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by Richard A. Lobban, Jr.

Introduction

Urban research takes many forms depending principally on the intended use of the results. Whether in urban planning, administration, policy or academic research, there are, however, certain common features. The points of unification lie in the areas where description and analysis converge. In other words, both applied and academic urban studies seek to create an accurate model of urban realities. Another area of unification is that either of the approaches requires an understanding and appreciation of urban linkages, processes and scale.

I am convinced that sound social research, for whatever purpose, must share the general features just mentioned. The task here is to outline the contemporary state of the art in urban studies with a focus on theory and topics of current urban research. Discussion moves then to methodological approaches in urban studies and finally some commentary is devoted to strategic research choices given prevailing needs, funding and interests.

Investigations of urban society have been launched from many disciplines including art and architecture, archeology and anthropology, political science and sociology, history, geography, mass communications, psychology, literature, planning, and management, to name some of the more prominent. Increasingly and quite broadly, it is accepted that no single discipline will adequately embrace or explain the complexities and scale of urban life. Consequently, much research has been inter-disciplinary as well as holistic. This positive and necessary step has tended to shape many of the theoretical models used in the study of cities, and here the common feature is the incorporation of notions of multifaceted reality, change, scale, and complex interrelationships.

In my own thinking, urbanization is the process of adaptation to the stress of cities where the high density of social roles permits (or requires) continual modification of one's own behavioral interactions. Even individual urban case studies of partial segments of urban life usually do, and always should, recognize the wider connections in the urban fabric. When financial support is adequate, the complexity of urban society is best studied by multidisciplinary teams looking at urban diversity, scale and connections. From such a comprehensive perspective, adequate theoretical models may be generated which seek to describe and explain the multiplex nature of urban life.

In May 1981, the Social Research Center at the American University in Cairo held a symposium on social research for development. Remarks by Dr. Janet Abu-Lughod on urban development are paraphrased here:

1. In the cities of developing countries there is a diversity of urban life-ways.

Appreciation is happily acknowledged for the criticism by Richard Huntington of an earlier version of this paper.
2. These cities must be studied in the context of large-scale regional systems.

3. The composition of the international political economy sets critical boundaries for patterns of urban development.

Questions of migration, population growth and distributive justice cannot be separated from the three points of Dr. Abu-Lughod.

I would also concur with her that there are four essential types of research which will be done at the present time:

1. large-scale, continuous urban monitoring;
2. secondary analysis of data;
3. in situ experiments;
4. evaluative research in action.

Hopefully, the distillation of her much larger discussion, plus my own presentation of the state of the art of urban research, theory, methods and strategies will give us pause to reflect upon our recent past, our complicated present and our challenging but exciting future in urban research. The launching of the Urban Development Unit of the Social Research Center in 1981 was intended to stimulate and coordinate these pressing urban research needs. Ideally, this present workshop will help to detonate further interest commensurate with the explosion of urban population and problems.

Macro-Scopic Theory

At the macro-scopic level of analysis one finds the models of political economy, regional systems, dependency theory, transnational structures, and institutional and class networks. Such frameworks are indeed necessary, for without them the context in space and time may not be fixed and one is left with an ahistorical, even anti-historical, analysis of structure without process. Since a fundamental property of cities includes its political economy, all urban studies should have some understanding of this matrix. This recognizes that any interest ranging from urban architecture to urban social organization will, at least implicitly, identify the prevailing relations of production, ideology and the commanding heights which inspired or tolerated a city in a particular configuration at a specific time.

A type of macro-scopic study deserves mention from the field of geography. Central place theory relates to, among other things, the maximal concentration of service and other urban resources, and to the minimal appropriate distances in transport and communication between residential, industrial and commercial areas. The study of urban ecology and spatial relationships has been very stimulating in providing hypotheses for testing and in generating structural and functional typologies. Frequently central place theory and its related paradigms have been criticized as being ethnocentric and not satisfactorily inclusive of variations over space and time in non-Western cities. Certain aspects of urban planning, derived from urban geography, may need re-evaluation in this respect.

Over recent years various models have been proposed including those which are structural, functional and typological. In addition, such important works as Whitfogel's "hydraulic theory," Sjoberg's "preindustrial city," and Lewis'
"culture of poverty" have stimulated much review and criticism. Most of the critiques have focused on various historical, cultural, or processual inadequacies of these ideas. While the criticisms are largely correct, one should not lose sight of the heuristic importance these models have had. Recalling that scientific urban studies are only very recent, it is incumbent upon us to realize that most fields begin first with taxonomies and descriptions, and only in maturity is study of process and variation going to be refined.

Still at the macroscopic level are a wide variety of monitoring studies. Such research may not lead to theory, but can give foundation to theoretical and hypothetical constructions when relationships are perceived between and among the data collected. Especially at the macroscopic level, monitoring may have a statistical expression. Very basic to urban studies are population data gathered in periodic censuses which describe the age, sex, ethnic and religious composition of a given group or area. Patterns of fertility, migration, mortality and household composition are usual features of census work.

