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### The National Center for Social and Criminological Research: Statement of Current Research Projects (1981)

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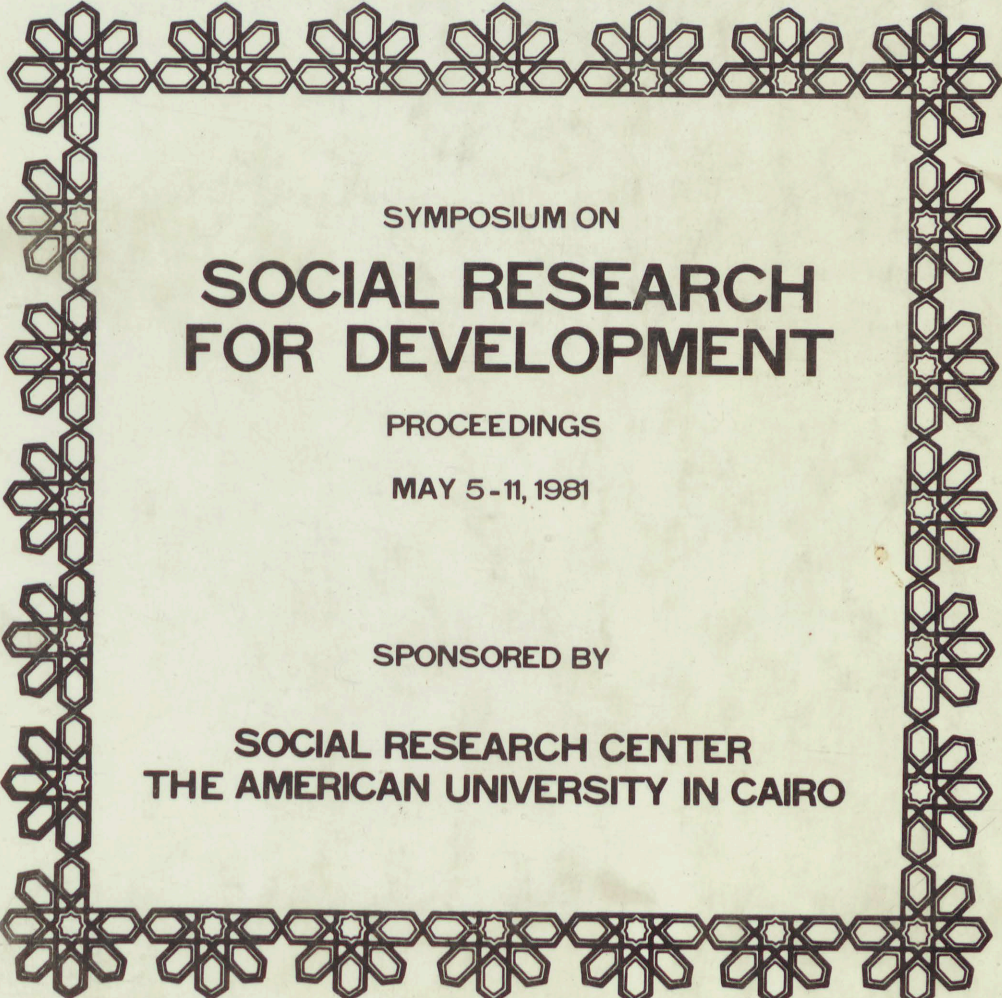
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# CAIRO PAPERS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE



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**SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER  
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The National Center for Social and  
Criminological Research  
STATEMENT OF CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS (1981)

Nahed Saleh

Despite the fact that the N.C.S.C.R. is the main governmental agency responsible for conducting social research in Egypt, it enjoys complete autonomy and has an independent budget. The Center was established in 1956 as an institute for criminological research and was reorganized and expanded in 1959 to become the National Center for Social and Criminological Research.

The Center currently pursues its multiple activities - research, training, etc. - through seventeen research units grouped under three main divisions: sociology, criminology and criminalistics. However, the distinction between disciplines and units is only made for practical reasons since many problems exceed the interest of a single unit or even a single division.

Before presenting the research projects currently being undertaken by the Center, some basic statements related to the philosophy, objectives and approaches adopted by the Center in conducting social research should be made.

