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**CAIRO PAPERS
IN SOCIAL SCIENCE**



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**URBAN
RESEARCH
STRATEGIES
FOR EGYPT**

**PREPARED AND EDITED
BY
RICHARD LOBBAN**

Thus, research could begin by monitoring the flow of cases from such areas through the formal system in Cairo, mapping in the flow data according to the areas of residence in the city as a prelude to research into the family life, the socio-economic context of the families involved. At the same time data would be gathered at each community site regarding the possible rural places of origin and regarding the recency of migration to the city. The perceptions of migrants regarding their new situation, in contrast to what had been their previous ways of dealing with family problems could be obtained, perhaps, at that level of observation. Moreover, such knowledge could also assist in the selection of a rural village site for field investigation.

This is but a rough drafting of a research idea which is still in the design phase. Dr. Curt Griffith and I have been mapping out the concepts and general contours of this research project. The idea emerged over a year ago and we have endeavored recently to draw into the design a number of persons who have had considerable research experience in urban systems as regards children and youth in poverty areas. Dr. Adel Azer of the National Center for Social and Criminological Research has assented to taking an active individual role in this project. Dr. Saad Gadalla of our Social Research Center has agreed in principle to have SRC host such a project, and we also have similar expressions of interest from Dr. Richard Lobban and Dr. Richard Huntington who respectively head up SRC's urban and rural studies units.

At the moment, it seems quite probable that the project will take from two to three years, and there is a fairly high probability of its being sponsored by the Canada Council as collaborative research.

Notes

1. This article is based on a research proposal which is currently being developed by myself and Dr. Curt Griffith of the Department of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada.
2. Here, and in the village studies (e.g., Menoufiya), the object would be to map in the ethnography of the informal interaction which reduces case flow into the formal, urban-centered adjudicative system.
3. For example, in village as in urban sites, the police officer and/or the juvenile police may be caught between the formal demands of the office and the obligations owed to community members engaged in traditional processes of dispute settlement.
4. For example, the juvenile police and its director, the demands on them, how they see the problem and themselves in it, the role of social workers in the arrest process, community reaction, the role of parquet's inquiry and his relations to the court, the judicial role, and so on.

DISCUSSION

SPECIAL URBAN RESEARCH PROJECTS

I. The Case for Sites and Services Schemes

If we look at the public housing example from Helwan, much of it is multi-family housing, but much is also rental housing -- perhaps half of the units. So it is possible to provide for this by the right type of 'sites and services' programs to include two and three story buildings. My guess is that it is still cheaper, and they will last longer than any alternative that the government has to build the houses.

* Well, in my experience, two or three story houses would be about the limit for such project.

* I'd go along with that too. In Cairo, for example, there may be certain physical limits.

* How do you deal with the central question of recovering costs versus benefits for subsidized housing schemes?

* Well, in Egypt, when there are up-grading loans, they set a repayment schedule which is made on the assumption that these are mostly going to be rental units. Beyond that, the individual will be responsible for the loan but so will the renters who now have a place to live. In Helwan, the average amounts are not that great and a typical loan would be about LE 900, so we don't need to worry too much about the possibility that someone is profiting from the loans. Even if we consider the costs of a fully serviced plot, we are only talking about LE 5,000 to LE 7,000...and this would include schools, health centers and so forth.

* In Helwan, you are not going to profit until you have invested quite a bit of your own money. Whatever loans of subsidized materials you get will go into making the core units. The money spent will also include personal investment.

* Also the schools, roads and shops will serve the people renting from you, so you cannot attribute the whole LE 5,000 to the whole cost of the plot.

* One objection to the 'sites and services' approach by third world people and governments is that such schemes are sometimes considered as providing low quality housing. Some international banking groups have also adopted this notion.

