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The Sidelined Front-liners: Eritrean CBOs in Greater Cairo

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Abstract

The Sidelined Front-liners: The Role of Eritrean CBOs in Egypt

Despite the recognition of the important role that community-based organizations play, among international actors concerned with refugee issues, as well as UNHCR's adoption of a community-based approach to protection; community-based organizations continue to be sidelined by these actors. This thesis explores the role that Eritrean CBOs play in improving the lives of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers living in Greater Cairo. It also investigates the challenges that they face while trying to operate in Egypt. Using a multi-scalar lens, the research examines the relationships between Eritrean CBOs and Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers, the State, UNHCR and its partner organizations, in addition to their relationship with one another. Through the narratives of nine Eritrean CBOs, two partner organizations, and six focus group discussions with Eritrean refugees, asylum-seekers, and closed-file refugees, this thesis shows that Eritrean CBOs play a significant role in improving the socio-economic conditions of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers. However, they are sidelined by the formal refugee-serving organizations in Egypt. It also argues that while their marginality allows them to function without having to bear the cost of the mainstream, it also causes them to face significant challenges with regards to funding and sustainability. The findings of the thesis suggest that Eritrean CBOs are not viewed as partners by formal refugee-concerned actors, despite being the front-liners and the first respondents to their community's needs.

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Overview

Introduction

In response to the growing number of refugees settling in urban settings, especially in developing and middle-income countries, UNHCR issued its urban policy in 2009. In this policy, the agency put forth a number of key strategies for the protection of refugees and helping them overcome the legal, financial, cultural and linguistic barriers that they face in urban settings. Among these strategies is promoting initiatives that aim to achieve self-reliance. Moreover, UNHCR has vowed to facilitate establishing urban refugee associations (UNHCR, 2009, p. 14). In its community-based approach, the agency acknowledged the role of community leaders and organizations in improving the lives of their communities and providing them with the needed protection (UNHCR, 2008). Among the key angles that the agency's community approach encompasses are two sets of activities. The first is the inclusion and consultation of refugee community leaders and representatives with regards to aid delivery, location, timing, and logistics. The second is mobilizing refugee community networks and resources with the aim of implementing development policies (Pascucci, 2017, p. 334). In UNHCR's policy paper which explains community-based protection, it is noted that only consulting the refugee community about their needs and concerns is not considered a community-based approach, as the refugee community needs to be engaged in all the steps of programs from their planning phase throughout their implementation, and until their monitoring and evaluation (UNHCR, 2013, pp. 5–6).

Recently, the global policy debate concerning development and humanitarianism has increasingly been acknowledging and calling for the inclusion of refugee community

organizations and localizing funding and activities. For instance, in 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) emphasized the importance of supporting and encouraging individuals affected by crises to act as first responders to their crises. The Grand Bargain agreement of the WHS, which encompasses some of the biggest donors, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and humanitarian organizations, has committed states to provide 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national actors (IASC, 2016a). The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) explicitly mentions refugees in its introduction as "relevant stakeholders", along with other UN agencies, international and local organizations, civil society organizations, and states, to which the GCR aims to provide the basis for "predictable and equitable" responsibility-sharing. Moreover, it dedicated an entire article titled "a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach" to emphasizing the importance of including local host community members and refugees in designing programs that aim to assist them (United Nations, 2018, pp. 14–17). In addition, in 2019, refugee-led organizations and community-based organizations were invited to participate in the inaugural UN Global Refugee Forum (Pincock et al., 2021, p. 720).

In academic spheres, researchers in as early as the 2000s have acknowledged refugees' ability to assist themselves (Campbell, 2006; Crisp, 2004; Harrell-Bond, 2002). For instance, Harrell-Bond put forth a rhetorical question about what would happen if an area where international organizations are responsible for service provision becomes too dangerous for foreign humanitarians to deliver aid. The answer, according to her, was that refugees would assume the responsibility of distributing aid dropped from airplanes among themselves (2002, p. 57).

Indeed, on the ground, some have found that refugees prefer to rely on their own communities as the primary source of social protection and assistance, especially in urban areas. For instance, in their study on refugee camps and cities in Kenya and Uganda, the researchers found that about 90% of refugees in the city stated that in case of emergency, they would rely on their communities for social protection (Pincock et al., 2020, p. 2).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the front the significant role that refugee community organizations can play in the lives of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. During the pandemic, international organizations and UN agencies have either retracted their field staff in camps, significantly reduced their field activities, or suspended their activities and went into complete lock down. The pandemic also took a toll on their funding while they tried to stand in the face of the pandemic's devastating impact. As such, the refugee community organizations and associations have come together to replace shortages in the assistance provided by formal humanitarian organizations and states. In some areas, researchers have found that they supported their communities with resources as simple as face masks, basic needs such as food and hygiene materials, and distributing information about preventative measures to minimize the spread of the virus (Betts et al., 2020b, p. 73). In fact, UNHCR has granted its 2020 NGO Innovation Award to refugee-led organizations across the globe for the significant role they played in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (UNHCR, 2021d).

Despite the recognition of the important role that community-based organizations play among international actors concerned with refugee issues, in addition to the policy shift of UNHCR towards community-based protection as highlighted above; this shift

remains rhetorical in nature. Until today, UNHCR has not issued a clear policy framework on how UNHCR and its partner organizations should work with community-based organizations on the ground in order to back up its existing community-based approach and ensure active participation and effective partnership with CBOs. Moreover, the GCR does not explicitly mention what role community-based organizations could play, despite its acknowledgment of the importance of a "multi-stakeholder and partnership approach" and the role of "local actors". The result of the absence of a clear policy guiding CBOs is that these organizations continue to struggle when trying to secure funding, and are less visible as partners to UNHCR and other traditional service providers. (Pincock et al., 2021, p. 720). The topic of refugee CBOs capabilities and the challenges they face remains relatively under-researched with a few number of theoretically informed studies (Griffiths et al., 2006; Huser, 2014; Pincock et al., 2020; Sahin Mencutek, 2021). In Egypt and other urban centers in the region, little research was dedicated to explore refugee CBOs, the challenges they face, and how they function (Grabska, 2006; Huser, 2014). The few studies done on CBOs in Egypt tend to place CBOs in a hierarchical position in relation to UNHCR and its POs, rather than viewing them as fully-fledged actors (Pascucci, 2017). Furthermore, no research tackled refugee CBOs from the angle of providers of social protection for refugees in Egypt.

That being said, there has been recently a growing body of literature, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, that is exploring the role of CBOs and emphasizing the importance of thoroughly studying them (Betts et al., 2020b; UNHCR, 2021d). A good example is the work of Alexander Betts, Kate Pincock, and Evan Easton-Calabria. Throughout their work, they call for increasing the emphasis on CBOs which they consider

an "untapped resource of potentially effective and legitimate providers of social protection." They argue that these forms of self-governance and self-protection might be more appropriate than traditional external governance. They call for moving away from the classic top-down assumption by humanitarian actors that refugees are passive recipients of aid, the protection of whom fully fall under the remit of states and humanitarian organizations. They also state that recognizing CBOs as 'civil society actors' could offer donors, that aim to work in a more direct way with refugees, a good point of departure under the GCR's workstream (Betts et al., 2020a; Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018).

Egypt is a country with no national asylum policy that hosts almost 274,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers. The majority of refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt live in urban areas among the host population in Greater Cairo (UNHCR, 2021a). Using a multi-scalar lens, this thesis aims to explore the role that CBOs play in improving the conditions of their communities, the social protection gaps that they fill, their relationship with international organizations and UN agencies concerned with refugees, and the challenges they face. The thesis will focus on Eritrean CBOs, and will look at their role in fulfilling the contemporary needs of Eritrean refugees, asylum-seekers, and closed file refugees in Greater Cairo. The following section lays out the justification, objectives, and the research questions to be answered in the thesis. Chapter 1 reviews literature on CBOs both globally and in the context of Egypt and introduces the conceptual framework upon which this thesis rests. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the research design including its methodology, methods, and the research's limitation and ethical considerations. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the history of Eritrean displacement to Egypt and the region, in

addition to a brief introduction to Eritrean transnational networks. Chapter 4 examines the relationship between CBOs and the State, and provides an overview of the main social protection gaps left by the state, that Eritreans find most challenging. Chapter 5 examines the relationship between CBOs and UNHCR and its partner organizations, in addition to social protection gaps that remain unfilled by their services. Finally, Chapter 6 investigates the role that Eritrean CBOs play in the life of Eritreans in Greater Cairo, the relationship between CBOs and refugees, in addition to their relationship with one another; followed by the conclusion of the thesis.

For the purpose of this thesis, the term 'refugees' will be used to refer to refugees, asylum seekers, and closed file refugees. A distinction between these categories will be made when necessary. Moreover, the term community-based organizations 'CBOs' will be used to refer to organizations initiated, led, and managed by refugees, whether they are formally registered or not. Finally, the term Partner Organizations (POs) will be used to refer to UNHCR's partner organizations, regardless of them being implementing or operational partners.[1]

Research Justification, *Objectives*, and *Questions*

1.1.1 CBOs in Egypt

There are several reasons why this research on refugee CBOs in Egypt is timely and significant. First, and as previously mentioned, there has been a policy shift towards promoting self-reliance, and a rhetorical recognition of the importance of incorporating CBOs as key actors in the global refugee regime. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic has

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[1] While the abbreviation (POs) is not commonly used by refugee-concerned organizations, the reason behind making no distinction between implementing and operational partners is to ensure the total confidentiality of the interviewed organizations.

proven that in times of extreme crisis, CBOs might be a major sustainable and reliable source of assistance and support for refugees and asylum seekers both in camps and in urban areas, as evidenced in the work of Betts et al. (2020b). Third, there is a growing body of literature emphasizing the need to focus on refugee-led social protection and CBOs (Betts et al., 2020b; Easton-Calabria, 2016; Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018; Pascucci, 2017; Pincock et al., 2020, 2021). Yet, there is a gap in research conducted on CBOs in Egypt with the exception of a study that dates back to 2006 dedicating only a section to CBOs, without any focus on a specific nationality; and another master's thesis that was conducted on two Somali CBOs in 2014 (Grabska, 2006; Huser, 2014). Additionally, a master's thesis conducted in Egypt in 2011 called, in its recommendations for further research section, for the need to conduct more research on CBOs in Egypt (Petrus, 2011). Furthermore, and as previously mentioned, no studies on CBOs in Egypt tackle them as a source of social protection. Fourth, the Egyptian president has declared the year 2022 as the year of civil society, reinforcing their role in enhancing and protecting human rights (Al Ahram, 2021, 2022). CBOs have been called "arguably the oldest but least understood civil society actors in the global refugee regime" (Milner & Klassen, 2020, p. 5). Thus, this thesis does not only contribute to a global debate, but also a national debate specific to Egypt.

1.1.2 Eritrean CBOs in Egypt

The reasons behind selecting Eritrean CBOs, in particular, are manifold. First and foremost, no research has been done on the role of Eritrean CBOs in Egypt, the challenges they face, and the way they interact with traditional humanitarian organizations mandated with supporting refugees in Egypt. In fact, studies conducted on Eritrean

refugees in Egypt are centered around their vulnerability. For instance, many studies were conducted on the problem of trafficking Eritreans in Sinai (Lijnders et al., 2013; Mekonnen & Estefanos, 2011; Yohannes, 2021), and the detention and deportation of Eritrean asylum seekers from Egypt (Amnesty International, 2022; Brown et al., 2004). Studies that explored Eritrean livelihoods and survival strategies were focused on individual experiences, and did not consider organized forms of self-mobilization of the community as a whole. Moreover, none of these studies tackled the contemporary issues, needs, and capabilities of Eritrean refugees in Egypt, as they mostly were conducted on Eritreans fleeing to Egypt from the 70s till the 2000s (A. Ajygin, 2010; Hashim, 2012). It is, thus, necessary to explore the collective practices of this community to fulfill its current needs after spending decades in Egypt. Second, As of May 2022, Egypt is host to around 22,000 registered Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers, making Eritreans the third largest refugee group in Egypt after Syrians and Sudanese (UNHCR, 2022b). This number is expected to increase due to the Tigray region war, as the region hosts a large number of Eritrean refugees hosted in four refugee camps (MMC, 2021). Additionally, Eritrean unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) make up the highest percentages of UASC refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt (UNHCR, 2020b). UASC, in absence of caregivers to take care of them, are more likely to be in a dire need of their communities in the host country for support, assistance, and protection (Behrendt et al., 2021). Moreover, there are limited resettlement slots and no prospects for legal local integration for all refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. Eritreans, in particular, are in a protracted situation because voluntary repatriation is almost impossible. This is because their return would entail serious human rights violation due to military conscription and arbitrary

detention in Eritrea (Ayoub & Abdel Aziz, 2021, p. 11). This suggests that Eritrean CBOs could be a key survival strategy for both UASC and adult Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. Additionally, from my observation and conversations with Eritrean community leaders during my work as a protection caseworker working with unaccompanied and separated refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan and the Horn of Africa in Egypt; I have noticed that the Eritrean community have a high level of self-mobilization and community solidarity. This was manifested in the higher rate of success in securing a housing arrangement for Eritrean UASC among their community members, in comparison with UASC from other nationalities.

