Today there is in India a growing awareness of the country's urban problems, particularly of the need to provide houses for the homeless, and also for the millions living in urban slums. In the fourth Five Year Plan, a sum of Rs. 60 crores is being considered for slum clearance and improvement. It is still a very small amount, given the magnitude of the problem, but it is twice the sum sanctioned for that very purpose in the third Plan. At a stage of development similar to that of India today, no Western country envisaged any large scale slum clearance and rehousing schemes. It is only a few decades ago that the highly industrialized and developed countries of the West, embarked on national policies of slum clearance and rehousing.

It is sometimes said that progress is faster the more recently it occurs. Though not universally true, that saying applies often to social change and to the higher aspirations and desire for reform to which it gives rise. In India resources are limited and from the purely economic point of view, investments in slum clearance and rehousing may not perhaps be the most "productive". However, social consciousness has developed to such a degree that we cannot any longer safely ignore the plight of India's homeless millions. If in India there is talk of slum clearance when there are still so many with no house at all, it is also because, unlike other more developed countries, many of our slums are not simply decaying or dilapidated dwellings, but improvised and temporary shelters, without urban services and sanitary facilities, and that frequently do not even provide enough protection against the inclemencies of the weather. These slums cannot be simply improved, but must be demolished and replaced by other dwellings.1

* Dr. Francis Ivern, S. J., is an Urban Sociologist on the Staff of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

1 In 1961, there was a shortage of more than 10 million houses in the country. In rural areas about 73% of the household live in 'kutcha' and about 2% in 'pucca' houses; in urban areas such houses are about 25% and 8% respectively, the remaining ones, both in the rural and urban areas, being of the mixed type, i.e. partly 'kutcha' and partly 'pucca': cfr. Country Statement for India, Asian Population Conference, New Delhi, 10—20 Dec. 1963, Department of Statistics, Government of India, New Delhi, 1963, p. 29. In 1958, the number of houses totally unfit for human habitation in India was estimated at a minimum of 1.15 million: cfr. Report of Advisory Committee on Slum Clearance, 18 July, 1958, p. 5.
The main reason for suppressing slums and rehousing the people living in them, is the right all men have to a decent house. However, at the basis of all slum clearance and rehousing policies there is also the assumption that better houses will make for healthier and happier families. Social workers tell us it is impossible to lead a normal family life in the overcrowded and insanitary conditions of urban slums. We are frequently reminded that sickness, poverty, vice, crime and other social evils are closely associated with slum areas. We know, therefore, what to avoid: the slums and their adverse - physical and social consequences. But the most scientific correlation between slums, and, let us say, juvenile delinquency, is of little aid to the architects or planners of new housing developments. They won't reproduce the slums in any case. They need more constructive criteria than the mere absence of disease or crime. What interests them is the social impact rehousing can have today on the life of individuals and communities.²

During these last years quite a number of works on urban sociology have been published in India. The growing interest in Urban Community Development—till recently an unexplored field—has provided us with valuable information on living conditions in urban slums. We do not yet have any scientific study, however, showing the effects of rehousing on the individual and community life of former slum dwellers. Even the numerous surveys conducted in Europe and U.S.A. in this particular field, are limited in scope and their conclusions cannot yet be generalized. Most of those studies only enable us to establish certain correlations between a variable still generic and vague called "rehousing" and other variables such as health, morale, adjustment, social relationships and social structure. The exact relation between specific aspects of rehousing and the concrete positive or negative effects attributed to it, has still to be clearly defined. Those studies, nevertheless, though conducted in other countries and still at an experimental stage, do provide us with abundant and interesting findings relevant to conditions prevailing here in India. They point to research areas and hypothesis that should be investigated and tested in the new housing developments being built under India’s incipient policy of slum clearance and rehousing.

The physical effects of rehousing.— Rehousing has an effect both on the physical and social life of people living before in slums. Though, for the sake of clarity, we shall consider separately these two effects, they are closely interrelated.

