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## Livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households in Cairo's informal settlements: The case of Izbet El Haggana

Nora Rafea

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**THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Livelihood Coping Strategies of Women Heads of Households in Cairo's  
Informal Settlements: The Case of Izbet El Haggana**

**Thesis Submitted to the**

**Department of political science**

**By**

**Nora Rafea**

**Winter 2017**

**Supervised by: Dr. Ibrahim Elnur**

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents for their unconditional love and support throughout my life. To my mother, Azza Rifaah, I would like to thank you for your kind heart, generous soul, and constant encouragement to become a better person every day. To my father, Dr. Ahmed Rafea, words are not suffice to express my gratitude for the endless opportunities and unconditional love you give to us, your children, encouraging our achievements and bearing our life choices even the not so right ones with an open heart. Your dedication, commitment and love to your entire family are always a source of inspiration. I am lucky to be called your daughter.

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## Chapter 1: Overview of the Study

This study investigates the livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households in Cairo's Informal Settlements. Its research problem centers on the premise that urban poverty is underestimated in Egypt, in addition, the growing rate of 'urbanization' is increasing the vulnerability of women heads of households. The study is focused on Cairo's informal areas as they represent a shelter for millions of rural migrants to the city. Informal areas in Cairo generally called "ashwa'eyat" in Arabic are either stigmatized or rationalized, yet, the nature of their informality and proximity to the urban center, and sometimes, even government establishments make them a unique source for inquiry. The main research question that is posed by this research is an attempt to understand the impact of the vulnerable context on the livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households in those spaces that are autonomous from the state. This question is important in light of a historical moment in the Egypt that is challenging the relationship between the state and society, and the choice of this specific group is important because women face "double marginalization" in a vulnerable urban context. The thesis is using the sustainable livelihood approach as the foundational theoretical framework in approaching the subject of women heads of households in Cairo's informal settlements that fits under the bigger context of urban poverty. The first element of this framework is the vulnerable context, followed by determining the 'livelihood assets', and the respective 'coping strategies' to achieve the desired 'livelihood outcomes'. Intermediary, there are structures, institutions, and governance issues that impact the relationship between access to capitals or assets, the coping strategies adopted and the livelihood outcomes. The study uses a qualitative approach to gather data on the topic from Izbet El Haggana, the study area and one of Cairo's largest informal settlements. There is a

wealth of literature on the subject matter that describes the different forms of deprivation experienced in those areas and how they are autonomous from the state. Yet, there is a gap in the literature on drawing the link between livelihood analysis and state-society relationships in approaching the issue of urban poverty from a gender lens, in which, this thesis aims to fill part of it.

Governments, development practitioners, international development organizations repeatedly acknowledge that new approaches to poverty reduction need to be developed and applied since all efforts to end poverty with all its forms failed. According to UNDP, “eradicating poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Globally, more than 800 million people are still living on less than \$1.25 a day; many lacking access to adequate food, clean drinking water and sanitation.”<sup>1</sup> In September 2015, world leaders adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the UN General Assembly Meeting to develop an integrated approach that ensures progress across the different inter-linked goals and to build on the achievements and gaps of the Millennium Development Goals. From 2015 onwards, governments and development practitioners will use the SDGs as the framework for reference in the development of policies and programs, in which eradicating poverty and hunger, and promoting good health, quality education and gender equality represent the first five (5) goals out of the seventeen (17) goals.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Research Problem: Underestimated Urban Poverty in Cairo**

Since 2011, poverty rates in Egypt have been on the rise. According to CAPMAS (the state-run statistics agency), poverty rates in Egypt have increased from 25.3% in 2010/2011 to 26.4% in 2012/2013 and reached 27.8% in 2014/2015. The latest

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<sup>1</sup> "Goal 1: No poverty." UNDP. Accessed November, 10 2016.  
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-1-no-poverty.html>.

<sup>2</sup> "Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform." United Nations. Accessed December 12, 2016.  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

Household, Income, Expenditure and Consumption (HIECS) survey of 2015 raised the Egyptian poverty line to 482 EGP compared to 326 EGP monthly in the 2012/2013 survey. In addition, the annual rate of inflation in consumer prices reached 14.8 per cent in June of 2016. Furthermore, the CAPMAS survey pointed out that the urban population is richer than the rural population. Rural poverty is estimated to have reached 56.7 per cent, while the poverty level in Lower Egypt was recorded at 19.7 per cent. The governorates of Assiut and Sohag ranked the highest in terms of poverty levels at a rate of 66 per cent, while poverty in Cairo was estimated at 18 per cent. In addition, the survey's results signified that food subsidies protected 4.6 per cent of Egyptians from falling below the poverty line.<sup>3</sup> In addition, unemployment rates increased from 9% prior to 2011 and reached 12.5 percent in mid-2016 with higher rates among youth and women.<sup>4</sup> The numbers neither reflect the livelihoods of the poor nor the scale of the problem. According to Sabry, urban poverty is severely underestimated in Greater Cairo. She argues that that census data that inform household surveys, on which poverty line studies are based, undercount the people living in informal settlements areas, which means that any policy developed based on the household surveys and poverty line is missing the majority of the poor. This also shows how the policies developed overlooks the urban poor due to the absence of accurate data on inhabitants of informal settlements areas, which ranges between 7.5 million to 12 million or even more.<sup>5</sup>

The government of Egypt does not know precisely the exact number of informal areas in Cairo. According to David Sims, economist and urban planner who wrote

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<sup>3</sup> "27.8 percent of Egyptian population lives below poverty line: CAPMAS," Egypt Independent, July 27, 2016, accessed January 09, 2017, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/278-percent-egyptian-population-lives-below-poverty-line-capmas>.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, "Egypt Overview," accessed January 09, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview>.

<sup>5</sup> Sabry, Sarah. "How poverty is underestimated in Greater Cairo, Egypt." *Environment and Urbanization* 22, no. 2 (2010): 523-541.



extensively on Cairo, the Ministry of Housing estimates that 40 percent of the population lives in informal settlements with this number on the rise since the 2011 revolution.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the literature review suggests that there is a relationship between “urbanization” and “women-headed households” as poverty affects men and women differently. Urban economies are cash based economies, which is a characteristic that compels poor women to engage in paid activities that involves the lowest-paid formal and informal jobs.<sup>7</sup> In addition, women headed households in Egypt are estimated to be 12.4 per cent in 2014. This data suggests that the inhabitants of informal settlements in Cairo who are estimated to be in millions are excluded from official census; thus, the percentage reported by government statistics will always be underestimated. In addition, the high poverty rates in rural Egypt, which can reach 60% per cent, are contributing to an increased rural-urban migration patterns. The below table shows the increasing trend in poverty rates, urban-rural divide, and rapid population growth as shown in the below table over 10 years<sup>8</sup>:

	<b>Poverty headcount ratio at urban poverty line (% of urban population)</b>	<b>Poverty headcount ratio at rural poverty line (% of rural population)</b>	<b>Population, Total</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>% of urban population</b>	<b>% of rural population</b>	<b>Persons</b>
<b>2005</b>	10.10	26.80	71,777,678.00
<b>2006</b>			72,990,754.00
<b>2007</b>			74,229,577.00
<b>2008</b>			75,491,922.00
<b>2009</b>	11.00	28.90	76,775,023.00
<b>2010</b>			78,075,705.00
<b>2011</b>	15.30	32.30	79,392,466.00
<b>2012</b>			80,721,874.00
<b>2013</b>			82,056,378.00
<b>2015</b>	19.7	56.7	91,508,084.00

<sup>6</sup> Sims, David. *Understanding Cairo: The Logic of a City Out of Control*. Cairo and New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Tacoli, Cecilia. *Urbanization, gender and urban poverty: paid work and unpaid carework in the city*. Working paper. March 2012. Accessed December 15, 2016.  
<https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UEPI%207%20Tacoli%20Mar%202012.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank, "Egypt, Arab Rep," Poverty and Equity Data, accessed November 10, 2016,  
<http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/EGY>.

On another note, ‘bread’ has always played a role in Egyptian politics since the riots in 1977 when President Anwar El Sadat tried to remove the subsidies on bread. It has also played a role during the reign of the ousted President Hosni Mubarak with the rise in global food prices in 2008, which caused unrest in the Egyptian streets and produced a significant youth movement like the 6th of April Youth Movement, which played a great role in mobilizing the people in different protests starting from April 2008 onwards. The birth of the 6th of April movement was at the wake of the food crisis in Egypt in 2008, which signifies the vulnerability of the economy and the regime. The first demand chanted by the people was “*Bread*” during the 18 days of protests that toppled Hosni Mubarak, which denotes its importance in Egyptian politics.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, research conducted in the period post the 25th of January revolution in 2011 by the World Food Program (WFP) and the Egyptian government in 2013 indicated that 74.7 percent of the households surveyed who faced shocks affecting their economic situation between 2011 and 2013 noted “rising food prices as the main shock”.<sup>10</sup> The report highlights an increase in the prevalence of food insecurity to 17.2 per cent (13.7 million people) in 2011 from 14 percent of the population in 2009. The same report suggests that some 15 per cent of the population moved into poverty, twice the number who moved out of poverty. According to the analysis of the report, “the highest poverty rates remain in rural Upper Egypt (51.5 percent of the population against a national average of 25.2 percent)”.<sup>11</sup> One of the policy recommendations the report has developed is to look into aspects of food security in Greater Cairo to better inform the policies as the surveys conducted in

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<sup>9</sup> Hafez, Karim. "Egypt's revolution: Egyptians still cry for bread." *Ahram Online*. January 24, 2013. Accessed January 9, 2017. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/63140.aspx>.

<sup>10</sup>World Food Program, “The Status of Poverty and Food Security in Egypt: Analysis and Policy Recommendations”, report, May 2013, , accessed November 3, 2016, <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp257467.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

these area lack in depth analysis.<sup>12</sup> The report also suggests “consumption of cheaper calorie-dense food and reduction of certain items are kind of negative coping strategies applied by Egyptian households, especially in time of crisis. Such strategies in addition to local dietary habits and nutritional awareness resulted in poorer dietary diversity and high dependence on food with lower nutrients, especially among the poor”.<sup>13</sup> This pattern suggests that the negative coping strategies of households due to the economic situation is increasing their food insecurity and vulnerability especially in urban areas since the urban poor are dependent on income generating activities.

Sims argues that understanding a city such as Cairo is not a daunting task as long as preconceived notions are discarded and care is taken to apprehend available information and to assess it with a critical eye.<sup>14</sup> Thus, it is important to ensure that definitions of poverty, urban poverty, informal settlements, and slum areas do not represent a barrier in understanding how people go about their daily life. Urban Poverty has a different nature from a place to another as each region has its unique national, demographic, economic and governance contexts. Thus, it is important to have a holistic and inclusive approach in the study of multi-dimensional poverty in informal settlements that takes into account the relationship between the vulnerability context, the capital assets (Human, Natural, Social, Financial and Physical Capitals), and the strategies adopted by women households to achieve their livelihood outcomes.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.17

<sup>14</sup> David Sims, *Understanding Cairo: The Logic of a City Out of Control*, 2011.

## **Research Questions, Hypothesis, and Objectives**

### **Research Question**

Based on the premise that urban poverty is underestimated due to the exclusion of informal settlements, while urbanization increases the vulnerability of women-headed households, the thesis aims to answer the following questions:

What are the sources of vulnerability surrounding the informal settlements in Cairo?  
And how does it affect the livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households?

### **Hypothesis**

Women heads of households are managers of complex asset portfolios and how they manage their own livelihoods affect the overall household poverty and vulnerability. The livelihood coping strategies of the urban poor suggests that in the absence of State, the citizens develop their own modus operandi to access their basic rights, which should be utilized in the framing of any policy aimed at alleviating poverty and improving their own livelihoods.

### **Objectives**

- 1) Study the sources of vulnerability surrounding Cairo's informal settlements
- 2) Investigate the impact of the vulnerability context on the livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households in Cairo's Informal Settlements.
- 3) Fill a gap in the literature on the link between livelihood analysis and state-society relationships

## **Methodology**

In social sciences, there are three distinct approaches to research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method which combines the two approaches. The type of research and the research question determine the best type of the research

methodology to be used. Quantitative approaches are often given more respect, as there is a tendency to regard science as related to numbers implying precision.<sup>15</sup> However, qualitative approaches in the social sciences allow the investigator to explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the “texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of the research participants.”<sup>16</sup> Qualitative research methods and analytic strategies are not associated with high-tech society in the ways quantitative techniques may be.<sup>17</sup> Qualitative research takes much longer, requires greater clarity of goals during design stages, and cannot be analyzed by running computer programs.<sup>18</sup> Despite its challenges, qualitative procedures give greater depth and understanding which is often needed either to complement quantitative research or stand alone at its own right depending on the purpose of the research. Qualitative research cannot be reduced to particular techniques nor to set stages, but rather it is a dynamic process, which links together problems, theories and methods.<sup>19</sup> In qualitative research, there is a distinction between naturally occurring and generated data. The main methods involved in working with naturally occurring data are observation, documentary analysis, conversation analysis and discourse analysis; the main types of generated data in qualitative research are in-depth interviews and group discussions. Choosing between them depends primarily on which type of data will best explain the research topic and on practical considerations. A topic guide is often developed to guide the interview process in semi-structured or unstructured interviews, which allows the

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<sup>15</sup> Bryman, Alan. "Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done?." *Qualitative research* 6, no. 1 (2006): 97-113.

<sup>16</sup> Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching*. Second Edition ed. London: Sage, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis, eds., *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers* (London: Sage Publications, 2003).

respondents to address important issues that may not emerge with quantitative methodologies. Qualitative research should be strategically conducted, yet flexible and contextual.<sup>20</sup>

As is the case with original research, the methods chosen are informed by the research questions of the thesis. According to Kanbur, the quantitative approach to poverty analysis has been dominating the policy-making circles, however, the use of qualitative approaches has been increasing.<sup>21</sup> There is a general acceptance at the level of rhetoric of the obvious complementarities between the two approaches; however, practitioners in the two traditions still seem to inhabit unconnected worlds with few successes.<sup>22</sup> This thesis aims to investigate the impact of the sources of vulnerability on the livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households through the sustainable livelihood approach which brings “people at the center of analysis” moving away from traditional poverty analysis that focus on material resources<sup>23</sup>. Thus, the qualitative approach is the best-suited methodology due to the nature of the research purpose and research questions posed by this thesis. Qualitative methods are used to address research questions that require explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their contexts. They are particularly well suited to exploring issues that hold some complexity and to studying processes that occur over time.<sup>24</sup> In this thesis, I use a qualitative approach in gathering primary data by conducting semi-structured interviews with women heads of households and service providers in Izbet El Haggana. A topic guide has been developed to guide the

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<sup>20</sup> Berg, Bruce Lawrence, Howard Lune, and Howard Lune. *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Vol. 5. Boston, MA: Pearson, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Kanbur, S. M. Ravi. *Q-squared: combining qualitative and quantitative methods in poverty appraisal*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Chambers, Robert, and Gordon Conway. *Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century*. Institute of Development Studies (UK), 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis, *Qualitative research practice*, 2003

interview process in the semi-structured interviews, which allows the respondents to address important issues that may not emerge with quantitative methodologies.<sup>25</sup> In that sense, using a qualitative approach in this study allows a deeper understanding of informal settlements that are excluded from the government's census data, which means that urban poverty is hugely estimated.<sup>26</sup>

**Primary Data:** Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with six women heads of households and employees in Al-Shehab NGO to understand their livelihood coping strategies in the vulnerable context until a pattern was established and the answers were repetitive.

**Secondary Data:** Secondary data is used in this research. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach is used as the theoretical framework in the attempt to answer the research questions.