The ultimate objective of a national center for social research is to rationalize the social strategies and policies pursued by the country by conducting two kinds of research: that addressed to the society and its culture and that which focusses on fundamental development problems.

Research in the N.C.S.C.R. is conducted on three levels:

- Basic objective research. This kind of research is not immediately directed towards practical ends, but its results may give a rational basis for action.
- Diagnostic research which is practically oriented and serves to assess needs, demands and services in order to understand the nature of development problems and the factors contributing to them.

- Evaluative research dealing with development programs and their effects as well as the attitudes of people concerned.

Due to the fact that most of the research problems do not come under the rubric of a single discipline and cannot be clearly classified as either sociological, economical or political, the Center has been careful in structuring its research units to represent various disciplines in each unit, and to train its staff to tackle problems on a multi-disciplined basis.

Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach, accompanied by an integrative methodology, is usually adopted the basic requirement for adequate comprehensive research.

Priorities of research topics are determined by the national goal of social development. The review of completed as well as current research is an indicator of such an orientation. The Center also conducts research suggested by planning and executive agencies:

#### CURRENT RESEARCH:

Research can be classified in relation to the social development process as follows:

- Basic objective research.
- Research dealing with development areas (rural and urban).
- Research dealing with target groups or categories, such as youth, women, children, etc.
- Research dealing with agents of development (law, education and mass-media).
- Research dealing with problems generated or hindered by development, such as population explosion, housing crises, rural migration, value conflict, crime, etc.

Space limitations have made it necessary to restrict this survey of current research projects to the last three years and to choose examples to illustrate the above classification.

#### 1. BASIC OBJECTIVE RESEARCH:

This type of research deals with the basic data needed for adequate social policy planning. Its scope is generally extended to cover both rural and urban areas on the basis of national representative samples.

"The Social Survey of Egyptian society" is one example of a basic research project. It aims to give a comprehensive scientific picture of Egyptian social conditions and a permanent updated record of formal and informal services available in order to serve as a reliable guide for planners, executive authorities, scientists and researchers. To achieve this aim, 15 research committees have been established to collect and analyze theoretical and statistical data on the following topics: population, family, social stratification, economic structure, political structure, culture, mass-media, housing, transportation, communication, education, health, social, religious and security services.

"The Basic Problems in the Egyptian Society" is another illustration of this type of research. It aims to assess the problems of Egyptian society and their priorities and importance according to different socio-economic classes from the point of view of the public, the planners, the executives and the leaders. This assessment will be used as an index for the most important problems deserving investigation. A schedule, including forty-four problems will be used, and the data will be collected by submitting the schedule to a sample representing the Egyptian population and officials.

"The Egyptian National Image" is also a basic research project: Its main purpose is to determine the basic features of the Egyptian National Image and the differences in this image according to social class, age, sex, religion, etc.

Eight measurements have been used to collect data from a sample of two and a half thousand representing labourers, farmers and intellectuals, selected from Cairo, and Upper and Lower Egypt.

Another recent research project is a

"Social Survey of Income in Egypt" which explores income, its levels and sources, factors affecting its distribution, saving and investment as well as expenditure patterns, and the reflection of these patterns on the vari-

ious features of Egyptian society in both rural and urban areas.

The study aims to identify the following:

- The different social strata in Egyptian society in the light of a number of basic variables, namely education, occupation versus land holding in rural areas, income and expenditure.
- The availability of different social services offered by the government, and access of different categories to services.
- The aspirations of social categories in terms of education, and their preferences with regard to occupation.
- The mechanisms by which various social categories.
- Patterns of consumption.
- Social mobility between different strata and within each stratum.

A sample of 4000 households from rural and urban areas has been chosen by means of a multi-phase sampling method on the level of governorates, districts/villages, and households. By this method, forty villages were covered in Lower and Upper Egypt as well as forty urban administrative subdivisions.

Two different interview schedules were structured, to reflect the differences in social and occupational structures in the rural and urban areas, in addition to direct observation, group interviewing and group discussion, which were used only in rural areas to identify the price of certain crops, financial dealings and current accounts. Considerable attention was paid to the methodological aspects and statistical techniques in order to correctly stratify the urban and rural sectors of Egypt.

