethnic composition of

the population aged 0-9 in 1990 was 72% Chinese, 19% Malays, and 8% Indians, as compared to 78%, 14% and 7% respectively for the total population. I will not get into a debate on what is a desirable ethnic composition for Singapore as I do not believe there are adequate bases for me to form an opinion.

6   Surprise, surprise

The 1990 census also threw up some surprises as far as demographic and social characteristics are concerned.

7   Singlehood Rates

First, the proportion of single men and women in the reproductive ages has increased (Table 4). This was in spite of government effort to promote marriage and family formation. The published data do not provide sufficient information for a better understanding of the reasons for the increase. We can, however, make some speculations: this could be because people are staying in school longer (both males and females) and because of employment (especially for females).

There is a tendency in Singapore to blame women for the marriage deficit, but actually the rise in singlehood rates can also be found among males (Figure 2). A second point to note is that the increase in the female singlehood rate is higher in the 35 and older age groups (Figure 3). These are the people who reached the prime marriage ages some ten years ago but had, for some reason, not married. Given that the likelihood of their ever marrying is rather low, the marriage promotion agencies would be better off if they concentrated their effort on the younger women, and men.

3   Number of Marrieds

Second, an anomaly that I have found in the data concerns the number of men and women who reported themselves as married (Table 5). The number of married women exceeded the number of married men by about 2,800. In Singapore where monogamy is the law (except under the Muslim Law Act), we should expect the numbers to be roughly equal. The available data do not allow more detailed analysis -- for example, whether the disparity occurred only among Muslims, whether this was due to differences in reporting between men and women who have registered their marriages but not undergone the traditional wedding or whether because these women were married to men living overseas.

9   Population size and rate of growth

Finally, what was most interesting to me, personally, about the census results was the size of the population enumerated (Table 6). This figure is higher than what one might expect based on the estimated population size and growth rates during the inter-censal period (Figure 4). If the census data can be accepted as accurate, then the population size and population growth rates have clearly been under-estimated for the past ten years.

This is significant point because policy decisions have been made on the basis of these estimates. While some discrepancy between estimates and actual counts must always be expected, the magnitude of the difference in the present situation is, to me, of great concern. Given the extent to which so many aspects of life in Singpore is being planned, the need for accurate data cannot be

emphasized enough. The latest census results reveal that the data on which our policies have been formulated may have seriously under-estimated reality.

10   Recommendation

This calls for a revision of the method by which inter-censal population estimates have been made. I would suggest that the database on population which was used to pre-print the census enumeration forms be utilized like a population register. Status changes can be updated through administrative measures so that an accurate count on the size and characteristics of the population can be generated at the touch of a few buttons.

11   Request

Finally, I would like to end with a request to the Department of Statistics to please retain the previous practice of publishing data on the total population in its Yearbook and Monthly Digest of Statistics. I notice that the Department has recently adopted the practice of publishing data only on the resident population. I would plead with the department and say that there are uses for both types of data, for research and policy-making.

Table 1   Age Structure, 1980 and 1990

	Number ('000s)		Percent	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
Total	2282.1	2690.1	100.0	100.0
Below 15	630.6	625.7	27.6	23.3
15-59	1481.1	1819.8	64.9	67.6
60 and over	170.4	244.6	7.5	9.1
Median age (years)	24	30		

Source:
Department of Statistics, Census of Population 1990; Advanced Data Release, May 1991.

Table 2   Ever-married Females by
Number of Children Born

(percent)

	1980	1990
Total	100.0	100.0
0	8.5	10.5
1-2	36.2	43.3
3-4	27.5	27.8
5 or more	27.7	18.4
Mean	3.4	2.9

Source: Department of Statistics,
<u>Census of Population 1990; Advanced
Data Release</u>, May 1991.

FIGURE 1

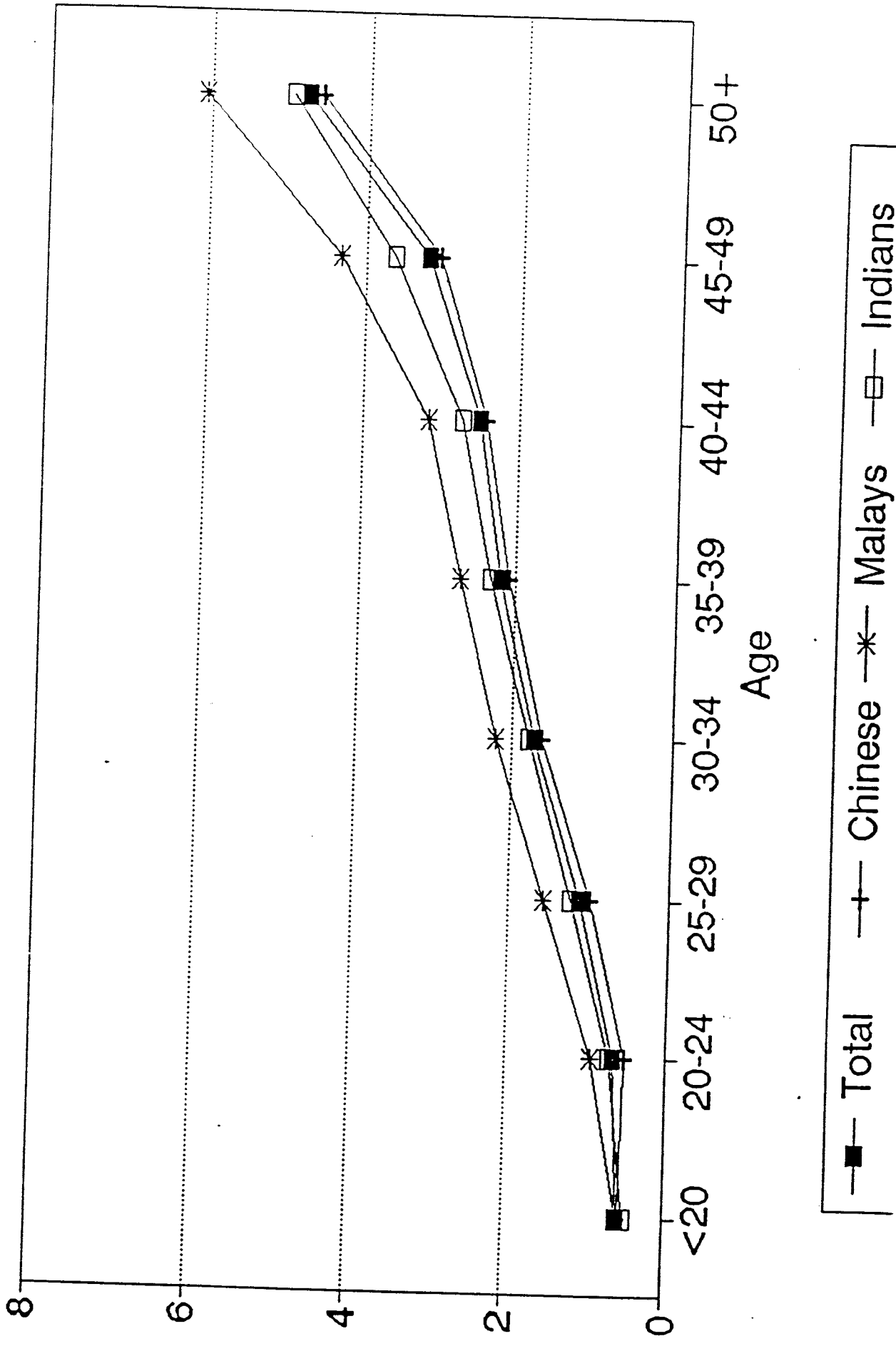# Mean Number of Children by Ethnic Group
1990

Legend: — Total —+— Chinese —*— Malays —□— Indians

Table 3   Ethnic Composition, 1980 and 1990

	Total	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others
All Ages					
1980 (#)	2282.1	1787.8	328.7	143.4	22.2
(%)	100.0	78.3	14.4	6.3	1.0
1990 (#)	2690.1	2089.4	380.6	191.0	29.2
(%)	100.0	77.7	14.1	7.1	1.1
Ages 0-9					
1990 (#)	428.1	306.2	82.7	32.7	6.5
(%)	100.0	71.5	19.3	7.7	1.5

Table 4   Percent Single by Age and Sex, 1990

Age group	Males		Females	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
20-24	92.1	94.3	73.7	78.8
25-29	54.8	63.7	33.6	38.6
30-34	21.4	33.0	16.6	20.4
35-39	10.6	17.1	8.5	14.4
40-44	8.1	10.1	5.8	11.2

Source:
Department of Statistics, Census of Population 1990; Advanced Data Release, May 1991.