### **Research Sample**

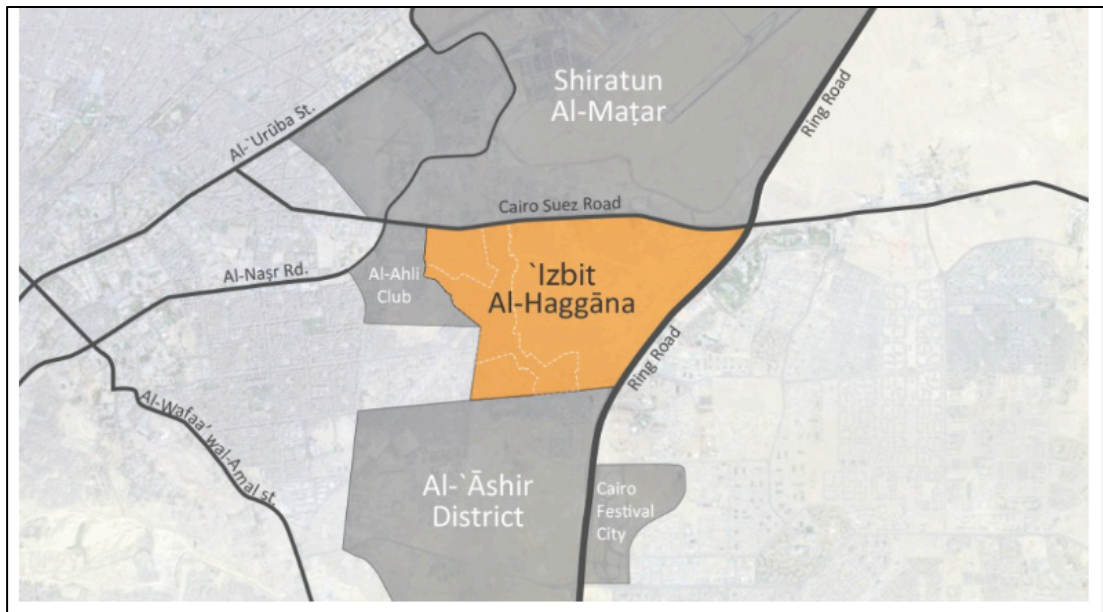
The research sample is a non-random sample, which focused on women heads of households who are residents of Izbet El Haggana aged 25-60 years old. Six (6) interviews were conducted with women service providers and beneficiaries of Al-Shehab NGO. The sample included a widow in her late 30s who is a mother to two girls, a woman in her early 30s who is divorced and a mother of one girl, three women in their 40s married with children, and one woman in her late 50s who is separated from her husband and mother to four girls. The common characteristic between the six women is that they have been residents of Izbet El Haggana for no less than 15 years. Thus, they have seen the evolution and development of the settlements. They are all residents of Area 1, where the older families who initiated the settlement live and where Al Shehab NGO works.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix A: Topic Guide

<sup>26</sup> Sarah Sabry, "How poverty is underestimated in Greater Cairo", 2010

## Description of Case Study and Study Area



Source: TADAMUN, Map of Izbet El Haggana showing its proximity to urban centers <sup>27</sup>

The choice of Izbet El Haggana as a study area is largely attributed to a number of reasons. The first reason is its proximity to urban centers such as Nasr City, Heliopolis, New Cairo, and Cairo International Airport. The second reason is the number of residents who are underestimated and even neglected by formal statistics. The third reason is the stigma surrounding the area as a center of drugs, crime, and illegal activities. <sup>28</sup>

Izbet El Haggana is one of Cairo's largest informal settlements and is located at the kilo 4.5 on the Cairo – Suez road with an estimated population of one million people living on about 750 acres. El Haggana was formerly military land granted to coastline soldiers to build their own settlements. The area faces problems that are common in other 1,221 informal areas that suffer from shortage in basic services such as water, sewage, garbage collection, inadequate healthcare, education and security. According

<sup>27</sup> These materials were developed by [TADAMUN: The Cairo Urban Solidarity Initiative. TADAMUN has given us permission to use the materials for a noncommercial purpose, and distribute any modifications under a similar license..](#)

<sup>28</sup> Al Shehab. *Al Shehab Institution for Comprehensive Development*. 2006.  
<http://www.alshehab.m2014.net/article30.html?lang=ar> accessed November 3, 2016



to El Shehab NGO, 77% of the residents of Izbet Al-Haggana are illiterate.<sup>29</sup>

However, as I have been informed, El Haggana is divided into four different areas, the area where I conducted my interviews is Area 1, in the premises of Al Shehab Institute for Comprehensive Development.<sup>30</sup>

Many of the camel corpsmen were originally from Upper Egypt and Sudan and they built one-story stone structures with mud ceilings, which were typical of their former homes.<sup>31</sup> Eventually the Haggana soldiers were allowed to pay a fee in exchange for building additional dwellings for their families, but the area remained a military zone. 'Izbet Al-Haggana's strategic location attracted construction workers, domestic workers, and many other working-class groups seeking to benefit from the new employment opportunities offered by the booming Nasr City district. Egypt's informal sector then grew quickly in the 1970s and 1980s due to internal migration to the urban areas, oil remittances from Egyptian workers in the Gulf, and the paucity of affordable housing. Haggana's lower-priced housing and easy access to the rest of Cairo continued to attract new residents, as did the eventual establishment of a public bus station at the area's northern border. Haggana has narrow, winding roads and buildings in close proximity to each other. Although Haggana is an informal area, it is listed as one of the sub-districts of East Nasr City district on the Cairo Governorate website.<sup>32</sup> A visit to the area shows that there are many street signs, but Al Shehab claims that the residents named all the streets and financed and erected the signs themselves. Geographically, the area is surrounded on all sides by military land. The

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Area 1 is considered as a relatively prosperous area in Izbet El Haggana as it is connected with basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation, housing units, wider streets, and generally safer in terms of conflicts as it has a higher concentration of older families who play a role in conflict resolution

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> The Cairo Urban Solidarity Initiative "Tadamun" provides a detailed account of Izbet El Haggana in which this description has been derived:  
[http://www.tadamun.info/?post\\_type=city&p=5469&lang=en&lang=en#.WDoqWYeLHdn](http://www.tadamun.info/?post_type=city&p=5469&lang=en&lang=en#.WDoqWYeLHdn)

area has four main entrances, two at the area's northern border (on the Cairo-Suez Road) called the 4.5 entrance and the Al-ṣa'qa entrance, one at its western border called the Al-tabby/District 10 entrance, and one at the south-east border called the Al-sallab entrance. There are a number of points through which one can enter Haggana but they are not well known and tend to be used only by residents or people who know the area very well. Local NGOs have divided the settlement into four parts referred to as Area 1, Area 2, Area 3, and Area 4. The areas with the most accessibility among local NGOs and residents are Area 1, which lies at Haggana's northern boundary and encompasses the 4.5 areas, and Area 4, which lies at Haggana's southern boundary and encompasses the Al-Sallab area. Area 2, which is called the high voltage area because high-voltage electricity cables cut through it and some residents live under these cables, is considered the poorest area in El Haggana. As for Area 3, this is where the two public schools of Haggana were built.

I was granted the opportunity to do my field research through Al Shehab Institute for Comprehensive Development. Al Shehab is a non-government organization that has been working in Izbet El Haggana since 2000. According to Law No. 84 for the year 2002 and its executive bylaws, the organization applied to be registered as an Institution. The registration was granted and its name became Al-Shehab Institution for Comprehensive Development (Registration No. is 5186 on 11/6/2003). Al Shehab works in marginalized and informal areas of Greater Cairo with the aim of “empowering the most marginalized groups such as women, children and youth without distinct based on sex, religion or color”.<sup>33</sup> Al Shehab mission is centered on “promoting and developing slum and poor areas and empowering the residents of these areas to own their tools and resources, in order to be able to defend their rights.

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<sup>33</sup> Al Shehab, 2006

Providing a developmental model through implementing projects that tackle the local community needs and create local cadres to achieve community participation.”<sup>34</sup> Al Shehab worked on many issues pertaining to the services of Izbet Al Haggana in defending their citizenship rights.

### **Context of the Research**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2016, the Central Bank of Egypt announced the liberalization of the currency exchange rate in the lead-up to receipt of a US\$12 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund aimed at decreasing the budget deficit and public debt. However, the government promotes this decision as part of a nationally owned economic reform plan. This research took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 in light of the economic decisions by the government, which caused hikes in the prices of food, energy, transportation and almost all commodities. The immediate outcomes of the decision were a steep devaluation of the Egyptian pound and price hikes across the board, but the implications on the quality of life and broader living conditions across classes are yet to unfold. Thus, the semi-structured interviews took place during a very sensitive time after calls in the country for the revolution of the poor on Friday, 11th November 2016.

### **Limitations of the Research**

This research was carried out during a limited time in the premises of Al Shehab NGO, which did not allow me as a researcher to gain first hand observations if the interviews were conducted inside the household of the interviewees, which would have added more depth. Moreover, the sample size was relatively small, which does not allow for broad policy recommendations. Moreover, the research was only conducted in the first part of Izbet El Haggana, which is relatively safe and is closer to

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

the bus station *El Mawqaf*. In addition, further research in other areas of El Haggana would have given a deeper understanding of the population in informal settlements as it is reported that some Sudanese refugees reside there too, thus, this study does not represent other segments living in the area. Another limitation of the research is that the interviewees have received services from Al Shehab NGO; thus, the research did not have the opportunity to interview women who do not have the same access to social networks. In addition, women living in Area 2, 3, 4 in Izbet El Haggana will probably report different types of coping mechanisms. Thus, my research has a limitation of generalizing the findings on the whole area, even if similarities were found.

### **Contribution of the Research**

On the theoretical level, there is a gap in the literature on the relationship between the sustainable livelihood approach and state-society relationship that this thesis aims to fill part of.<sup>35</sup> On the empirical level, the main contribution of the research is that self-policing becomes a form of coping which makes the case of Cairo's informal settlements a distinct one. It also connects important elements of the sustainable livelihood approach linking the sources of vulnerability surrounding informal settlements to the daily livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households through a qualitative approach.

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<sup>35</sup> De Haan, Leo J. "The livelihood approach: a critical exploration." *Erdkunde* (2012): 345-357.

## **Thesis Outline**

This thesis consists of 5 main chapters, an introductory chapter and a final one dedicated to the conclusion and recommendations. The first chapter introduces the topic of research and gives some background on the context of Egypt, the contribution of the research, the research methodology and the hypothesis. It is followed by a second chapter, which will consist of the literature review, which concludes by the theoretical framework. The third chapter is dedicated to capturing the sources of vulnerability surrounding informal settlements. The fourth chapter showcases the qualitative research findings. The fifth and final chapter focuses on the discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

Many theories and strategies have been developed to address poverty. Although the literature covers a wide range of such theories and strategies, the review of the literature will focus on the following areas: conceptualization of poverty, vulnerability, how urban poverty is different from rural poverty, how poverty influence women and men differently, and the theoretical framework that guides this research.

### The Conceptualization of Poverty

There is excess in the definitions and approaches of poverty, which means that finding one definition is not possible since it also has political, social and economic implications. Thus, the different approaches in conceptualizing poverty needs to be reviewed to provide a larger framework for this study.

The conventional definition of poverty focuses on a person's material resources, especially income. This definition and understanding has been guiding the development discourse for decades and still has an influence on how policies are recommended and formulated. The 'incomes and expenditures approach' has been used for individuals and for households as an indicator of poverty in both absolute and relative terms.<sup>36</sup> This concept has also been complemented by a range of other social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, nutrition, the proportion of the household budget spent on food, literacy, school enrolment rates, access to health clinics or drinking water, to classify poor groups against a common index of material

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<sup>36</sup> Nolan.B & Whelan, C.T "Resources, Deprivation and Poverty. Brian Nolan and Christopher T. Whelan.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 24: Iss. 4, (1997) Retrieved from: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol24/iss4/18>

welfare.<sup>37</sup> Those indicators or approaches have been developed through many years of practice by academics, social workers, economists and anthropologist who define and measure poverty in different ways. Sen has also contributed to the conceptualization of poverty by looking at it in terms of ‘standards of living’.<sup>38</sup> He concludes “ultimately the focus has to be on what life we lead and what we can or cannot do, can or cannot be...the standard of living is really a matter of functioning and capabilities, and not a matter directly of opulence, commodities, or utilities”.<sup>39</sup> Building on the work of Sen, the United Nations Development Programs’ Human Development Report of 1996, introduced an index of Capability Poverty built on indicators from four areas--health and nutrition, reproduction, education, and housing. In addition, the World Bank’s World Development Report (2000/2001) included indicators of political disadvantage such as empowerment, participation, exclusion, and discrimination. It describes poverty as follows: “Poor people live without fundamental freedoms of action and choice that the better-off take for granted. They often lack food and shelter, education and health, deprivation that keep them from leading the kind of life that everyone values. They also face extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation, and natural disasters. And they are often exposed to ill treatment by institutions of the state and society and are powerless to influence key decisions affecting their lives. These are all dimensions of poverty.”<sup>40</sup> This broad definition of poverty allows for tackling the issue in a more comprehensive way that does not focus solely on incomes and expenditures. UNDP acknowledges poverty as a ‘multifaceted problem’ not just the ‘lack of adequate income. “It is a cruel mix of

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<sup>37</sup> Nagi, S. “Poverty in Egypt: Concepts, Realities, and Research Agenda”. (2001) Retrieved from: [http://www1.aucegypt.edu/src/pdr/Research\\_Briefs/Poverty\\_In\\_Egypt.pdf](http://www1.aucegypt.edu/src/pdr/Research_Briefs/Poverty_In_Egypt.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Sen, Amartya. "The standard of living: lecture I, concepts and critiques." *The standard of living* (1987): 1-19.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.3

human deprivation in knowledge, health, dignity and rights, obstacles to participation and lack of voice. Therefore, comprehensive transformational change is needed to address the root causes of poverty.”<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, when it comes to practice and poverty reduction policies, the focus is still on ‘income, consumption and expenditures approach’, which utilizes the household surveys to measure poverty even if its limitations are well acknowledged and documented by scholars and practitioners.

Hulme raises an important question on how to approach chronic poverty. In particular, the question is of whether chronic poverty should be conceptualized as income or consumption poverty or as something that has many dimensions. “It is now widely accepted by analysts and policy makers that poverty is deprivation in terms of a range of capabilities in addition to income—education, health, human and civil rights—and that these capabilities are significant in their own right.”<sup>42</sup> Even though the conceptualization of poverty is now widely accepted to be a combination of the above, conceptual and practical problems arise everyday with the application of poverty reduction strategies as they do not necessarily include in-depth analysis of the needs of the people and they are generally politically motivated.

The concept or the end goal of “well-being” has inspired the development of different approaches of analysis including all the literature on poverty, thus, focusing on one approach only does not yield a real change in improving lives of the people. Coudouel et al.<sup>43</sup> focus on three analysis frameworks of well-being: poverty, inequality and vulnerability analysis. They provide basic definitions for the three concepts with the

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<sup>41</sup> UNDP. “Fast Facts United Nations Development Program”. (2013) retrieved from : <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/fast-facts/english/FF-Poverty-Reduction.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Hulme, David, and Andrew Shepherd. "Conceptualizing chronic poverty." *World development* 31, no. 3 (2003): 403-423.

<sup>43</sup> Coudouel, Aline, Jesko S. Hentschel, and Quentin T. Wodon. "Poverty measurement and analysis." *A Sourcebook for poverty reduction strategies* 1 (2002): 27-74.



aim of guiding decision makers to define the type of information they need to monitor poverty reduction and make appropriate policy decisions.<sup>44</sup> The basic definition adopted for poverty is “whether households or individuals possess enough resources or abilities to meet their current needs.”<sup>45</sup> This definition combines the income and capabilities approaches, which means that income they will look at the ‘income’, ‘expenditures’, and ‘consumption’ in addition to health, education and other assets. The second concept is “inequality” which can be described as the “inequality in the distribution of income, consumption, or other attributes across the population...based on the premise that the relative position of individuals or households in society is an important aspect of their welfare.”<sup>46</sup> This definition further means that the overall level of inequality in a country, region, or population group, in terms of monetary and nonmonetary dimensions, is in itself also an important summary indicator of the level of welfare in that group.<sup>47</sup> ‘Inequality’ and ‘the perception of inequality’ are concepts that require further conceptualization, as they are more subjective and relative with links to other concepts related to governance indicators such as justice and the rule of law. The third concept ‘vulnerability’ is defined as “the probability or risk today of being in poverty—or falling deeper into poverty—at some point in the future.”<sup>48</sup> Coudouel et al. acknowledge that ‘vulnerability’ is a key dimension of well-being, since it affects individuals’ behavior (in terms of investment, production patterns, coping strategies) and their perception of their own situation.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the next section will aim to review some aspects related to the concept of vulnerability, as it is difficult to measure, yet it is vital for the analysis in this research.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.29

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 54

## Defining Vulnerability

Moser defines vulnerability as ‘the insecurity or well-being of individuals or communities in the face of changing environment (ecological/social/economic/political) in the form of sudden shocks, long term trends or seasonal cycles’.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, “people become “vulnerable” if access to resources either at a household, or at an individual level is the most critical factor in achieving a secure livelihood or recovering effectively from a disaster.”<sup>51</sup> Lipton and Maxwell also explain vulnerability as a dynamic concept, as it changes with the processes, contexts, and environments.<sup>52</sup>

The households with direct access to capital, tools and equipment, and able-bodied members are the ones, which can recover most quickly when a disaster strikes. As such the most vulnerable people are the poorest, who have little choice but to locate themselves in unsafe settings. It is suggested, however, that vulnerability can be understood through an assessment of tangible and non-tangible assets: labor, human capital, productive assets, household relations and social capital.<sup>53</sup> In addition, Moser found that although poor people are usually among the most vulnerable, not all vulnerable people are poor.”<sup>54</sup> This distinction is important, as it is more inclusive and makes the concept as dynamic and responsive to the needs of the people to secure their livelihoods regardless of income measurements and poverty analysis. Yet, measuring vulnerability remains problematic.

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<sup>50</sup> Moser, Caroline. *Confronting Crisis. A Comparative Study of Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability in Four Poor Urban Communities. Environmentally Sustainable Development Studies and Monographs Series No. 8*. The World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433, 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> Lipton, Michael, and Simon Maxwell. "The new poverty agenda: An overview." *Discussion Paper-Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (United Kingdom)* (1992).