This thesis, thus, is both timely and significant for the following reasons. First, it contributes to the global body of literature on refugee community-based organizations and highlights any missed opportunities in improving the lives of refugees. Second, it fills a research gap, as no studies were previously conducted on Eritrean CBOs in Egypt, nor on the recent waves of Eritrean asylum seekers in Egypt. A research gap also exists with regards to viewing CBOs as providers of social protection, a gap which this thesis also aims to fill. Third, it could provide those who work in organizations that serve refugees in Egypt with available alternative solutions for social protection issues through CBOs. Moreover, shedding light on CBOs, their capabilities, and the challenges they face through research could encourage other researchers to conduct further studies in the region. It could also encourage practitioners in the refugee field to engage, and partner with these organizations to ensure that all existing opportunities are being utilized. This could eventually lead to the achievement of UNHCR's community-based approach intended results.

Using a multi-scalar lens that puts Eritrean CBOs at the center of the analysis, and views their position in relation to Eritrean refugees, the state, UNHCR and its POs; this thesis has three main objectives. First, it aims to provide an overview of the landscape of Eritrean CBOs (both registered and unregistered) currently functioning in Greater Cairo and to explore the role they play in improving the lives of Eritrean refugees and filling in social protection gaps left by the national legislative framework and refugee-serving organizations in Egypt. Second, the thesis seeks to understand to what extent these CBOs are given the space to interact and cooperate with UNHCR and its implementing and operational partners if at all. This is explored through the narratives of both refugees leading CBOs, and the agency's publications. Third, the thesis highlights the main challenges facing these CBOs, hoping to provide an entry point for UNHCR and other actors concerned with refugee protection and assistance in Egypt to better cooperate with, and utilize the capabilities of CBOs, instead of having two isolated parallel channels, which runs the risk of wasting resources and efforts.

The thesis aims to answer the following primary research question:

What is the role that Eritrean CBOs play in improving the lives of Eritrean refugees in Greater Cairo? and what are the challenges that they face while fulfilling this role?

Sub-research questions:

- What are CBOs, what is their role, and who do they serve?

- What are the main social protection gaps that Eritrean CBOs fill?

- What is the relationship between Eritrean CBOs and UNHCR and its POs, and how does this relationship impact these CBOs?

- What are the main procedural challenges (including legal and financial) challenges facing each of the Eritrean CBOs that are currently functioning in Greater Cairo?

- How do Eritrean CBOs in Greater Cairo ensure their sustainability?

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

1.1   Definition of Terms

1.1.1   Protection and Social Protection

In his book chapter, Helton revisits the concept of refugee protection, and states that while the terms 'refugee' and 'protection' are often used together, the term is often difficult to describe. He argues that traditionally, protection refers to legal protection, meaning entitlements under the law. In order to understand if a population is protected, we have to understand the extent to which the authorities are adhering to these laws, and how they are being implemented on the ground. He further argues that 'protection' is not particularly defined under international refugee law. According to him, while UNHCR's core responsibility of protecting refugees and asylum seekers is traditionally understood as the insurance of the maintenance of security and physical protection and providing redress under the law; protection is a broad humanitarian principle which means to secure the enjoyment of basic human rights and to meet primary humanitarian needs (Helton, 2003). Helton's interpretation of protection is important because it highlights that in addition to security, physical protection and redress under the law, there are other dimensions to protection; namely securing basic human rights and meeting primary humanitarian needs. These dimensions are part of what this thesis is concerned with.

International organizations and UN agencies have endorsed a similar definition for protection. The Inter-agency Standing Committee, of which UNHCR is a member, defines protection as:

> …All activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e.

International Human Rights Law (IHRL), International Humanitarian Law, International Refugee law (IRL)) (IASC, 2016b, p. 2).

Given that 'protection' is so fundamental to what a refugee is, most scholars focus on defining protection in legal terms. The refugee definition itself focuses on protection: "…is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." As Goodwin Gill explains, While the international refugee regime has a fundamental role in ensuring the provision of material assistance, the notion of 'legal protection' is especially particular in its focus. Legal protection means using the legal instruments (international treaties and national laws) which lay down or implement states' obligations. These also guarantee that no asylum seeker is exposed to any sanctions, expulsions, or refoulement, and that every refugee enjoys fully the rights and benefits they are entitled to (2014).

Scholars who are interested in studying how refugee communities mobilize in their host countries to assist themselves look at protection from a more pragmatic, rather than legal, point of view. For instance, in their book, Betts et al. adopt the term "social protection" to refer to refugee communities' self-mobilization practices in the form of informal networks and community-based organizations to support one another in areas such as finance, livelihoods, housing, health, and education. They define social protection as "activities designed to reduce population's poverty, vulnerability, or risk". However, they argue that the definition of social protection for refugees varies in comparison with national counterparts (2020, p. 3). Betts' et al.'s interpretation of social protection is what is used in this thesis.

1.1.2 Protection Gaps

In order for this thesis to identify the role that CBOs play in filling in gaps in the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, it is important to understand what protection gaps are, and how they can be identified. As previously mentioned, international protection is commonly understood as legal protection as premised in legal provisions. Rebecca Dowd and Volker Türk state that 'protection gaps' is a term that is commonly used to refer to the inadequacies in the protection afforded to refugees and forcibly displaced persons, where the existing provisions of international law, specifically, and international refugee law; are either not applicable, non-existent, or inadequate in scope, or are not interpreted or applied in an appropriate manner. They identify three types of protection gaps: application gaps, implementation gaps, and normative gaps.

Application gaps refer to the non-applicability of international refugee legal instruments in certain states. This happens when some states do not sign the relative legal instruments that call for the protection of refugees, such as the 1951 Convention. Another application gap pertains to the temporal and geographical limitations of the 1951 Convention, which were later addressed by introducing the 1967 Protocol. Implementation gaps, on the other hand, relate to when the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol are interpreted and applied in an overly restrictive or poor manner. The authors further argue that many of the protection risks that many refugees and asylum seekers face are linked to the failure of the legal framework of a given state in according them their basic rights, which perpetuates or fails to address certain types of discrimination. This could also be linked to the lack of resources or capacity in a given state, and/or the political unwillingness to provide protection and assistance to certain groups. This, they

explain, is the reason why UNHCR and its implementing partners often step in to replace state structures and fill in these implementation gaps.

The third and final protection gap that the authors mention are normative gaps. These gaps arise as a result of the complexity of the reasons why forcibly displaced persons flee their countries of origin. Given that the 'convention refugee' is one that should flee persecution based on one of the five convention grounds, some forcibly displaced persons, who have fled as a result of non-human made disasters for instance, are also deserving of protection. Yet because they are considered as economic or climate migrants, they are denied this type of protection. Normative gaps, as the authors argue, can also be a result in cases where the need for protection arise after persons have left their country of origin, such as in the case of stranded migrants (Dowd & Türk, 2014, pp. 278–285).

In their recent study on refugee-led organizations as an aspect of humanitarian "localization", Pincock et al. state that while traditionally, refugees in low and middle-income countries are often assisted and protected by UNHCR and its non-governmental implementing partners, refugees often turn to their own informal networks and establish community-based organizations in order to provide themselves with alternative social protection and assistance. They find, through their research, that community-based organizations do proliferate to fill in the formal humanitarian and development actors social protection gaps (2021).

1.2   Unpacking CBOs

1.2.1   Conceptualizing Refugee CBOs

There is a general agreement among scholars on the key elements that make up a refugee community-based organization. There is, however, a clear lack of agreement on a unified term used to refer to them, with many terms being used interchangeably. In their research on agencies providing employment services for refugees, Tomlinson & Egan use the term refugee community organizations (RCOs) and define it as organizations that refugees themselves form, often along specific cultural, national, or ethnic lines, and manage (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002, p. 1026). Similarly, in her research on Syrian refugee community organizations in Turkey, Sahin Mencutek uses the term "refugee-led community organizations (RCOs)" to refer to all formal and informal establishments formed by Syrian refugees. She does not differentiate between the legal status of the organization, as she uses "RCOs" to refer to all formal and informal organizations formed by Syrian refugees including what Syrians themselves call "forums, cultural centers, cultural houses, community centers, associations, courses, or gatherings (Sahin Mencutek, 2021, p. 182)."

Griffith et al. are among the earliest scholars to produce a rich body of literature on refugee community organizations. They, like the aforementioned scholars, also use the term refugee community organizations (RCOs), but they are among the few who question if the terminology used to refer to these organizations matters. They argue that the term "RCOs" implies "the rooting of organizational forms in the broader social relations of the refugee community" (Griffiths et al., 2006, p. 883). According to Zetter and Pearl, refugee community organizations (RCOs) are "organizations rooted within, and supported

by, the ethnic or national refugee/asylum seeker communities they serve. Essentially, these RCOs are established by the refugees and asylum seekers themselves – or by their pre-established communities" (Zetter & Pearl, 2000, p. 676).

Another term that is often used in literature is refugee-led organizations (RLOs). The term "refugee-led organizations" (RLOs) is used to refer to organizations formed by refugees, regardless of their formal or informal status (Betts et al., 2020b; Easton-Calabria, 2016). However, Piacentini warns of imposing the "refugee" label as a defining criterion. She warns against reducing them to organizations fixed around the notion of "refugeeness". She criticizes such conception because of the underlying assumption that these organizations are fixed in space and time, made up of individuals organizing around homogenous understandings of issues and objectives unique to refugees and asylum seekers only, and that refugees are a homogenous group defined by their 'refugeeness' (2012).

The final commonly used term, which I also adopt in this thesis, is community-based organizations (CBOs). Martinez offers one of the most elaborate definitions for CBOs, as he contrasts them to grass-root organizations. According to him, CBOs are organizations that are led by members that belong to the community they represent the interests of, and with whom they share costs, and benefits of social change efforts, and the leadership of which are accountable to its members (2008, p. 342). What can be concluded from this review is that the terms used to refer to these organizations highly depend on the function of the research and the direction of the researcher. Some researchers do not even turn to defining the terms they use. For instance, in one of the few studies that included a full section on refugee community-based organizations in

Egypt, Grabska uses the terms community-based organizations and community-based associations interchangeably without providing an explanation for the difference between them (2006). Accordingly, providing an overarching definition might not be feasible. However, most of the terms used by the scholars highlighted above share one key element, they are organizations formed and managed by refugee communities to support their communities.

Refugees resort to forming social networks with their communities as a way of defying the mental and material repercussions caused by their flight and exile, and as a way of building livelihoods strategies and achieving feelings of belonging (Huser, 2014). Some researchers speak of "refugee-led social protection" rather than community-based organizations as an umbrella term to encompass activities carried out by formal and informal networks and 'support-systems' of refugees to address their own vulnerabilities; whether they are formal or informal community-based organizations, or less structured cultural or religious networks (Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018).