Material and physical changes are easier to determine and measure than social changes. Numerous surveys, both in U.K. and U.S.A., show a substantial and relatively quick decline of sickness and mortality after rehousing. Tuberculosis and other contagious diseases are the most affected by the changed housing conditions. The Dutch experience in rehousing "problem families" after II World War confirms the betterment of general health conditions in new housing projects. Other studies reveal that when people are transferred from slums to better dwellings, not only their health improves, but there is also a marked amelioration in the care of the home, in the cleanliness and nutrition of children and in the way people

behave. These findings are not surprising and could be confirmed by many social workers engaged in urban community development in India. But it is interesting to note that the physical effects of rehousing are not always positive. In some cases death rates during the first five years after rehousing were higher—even as much as by 46%—than those during the five years preceding the transfer of the same families from the slums. This paradoxical finding can be partly explained, at least for the first few months following the resettlement of people in new quarters, by the lack of group immunity to common communicable diseases which has been observed in other newly assembled groups such as army recruits. But the fact that death rates remained higher for a considerable period after rehousing requires another explanation: The surveys show that the higher rents families had to pay for their new dwellings at the expense of their already meagre diet, were mainly responsible for the increased mortality. This finding cannot be generalized, but it shows the complexity of the rehousing problem and the danger of hasty solutions. New houses often mean, not only higher rents, but also more money spent, e.g., on furniture and journey to work. The quantity and quality of food consumption may suffer, and this may result, if not in higher mortality rates, at least in the increase of diseases arising from malnutrition. In India, where the poor classes have already a very scantly diet, the economic consequences of rehousing should be carefully weighed.

Studies undertaken to test the effects of housing on health and performance, show that children of rehoused families attending city public schools, were more likely to be promoted at the normal pace, while children living in slums were being held back more often. The reason was not, as it had been originally anticipated, because the new houses provided school children with more room, and hence greater opportunity to study and do homework unhampered by interruptions from other family members. But better school performance among rehoused children was simply the result of more regular daily school attendance. This in turn was the effect of less illness and morbidity after rehousing. The social effects of rehousing: (a) Morale and general adjustment.—Crime, begging and juvenile delinquency seem to decrease when people move from slums to better houses. However, the effect of rehousing on these pathological expressions of social disorganization that are usually more common in slums, is not so evident. Delinquency, crime and vice are associated with a whole series of factors of which housing is only one. It has still to be proved that any noticeable reduction of these so called "social evils" will result from the mere improvement of housing in its physical

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aspects, if other factors remain unchanged. After World War II, London slum dwellers were rehoused on the outskirts of the city. Public authorities were surprised to discover that criminal offences were on the increase in the new housing developments. The reason was simple: The physical structures had been improved, but the social and functional aspects of housing had been neglected. For the slum dwellers rehousing meant often to break up old friendships, to give up the community centres and the places where they used to gather to talk and recreate. In the new surroundings, with new and better houses, but no social amenities of any kind, families experienced loneliness and boredom, and wished to return to the overcrowded and dilapidated quarters they had just left.

In the following pages we would like to stress the influence of rehousing on those aspects of social life that, by the fact of being more common and ordinary, are often also less known. One of the first to analyse the social effects of slum clearance and rehousing was F. S. Chapin. His studies of "Summer Field Project" at Minneapolis, as early as 1935, marked the beginning of sociological research in that domain. In later studies Chapin, with the help of elaborate sociometric scales, measured the effects of rehousing on slum dwellers in four areas: morale, general adjustment, social participation and social status. Though Chapin's methodology was excellent, his pioneering research gave modest results: After rehousing there was an overall improvement in the four aspects studied, but only the changes in social participation and social status proved statistically significant. Later research conducted by others both in and outside U.S.A., produced more substantial data.

After rehousing people who before were "hostile and hopeless", become "friendly and cooperative". Other positive manifestations of morale and general adjustment are: the pride residents express for their new neighbourhood; the feeling that they are getting their money's worth for the higher rents they have to pay; the fact that women like the new houses and comment favourably on several aspects of the new surroundings, e.g. the safety of the children's play places; and finally the people's greater optimism and satisfaction with their personal state of affairs.