* There has been a study of various opinions on 'sites and services' strategies by the Argentinian Hardoy, formerly a professor at Yale, who is a famous historian and now a world authority on the Incan cities. He is a recognized authority on these low-cost housing strategies. In Kenya, I know from personal experience that the 'sites and services' schemes were fought, tooth and nail, by the government and the city council. But since the World Bank wanted to do it and was willing to put up the money, the government was willing as well. But the government insisted to go ahead with their own high-cost city council housing which they did, in fact, build. So in Kenya we have 'sites and services' schemes but without government commitment. In a case in Botswana, the government has adopted this enthusiastically and has perhaps half

of their total housing investment directed toward low-cost housing projects. There, the decision was mainly technocratic. The government was concerned with the housing problem, and the Ministry of Finance said there was not very much money. The Cabinet asked how they could spread the money around. The Urban Planning Department replied by saying that putting in 'sites and services' schemes the money would go a lot further. So the government said that they ought to put in as much money on this as they could. So you can say this was a sincere effort to match the resources with the needs. One of the ironies is that you might expect a sincerely socialist government would adopt this strategy because it would serve the needs of the poor people. But in the case of Tanzania and Mozambique, this did not seem to happen, while in Zambia, it has been more widely accepted. In Tanzania, the distrust of private ownership is so great that they decided that the people would rent and then would make a lot of money; then reinvest, make more money, and pretty soon make more housing and make more money, and we just can't have this. So sometimes the ideology of egalitarianism can become a barrier just like the 'high standards notion' can become a barrier.

* I'd like to bring out two other dimensions of this. First are relations to the land and second are the contracts which provide for the services. I would like to mention some instances which are at variance with the Egyptian experience. In Cairo and Helwan, it is feasible to apply this approach because there is desert around, and there can be urban expansion in that area. The same applies in Ismailia where they have done land development and acquisition with public projects along these lines. In governorates where land is becoming so scarce by the expansion of housing and industry, the 'sites and services' approach may not be applicable.

* Well, really, in the Delta there is very limited possibility for pursuing the 'sites and services' strategy because of limited land, but in Cairo and in Upper Egypt, where the desert is close, it is feasible.

* Another question is, of course, a cost-wise assessment of such project. Do we have a cost-effective formula to evaluate such projects?

* Well, such formulas exist, but I don't have them here. My guess is, however, that you'll get much further by running a bus or railway line out to areas where the land is available and serviceable and let people build their own housing for them in the city.

(Sections not intelligible)

II. Urban Conservation

* The main reason why nothing is done on the conservation of Cairo is that there is no program. There is the technical expertise, and I believe that there is the money -- really no problem in these areas. But when you come to the decision-making, that is where things come to a halt.

* Is this a question of administration or a question of values? If the values of urban preservation were there, the question of why the city was left to languish is not seen as an oversight, but in effect someone, somewhere, said that is good. This situation is, for better or worse, an expression of the lack of public interest.

* Yes, I wanted to make a comment and pose a question for our experts. First of all, I want to thank John Rodenbeck for a very stimulating and well-presented paper. It seems to me that the way you have presented this area of conservation concepts is really at odds with most of what has been discussed today in terms of neighborhood urban services or upgrading, because the philosophy underlying those things stems more from ideas of modernization and development, or -- how shall I say it? -- more of an economic sense of urban questions. Your presentation, on the other hand, on the question of conservation is derived from a sense of civilization or humanities. So my question is: Do you think that there is a rapprochement between what you have proposed for conservation with all the rhetoric that is going on about meeting basic needs, and the problems of bureaucratization?

* Absolutely. Number one is the sewers. It is a total waste of time putting buildings back together unless the sewer system works. A total waste of time.

* Well, what I would suggest is that we start from a philosophy of human dignity, a sense of civilization and humanistic concerns.

* Really, there does not need to be a conflict between area preservation and the preservation of the people themselves. Also, it is not just a matter of serving the interests and needs of a specific community, but there is a much larger picture of interest to the whole country. True, there may be a direct effect on the hundreds of thousands there in the respective communities, but it has a value to all of us.

* We need to look at the economic aspects too. Why are these areas of historic interest places that people visit? What are the high-technology options for these areas beyond history and national values? There must be aspects which would have a direct bearing on development and job creation. These kinds of questions must be studied to see what kinds of economic activities would be appropriate for such areas, replacing those kinds of jobs which don't make sense for the area, or actually threaten the area, the surroundings, the buildings, and everything else.

* Any time that we deal with these issues we should deal with them within a contextual framework. I think that different social agencies ought to form coalitions to study different social problems in the context of each other, not myopically or separately. After 26 years of work in the United States, the most valuable studies are those which establish a broad contextual relationship.

* I agree with that, and these discussions have been most fruitful, but this session has run out of time.

Applause.