Most of the scholarly work on CBOs attribute the proliferation of CBOs to the limited access to scarce resources in urban settings. In their research on these networks in Uganda and Kenya, Easton-Calabria & Pincock found that they proliferate as a way of addressing the scarcity of resources and lack of access to basic needs in urban settings, which deem it necessary for refugees to be self-reliant. However, given that refugees often face obstacles that are related to access to the labor market, discrimination, and competition with locals, individualized forms of self-reliance are hard to achieve. An additional reason for these organizations and groups to proliferate is the limited services offered by UNHCR and its implementing/operational partners. However, it is argued that

such networks form even in camps, where assistance by international organizations is more accessible (2018). In Kampala, a large landscape of refugee-led initiatives proliferated and flourished to fill in gaps in services provided by INGOs (Pincock et al., 2021). In Egypt, Grabska shares with other studies the same view, however, she also attributes the proliferation of CBOs and CBAs to the limited number of resettlement slots for refugees, and the protracted nature of their presence in Egypt (Grabska, 2006, pp. 36–37).

In addition to addressing scarce resources, Grabska argues that one reason why CBOs in Egypt started taking more formalized forms was a shift in UNHCR Cairo's office, which started to implement a community-based approach in tackling refugee issues, and provided funding to CBOs for the first time in 2004 (2006, p. 37). In fact, Pascucci states that notions of self-reliance are now governing forced displacement in the Global South. She adds that many CBOs in Egypt emerged as a response to UNHCR's recognition of their importance suggested by its community-based approach, and to the funding opportunities resulting from such approach (Pascucci, 2017).

1.2.2 CBOs' Role and Response Globally

CBOs play a significant role in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. It was found in one study that the activities of these organizations span from exchanging and sharing information, to offering basic needs such as food, clothes, shelter, and mental healthcare, to more specialized services such as paying school fees for children, training youth and raising their capacities and operating loan cooperatives to support refugees in starting their own businesses (Easton-Calabria, 2016; Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018; Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). Interestingly, some of these organizations' activities extend to

transnational political mobilization such as peacebuilding and reclaiming the image of their home countries. One of the most remarkable findings that this study yielded was that refugees often prefer turning to these community networks rather than traditional refugee agencies. The researchers attribute this to the personal nature of these networks that go beyond the traditional giver-receiver model of aid provision dominating the humanitarian regime (Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018). Some have found that CBOs help fill gaps left by traditional refugee-serving organizations (Pincock et al., 2021).

Besides the material resources that CBOs offer for their communities, there are other functions for CBOs. Some argue that CBOs have a role in strengthening and fostering a sense of ethnic or national identity through activities that aim to preserve linguistic, cultural, religious, and national traditions (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002, p. 1037). In one of the few studies that tackle refugee community-based organizations in Cairo, Huser argues that community-based organizations hold a symbolic value for refugees. Her research found that they act as sites of community formation where refugees could defy the notions of helplessness and dependency often imposed on refugees, by supporting their community and engaging in local activism (Huser, 2014). Similarly, In her research about Somali community-based organization in the United Kingdom and Canada, Hokpins argues that community-based organizations help rebuild the community and provide a safe space for refugees where they could feel empowered and are able to regain their confidence (Hopkins, 2006, p. 362). The notion of collective agency is similarly presented in research on Syrian community-based organizations in Turkey. The researcher, however, argues that the political and legal contexts of the state where the

refugee community-based organization operates highly affect the degree to which it is able to challenge the existing power relations (Sahin Mencutek, 2021).

1.2.3 Situating CBOs within the Global Landscape of Refugee-concerned Actors: Challenges and Opportunities

Most of the challenges facing CBOs captured by scholars can be categorized into three main categories: challenges resulting from structural constraints and restrictions imposed by the global landscape of actors concerned with refugees, challenges caused by tension and disagreements within the refugee community itself, and challenges caused by contextual constrains as they relate to the political landscape of the state in which CBOs function.

1.2.3.1 Power dynamics within the landscape of refugee-concerned actors.

Despite the scarcity of literature that examines the interaction between community-based organizations and international actors (UNHCR and its partner organizations) (Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018), a general picture can be drawn from the existing literature. Among the first scholars to highlight the importance of understanding such interaction are Betts et al. They argue that despite the shift in global policy debates towards localizing funding and activities, and the recognition of the global humanitarian actors of the important role that CBOs play, this shift remained rhetorical in nature and never materialized into a clear framework governing the ways by which UNHCR and its POs can cooperate with CBOs. Such absence of clear guidelines and frameworks gives formal humanitarian actors the discretion as to if and how they will partner with CBOs. POs are, thus, able to "engage with, bypass, or selectively include" CBOs to partner with.

This directly translates into POs being the gatekeepers to funds and formal recognition, and perpetuating the benefactor-beneficiary model (Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018).

In their research in Kampala, the researchers found that most CBOs do not receive any formal funding, nor do they engage with UNHCR and its partners. Of 30 organizations, a large number found many other streaming funding lines, and only 2 have been funded by UNHCR. The general view of UNHCR was that a CBO has to be an implementing partner to receive funds, but CBOs are unlikely to meet the requirements of a PO due to lack of capacity; The thing that authors called the "chicken and egg" dilemma (Pincock et al., 2021, p. 731). It is worth noting, however, that such conceptualization is problematic because it assumes that CBOs are skill-less, or that their capacities are being evaluated against the dominant model of what an organizational capacity is.

In Egypt, Grabska found that access to funds is a problem for CBOs. However, she attributes this to their unregistered status, which renders them ineligible for donor funds. She also found that many of these CBOs are short-lived due to the novelty of their establishment, which means that these initiatives are deprived of organizational skills and capacities. Furthermore, she found that CBOs often rest upon the shoulders of only active and committed refugees, so when these individuals are no longer present in the country; the CBOs fall and cease to exist.

1.2.3.2 Competing Over Scarce Funding

Another major problem facing CBOs is competing over resources and the fear of POs to partner with CBOs. In one study, it was found that even when POs do partner with CBOs, they often impose obstacles by, for instance, not adhering to their deadlines or

obligations. However, CBOs in this study have attempted to find alternative solutions and formed larger unions/networks to maintain their autonomy from POs and escape their monopoly over funds, bureaucracy, and censorship. Despite their attempts, they were only able to find funds through the community. Their study suggested that even when the political landscape might allow for legally registering their CBOs, such as the case in Kampala, the key determinant to their ability to raise funds and operate highly depends on pre-existing hierarchy of organizational power and the top-down refugee governance perspective (Pincock et al., 2021).

In their research on the impact of the refugees' dispersal policy in the UK, Griffith et al. found that access to funding is also the biggest problem facing CBOs. They were competing with far more capacitated organizations. Requirements like a presenting a track record of managing funds is requested to be able to secure funds, which CBOs often lack. This influenced the activities of the organizations, where accountability to the donor is a priority over the actual vision of the CBOs and the needs of refugees. This led some organizations to organize their activities outside the mainstream funding channels, or to simply organize them based on informal networks rather than formal organization. The result of this was that many initiatives were short-lived, as the political landscape only allowed funding and legitimacy through the formal channels of organization. Griffith et al. argue that while NGOs and other statutory bodies are instrumental for funding CBOs and occupying them with the needed skills and know how, they are very restrictive in terms of setting their own agenda and looking for CBOs that are representative of their own interpretation of refugees. Meanwhile, CBOs that resist such mechanisms might cause

further marginality and lack of integration because they are resistant, gap filling, and have to function outside the margin of the state to avoid pre-set criteria and agendas (2006).

1.2.3.3 Viewing CBOs as sub-contractors rather than partners

Another challenge facing CBOs that is recurrent in literature is a result of the way UNHCR and other mainstream organizations perceive CBOs. A common concern stated by CBOs in Zetter & Pearl's research in the UK is that service providers view them as sub-contractors rather than actual partners and key actors; which results in the exclusion of small sized CBOs from partnerships, eventually leading to diminishing their chances of expanding or improving their services (Zetter & Pearl, 2000, p. 695). Another result, as suggested by Huser, is that CBOs resort to 'NGO-ization' or adopting the same institutional way of POs' operations to gain access to funds and recognition. This gives donor organizations the upper hand in dictating the activities of these CBOs, leading CBOs to become less connected to their communities, less autonomous and more donor-driven (Huser, 2014, p. 103). Moreover, in their research in Kampala, the authors highlighted that due to the lack of partnership pathways, personal relationships were the determining factor for CBOs to access support. Refugees who were able to secure support for their activities were predominantly male, English speakers, with a certain level of education, and had experience working at INGOs. This, according to the researchers, could lead to further increasing inequalities between refugees, and causing those refugees to implement activities that appeal to the donor, rather than activities that reflect the real needs of the community (Pincock et al., 2021, p. 730). Similarly, in their research in Kampala and Nairobi, Pincock and Easton-Calabria also found that lack of access to

funding and powerful actors, and being perceived as implementers/mobilizers rather than actors of change; are some of the biggest challenges facing CBOs.

Additionally, they found that there is a general atmosphere of distrust between CBOs and traditional service providers. CBOs suspect that these organizations are co-opting their ideas, while international organizations might perceive refugee-led social protection as a means of economizing, running the risk of declining the quality of assistance (Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018). In another research, it was found that the lack of capacity of these CBOs and their criticism of UN and INGOs make them an unpreferred partner for international actors (Betts et al., 2020b). The issue of perceiving CBOs as sub-contractors, or sometimes even beneficiaries is reflected in the response of a research respondent who worked at UNHCR in Kampala. He said: "Sometimes we support refugee organizations in events… generally this is in-kind, like helping with tents or chairs… I actually don't know of other refugee CBOs… who received money from UNHCR in the last year" (Pincock et al., 2021, p. 726).

1.2.4   Tension within the community: fragmentation and internal divisions

The divisions and fragmentation within refugee communities along ethnic, religious, linguistic, or tribal lines renders CBOs weaker and less able to utilize collective action (Sahin Mencutek, 2021, p. 186). In Egypt, Grabska found that the lack of trust from refugees towards CBOs due to individual incidents, which is exacerbated by the tribal and ethnic disputes, destabilizes CBOs (Grabska, 2006, p. 38). Much like Grabska's findings, Hopkins found, in her research about Somali CBOs in Canada, that in addition to lack of access to funding and limited resources, internal divisions and clan tensions were found to be a major challenge facing these CBOs. She argues that CBOs, which are

homogenously represented as "Somali" but are actually organized among tribal lines, had their ability to respond to their community needs severely hindered; and Somalis were discouraged from seeking their help due to underlying exclusionary practices. She argues that in communities with low level of self-mobilization and a high level of fragmentation, the assumption that CBOs are better positioned to help their own communities might not be true (Hopkins, 2006).

Similarly, Zetter & Pearl argue that the scarce resources and the specificity of CBOs in the UK, with regards to the ethnic group they serve and their location, hinder their ability to cooperate with one another. Their ethnic affiliation leads them to view each other as competitors rather than partners. Thus, they withhold information about scarce funding sources and strategies for sustainability and recognition. Additionally, because they are serving their own communities, they tend to lack professionalism in their relationship with their own communities that they serve, as opposed to other organizations (Zetter & Pearl, 2000, p. 686).

1.2.5 The political landscape of the host country

As previously mentioned, researchers have found that the political landscape plays a major role in the ability of CBOs to function. In her research on Syrian CBOs in Turkey, the researcher argues that turkey's authoritarian-central government is very suspicious of civil society organizations and foreigners. This, in turn, means that CBOs have to emphasize their apolitical nature, and have to refrain from engaging in any criticism of the government or its policies. This translates into non-existent venues for collective mobilization surrounding rights. Furthermore, Syrian CBOs in Turkey also lack funds and organizational capacity. To overcome this, they resort to transnational cooperation with

INGOs in the global North and Arab Gulf countries. They also form social, economic, and political exchanges with Syrians living elsewhere. The researcher uses the terms "invited spaces" to refer to the spaces CBOs are allowed to occupy and operate within. These include filling gaps in service provision and benefiting host country, and even sometimes appearing on the panels of migration governance actors to generate "good press". On the other hand, she uses the term "invented spaces" to refer to spaces used to advocate for claiming rights. She further argues that both invented and invited spaces are dominated by migration governance actors (Sahin Mencutek, 2021).