FIGURE 2
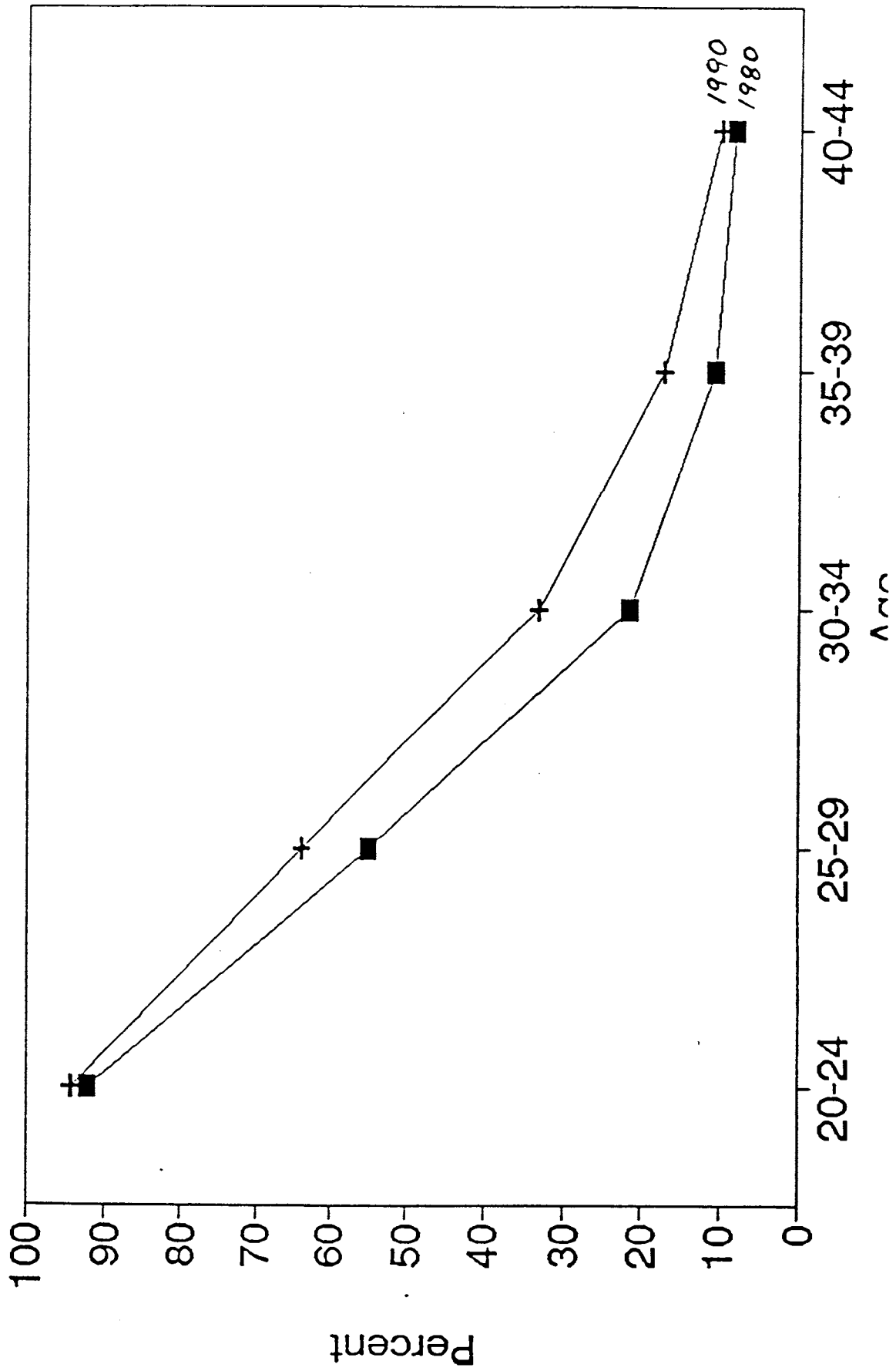
Percent Single (Males), 1980 and 1990

Figure 3.

Percent Single (Females), 1980 and 1990

_1990_
_1980_

Age
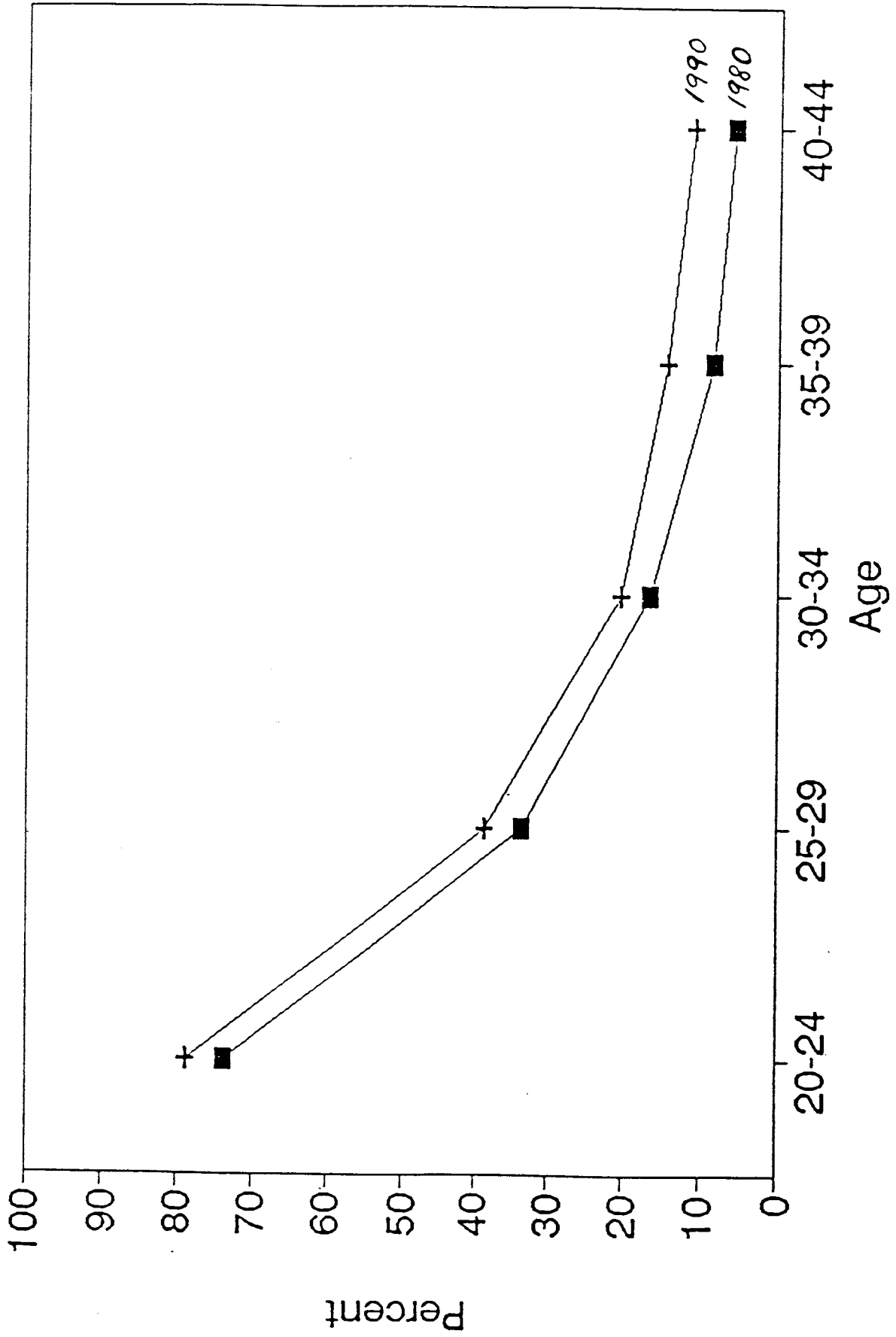
Percent

Table 5   Number of Married Men and Women, 1990

Married men   :   587,400

Married women   :   590,200

Difference   :   2,800

Source: Department of Statistics, Census of Population 1990; Advanced Data Release, May 1991.

Table 6   Population Size and Growth Rate, 1980-1990

Year	Size (000)	Growth Rate (%)
1980	2413.9	1.5
1981	2443.3	1.2
1982	2471.8	1.2
1983	2502.0	1.1
1984	2529.1	1.1
1985	2558.0	1.1
1986	2586.2	1.0
1987	2612.8	1.2
1988	2647.1	1.5
1989	2685.4	1.3
1990	3002.8	

Source: Department of Statistics, Yearbook of Statistics 1990, July 1991.