Constant or regular monitoring is usually provided by a variety of government bureaucracies. From such offices we may learn about crime, labor composition, trade, income (and its distribution) as well as other fiscal and budgetary matters. Licensing, permits and registration offices give notions about commerce, occupational structure and ownership of various significant possessions. Likewise, Ministries of Education and Health may offer statistical impressions of trends in medicine and schooling which would be essential for planning and development. Specialized offices or bureaus survey the needs of youth in terms of sports, recreation and entertainment.

Given large-scale urban societies, the typical social scientific inquiry must rely on the data base provided by such organs as just mentioned. The size and expense of the studies would make it impossible to be otherwise. At the same time, the role of relatively inexpensive computers and data processing equipment means that even smaller-scale studies may effectively incorporate large-scale data in constructing their urban models and matrices. The "canned" programs such as BMD and SPSS have now made computers accessible to a vastly greater number of researchers, even for those without special mathematical skills. Aside from this profound upgrading in information retrieval and basic data collection, the high speed of computers makes it possible to seek efficiently a wide array of significant correlations and statistical associations which may be very revealing and frequently tend to generate new theoretical relationships which may be subject to empirical test.

Models at the macro-level often describe and analyze types of culture change by virtue of the fact of examining changes over time with respect to specific, monitored variables. Change may be interpreted in a variety of ways but four main groups may be pointed out. First, there are the paradigms which feature accommodation, adjustment and adaptation to urban life in the "urbanization without breakdown" school. Secondly, the "urbanization with breakdown" school concentrates on stress, disorders, conflict, crime, delinquency, unemployment, and deficiencies in health, education and social services. The third "compartmentalist" approach accepts the perspectives of the first two schools, but notes that change is always uneven and incomplete. Adjustments in one sphere may take place in association with breakdown in another. Cooperation and common charters and symbols may result even when antagonistic bodies are temporarily united for reasons of common interest.
The study of urban change may also be viewed by a "dialectical model" which sees conflict or contradiction in systems as the source of change itself. Such models note that stressful circumstances may compel some alteration of one's urban lifeways. Popular here are discussions of contradictions between classes, but conflict between institutions, the two sexes, as well as rivalries of an interpersonal or psychological sort have attracted considerable attention.

As the science of urbanism has grown, a very great many pages have been written on definitions of the city. In general, the definitions vary as considerably as the uses to which they may be put. The definitions may be found, however, in two large clusters, i.e., quantitative and qualitative. Those quantitative measures usually relate to demographic aspects such as rates of growth of urban population, population size and population density. The qualitative definitions usually objectify socio-cultural properties of urbanism. Together, both seek to describe the overall process of urbanization.

The definitions which have been offered almost defy enumeration, but as an anthropologist, I am especially fond of Southall's notion of an area with a "high density of role-relationships," that is, a place of concentration of multi-stranded connections to a socio-economically diverse and stratified population.

Micro-Level Urban Theory

As we have just discussed, there is a wide variety of theoretical perspectives one may take from the full-city view to regional or even global studies of the function and structure of cities and the process of urbanization. At the intra-urban or micro-level, applied or academic research can give practical tests of macro-level theory. Urbanist investigation at the micro-level may be based on an urban community, quarter or neighborhood, voluntary associations, crafts and guilds, individual buildings or events, and other specialized interactions in an urban context.

Similarly, many of the methods and theories of the macro-level may appear in micro-level analysis. In fact, it may be that micro-level case studies will be used to confirm, reject or modify the hypotheses of macro-level, deductive research. At the smaller scale, operational units must be determined in order to have a sharp focus. A number of well-known urban studies were done with small, bounded urban groups. They may be delineated by existing borders in urban geography, by social, ethnic or occupational status, or by special function groups.

Whatever the case, the interest is typically aimed at a particularistic understanding of urbanization or related phenomenon such as industrialization, "modernization," "development," "Westernization," class formation, or social differentiation. As with macro-level theory and analysis, community level inquiry may also seek to be holistic, but rather than calling upon a multi-disciplinary team, the urbanist at the micro-level may often be a jack-of-all-trades. This style is especially common in urban anthropology which is built upon anthropological history of rural ethnographies in villages and groups which were often accepted as a bounded whole. Popular now in micro-level urban research is the informal framework in which markets, labor, economy, social services, housing, education and so forth are examined by virtue of the fact
that they may exist outside established hierarchies and regulation.

A long tradition of social network analysis in African urban studies has helped to identify bounds and limits for informal groups and thereby makes possible comparative network studies. Theoretical concern in social network analysis has been concentrated on such variables as density, frequency, range, and intensity of interaction. The study of networks, whether "ego-centric" or "socio-centric" has been especially important in transcending the limits of structural kinship analysis which are not sufficient in complex urban areas where non-kin relations have an important role.