<sup>53</sup> Moser, Caroline ON, Cathy McIlwaine, and Jeremy Holland. *Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability: Confronting Crisis in Angyalfold, Budapest, Hungary*. Vol. 2. World Bank Publications, 1997.

<sup>54</sup> Moser, Caroline ON. "The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies." *World development* 26, no. 1 (1998): 1-19.

## How to Measure Vulnerability?

Measuring vulnerability can be problematic and complicated due to the multiple definitions of the concept and the determination of the kind of data needed to conduct an assessment. Measurements of vulnerability usually include both the sensitivity, which is the extent of the response, and the resilience, which is the ability to recover, of economic units to a shock.<sup>55</sup> As the concept of vulnerability remain a vigorous, and dynamic concept, different frameworks were developed to be able to measure it empirically and gain better understanding of the livelihoods of the people. One such approach is the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach.

Hulme focuses on the improved data, qualitative and quantitative, available in regards to poverty in the developing world. Conceptual advances such as capability frameworks, vulnerability and livelihoods analysis which allows researchers to study more than poverty trends and move to the study of poverty dynamics.<sup>56</sup> Livelihoods analysis has particular relevance for understanding chronic poverty as it permits the tracking over time of a household's assets (human, social, natural, physical and financial) in relation to its vulnerability context and the institutions, organizations and policies that mediate its external economic and social relationships.<sup>57</sup> A particular strength of this approach is that it recognizes human agency and examines the way in which household livelihood strategies are built around protecting, substituting, increasing and using assets to produce security and achieve other goals. In addition, its focus on vulnerability is central to understanding chronic poverty. It is not unproblematic, however, and is subject to several critiques. The most significant of these is its failure to deal adequately with social relationships and power the very

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<sup>55</sup> Hulme, Mike, Ruth Doherty, Todd Ngara, Mark New, and David Lister. "African climate change: 1900-2100." *Climate research* 17, no. 2 (2001): 145-168.

<sup>56</sup> Hulme, David, and Andrew Shepherd. "Conceptualizing chronic poverty." *World development* 31, no. 3 (2003): 403-423.

<sup>57</sup> Ellis, Frank. *Rural livelihoods and diversity in developing countries*. Oxford university press, 2000.

least; when the framework is used it needs to be supplemented by an analysis of how any specific household fits into wider social structures.

### Conceptualizing Urban Poverty

In light of the above, defining “urban poverty” will also be problematic since it is associated with the conceptualization of poverty. Wratten explained that the definition of poverty has an impact on how any phenomenon will be understood.<sup>58</sup> She clarified that the development literature has focused on inequalities between rural areas and better off urban populations, and the linkages between urbanization, the spread of capitalism and poverty.<sup>59</sup> There is a distinction between urban poverty and rural poverty in many different ways. Urban poverty encompasses a physical element and also another social element that makes it different from rural poverty. The first set of approaches have focused on the physical infrastructure problems of housing, sanitation, water, land use and transportation while the second set of broad approaches has focused on economic and social infrastructure issues such as employment, education and community services.<sup>60</sup> Baker and Wratten illustrate how urban and rural households adopt a range of diversification strategies, by having one foot in rural activities and another in urban, thus, some researcher think that the conceptualizing of urban poverty as separate from rural poverty is problematic.<sup>61</sup> This means that both areas need to be understood within a complementary framework. Understanding urban poverty cannot be separate from the understanding of rural poverty since they both reflect a complex state of affairs. Another distinction between urban and rural poverty can be attributed to the fact that urban economies are cash

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<sup>58</sup> Wratten, Ellen. "Conceptualizing urban poverty." *Environment and urbanization* 7, no. 1 (1995): 11-38.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Masika, Rachel , Arjan De Haan, and Sally Baden. *Urbanisation and Urban Poverty: A Gender Analysis*. Report. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. October 1997. Accessed December 2016. <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/sites/bridge.ids.ac.uk/files/reports/re54.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> Wratten, Conceptualizing urban poverty, 1995

based economies, which is a characteristic that is different from the rural economy. Food, water, transportation cost higher in urban areas, which constitute more burdens on the household and are all based on cash. This has an impact on poor women as they are compelled, often from a very young age, to also engage in paid activities. In many instances this involves work in the lowest-paid formal and informal sector activities, which, at times of economic crises, require increasingly long hours for the same income.<sup>62</sup> Thus, a gendered perspective on urban poverty is important as it gives a deeper understanding to the inefficient use of resources and how it impacts men and women differently. The most important determinant in this equation is how women are burdened by increased responsibilities and vulnerabilities in the cash based economy.

### **Gender and Urban Poverty**

A gender perspective of urban poverty is important because men and women experience and respond to poverty in different ways. Access to income and assets, housing, transport and basic services is influenced by gender-based constraints and opportunities. Gender-blind urban services provision may not meet the needs of women if their priorities are not taken into consideration. A gender perspective is important in any analysis, however, it is specifically important to the understanding of urban poverty because urbanization and gender roles have a very close kinship. The decision of migration in itself is shaped by gender relation and impacts the entire household. Urbanization tends to affect gender roles, relations and inequalities (although with great variety in the form and intensity from place to place) since the factors responsible for female-headed household (FHH) formation arise through

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<sup>62</sup> Tacoli, Cecilia. *Urbanization, gender and urban poverty: paid work and unpaid carework in the city*. Working paper. March 2012. Accessed December 15, 2016.  
<https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UEPI%207%20Tacoli%20Mar%202012.pdf>.

urbanization. This is evident in the transformation of household structures, the shifts in household survival strategies and changing patterns of employment.<sup>63</sup> Female-headed households are generally linked with disadvantage; however, there is an argument that arises which shows that this can be an advantage to women, not a disadvantage. According to some studies, female-headed households may experience greater “self-esteem, more personal freedom, more flexibility to take on paid work, enhanced control over finances and a reduction or absence of physical and/or emotional abuse.”<sup>64</sup> Studies have shown that the expenditure patterns of female-headed households are more biased towards nutrition and education than those of male-households. While the first argument of increase in self-esteem and agency of well-being seem a bit farfetched as there are other different forms of violence and exploitation women suffer from and hard to measure as it is subjective. However, the second element on increased expenditure patterns on nutrition and education is more valid.

Comparing female-headed households to male-headed household is a complicated process as this depends on the approach of poverty measurement being applied. Rajaram used different measurements other than “consumption measurement” that is usually used in government measurements. The result of his study reveals evidence that “poverty measures based on the housing condition and the wealth indices show that female-headed households are less poor than male-headed households. However, based on the standard of living index measure of poverty, female-headed households are marginally poorer than their male-headed counterparts.”<sup>65</sup> Consideration of urban

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<sup>63</sup> Sylvia Chant, ‘Gender aspects of urban economic growth and development’, paper prepared for the UNU/WIDER Conference on Human Settlements in the Changing Global Political and Economic Processes, Helsinki, 1995.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Rajaram, Ramaprasad . *Female-Headed Households and Poverty: Evidence from the National Family Health Survey*. Technical paper. Department of Economics, The University of Georgia. August 2009.

poverty often neglects differentials between men and women in terms of their access to income, resources and services. Such differentials may occur within households between men and women or between individuals (i.e. between single men and single women) or between households with women-headed households at a disadvantage to male-headed households. There are also gender-based differentials in vulnerability to illness and violence.<sup>66</sup>

Urbanization is also often associated with gender-related transformations such as the greater engagement of women in paid employment, linked with a wider range of opportunities than in rural areas. This, in turn, has demographic implications including a decline in fertility levels, often-higher proportions of women in the overall urban population, and a concentration of women-headed households in urban centers.<sup>67</sup> However, this perspective is not entirely accurate since urbanization does not necessarily give women greater opportunity. On the contrary, it can be a process that actually exploits women not the other way round. The concept of “double marginalization” needs to be thus further elaborated as women face gender inequality on different levels. In rural areas in the case of Tanzania, women lack access to control rights over livestock, land, and income, which are critical to securing a sustainable livelihood. However, this inequality remains invisible to women who appear to readily submit to local customs, and to the community at large due to a lack of public awareness and gender-based interventions. However, even when they migrate to urban center, “they face double marginalization for being pastoral woman

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<https://www.frbatlanta.org/-/media/documents/news/conferences/2009/3rd-international-economics/093rdseinternationalseconomicspaperrajaram.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> Wratten, Conceptualizing urban poverty, 1995

<sup>67</sup> Chant, Sylvia H., ed. *The international handbook of gender and poverty: concepts, research, policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011.

for being a woman.”<sup>68</sup> Even though, urban centers increasingly attract women because they offer more economic opportunities than rural areas. This is reflected in changing urban sex ratios (the rate of males to females in a population): the proportion of women living in urban areas has risen steadily in most parts of the world. According to Tacoli, women have unequal position in the urban labor market, have limited ability to secure assets independently from male relatives and are at greater risk to be exposed to violence.<sup>69</sup> UNFPA estimates that women make up 70 to 90 per cent of the workforce in specific sectors such as garments in Latin America and Southeast Asia.<sup>70</sup> Thus, a closer look at how people in urban areas survive in their daily life of importance, which brings into the picture the livelihood approach.

### **Linking Vulnerability to Urban Poverty**

Vulnerability affects rural and urban poverty differently since they have different contexts. Farrington et al. review of the literature on urban poverty and vulnerability analysis concluded that poor men and women in cities frequently face sources of vulnerability that can be categorized into the following elements: social context of cities, the nature of the urban economy, the urban environment and urban systems of governance. For example, urban areas are considered to be less safe than rural area, though, this stereotype is routed in different cases. One of the most contested areas that links vulnerability to urban poverty is the debate around the presence or absence of social solidarity networks in urban areas. The question is whether social diversity and fluidity of cities mean that the urban poor suffer from conditions of “social disintegration and the erosions of community, or whether they rely on strong

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<sup>68</sup> Eneyew, Adugna, and Sileshi Mengistu. "Double Marginalized Livelihoods: Invisible Gender Inequality in Pastoral Societies." *Societies* 3, no. 1 (2013): 104-116.

<sup>69</sup> Tacoli, Urbanization, gender and urban poverty, 2012

<sup>70</sup> Ibid



networks of solidarity between groups and individuals”<sup>71</sup>. Wratten pose the question of why specific communities or households suffer from high levels of social fragmentation in cities. Recent migrant groups may be more socially isolated, while longer established neighborhoods, or ‘urban villages’, may be more socially cohesive or neighborhoods may be fragmented due to specific social problems, such as a prevalence of criminal activities and drugs or alcohol dependency or ethnic, religious or communal tensions, are some of the characteristics that have been highlighted as sources of increased social fragmentation in urban areas.<sup>72</sup>

### **The Sustainable Livelihood Approach**

Poverty reduction strategies that only focused on income generation and economic growth did not succeed in improving the lives of poor people in developing countries. Thus, scholars and development practitioners aimed to develop a conceptual framework that may yield a deeper understanding of people’s life by bringing them into the center of analysis. This approach is called the “sustainable livelihood approach”. It has been used in the study of alleviating rural and urban poverty and has been acknowledged by International Organizations as a tool that gives better understanding of complex realities and socio-economic policies. Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway define “ *sustainable livelihood*” as the following: “ A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in

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<sup>71</sup> Farrington, John, Tamsin Ramasut, and Julian Walker. "Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches in Urban Areas: General Lessons, with Illustrations." (2002).

<sup>72</sup> Wratten, conceptualizing urban poverty, 1995

the short and long-term.<sup>73</sup> Carney provides a simpler definition of ‘sustainable livelihood’ in the following manner: “A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living”, and when added to “sustainability”, it will mean that “it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.”<sup>74</sup> On another level, the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) has made a considerable effort in the conceptualization of sustainable livelihoods. In 1999, it published a set of guidance sheets to share and summarize emerging thinking on the sustainable livelihood approach. The guidance sheets show that the livelihoods approach “puts people at the center of development” by adopting the following practical means: 1) Analysis of people’s livelihoods and how these have been changing over time; 2) fully involves people and respects their views; 3) Focuses on the impact of different policy and institutional arrangements upon people/households and upon the dimensions of poverty they define 4) stresses the importance of influencing these policies and institutional arrangements so they promote the agenda of the poor; 5) works to support people to achieve their own livelihood goals.<sup>75</sup> The model developed by DFID is useful in drawing upon an understanding of the different components from the framework.

The sustainable livelihood approach was originally developed and derived from the rural context. However, different scholars adapted the framework to urban

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<sup>73</sup> Chambers, Robert, and Gordon Conway. *Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century*. Institute of Development Studies (UK), 1992.

<sup>74</sup> Carney, Diana. "Sustainable rural livelihoods: what contribution can we make? Papers presented at the Department for International Development's Natural Resources Advisers' Conference, July 1998." In *Sustainable rural livelihoods: what contribution can we make? Papers presented at the Department for International Development's Natural Resources Advisers' Conference, July 1998*. Department for International Development (DFID), 1998.

<sup>75</sup> DFID, U. K. "Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets." *London: DFID*, 1999

livelihoods. For instance, Rakodi and Lloyd try to apply the sustainable livelihood approach to the study of urban settings. They concluded that “solutions cannot be imposed from outside but must be decided and negotiated through partnerships in a particular locality...customizing a livelihoods framework in a particular context is necessary to open up discussion and reconciliation of various competing and undermining factors.”<sup>76</sup> In addition, SIDA published a report in 2002 on the adaptation of the sustainable livelihood approach in urban areas illustrating general lessons from Indian case studies. The report suggests that there is nothing “inherent” in urban settings that prevent the application of the sustainable livelihood approach. Moreover, the report argues that the “need for livelihoods approaches in urban settings is pressing, and that the returns to their implementation might be high.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, there is growing evidence on the viability of utilizing the sustainable livelihood approach in urban settings. In addition, studies on urban poverty and the sustainable livelihood approach have been conducted in Kenya, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and India amongst others to draw upon the intertwined link between ‘shocks’ or ‘vulnerable contexts’ and their influence on the coping strategies of the affected populations and their overall livelihoods outcomes.<sup>78</sup> An important pattern has been concluded from the study, which shows that reduction in food consumption, is the most utilized coping strategy, which increases their vulnerability as they become at greater risk of health problems. It is not possible to define a simple set of characteristics for the livelihood strategies of the poor in urban areas, however, practical experience and field research does suggest that some common themes emerge around the conditions faced and livelihood practices adopted by many of the

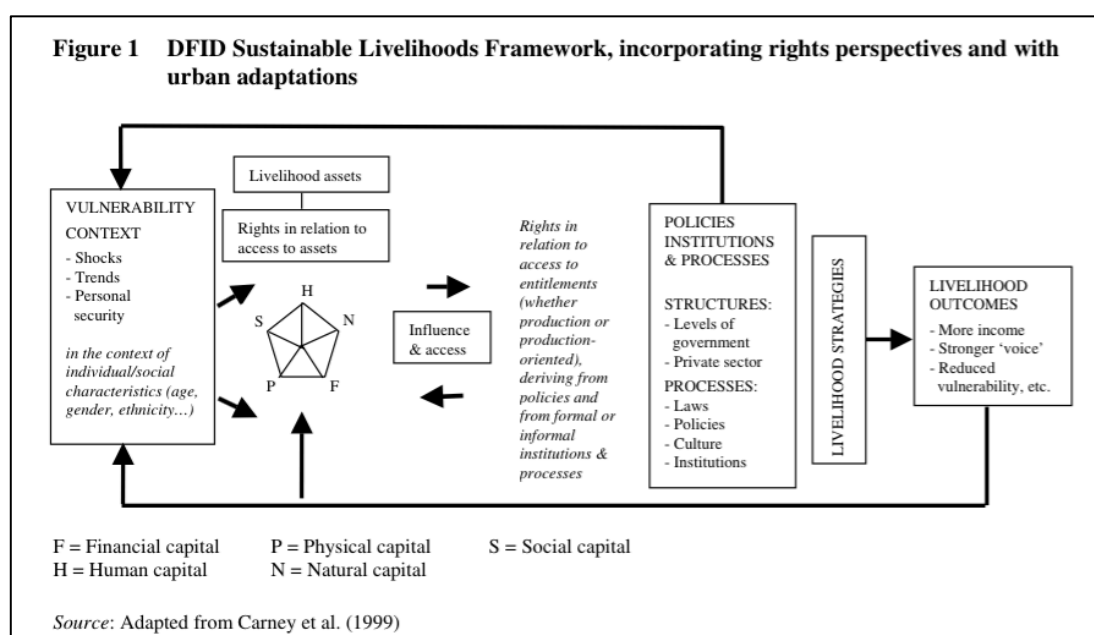
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<sup>76</sup> Lloyd-Jones, Tony, and Carole Rakodi. *Urban livelihoods: A people-centred approach to reducing poverty*. Routledge, 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Farrington et Al. *Sustainable Livelihood Approaches*, 2002

<sup>78</sup> Moser (1998); Swift et Al, (2001) Levin et Al, (2000); Ellis & Mdoe (2003); Amendah et Al. (2014).

urban poor.<sup>79</sup> Another tool that can capture the complex realities of the urban poor within the sustainable livelihood approach is the “asset vulnerability framework” model. The framework suggests that the urban poor are managers of complex asset portfolios and illustrates how asset management affects household poverty and vulnerability. The framework aims to capture the complex external factors affecting the poor, which can then be adapted depending on the context.<sup>80</sup>



Nevertheless, the sustainable livelihood approach received criticism for neglecting aspects that is important to poverty and vulnerability analysis. Haan reviewed the different critiques posed to the sustainable livelihood approach. One criticism is that it did not go beyond material motives using a neo-liberal language by calling resources “capitals”.<sup>81</sup> Another critique that was posed to the framework is that it is a neoliberal project since it focused on “on opportunities than on constraints, more on actor’s agency than on structure, more on neutral strategies than on failed access due to

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Moser, Caroline ON. "The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies." *World development* 26, no. 1 (1998): 1-19.