This literature review highlighted that most studies conducted on CBOs yielded similar results. However, this review also highlighted the scarcity of research available on refugee community-based organizations in Egypt. No research has been done to extensively look at CBOs in Egypt in general nor Eritrean CBOs in Greater Cairo in particular. Studies available on refugee community-based organization only offer limited insight or follow a case study approach (Huser, 2014). While Grabska's research explored important aspects and offered valuable insight, it is important to note that the research dates back to 2006. Additionally, CBOs are tackled in only one section of this study (Grabska, 2006). Finally, no studies were conducted to assess the level of engagement between CBOs and UNHCR and its POs in Egypt.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

1.3.1 *Implementation Protection gaps*

This thesis makes use of Volker Turk and Rebecca Dowd's conceptualization of protection gaps in order to identify the protection gaps left by the legislative framework governing refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. However, it focuses on implementation

gaps, which are better suited to explain protection gaps left by the state. As previously mentioned, implementation gaps refer to the inability of the legal framework of a given country to address certain types of discrimination or vulnerability due to scarcity of resources or capacity, or/and the lack of political willingness to provide protection and assistance for refugees and asylum seekers. These include: the lack of access to basic rights such as documentation, education, protection against sexual and gender-based violence, especially in urban settings; and lack of access to basic needs such as healthcare, nutrition, and water and sanitation. These gaps lead UNHCR and its implementing partners to sometimes intervene and replace state structures (Dowd & Türk, 2014). Given that Egypt is indeed a state where UNHCR replaces the state structure and acts as a "surrogate state" (Kagan, 2011b), this conceptualization is used to identify gaps in the social protection of refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. However, it is taken a step further and is applied on UNHCR to identify gaps left by the agency and its POs to assess the extent to which CBOs fill these gaps.

1.3.2 The Global Governed and Post-protection

The second conceptual proposition that this thesis is informed by is the concept of 'The Global Governed' newly introduced in a book holding the same title. In this book, the authors argue that services are provided by UNHCR and its implementing partners top-down in low- and middle-income countries, hosting the vast majority of refugees and asylum seekers. As such, "protection becomes governance". They introduce the new concept they term "the global governed" which does not aim to refer to a population per se, but rather "a way of analytically re-privileging the subjects of global governance… shifting the primary analytical focus from governors to the governed". They use this term

to refer to refugees who are not passively ruled but are "integral actors in global politics with their own values, interests, and power relations." In this sense, they think of refugee-led social protection as a form of governance.

To conform with this new conceptual contribution and using post-humanitarian and post-development literature as a starting point, they introduce the term 'post-protection' rather than 'protection' to explore the relationship between global refugee governance (top-down) and refugees (bottom-up). They argue that the 'post-protection' is a way of moving from the traditional notion of protection as a benevolent category, to viewing protection as a form of power, which becomes governance. The post-protection concept is especially significant when exploring the role of CBOs because it involves a multi-scalar global, national, and local perspective. Additionally, it examines bottom-up approaches to self-protection beyond the emergency phase following the initial crisis to the "normal" phase in protracted refugee situations, like Egypt. To the authors, "the global governed" is an umbrella concept for 'post-'approaches that not only focuses on the subject population, but critically situates them within the global governance regime, "through a dual regard for the ways in which 'top-down' governance constrains and enables subject populations and the potential for alternative 'bottom-up' forms of collective action." They also focus on social protection rather than simply protection against threats to physical integrity (Betts et al., 2020c).

This theoretical contribution is significant to this thesis for the following reasons. First, using the term global governed is introduced in the aforementioned book to shift the analytical lens from the governors (international and national institutions) to the governed (refugees), which is the same analytical lens that this thesis is using; by putting Eritrean

CBOs at the center of the analysis. It also allows for focusing on the collective mobilization of refugees to provide others with social protection, rather than mere self-protection. This shift serves to view CBOs as fully-fledged actors with their own internal interests, power relations, and values. Second, the book uses post-protection as a framework to critically explore the interaction between CBOs (bottom-up) and international institutions (top-down). This is important because this thesis does not only analyze the role of CBOs by highlighting protection gaps caused by the state and international organizations (top-down), and how CBOs fill them; but will also allow space for examining other potential roles that these CBOs play (bottom-up). Finally, and as previously mentioned, the post-protection framework views protection as a form of governance, which could help in identifying the root causes of the challenges that CBOs face. In other words, problematizing protection as a form of power (governance) rather than a benevolent category could help shed light on the implications of not formally acknowledging the ability of refugees to be protectors. From that, I argue that the lack of a policy framework that regulates the role of and acknowledges that CBOs are providers of protection will lead to fragmentation and disempowerment, even if UNHCR calls for applying a community-based approach. Both concepts are used not as analytical tools, but as a lens the thesis looks at CBOs through, and an approach that situates them at the center of the analysis.

1.3.3 Marginality

Asef Bayat argues that as opposed to classical understandings of marginals as people that occupy a social space between two cultures or societies while not fully belonging to one, marginality means an inferior social position that is imposed on a group of people not necessarily because of their features, but because of the dominant law,

institutions, and discourse. Marginality, thus, is standing opposite to hegemony, by being excluded from the mainstream as a site of power. Most important to the discussion of the role that CBOs plays, Bayat questions whether "marginality" is a positive or a negative status to be in. He proposes that marginality could encourage marginals to engage in practices of "alternative lives" to survive and thus, can become positive and liberating. He sees that marginal sites could foster an opportunity for those who cannot bear the cost of the mainstream, to engage in "alternative social arrangements". He attributes this to the fact that while marginal sites are deprived of the mainstream opportunities, they are also exempted from the costs and restrictions of the normal/mainstream socioeconomic life, which is an opportunity to challenge the mainstream (Bayat, 2012, pp. 20–21).

The notion of positive marginality can be applied on refugees and CBOs in Egypt for several reasons. First, Bayat argues that marginal spaces can better be explored at the local micro-level. Second, the marginal urbans in their informal environments base their relationships on trust and negotiation instead of the state and its bureaucratic institutions, as they cannot bear the cost of such channels (taxes, bills, etc.). Third and most importantly, he argues that the argument on marginality can be applied to poor migrant communities integration in particular, because they resort to their immediate circles in the form of religious groups, informal associations, and social networks to achieve a feeling of belonging on the margin; where they do not possess the capital that could allow them to be immersed in the mainstream (Bayat, 2012).

Using such conceptualization while analyzing CBOs in Egypt is especially important because it helps shift the focus away from discourses of poor victims to active key actors. It can help consider what points of strength exist within the community, instead

of completely erasing them and focusing on the formal refugee regime shortfalls. Finally, Bayat has clarified that the urban marginal resorts to other circles to navigate the informal life outside of the mainstream. How these "circles" can be conceptualized is tackled in the next section.

1.3.4 Social Capital

Nasution argues that the marginalized resort to their social capital to economically sustain a living, and this social capital can be attained through membership in a particular social network. He further argues that long-term relationships, social ties, and social contacts produce a strong social capital, and this is the way through which a community can achieve a high level of resilience and a better ability to utilize available resources. While his proposition was to explain how those who are spatially marginalized (informal areas in urban spaces), the notion of social capital is very relevant for CBOs (2015). Social capital, a concept which was developed by Bourdieu and later approached differently and expanded upon by Putnam is especially significant and commonly used in literature on refugee agency and self-mobilization. Bourdieu defines social capital as:

> [T]he aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21)

It is worth noting, however, that Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital is linked to power and social stratification. He views social capital as an individual rather than a collective resource. For him, social capital is not available to every member of a given group/network, but only to individuals who exert the effort to benefit from it by achieving power or status. Putnam, however, views social capital as a collective resource. He defines it as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital" (Putnam, 1993). There have been three identified types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding capital refers to the social connection that exist within the group and that acts as a support system that help the group survive, bridging capital refers to the connection between the group and other groups wider community, which helps the group to access resources that are unavailable in their immediate network; and linking capital refers to the networks between the group and persons in positions of authority; which helps the group advance in terms of power and status (Pittaway et al., 2016). In this thesis, given that Eritrean refugees live on the margin of the society, and in the absence of linking capital, I argue that bonding capital acts as the most important resource for Eritrean refugees in Egypt. However, this thesis also considers how bridging capital is sometimes utilized by CBOs as discussed in chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Research design

2.1 Methodology

This research is qualitative and does not claim to be representative of all CBOs in Egypt. However, its main aim is to map and include all Eritrean CBOs that are currently functioning in Greater Cairo, and that are recognized by the Eritrean community as CBOs; whether they are legally registered or not. The methodological approach of this study is using a multi-scalar approach. Glick Schiller argues, the 'multi-scalar' term serves as "a shorthand to speak of socio-spatial spheres of practice that are constituted in relationship to each other and within various hierarchies of networks of power." The term 'hierarchy' does not mean fixed power relations, but rather recognizes situations of unequal power (Glick Schiller, 2018). As opposed to methodological nationalism, a multi-scalar methodology does not situate the nation-state as the "top" or macro-level of analysis. In fact, a multi-scalar lens is not concerned with the notion of levels that are separate from one another (Glick Schiller, 2015).

> The concept of multiscalar social fields enables us to address and capture aspects of social relations through which broader social forces enable, shape, constrain, and are acted upon by individuals …. Migrants ... form multiple new social relations and maintain others as they settle in specific places and the networks in which they live contribute to the remaking of the institutional nexus of city-level, regional, national, supranational, and globe-spanning actors. (Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2018, p. 9).

The significance and strength of using a multi-scalar methodological approach in this particular thesis are related to its ability to bring together "scales" that without a multi-scalar analysis would not have been suitable to examine through a relational framework (Williamson, 2015). Instead of approaching the role of CBOs from a purely "top-down" or purely "bottom-up" perspective, this thesis highlights the interaction between refugees, community leaders, international organizations, national policies, and the refugee regime at large. This helps bring up both structural constraints and the agency of refugees without portraying them as victims or passive actors (Caglar & Glick Schiller, 2015).

In order to answer my exploratory research questions and in the absence of secondary sources that address this question holistically, I adopt a triangulation approach by combining multiple qualitative research methods, which will be explained in detail in the methods section. Triangulation is a vehicle which allows for increasing the validity of the findings by adopting several research methods and comparing the findings. It helps compensate for the weakness of a certain method by relying on the strength of another, where one complements the other. Thus, in this thesis, secondary sources are used, the findings of which are triangulated through primary sources and vice versa.

2.2   The Conceptual Framework Through a Multi-scalar Lens

Figure1

Conceptual framework through a multi-scalar lens
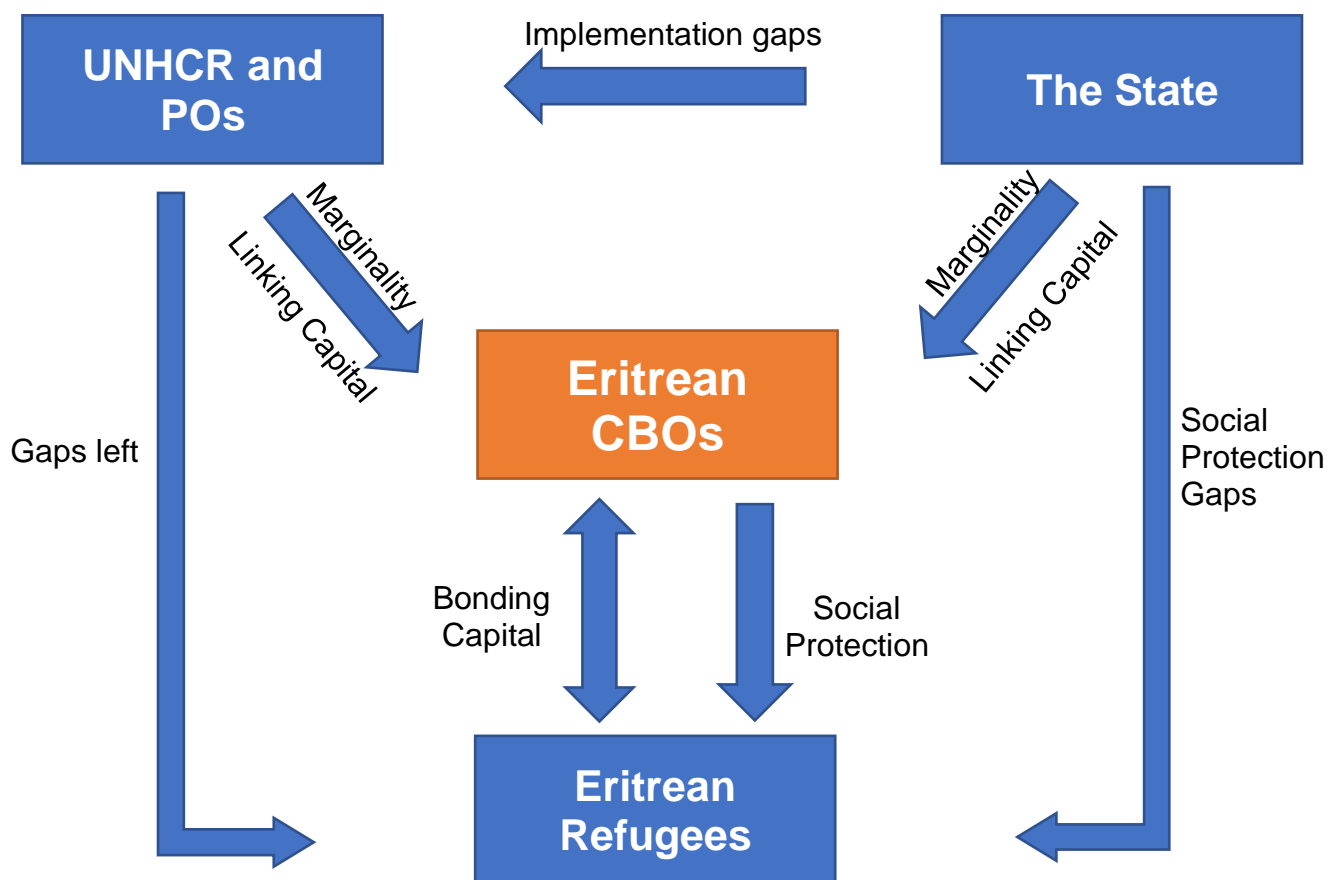
Three scales utilizing the conceptual framework are used to answer the research questions, and throughout the three scales, the global governed concept is used to place the CBOs at the center of the analysis as shown below:

2.2.1   First scale of analysis: CBOs and the State

The direct and indirect interaction and the relationship between CBOs and the State is explored. The direct interaction is investigated through analyzing the law governing CBOs in Egypt. Afterwards, the implementation of the law is explored to identify the key gaps as they relate to Eritrean CBOs. Then, the implications of such gaps on the

CBOs is explored. At this scale, I argue that the State marginalizes Eritrean CBOs by limiting their access to legal registration through the restrictive articles of the law. Using Bayat's concept, I argue that CBOs are able to function freely away from the eyes of the state as a result of the positive marginality. Moreover, I argue that due to the restrictive nature of the law and the marginality of CBOs, no linking capital exists between CBOs and the State, causing them to rely on bonding capital to navigate life outside of the mainstream. As for the indirect interaction, the Implementation Gaps concept is used to identify the main social protection gaps left by the State through analyzing the legal framework governing Eritrean refugees in Egypt. This paves the way for identifying the role that CBOs play in filling in social protection gaps.

2.2.2 Second scale of analysis: CBOs and UNHCR and its partner organizations

The direct and indirect intersections between CBOs and UNHCR and its POs is analyzed. The direct interaction is explored through analyzing the Community-based Approach Manual governing the relationship between CBOs and UNHCR and its partners. The manual is compared with its implementation in the context of Egypt, through the narratives of the CBOs. I argue that UNHCR and its partners marginalize CBOs by not adhering to the manual's provisions. In absence of linking capital between CBOs and UNHCR and its partners, and in light of not viewing them as integral actors in the refugee regime, I argue that CBOs resort to their bonding capital to secure resources necessary for their survival. I also argue that the CBOs' marginality in this case is negative, as it restricts them from accessing resources necessary for their operations. As for the indirect relationship between the two parties, the Implementation Gaps concept is used to suggest that UNHCR and its partners leave the same gaps unfilled, causing CBOs to intervene to

fill in these gaps through their services, and causing refugees to rely on their bonding capital through CBOs to gain access to the services not provided by the State nor UNHCR and its partners.

2.2.3 Third scale of analysis: CBOs, refugees, and CBOs

The third and final scale of analysis analyzes the relationship between CBOs and one another, and their relationship with refugees. In this scale, I use the social capital concept to argue that both CBOs and refugees invest in and rely on one another as a result of their marginalization, and in absence of bridging capital with the host community and linking capital with the State and UNHCR and its partners. In this sense, the CBOs benefit refugees by providing them with services and social protection not provided by the other parties, and refugees benefit CBOs by providing them with human and financial resources in order to continue operating.

2.3 Methods

2.3.1 Secondary sources

Before starting the data collection phase, the research begins by reviewing secondary sources including academic literature, UNHCR and INGOs publications and reports, newspapers, and national laws. After the data collection phase, the research uses secondary sources to triangulate findings from the field work. The secondary desk review covers the following thematic areas:

1. History of displacement of Eritreans.

2. Background information on Eritreans seeking asylum in Egypt.

3. National legislations, policies, and international legal instruments concerning refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt.

4. Key protection gaps Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers face in Egypt.

5. The role of social networks in the lives of Eritrean refugees, asylum seekers, and persons in refugee-like situations in Greater Cairo.

6. Unpacking the meaning of CBOs.

7. Proliferation of CBOs in Egypt and their role.

8. Funding streams for CBOs in Greater Cairo.

9. Challenges facing CBOs in Greater Cairo.

10. UNHCR community-based approach application in Greater Cairo.

11. UNHCR and community mobilization.

12. Interaction between CBOs and other organizations serving refugees in Greater Cairo.

2.3.2 Primary data collection

2.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

The first primary qualitative research method that I make use of in this research is the semi-structured interview. Three main stakeholders were invited for semi-structured interviews: a) Eritrean refugee community leaders who manage or are involved in Eritrean refugee community-based organizations, b) individuals working at UNHCR's POs that work with CBOs, and c) individuals working at UNHCR.

Semi-structured interviews are a convenient information gathering method for this research for several reasons. They help guide respondents through guiding questions while allowing them a great deal of flexibility. They, also, involve the usage of open-ended questions, which allows the research respondents not only to provide information, but also "challenge, clarify, elaborate, or re-contextualize understandings of social

movements" (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 94). Semi-structured interviews have been referred to as a suitable method for data collection in certain cases which are of relevance to this research. The first is when there is a need to evaluate certain programs by interviewing program staff and front-line service providers, who are among the stakeholders highlighted above. The second is when there is a need to examine a certain area little research has been done to cover (Adams, 2015, pp. 493–494).

I used semi-structured interviews to guide my research respondents to provide answers for my key research questions, but I also gave them the space and flexibility to add aspects that might have been missed by the research questions. Guiding questions asked to the respondents included questions about establishing the CBO, services that Eritrean CBOs offer for refugees, challenges facing CBOs, views on the position of Eritrean CBOs in the landscape of refugee-concerned actors in Egypt and the reasons behind such views, and relationships with the host community.

2.3.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

The second qualitative method that I used to answer my research question is focus group discussions with refugees, asylum-seekers, closed-file (rejected) asylum seekers, and unregistered persons from different age groups and gender. Focus group discussions are suitable for my research for several reasons. First, they are beneficial when the topic explored is under-researched, so several stakeholders could be invited to share their views on the topic. Additionally, focus group discussions involve several individuals who come together in a shared setting and collectively share their views. These discussions are stimulating in the sense that the respondents can stimulate certain forgotten memories or ideas in one another's minds, and they also allow respondents to build on

each other's thoughts, which yields richer data (Marvasti, 2004b, pp. 23–25). I used an unstructured approach to focus group discussions in order to allow more spontaneous interaction.

2.4 Sampling

In order to reach my target sample, non-probability purposive sampling was used to reach community leaders and individuals working at international organizations integrating CBOs in their projects' implementation, then snowball sampling was used to reach other community leaders and refugee groups. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select individuals working at UNHCR. I relied on networks I have created by working as a previous caseworker at one of the INGOs that work directly with Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers among other nationalities. Throughout my work, I managed to form a network with a group of interpreters from the refugee community, para-social workers from the refugee community, refugees working at refugee community-based organizations, UNHCR staff, and staff from all of UNHCR's POs working with refugees and asylum-seeker.

Through these connections, I was able to engage in a friendly discussion with one of the highly active community leaders who provided me with a list of the currently active Eritrean CBOs, which amounted to 11 CBOs, along with their geographical distribution. The community leader also facilitated my access to these CBOs during the data collection phase.

Table 1

Sample

Method	Participant	Age	Sex	Total Number
Refugees, asylum seekers, and closed-file refugees				
FGD	Asylum seeker	18		
	Refugee	19		
	Refugee	22	Males	
	Refugee	26		
	Asylum seeker	18		
FGD	Asylum seeker	18		
	Asylum seeker	19	Females	
	Refugee	27		
	Refugee	17		
FGD	Refugee	63		
	Asylum seeker	53		
	Refugee	22	Males	
	Refugee	64		
	Refugee	44		27
FGD	Asylum seeker	45		
	Refugee	50		
	Refugee	26	Females	
	Refugee	30		
	Refugee	35		
	Asylum seeker	39		
FGD	Unregistered	60		
	Closed-file	44	Males	
	Unregistered	38		
	Closed-file	28		
FGD	Closed-file	44		
	Closed-file	41	Females	
	Closed-file	42		
CBOs				
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Male	
	Registered	-	Male	
	Registered	-	Male	
	Registered	-	Female	
	Registered	-	Female	
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Male	22
	Registered	-	Male	
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Female	
	Registered	-	Female	

	Registered	-	Male
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Female
	Registered	-	Female
	Registered	-	Male
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Male
	Registered	-	Male
	Registered	-	Male
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Female
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Male
	Registered	-	Male
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Male
Semi-structured Interview	Registered	-	Female
	Registered	-	Female
Partner Organizations			
Semi-structured Interview	-	-	Male
Semi-structured Interview	-	-	Male

2

2.5 Limitations and Ethical Issues

The first limitation is related to translation and interpretation. Due to time constrains, all the research respondents in the FGDs were Arabic speakers. Thus, the research excluded the non-Arabic speaker population. However, all the CBO management teams that I met during the fieldwork could speak the Arabic language. Additionally, language was one of the issues that were raised during the FGDs as an obstacle facing Eritrean refugees. While it would have been better to hear the experiences of non-Arabic speakers firsthand from this population; my research participants provided me with valuable insights about the issues that other Eritreans face as a result of the language barrier.

The second limitation that I faced during data collection was the unwillingness to participate in a study with no direct benefits on the short run. This was the case with a

few number of the CBOs, which eventually agreed to participate after I presented a lengthy overview of my research aims and significance to the CBO managers. However, one of the CBOs rejected the initial meeting. Another CBO was not interviewed due to the inability to reach any of its managers through neither my networks nor other CBOs. As such, I successfully interviewed nine out of the eleven Eritrean CBOs that are currently functioning in Greater Cairo.

The third limitation is related to gaining access to a respondent from UNHCR. I followed the formal channel of reaching out to UNHCR to request an interview with the department responsible for cooperation with CBOs. While the office initially agreed, they informed me that they will get back to me once they decide on who will be meeting me for the interview. However, the interview never materialized, despite the multiple trials and reminders. Accordingly, the perspective of UNHCR is presented in this thesis through two sources only: CBOs and UNHCR Egypt's publications. However, the findings collected from the CBOs about UNHCR were not verified nor discussed with UNHCR.

Finally, working with human subjects, especially from a population that is typically considered vulnerable, requires several ethical considerations such as making sure that their participation is voluntary, that they are protected against any kind of harm, that their data remains confidential, and that they provide an informed consent to participate in the research (Marvasti, 2004a). This research adhered to the American University in Cairo's policies and guidelines. An ethical approval was sought through the AUC's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The research goals and my identity as a graduate student were fully disclosed to the participants.

An oral informed consent was collected from the research participants (CBOs, FGDs, and POs). As expected prior to conducting my fieldwork, many of the CBOs and the participants in the FGDs were uncomfortable with signing any papers. Accordingly, the consent was collected orally, and the participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time of the interview. Throughout my six FGDs and my interviews with the CBOs, only one individual decided to withdraw from an FGD before I started to ask my questions. Identities including names and any other identifiable information was removed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. I only use codes for my interviewees. Finally, all the data collected was saved on a password protected hard drive, and the usage of hard copies was kept to minimum, and only when it was necessary.