Population Size and Growth Rate
1980-1990

FIGURE 4
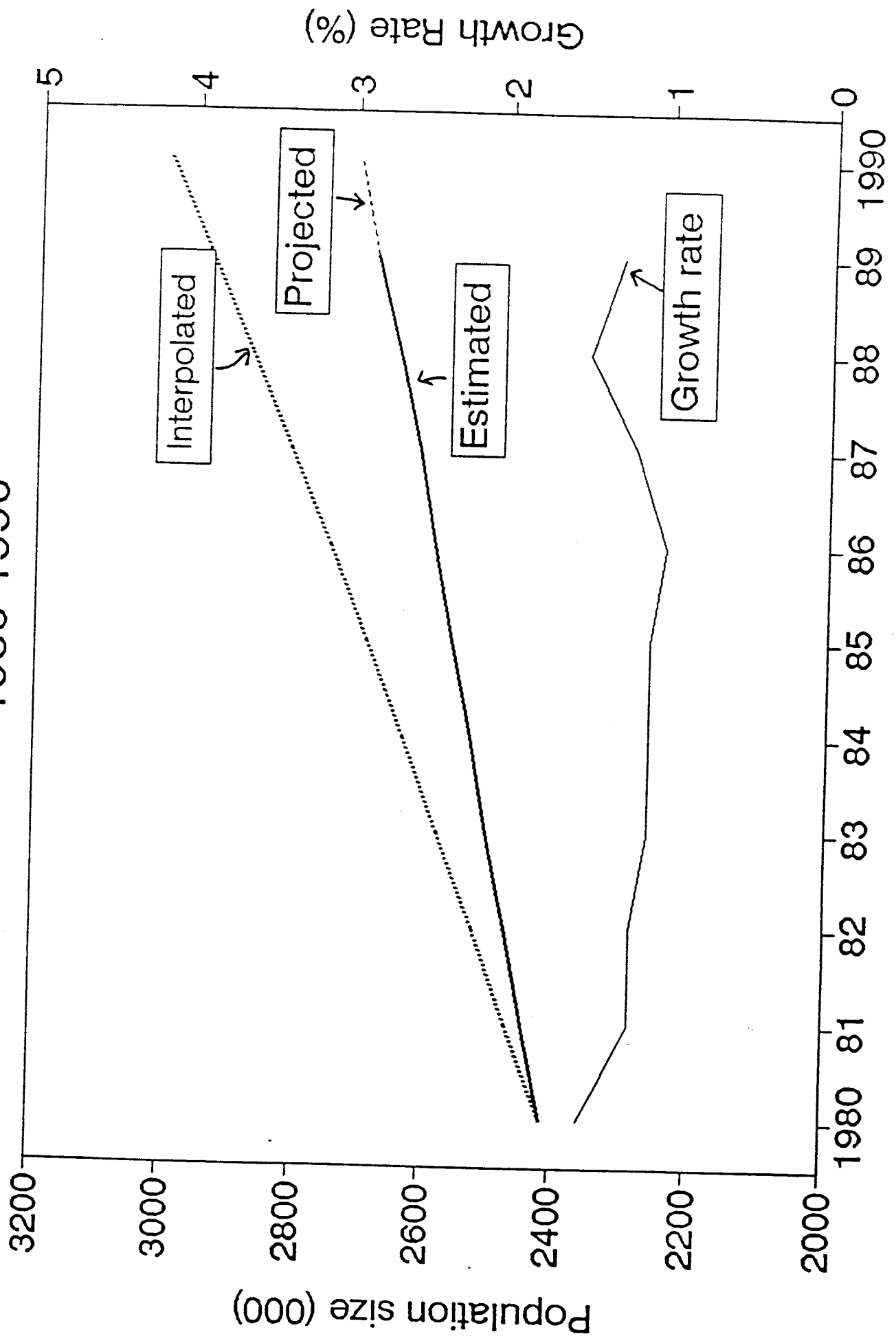
EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES

by

Ong Chit Chung
Chairman, GPC on Education and
MP for Bukit Batok

Introduction

It was not easy to conduct a comprehensive census. By any standards, it was a monumental task, involving much time, manpower, and computer resources. By inference, it is also not easy to give in-depth comments on the census unless one is able to do thorough research or back up one's views with comprehensive statistics.

What I am trying to say is that without extensive research, what I will try to do this morning, in my comments on "Education and Languages", is just to highlight the changes, extrapolate and interpret the trends. Therefore, I beg your indulgence.

I will start with the figures on literacy. Between 1980 and 1990, general literacy in Singapore rose from 84% to 90% across the population. This compares favourably with countries like China (70%), Malaysia (80%) and the Philippines (88%). But we have some way to go before we catch up to the 99% literacy of the UK, USA and Japan (World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1991).

Interestingly, there is not much difference in the literacy rate amongst the racial groups. The literacy rates for the Chinese, Malays and Indians were 90, 92 and 93 percent respectively, with the Malays and Indians scoring slightly higher rates.

Overall, literacy in English increased from 56% in 1980 to 65% in 1990. English has further strengthened its position as the main language (Table 15, Census of Population 1990: Advance Data Release, 1991, reproduced in Annex I.)

Also noticeable is that the population of households using English at home also increased from 11.6% in 1980 to 20.3% in 1990. (Table 16, Advance Data Release, 1991). This trend is likely to continue. It may mean that it is easier for the child to keep up with English at school, but it would also mean less support in the home environment for the learning of the mother tongue. There may also be increasing fear in some quarters of the loss of traditional values.

During the same period, amongst the Chinese, those speaking Mandarin at home increased from 13.1% to 32.8%, while dialect-speaking households declined from 76.2% to 46.2%. (Table 17, Advance Data Release, 1991). This speaks volumes of the success of the "Speak Mandarin" campaign.

The dialect-speaking households are expected to decline further with bilingualism in schools, the "Speak Mandarin" campaigns and changes in the age-profile of the population. However, some dialect-speaking homes will simply become English-speaking homes. This is shown by the increase in the number of English-speaking homes amongst Chinese households during the period 1980 to 1990, from 10.2% to 20.6%.

The percentage of Indian households speaking English at home also increased from 24.3% to 34.8% during the same period. In contrast, 94.3% of the Malay households in 1990 speak Malay. This means that the Malays have conducive home environment for the learning of their mother tongue.

If you sieve through Table 16 of the <u>Advance Data Release</u>, which gives the predominant household language of 1990, it is shown that 62.7% of the population speak either Mandarin or Chinese dialects at home (Mandarin 26%; Chinese dialects 36.7%). This is borne out by survey results which indicate that SBC Channel 8 viewers outnumber the Channel 5 viewers (Annex II).

This means that the Mandarin and dialect speaking sectors constitute a significant grouping. They occupy the middle ground and this has political significance.

Table 11 of the <u>Advance Data Release</u> gives us the figures for the "Level of Education Attending, 1980 and 1990" (for those currently in school). During this period, the percentage attending Upper Secondary almost doubled from 5.2% to 9.5%, while those attending university almost tripled from 1.3% to 3.4%.

These are indeed very significant increases. The increases reflect public aspirations. The government must be given credit for its time and energy in building up the infra-structure and resources of the educational institutions in so short a time. This is no mean achievement.

Such increases were not possible if the people did not give the highest priority and importance to education. The people rightly considered education as the key to economic and social mobility. Over the next ten years, as the population becomes better educated, the economy develops, and expectations rise further, there will be an increasing demand for a third university, an open university and distance-learning programmes.

It is difficult to obtain equivalent data on educational levels in other countries, but from what I can gather, in the UK, the percentage for higher education is 22.9%, for Japan 36.9%, and USA, 43.8%.

Singapore, therefore, has a long way to go in terms of higher education for an advanced and developed nation. But if we were to go international, global or be technologically ahead of our competitors, we have to set much higher targets for higher education.

Amongst the racial groups, in 1990 the Chinese have the highest percentage in the University, with 3.9%, the Indians 2.4%, and the Malays, 0.9% (Table 11, Advance Data Release, 1991). The Malays have therefore the least percentage, but the encouraging note is that, as a group, it made the most progress during the period, improving the percentage by four times, from 0.2% in 1980 to 0.9% in 1990.

Table 14 of the Advance Data Release entitled, the "Highest Qualification Attained for Males and Females in Age Group 25-49 years, 1980 and 1990", shows that in 1980 for the 25-29 age group, the percentages of males and females who attended university education were 4.9% and 3.2% respectively. By 1990, the figures for males and females were 8.5 and 8 percent. The females have caught up with the males in higher education. This is a positive development and a credit to our educational system.

For the academic year 1989-90, female undergraduates in NUS out-numbered male undergraduates, i.e. 7,857 female undergraduates to 6,788 male undergraduates (NUS Tenth Annual Report, 1989-1990). For the same academic

year at NTI, the male undergraduates numbered 3,352, while the female undergraduates numbered 2,123 (NTI 9th Annual Report 1989-90).

These statistic are not conclusive. We have to study the 1991 enrolment statistics and see if it is the trend that more females than males are being enrolled at the universities. We then have to analyze the reasons and the implications.

Overall, my conclusion is that over the decade, the government has done very well in expanding and upgrading the educational institutions. For the next lap, the expectations and aspirations are even higher. The challenge is to provide quality education at all levels as well as to provide even more opportunities for higher education. This we must do if we are to become a fully developed nation, and be in the forefront of technology and enterprise. As they say, we have done well, the best is yet to be.

TABLE 11   LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTENDING, 1980 AND 1990

Per Cent

Level of Education	Total		Chinese		Malays		Indians		Others	
	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Below Secondary	62.6	58.5	62.0	56.2	66.7	69.1	61.4	64.1	56.5	62.5
Secondary	30.9	28.6	30.7	29.4	30.9	25.0	31.7	26.2	34.8	26.8
Upper Secondary	5.2	9.5	5.8	10.5	2.2	5.0	5.7	7.3	6.5	7.1
University	1.3	3.4	1.5	3.9	0.2	0.9	1.2	2.4	2.2	3.6

Note :   1990 data are based on 10% sample.