High intensity urban research has also taken the form of situational and conflict analysis in which the "social drama" or presentation of self is probed. Studies of high resolution have been very revealing when the sample frame can guarantee their representativeness.

Another concern at the micro-level evolved from earlier efforts to describe a "folk-urban" or "rural-urban" dichotomy. As research progressed it became clear that there was in actuality a continuum and in some cases one may identify "ruralization" of cities and "urbanization" of the countryside towns. Along this new line, research has concentrated on such questions as relations to agricultural production in urban markets, micro-patterns of migration like step-migration, transportation modes and networks, and other sorts of social and commercial brokers and middlemen. All of these studies emphasize, at least implicitly, the linkages to, rather than separation from, the rural hinterland.

Linkages within a given urban area are not neglected. Intra-urban connections are revealed in studies at the individual or neighborhood level vis-a-vis local government, local power relations, and political brokerage. Particularistic concerns in urban administration and services may require investigation of refuse, water drainage, electricity and sewerage services and matters of transportation like traffic control, parking, road maintenance and mass transit.

Micro-level research also embraces individual responses to urbanism including patterns of psychological or psychiatric adjustment, assimilation, acculturation, and changing modes of articulation with one's urban community. Long-standing interest has been maintained on a number of aspects of social organization in the urban context. The four models of culture change sketched above have all been used to interpret modifications in kinship, family organization, marriage, class, "race" and ethnicity. Whether a study is of the "breakdown" paradigm or "without breakdown," or if the model is "compartmentalist" or "dialectical," the centerpiece is still the question of social change in cities.

Methodologies in Urban Research

Methodological stances and tactics in urban research vary as considerably as the scale and diversity of the subject of inquiry. Parallel to the sections above on urban theory, methodology may range from comprehensive, quantitative surveys to intensive, qualitative case studies. In general, the appropriate methodology will represent a trade-off between the penetrating, individualistic study versus the statistically holistic, but necessarily more superficial research. The means of inquiry will also require judgements about sampling and representativeness.
The consequences of these decisions will result in methodologies ranging from full-scale household level, census questionnaires to long-term participant observation as a "marginal native" within a small section of an urban neighborhood as a case study designed to characterize wider urban patterns or perhaps only record a unique category of urban life.

Determination must be made whether intrusive or unobtrusive tactics will be used. Once again, a balance must be struck between the higher quality, "noise-free" data of unobtrusive research versus the more exhaustive but potentially distorted data of intrusive research. Field research also demands an explication and justification of the sampling frame. With the target population one must determine whether free-flowing participant observation is sufficient or must this be supplemented with structured interviews. It is frequently useful for the methodologist to consider whether a given study will build upon existing research on a topic and be comparative and perhaps cross-cultural as well.

Today's social science research may find the investigation straddling some place between "objective" academic research (which may not be that objective) to more "subjective" evaluative, interventionist, action research (which may not be that subjective). Large-scale, heavily-funded research tends to be that which is problem or policy-oriented in the general field of urban development. There the scientist may be called upon to gather base-line data, carry out progress reports or conduct evaluative surveys useful to the administrator.

In reality, there can be no completely "value-free" research, and professed "neutrality" may be rather illusory. Indeed, the extremes of "armchair" social science and "going native" have been thoroughly criticized for their methodological sterility. What is expected is a sense of personal ethics and self-consciousness which aims in the directions of intellectual honesty and unflinching respect for the integrity of human subjects. Notions of relevance should not mean marching lock-step with the current wave of research interests and, I believe, there is a moral or ethical responsibility to ask questions about knowledge for what and for whom. Urgent and active research intensifies the need for self-consciousness and a commitment to integrity and honesty in the field and in the office.

A discussion on methodology could not be even superficially complete without some comments on epistemology. Assumptions ought to be questioned and scrutinized and categories made realistic in data collection. For some, the tactics of ethnoscience and cognitive mapping may be appropriate as the best way to determine the validity of observations. Scientific "truth" can require testing, retesting and independent confirmation. From theory, one must construct hypotheses which may be confirmed, rejected or modified by field experience.

Certain experimental designs will demand specified experimental controls or, at least, a statistically valid sampling technique with appropriate statistical tests of correlation or association. Advance in the scientific method will need clear identification of independent and dependent variables in order to track down the problematic dimension of causality in urban change.

By no means does our "scientized" or refined methodology seek to exclude
the fertility of introspection, reflection and intuition which interact with inductive or deductive models pursuing an understanding of complex relationships in urban society.

Choices in Research Strategy

In formulating or conducting urban research one will select, modify and create models from the theoretical and methodological spectrum described. At the same time one hopes that funding will be found to support the research. At this point, the researcher typically tries to convince a foundation or international or national organization that the research merits support. Alternatively, existing organizations may formulate their own proposals and search for bidding contractors to complete the research that the organizations have identified. In either case, research priorities are established which help to determine which proposals will be solicited and/or accepted.