But here again, the effect of rehousing on people's morale cannot be always described as favourable. Studies conducted in different countries report a high percentage of residents of new housing estates wishing to leave, and many of them de facto leaving the area. Some degree of turn-over is unavoidable when large numbers of people

8 Smith, M. M. H., *Delinquency and Housing Conditions*, Report of meeting held at The Housing Centre, London, on 10th April, 1951, pp. 1-6 (mimeographed).
are transferred to a completely new milieu. But if we take into account that housing projects offer to the slum dwellers living conditions generally much superior to those they had before, that high residential mobility must have another explanation. The reasons given for moving out from the new houses, are not always rising aspirations, or a desire for still better living quarters, or a better neighbourhood. Excessive rents, greater distance to the place of work, and difficulties with neighbours are often mentioned as motives. But the reasons given are not necessarily the true and decisive ones. Nor rarely higher rents and increased distance to the place of work become burdensome because of a general dissatisfaction with living conditions in the new housing estates. Some surveys describe rehoused families are grieving for their "lost home", as people would grieve and mourn for a lost person.

Lack of general adjustment is the main cause of the high turnover after rehousing. Houses are sometimes not adapted to families' changing size and structure, and rents are too high. But often lack of adjustment is not caused by the quality or design of the individual dwellings, but by the badly planned lay out of the housing development as a whole. Friction may arise between neighbours because houses are placed in such a way that people are brought too close together, when they would prefer more isolation and privacy. In more homogeneous communities used to frequent and informal contacts—as it is often the case among slum dwellers—the same lay out could have a favourable influence on community life. Lack of employment opportunities is also one of the factors driving people away from recently constructed housing projects.

Physical planning is not enough. Rehousing will not lead to happier families if no account is taken of the social and economic needs of the people and nothing is done to encourage the creation and development of community life in the new neighbourhoods. It is revealing to compare the social amenities and community facilities of new housing projects—some situated on the city suburbs and relatively isolated—with those of independent towns of more or less the same size. One rehousing project, e.g., had only 1 school, 1 play ground, and 13 small clubs and associations for the young and the adult. On the other hand, a little town with half that population, had 4 schools, 3 play grounds, 22 clubs or associations, and besides, 11 places of worship, 4 consumers stores, 7 small hotels, 1 library, 1 cinema, 1 post office and 1 public hall.

Slum clearance and rehousing is a delicate operation demanding from the people involved considerable sacrifices and an effort to adapt to new conditions. Slum dwellers are often the less prepared to do that. That is why a long period of preparation and reeducation before rehousing and a close, follow up after rehousing are necessary.

(b) Social relations.—Studies on morale and general adjustment confirm the hypothesis that the adaptation to housing in its physical aspects is partly conditioned by the adaptation to the social environment in which one lives. Social adjustment can be measured by the degree in which individuals take part in the life of the group. Slums are often presented to us as typical and extreme examples of the individualism and social disorganization that has characterized the urbanization process. That is why one of the main objectives of Urban Community Development in India is defined as being "to create and develop community consciousness and community integration." What seems to distinguish slums, however, is not so much extreme individualism and lack of social relationships, but rather a type of social organization different from that found in other urban areas. In slums social contacts are generally informal, spontaneous, and based on primary or face to face groups like the family. In more developed urban communities social relations are more formal, more organized, and transcend the kinship groups and immediate neighbourhood. In the slums there is "social interaction", but not "social participation". The social relationship pattern is of the "Gemeinschaft" type, to use Tonnies expression.

Rehousing marks the transition from an informal and spontaneous, to a more formal, reserved and isolated existence. Relations based on kinship tend to diminish, while friendly relations with neighbours are on the increase. The latter are no longer circumscribed to the immediate neighbourhood, but embrace people living in other parts of the city. Slum dwellers become more and more city dwellers.

The informal pattern of social interaction typical of slums, however, may remain for a long time even after rehousing. We know of rehousing schemes that spared no effort to keep intact the social structure and relationships existing in the old slum quarters. To that purpose, whole groups of families living in the same street or neighbourhood, were moved simultaneously and placed together in the new housing project. Fifteen years later, a survey was conducted and formal social relationships were found to be almost inextinct. The few organized activities in the housing development had originated only to satisfy concrete and transient needs, and disappeared once the immediate objectives had been achieved. But even then a division could be detected among the residents into two opposite groups: those who had attained a somewhat higher standard of living after rehousing, and considered themselves the "respectable tenants" in opposition to the so called "rough tenants". In other rehousing developments a similar polarization took place: At one extreme, the respectable tenants, more reserved and isolated; and at the other, the rough tenants, more sociable. In the planning of a rehousing scheme, with its accompanying community services, cultural and recreational activities, some consideration should be given to the pattern

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17Neighbourhood and Community, p. 106.
See also, Durant, R., op. cit., p. 277; Young, T., op. cit., pp. X, 18-19.
21Neighbourhood and Community, p. 92.
of social relationships of a given group, and also to the possible changes that can take place after rehousing, along the lines described above.