Chapter 3: Background on Eritrean Displacement

Introduction

While providing a detailed overview of the history of displacement from Eritrea requires an entire study on its own, the past informs the present, especially in the case of the Eritrean displacement. As will be presented in this chapter, the policies of Eritrea is an important factor influencing the life of Eritrean refugees and the role of CBOs in the host country. As such, this chapter contextualizes the presence of Eritrean refugees in Egypt by providing a brief overview of the most remarkable events that may have caused primary or secondary displacement from Eritrea to Egypt. The chapter starts with a brief introduction to the estimated numbers of displaced Eritreans. Afterwards, the chapter presents the three main phases of Eritrean displacement: prior to independence, during and after independence, and post the border war with Ethiopia and contemporary displacement. The chapter, then, tackles the Eritrean diaspora and its evolution, followed by the demographics of Eritrean refugees in Egypt. It is very important to note that due to the long history of instability and conflict in Eritrea, in addition to the different admission policies in the receiving countries; the legal status of those who left Eritrea are blurry between regular/irregular migrants, asylum seekers, or refugees (Thiollet, 2007, p. 3).

3.1   Historical Overview of Forced Displacement

There is a dearth of data on the accurate total population of Eritrea, as the current government never carried out a census (Fusari, 2022, p. 48). Data available significantly varies from a source to another. For instance, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) estimates the total population of Eritrea to be almost 5.7 million as of 2022 (UNDESA, 2022), While the United Nations Population Fund

(UNFPA) estimates the total population to be about 3.7 million as of 2022 (UNFPA, 2022). Regardless of the accurate total population, Eritrea ranked as the tenth top country of origin for displaced persons globally, and the sixth in Africa. According to UNHCR, the total number of reported displaced Eritreans across borders by the end of 2021 was 511,900. If the total population figure reported by UNEDSA holds true, this means that about 9% of the Eritrean population are displaced across borders. This percentage, of course, only encompasses numbers that are reported/registered. Eritrea is also ranked as the fifth country of origin with the highest ratio of persons displaced across borders to its inhabitants (12,400 displaced persons per 100,000 inhabitants) (UNHCR, 2022a, p. 17). Eritrea is also considered one of the fastest nations to be losing its population to emigration (Tadesse, 2019, p. 80).

3.1.1 Displacement Prior to Independence (1961-1993)

It is important to note that the history of emigration and displacement from Eritrea is closely related to its liberation struggle. Eritrea as we know it today became independent from Ethiopia in 1993, after fighting a liberation war for 30 years since its annexation by Ethiopia in 1962. During the era of armed struggle for independence, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) led an armed struggle in the Muslim-dominated lowlands. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) was formed from splinter groups of the ELF (Hirt, 2021) under the control of Isaias Afewerki about a decade later, which eventually became the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ); the government party ruling Eritrea today (Hirt, 2021). During the war of liberation, the two groups (EPLF and ELF) fought a war among themselves, besides the war against Ethiopia. Eventually, the EPLF ended up controlling the government and excluding the

ELF. During the thirty-year war, it is estimated that 25-30% of Eritreans began seeking refuge abroad due to conflict, instability, and environmental factors (Hepner, 2009a).

Data on the exact destination and number of those who fled is not available, but it is stated that many of those who fled during the 1960s went to Sudan (Malk, 2019). Additionally, the literature available argues that during the war of liberation between 1962 and 1991, in oil rich GCC countries, and Saudi Arabia particularly, migration policy was used by proxy as an asylum policy for Eritrean refugees. In that era, Saudi Arabia allowed the entry and settlement of exiles through migration policies and provided them with favorable treatment. This support stemmed out of the Arabism sentiments that was prevailing the region at the time. Eritreans were considered as Arabs who should be supported against the Ethiopian Christian colonialism (Thiollet, 2011). A

According to the available literature, the presence of Eritreans in Egypt dates back to the 1950s. However, those who migrated from Eritrea to Egypt were mainly the leaders who called for the independence of Eritrea. Those were targets to persecution or were forced to leave the country by the Ethiopian government. Soon after, many of these leaders and other Eritreans settled in Cairo, which was, at the time, a hub for Eritrean Muslim university students. According to Hepner, Egypt was funding the Eritrean Students Club in Cairo since 1955, which later became the Eritrean Student's Union (2004). During this period, 400 Eritrean students in Egypt were studying at Al Azhar university or other secondary education institutions. In fact, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was founded by the Eritrean diaspora in Cairo, in July 1960, marking the beginning of the armed struggle for independence. The ELF was co-led by Idris Osman Galadewos, an Eritrean Cairo University law graduate. The ELF operated from Egypt and started

creating cells in Sudan, Saudi Arabia and other GCC states, and Eritrea (Conrad, 2010, p. 34). For the first ten years, the ELF was constructed as a Muslim, Arab movement. It is worth noting that the members of Eritrean Liberation Army (ELA), the military wing of the ELF, were mainly Muslims from the Eritrean lowlands. Accordingly, some sources attribute the Egyptian support of the Eritrean activists in Cairo to Gamal Abdulnasser's goal of making Cairo the center for African liberation movements under the ideology of pan-Arabism and pan-Africanism. This support was also manifested in granting Eritreans scholarships to study at Al Azhar University, the majority of the recipients of which were from the Eritrean lowlands, meaning they were Muslims. Additionally, the Sawt Al Arab radio was broadcasted in many African languages including Tigrinya, which gave the leaders of the revolution a platform to spread their messages, influencing younger generations (Bellucci & Zaccavia, 2009, p. 107). Thus, it can be said that those who fled to Egypt during this period were mainly political activists.

During the 1960s, thousands of Eritreans who supported the ELF fled to Sudan and remained there. Starting from the mid-1970s, thousands of Eritreans fled to Sudan and other parts of the world, and the situation was exacerbated by the civil war between the ELF and the EPLF in 1980-1981, in addition to a major famine in 1984. The number of Eritreans who fled to Sudan during this period was estimated to be 500,000. While the number of Eritrean refugees who came to Egypt during this period is not available, there is evidence that UNHCR Cairo Office provided Eritrean refugees in Sudan -among others- scholarships at secondary and post-secondary levels in Egypt in the late 1970s and 1980s. The number of recipients of this scholarship amounted to 2,000 to 3,000, which included Eritreans (Bereketeab, 2007, p. 81; Sperl, 2001, p. 12).

3.1.2 During and After the Independence (1991-2000)

In May 1991, Eritrea was liberated from the Ethiopian rule by the EPLF led by the current Eritrean president Isaias Afewerki (Kibreab, 2013, p. 633). In May 1993; Eritrea gained its full independence after a referendum was held, in which 99.8% of Eritrean voters both in Eritrea and in the diaspora voted for independence, ending the thirty year-long armed struggle (Hepner, 2009a). After independence and until 1997, migration from Eritrea slowed down, and some of those who previously fled the country repatriated from Ethiopia, Sudan, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America (Hepner, 2009a; Kibreab, 2008, pp. 121–122). By the mid 1990s, about 189,000 Eritreans who were living in Sudan had returned to Eritrea, but many remained in the diaspora (GSDRC, 2016, p. 15). However, Hirt states that after the independence, Eritrean returnees from Sudan who supported the ELF were not welcome by the government, thus, they had to migrate to the GCC (Hirt & Mohammad, 2022, p. 81). In 1998 and until 2000, a border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia erupted, claiming the lives of what was estimated to be 20,000 Eritrean soldiers; causing Eritreans to resume fleeing once again. Zohry states that this conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has resulted in displacement from the two countries to Egypt (Zohry, 2003). However, the border war came to an end in 2000, with the signing of the Algiers Peace Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia (Stark, 2018); eventually causing the return of many of those who had been displaced to Sudan (Hepner, 2009a; Kibreab, 2008, p. 121). Zohry argues that many of Eritreans who arrived in Egypt in the 1990s were engaged in secondary migration from other African countries or GCC states to Egypt (Zohry, 2003).

3.1.3 Post the Border War (2000 onwards)

Despite signing the Algiers Peace Agreement, the border remained disputed (Stark, 2018, p. 14). This stalemate marked the beginning of a new era of what has been called the "no war, no peace" era, as the Eritrean government felt the need to be constantly ready for the war with Ethiopia (Malk, 2019, p. 4). As a result, Eritrea was turned into an autocratic political system and the society became completely militarized by the Eritrean president. Eritrea functioned without a parliament, a constitution, nor a judiciary. Additionally, any voices that called for reformation or democratic elections were made silent through imprisonment. Journalists, students, religious leaders and reformists were arrested, and religious institutions were shut. Additionally, the government implemented a shoot to kill policy on the borders to prevent people from fleeing (Hirt, 2021, pp. 2–3). Moreover, obligatory military conscription was enforced (Stark, 2018, p. 7). Initially and in 1995, the Eritrean government enforced the Eritrean National Service (ENS) on all abled persons regardless of their gender, religious beliefs, and family responsibilities, with the exception of the 30-year independence war's veterans. As opposed to the classic military conscription in other states, the ENS entailed both military training and training that aim for conscripts to acquire the values of the liberation armed struggle and loyalty to the country for 18 months. However, after the border war and in May 2002, the Eritrean government launched the Warsai-Yike'alo Development Campaign (WYDC); which aimed to transfer the nationalist ideologies from the older generations who participated in the liberation war to the younger ones. The WYDC also made the ENS indefinite (Kibreab, 2014). Moreover, the WYDC has turned the ENS into forced labor, as those who are not assigned to join the defense forces were assigned to

other developmental projects such as construction, or in governmental offices with limited pay. Those who were draft evaders were met with harsh punishment, revocation of all civil rights, and were prohibited from obtaining an exit visa to exit the country (Hirt & Mohammad, 2018, p. 108). This caused a massive exodus, one that was considered among the top ten in the world (Hepner, 2009a). However, this time, fleeing the country was no longer fueled by the nationalist war of liberation but by the dire conditions. This is what was explained by Hepner, who categorized Eritreans who fled Eritrea into two generations: the first is Generation Nationalism, who left the country during the liberation struggle with the aim of returning, and Generation Asylum, who fled the country due to the totalitarian regime.

The problem was exacerbated when UNHCR invoked a world-wide cessation clause on May 8, 2002 and prompted all Eritrean refugees in Sudan to apply for repatriation by the end of the same year. This was on the grounds that the end of the independence war and the Eritrea-Ethiopia border meant the end of the persecution that Eritreans suffered in the past (Kibreab, 2008, p. 121). Zohry argues that this is when Eritrean refugees who lived in Sudan started arriving in Egypt, in fear of forced repatriation to Eritrea (2006, p. 50). From this point onwards, fleeing Eritrea has been largely driven by the indefinite national service by most Eritreans. In fact, the invocation of the cessation clause has caused Eritreans to engage in circular or serial migration. Circular migration included fleeing Eritrea, then repatriating, then fleeing once again. Serial migration was along the following routes: from Eritrea to Sudan then from Sudan to Egypt, then to Israel, or from Eritrea to Ethiopia to Sudan to Libya to Italy (Malk, 2019, p. 12).

Between 2008 and 2011, many Eritreans travelled from Sudan to Israel through Egypt because reaching Italy through Libya, which was intercepted by the Italian push-backs as a result of the Italian-Libyan friendship Agreement. An increase in the number of Eritreans who entered Egypt with the aim of transiting to reach Israel was reported in 2008 (Samy, 2009, p. 6). However, Israeli policy of forced return has reduced the usage of this route. In 2006, Israel registered over 40,000 crossings while arrivals to Italy decreased significantly. This route (from Sudan to Israel through Egypt) became dangerous because of Egypt's detention of Eritreans, in addition to their abduction by human traffickers for ransoms and organ harvesting in Sinai (GSDRC, 2016, p. 17). In 2005, a massive secondary migration wave from Sudan and Ethiopia to Egypt took place (Schröder, 2015, p. 2). However, since 2008, restrictive policies and the recurrent deportation of Eritreans made Egypt a transit point. From 2005 Until 2013, a large number of Eritrean refugees fled to Israel. The journey to Israel through Sinai remained very popular until 2012 due to the cheaper smuggling fees than that of the route from Libya to Europe (Humphris, 2013). However, in 2012, Israel amended its 1954 prevention of infiltration law, and all irregular border crossers were perceived as infiltrators with no distinction between refugees and migrants; and who can be detained for 3 years before their deportation to Ethiopia or Eritrea. Israel also established a fence along the Sinai-Israeli border and a detention center with a capacity of 10,000 persons (Humphris, 2013, p. 4).