Clearly, strategic choice must be made if serious social research is to advance. Unsolicited research must be made attractive. A. L. Straus suggested three strategies in developing research proposals. First, study the unstudied; here one must be a pioneer and be able to convince others of the innovative or insightful dimensions of this research. Neglected areas such as peoples' art and historical preservation may be included here. Second, study the unusual; often these studies would be small-scale and bounded social or geographical entities. For Cairo, a study of the social organization of boat people or of the City of the Dead, would certainly qualify. Thirdly, study the contentious or controversial; in this case informal housing or economy, or mental health would be fascinating but not less than a study of the role of bakshish and corruption. Here too, questions of environmental pollution, rubbish and sanitation would be likely to stir interest. Studies on the role of women and religious movements in the cities of the Middle East are also certain to arouse intense concern.

On a more overt policy level, research into urban employment, literacy health, youth, welfare and job training would be highly acceptable. Research supporting self-help projects and initiating income-generating projects through arts and crafts would be especially meaningful. Urban art and architecture specifically, and historical preservation, in general, ought not to be neglected, particularly on the basis of urgent research.

Many private and governmental funding agencies are influenced by a guiding policy of egalitarianism and reformism. The roots of this orientation lie in a sincere concern for the underprivileged and with a certain anxiety about more radical change if impoverished sections of an urban population are even more neglected. This attitude means that a popular target group for urban research has been with the poor, and services to the poor such as water, electricity, sanitation, family planning, health, education and a host of other service sectors.

It is not to be overlooked that even in applied or policy research and in evaluation, a huge amount of data is generated which is useful to those seeking
indicators of the level or intensity of urbanization. A UNESCO guidebook for urban research lists the following 19 indicators:

1. overall population
2. annual rate of urban growth
3. infant mortality
4. life expectancy
5. literacy
6. school enrollment
7. mail circulation
8. newspaper circulation
9. doctors/population
10. cinema attendance
11. calorie intake
12. protein intake
13. housing density
14. energy consumption
15. income
16. gross domestic product
17. males in non-agricultural activity
18. rural density
19. dependency ratio (economically active/inactive)

The above list is certainly not exhaustive but should serve to underscore the fruitful cooperation between applied and academic research since the baseline data gathered by the former will be indispensable for the latter.

Summary

This short paper has surveyed the state of the art in urban research ranging from the general types of studies to more specific types of inquiry at the macro and micro levels of analysis. The paper also provided a sketch of some of the theories and methods involved in contemporary research and suggested a variety of research choices which may be made.

In a sense, there can be no conclusion of a paper of this type as the subject matter is mercurial and in process. The excitement of urban studies may, in fact, be related to this dynamic character. The elusive nature of urban life, in both speed of change, and magnitude in scale, is certain to guarantee fascinating horizons in the years to come. The future research questions are not less dynamized by the urgency and precariousness of life in cities for many millions. The challenge is great and very pressing.
DISCUSSION

URBAN RESEARCH THEORIES AND STRATEGIES

I The Informal Sector Revisited

* Roughly speaking, you have about one million people in informal work.
* That sounds a bit too low.
* That is the best we can calculate at present, but let me say something in defense of this position. These million people are doing all kinds of casual jobs outside any kind of formal or public sector. But they could still be very much a part of the society. As I said, there is a lot of under-counting, even using the best information sources. Secondly, we are confining ourselves to a certain age limit, fifteen years and over.

* You use the word 'colloquial' categories. Does it include bawwabs (doorkeepers)?
* No, they are already counted, because they have their own system. They are not considered as porters. We mean the porter as in railway stations and such.
* Oh, I see, doing the running...
* Also, have you considered women in the informal sector? How much of that 900,000 or million would you imagine are women and children?
* You do have child labor. You know we have a lot of people under twelve, especially garbage collectors. And you have women. When you go to interview households for population purposes and talk to the household, the head of the household is most often a man. A lot of women, like Barbara Ibrahim and others, are interested in the role of women and the division of labor. I am sure there are a lot of women engaged in informal work. For example, there are local women engaged in work—you can see them selling their wares in the streets—and they are doing active trade. A lot of women and children are actively participating, in particular, in the informal urban economy, but there's no way of knowing that, because the information of the population system is very, very limited, even defective.

* One more question: If you say that there are one million, it seems rather small given the 42 million in Egypt...
* Not 42 million; you take it as around 12 million, that is, the work force.
* Okay, let's say that. It's still rather small in relation to the dynamics of the trade. Assuming it is small, as you mentioned before, there are certain limits to which you can saturate the informal sector, after which you clearly have unemployment. I think that the thrust of your paper was that this sector is becoming super-saturated, and people are still pouring in. The fact is we may have to expand the informal sector to accommodate these masses pouring into the city.
I think I could expand on this point, if you want to have a whole new perspective. Take the work force in Egypt (roughly 12 million) and relate it to the urban labor pool proper. You get about one-fifth, roughly, of the labor force belonging one way or another to this sector.