(c) Social structure: uniformity vs. differentiation.—Should we rehouse slum dwellers in separate housing developments, or on the contrary place them in neighbourhoods where people of different social class or status also reside? Should we create homogeneous or heterogenous social groups? De facto, in many countries, public housing policies have encouraged, not always intentionally, a sharp social and functional segregation. Standardization of housing types, zoning laws and uniform rents have contributed towards the creation of communities homogeneous from the socio-economic point of view. Since by rehousing slum dwellers we aim at improving not physical structures, but also community living, the question may be legitimately raised whether this latter objective is better achieved in homogeneous or heterogeneous settlements. The choice is not easy. If slum people are rehoused together, those among them who wish to rise in society and attain a minimum of respectability, are inclined to move out of the rehousing estate that, because of the origin of the residents, is held in low esteem by the other citizens. Another drawback of neighbourhoods occupied exclusively by former slum dwellers, is the difficulty of finding leaders capable of mustering enough authority to organize group activities, and contribute to develop the social life of the group. Sometimes the criteria adopted to select residents for low cost housing projects, result ipso facto in the elimination of all potential leaders. If local leadership is not forthcoming, residents tend to depend entirely on outside leaders, often on those responsible for the administration of project. Excessive dependence on outsiders is frequently a source of tensions and dissatisfaction.

All agree it is difficult to create some kind of social structure and organization in homogeneous communities, where specialization and social differentiation are entirely lacking. Many advocate "socially balanced" communities, comprising a mixture of social classes, family types and age groups. Is that socially feasible? Community life develops as a rule among individuals belonging to similar social classes and sharing common interests. Experience shows that we shall not suppress class distinction by simply bringing different classes physically together in the same street or neighbourhood. Social and functional segregation are a phenomenon common both to public and private housing developments. The obstacles that hamper social interaction among different groups are operative everywhere. The study of the social effects of rehousing seems to indicate that mere social differentiation by itself does not favour the formation of groups. It is the degree and type of that differentiation that matters. The families we bring together in the same rehousing scheme, must belong to mutually compatible and complementary classes. This compatibility is defined not by occupation

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22 White, L. E., Community or Chaos, pp. 12-16; Bauer, C, op. cit., pp. 21-25.
24 Neighbourhood and Community, pp. 140-142; Wallace, F. C, op. cit., pp. 49-51; White, L. E., Tenement Town, p. 16.
and income alone, but also by the aspirations and social mobility of the classes involved. As we pointed out before, in homogeneous communities as far as income and occupation are concerned, divisions may arise between the "respectable" and the "rough" tenants. There is also, e.g. less compatibility between the majority of the working class and the minority within that class that wants to climb higher, than between that same working class and a lower middle class that is socially stationary or on the decline.

(d) Changes in family patterns.—We hear often about the gradual disintegration of India's traditional joint family system under the impact of social and technological changes, particularly industrialization and urbanization. When rural people migrate to cities, the joint family starts breaking up and with it the spirit of mutual aid and cooperative effort characteristic of that institution. These social changes, we are told, are more deeply felt in urban slum areas, where people are still rural in outlook, in greater need of assistance, and where formal organizations have not yet filled the vacuum created by the dismemberment of the joint family. Except for a few comparative studies on joint family patterns in urban and rural areas however, we have still few objective data on family types and structure in city slums. Are joint or quasi-joint family patterns more common in slums than in other urban areas? Do intermediary forms between the joint and nuclear family emerge in slum areas? What effect does rehousing have on the family structure of slum dwellers?