TABLE 14   HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED FOR MALES AND FEMALES
IN AGE GROUP 25–49 YEARS, 1980 AND 1990

Per Cent

Highest Qualification	25-29 Years		30-39 Years		40-49 Years	
	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990
Males	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Below Secondary	69.0	45.4	72.4	51.4	84.0	62.5
Secondary	16.9	32.9	13.6	29.1	7.9	21.7
Upper Secondary	9.2	13.2	8.8	12.1	4.5	9.6
University	4.9	8.5	5.2	7.4	3.6	6.2
Females	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Below Secondary	72.3	35.8	80.5	51.7	92.0	72.7
Secondary	18.0	44.0	12.1	34.6	4.6	19.3
Upper Secondary	6.5	12.2	5.1	9.1	2.4	5.6
University	3.2	8.0	2.3	4.6	1.0	2.4

Note :   1990 data are based on 10% sample.

TABLE 16   PREDOMINANT HOUSEHOLD LANGUAGE,
            1980 AND 1990

| | | Per Cent |
Language	1980	1990
Total	100.0	100.0
English	11.6	20.3
Mandarin	10.2	26.0
Chinese Dialects	59.5	36.7
Malay	13.9	13.4
Tamil	3.1	2.9
Others	1.7	0.7

Note :   1990 data are based on 10% sample.

TABLE 15   LITERACY IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, 1980 AND 1990

| | Total | | Chinese | | Malays | | Indians | | Others | |
Language	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990
English	56.0	65.0	52.5	61.7	65.8	73.0	67.4	81.6	94.6	91.9
Chinese	59.6	61.5	77.0	78.1	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.1	3.3	5.8
Malay	16.6	16.0	1.2	1.3	95.7	95.1	18.3	26.3	32.2	31.8
Tamil	3.3	3.4	—	—	0.1	0.1	47.6	49.5	0.3	—

Note :   1990 data are based on 10% sample.

ANNEX II

SBC's Top Twenty English Programmes (7-13 July 1991) (Average)
(Excluding News and Documentary/Current Affairs Programmes)
(Aged 4 and above)

Rank	Programme	Audience	Rating*	Day	Time	Channel
1	**Crime and Passion	248,000	10	Sat	9.30pm-10.30pm	5
2	America's Funniest Homevideos	221,000	9	Thu	8.30pm-9.00pm	5
3	Friday Movie - Dead Poets Society	196,000	8	Fri	10.45pm-1.20am	5
4	Attack of the Killer Tomato	170.000	7	Sun	10.00am-10.25am	8
5	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	160,000	6	Fri	6.30pm-7.00pm	5
6	Best of Disney - Chip 'N' Dale Rescue Rangers	155,000	6	Wed	6.30pm-7.00pm	5
7	New Adventures of He-Man	148,000	6	Tue	6.30pm-6.55pm	5
8	Best of Disney - New Adventures of Winnie The Pooh	137,000	5	Mon	6.30pm-7.00pm	5

	Programme	Viewers	Rating	Day	Time	Rating*
9	Super Force	136,000	5	Sat	8.30pm-9.00pm	5
10	Thursday Features Special - Heartbreak Hotel	134,000	5	Thu	10.30pm-12.25am	5
11	Hunter	129,000	5	Wed	8.00pm-9.00pm	5
12	Tuesday Premiere - Alien Nation	125,000	5	Tue	9.30pm-11.15pm	5
13	Jake and The Fat Man/MI	119,000	5	Thu	9.30pm-10.30pm	5
14	CD/Perfect Stranger	118,000	5	Sat	7.50pm-8.30pm	5
15	Yan Can Cook	113,000	5	Sun	5.00pm-5.30pm	8
16	Videopower	112,000	4	Thu	6.30pm-6.55pm	5
17	Superstars of Wrestling	111,000	4	Sat	6.30-7.10pm	5
18	Twin Peaks	110,000	4	Mon	9.30pm-10.30pm	5
19	The Golden Girls	106,000	4	Fri	10.15pm-10.45pm	5
20	The Cosby Show	103,000	4	Sun	8.30pm-9.00pm	5

* Rating is computed as the percentage of 4 + watching the programme.
** SBC-Produced Programme

SBC'S TOP TWENTY NEWS AND DOCUMENTARY/CURRENT AFFAIRS (ROGRAMMES (7 - 13 JULY 1991) (AVERAGE)
(Age 15 & Above Only)

Rank	Programme	Audience	Rating*	Day	Time	Channel
1	News at 8 (C)	536,000	26	Thu	8.00pm-8.30pm	8
2	News at 8 (C)	534,000	26	Mon	8.00pm-8.30pm	8
3	News at 8 (C)	533,000	26	Fri	8.00pm-8.30pm	8
4	News at 8 (C)	517,000	25	Tue	8.00pm-8.30pm	8
5	News at 8 (C)	515,000	25	Sun	8.00pm-8.30pm	8
6	News at 8 (C)	509,000	25	Wed	8.00pm-8.30pm	8
7	Focus (C)	461,000	22	Sat	9.30pm-10.15pm	8
8	News at 8 (C)	416,000	20	Sat	8.00pm-8.30pm	8
9	Hot Topic - Being Singles. (C)	358,000	17	Sun	7.30pm-8.00pm	8
10	Tuesday Report -Autism - A World Apart (C)	267,000	13	Tue	10.30pm-11.00pm	8
11	News at 9 (E)	119,000	6	Sat	9.00pm-9.30pm	5

12	News at Malay	114,000	6	Wed	7.30pm-7.50pm	5
13	News at 9 (E)	112,000	5	Thu	9.00pm-9.30pm	5
14	News at 9 (E)	106,000	5	Wed	9.00pm-9.30pm	5
15	News In Malay	104,000	5	Mon	7.30pm-7.50pm	5
16	News at 9 (E)	99,000	5	Fri	9.00pm-9.30pm	5
17	Tinjauan (M)	94,000	5	Mon	7.50pm-8.20pm	5
18	News in Malay	93,000	5	Sun	7.30pm-7.50pm	5
19	News at 9 (E)	92,000	4	Tue	9.00pm-9.30pm	5
20	News in Malay	90,000	4	Tue	7.30pm-7.50pm	5

* Rating is computed as the percentage of 15 + watching the programme.

SBC'S Top Thirty Programmes (17 - 13 JULY 1991) (Average)
(Excluding news and documentary/current affairs programmes)
Age 4 & Above

Rank	Programme	Audience	Rating*	Day	Time	Channel
1	The Other Women (C)	980,000	39	Mon	9.30pm-10.30pm	8
2	**The Other Women (C)	978,000	39	Thu	9.30pm-10.30pm	8
3	**The Other Women (C)	973,000	39	Fri	9.30pm-10.30pm	8
4	**The Other Women (C)/MI	971,000	39	Tue	9.30pm-10.30pm	8
5	**The Other Women (C)	966,000	39	Wed	9.30pm-10.30pm	8
6	Chinese Cinema 1 - The Fortune Code	888,000	36	Sat	10.15pm-11.15pm	8
7	Flying Fox of Snowy Mountain (C)	867,000	35	Sun	9.45pm-11.15pm	8
8	**Perfect Match (C)	783,000	31	Sun	8.30pm-9.45pm	8
9	**One Plus One (C)/MI	752,000	30	Thu	6.45pm-8.00pm	8
10	**One Plus One (C)/MI	742,000	30	Mon	6.45pm-8.00pm	8

11	**One Plus One (C)	741,000	Tue	6.45pm-8.00pm	8
12	Varity Tonight (C)	739,000	Mon	8.30pm-9.30pm	8
13	**One Plus One (C)/MI	736.000	Fri	6.45pm-8.00pm	8
14	**One Plus One (C)/MI	708,000	Wed	6.45pm-8.00pm	8
15	**Variety Tonight	661.000	Fri	8.30pm-9.30pm	8
16	**Variety Tonight (C)	628.000	Tue	8.30pm-9.30pm	8
17	**Variety Tonight (C)	605.000	Thu	8.30pm-9.30pm	8
18	**Variety Tonight (C)/CD	593,000	Wed	8.30pm-9.30pm	8
19	**Weekend Delight (C)	517,000	Sat	8.30pm-9.30pm	8
20	Chinese Cinema - Beloved Son of God	478,000	Wed	10.30pm-12.05am	8
21	Heaven's Retribution (C)	462,000	Sun	6.45pm-7.30pm	8
22	Heaven's Retribution (C)	396,000	Sat	6.45pm-8.00pm	8
23	Incredible Exorcist Venture (C)	376,000	Mon	10.30pm-11.20pm	8
24	Yes Sir (C)	315,000	Sun	10.45pm-12.45pm	8

25	Chinese Cinema 2 - Fire On The Great Wall (C)	267,000	11	Sat	11.55pm-1.20am	8
26	**Crime and Passion (E)	248,000	10	Sat	9.30pm-10.30pm	5
27	America's Funniest Home Videos (E)	221,000	9	Thu	8.30pm-9.00pm	5
28	Screen 8 - Silent Romance (C)/MI	214,000	9	Sun	3.15pm-5.00pm	8
29	Friday Movie - Dead Poets Society (E)	196,000	8	Fri	10.45pm-1.20am	5
30	Starzinger (C)	194,000	8	Sun	10.25am-10.45am	8

* Rating is computed as the percentage of 4+ watching the programme.
** SBC--Produced Programme

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

by

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Introduction

My comment and presentation will focus on the economic characteristics of the population. A careful study of the Advance Data Release shows that there are some broad general trends on the economic characteristics of the population that are fairly obvious and most of the data and tables are not surprising. The data show that more young people are staying in school longer; female labour force participation increased for all ethnic groups; and there was some professional occupational upgrading.