One thing about the dynamics. A lot of people are, as it came out in the seminar, quite happy to see the informal sector protected, regulated and preserved. There's a point to that, but little is being done. You'd better rationalize the sector by making the work productive and giving them more or better facilities. No problem.

The question is, to what extent could you use the urban formal sector as a kind of role for other kinds of more productive employment, and how much can the urban sector absorb more informal entrants into the labor market.

I think the crises of the urban sector are understated because of the high occurrence of external migration in the Egyptian labor force. There are a lot of returning migrants, who are not going to work in the countryside (for a number of reasons), and they would like to reside in the urban areas. Many of these people may contribute to the crises. By all projections, this is not going to be delayed beyond the mid-'80's.

Secondly, as I said in my previous paper, the point is that you can see a relationship between the expansion of what I regard as formal employment and informal employment. The expansion, or the dynamics of the expansion, cannot be seen as unlimited. It is ultimately limited by the number of people holding formal jobs and earning the kind of income generated in commodities, or whatever, in the recognized service sectors.

There is also a dependent situation, because the people in the informal sector may somehow be dependent on the income and economic opportunities of the other sector.

I think some of these limits are going to be exhausted very soon...

(Sections not intelligible)

I'll just say that the signs of this booming position are not going to last forever. So, we cannot say we did very well reaccommodating all of the returning workers. Yes, it was possible up to a point, but the crisis is moving onto the horizon.

I'm not clear as to where exactly you draw the line between the formal and informal sectors.

Well, it is a very tricky thing, because of what we regard as formal. Let us take the bawwab. He's, in a sense, tied to a building. You can then, to put it roughly, regard him as in the formal sector. Take the messengers. We have about 125,000. They have as miserable conditions as car attendants...

I think if you want to make a proper analysis of this -- it's never been done anywhere, I must confess -- you have to use multiple criteria: What is regarded as formal versus informal; what is productive versus unproductive? You may find a number of jobs which look like formal that are not productive and a number of others that are informal, which are highly productive, in a
sense. I am not drawing a line, but rather I use my statistics as a kind of minimal subset, what I would regard as highly informal, but not necessarily unproductive. I am drawing the line if he is tied up to some kind of institution. Even if he is operating from his own institution, he is slightly formal.

* Some people in the investment sector, as you know, use the term 'unorganized.' This is not necessarily formally unorganized. It is unorganized (not informal) for all establishments using nine employees or less. This is a statistical definition. You take the organized sector as ten and above and the unorganized sector as nine and below.

There are subjects who are never open to inspection (they are not abiding by the rules, you know). So they are classified as unorganized in the legal sense. My concept of informal is definitely more restrictive. If we were to be doing any kind of properly designed study, we would have to use multiple criteria in order to establish our own definition. Using the position of multiple criteria, you have identified the so-called minimal subsets (the subset of the subsets), which the area represents as the so-called core of the informal sector.

This is part of the research design, but I must say that in all of the studies (and I have reviewed a lot of studies), there was no exact definition.

* Didn't they use the nine-and-under criterion?

* Yes, it was used in many places, as I told you, but it is very inconvenient to use. In Egypt, we use it for symbols, but it is not informal in any special sense. In different reports they use different definitions. Technically, many are used for the basic services. But when it came to the manufacturing activities, they used nine and below, or five. They used just about anything. In a country with a small industry, you can say five and below five.

* In France, we use two concepts. One is informal and the other is 'underground,' as we call it. I think in the case of France, or in Egypt, it is very important.

* Sir, your definition of the informal sector represents segments of casual service. You ignore part-time employment. This is not legal employment, but it is organized, and there are not one million, but ten million Egyptians in this sector.

* Yes, this could also be informal.

(Sections not intelligible)

* I understand exactly what you are talking about; I thought about it for a long time. There's a big debate now, but I think we should avoid confusion. There's a difference between the so-called 'hidden' economy, as you pointed out, and what is called more carefully a 'black' economy. I think our Indian colleagues were the first to call it the 'black' economy, and now they use it in England, the States and so forth.

(Sections not intelligible)
So the black economy, the rival economy (I'm writing a lot of papers on the 'black' economy), is a different type of economy. As you say, it is different because it is becoming a permanent feature under inflationary conditions. For example, everyone is taking a second job, moonlighting. You know about moonlighting -- you do it, I do it, everybody does. The problem of moonlighting from the tax point of view is that this economy escapes taxation.

* But can this be measured statistically?

* Yes, I am a statistician. The question is that this is a different type of economy, and I don't mean the informal sector. In Egypt, there is a flourishing 'black' economy. The 'black' economy is actually covering the small operators in illegal dealings, the middle class people, the professionals, who are moonlighting and aren't accounted for, and most importantly, there is big money -- the big 'black' money -- circulating. I mean millions.

So, I understand the difference very well, and I think we ought to keep the two notions distinct and redefine them in both of our countries. In the case of Egypt, this could be a fantastic thing to understand.

