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**The Social Position of the Elderly persons
in Light of the Urban Changes**
(A field study in the province of Afif)

**A Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for
the PhD. Degree in Sociology**

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Thesis Abstract

The study subject is (**The Social Position of the Elderly persons in Light of the Urban Changes - A field study in the province of Afif**), and it aims to identify the current status of the social position of elderly people through: identifying the social position of the elderly persons in Afif province community; identifying the extent of vulnerability of the social position of the elderly persons in Afif province community to the social and economic changes that have taken place in Afif province community as part of the overall change in Saudi the society; identifying the social factors associated with change in the social position of the elderly persons in Afif province community; identifying the discrepancies between some of the social, economic and demographic characteristics of the elderly persons, (which are: Place of residence, health situation, educational level, the social situation, economic situation, number of sons & daughters, family authority sons & daughters jobs) and his/her changing social status; identifying the attitudes of young people in the community of Afif province towards the elderly persons; finally, identifying the social roles that the elderly persons Afif province expect to perform. This study uses the descriptive approach with its twofolds (quantitative and qualitative). It makes use of the social survey method, as well as the case study approach and the field study approach. Two measurements are used as tools to collect the data the first is the measure of the social status of the elderly persons; and the second the measure of social status of the elderly persons among young people. Interview tool was also used to collect the field data. The study population consists of adult males in both the elderly persons and young people categories of the Saudi residents in the province Afif at the time of the study. To measure the level of social status of the elderly persons from the viewpoint of older people themselves, a representative sample of all social economic and demographic characteristics of the elderly persons in the province of Afif has been selected. The sample included 353 elderly persons representing 5% of the research community. The researcher has selected a sample of the elderly persons from the study sample itself to apply the case study and the field study methods on them. They were selected according to multiple stages sample method from the original sample of the elderly persons to include 7 elderlies from the case study sample. To apply the field study on young people, a sample consisting of (373) students from the third class of the secondary school stage in the province of Afif and affiliated centers was selected.

The Major Findings of the Study:

1. There had been many social factors determinant of the social status of the elderly persons in the community of Afif Province in the past, which are hereinafter ordered according to their

importance: family name, generosity, financial condition, religiousness, number of children, courage. No disagreement among the elderly persons as to the ranking of social norms determining the social status of the elderly persons according to the environment. The order of social norms that the elderly people see as determinant of the social status of the elderly persons at the present time, are the influence and the size of the group to which the elderly belongs in the first place, where the son's and daughter's jobs comes second, the proximity to the group comes third, state of health comes fourth, and in the fifth place the economic situation.

2. The majority of elderly people believe that there is a change in their social status at present compared to the past when the elderly persons had enjoyed a high status. The majority of the elderly persons believe that their image of themselves is low, followed by a medium view, and then the high view. The majority of the elderly persons believe that people's view of the elderly is low, followed by those who believe that people's view of the elderly has not changed, and last those who believe that people's view of the elderly is better than it used to be.
3. Regarding the order of attitudes of the elderly persons to the social status of the elderly persons in the community recently, first come the category who view that their social status in the community is low; second those who view their social status in the community as medium; and third those who view their social status in the community as high. The views of older persons to their social status within the family to which they belong, first comes the category of the elderly persons who feel that their social status within the family is low, followed by those who view it as medium, and last those who believe that their social status within the family is high.
4. The elderly person's social interaction with the community and family is influenced by many social factors, as the order of the factors that the elderly persons consider as limiting their interaction, is as follows: first, poor health condition, lack of friends, lack of communication between neighbors, ill-treatment by young people to elderly people, and the desire of the elderly person to keep away from people.
5. There are statistically significant differences between the social status of the elderly persons and some social, economic, and demographic characteristics of the elderly person, which are: (health status- educational level- the social situation- place of residence). There is no statistically significant difference between the social status of the elderly person and some of the social, economic and demographic characteristics of the elderly person,

(economic situation, the number of sons and daughters, family authority, jobs of sons and daughters).

6. The majority of the positive attitude of youth towards elderly persons are medium; second comes the high youth's attitude; third the low youth's attitude. Differences in the responses of the youth toward the elderly by place of residence are observed for favouring youth living in non-urban areas than among youth living in urban areas.

1-the majority of the elderly persons believe that they have the ability to perform social roles. The most important social roles that they see their ability to do, are : first securing the needs of home and their sons homes; second, devotion to worship; cooperation with the Mayor of the district in serving the members of the district; call to God aiming non-Muslims; catering for the conditions of orphans and widows in the community and the people of the district; practicing business; visiting the children's schools; cooperation with charitable institutions and volunteering in a beneficial work; serving previous work; help the policemen and traffic policemen; cooperation with the Commission to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice; cooperation with the Emarah and the municipality in maintaining security, sporting and health maintenance; farming; and finally, documenting the history of the group.