Instead of using the relatively limited data release, I will focus on three points and draw up some policy implications with a more futuristic kind of perspective.

1. The Phenomenon of Everybody Becoming An Employee

Table 1 shows that the percentage of active CPF contributors (employees) in the labour force has been rising steadily to reach 80% in the 1980s. More significantly, Table 2 indicates that compared to the overall working population, employers as a group are much less educated. This was the result of our MNC-dependent development strategy since the mid-1960s which resulted in the formation of a subsidiary economy staffed by employees. This was in stark contrast to the other NIEs whose economies are largely based on domestic firms.

For example, at present, about 80% of Singapore's direct exports are accounted for by the MNCs while the percentages for the other NIEs are between 10 and 20%.

While the phenomenon of everybody becoming an employee is a highly complex one, the next twenty years could witness more Singaporeans striking out on their own. On the supply side, the rise in university and Polytechnic enrolment since the early 1980s, coupled with the future development and expansion of a private or third university or an open university will significantly increase the supply of diploma and degree holders. On the demand side, the domestic economy is expected to slow down in the next 20 years, reducing opportunities for employees. In addition, at the global and regional levels, the next twenty years is likely to witness the regionalisation of trading groups and a far less generous OECD in investment outflows and market access. On the other hand, with gathering momentum in liberalization and deregulation, coupled with the proposed ASEAN FTA, the ASEAN region is likely to become a major growth area. Our local firms are more familiar with the region than the OECD markets and the scope for them to form partnerships and alliances with firms in the other ASEAN countries would be greatly enhanced in the future. Thus, while the whole phenomenon is highly complex with the influence of socio-political factors playing an important role, I think the economic push and pull factors are likely to lead to a gradual increase of domestic entrepreneurs, compared to the situations in the 1960s-1980s. This is significant because it has implications for the resilience of the domestic economy. One can even question whether a country can become developed based solely on a subsidiary economic structure.

2.   The Middle Class Squeeze

Table 3 shows that income distribution in Singapore has improved significantly from 1966 to 1979.   This was due to the fact that the labour intensive industrialization process during this period created employment opportunities to soak up unemployment, provided jobs for women to enter the labour force and generally spread income to the lower strata of society. However, since 1979, the Gini ratio indicated that income distribution has deteriorated. I think this is due to the peculiar wage structure of the economy.   Since Singapore is an open economy, free mobility of capital and skilled labour resulted in the top 10% of our wage level being pegged to the OECD countries.   On the other hand, the opening of our door to unskilled and semi-skilled workers from the region resulted in the lower 30% of our wage level being pegged to the regional economies.   This pull on either side resulted in a highly unequal distribution of income.   Social and political harmony, however, was maintained largely because for the lower 70% of the population, there was a whole range of direct and hidden subsidies in housing prices, lower interests financing, generous period of mortgage payment and cheap and   accessible public transport.   They live in a "happy universe." Thus, under the one-man-vote system, the so-called HDB heartlands are well taken care of.   This is our counterpart to the agricultural sector in other industrialized countries, a constituency subsidized for political reason.

As the top 10% of the population enjoy OECD wages and some third world prices, they are relatively well off.   Moreover, as in any other society, they constitute the elite establishment who formulate the rules of the game.   They do not get or need any government support.

The 20% in between, increasingly consisting of the younger population, perhaps aged 25-35, found themselves in a political "no man's land." They do not receive the various subsidies for the lower 70%. Left to market forces, they find themselves outbid by the purchasing power of the top 10% and foreign capital inflows in private property, car and other trappings of the good life. Unfortunately, the Census Advance Data Release does not have any data on income. It is possible that during the 1980s, this group, while being better off in nominal income, and in real income if deflated by prices of food, consumer goods and durables, might find themselves worse off if their income were deflated by rising asset prices like private property and car prices. It would be useful to use the 1980 and 1990 census data to analyze that.

I think perhaps the migration pattern reflects this middle class squeeze. While the phenomenon is highly complex, there is some indication that this 20% group, being diffused and not concentrated in any constituency and not having political or decision making power, have chosen to migrate.

With rising aspiration and increasing opportunities for education, the 20% could increase in the future. It would be politically problematic if for this group of increasingly young people, better training and higher income did not lead to higher real purchasing power at the end of the hard journey. They would be disillusioned. The government might wish to review her policy on land, private property and car ownership to help this group who are presently in a political "no man's land."

Table 1

Active CPF Contributors as Percent of Labour Force

1967	44.4
1970	59.9
1975	77.0
1980	79.5
1984	79.4
1990	80.1

Table 2

Educational Profile of Working Population

	Total	Employer
Total	100.0	100.0
Below Primary	18.6	26.4
Completed Primary	14.7	15.4
Lower Secondary	19.6	19.8
Secondary	28.4	24.4
Upper Secondary	8.1	5.7
Polytechnic	4.2	2.2
University	6.3	6.1

Table 3

GINI RATIO

1966	0.498
1975	0.448
1979	0.424
1982	0.465
1984	0.474

MODE OF TRANSPORT

by

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Introduction

This short paper highlights the 1990 census findings on mode of transport, their implication for planning and urban development and the need for transport planning to be fully integrated within the physical planning framework.

Census Findings: Mode of Transport

A comparison of the census findings for 1980 and 1990 shows fairly clearly that while the predominant mode of transport to work is still public transport (56%), there is no significant shift in transport mode with the introduction of the MRT to our transport network (Table 1). There is, however, a slight increase in the percentage of workforce commuting to work by car from 13.6% to 16.7%. This is not surprising given the rising affluence of Singaporeans over the last ten years and the steady increase in car population (Figure 1). Nonetheless, it should be noted that of the 56% of our workforce commuting to work by public transport about 10% did so using the MRT. There is therefore a lot of scope to further improve the usage of the MRT as an important mode of transport to ensure the achievement of the objectives of our land-transport policy -- free-flowing traffic and maximum accessibility.

<u>Planning Implications</u>

Indeed, the census results and the increase in car population show that cars are and will most likely be part of the Singaporean lifestyle. There is however a need to maintain a proper balance because having a car that gets nowhere because of traffic jam is frustrating. The key to strike a proper balance is to provide an attractive public transport alternative by increasing the coverage of our rail network and by judicious physical planning to locate major activity generators at locations most accessible by mass transit. This is also the reason why systematic town planning has long been recognized as a key factor in our land transport policy (Figure 2).

In sum, to achieve the objectives of free-flowing traffic and maximum accessibility we must integrate transport planning within the overall physical planning framework. In this way, our road and mass transit networks will form an integral part of and support our land development strategy envisaged in the Singapore Concept Plan. The Singapore Concept Plan, first formulated in 1971, is an integrated land use and transport plan that guides the building up of our transport and other infrastructure in tandem with land development. In our current review and refinement of the Concept Plan, great attention has been paid to the development of a Strategic Transportation Plan as a key component of the Concept Plan, alongside the Leisure Master Plan, the Natural Environment Plan and others (Figure 3).

Strategic Transportation Plan (STP)

As a long-term strategic plan, the STP aims to achieve the following objectives:-

(1)   To provide the overall long-term framework for mobility to support urban and economic development;

(2)   To test the ultimate capacity of a total and integrated system of transport facilities;

(3)   To provide the best possible public transport network as an attractive alternative to the private car; and

(4)   To enable intensification of development at locations most accessible by public transport.

The focus of the STP is on the road and rail network although many other important transport facilities such as pedestrian network, car parking facilities, bicycle network, ferry landing facilities, etc are also included for review to ensure its comprehensiveness (Figure 4).

Constellation Concept and Decentralization of Commercial Activities

One of the most important components of the Strategic Plan that shows its close integration with the physical development strategy is the proposal to decentralize commercial activities to locations that are most accessible by mass transit (MRT) and well served by the expressway and road network. Such locations are also designated for high intensity development and are arranged in a "constellation-like" manner at mass transit nodes linked by MRT or light rail and

served by the expressway network. These nodes are the regional, sub-regional and fringe centres around the Central Area (Figure 5). These centres are planned to function in its respective capacities as centres for business, employment, shopping, entertainment and cultural activities. In other words, these centres are heavy activity or trip generators that are also at the most accessible locations by mass transit. The benefit of such a strategy is to give workers and residents maximum accessibility with the choice not to commute long distance to work, shop and entertain and the choice to have a convenient, efficient and comfortable mass transit system as an alternative to the private car. Furthermore, it also allows the intensification of development at the most accessible locations by mass transit and ensures free flowing traffic.