## 2. RURAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Center has been involved from the very beginning in issues related to development and planning in rural and urban areas.

Intensive case studies of single communities have been conducted. The study of housing conditions in rural Giza with a view to carrying out a housing self-help project, the study of rural community development, with a view to proposing integrated development programs and the Evaluation of development programs in five rural villages are examples of this orientation.

In these case studies an effort was made to combine sociological and an-

thropological techniques. In addition to a description of each community selected, attention was given to village history, population growth, agricultural conditions, and services available. This information was gathered through participant observation and by relying on informants, formal and informal leaders and an intensive interview schedule of a household sample chosen according to the research's objectives.

A two-phased study of an action research to upgrade squatter settlements in greater Cairo is one of the latest projects undertaken in this area. The first phase was a market study and was followed by six case studies of urban settlements, five of which were in the extreme south (Helwan) and one in the extreme north (Ain Shams) of the currently developed areas.

A multi-disciplinary approach was adopted, thus giving a viable picture, from the social, architectural and medical points of view, of the six settlements and helping the designer, the planner and the executive authorities to decide on the appropriate programs needed in each.

The aim of the action research were:

- i. to give a precise description of each settlement, i.e., its historical background, the origin of its settlers, its geographical setting, population, housing conditions, economic basis, utilities and services available.
- ii. to study a stratified sample of households in each settlement to determine:
  - the socio-economic profile of the households;
  - their housing conditions (building materials, building procedures in erecting houses, design, finance, facilities, space uses, furniture and modern equipment);
  - the possible effect of the squatters' living conditions on the physical health of pre-school children, who form the most vulnerable age category;
  - the effect of physical layout on social relations, values and aspirations.
  - the needs of families in terms of utilities, facilities, and housing improvements;
  - the opinions of householders concerning the upgrading program, their suggestions concerning priorities, their willingness to cooperate in such a program, their ideas about the ways in which they can help.

Several research techniques have been used, with old people as informants; informal non-directive interviews were made at the beginning with local leaders, and then guided interviews were made with settlers, focussing on building procedure, upgrading, popular participation, needs, wants, priorities etc. These interviews suggested a series of issues and insights and were the guidelines for standardized interview; sociometric questions were added to identify informal leaders (male and female) accepted by settlers and capable, from their point of view, of playing vital roles in the upgrading program.

A dwelling schedule was used by the architects as well as minute and detailed photographs and drawings of each house, including plans, sections and elevations, and quick sketches of furniture etc. Physicians recorded the nutritional status of children by weight, height and skinfold thickness.

Architectural and medical surveys were made, after the socio-economic survey, on a limited sample of the initial survey. The results of these socio-architectural and medical studies were combined and comprehensive and reliable recommendations were made.

Attention has been paid in the study of the flow of rural people to towns and cities and its impact on urban development, since this is one of the dominant features of contemporary Egypt. Migration to Cairo, urbanization, adjustment of migrants to city life, problems due to rapid urbanization such as slum areas and migration and crime, are some of the main urban research areas in which the Center has been involved.

Equal concern has been given to industrial developments in big cities, to the evolution of legislation for industrial workers and to the needs of industrial workers, related to both their living and working conditions.

### 3. TARGET GROUPS

Any development policy is concerned with two groups: the participants, or the potential participants, and the beneficiaries of the development programs. The Center gave special attention to the development target groups. Women, youth and children were the topics of a number of both past and current researches.



## (a) Women:

Although samples in most research conducted by the Center include both sexes, and comparisons are always made between their opinions, attitudes, values, needs, aspirations and behaviour, women as a topic of research have been given special consideration over the last decade in such studies as "Woman's image in the Mass Media," "The Budget of working women in Industry," "The position of working women in factory organization," "Family Planning, from the point of view of wives," "The veil among university students," and two opinion surveys on women, the first proposing a leave with half-pay to bring up children, the other investigating the attitudes towards the status of women in Egyptian proverbs. Furthermore, recent issues of the National Review of Social Sciences were dedicated to women, a fact which indicates the increasing concern of the Center with this topic.