<sup>81</sup> De Haan, Leo J. "The livelihood approach: a critical exploration." *Erdkunde* (2012): 345-357.

conflicts and inequalities in power.”<sup>82</sup> This brings another shortcoming or gap in the framework, which was accused of neglecting “power relations” in its analysis. However, Haan responded to these critiques in his paper showing that the sustainable livelihood approach was also drawn from neo-Marxist theory and on local realities, not necessarily neo-liberally driven. In addition, he clarified that “power relations” were not entirely absent from livelihood analysis, as this approach also resembles the rights based approach, which acknowledges power relations and inequalities. There are three overlapping domains that stimulated the study of “power relations” in livelihood analysis, which are political ecology, gender studies, and studies on political arenas.<sup>83</sup> Those three domains show the relevance of conducting power mapping or political mapping exercises with a gendered perspective to add depth to the livelihood approach. Another criticism of Sustainable Livelihoods as a holistic approach to development is its failure to explicitly address issues of power, and it is argued that ‘a rights-analysis (founded on a concern for maximizing human agency and freedom) provides one way of addressing political and institutional relations’.<sup>84</sup> Thus the incorporation of rights-based approaches into sustainable livelihood analysis can help to explain issues of power in determining access to assets. As noted above, one way of looking at poor men and women’s access to rights is through a notion of political capital, as outlined by Baumann and Sinha, on the basis that the ability to influence political processes which determine decision-making and access is something which men and women can build up and draw on.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> Ibid

<sup>84</sup> Norton, Andy, and Mick Foster. *The potential of using sustainable livelihoods approaches in poverty reduction strategy papers*. London: Overseas Development Institute, 2001.

## Conclusion of the Chapter

As illustrated in this chapter, the conceptualization of poverty is problematic since it is shaped by political, economic, and social motives. There is now a general understanding that poverty is multi-dimensional and cannot be narrowed down into a person's material resources, especially income. In addition, there are other frameworks such as 'inequality', 'vulnerability' analysis that need to be tackled to complement poverty analysis. The concept of 'vulnerability' is a key dimension of well-being, since it affects individuals' behavior in terms of investment, production patterns, coping strategies, etc. which is an important element that is usually overlooked in developing poverty reduction strategies. Measuring vulnerability is difficult because it needs improved quantitative and qualitative data which is timely and costly, yet, valuable as it acknowledges human agency. Different frameworks were developed such as the sustainable livelihood approach to utilize the vigorous and dynamic concept of vulnerability. The sustainable livelihood approach is useful as it gives better understanding of complex realities and socio-economic policies that impact how people access, cope and achieve their livelihood outcomes. Thus, it brings them into the center of analysis, which is necessary in understanding complex problems such as "chronic poverty". Yet, this framework has its limitations, as it does not necessarily include power relation structures or state-society relationships or gender relations in the analysis. However, the framework is adaptable which means that those elements can be added to the analysis. In addition, 'political capital' can be added to livelihood assets in the framework.<sup>85</sup>

The scope of this research is focused on urban poverty, thus, it was important to review different elements of the concept. One important conclusion of this literature

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<sup>85</sup> Baumann, Pari, and Subir Sinha. *Linking development with democratic processes in India: Political capital and sustainable livelihoods analysis*. Overseas Development Institute, 2001.

review is that urban poverty cannot be understood without an understanding of rural poverty. Thus, urban poverty will only be defined and understood if rural poverty is also brought in the picture, as there is a complex relationship between the two contexts. In addition, the vulnerability of women increases in urban poor contexts as ‘urbanization’ adds extra burden on rural migrant women and increases the number of women headed households. Thus, this thesis will aim to contribute to the literature on livelihood analysis in urban settings in light of the urban-rural divide. Moreover, it aims to fill a gap in the literature that links the sustainable livelihood approach to other elements such as gender relations and state-society relationships in the analysis.

### **Chapter3: Sources of Vulnerability Surrounding Informal Settlements in Cairo**

#### **Introduction**

Measuring or determining all sources of vulnerability involves a great degree of complexity. As concluded from the literature review, the sources of vulnerability surrounding cities can be classified into four main elements: the social context of cities, the nature of the urban economy, the urban environment and urban systems of governance.<sup>86</sup> However, urban poverty cannot be understood without an understanding rural poverty, as there is an inter-dependent dynamic relationship between the two contexts.<sup>87</sup> In the case of Cairo's informal settlements, understanding the roots of its development vis a vis the state, in addition, reviewing the policy of the state towards informal settlements is important to contextualize the problem. This chapter will be divided as follows: firstly, it will present an understanding of rural poverty in Egypt; secondly, it will give an overview of the development of informal settlements in Cairo, thirdly; it will present the policies of the state towards informal settlements; fourthly, it will present the political, economic social and environmental contexts that contribute to the additional vulnerability of informal settlements.

#### **Understanding Rural Poverty in Egypt**

An understanding of Egypt's geographic distribution is important to understand the relationship between rural and urban poverty. Geographically, Egypt is divided into four main regions: The Nile Valley and Delta, Western Desert, Eastern Desert and Sinai Peninsula.<sup>88</sup> Administratively, Egypt is divided into 27 governorates where Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said and Suez governorates, are considered to be fully 'urban' governorates. The rest of the governorates are a mixture of 'urban' and 'rural' areas.

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<sup>86</sup> Farrington Et Al. Sustainable Livelihood Approaches, 2002, p.15

<sup>87</sup> Wratten, Conceptualizing urban poverty, 1995

<sup>88</sup> CAPMAS, Egypt in Figures 2015. Report. Accessed December 15, 2016.

<http://www.sis.gov.eg/newvr/EgyptinFigures2015/EgyptinFigures/pages/english%20Link.htm>



According to CAPMAS, the percentage of the population living in ‘urban’ areas in Egypt across the governorates is approximately 42.7% while the percentage of the population living in rural areas is estimated to be 57.3%.<sup>89</sup> The below table shows the population distributed over the urban-rural continuum which indicates that the disparity is not only between governorates but also within the governorates. Moreover, the table shows that the majority of Egyptians live in rural areas, which correlates to the poverty map that confirms higher percentages of poverty in rural areas.<sup>90</sup>

Governorate	% Urban	Population (2015)	Rural	Urban
Alexandria	98.8	4,812,186	56,698	4,755,488
Aswan	42.3	1,431,488	826,543	604,945
Asyut	26.5	4,245,215	3,119,112	1,126,103
Beheira	19.5	5,804,262	4,674,346	1,129,916
Beni Suef	23.2	2,856,812	2,193,871	662,941
Cairo	100.0	9,278,441	0	9,278,441
Dakahlia	28.2	5,949,001	4,271,428	1,677,573
Damietta	38.7	1,330,843	815,244	515,599
Faiyum	22.5	3,170,150	2,456,368	713,782
Gharbia	30.0	4,751,865	3,324,630	1,427,235
Giza	58.6	7,585,115	3,138,310	4,446,805
Ismailia	45.4	1,178,641	643,778	534,863
Kafr El Sheikh	23.1	3,172,753	2,441,246	731,507
Luxor	37.8	1,147,058	713,422	433,636
Matruh	70.6	447,846	131,841	316,005
Minya	18.9	5,156,702	4,183,284	973,418
Monufia	20.6	3,941,293	3,128,460	812,833
New Valley	48.0	225,416	117,180	108,236

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> Rural Lower Egypt Governorates are: Damietta, Dakahlia, Sharkia, Qalyoubia, Kafr el Sheikh, Gharbeyya, Menoufia, Beheira, Ismailia governorates. Rural Upper Egypt Governorates: Menia, Assiut, Sohag, Qena, Aswan and Luxor governorates.

North Sinai	60.2	434,781	173,095	261,686
Port Said	100.0	666,599	0	666,599
Qalyubia	44.7	5,105,972	2,825,045	2,280,927
Qena	19.7	3,045,504	2,445,051	600,453
Red Sea	95.1	345,775	17,062	328,713
Sharqia	23.1	6,485,412	4,987,707	1,497,705
Sohag	21.4	4,603,861	3,618,543	985,318
South Sinai	51.1	167,426	81,924	85,502
Suez	100.0	622,859	0	622,859
<b>Total</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>87,963,276</b>	<b>50,384,188</b>	<b>37,579,088</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Egypt in Figures Report 2015

Prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution in 2011, national statistics based upon the results of the 2008/09 rounds of the Egypt's Households Income, Expenditure and Consumption Surveys (HIECS) showed that the incidence of poverty in rural areas was 2.4 times that in urban regions; 28 percent of residents in rural areas were below the poverty line; 17 percent in rural Lower Egypt and 44 percent in rural Upper Egypt.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, this survey availed a data set representative of the poorest 20 percent of villages in Egypt; that is, the very left tail of the household income/consumption distribution in all villages in rural Egypt.<sup>92</sup> The 1000 poorest villages are located in rural Upper Egypt and generally characterized by lack of adequate public infrastructure, private capital accumulation, and low investment in human capital and the absence of pro-poor program-based fiscal policy, which collectively lead to deterioration in living standards in Upper Egypt, compared to other regions.<sup>93</sup> Urban areas despite all their problems remain a great source of attraction to the people from rural Egypt, which means that they are more vulnerable.

Tackling urban poverty will greatly depend on tackling issues of rural poverty. While

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<sup>91</sup> Verme, Paolo; Milanovic, Branko; Al-Shawarby, Sherine; El Tawila, Sahar; Gadallah, May; A. El-Majeed, E. A. *Inside Inequality in the Arab Republic of Egypt*. World Bank. 2014. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/17583>

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> "A Profile of Poverty Across Egypt and Recommendations". Policy Brief. ENID. 2015

the environment in the city is hugely different, it is important to understand the culture and build on it for the people moving in those areas. The lack of access to schools, education opportunities, healthcare facilities, job opportunities in rural areas continue to make the urban cities the center for services and income generating activities.

Furthermore, the HIECS survey of 2015 that was conducted post the 25<sup>th</sup> of January uprising by four years shows a considerable increase in rural poverty rates which is estimated to have reached 56.7 per cent, while the poverty level in Lower Egypt was recorded at 19.7 per cent. This means that in seven years, rural poverty rates have doubled from 28 percent in 2008/09 to 56.7 percent in 2015. The governorates of Assiut and Sohag ranked the highest in terms of poverty levels at a rate of 66 per cent, while poverty in Cairo was estimated at 18 per cent. This disparity in data between the rural and the urban suggests that while rural poverty rates are increasing considerably and the rate of urbanization is also increasing exponentially with the establishment of new cities, yet the percentage of urban poverty did not double as much according to official statistics, this means only one thing: not only is urban poverty underestimated, but there is also a chance that those new popular quarters or informal settlements are extensions of rural poverty in urban spaces. Thus, an understanding of the history of the development of the informal settlements and the nature of vulnerabilities in the urban context and how it is different or similar to rural areas is important.

### **A Brief History on the Development of Informal Settlements in Cairo**

During the 1960s, the informal urbanization process on the peripheries sped up, with a substantial increase of rural-urban influx to Cairo. The annual growth rate of Greater Cairo attained 4.4% between 1960 and 1966. This period marks the first expansion

phase of informal settlements, mostly on agricultural land in the western (Boulaq al-Dakrou, Waraq al-Hadr, Waraq al-Arab, Munira) and northern (Shubra al-Kheima, Matariya) parts of the city.<sup>94</sup> In spite of the good productivity of agricultural land, their sale for building was more remunerative than the revenues from farming, a fact that encouraged farmers to sell their parcels.<sup>95</sup> Urbanization of agricultural land was the result of a horizontal extension of villages surrounding the capital, combined with a form of urbanization from the city of Cairo itself. From that period on, the state reinforced legislation forbidding informal construction on agricultural land (Law 59-1966, subsequently amended many times). Nevertheless, these laws and decrees were ineffective, and housing demand was still growing because of migration and high demographic growth in the capital. The populist housing policy implemented by Nasser, in Cairo on particular (with public housing called *masakin sha'biyya* and cooperatives), was also inadequate for creating shelter for low-income families and the cohort of migrants rushing to Cairo. Some new informal districts appeared, while others (like Dar al-Salaam, Imbaba, Zawyat al-Harma, Baragil, Saft al-Laban) continued to grow rapidly. Families who could not afford an agricultural plot built a house on land belonging to the state (*wada' al-yed*, or 'putting their hand on it'), almost all of which was desert land, or bought a parcel from local brokers. Thus, informal areas on desert land like Manshiet Nasser and Ezbat al-Haggana continued to grow heavily.<sup>96</sup>

Starting in the 1970s and 1980s, a new phase of informal urbanization began, larger than that of the preceding decade. In Greater Cairo, 84% of new units built during the 1970s were considered illegal. As a result of savings generated from work in the

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<sup>94</sup> Kipper, Regina, and Marion Fischer, eds. *Cairo's Informal Areas Between Urban Challenges and Hidden Potentials*. Cairo: GTZ Egypt, 2009

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p.17

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p.17

neighboring oil-producing countries such as Iraq, Libya, and Saudi Arabia, which had been suddenly enriched during the oil booms in 1973 and 1979, people invested in informal land and constructions.<sup>97</sup> This period was known by Sadat's policy of economic liberalization (infitah) launched in 1974, which opened the economy to private investments and was characterized by less state-control. In this period, studies focused on inequality across urban and rural areas in line with the period of strong migration and urbanization flows that characterized the period.<sup>98</sup>

From 1990s and the most recent decade have seen perhaps a decline in the interest for inequality as growth, liberalization, and privatization of the economy attracted most of the attention and the studies of inequalities that appeared did so mostly in the context of poverty studies.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the formation of informal settlements in Cairo must be seen within this wider context of the political and socio-economic policies of the State. The increase in the number of informal settlements has both a historical context related to the socio-economic policies of the state and another dimension related to the natural population growth and urbanization rate that is linked an accumulation of different factors such as inappropriate housing policies and regulations, high rural poverty rates, and lack of understanding on issues related to inequality. If people invested in the informal sector, it was because the supply proposed by the public sector was neither sufficient nor affordable. In fact, public housing units in the New Towns located in the desert areas surrounding Cairo were built for the upper middle class and not for low income and poor families.<sup>100</sup>

The informal settlements became an important feature of urban poverty in Egypt because of the very low prices of the houses that was built illegally at no cost on

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p.18

<sup>98</sup> Verme, et Al. *Inside Inequality in the Arab Republic of Egypt*. World Bank. 2014.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> Kipper and Fischer, eds. *Cairo's Informal Areas*. 2009

either an agricultural land or the state owned desert land. In the literature, the settlements are divided into four different types: 1) Informal Settlements on Former Agricultural Land, 2) Informal Settlements on Former Desert State Land, 3) Deteriorated Historic Core, 4) Deteriorated Urban Pockets As illustrated, the history of the settlements varies according to location and type. For example, Manshiet Nasser began as a relocation site for “slum dwellers” and “garbage collectors”, and Izbet El Haggana began as “a hamlet for the households of coast guard soldiers stationed nearby.”<sup>101</sup> Those two settlements can be classified as type 2 settlements that were built on former desert state land. According to UN Habitat, in each case, a core settlement was allowed to take hold, and expanded as the neglect of the government towards its own property became apparent. Usually, quite large plots on the fringes of the established core were walled, and then these pioneers would sell sub-parcels to other settlers. The rate of growth of individual communities varied greatly, with spurts of expansion at certain periods being quite common. The development process was completely informal, with no legal paper work and a total reliance on personal trust, mediated, when necessary, by the existing community, referred to as a ‘hand claim’ process. Although these areas are technically illegal, settlers have certain ‘customary rights’ derived from interpretations of those portions of the civil code pertaining to hand claims on desert land. Residents tend to collect either the receipts from paying *tahkir* (a nominal rent imposed by a Governorate’s Amlak (Properties) Department) or awayyid (property tax), from electrical connections, and from other items to establish as much paper legitimacy as possible. The development of informal settlements is related to the presence and absence of the

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<sup>101</sup> UN Habitat. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*. UN-Habitat. 2003. <http://mirror.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=1156> (accessed November 3, 2016).

state and its economic policies. As explained, the informality of the settlements reveal how the migration patterns as well as the lack of adequate development policies towards rural areas has not only decreased agricultural land, but also increased the percentage of both rural poverty and informal settlements due to inadequate housing policies and understanding of the livelihood assets, coping strategies and outcomes of rural men and women.