Table 1

Mode of Transport to Work
1980 and 1990

Transport Mode	1980 (%)	1990 (%)
Car only	13.6	16.7
Bus only	56.0	46.1
MRT/MRT & bus	-	9.9
Others	13.0	15.4
Not required	17.4	11.9

Source: Department of Statistics, Census of Population 1990; Advance Data . Release, May 1991.

FIGURE 1   CAR POPULATION & PER CAPITA INCOME

Cars (in thousands) $(in thousands at 1985 market price)
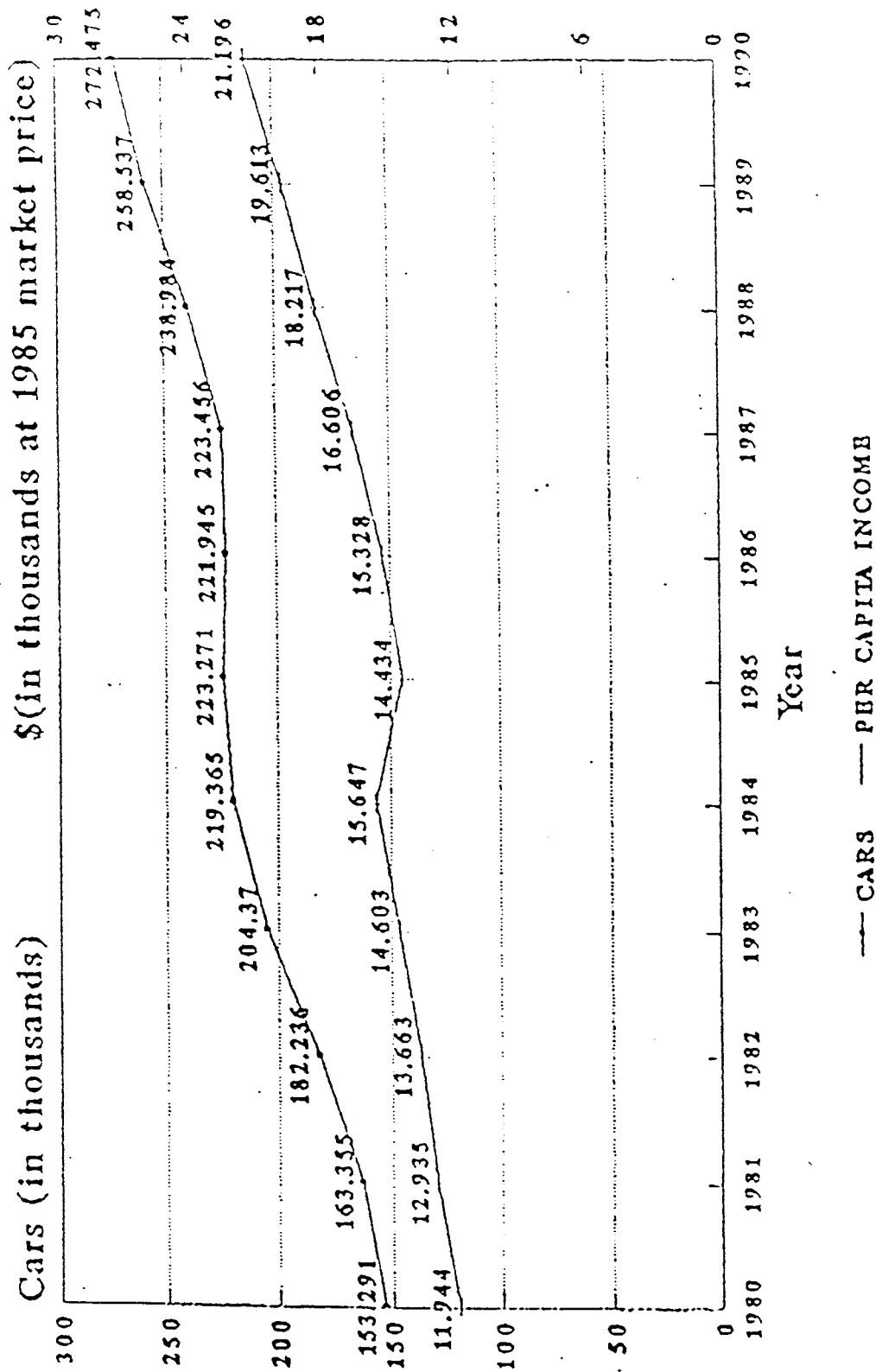
FIGURE 2   FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO A LAND TRANSPORT POLICY THAT ENSURES FREE-FLOWING TRAFFIC AND MAXIMUM ACCESSIBILITY
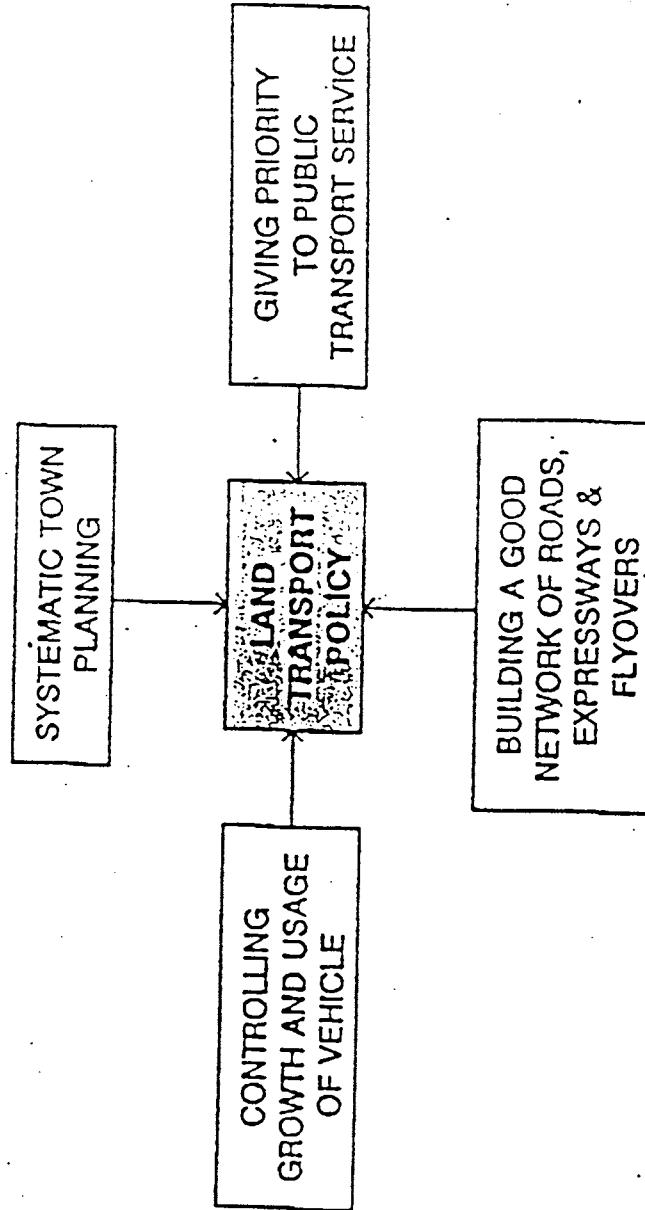
FIGURE 3