One of the most important current researches in this domain is "The changing social status of women in Egyptian society." This is a multi-stage re-research, the first stage being a socio-historical analysis of data pertaining to the education, employment and socio-political activities of Egyptian women, with special reference to the period following the First World War. The main part of the research however, is a fact-finding survey which is exploratory in nature. Education, employment and participation in socio-political activities are regarded as the main independent variables which have accelerated changes in the role of women.

Such changes will be studied and assessed in terms of three main areas of interaction:

- i. Family life changes will be assessed through four dimensions:
  - From economic dependence to participation in financial responsibility.
  - From full-time to part-time availability for housework.
  - From a recipient of, to a partner in decisions.
  - From constrained exposure to interpersonal interaction.
- ii. Work situation - changes will be assessed through four areas of interaction:
  - the working woman as a colleague (to males and females).
  - the working woman as a superior (to males and females).
  - the working woman as a junior colleague (to males and females).
  - the working woman as a permeable system through which home-problems leak into and affect various aspects of the work situation.

iii. Personality structure will be investigated in terms of traits, attitudes and self-image.

(b) Youth:

The problems, needs and aspirations of youth have recently attracted scientific interest at national and international level. Aware of the importance of this group, the Center has conducted a series of researches on youth. The first one, on secondary school students and on university students, tried to determine the educational, family, economic, religious, recreational, sexual, psychological and political problems of youth as well as their various needs and aspirations. They were conducted by samples at the national levels. The latest researches focussed on the social structure of Egyptian youth and aimed to investigate:

- the nature of social and cultural conditions under which the youth live.
- the quality and quantity of social, political, economic and cultural participation of youth.
- the nature of youth problems: political, social, cultural and economic.

A sample of young persons (650) of both sexes of the age category 15-30 was selected from urban and rural areas and data was collected through the administration of an interview schedule. "The role of youth in the National Movement" is another example of research in that series. It deals with the role played by youth from the Orabi movement until the Egyptian Revolution in 1952, including the revolution of 1919, the 1928-1935 period, and the events of 1946. The role of youth is analyzed in terms of the social and structural conditions in which these events happened, the most important issues which prevailed in each, the attitudes of youth regarding these issues, and their interaction with the different social forces. This research by its very nature relies to a great extent on the historical method.

"The attitudes of Egyptian intellectuals towards some youth issues" is another research project which started with a symposium held by the Center, in which a group of Egyptian intellectuals, representing different ideologies, discussed a working paper suggested by the research team on four main points:

- Youth issues deserving attention.
- Youth problems as perceived by the intellectuals.
- The factors leading to such problems.
- Suggested solutions for these problems according to the different points of view and ideologies.

The minutes of this symposium have been analyzed and conclusions have been drawn.

## (c) Children:

The Center has already conducted a large number of researches dealing with children. One of its big projects in this field was "Children's needs in Egypt" the main object of which was to furnish the planner with basic data and recommendations that would serve as a solid base for the formulation of policies to meet children's needs. Other research has been conducted on children and television, children and their theater and the socialization process and the role played by family and its impact on the personality structure of the child.

## 4. AGENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

The Center gives great consideration to agents of development such as the law, education and mass-media.

## a. Law:

Since its establishment, the Center has been reiterating the need for relating law to the social reality. In fact socio-legal studies have revealed that law is but an instrument used by the legislator to protect and regulate social interests in a given society. Furthermore, law has been used in many instances as a tool for the introduction of social change. Consequently, several researches and programs on the impact of law on socio-economic development have been initiated by the Center.

"Law and Population," one of the first researches conducted, assessed the impact of legal regulations on population problems, namely laws regulating marriage, divorce, abortion and family planning. "Agrarian reform in Egyptian society" is another type of research in this field, it includes the following different integrated studies:

- A documentary study of similar reform in the agricultural sector all over the world.
- A historical study of land ownership in Egypt prior to the agrarian reform
- An economic study on the effects of agrarian reform on social change in rural Egypt.
- A study of the agrarian legislations since 1952.

These studies ended with a social research on the effects of agrarian reform on the social structure of rural Egypt.