I am constructing a matrix by which I can study the role of the 'black' money sector. I'm trying to see how this interacts. The hidden economy is a very important concept and is a by-product of inflation.

* Two comments. One is on statistics.

* Yes.

* You chose shiakha (neighborhood administrative units). Have you taken the shiakha as your statistical specialty? We've had a statistical definition of the shiakha for ten years. Actually, I suppose the shiakha have changed in the past one or two years.

* No, it's still there; they have it.

* The population census was done at the level of the shiakha, where we believe there may be major developments. Perhaps there are compromises on calculations, but the shiakha are still the basic minimum units of the statistics.

* My other question is about the proposition of survey and interview programs in the city. We had problems interviewing in the south of Cairo with a well-known Egyptian architect, who said the inhabitants were afraid of the national census.

* Was that study on informal housing?

* Yes.

* In informal housing, most people are afraid of anyone.

* I think housing is a different story, because most of the people are afraid. If you visit them in their own quarters, they are afraid you are a tax or insurance officer, and so they are very unresponsive. You would do better
if you take someone off the streets (don't ask him for his identity card or any legal papers) and treat him as a number, allowing him to give you general information.

* I wonder.

* I was going to make a remark, or ask the question really, about what is the purpose of this exercise? Why make these distinctions in the first place? In thinking about this, the question comes up elsewhere. I have done some work on the economics of China and Russia, where people trying to study imprecise data come up with some interesting problems of published figures simply not being consistent.

What they have is not just the 'black' market or 'black' economy, but there they've added the concept of the shadow economy. This has become, in effect, a way of getting at an understanding of how the system works. According to the rules there, everything is supposed to be accounted for by the plan. You know, the totally, centrally-planned economy, in which the product is supposedly a predictable result of the operation. But it just doesn't work out that way.

Although they have discovered or identified the existence of an economy that they now refer to in the literature, whether they are Russian economists or whatever they are, the shadow economy is, in effect, a technically illegal activity, which accounts for the productivity (or successful results) of the formal economy, and without which the system wouldn't work.

I think that it raises a question about what you're suggesting here and that maybe a little bit more would have to be added, in terms of how to enumerate and how to categorize these activities.

* To a certain degree, the question we are trying to get at has come up because we don't know what is going on. We are trying to count, and measurement can become an end in itself, but we can also ask some questions about the importance of what it is we're trying to count.

You raised the question of esteem and self-esteem. I don't quite know how we can avoid this in some manner, way, shape or form without making value judgements about what is important and what isn't, and what might be encouraged or not encouraged. But we do have some issues, at least, having to do with work activity.

* I just want to say I think this is a tremendously fertile and important field of study. It has all kinds of implications for housing, technology choice, government and laws, national statistics and so forth. It's very important.

In Kenya, I believe that the definition they used was 'unregistered enterprises,' and I believe that the figure (the 10 or 20 employee figure) came in because that was the level at which you had to go to court and file an annual report, if you had that many employees, although some of those might be formal, highly modern, technical things, like a camera store. Functionally it proved useful.

You see, the difficulties of taking an arbitrary definition may be more
perceived than real. In fact, it was a pretty useful function. Once you had chosen your definition, everybody sort of agreed that basically it meant small-scale, unregistered enterprises.

* I just wanted to come back to the issue of whether, when we make an analytical distinction between the 'black' economy and the informal sector, it has much meaning when you get down to the level of the street or household or the way in which people are generating income.

In this regard, what would you do with a woman who stands in line at the gam‘iyya (association) buying subsidized food and then selling it again in her neighborhood for just a piaster or two more. She’s making a profit and providing a service to her neighbors. Where would she fall in?

I have a feeling there may be quite a few of these categories of murky kinds of activities, which interface within that 'black' market. Lots of money is not being made, but services and goods are being provided to poor people in these kinds of ways.

* I agree with you entirely. I think we’ll do some research on this on the spot, and I hope to find these particular things where we have a certain degree of overlap between what can be regarded as informal, 'black' or 'semi-black' types of economy.

But there is a certain segment of the 'black' economy, a special one, where there are a lot of transactions on a very high level, like smuggling hashish. You know people consume three billion dollars worth of hashish per year. That is the official statistic.

But if you talk about small dealings where there is a kind of mixture of informal and 'black,' we can determine to what extent the distinction dissolves in many instances. On this we conduct our investigations, but we can’t say they are kept distinct.

I think Tim was quite right in saying what was in the shadow or grey economy was not only to make things look more colorful, but there are things on the brink of, or in between, a fully legal, formal economy and things 'black'.

Take, for example, someone who is a government employee or an army officer, who drives a taxi in the afternoon. He’s earning a living, right? You don’t say he’s entirely illegal; he’s somewhere in that 'grey' economy, but he’s also productive and useful. He’s helping himself and the economy.

So if we want a full-fledged kind of thing, we ought to identify what could be regarded as formal-formal, as formal-informal, what is shadow or grey, what is fully informal and what is 'black', and how they are all interlinked.