OVERALL FRAMEWORK (CONCEPT PLAN WORK)
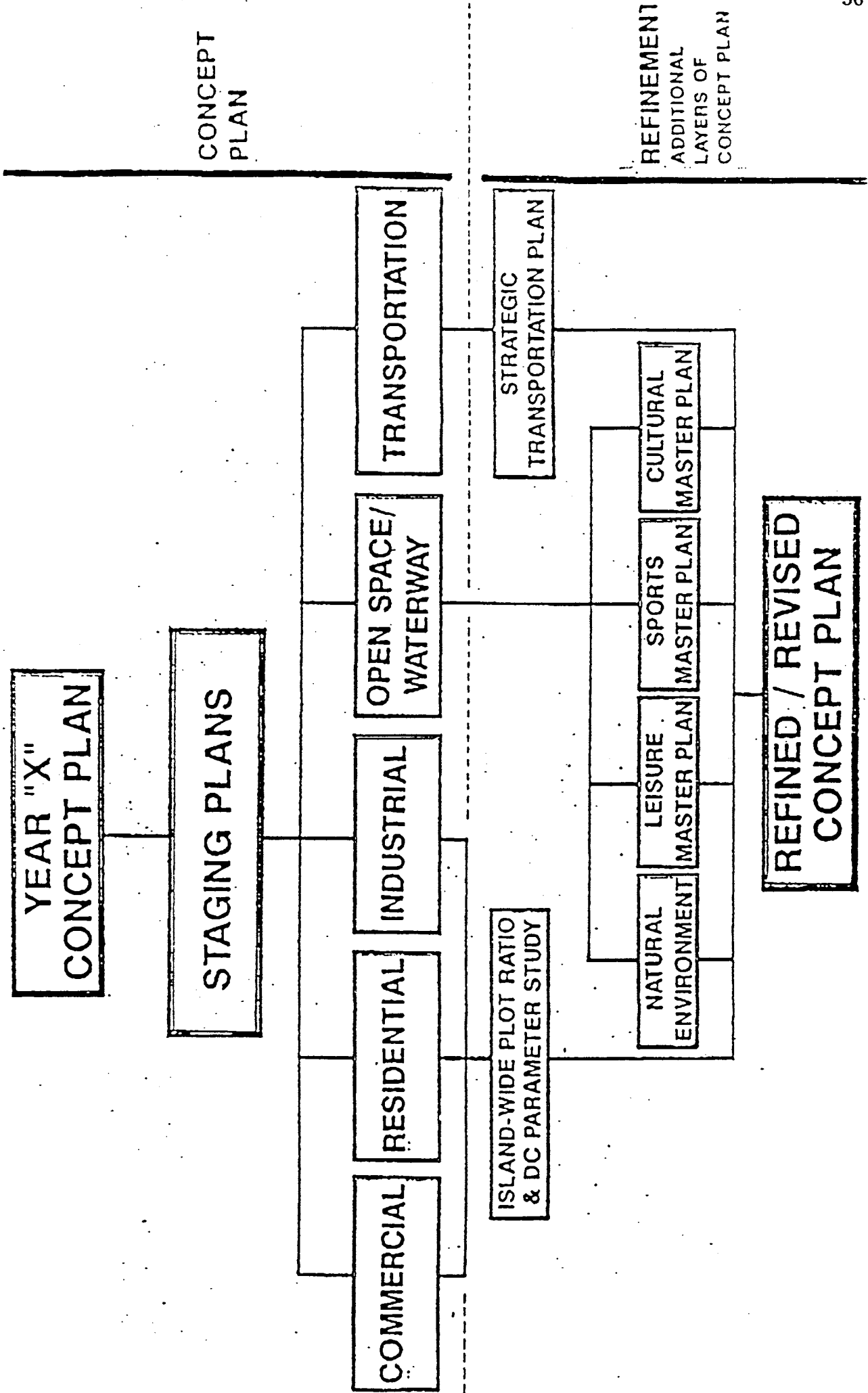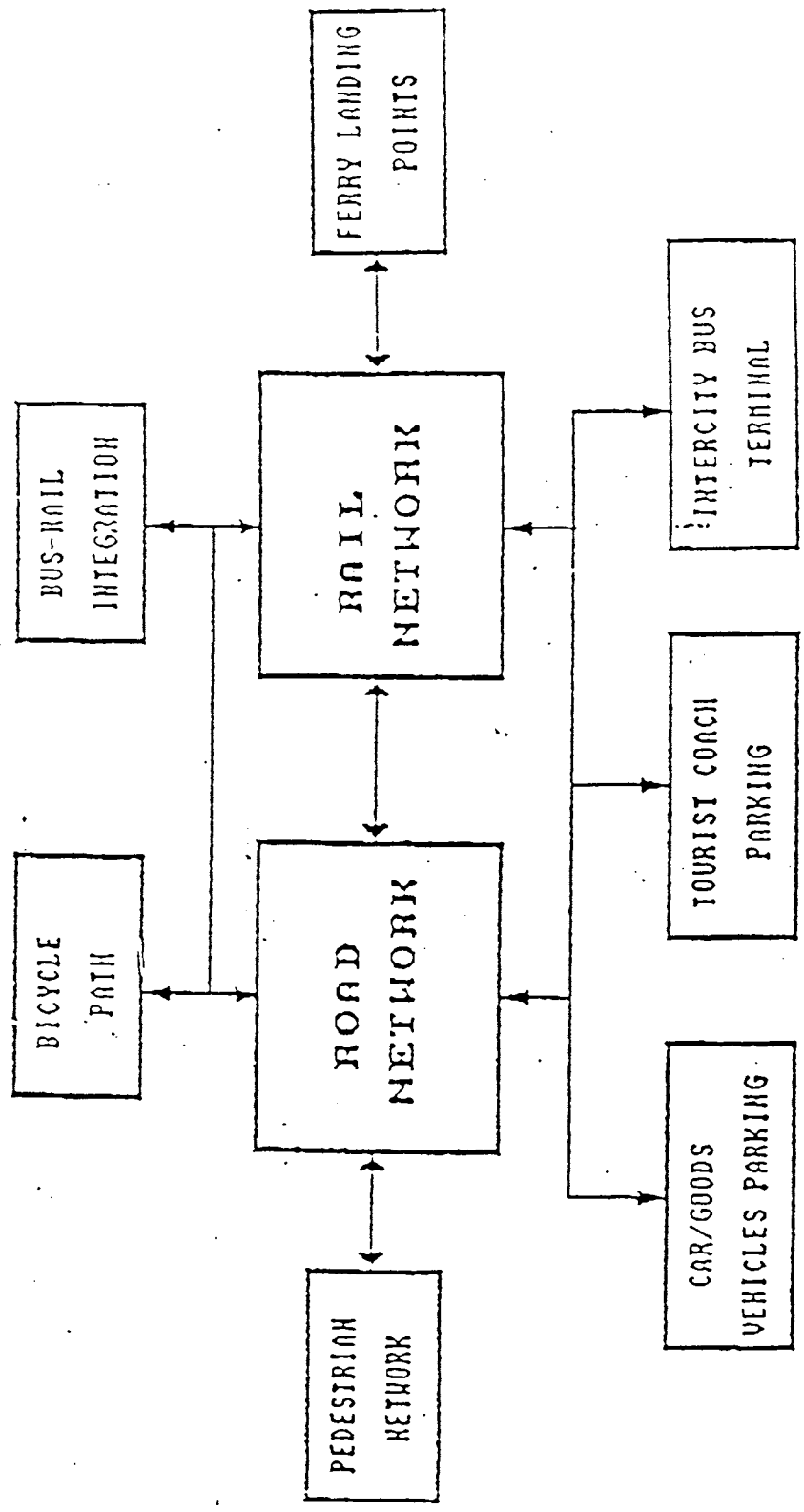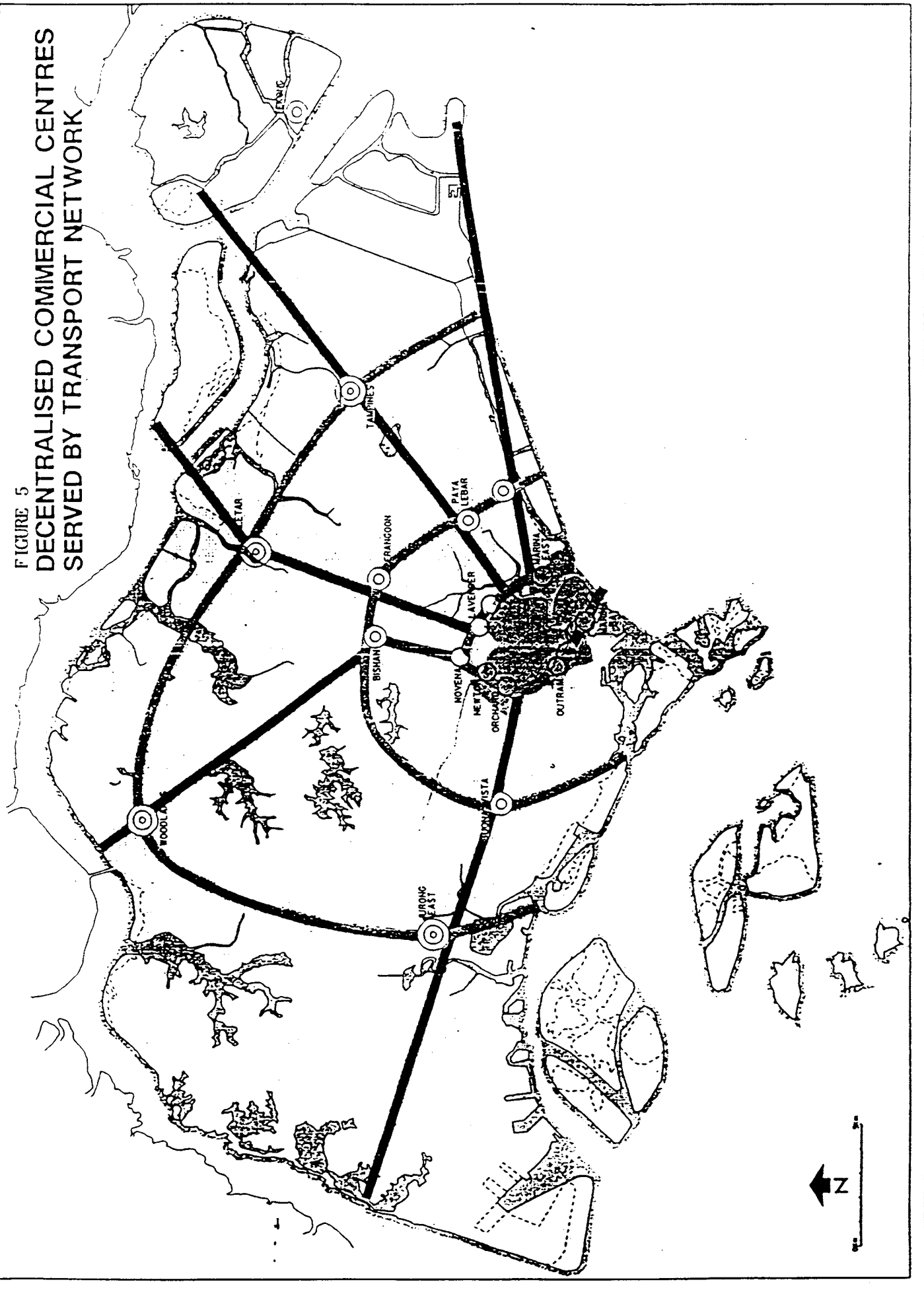
FIGURE 4   'LINKAGES' BETWEEN CONCEPT PAPERS