### **Policy of the Government towards Informal Settlements**

The policy of the government towards informal settlements can be seen within a wider discourse on ‘urban governance’ which is defined as “the linkages of people, organizations, regulations and practices – visible and hidden, intended and unintended,” creates formal and informal rules for decision-making which determine which areas get resources and which do not.<sup>102</sup> The government of Egypt does not know precisely the exact number of informal areas in Cairo. According to Sims, the Ministry of Housing estimates that 40 percent of the population lives in informal settlements. A comparison of census data between 1996 and 2006 puts the number at 67 percent with the percentage increasing since the 2011 Revolution.<sup>103</sup> In the 1990s and early 2000s, the government policy could be described as an ‘aggressive interventionist approach’, yet, there has been a gradual shift in the policy was driven by several factors, including the scale of informality eclipsing the capacity of the government to manage it, political expediency, security concerns, electoral contests, and the ongoing civil discourse that has demanded a more humane, inclusive, and open approach to the residents who live in informal settlements. There are two major principles that underpin the government’s approach to informal areas and urban

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<sup>102</sup>Marwell, Nicole P. "Mapping the Social Geography of Urban Inequality." The Cities Papers. July 23, 2014. Accessed December 15, 2016. <http://citiespapers.ssrc.org/mapping-the-social-geography-of-urban-inequality/>.

<sup>103</sup>David Sims, Understanding a City out of Control, 2011

development in general. The first is that informal areas are a problem. They are identified and characterized negatively and treated as something that must be reduced or removed, much in the way that the government plans and acts to reduce illiteracy, poverty, and child mortality rates. The second principle is that urban growth must be directed away from existing cities and agricultural land to desert areas in order for Egypt to develop properly and enhance economic growth. An often-cited statistic is that Egypt utilizes just four percent of its land area.<sup>104</sup> The interventionist approach includes eviction and demolition, resettlement, rehousing, and upgrading. Two government entities have the authority to intervene in informal areas: the governorates and the Informal Settlements Development Facility (ISDF).<sup>105</sup> Preventative approaches include “belting,” delineating and enforcing Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB), bans on using agricultural land for residential purposes and squatting on state-owned desert land, and using building codes and planning regulations which, when enforced, prevent the types of structures that are built in lower-income informal areas. Those policies have not been successful in limiting the growth of informal areas. At best, they have redirected informal growth from one area to another or at worst, they have encouraged informal growth, left residents unprotected, and increased corruption at the local level. For example, the national building standards produced by the Housing and Building National Research Center (HBRC) are suitable for mid- to high-end housing units, but do not accommodate the types of buildings that lower income families can afford. In order to satisfy this demand, these standards force developers to work informally. Developers know that if they build units that meet the national building codes, their targeted clientele will not

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<sup>104</sup> Mitchell, Timothy. "America's Egypt." Middle East Research and Information Project. April 1991. Accessed December 4, 2016. <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer169/americas-egypt>

<sup>105</sup> "Coming Up Short: Egyptian Government Approaches to Informal Areas," Tadamun, , accessed December 3, 2016, <http://www.tadamun.info/2014/09/16/coming-short-government-approaches-informal-areas/?lang=en#.WHVKloeLHdl.s>



be able to afford them.<sup>106</sup> Local government officials responsible for enforcing the building code and issuing building permits also know that the regulations do not always meet the local context and sometimes use them as leverage for rent-seeking. The result is that the regulations are ignored, no minimum standards for safety or security are enforced, and the welfare of residents suffers. While this allows the informal sector to meet the high demand for affordable housing units in Egypt, sometimes the buildings are unstable, poorly built, and unsafe for use. In these instances, the building code benefits local government officials and developers and is harmful to residents—the very people it is meant to protect. Informal areas fall primarily under the jurisdiction of the following government entities: the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC), the Governorates, the Informal Settlements Development Facility (ISDF). The Supreme Council of Planning and Urban Development (SCPUD) is not directly involved with informal areas, but governs urban development in general. SCPUD sets national-level goals and policies for planning and urban development, coordinates between the government entities that are concerned with urban development, provides expertise to legislators about laws governing urban development, evaluates the implementation of the national strategic plan and the regional strategic plans, and approves the national, regional, and governorate strategic urban development plans.<sup>107</sup> Many informal areas have access to public services and utilities and have relatively strong, if not formal, land tenure. This is not to suggest that informal areas are treated on equal terms with their formal counterparts: the quantity and quality of public services available in informal areas is, on the whole, inferior to those offered in formal areas. Government

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<sup>106</sup> Nada, Mohamed. “The Politics and Governance of Implementing Urban Expansion Policies in Egyptian Cities.” *Égypte/Monde arabe* Third Series, 2011. Accessed December 10, 2016. <http://ema.revues.org/3294>

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

planners and decision makers have long recognized that informality is a fact of life in cities.

There has been a shift in the way the government has been approaching informal areas at least on the level of policies or language, accompanied by inconsistent actions. The current constitution adopted in 2014 through the Committee of Fifty attempted to discuss the issue of informal settlements by including a specific article on the issue. Article 78 of the 2014 Constitution recognizes ‘ashwai’at (the literal translation of unplanned slums) and requires the State to take actions towards them. The article stipulates the following: “The State shall ensure the citizens' right to adequate, safe and healthy housing in a manner which preserves human dignity and achieves social justice. The State shall devise a national housing plan, which upholds the environmental particularity and ensures the contribution of personal and collaborative initiatives in its implementation. The State shall also regulate the use of State lands and provide them with basic utilities within the framework of comprehensive urban planning which serves cities and villages and a population distribution strategy. This is to be applied in a manner serving the public interest, improving the quality of life for citizens and safeguards the rights of future generations. The State shall also devise a comprehensive national plan to address the problem of unplanned slums, which includes re-planning, provision of infrastructure and utilities, and improvement of the quality of life and public health. In addition, the State shall guarantee the provision of resources necessary for implementing such plan within a specified period of time.”<sup>108</sup> This article is problematic as it does not include a definition of the term ‘ashwai’at’ (translated as “unplanned slums” in Article 78 quoted above). Definitions are important as they guide the strategy and the policy of

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<sup>108</sup> *Constitution of The Arab Republic of Egypt 2014*. State Information Service.  
<http://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvr/Dustor-en001.pdf>.

the government, as there are different types of informal settlements that require a different kind of intervention. Thus, it is important to study that political context that surrounds informal settlements to understand the relationship between the government and the residents of those areas.

### **Mapping the Political Context**

Any action cannot be understood without a wider understanding of its context. Thus, informal settlements need to be understood within a wider political context. The political context is key to understanding all other elements surrounding the informal settlements because it reflects inherent power struggles, structures, policies and institutions that shape the daily lives of the people. Since 2011, Egypt has been passing through a transition that needs yet to be understood, studied, and analyzed. The Egyptian Revolution of the 25th of January in 2011 called for three main demands “Bread, Freedom, and Social Justice”. The main slogans chanted by millions of Egyptians were indicative of the driving forces that moved them to the streets. The call for ‘bread’ has been the first demand of the revolution indicating its centrality in their lives, not just as a basic commodity, but an emblem for the desire to live a dignified life.

There is a shift in the nature of the state and society relationship in Egypt since the 25<sup>th</sup> of January uprising in 2011. The Mubarak regime that was once thought to be invincible was taken down through the collective action of different segments of the society. It can be argued that all the events that happened in Egypt since 2011 is actually an attempt to rewrite the formal and informal rules governing the relationship between the state and society. This research will focus on three main elements in this domain: 1) the relationship of the people with the police station and security apparatus, 2) the constitution drafting process which provides the legal framework of

action; and 3) the role of civil society organizations in this relationship.

The study of Salwa Ismail in 2006 on Cairo's popular quarters preceding the 25th of January revolution focused on the ordinary citizens' encounters with the everyday state in Bulaq al-Dakrur.<sup>109</sup> Ismail's main argument is that there has been a marked and qualitative shift from the "distributive state" to the "security state" which represents a wider dynamic of state–society relations involving processes of engagement and disengagement on the part of both the state and societal forces. According to Ismail's analysis, state disengagement has taken the form of withdrawal from the provision of public social services, including the elimination of subsidies, masked privatization of schooling, contracting out, and privatization. Societal disengagement emerges in the increased levels of participation in informal economic activities and in the people's preference to avoid state authority when seeking to resolve issues of daily governance. The encounter of the citizens with the state through their interactions with the police is largely charged with suspicion and conflict. As illustrated by accounts of the informants in her study, the police is thought to abuse authority and use violence and humiliation. As such, the residents express a desire to avoid dealing with the police even when there may be a need for their intervention as in the case of street fights and disputes between residents. As such, a great deal of conflict goes unreported and is settled internally whether peacefully or violently.<sup>110</sup> Thus, the study revealed the complicated relationship with the police as a reflection of their engagement or disengagement with the state in their daily life. Nevertheless, it is important to investigate another dimension of this relationship after the events of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution in 2011, especially after

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<sup>109</sup> Ismail, Salwa. *Political life in Cairo's new quarters: Encountering the everyday state*. University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid

the absence of the police from the streets.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 ‘Friday of Anger’ or ‘Friday of Rage’, tens of thousands of Egyptians marched in the streets demanding the fall of the Mubarak regime and calling for ‘bread, freedom and social justice’. The Friday of Anger came in as an escalation and response to the authoritarian rule of the Mubarak regime. However, there was a specific rage directed towards the police stations on this Friday as they were burnt down along with the premises of the ruling National Democratic Party. Years later, there are many theories and questions around who burnt the police stations down, with different theories and accusations. During the days of the uprising, it was widely said that the youth of the informal settlements, ‘shabab al ashwa’yat’ are the ones who burnt down the police stations as an expression of anger towards the establishment that has been constantly discriminating against them. People construct narratives in different ways and neglect the facts that do not seem to be serving their own narrative. The police was one of the main instigators and reason for the mass protests the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution. The despair felt by the people has instilled a culture of fear, and a very sensitive relationship with the police station. It is no wonder, how the police stations have all been burnt down during the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution in 2011. As El Mahdi shows in an article published directly after the fall of Mubarak, the Egyptian revolution has been largely “Orientalized” showcasing the ‘peaceful’ youth from the middle, upper middle class while negating the youth who have actually fought against the brutal police forces on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January.<sup>111</sup> This kind of discourse serves a broader narrative, which stigmatizes residents of informal settlements as chaotic, criminals, and thugs. Thus, the

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<sup>111</sup> El Mahdi, Rabab. *Orientalising the Egyptian Uprising*. Jadaliyya, 2011. Accessed <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1214/orientalising-the-egyptian-uprising> December 24 2016

relationship between the residents of informal areas with the police becomes largely complicated.

The constitution writing process in itself was indicative of the desire of the people to ensure that the state represents them. The issue of representation, participation and accountability are all part of a broader rhetoric that determines the relationship between the state and society. From 2011-2014, Egypt passed through the process of drafting the constitution two times which in itself reflects the constant desire to change the political system. In three years, Egyptians participated in three constitutional referendums, two parliamentary elections, and two presidential elections. This in itself is an indication of instability needless to say increase violence in the street and instances of sexual violence against women in political protests. In addition, two interim-constitutions that were both drafted by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the first was drafted upon the cessation of Hosni Mubarak's presidency in February 2011, and was introduced for a referendum on the 19th of March 2011, which marked the first political event where actually people can vote with their ID cards. The second interim-constitution was announced by the interim-president Adly Mansour on the 8th of July 2013 after intervention of SCAF in terminating the rule of the president-elect Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood. This was an attempt to reshape the transitional period in a way that appeases the people, however, all events afterwards only caused greater political and social polarization in the Egyptian society. Without delving on the details of describing in details of the events that happened in Egypt since 2011, one thing is clear, this whole revolution or uprising and all the protests that followed is an attempt to rewrite the contract between the state and society.

Civil society organizations play a fundamental role in reflecting the nature of the relationship between the state and the society. Sika argues that the ruling elite in the post-January 25th of January in Egypt do not want civil society organizations to become independent from the state, on the contrary, the state wants to continue dominating these organizations to ensure its hegemony over society.<sup>112</sup> The Mubarak regime tolerated syndicates, unions, business associations and service-based organizations, but harassed pro-democracy actors like human rights organizations and non-religious social movements, regularly accusing them of being agents of foreign regimes or “spies”.<sup>113</sup> Yet, civil society actors continued to struggle for their independence, it is estimated that almost 300 independent unions have been established, in the period directly after the ousting of Mubarak, the most important of which are independent labor unions that have sporadically developed in different governorates, to protect the interests and the rights of workers.<sup>114</sup> The state continues to see civil society organizations as a threat that must be controlled. In late 2016, a new law was drafted by Egypt’s parliament that effectively prohibits independent non-governmental groups in the country by subjecting their work and funding to control by government authorities, including powerful security agencies.<sup>115</sup> The law adds a layer of administrative and bureaucratic requirements to ensure the cooptation of civil society organizations.

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<sup>112</sup> Sika, Nadine. "Civil Society and Democratization in Egypt: The Road Not Yet Traveled." *Democracy & Society* (Georgetown University), 2012: 29-30.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid

<sup>114</sup> Omayma Kamal and Mohamed Gad, “Independent Unions: Stories of A Nation that Rises Up,” (Arabic) *Al-Shorouk News*, March 27, 2011.

<sup>115</sup> “Egypt: Draft Law Bans Independent Civil Society Groups”. Human Rights Watch. December 06, 2016. Accessed December 15, 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/28/egypt-draft-law-bans-independent-civil-society-groups>.

## The Social Context

The term “social context” is a very broad term that can mean different things depending on the scope of the research. In the literature, there is not necessarily a shared understanding regarding how the concept can be categorized or defined. Social context can include a wide range including abilities, beliefs, values and norms, culture, networks and economics. The social context in Cairo can be described as complex to say the least since geographical distribution is not based on the income of the household. According to UN Habitat, poor people are found living mixed with low and middle-income families in the center of old neighborhoods and in the huge informal settlements of Greater Cairo, even in the upper class neighborhoods, a small proportion of poor people could be found.<sup>116</sup>

The informal settlements represent the shelter to millions of people due to the relative low-price of housing in those areas. According to CAPMAS statistics in 2012, the population of Greater Cairo that constitute three main governorates: Cairo, Giza and Qalyoubia, is estimated at 20 million. Cairo alone is estimated to stand at 9 million; yet, this number is definitely underestimated as residents of informal settlements are usually excluded from the census. As suggested in the literature review, social diversity in the cities is likely to create tensions more than in rural areas due to income and spatial inequality.<sup>117</sup> This is very evident in the case of Greater Cairo, the diversity of the population and the spatial injustice. Eldefrawi suggests that informal settlements kept the status of saved community with tight solidarity compared to formal settlements in Egypt. This kind of community helps shape the social relations and coping strategies within the informal settlements. This represents the social

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<sup>116</sup> UN Habitat. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*. UN-Habitat. 2003.

<sup>117</sup> Wratten, 1995; Rakodi and Lloyds, 2014; Moser, 1996.



capital of the residents in informal settlements.<sup>118</sup>

### **The Urban Economy**

The underestimation of urban poverty and the exclusion of informal settlements have different implications the understanding of the economic context surrounding them. Sabry has shed light on the underestimation of poverty in Greater Cairo by pointing out how the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the official source for statistics in Egypt, has consistently under-counted populations in informal settlements. Some large areas were found to be missing from this agency's lists, while others had estimates for their population that were a small fraction of their real population. Moreover, she highlighted that this has an implication on both national population census and household surveys that provide data for poverty line studies. This means that any number provided by the government is inaccurate and underestimated.

Another element that must be carefully tackled is a thorough understanding of the formal and informal economy. While there is data and indicators produced for the formal economy, there is a lack of data on the informal. This means that both poverty and vulnerability are greatly underestimated. The informal economy or the shadow economy is the most detrimental factor contributing to the livelihoods of the people. Elshamy (2015) suggests that the burdensome tax system, high inflation rates, and dominance of the agriculture sector are the key sources of the informal economy, representing altogether around 72 percent of the informal economy from the period between 1980 and 2012. The results also confirm that a higher degree of informality reduces the number of contributors to social security schemes, and enrollment rates in

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<sup>118</sup> Eldefrawi, Sarah " Community and Neighbourhood in Egyptian Context, Case Formal and Informal Settlements - Cairo," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 281-286, 2015.

education. The size of the informal economy differs considerably across time. The average annual growth rate for the size of informal economy in Egypt was around 1% for the period 1980-2012.