We can have an analytical distinction for the sake of argument, but in the end things are mingled together, and we have to disintangle the mix.

* One more question related to this, but having to do with your estimates of one-fifth of the urban labor force being involved with the informal sector. I am assuming that you mean the male labor force, because most of our qualitative studies of traditional labor suggest that, in fact, a majority of women are not
earning in the formal sector, but rather they are earning in the informal sector.

* Women and children under fifteen are not considered, but women are also miscounted. Women in the population census are not counted, because it doesn't interview them or ask what they do unless they are head of the family.

* Along this same line, when we survey the literature of the past, there was poverty and there were poor housing facilities, but it is amazing that these kinds of things don't appear in the literature. I'm sure they were noticed, but I wonder if their absence should be taken as a reflection of indifference, or whether they just simply resorted to a military suppression of areas and wrote them off as a sort of ideological indifference, as if that's the way they liked it.

I'm wondering if in the survey you see a number of things, especially the kinds of things we've been talking about the past two days, that don't appear in the earlier literature on other subjects.

* I think we had not learned of the problems of Cairo until very recently because there were mostly archeological studies coming from Egypt until the 1960's. Now, there may be changes in the literature because we are becoming aware of the problems.

* I suspect that in the secret civil secretary records they knew certain areas were troublesome and that there were poor conditions. Of course, they would suspect problems, but it was never the legitimate concern of serious scholars.

* The book of Le Carre written in the 1930's shows very well that there was already interest in the urban problems of Cairo. It's still one of the beat books on the urban geography of Cairo.

II The Rural-Urban Nexus: Linkages and Dichotomies

* Mark, does your research proposal tell us something about the nature of the city other than that it is different from the countryside?

* I hope so. I think that maybe one of the critical areas of this research might be the mapping out of something that we haven't noticed before. Despite the fact that the formal system is not doing its job, according to what it's intended to do, under the 1974 legislation, it may well leave a lot of community reorganization to deal, in its own way, with the problems of children, redefining what there are in opportunities for rural children and youth.

It might be precisely what the law demands, and it may be a factor in the whole process. There is a great deal of legal definition of juvenile behavior that pertains to Cairo, which never pertains to rural or other areas where those people came from. So, very often, when they come to the city, what had been constituted as legal behavior in the village is found out to be illegal behavior.
We're interested in these kinds of things, even though it may not be very
informative in regard to the police or in regard to any kind of internal reform
of law or of some sort of other process. We might be able to find that there
are, in fact, negotiated or mediated processes working in the community that
satisfy the community but not the state, especially when it comes to juveniles
who break the law. It may be that you could find new patterns of negotiation,
which would mediate between the justice system and where it is taking place
communally. This may take the form of community negotiation groups.

There is a question of where there may be a government designation or
district, which is a kind of community unto itself. For certain purposes that
may be very necessary. But if you're trying to define a community, if there
is a community, then this is something we will still have to discover.

I was wondering, and maybe I have not understood, but when you use the
terms 'formal' and 'informal,' I hear you also using terms like 'communal,'
'more structured,' and 'not so city-like' and 'rural'....

These are all theoretical assumptions or categories.

Are you thinking in terms of the formal as being urban, structured or
bureaucratized?

It really refers to fairly standard theoretical distinctions between
adjudicated justice, which either involves a Western form of three judges or
the kinds of things you see in courts today, or it could refer to the informal
systems of justice as we see them spelled out by the Sunni Moslems. By
informal systems, we're talking about the more negotiated or mediated systems,
which do not begin with the idea that it is the individual who is to be held
accountable for a particular offence.

In negotiated justice, it is the ethic of that shared or communal
responsibility that seems to have predominance over the notion of a person's
guilt or punishment. Then you have the idea of collective responsibility for
individual behavior which, I suspect, is a predominant theoretical assumption
in rural areas. The transformation of this in the urbanization of rural
culture is something coming in sharp contrast. I think we will find this to be
even more true in the rapidly growing provincial cities, but perhaps not as
much as the adjudicated or Western system begins to become more implanted
there. I'm just trying to make that finer distinction between mediated justice
and adjudicated justice.

Let me raise a question: So much of what we have discussed over the last
period has dealt with linkages, connections, networks and continua, rather than
the dichotomies we've inherited from various social scientists -- that is,
rural/urban, formal/informal, etc. -- all these kinds of dichotomies...

It may be interesting to conduct the largest part of your study in the
neglected provincial cities we heard about this morning, rather than take up
these apparent polar opposites, like the rural and the urban, and then make
your two comparisons. It may be that the provincial cities would provide the
kind of interface that is so chronically lacking in studies that tend to have
these polar opposites, which ultimately add to our false impressions, rather
than enriching a nexus or linkage, which are patterns of this association.
The other thing that I would like to bring up, with respect to stress, alienation, riots and all those problems that we've discussed is a notion I've had, which comes, I suppose, from medicine. In cancer detection they have a thermographic/heat scanner they place over someone's body to determine which cells are going to become active. Maybe in looking at crime we can do some sort of general, ongoing monitoring, some sort of scan, by making a composite variable. Crime would be one of them, and maybe other kinds of measures would be illuminating.