"Legislations and social change" is a current study which aims to assess the different legislations which have been promulgated since the Egyptian revolution in 1952, to classify these legislations according to areas, and to analyze their effects and the socio-economic changes they have generated in Egyptian society.

A special program on law and social policy has been initiated recently. It includes a series of research which seeks to assess the effects of certain legislations on the phenomena of poverty. Two projects have been launched. The first, "Social security: an attempt to deal with poverty," is a two-stage research. The first stage is an evaluation of the social aid system as it is viewed by the beneficiaries themselves, who stated the problems they encounter in dealing with the ministry. The second stage is a social survey of about one thousand poor families chosen from the beneficiaries of this system and selected from both rural and urban areas. The survey aims to assess their living conditions, their different needs and the ways in which they cope with poverty.

The second project is entitled "Providing Social and Economic Security to the Lower Stratum of the Labour Force." It seeks to evaluate the social policy adopted by the Government to evaluate the social policy adopted by the Government for marginal workers protected by Law No. 112 of 1975, who fall into various categories and constitute 1/3 of the labour force. The research seeks to evaluate the social policy in all its dimensions - education, training, employment, health and social security - which the government has adopted in dealing with these categories of the poor. Furthermore, the research aims to assess the obstacles which impede the implementation of the social security system and its application to all potential beneficiaries, which number about 4.3 million inhabitants.

b. Education:

With the massive expansion of education over the last three decades and the decline of its quality, accompanied by the excessive proportion of illiterates, education has received some attention in the research policy of the Center. This was reflected in survey research conducted on secondary school students as well as university students, and in the research of under-achievement in elementary,

preparatory and secondary schools, which determined the major psychological, social, physical, mental, and economical factors effecting the students' performance in school. Another research in the field of education is on adult education. The principal aims of this research are to find out how those responsible for adult education conceive the problem, and to assess the problems encountered in adult education and the motivations among the adult illiterates. A most recent opinion poll in the field of education deals with private lessons. This was conducted as a response to the acuteness of the private tuition problem, which reflects the failure of the formal educational system to take its full responsibility in the educational process.

c. Mass-Media:

The National Center has also conducted research in the field of mass-media, some of which deals directly with the role of mass-media in socio-economic development. One of these researches is "The Evaluation of Mass-Media in Rural Society." This started with evaluative research into the rural programmes broadcast on the radio. This is an interdisciplinary research, consisting of three subsections: one is research into the content of these programmes, which depends on a content analysis technique; the second is experimental research, which aims to test the ability of farmers to understand the content of these programmes; and the third aims to investigate the impact of rural programmes on the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of the farmers as regards aspects of socio-economic development such as adult education, family planning, the use of new techniques in agriculture, etc. A most recent study in the field of mass-media and socio-economic development is on the impact of the integration of the mass-media and service agencies on rural development. This research was conducted in four villages using an interview schedule and the sociometry technique. One of the aims of this research is to investigate the impact of mass-media on the the political and social participation of the rural citizen in the development of his village, and the role of opinion leaders in this process.

## 5. PROBLEMS GENERATED BY DEVELOPMENT

The Center has always been concerned with problems generated by development as well as those which hinder the development process such as population explosion, and housing and values conflict.

#### a. Population Explosion

There is no need to affirm that the population explosion, as a major national problem, merited the attention of the Center, which has been reflected in a series of research, for example: "The Status of Women in Relation to Fertility and Family Planning," "Law and Population," "Attitudes of Husbands and Wives Towards Family Planning," and "Values, Customs and Traditions Associated with Fertility."

#### b. Housing

The crisis caused by bad housing conditions in Egypt is attributable to various factors, foremost among which are the high rate of population increase, the massive urban immigration of large numbers of poor, illiterate and unskilled villagers, and the low average per capita income and the low rate of economic growth. The Government has been endeavouring to provide economic housing units for the low income bracket of the population in different cities throughout the country. However, the housing projects undertaken so far did not have an adequate base in the necessary social studies determining the needs and requirements of the individuals to occupy such units. Numerous problems have therefore arisen, some of which have been overcome; others are still pending. Accordingly, the Center launched a study, "Economic Housing in Old Market of Imbaba, A Study on Main in a Planned Site," with a view to shed light on the housing problems of poor people. The study aims to investigate the housing conditions in urban areas and to identify the interaction between a planned site and the inhabitants therein, thus endeavouring to find answers to the following questions:

- how could a planned housing project possibly affect the life of its inhabitants?
- how would inhabitants react to such a project?
- what are the possible changes to be brought about by them to modify their inner and outer space according to their needs and wants?