There are reports that the smuggling networks of the route from Egypt to Europe flourished in 2013 due to its usage by Syrians who paid money to take the journey. This allegedly popularized the route among other displaced populations, among which was a

large number of Eritreans. This suggests that large numbers of Eritreans entered Egypt during that period (Reitano Tuesday & Tinti Peter, 2015). Recent developments in Ethiopia that could potentially cause further movement of Eritreans is the war in Tigray region in Northern Ethiopia which started in November 2020. The Tigray region shelters about 96,000 Eritrean refugees in four refugee camps (UNHCR, 2022c). Egypt is among the countries that could allegedly be a destination to Eritreans refugees displaced from Tigray (MMC, 2021). Furthermore, Ethiopia has ended accepting Eritrean refugees on prima facie basis in 2020 (UNHCR, 2021b).

Despite it being longer and more dangerous, Eritreans started avoiding the route to Europe through Libya and opted for the route to Europe through Alexandria in Egypt from mid-2015 to the late 2016. This is because of the tribal and sectarian wars in Libya in addition to the state of chaos that prevailed the country. However, the Egyptian government cracked down on smugglers and began intercepting movement in late 2016 (American Team for Displaced Eritreans, n.d.). In 2017, the Khartoum process was established and Sudanese security forces exercised a lot of arrest and deportations (Hirt & Mohammad, 2018).

As for Eritreans in the GCC states, and specifically Saudi Arabia, their situation deteriorated in 2016. None of the GCC states that Eritreans go to ratified the 1951 Convention. Eritreans there were considered as labour migrants, despite being qualified for asylum in other countries that ratified the convention. The Saudi government increased the residency fees to 400 Riyal per month for each family member registered on the residency permit (Cole, 2022, p. 4491). The failure to pay the fees would result in the loss of the residency permit, and accordingly, the legal right to live in Saudi Arabia.

Additionally, those who did not pay the fees were forced to pay the outstanding fines before being able to leave the country. Hirt's research highlights that some who were unable to pay the fees were deported to Sudan, and from there; they re-migrated to Egypt. Others sent their family members to Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, or Turkey so as not to pay the residency fees. On top of these strict policies, Saudi Arabia introduced the Saudization policies, which aimed to nationalize the labor force (Cole, 2022).

Another reason for Eritreans to leave Saudi Arabia was that they are considered labor migrants, and thus, they are reliant on their embassy to keep the legal status. Thus, they were forced to fulfil the obligations imposed by both the *Kafeel* and their state to avoid losing the residence permit. As Hirt highlights in her research: "The UN Security Council report from 2012 states that in Saudi Arabia: "'Eritreans must visit their Embassy every other year and pay taxes, or they will not legally be able to remain in the Kingdom' (UNSC, 2012, p. 53)". The Eritrean state exercised control over its diasporic communities in Saudi Arabia through a network of transnational organizations that include community centers and diplomatic missions. Moreover, the Eritrean diaspora in Saudi were obliged to remit money to their relatives who were unable to generate income because of the national service. The arm of the Eritrean state, thus, was heavily extended in Saudi Arabia, by enforcing donations and obligatory meetings of the state controlled *mahbere-koms* (community associations) (Hirt & Mohammad, 2022).

Based on previous research conducted on Eritrean youth in Egypt, there is a common route that Eritreans take to Egypt in the contemporary era. This route involves travelling from Eritrea to Sudan and arriving either in Kassala, Shagareb camp to register with UNHCR, or going directly to Khartoum without registering at all. From Sudan,

Eritreans arrange for a smuggler to take them to Aswan, eventually ending up in Cairo after taking a train. According to my respondents, three main groups of Eritrean refugees currently arrive in Egypt. The first group comprises persons who fled Eritrea to Sudan at some point after the border war and engaged in secondary migration from Sudan after the political situation deteriorated. The second group comprises Eritreans who migrated to the GCC states (precisely Saudi Arabia) about a decade ago, then had to leave the country due to the nationalization policies. The third group, which is considered the most vulnerable, comprises those who travelled directly from Eritrea to Egypt with the intention of crossing the Mediterranean.

The following chart represents the evolution of the number of Eritrean refugees in Egypt from 2000 to present:

Figure2[2]
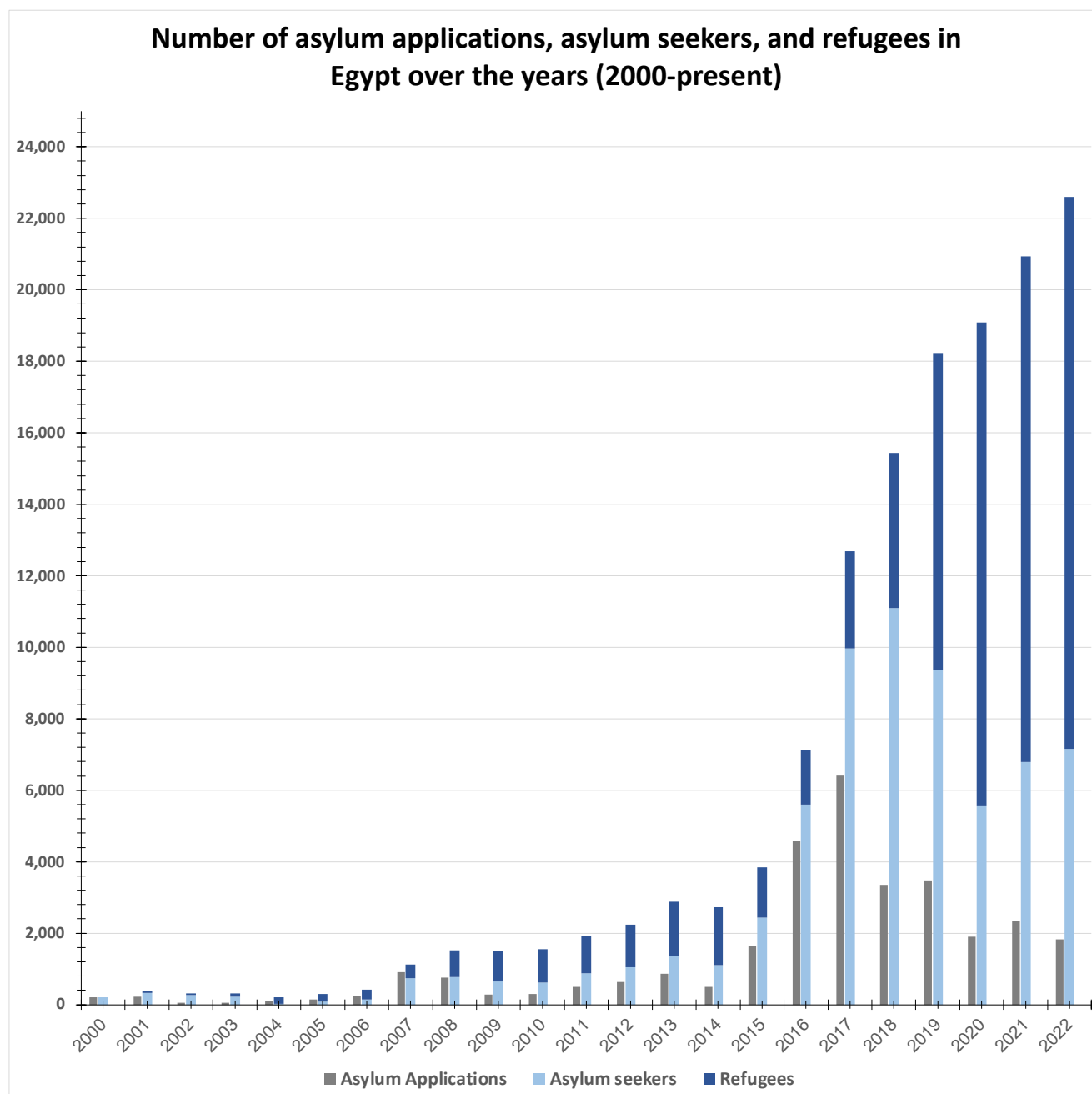
Note. Data from UNHCR Statistical Database, 2022. https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=3Iw3aN

[2] Asylum applications were included in the figure to give an estimate of the number of new arrivals.

3.2   The Eritrean Diaspora

The Eritrean diaspora and the networks they created played a significant role in the birth of the Eritrean state as we know it today. Eritrea has been named a "diasporic state" (Koser, 2003, p. 174), and as Hepner said, each Eritrean at home has at least a member in the family in the diaspora (Hepner, 2009b, p. 166). As previously mentioned, the ELF, the original liberation front that initiated the armed struggle for liberation, was formed by political activists in Cairo. The ELF later moved its headquarters to Kassala in Sudan and had offices in Khartoum. However, the history of nationalist pro-independence movements mobilization goes back to the 1950s, in the form of students, workers, and political activists' associations in exile. Cairo was a hub for nationalist mobilization, where Al Azhar University students and the Eritrean Students used to meet to look into the situation of Eritrea. Some of the members of this club were later involved in forming the ELF. But Egypt was not the only place where Eritrean exiles gathered. In 1958, the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) was founded in Sudan by Muslim Eritrean workers as the first formal organization that called for the independence. Many of the ELM members later joined the armed wing of the ELF. Other nationalist groups were also active in other countries such as students in Ethiopia in the 1974, the General Union of Eritrean Students in Damascus, Syria in 1968, and practically everywhere Eritreans existed, including North America and Europe.

During this period, Eritreans were mostly focused on the nationalist project, and to a big extent, forgot their divides. For instance, despite the ELF being formed by Muslims in exile, it received support from Christian activists in Eritrea and Cairo in its early days (Kibreab, 2000, p. 253; Redeker Hepner, 2009, pp. 18–20). In fact, Kibreab argues that

contrary to the belief that exile causes detachment from the country of origin of refugees, the long exile, confinement in camps, and collective suffering of Eritreans in Sudan reinforced their social cohesion and networks; and resulted in the development of a sense of "Eritreaness" that transcends religion, ethnicity, and tribal affiliation. This was reinforced and capitalized on by the liberation fronts, especially the EPLF, that constantly promoted independence as a nationalist project that should transcend other loyalties. The EPLF was able to mobilize the diaspora and channeled their participation in the war. The front was also highly dependent on the diaspora in America and Europe as a source of funding and became a transnational organization through establishing mass organizations for women, youth, and workers in Eritrea and across the globe. These organizations were later replaced with apolitical community organizations called the *mahbere-koms* in 1989 (Hirt, 2015).

After the liberation, the Eritrean government was aware of the importance of its diaspora and started establishing avenues to intensify its links with the diaspora and began "milking" it (Hirt, 2013, p. 14). The EPLF encouraged the diaspora to participate in the 1993 referendum, and in return, they were provided with Eritrean identity cards. Around 95% of the diaspora participated in the referendum Those were also involved in the drafting of the constitution and 6 out of 50 members of the Assembly of the Constitutional Committee were abroad (Koser, 2003, p. 175; Schmitz-Pranghe, 2010).

Additionally, the government imposed a 2% of the annual income diaspora tax to be paid by Eritreans abroad. In the early years of independence, the Eritrean diaspora volunteered to pay these taxes with the aim of reconstructing the state. Scholars often refer to this as "long-distance nationalism" rather than transnationalism. After the border

war broke out, the government resorted to its diaspora to raise funds through its consulates and embassies, fundraising festivals, and selling land to Eritreans abroad. Political offices in the key countries where Eritrean diaspora, such as Saudi Arabia, USA, and Germany re-opened, and embassies and consulates were advised to establish a census and a demographic profile of the diaspora (Koser, 2003). During the border war period, Eritreans abroad contributed $142.9 million to the war in the form of direct donations or purchasing bonds.