We might do some sort of ongoing monitoring, whether in urban or rural areas or provincial cities, just to study the situation before things happen. Then, instead of doing what we usually do in social science, which is trying to study what caused something to happen, post facto, you may be able to get a richer notion.

You could, maybe, bring this survey of socio-legal questions to bear upon some of these larger, hypothetical or theoretical issues.

* I think, too, we need a revision of what kinds of things we mean by urban and rural (this has been brought out before), and what we mean by ruralization of urban areas and urbanization of rural areas.

I know that Dr. Abdel-Fadil remarked just a while ago that there was, indeed, a double process going on. He also made the remark that the ruralization of urban areas was unique in recent times, but, of course, it is not terribly unique, and it is not terribly recent. Throughout the history of Cairo, the earmarks of agriculture have been all over it. I think what he's referring to is a kind of ruralization that stems from the urbanization of rural areas.

* May I make a comment on that point? When we talked about ruralization in urban areas, I think we meant something wrong or bad. Certain areas were very rural, like Dokki/Mohandessin or Imbaba. There's nothing new about it. On the contrary, half of Giza around the Pyramids has been fairly rural until very recently. No problem.

The question is that before we had had some kind of reasonable political balance, and now there is a destructive pattern where rural elements are invading, in very destructive ways, certain aspects of urban life.

In the countryside, rural areas are being preserved, so that we can enjoy them. There is nothing wrong with that. What is meant by ruralization, which perhaps is not very clear, is the notion of the upset of the political balance in Cairo between the rural and urban. It is not necessarily economical, nor consistently rural or urban. What's happening now is that there are new features (not that we mean anything bad by these new rural features) that fit a certain pattern. In all parts of Cairo, rich and poor, there are these kinds of disproportionate patterns, which are a mixture of urban and rural, that are not good.

I think the thing to do about any value judgement with ruralism or urbanism is to talk about linkages, or whatever, coming out of these problems. Anyway, when we talk about a dichotomy, we should always make a distinction between the modern subsistence sector and formal/informal or rural/urban categories. And when we want to understand the processes and actual dynamics
of behavior, we've got to allow for their interaction.

* I think this is quite correct.

* So, in view of this, it is a matter of allowing for the working interaction between the two.

* I think that the nature of these linkages is changing, and it is a very complex problem to analyze. For one thing, if you go back to the pre-Nasser period, Cairo was a city that was, for all practical purposes, dominated by agriculture. And agriculture was dominated by tools, which represented the only capital rural areas had.

The Nasser period and the adoption of the Soviet model meant the decline of interest, as far as policy was concerned, in agriculture. At the same time, you had the interference with these agricultural forces in terms of land reform and this kind of thing. Today what we have, I think, is a situation in Cairo where industrial capital is dominating the agricultural areas more and more.

I'm not saying we have a predominance of industrial capital in Cairo, but what I am suggesting is that these new changes in the urban sector and in its economy are transforming the nature of the countryside in such a way as to bring its capital into tools so that the older tools are no longer the only capital.

Now, in certain sectors, but not all, rural areas are becoming dependent on your American, or whatever, multi-national complex. What we're experiencing is, perhaps, a new kind of ruralism in Cairo, if you want to put it that way. The older people, who are dependent on hand tools, which were once their only capital, are now in the city.

This is a new phenomenon. What we're getting is a transformation, like the kind that maybe the Europeans went through in London during the Victorian Age or the Paris that Dr. Rodenbeck was talking about yesterday.

We have the older aspects of Cairo still present in the donkey carts and people bringing their old agricultural tools and other residues of agricultural life with them into the city. So what we have is quite a mix in terms of the ruralization of Cairo.

* This question of definition has always been a vexing one, and we've got problematic definitions of the terms 'formal' and 'informal' because of the complex economy and the interpenetration of rural and urban. This is all not acceptable as a very good answer.

I think that what Dr. Abdel-Fadil was saying in terms of the informal/formal one is that we simply have to go and look—hopefully without blinders because of our pre-existing categories—and maybe we will find out afterwards what the distinctions should mean.

* I'm not arguing against your or Dr. Abdel-Fadil's position, but what I am suggesting is a bit more complex. I have no question about going and looking. That is exactly what you would have to do, and I think I would follow the suggestion that when you go, look at the actual social relations in rural production.
I want to add a somewhat different idea, which is traditional in geography when they talk about a hierarchy of urban places. Such an idea gives you more flexibility than simply talking in terms of urban versus rural.

I am so very sorry to say that our available time and tapes are exhausted. It is a shame that we must draw to a close, but these papers, and particularly the discussions, have been unusually rich, and I am confident that the ideas, theories and strategies which have been raised will continue to be discussed at much greater length throughout our decade.