In addition, the CAPMAS-led 2015 Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey indicates that more than 25 million Egyptians lived on less than LE482 per month in 2015 and found that the percentage of Egyptians living in poverty rose to 27.8 percent, up from 26.3 percent in 2012/13 and 25.2 percent in 2010/11. The official poverty line rose from LE326 per month in 2012/13 to LE482 per month in 2015, to reflect a rise in the minimum income sufficient for a dignified life. This means that a family of five needs a monthly income of LE2, 410 to remain above the official poverty line.<sup>119</sup>

Most of the Egyptian population is dependent on the informal sector, which is more susceptible to shocks. While employees of the formal sector face other problems, they rely on a fixed amount but in the face of the increasing prices, they are getting poorer every day, which can be the reason for other problems such as working in more than one job or resorting to corruption, the informal economy. The informal and formal sectors are both vulnerable to any changes on the political or economic sphere. According to CAPMAS, the urban population, represent 42.7% of total population (2015), while the rate of urbanization is estimated to be 1.68% annually. This means that the majority of rural Egypt is facing marginalization from the discourse of protest and stand at a disadvantage. Additionally, research conducted in the period post the 25th of January revolution in 2011 by the World Food Program (WFP) and the Egyptian government in 2013 indicated that 74.7 percent of the households surveyed



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<sup>119</sup> Kassab, Beesan. "Household survey highlights rise in poverty, inequality in Egypt." Mada Masr. July 27, 2016. Accessed December 5, 2016.  
<https://www.madamasr.com/en/2016/07/27/news/economy/household-survey-highlights-rise-in-poverty-inequality-in-egypt/>.

who faced shocks affecting their economic situation between 2011 and 2013 noted “rising food prices as the main shock”. Moreover, the report suggested, “significant pockets of poverty and food insecurity are emerging in urban areas, where poverty increased by nearly 40 percent between 2009 and 2011.”<sup>120</sup>

## Environmental Context

There has to be a distinction between the differences between rural and urban poverty in terms of the natural and physical environment since both are very different and will affect livelihoods in different ways. The below table adapted from Farrington et al shows the difference between the two contexts and its impact on the livelihoods:

 <b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b> 
<p>Livelihoods drawn from crop cultivation, livestock, forestry or fishing (i.e. key for livelihood is access to natural capital)</p> <p>Access to land for housing and building materials not generally a problem</p> <p>More distant from government as regulator and provider of services</p> <p>Access to infrastructure and services limited (largely because of distance, low density and limited capacity to pay?)</p> <p>Fewer opportunities for earning cash; more for self-provisioning. Greater reliance on favourable weather conditions</p> <p>Access to natural capital as the key asset and basis for livelihood</p> <p>Urban characteristics in rural locations (e.g. prosperous tourist areas, mining areas, areas with high value crops and many local multiplier links, rural areas with diverse non-agricultural production and strong links to cities...)</p>	<p>Livelihoods drawn from labour markets within non-agricultural production or making/selling goods or services</p> <p>Access to land for housing very difficult; housing and land markets highly commercialised</p> <p>More vulnerable to ‘bad’ governance</p> <p>Access to infrastructure and services difficult for low-income groups because of high prices, illegal nature of their homes (for many) and poor governance</p> <p>Greater reliance on cash for access to food, water, sanitation, employment, garbage disposal</p> <p>Greater reliance on house as an economic resource (space for production, access to income-earning opportunities; asset and income-earner for owners – including <i>de facto</i> owners)</p> <p>Rural characteristics in urban location (urban agriculture, ‘village’ enclaves, access to land for housing through non-monetary traditional forms...)</p>

Source: Farrington et al, 2002

<sup>120</sup> World Food Programme. *The status of poverty and food security in Egypt*, 2013

Another aspect that is well documented in the literature about the vulnerability of Egypt is its problems with water resources and food security. The latest assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that most countries in the Middle East and North Africa region – including Egypt – are highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Cities are playing a key role when it comes to addressing this challenge. According to the report, the urban population and infrastructure are increasingly at risk. Especially poor inhabitants are vulnerable to those impacts, lacking the financial means to pursue a sustainable livelihood. While a framework for climate change adaptation exists, neither policies nor actions are implemented at the local level. Concrete examples for community-based adaptation measures have yet to be applied.”<sup>121</sup> This is another important element that needs to be taken into consideration. Climate change certainly has an impact on the agriculture land, but it also has an impact on urban populations and residents of informal settlements.

### **Conclusion of the Chapter**

This chapter aims at presenting the sources of vulnerability that affects livelihoods in Cairo’s informal settings to answer the first research question: “What are the sources of vulnerability surrounding the informal settlements in Cairo?” The sources of vulnerability surrounding informal areas in Cairo can be summed up into the following points: inadequate state policies towards rural areas and informal settlements, a contentious state and society relationship, an informal cash based urban economy, exacerbated with a historically inadequate housing policies. The informal settlements can be seen as an extension of rural poverty in urban spaces, since the

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<sup>121</sup> "Climate Change Adaptation and Urban Resilience." Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas. Accessed December 5, 2016. <http://egypt-urban.net/climate-change-adaptation-and-urban-resilience/>.

majority of the population residing in those spaces are rural migrants who moved to urban centers to improve their livelihoods to access services and opportunities missed in rural areas. As such, the inadequate housing policies of the state and the lack of a development policy targeted towards rural areas are amongst the factors that intensify the development of informal settlements. It is important to note that those same sources of vulnerabilities have an impact on residents of 'formal areas'; yet, informal areas face double marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion, which make them more prone to be affected by shocks such as the uprising or increase in food prices.<sup>122</sup> The sustainable livelihood approach stresses that an understanding of livelihoods and the vulnerabilities that people work to protect themselves from, is essential and must be drawn from the men and women through in-depth consultations. The next chapter presents the case of women heads of households in Izbet El Haggana, one of the largest informal settlements in Cairo.

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<sup>122</sup> As defined by Moser (1996) vulnerability is "the insecurity or well-being of individuals or communities in the face of changing environments (ecological/social/economic/political) in the form of sudden shocks, long term trends or seasonal cycles

## Chapter 4: Qualitative Research Findings

### Introduction

This chapter draws on empirical data from semi-structured interviews conducted in Area 1 of Izbet El Haggana in the premises of Al Shehab Foundation for Comprehensive Development with six women-heads of the households. The interviewees were asked a series of questions to capture their livelihood assets and coping strategies. The theoretical framework guiding this research was used in the formulation of the topic guide and the analysis of the answers of the respondents. As illustrated in the literature review, the concept of “sustainable livelihoods” can be defined by dividing the term into two parts. The first part is to look at what comprises a ‘livelihood’ and the second part is to determine how it can be ‘sustainable’. A livelihood includes the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living”, and when added to “sustainability”, it will mean that “it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.”<sup>123</sup> This understanding ensures that poverty reduction strategies are not merely focused on income enhancing activities, but includes a deeper understanding of the vulnerabilities and aspirations of the people, who become the center of analysis. Most of the women interviewed have lived more than 15 years in the area, thus, they have seen the transformation from an isolated place where they have used their own coping strategies such a ‘stealing water from the army’, using ‘gas bulbs’ instead of electricity to a more civilized way since electricity and water have been introduced to the area. This chapter aims to first present the livelihood assets available to women heads of households in Izbet El

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<sup>123</sup> Diana Carney, "Sustainable rural livelihoods", 1998

Haggana, followed by their livelihood coping strategy derived from the answers of the respondents.

### **Livelihood Assets**

As illustrated in the literature review, livelihood assets are classified into tangible and intangible assets. Chambers defines tangible assets as those physical assets, which are owned, while intangible assets are defined as those assets that help men and women access other assets such as social capital or legal frameworks, which they do not directly own or have control over.<sup>124</sup> In addition, Baumann and Sinha suggest that the ability to influence political processes, which determine decision-making and access, is something that can be utilized by the people, and must be added as another asset in the sustainable livelihood approach.<sup>125</sup> In the context of urban settings, some assets are more relevant than others. The main livelihood assets that will be discussed in this section are the following: human capital, physical capital, and financial capital, which are the tangible assets, while social capital and political capital are classified as intangible assets.

### **Human Capital**

Human capital represents the skills, knowledge, ability to work and good health that enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies to achieve their livelihood objectives. At a household level human capital is a factor of the amount and quality of labor available; this varies according to household size, skill levels, leadership potential, health status, etc.).<sup>126</sup> As demonstrated in the literature review, poverty is a ‘multifaceted problem’ not just the ‘lack of adequate income’. “It is a cruel mix of human deprivation in knowledge, health, dignity and rights, obstacles to participation

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<sup>124</sup> Chambers, Robert. "Poverty and livelihoods: whose reality counts?" *Environment and urbanization* 7, no. 1 (1995): 173-204.

<sup>125</sup> Baumann and Sinha. *Linking development with democratic processes in India: Political capital and sustainable livelihoods analysis*. Overseas Development Institute, 2001.

<sup>126</sup> Farrington et Al , *Sustainable Livelihood Approaches*,2002, p.26

and lack of voice.”<sup>127</sup> In that sense, the livelihood assets especially human capital is linked to how poverty is defined and approached. Clearly financial capital, in terms of access to employment and earnings, is strongly dependent on adequate human capital. In turn, human capital is highly dependent on adequate nutrition, health care, safe environmental conditions, and education.<sup>128</sup> As illustrated in chapter 3, informal settlements in Cairo especially those built on military land lack basic services due to their complex relationship with the state and the relationship between rural poverty and migration.<sup>129</sup> From the answer of the women on the 7 questions that reflect aspects of human capital, the following answers were cross-cutting despite differences in age, job, status and level of education. Most of the respondents had completed basic education at the preparatory level, which means they can read and write. In addition, one of the respondents indicated that she was illiterate, but later in her life she joined the literacy classes offered by Al Shehab. It is estimated that 77% of the women residing Izbet El Haggana are illiterate, which does limit their access to job opportunities and increases their vulnerabilities.<sup>130</sup> On the question of healthcare, neither of the women interviewed have health insurance as they all work in the informal sector. On the question of the government food subsidy program, the women have subsidy cards, which is linked to their ID cards. The government food subsidy program has undergone several reforms over the past years. In mid-2014, Egypt introduced the food subsidy system wherein citizens are provided with smart cards entitling them to a monthly ration worth EGP 15 per individual in addition to five loaves of bread a day at the subsidized price of EGP 0.05 a loaf, which is lower than

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<sup>127</sup> UNDP. “Fast Facts: United Nations Development Program”. (2013) retrieved from : <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/fast-facts/english/FF-Poverty-Reduction.pdf>

<sup>128</sup> Farrington et Al, Sustainable Livelihood Approaches, p.26

<sup>129</sup> See Chapter 3 on the sources of vulnerability surrounding informal settlements

<sup>130</sup> Al Shehab, 2006



the market rate of EGP 0.3.<sup>131</sup> On another note, the interviewees indicated that 90% of the women in Izbet El Haggana work as domestic workers, utilizing their knowledge of domestic work to access financial capital, which will be discussed in the next section. The women neither have adequate nutrition, health care nor safe environmental conditions and education. This asset is largely influenced by the vulnerable context and has an impact on the coping strategies and eventually the livelihood outcome.

### Financial Capital

Financial capital can be understood in terms of “income from the sale of labor”<sup>132</sup> The importance of income for the urban poor relates to the highly ‘commoditized’ nature of cities, leading to a higher dependence on cash income compared to rural residents who usually have better access to land for subsistence agriculture, to common property or ‘free’ natural resources (e.g. fisheries, fuel wood, hunting grounds), and who may be paid in kind for their labor (e.g. agricultural laborers may be paid in rice in some areas of India). City-dwellers’ dependence on income as their key asset often means that urban poverty is under-counted – the fact that almost all their assets must be converted into cash in order to be used for consumption may make the urban poor seem less poor in terms of income. As such, the women from Izbet El Haggana are not very much different from other women in other urban areas. The income of the household is largely dependent on domestic housework in other upscale areas such as Heliopolis, Nasr City, Al Rehab City and New Cairo. As the women themselves and the service providers said, 80% of the women in the area work as domestic workers and 90% are the women heads of households. In order to enhance this asset, women

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<sup>131</sup> "Egypt's food subsidy card system to be managed by military production ministry." Ahram Online. August 16, 2016. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/238990/Business/Economy/Egypt's-food-subsidy-card-system-to-be-managed-by-m.aspx>.

<sup>132</sup> Twigg, John, and Mihir R. Bhatt. *Understanding vulnerability: South Asian perspectives*. Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd (ITP), 1998.

have developed together a saving scheme to support each other with the cash flow. As illustrated previously, financial capital is dependent on human capital. Financial capital is dependent on the nature of the urban economy which is a cash based economy and hugely informal.

### **Physical capital**

Physical capital includes assets such as housing, tools and equipment that people own, rent or use and public infrastructure that they have access to. As illustrated in Chapter 3, the inadequate housing policy of the state has caused the increase in the number of informal settlements. In addition, most of the residents in Izbet El Haggana are migrants from rural areas who settled in El Haggana due to its low prices and proximity to the center. Physical capital is one of the most important aspects that need to be analyzed. According to one of the women interviewed, who lived in Izbet El Haggana for more than 30 years, she built a house with her husband when they first moved to Cairo from Al Gharbia as the land was available in El Haggana back then, the house was written in his name. After 18 years of marriage, when they had completed the house, he remarried and stopped spending on her and her 5 daughters. He was not able to evict her from the house, as she was the custodian of their children. She witnessed the transformation of Haggana from an area with no services to an area with electricity, water, and even gas pipes. As a coping strategy, she worked in domestic homes; she cooked meals to other domestic workers, and then joined Al Shehab as an office lady. She is currently waiting for her fifth and last daughter to be married and then she knows that she will eventually be evicted from the house. She is torn between supporting her daughter as a bride and paying installments for another house in an informal settlement with no sunlight awaiting her kick-out of the house. They don't have a hospital, enough schools, police station, and

housing. The lack of public infrastructure, women are not even registered as the owners or renter of their houses. It is either in the name of their husbands, family of the husband, or fathers.

Women who do not have command over physical capital have other problems as they are subject violence, mistreatment, and they are primary caregivers and breadwinners but they are still not able to move ahead because they do not have control over the physical capital. Despite the complaints from El Haggana, they still think that its proximity to the center is a source of tolerance. There are only two public schools in the area and one private school in the third district. It has been reported that there are more than 100 students per class in the primary school. There is no preparatory or secondary school in Izbet El Haggana, which has further implications on the livelihood strategies of the people.

### **Social capital**

Social capital refers to networks of mutual support that exist within and between households, extended family, and communities, which people can mobilize to access, for example, loans, childcare, food, accommodation and information about employment and opportunities.<sup>133</sup> Some also argue that strong social capital can help communities in mobilizing to make demands for services and rights to the state.<sup>134</sup> This is indeed an important element that has been utilized by women heads of households in urban and rural areas. Social capital is actually one of the most valuable livelihood assets of the women in Izbet El Haggana. Through Al- Shehab Foundation, they have established saving groups, each composed of 9-15 women and men. Moreover, in the old days, the residents worked together to support each in their coping strategies in the absence of any infrastructure. The networks of solidarity

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<sup>133</sup> Moser, 1998; Dersham and Gzirishvili, 1998

<sup>134</sup> Putnam, Robert D. "The prosperous community." *The American Prospect* 4, no. 13 (1993): 35-42.

ensure they have increased security. It is one of the defining elements that they draw from in their coping strategies. The women interviewed have been residents of El Haggana for at least 15 years. They have social ties and family roots in el Haggana, which makes their own quarter a source of security and solidarity. Social capital is key asset that influence the coping strategies and livelihood outcomes of the women heads of households. This will be discussed in detail in section on livelihood coping strategies.

### Political capital

One criticism of the ‘sustainable livelihood approach’ as a holistic approach to development is its failure to explicitly address issues of power, and it is argued that ‘a rights-analysis (founded on a concern for maximizing human agency and freedom) provides one way of addressing political and institutional relations’.<sup>135</sup> Thus the incorporation of Rights-Based Approaches (RBA) into SL analysis can help to elucidate issues of power in determining access to assets.

As noted above, one way of looking at poor men and women’s access to rights is through a notion of political capital, as outlined by Baumann and Sinha, on the basis that the ability to influence political processes which determine decision-making and access is something which men and women can build up and draw on. According to the interviewees, when voting became through the ID cards, many things changes for them, as they started to care about issuing an ID card. She also the said the parliamentary candidate especially from 2012 supported many women with issuing the ID card for voting purposes, which then helped them in getting “maash El Sisi”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Andy Norton and Mick Foster, *The potential of using sustainable livelihoods approaches in poverty reduction strategy papers*.2001.

<sup>136</sup> ‘Maash El Sisi’ refers to the social safety net program under the national name of Takaful and Karma aimed at protecting the poor through income support through the provision of conditional and unconditional cash transfers. The project was launched in September 2016 with the support of the

Thus, the political event has actually been utilized in a positive manner regardless of their political motivation. Those women having their ID cards and official papers raised their awareness; it is their first identity with the government. It has also helped them in knowing the importance of birth certificated for their children. The services that were introduced to Izbet El Haggana were largely the work of the CBOs in the area. The three NGOs in the El Haggana has put some pressure on the State to introduce some changes but still the needs stand very much the same.