FIGURE 5
DECENTRALISED COMMERCIAL CENTRES
SERVED BY TRANSPORT NETWORK

HOUSEHOLD AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

by

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Housing and Development Board

Introduction

The Census allows us to track the nation's progress and alerts us on emerging trends. I will highlight three issues and trends for discussion. First, home ownership. Second, the profile of rental flat tenants. Third, housing standards and the pressure on land.

Home Ownership

2   Home ownership is undoubtedly a feather in our cap. Home ownership rose from 59% in 1980 to 90% in 1990. I should also add that we achieved this with bigger and better homes. In the developed countries, home ownership is typically around 60-70%. The objective of full home ownership is well within reach. We are likely to be the first country in the world to achieve full home ownership.

3   What I would like to draw your attention to is the manner in which Singapore achieved this. In most countries, the government encourages home ownership by allowing mortgage interest payments to be deductible for tax purposes. Such an approach tends to favour the more well-to-do. The bigger the house, the bigger the mortgage interest payments. The higher the income, the greater the tax benefits. In Singapore, however, government encourages home ownership directly through the HDB. HDB builds the flats as cost-effectively as

possible. The prices are made affordable. The smaller flats enjoy a bigger subsidy. In this way, home ownership has been the government's most effective instrument for helping the less well-off members of our society.

4   Being a multi-racial society, we are particularly pleased that this process has benefitted all races. Home ownership in the Indian community was 17% below the national average in 1980. This was narrowed to 5% in 1990. Home ownership in the Malay community has overtaken the national average.

Profile of Rental Flat Tenants

5   With the dramatic increase in home ownership, we can expect a corresponding drop in rental housing. The Census shows that rental housing indeed dropped from 21.8% in 1980 to 7.4% in 1990.

Again all races reflected this improvement; the Indian community from 21.3% in 1980 to 11.8% in 1990 and the Malay community, more dramatically, from 30.3% to 6.4%.

6   This raises an important question. Did the improvement reflect social mobility across the board or is there a segment of the population that has been left behind? In other words, did the benefits of economic development in the last decade spread to the various sectors of the population?

7   We do not have longitudinal studies to track the social mobility of specific groups. Let me attempt to answer this issue by looking at proxy indicators. First,

the number of 1-Room rentals, the smallest flat that we rent out, has dropped drastically. In 1981, there were 57,400. In 1990, there were only 19,000 or about one-third of the number in 1981. The improvement is seen in all the races. The Malay community however showed the greatest improvement from 11,200 households in 1-Room rentals flats in 1981 to only 2,200 households in 1990.

8   Another parameter is how long the tenants have stayed in rental flats. In 1981, the average length of stay among the 97,200 rental tenants is 7.0 years. In 1990, the average length of stay among the 45,000 tenants is 9.9 years. More specifically, only 19,000 households have a length of stay greater than 10 years.

9   These numbers do not occur naturally. They happen because government consciously made a special effort to assist low income families to upgrade themselves and own their own homes. Such schemes include affordable three-room flat prices, low mortgage interest rates, small down payments, longer repayment schemes, ballooning payment arrangements and so on.

10   Helping the low income to upgrade themselves is high on our agenda. We are finalising a comprehensive review and the Minister for National Development outlined the main thrusts of our efforts in Parliament recently. First, HDB will extend the assistance schemes. With some additional assistance, more tenants will be able to own their homes. Second, despite Government's efforts to encourage and assist citizens to own their flats, there will remain a small number of families who will continue to need rental housing. The physical standards and

quality of rental flats will be improved under HDB's Upgrading Programme. In this way we can ensure that everyone has a share in the economic development of Singapore, without undermining the motivation and incentive that spur individual effort.

Housing Standards and the Pressure on Land

11   The final part of my comments is to sound a cautionary note. In the last decade we have seen a vast improvement in housing standards. For the future we expect the household size to drop further. At the same time, the average size of our homes is increasing. It was estimated that Singaporeans enjoyed 20 sq m of residential floor area per person in 1990. In the Concept Plan, we have catered for 30-35 sq m per person. This will inevitably put more pressure on land. We should try to satisfy people's aspirations for better homes not only through bigger and bigger homes but in terms of a better total living environment, more imaginative layout planning, better building design and better finishes. In this way, we can strike a balance and achieve better homes without an overly built-up environment.

Conclusion

12   Our efforts to make Singapore a better place to live in will continue. We hope that in the next Census, we can give a good account of our efforts just as we did in the recent Census.

DISCUSSION

1.   Social Class and Language Use.

A question was raised on whether there was a class division in Singapore between English speakers and non-English speakers. The opinions on this appeared to be divided. There was one view that there was a split among the younger adults, with the educated speaking English and manifesting a whole different orientation in terms of religion, lifestyle, and so forth, from the less-educated. Another view, however, was that the compartmentalisation between the Mandarin-speaking, not-so-educated and the English-speaking, educated was slowly and steadily breaking down. According to this view, the issue faced in the promotion of Mandarin and the Speak Mandarin campaign was how to make Mandarin a living language so that it will be used by all and not be dominated by one class.

2.   Is English a foreign or local language?

This distinction was, however, thought to be important because of its psychological and cultural implications. One point of view was that while Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong has again expressed concern with the problem of loss of cultural values in connection with the use of English, there was really no alternative but to continually make effort to minimize its negative side-effects once English has been chosen as the language of administration and instruction. Another view, however, was that English can, and has been, used effectively in local plays and dramas to deal with local issues and local values.

3.   Social Class and Ethnicity.

The idea that the phenomenon of the underclass was a function of individual background and not ethnicity was questioned. It was argued, moreover, that if being in the underclass was not a function of ethnicity, then national rather than communal solutions to the problem of the underclass (such as Mendaki and Sinda) should be sought. It was clarified that the conclusion was arrived at on the basis of comparison of the ethnic profiles of the underclass. According to this view, the more disturbing trend was the divide between the educated and the less-educated or underclass who did not share language or religion, with no common institutions (such as the monarchy or a state religion) to bind them.

4.   Role of communal help organizations (Mendaki, Sinda, etc.)

According to one view, while a national perspective to problem solving should be encouraged, communal organizations such as Mendaki and Sinda have their own important roles to play. This was because in order to reach out to households of different characteristics at the grassroot level, it was only practical to speak the same language and know their culture.

5.   Foreign population and population statistics.

A question was raised about the 10% discrepancy between the estimated total population and the size of the population enumerated by the census. It was of concern as this would affect statistics such as the per capita income. Chief Statistician Paul Cheung explained that his department will not continue to publish data on the total population, including the foreign population, as this could

fluctuate widely in relation to economic conditions. He also explained that the question of whether to include the foreign workers statistics for planning purposes, and thereby also increase its visibility, was a difficult policy matter yet to be resolved.

6.   Accommodating a four-million population.

A question was raised on the quality of life with a four-million population target. It was explained that the additional population could be accomodated with further reclamation which could add up to 20% more land area than at present. It was, however, also acknowledged that there were limits to physical expansion. Hence there will have to be more imaginative use of space and some activities will have to be expanded beyond Singapore's physical limits (e.g. by treating Johore, Batam and elsewhere as places for recreational).

7.   Social security and the elderly.

There was a concern that a large group of the elderly population may not be adequately protected for the future as they have only very low CPF accounts or an amount not high enough in their Medisave accounts to cover the present inflation in medical and other costs. It was argued that this could be an important political problem in the 1990s.

8.   Defining of social class.

Questions were raised on the definition and criteria for classification of social class in Singapore. In the present forum alone, several categorizations of

Singaporeans into social classes were used, some of which were contradictory. One participant noted, for example, that while one panelist cited data from a Straits Times survey which showed that 70% of the population considered themselves "middle-class," another panelist had suggested that this was in fact the size of the "HDB heartland," the beneficiaries of government subsidies. The latter had also identified the middle-class as the 20% belonging in the "no man's land," squeezed between the subsidy receivers and the top 10% earning OECD level wages. This figure was again disputed. The participant also pointed out that there was no mention of the "working class." The discussion clearly pointed to the necessity of identifying social class indicators for Singapore.