This better understanding of people and their way of life, their needs, their aspirations, and their requirements will permit the formulation of precise suggestions for the provision of a better housing environment. In the light of these general objectives and interdisciplinary method was adopted and five Com-

mittees were formed to study the social, psychological, medical, criminal and architectural aspects of this planned site.

c. Values and Socio-Economic Development:

This is one of the current research projects which started in 1979. It has an integrated research team representing several disciplines - sociology, psychology, philosophy, economy, political science and history. The whole project depends on several methods - the historical method, the comparative method and the Delphi method. It also uses several techniques - case study, content analysis, participant observation and the statistical technique. The whole project aims to investigate the relationship between the value system of Egyptian society and socio-economic development models. To fulfil this aim the project was divided into five sub-areas:

- i. The Announced Values - Political, Economic, Social and Individual: and their relationship to development models since 1952: The aim of this research is to investigate the continuity and the constancy of these values, and their consistency with socio-economic development models. The period from 1952 to 1980 was divided, according to political criteria, into five periods. The main sources of research data are political speeches and other documents. The main technique is content analysis, and both the historical and the comparative methods are used. The data will be analyzed in the context of the changes in the political, economic and social structure.
- ii. The Educational System and Values Related to Development: The aim of this research is to investigate the value system of the educational process, to discover the range of its consistency with the announced values and with the development model. This research depends mainly on a case study of the educational system with a content analysis of a sample of school books.
- iii. The Mass-Media and Values Related to Development: The aim of this research is to investigate the content of the mass-media, to assess the main values, then to examine the consistency within these values

and their consistency with the announced values and the development model.

iv. Values in the Egyptian Society: The aim of this research is to investigate the value system held by important Egyptian subcultures, by different socio-economic classes, and by different age groups, and to draw a profile of the present state of the Egyptian value system and its components. This research will use both participant observation and the statistical technique. Its ultimate aim is to discover the values that motivate social, economic, political and individual behavior, to analyze them clearly and profoundly and to discover conflicts between them from one side, and between them and the socio-economic development model from the other side.

v. Development, Values and the Future: This research is a research in the field of futurology. It aims to analyze forecasts of the future of development in Egyptian society within two decades, and the values which agree and conflict with it. The Delphi Method will be used and a sample representing planners, opinion leaders, social scientists and other intellectuals will be selected.

d. Crime

Special attention is given to the new types of deviancy and crime generated by development. "Economic Transformation and its Relationship to New Types of Economic Crime" is one of the projects undertaken in that perspective, focusing on economic transformation; "the effect of the open door policy on the adoption of new types of behavior among school children" is mainly concerned with the effect of this policy in reshaping the socio-economic system and producing new ideas and new values influencing the socialization process.

CONCLUSION

These are some examples of current research conducted by the National Center in areas and topics related to development. In concluding this review a



few remarks may be made. Firstly, there is a need to move away from partial and fragmented research to more integrative and synthesizing studies, which look at society as a whole and which deal with any research problem in its social, political and economic context. The National Center tries to fulfil this aim in some of its current projects. Secondly, it is necessary, to some extent, to liberate oneself from methodologies and theories worked out in the context of developed countries. There is a need to develop new concepts, methods, techniques, analytical categories and models suitable for our developing society. The Center has taken a step in this direction by establishing a research unit for methodology. A third observation is that social researchers have to contribute to social policy, which means that research for development ought to give priority to studies which indicate or define the problems facing development efforts and which suggest policies geared to solving them. Priority should also be given to research that arises from problems associated with the implementation of policy; to research that is stimulated by the consequences of policies; to action research; to evaluative research; and to studies which integrate the results which focus on particular development problems. It is the role of the National Center, with its position as an official Center, to affirm the interplay between social policy for development and social research.