### **Livelihood Coping Strategies**

In the literature, there is a distinction between coping strategies in urban and rural contexts. However, there are similarities across poor households. The below table adapted from Chambers, UNHCS and Moser classified the livelihood strategies into three different categories: 1) Income enhancing/investment strategy, 2) Expenditure-reducing/sacrificing, 3) Collective Support. However, those three classifications do not account for other strategies that are devised by the people in a contested state-society relationship that has been concluded from the research such as self-policing. In addition, the expenditure reducing or sacrifice strategy such as sending children to labor has not been the case of the interviewees who sacrificed other things such as the quality and quantity of food, which increases their vulnerability and food insecurity. The income enhancing strategies for women heads of households in Izbet El Haggana is focused on domestic work and food preparation for residents of the richer areas surrounding the settlement. This below section will present some of the coping strategies from the qualitative findings.

Strategy	Mainly urban	Urban and rural
income-enhancing/ investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>domestic services – cleaning and childcare (esp. girls and women)</li> <li>urban agriculture</li> <li>renting out rooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>home gardening</li> <li>processing, hawking, vending</li> <li>transporting goods</li> <li>casual labour, piece work</li> <li>specialised occupations (e.g. tinkering, food preparation, prostitution)</li> <li>child labour</li> <li>migration off seasonal work</li> <li>begging</li> <li>theft</li> </ul>
expenditure-reducing/ sacrifice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>scavenging</li> <li>cutting transport costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mortgaging and selling assets</li> <li>selling children into bonded labour</li> <li>changes in purchasing habits (e.g. frequent smaller quantities, not bulk buying)</li> <li>buying less and/or cheaper goods and services</li> <li>discrimination within the household (e.g. giving less to less powerful or less favoured household members)</li> </ul>
collective support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communal kitchens</li> <li>communal childcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mutual loans or savings groups</li> <li>putting out children for care in extended family</li> <li>remittances from household members working away</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Moser, 1998 and Chambers, 1997

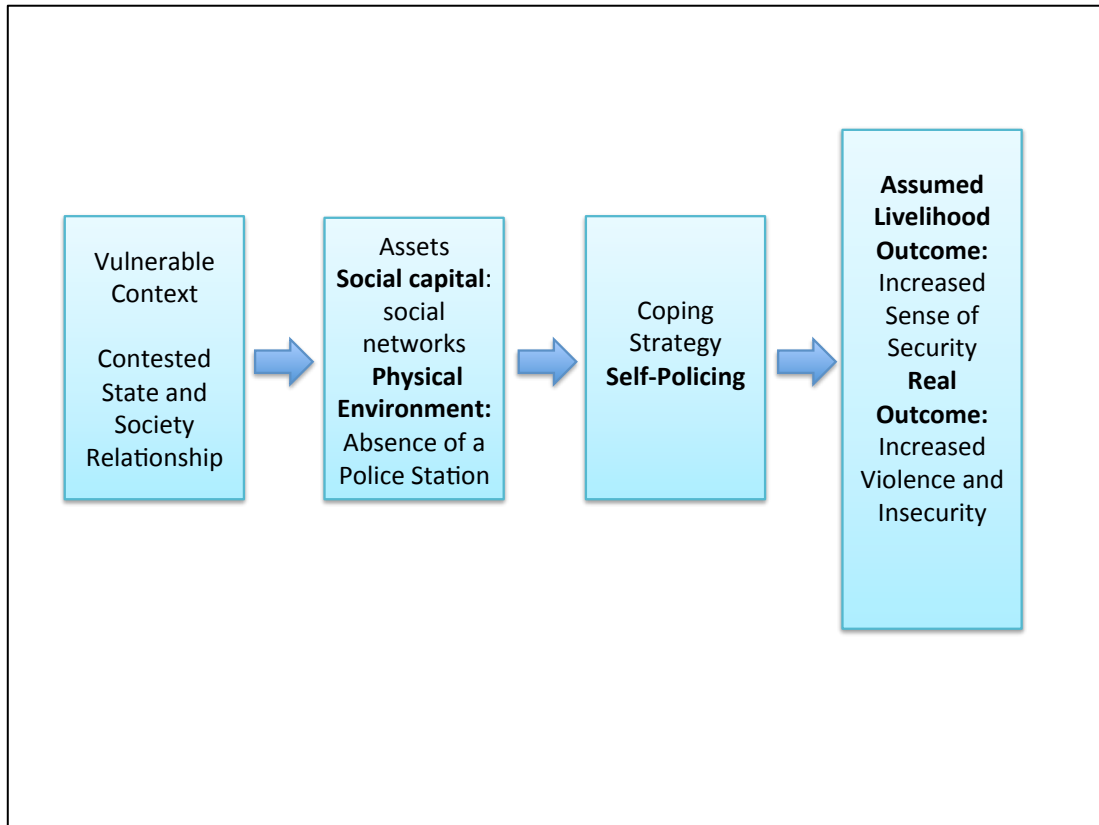
## Self-Policing

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the state and society relationship has shifted post the 25<sup>th</sup> of January uprising in which the police was considered as one of the pivotal forces that ignited the revolution because of its reported abuse of authority and violence against the people. Yet, the relationship with the police remains intricate and complicated. Ismail reported that the resident of Bulaq El Dakrou, a popular quarter in Cairo, expressed a desire to avoid dealing with the police even when they need their intervention as in the case of street fights and disputes between residents.<sup>137</sup> In contrast, the interviewees in this research in Izbet El Haggana reported their desire to have a police station in their area as an icon for ‘deterrence’ and ‘protection’. *The police station has repeatedly been reported as the main one of the needs of the area across different constituents. It will be interesting to analyze how this is different from other popular areas. This will further be used in the analysis of the literature on the*

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid

*state-society relationship*. “When there is a fight and we call the police, they tell us call us back when one of them die,” said three interview participants. The absence of a police station in Izbet El Haggana seems to be one of the causes of the drugs and violence in the streets. However, as one of the residents had said who has lived in Izbet El Haggana in Area 1, “*In our square, people know each other, (thus), if any fight erupts, we know how to contain it because we are family.*” Abeer, 36, raised the issue that the presence of the police will change the stigma around El Haggana and at least if people will continue to strive on drugs, they will do it secretly and not that public. She also said that this is one of the reasons men get violent against women. The services that were introduced to Izbet El Haggana were largely the work of community-based organizations in the area. The three NGOs in El Haggana have put some pressure on the State to introduce some changes but still the situation is very much the same. The presence of a police station in the area with a Civil Registry department will also facilitate the issuance of official papers such as ID cards and birth certificates. Izbet El Haggana does not have a police station and has been stigmatized and known as a place where addicts and dealers reside. When asked about the needs of Izbet El Haggana, the interviewees repeatedly said that they need a police station as one of the first priorities. From observation, a police car was standing on the outskirts of the area. The residents clarified that the “police car only comes when they want to take someone to close a certain *mahdar*.”



This figure is developed by the researcher and adapted from the Sustainable Livelihood Approach

### Private Tutoring

Egyptian families spend a fortune on education. Although public schools are available to everyone, most families try to find private tutoring to supplement their children's education in the public school system. According to the Household Income, Expenditure, and Consumption Survey (HIECS) 2012/2013, an average household devotes about 38% of its expenditures for education on private lessons and 11% for transportation.<sup>138</sup> In the case of Izbet El Haggana, the boys and the girls either drop out from school or go to areas adjacent to Izbet el Haggana, the more upscale Heliopolis or Nasr City. The interviewees agreed that if they had more schools in the area, this would save them a lot of money as they spend a big amount from their income on transportation. When asked about the biggest expense of the household is,

<sup>138</sup> CAPMAS, Egypt in Figures 2015. Report. Accessed December 15, 2016.  
<http://www.sis.gov.eg/newvr/EgyptinFigures2015/EgyptinFigures/pages/english%20Link.htm>



the women with kids in the school age expressed that *“education and the needs of the kids is the number one item that takes most of our income.”* Education of children is the number one priority for women heads of households as they see it their only way out of poverty. *“I would do anything to make my children continue their education, this is their weapon”*. Even though public schools are not expensive for the women interviewed, they complain from the expenses of ‘private lessons’. As one of the women expressed, *“the schools are overcrowded, teaches depend on private lessons to increase their income, we cannot prevent our children from attending the private lessons, and this is where their education happen”*. On another note, it is very important to note that there is “stigma” around the public schools in the area. Most of the women interviewed had registered their children in schools outside of Haggana even those who go primary schools. When addressed the question about public schools in El Haggana, they respond with dismay. *“The children there are not clean, there are more than 100 student per class”*. They make it as a statement and take pride in registering their kids in schools outside of Haggana.

### **Changing Dietary Options**

‘Bread’ has always played a role in Egyptian politics since the riots in 1977 when President Anwar El Sadat tried to remove the subsidies on bread. It has also played a role during the reign of the ousted President Hosni Mubarak with the rise in global food prices in 2008, which caused unrest in the Egyptian streets and produced a significant youth movement like the 6th of April Youth Movement, which played a great role in mobilizing the people in different protests starting from April 2008 onwards. The birth of the 6th of April movement was at the wake of the food crisis in Egypt in 2008, which holds significance of the vulnerability of the economy and the regime. Additionally, research conducted in the period post the 25th of January

revolution in 2011 by the World Food Program (WFP) and the Egyptian government in 2013 indicated that 74.7 percent of the households surveyed who faced shocks affecting their economic situation between 2011 and 2013 noted “rising food prices as the main shock”. Moreover, the report suggested, “significant pockets of poverty and food insecurity are emerging in urban areas, where poverty increased by nearly 40 percent between 2009 and 2011.”<sup>139</sup> “*Food is not important, even if the prices go up, we can manage the amounts and the type, but (we) have a problem with education because the private lessons are going up and transportation.*” Yet, data from CAPMAS on Income, Expenditures and Consumption shows that food represents the biggest expenditure of the household. This fact is contrary to the accounts of the interviewees. Limited income and even unstable income put a huge amount on the family but it is the number one thing they are not willing to sacrifice. There are many expenses surrounding education that goes beyond the schools fees such as transportation. El Haggana is relatively close to main urban city center, which means that there is access to schools. All the interviewees were living in the first quarter of Izbet El Haggana, which is closer to the bus station. However, the more we go inside, the more there is disparity in the access to the services. The interviewees agreed that education is the number one asset they ensure their kids have access. The failure of the school system to deliver education for children in over populated classes has put pressure on the families across Egypt to find alternative ways such, *private tutoring* which constitute additional burden on the expenses of the family. It was observed in the interviews that there was some kind of pride from the side of the interviewees that they are sending their children to place from outside the area. Yet, this represents an additional burden on the family, as children need to take daily transportation, which

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<sup>139</sup> World Food Programme, 2013

constitutes another expense.

### Important Issues Emerging from the Interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research allows for important issues to emerge outside of the topic guide, which enriches the research undertaken.

There are three important issues that emerged from the interview that will be discussed below. The first issue is on the question of coping and resistance, the second issue is related to spatial inequality and uneven development, the third issue is on the relationship between elections and social protection.

### Coping and Resistance

Any stressful situation in life is confronted through different human reactions. The political discourse cannot be understood without an interdisciplinary view that tackle the issue of impoverishment from different angles. Anthropology, sociology, and political theories of poverty has by far conceptualized poverty with a set of characteristics and measures suggested are all part of a greater schema which does not look at the resilience of the people. Why people cope or resist? What is the trigger of their movement?

From the field research and especially with their negative experience with ‘change’, people are now more inclined to cope than to resist. As Um Mahmoud expressed, “*we had better living conditions under Mubarak, we do not approve of the decisions of Sisi, but we are afraid to get someone who is even worse.*” Yet, it would be interesting to speak to the youth to see if they have the same reaction. Women heads of households suffered the most from the uprising as their vulnerability increased due to the absence of the security even outside the borders of their community. As expressed by Abir, “*the young men have nothing to deter them or to be ashamed of right now, they now take tramadol and hashish einy einak (meaning in your face)*”.

The lack of political action in terms of protests despite worsening economic conditions might be understood as a form of ‘silence’ or ‘approval’. However, this is hugely mistaken. The widespread use of drugs, violence, robbery, and growing rates of the crime. People don’t have a problem with food as long as you give them the basic needs of bread and carbohydrates, which is the number one component in the dietary. They cope with their poverty by decreasing the consumption of food; it is not really their problem. They have a problem with education; they are ready to do anything to give their children education for social mobility. This is their hope. While the State continues to under-deliver, they form their own forms of governance, yet they yearn for the presence of the State in their lives to protect them. As Um Mahmoud told me, *“we did not go to the streets because we agree with his policies, we did not go because we are afraid to get an even worse person... our standard of living was even better during Mubarak”*. *“Now people are doing drugs in front of everyone, no shame.”* Women heads of households develop their own *modus operundi* and coping strategies away from the state by depending on an informal economy that gives them access to services through the provision of social solidarity networks. Yet, in doing so, their vulnerability increases exponentially, which depletes their ability to protest against the state in the same manner and scale of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution. These cases show that people won’t necessarily revolt the more they are repressed economically. The fear of a ‘revolution of the hungry’ on the part of the state and the ruling elite might be obsolescent, nonetheless, political action and forms of resistance might be taking place in daily life, yet, and those forms of resistance might be mistakenly overlooked. Scott explains how political action by lower classes is not openly declared in the usually understood sense of “politics” since group action is not understood in the sense of collective action. In addition, he argues

that the politics of subordinate groups falls into the category of "everyday forms of resistance," and that these activities should be considered political, as constitute a form of collective action, and that any account which ignores them is often ignoring the most vital means by which lower classes manifest their political interests.<sup>140</sup> For instance, self -policing in the case of Izbet El Haggana and the knowledge of women of their own vulnerability is a form of 'coping' and 'resistance' at the same time since they are filling the void of the state by depending on their own social capitals, however, simultaneously, this action is a declaration of their independence from the state.

### **Spatial Inequality and Uneven development**

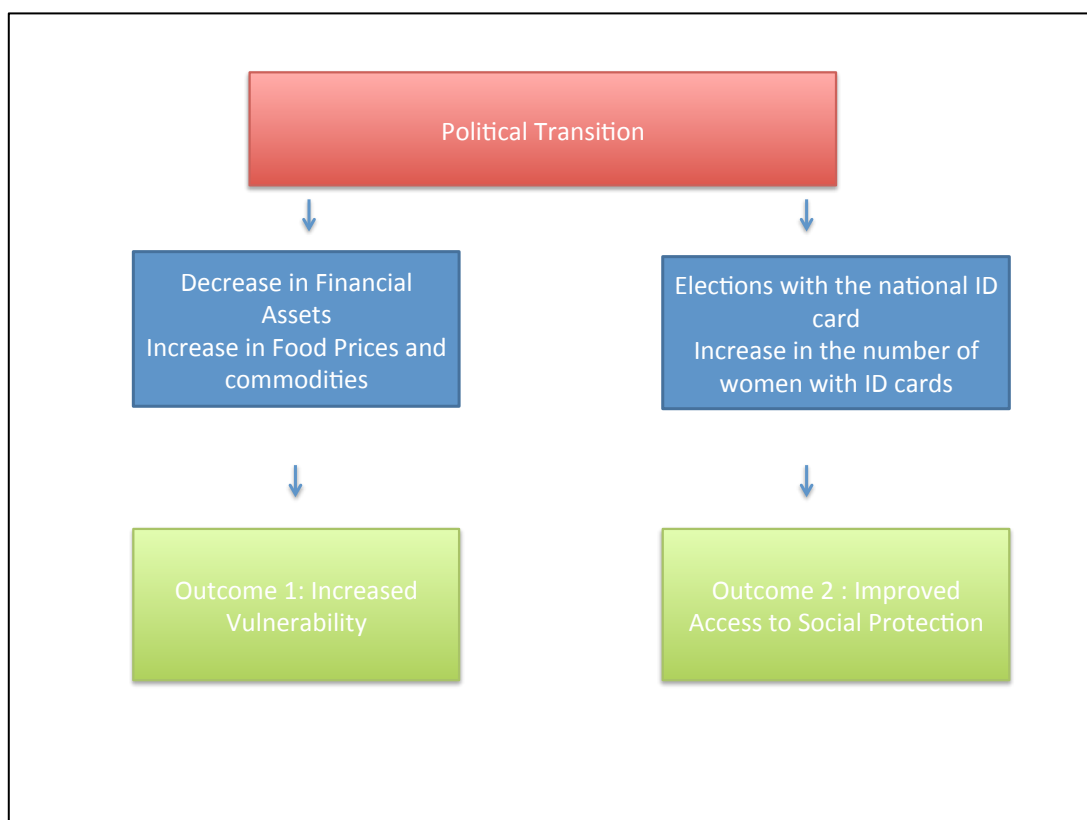
Izbet El Haggana cannot be approached as one study area as it also suffers from uneven development. As communicated by the interviewees and other secondary sources, the second area, which is known as the "High Voltage" area, suffers the most in Izbet El Haggana. The second area is further away from the bus station *al mawqaf*, which can be considered as the bridge between El Haggana and the outside world. Area 2 does not have access to basic services, thus, women who live there are more vulnerable. This also shows another element, which is uneven development. Uneven development will impact the type of the 'coping strategy' adopted by the women heads of households depending on their distance from the center, in the case of Izbet El Haggana, it is the bus station *el mawqaf*, this puts on them additional transportation expenses to move inside the settlement. The tuktuk, which is the most popular mode of transportation in the settlement, cost around 5 EGP. This concept of spatial inequality and uneven development does not only affect the daily coping strategies, but also has an effect on the how resident interact together.