In Western countries slums are often distinguished by a family organization different from the joint family as we know it in India, but larger and more closely knit than the conjugal or nuclear family. It is known as the "extended family". In some countries this family pattern bears certain resemblance to the patriarchal family, while in others is closer to the matriarchal type. In the latter case, a whole system of relations and mutual aid, having the housewife as its focal point, is established among the members of the extended family. A bit like in ancient matriarchal societies, the male elements keep apart and organize their own groups and activities to which women have limited access. Life in the slums is polarized in relation to the extended family and to the neighbourhood "corner" or "friendship group". In the West slum society is not as a rule centred round the home as such. Husband, wife and even children have their own separate spheres of interest and activity. Meals in common are perhaps the only occasion for the family to get together.26

With slum clearance and rehousing a passage from the extended to the immediate, nuclear or conjugal family begins to take place. After rehousing the family regroups itself. Division of labour at home is not so sharp and rigid as in the slums. Husbands are more willing to help in certain household tasks, and women are less inclined to work for wages outside their homes.27 Women also speak with greater interest and affection about their husband and children. Rehoused families go out together more often, e.g. for picnics. This,


27In other housing estates (Sheffield and Watling) a contrary effect was observed: The number of married women working outside the home increased after rehousing. The reasons were economic and psychological: The need of companionship women felt and tried to satisfy in the place of work.
is all the more remarkable when we realize that rehousing has meant for many families an added financial burden, and shows a change not only of family organization patterns, but also of attitudes among residents.

The very structure of the new houses and the way rehousing is done, renders sometimes inevitable the transition from the extended to the immediate family. Most of the times, people are rehoused following certain priority norms that do not take into consideration existing kinship groups and family structure. The houses themselves are designed for families of the nuclear type, and new arrivals are almost forced into becoming a group of isolated households. The extended family breaks up. The old couples often remain in the old quarters, far from the new houses built outside the city or in the suburban areas.

The passage to the nuclear family is not necessarily harmful to community life and family relations. On the contrary, the change can prove beneficial. Some people, however, would like to preserve as far as possible the extended family among the urban lower classes. For these the joint or quasi-joint family system still plays a decisive role in maintaining group cohesion and stability, acts as a sort of mutual assistance agency, and contributes to diminish their feeling of insecurity. If the extended family pattern has to be safeguarded, slum families should be preferably rehoused on, or at least near the place they occupied before. In our congested cities that may not always be possible. The density of many old and dilapidated city wards is so high that all families cannot be rehoused on the spot, if reasonable density and health standards are to be kept. Building in height, even when feasible, is not always socially desirable given the social characteristics and habits of the families to be rehoused.

(e) Social status.—The passage from an informal to a formal and organized system of social relationships, from the extended to the nuclear family, and the changes in morale after rehousing, are all signs of a changing social status. Families, e.g., desire a greater reserve because they consider it distinctive of higher social class. People wish to move out from housing developments occupied exclusively by former slum dwellers, partly because their desire to rise higher in the social ladder can find no expression in a community marked by the stigmata of the slums.

Changes in social status can also be measured by changes in income and occupation, by the way children are brought up, the way a house is decorated, the amount and type of furniture and other household a family possesses. Rehousing has a positive impact on some of the sociological determinants of social status. Occupation and income, however, are a function of larger socio-economic structures, and hence are less influenced by rehousing. After settling in new houses, slum people often express the belief that they have improved their position in life, and report themselves as "rising in the world". But this perceived betterment is not always accompanied by heightened aspirations for jobs, for their children, or for home ownership. There is no significative change among rehoused families as regards occupation. Some surveys, however, do report slight changes of preference among young people in the choice of jobs or professions. This trend is more pronounced among young women who

manifest a greater desire to perform cleaner and more delicate tasks.30

The positive influence of rehousing on social status is more evident when we examine the material and cultural expression of that status in the home: furnishings, orderliness, general impression of good taste, household possessions, etc. But an improvement of social status as measured by these criteria should not be construed as implying a higher Standard of living. On the contrary, it is hot rare that after leaving the slums people sacrifice essential family needs to satisfy their desire of ostentation. The house in that case loses part of its functional value and becomes in a way an enemy of a better family life.

Conclusion.—The often repeated propositions "slums make the people" and "people make the slums", are over simplifications of a complex problem. Similarly, slum clearance and rehousing cannot be simply reduced to building better houses, nor even if they are occupied by normal and healthy families, with no traces left of the so called 'slum mentality'. Housing has a social and functional value as regards family and community life that must be taken into account by today's builders and planners, if they do not wish to be labelled "slum makers" tomorrow.