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<sup>140</sup> Scott, James C. *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

## Elections and Women's Access to Social Protection

An election, which is a political event, has changed many of the ways people had viewed their power or lack thereof. It must be pointed out that those changes have many implications on the daily life of the people. Below is a figure developed by the researcher to reflect the complex relation between those different elements.



This figure is developed by the researcher and adapted from the Sustainable Livelihood Approach

The figure shows how the same event had a positive and a negative impact on their desired livelihood outcomes. As one of the interviewees said, *“we only felt that our voice matters after el thawra (the revolution)”*. Yet, the same interviewee acknowledged that they had better standards of living before the revolution. *“My kids lived a better life before the revolution, now we are all struggling. The boys after schools to at least cover their daily transportation fees.”* The deterioration of the economic situation increased their overall vulnerability. On the other side, the interviewees acknowledged that when voting became through the national ID cards,

may things changed for them, as they started to care about issuing an ID card. One of the interviewees said, *“The parliamentary candidate especially from 2012 supported many women with issuing the ID card for voting purposes, which then helped many women afterwards in getting ‘maash El Sisi’”*.<sup>141</sup> Thus, the political event has increase the awareness of women about their citizenship rights and helped them understand the importance of issuing birth certificates for their children also linked them to social protection programs which is an indirect benefit of acquiring the national ID card.<sup>142</sup>

### **Conclusion of the Chapter**

This chapter aimed at presenting the qualitative research findings to answer the second part of the research question investigating the impact of the vulnerable context on the livelihood coping strategies of women heads of households in Cairo’s informal settlements, using the case of Izbet El Haggana. The main findings of the research that make Cairo’s informal settlements different from other urban contexts is the emergence of self-policing as a coping strategy, which reaffirms the argument that the sustainable livelihood approach needs to include political capital and state society relationships in the framework of analysis. The absence of the police station in the area is a reflection of the absence of the state in their lives, in which they were able to develop their own coping strategy drawn from their assets, the most valuable of which is, social capital. There are issues that emerged from the interviews such as the different forms of resistance that are salient but not understood, uneven development and spatial inequality within the same study area, internal stigma, and the link between elections and the indirect benefit of women from the social protection

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<sup>141</sup> ‘Maash El Sisi’ refers to the social safety net program under the national name of Takaful and Karma aimed at protecting the poor through income support through the provision of conditional and unconditional cash transfers. The project was launched in September 2016 with the support of the World Bank. More info on the project can be accessed here: <http://projects.worldbank.org/P145699?lang=en>

services. A clear link between the sources of vulnerability in Chapter 3 and the livelihood assets and coping strategies has been established in this chapter. The coping strategies of women are mostly ‘negative coping strategies’ that increase their vulnerability in terms of security, health, and income. The investments of the women in the education of their children, while sacrificing other choices, needs to be questioned and studied if it is contributing to their social mobility or their chronic poverty since the urban economy remains fragile and largely informal.



## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

As discussed earlier, the research problem is based on the premise that urban poverty is underestimated in Egypt; in addition, the growing rate of ‘urbanization’ is increasing the vulnerability of women heads of households. The study is focused on Cairo’s informal areas as they represent a shelter for growing population of rural migrants to the city. Informal areas in Cairo generally called “ashwa’eyat” in Arabic are usually stigmatized or rationalized, yet, the nature of their informality yet proximity to the urban center, and sometimes, even government establishments make them a unique source for inquiry. This thesis started by using the sustainable livelihood approach as the foundational theoretical framework in approaching the subject of women heads of households in Cairo’s informal settlements which fits under the bigger context of urban poverty. Thus, the first element of this framework is looking at the vulnerable context, followed by determining the ‘livelihood assets’, and the respective ‘coping strategies’ to achieve the desired ‘livelihood outcomes’. Intermediary, there are structures, institutions, and governance issues that impact the relationship between access to capitals or assets, the coping strategies adopted and the livelihood outcomes. The study used a qualitative approach to gather primary data on the topic from Izbet El Haggana, the study area and one of Cairo’s largest informal settlements. The literature on the subject is rich in terms of describing the ‘poverty’ experienced in those areas, yet, there is a gap in the literature on drawing the link between livelihood analysis and state-society relationship and the wider power relations structures of analysis.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Spatial inequality exists even inside the informal settlements, which will affect the ‘coping strategy’ of women in different ways. Izbet El Haggana cannot be approached

as one study area as it also suffers from uneven development. As communicated by the interviewees and other secondary sources, the second area, which is known as the “High Voltage” area, suffers the most in Izbet El Haggana. The second area is further away from the bus station *al mawqaf*, which can be considered as the bridge between *El Haggana and the outside world*. Area 2 and does not have access to basic services, thus, women who live there are more vulnerable. This also shows another element, which is uneven development. Uneven development will impact the type of the ‘coping strategy’ adopted by the women heads of households depending on their distance from the center, in the case of Izbet El Haggana, it is the bus station *el mawqaf*, this puts on them additional transportation expenses to move inside the settlement. The toktok, which is the most popular mode of transportation in the settlement, cost around 5 EGP.

In addition, the contested state-society relationship especially after the events of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution and the protests that followed increased the concept of ‘coping’ and ‘resistance’ concurrently. Women heads of households develop their own *modus operandi* and coping strategies away from the state by depending on an informal economy that gives them access to services through the provision of social solidarity networks. Yet, in doing so, their vulnerability increases exponentially, which depletes their ability to protest against the state in the same manner and scale of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution. These cases show that people won’t necessarily revolt the more they are repressed economically. The fear of a ‘revolution of the hungry’ on the part of the state and the ruling elite might be obsolescent, nonetheless, political action and forms of resistance might be taking place in daily life, yet, and those forms of resistance might be mistakenly overlooked. Scott explains how political action by lower classes is not openly declared in the usually understood sense of “politics” since

group action is not understood in the sense of collective action. In addition, he argues that the politics of subordinate groups falls into the category of "everyday forms of resistance," and that these activities should be considered political, as constitute a form of collective action, and that any account which ignores them is often ignoring the most vital means by which lower classes manifest their political interests.<sup>143</sup> For instance, self -policing in the case of Izbet El Haggana and the knowledge of women of their own vulnerability is a form of 'coping' and 'resistance' at the same time since they are filling the void of the state by depending on their own social capitals, however, simultaneously, this action is a declaration of their independence from the state.

Another finding of the research of this research is that the deteriorating economic situation is increasing the food insecurity of the household, which increases their vulnerability. The first coping strategy adopted by women heads of households is the decrease their food consumption and calorie intake by sacrificing the quantity and quality of food. In doing so, women heads of households ensure they are able to cover for other expenses that ensures that their kids won't drop out.

The livelihood coping strategies of the people especially the women in those areas are largely dependent on the informal sector, which means that there is a whole economy and a whole set of people who are underestimated, marginalized, and drive their own life away from the state. As illustrated through primary and secondary sources in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the state is an active perpetrator in the violence, stigma, and discrimination against its policies or lack thereof, which means that the vulnerability are on different levels. Urban Poverty or life in the city cannot be understood outside of the context of rural poverty and the rate of urbanization. By looking deeply at the

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<sup>143</sup> James Scott, *Weapons of the weak*, 1985

livelihoods of the people, it becomes clear that they are sacrificing many investments for the future for the sake of their daily life. The education of their kids is the biggest source of spending, however, this money again goes to the informal economy. The State is neither delivering nor receiving huge amounts of money that is being bumped into the informal economy every day. The state is subsidizing the rich even with its social justice policies. Moreover, there is a psychological and political game at hand; the informality of the economy is actually serving the state, not a burden since the people have developed their own strategies. There is no real will to integrate the informal residents as if this will give the people the right to ask for their rights. As long as they are informal, the state has an upper hand and an excuse for not serving them. The lack of development in the rural areas and the shrinking of the agriculture land are directly increasing the vulnerable context of the city with the growing rate of urbanization, the increase in food prices, and most importantly the increase of the gap between the rich and the poor.

Instead of looking at informal settlements as a burden on the city and on the state, there are other ways to look at it as spaces for contesting formal governance systems, livelihoods, and the birth for creative endeavors in daily survival strategies.

The interplay of structural changes, state power, and daily governance, and presents a fascinating analysis of urban transformation and power struggles—as international forces meet local communities in a major city of the global south. Bayat sheds light on informal life, the relations and institutions that lie at the margin of state control, make up a vast swath of social existence, where some of the most creative (as well as anti-social) endeavors take shape, as shown in the circles of family, kin members, friends, or among those who operate in the localities, communities, and informal worksites. Spaces from among the art world, intellectual circles, book publishing,

cultural production, new social media, independent journalism, legal and architecture profession, or social work may produce alternative speech and unorthodox ways of being and doing things. Even the state-regulated institutions such as schools, colleges, municipalities, neighborhood associations, city councils, student clubs, workers' unions, and professional syndicates often turn, by critical and creative users, into spaces where some of the core social and political values are contested.<sup>144</sup> As Bayat indicated, those informal spaces that shape the Egyptian society can be a source of creative endeavor. However, the policy of the state toward the informal settlement has transformed them into the narrative of burden, crime, and stigma to serve the interests of the state.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Egypt is passing through a historical moment not less important than the revolution, a moment of economic crisis that is affecting all classes with the sudden devaluation of the pound. As women heads of household are more prone to cope with the stressful situation through sacrificing choices, this will have repercussions on the health, education, and overall wellbeing of the being. Thus, the following are the recommendations:

- A longitudinal study on the impact of the vulnerable context on their daily life especially after the floating of the Egyptian pound, which increased the prices on all commodities.
- Within the same area, there is inequality in the same informal settlement. Further research is needed to tackle the problems of the Izbet El Haggana who live in High Voltage area

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<sup>144</sup> Bayat, Assef. "Revolution and Despair." Mada Masr. 2015. Accessed Nov 3, 2016 <http://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/01/25/opinion/u/revolution-and-despair/>

- A further study should be conducted on youth living in informal settlements who face a different kind of violence and are portrayed as sources of ‘threat’ to the women.
- Interviews should also be held with women who do not have access to NGOs as this represents one of the livelihood assets that is underestimated.
- Further research on different population in the area using the livelihood approach is needed including young men and women who will express a different kind of coping strategies.
- A gender perspective does not only mean women though it has generally been associated with women more than men. A gender perspective needs to bring men into the question as women complain from their violence, abuse, drug use, and lack of contribution to the household. A research on contested masculinities is needed.
- An anthropological study should be conducted in the area to eliminate the stigma and misconception on residents of the informal areas, which can redirect the policy of the government towards them.

### Research Reflections

As I went to visit El Haggana, it is very close to Cairo International Airport, Heliopolis, and Nasr City. However, the dichotomy lies in its visibility vs. invisibility. It is visible yet invisible. The bus station under the bridge represents the border between two worlds. It is the meeting point of El Haggana residents with the outside world. As you go in, a different world meets you. Tiny roads and alleys, garbage, unpainted houses similar to any other popular quarter in Egypt. However, what is striking about Izbet El Haggana or El Kilo 4.5, as the residents like to call it, is its location and proximity to army land and other important governmental establishments. However, anyone driving in the area would not even know this settlement, which is home to at least one million people according to NGOs. As a researcher, this thesis has been an educational experience not only on the academic level, but also on the personal level, as I was able to change many of the stereotypes I had in mind about Cairo's informal settlements. There is a dire need to address rural poverty to ensure the problems of informal settlements are solved. Vulnerability and marginalization are at the center of the daily lives of many Cairo residents, yet, they are overlooked due to the type of urban planning of the city. Cairo is a city that represents all sorts of contradictions and opposites with different realities. As a resident, I discovered there is yet to be discovered, studied, and analyzed to understand the dichotomous relationship between the visible and the invisible, the center and the periphery, the rural and the urban, and all forms of justice and inequality.

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## Appendix A: Topic Guide

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Education Level:**

**Area of Residence:**

**Household Size:**

**Human Capital** (Human capital represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. At a household level human capital is a factor of the amount and quality of labour available; this varies according to household size, skill levels, leadership potential, health status, etc)

- 1) What is the level of your education?
- 2) What do you do to earn a living?
- 3) Do you have access to healthcare?
- 4) Are you enlisted on the Government subsidy programme?
- 5) How many kids do you have?
- 6) What are the sources of the household income?
- 7) Do you/ or anyone in your family suffer from health problem?

**Physical Capital** (Physical capital comprises the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods)

Do you have access to the following?

- 1) affordable transport;
- 2) secure shelter and buildings;
- 3) adequate water supply and sanitation;
- 4) clean, affordable energy; and
- 5) Access to information (communications).

### **Natural Capital (Questions directed to service providers)**

- 1) What are the planning objectives for Izbet El Haggana? How have they changed in the past 10 years?
- 2) Have there been any formal investigations relating to the population increase and the urban poor?
- 3) Have there been any formal investigations in to the informal settlements?
- 4) What are the current national policies regarding informal settlements in Egypt?
- 5) Are policies seen as effective methods of intervention?
- 6) How do you believe informal settlement-dwellers perceive the government?

### **Financial Capital**

- 1) Which types of financial service organizations exist (both formal and informal)? Informal jobs that makes you ineligible, formal job, no health insurance
- 2) What services do they provide, under what conditions?
- 3) Who – which groups or types of people – has access? What prevents others from gaining access? What is your opinion on current food prices?
- 4) Have you noticed any changes in food prices recently?
- 5) Increase in food prices not justified?
- 6) Are the reasons justified? Do you think prices are changing steadily and proportionally to income for example?

**Social Capital** (the social resources, networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations) upon which people draw when pursuing different livelihood strategies requiring coordinated actions.

1. Access to networks?
2. Social relations?
3. Affiliations?
4. Community based organizations?

**Coping Strategies:**

1. How do you prioritize when you buy food for your family? Where does food price fall in your list of priorities?
2. How has your food expenditure and designated budget changed as a result of food price changes over the last 5 years?
3. Financially, how do you deal with changes to your food budget? Are you able to cope or do you face hardships?
4. What are the initial steps you take when food prices exceed your predetermined budget?
5. Which combinations of activities appear to be 'working' best? Is there any discernible pattern of activities adopted by those who have managed to escape from poverty?
6. Which livelihood objectives are not achievable through current livelihood strategies?

## الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

### استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث: استراتيجيات التأقلم المعيشية في المناطق اللارسمية في القاهرة: حالة عزبة الهجانة

الباحث الرئيسي: نورا رافع/ طالبة ماجستير بالجامعة الأمريكية في القاهرة

البريد الإلكتروني: nrafea@aucegypt.edu

الهاتف: 01227450350

انت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية عن استراتيجيات التأقلم المعيشية من قبل سكان المناطق الحضرية وبالأخص المناطق اللارسمية في القاهرة

هدف الدراسة هو الحصول على فكرة أكثر وضوحا في معرفة استراتيجيات التأقلم المعيشية لسكان المناطق الحضرية وبالأخص المناطق اللارسمية في القاهرة من أجل توصيات أكثر فعالية  
نتائج البحث ستنتشر في دوريه متخصصة أو مؤتمر علمي أو ربما كليهما مؤتمر إذا حازت على القبول وستنتشر كرسالة ماجستير في الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة.

المدة المتوقعة للمشاركة في هذا البحث هي من نصف ساعة إلى ساعة  
اجراءات الدراسة تشتمل على اجراء مقابلات مع مقدمي خدمة وسيدات في منطقة عزبة الهجانة حول القدرات والممتلكات (بما في ذلك الموارد الاجتماعية والمادية) والأنشطة المطلوبة لسبل المعيشة  
المخاطر المتوقعة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة - لا يوجد مخاطر.

الاستفادة المتوقعة لا يوجد

السرية واحترام الخصوصية: المعلومات التي ستدلى بها في هذا البحث سوف تكون المعلومات التي سوف تدلى بها في هذا البحث ستحفظ بطريقة سرية وأمنه في جهاز الكمبيوتر الخاص بالباحث.

أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة أو حقوق المشاركين فيها أو عند حدوث أي اصابات ناتجة عن هذه المشاركة يجب

ان توجه الى نورا رافع على: 01227450350

ان المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ماهي الا عمل تطوعي، حيث أن الامتناع عن المشاركة لا يتضمن أي عقوبات أو فقدان أي مزايا تحقق لك. ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.

الامضاء: .....

اسم المشارك: .....

التاريخ: ...../...../.....