As previously discussed, after the border war, the government became totalitarian, and this echoed in its policies towards its diaspora. Those who do not pay the income tax are deprived of documents such as birth certificates or passports from the consulates. This was especially problematic for Eritreans in the GCC states, who require a passport to get a work permit. While they supported the national project, some resistance and criticism of the Eritrean government has been observed among some of the diaspora. Schmitz-Pranghe argues that this has caused some rights-based initiatives, religious institutions, and apolitical community organizations to begin flourishing (2010). The diaspora, however, did not only contribute to the (re-)construction of Eritrea and the political discourse, but they also sent remittances to their families who were suffering the low-paid open ended national service or who were refugees in Sudan, Ethiopia, and other countries in the region. Additionally, they were supporting their families flee the country through paying smugglers and ransoms of human traffickers (Hirt, 2013; Schmitz-Pranghe, 2010, p. 17).

Despite the attempts of the state to replace kin loyalties with loyalty to Eritrea, Eritreans abroad were concerned with their responsibility towards their families 'left

behind'. After the border war ended and with the deterioration of the conditions in Eritrea, Eritreans abroad became aware that the state has neither the capacity nor the intention to provide their families with any support. Thus, they felt the need to support them through remittances (Redeker Hepner, 2009, p. 167). Moreover, Eritreans who managed to leave the transit camps in places like Ethiopia and arrived in third countries also assisted their families in following suite through paying smugglers or sharing information. While this is true for all migrants, the Eritrean case is unique due to the long history of displacement and the massive number of those who have left the country and settled in other places (Adugna et al., 2022). The links between the diaspora and their families at home were also facilitated by the evolution of the internet (Koser, 2003), which emerged as a transnational public space for shared belonging (Bernal, 2006, p. 161). Kibreab argues that the trans-religious and trans-ethnic social networks that were created in exile constitute one of the most important resource that Eritreans utilize in re-constructing their livelihoods (Kibreab, 2000).

3.3 Demographics of Eritrean Refugees in Egypt

Before delving into the findings of this research, this section aims to outline the demographic profile of Eritrean refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in Egypt.

There are nine officially recognized ethnic groups in Eritrea, which are classified along ethno-linguistic lines rather than phenotype. These groups are: are Tigrinya, Tigre, Saho, Rashaida, Nara, Kunama, Hedareb, Bilen, and Afar (Kibreab, 2000). The population is almost equally half Muslim and half Christian (Kibreab, 2000; Sorenson, 1990). However, each of these groups is composed of sub-clans, which in some cases have a distinct dialect or cultural differences (Tewolde, 2021). The largest two ethnic groups are Tigre

and Tigrinya (Woldemikael, 2003), accordingly, Tigre and Tigrinya are the most common languages spoken by Eritreans. While Tigrinya and Arabic are the working languages in Eritrea (Hailemariam et al., 1999), one of the research respondents highlighted that only a few groups of Eritreans can speak Arabic well (FGD4, Personal Communication, 6 September 2022).[3]

While the breakdown of the areas of residence of Eritrean refugees in Egypt is not available, it is known that most of the refugee population lives in Greater Cairo. Eritreans are typically clustered in high numbers in Ard El Lewa and Faisal. However, there is a considerable number in Haram, 6th of October, and Mohandiseen, A fewer number of Eritreans live in other neighborhoods such as Maadi and Ain Shams. However, according to the research respondents, they tend to move following their predecessors. According to UNHCR, as of 2021, there were 14,141 Eritrean refugees and 6,785 Asylum seekers in Egypt (UNHCR, n.d.-a). Of these figures, about 48% are females 52% are males (UNHCR, n.d.-b). Unaccompanied and separated minors in Egypt are primarily from Eritrea or Ethiopia (Ayoub & Abdel Aziz, 2021). The latest figures published by UNHCR indicate that Eritrean children alone constitute 48% of the total number of unaccompanied minors, and 35% of the total number of separated minors in Egypt (UNHCR, 2020b, p. 12).

3.4 Relationships with the Host Community

Most research conducted on refugees in Egypt found that the relationships between the host community and refugees in general or African refugees in particular is

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[3] The respondent highlighted that Arabic does exist in Eritrea, especially among the Muslim population. However, only those who lived in Sudan or the GCC states are able to speak a dialect that Egyptians would find comprehensible.

either non-existent or negative. In an earlier study on Eritreans and Ethiopians in Egypt, Brown et al. note that they were typically both physically and socially isolated with minimal interaction with the host community. They attributed this to language barriers, ethnic and religious-based discrimination, in addition to general fear of the police. When and if an interaction took place, their respondents reported verbal and physical harassment, violence, discrimination and racism, financial exploitation, abuse at the workplace, and unwelcoming sentiments (Brown et al., 2004, pp. 679–685). Similar findings were echoed in more recent studies conducted on Eritreans in Egypt (Siino, 2018), and other studies on African refugees in general (Miranda, 2018, p. 18). However, the experience of the Eritrean refugees I interviewed for this research was different. Or to say the least, they perceived the interaction with Egyptians in a different way as will be explained in detail in chapter 6.

3.5   Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide a historical overview of the Eritrean displacement, both to contextualize the presence of Eritreans in Egypt, and to outline the situation in their country of origin. It traces back their presence in Egypt to the early sixties, and how it evolved over the years; highlighting the main pull factors that result in Egypt being a country of destination for Eritrean asylum seekers. It also highlights the transnational networks between Eritrean refugees and the diaspora and its importance. A brief overview of their demographics in Egypt and the nature of the relationship with the host community is also presented in order to lay the foundation for the following chapters.

Chapter 4: CBOs and the State

Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the first scale that this thesis is concerned with, which is the relationship between Eritrean CBOs and the State. It investigates the challenges facing CBOs as a result of the national legislative framework. It also presents the main social protection gaps that are left by the State, and that Eritrean refugees find most challenging. The chapter is divided into two main sections covering both the direct and indirect influences that the State has on Eritrean CBOs. The first section is concerned with the direct impact. It lays out the national legislative framework under which CBOs in Egypt fall, highlights the challenges that CBOs face while trying to navigate this legislative framework, and describes the implications of these challenges on their way of operation. The second section provides an overview of the national legislative framework governing Eritrean refugees' access to work and access to education, as the two most common social protection gaps that Eritrean refugees mentioned during data collection. The indirect impact of these challenges on CBOs is reflected in the services they provide to fill in these gaps left by the State. This section lays the foundation for the role that CBOs play in filling in these gaps, as thoroughly presented in Chapter 6.

4.1 Legal Framework Governing CBOs in Egypt

As previously mentioned in the research justification section, CBOs are considered civil society actors. Thus, to operate and receive funds, they must legally register like all other civil society organizations (CSOs). The current law that CSOs fall under is Law no. 149 of 2019 (the Law on Regulating the Exercise of Civil Work) and its Executive Regulations (Egyptian Prime Minister Decree No. 104 of 2021), which recently replaced

Law No. 70 of 2017 commonly known as The NGO Law. The 2017 Law was heavily criticized for being severely restrictive, and the State has generally been repressive towards CSOs (Mirshak, 2019). Despite coming into force in light of the president's acknowledgment of the important role that CSOs play. (Al Ahram, 2021), the 2019 Law has also been criticized for perpetuating existing restrictions (HRW, 2019). The Ministry governing NGOs is the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). Upon the promulgation of its Executive Regulations on January 11, 2021; the Law called all CSOs to reconcile their status with the provisions of the new law within a year from entry to force of the Executive Regulations, ending in January 11, 2022 (Government of Egypt, 2021, §2.2). This means that not only new organizations need to register, but those which had already been registered also need to conform with provisions of the new law. The deadline was later extended for another year to end on January 11, 2023, which coincided with the announcement of the Egyptian President the year 2022 as the Year of Civil Society (MoSS, 2022). The law also established the Central Unit of Civil Society Associations and Work, in addition to its sub-units, which replaced the Central Directorate of Associations and Unions; and which is responsible for matters of the civil society (Government of Egypt, 2019, § 6.76). These include monitoring all NGOs and applying the law and its executive regulations. The penalty for failing to legalize the status of the organization or for receiving money or donations from a foreign or a national entity without a legal approval is a minimum of 100,000 EGP and a maximum of 1,000,000 EGP. Additionally, the Law gives the competent court the liberty to order the dissolution of the organization (Government of Egypt, 2019, §1.2).

4.1.1 The State's Definition of CBOs

First and most importantly, the Law makes no reference to any organizations that are founded and led by refugees. In its definitions section, article (1) of the Law distinguishes 11 types of entities that practice civil work. At the first glance, CBOs could seemingly fall under the "Foreign Non-Governmental Organization" category, defined as:

> Any non-profit seeking foreign corporate person the head office of which is located in Egypt or abroad and is permitted to practice one or more of the activities of civil society associations and foundations that are in accordance with the rules stipulated in the hereto attached law and subject to its provisions.

However, closer examination of the Executive Regulations shows that CBOs functioning in Greater Cairo do not fall under this category. This is because CBOs do not have a "mother" or main organization abroad (Government of Egypt, 2021, § 6.108). This type of organizations is established through a request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). There is also another type of organizations that CBOs could seemingly fall under, which is 'Community Associations'. Article (6) of the Law stipulates that while adhering to the principle of reciprocity, the Minister of MoSS could grant any "foreign community" the permission to establish a Community Association. The executive regulations further note that the license can be granted after the approval of MFA. However, article (17) of the regulations state that only one association is allowed for each foreign community, which is concerned with only the affairs of its members rather than the whole community; and that at least fifty members should apply for the association's membership, "while adhering to all the conditions and procedures stipulated in the hereto attached law and its executive

regulations." The last sentence suggests that the conditions in this article are additional to the rest of the articles. This leaves any non-Egyptian CBO with only one channel to register: the one designated for Egyptian Civil Society Associations.

4.1.2 Conditions and Procedures of Registration

Article (2) of the Law stipulates that civil society organizations can be established by virtue of submitting a notification to MoSS, using the forms and documents specified in the Law and its Executive Regulations. However, the organization is not deemed legal unless all the required information and documents are fully satisfied. There are numerous documents that must be attached to the notification. Among these are: proof of payment of 2,000 EGP as a registration fee, proof of legal residence for non-Egyptians, and the statute of the organization (Government of Egypt, 2021, § 1.14). MoSS has 60 working days (three months) to object to the organization's objectives or activities, should they be found to be in violation of the constitution or criminalized by the criminal law, or any other law, or if required information or documents are incomplete or insufficient (Government of Egypt, 2019, § 1.9). Article (3) of the Law states that the organization's written statute should fulfill certain requirements. Among these requirements are that the name of the organization should be distinctive, reflective of its purpose and not to be confused with the name of another organization sharing the same scope of work or geographical scope (Government of Egypt, 2019, § 1.7). Additionally, the names, nationalities, place of residence, and the national identification or the passport number of the founders (in case of non-Egyptians) must be provided.

Article (5) of the Law is the only article which makes a reference to the presence of non-Egyptians on the board of directors or as members of the organization. However,

the Law clearly states that the number of non-Egyptians cannot exceed 25% of total number of the members or board of directors. Additionally, non-Egyptians must hold a permanent or temporary legal residence in Egypt. That being said, article (16) of the Executive Regulations states that the approval on the inclusion of non-Egyptians in the membership of the organization is issued within up to 60 days of receiving the request after the relevant authorities review the names and data of these individuals. Additionally, the membership of non-Egyptians in the organization expires with the expiry of their legal residence. Moreover, article (72) of the law prohibits Egyptian organizations from hiring non-Egyptian experts, or permanent or temporary workers or volunteers without obtaining the approval of the Minister. The approval is obtained through submitting a request from the Unit, at least 60 days before recruiting the non-Egyptian individual. Those recruited are subject to the labor laws governing the recruitment of foreign workers in Egypt (Government of Egypt, 2021, § 6.113).

Finally, the Law commits organizations, upon the approval of their establishment, to work in the fields of society development as defined in their statute while considering the developmental plans of the State and the needs of the community when implementing their activities (Government of Egypt, 2021, § 2.27). Moreover, organizations are barred from performing activities that would disrupt "public order, or morals, or national unity, or security", or "performing any activity that requires a license from a governmental agency prior to obtaining the license (Government of Egypt, 2019, § 2.15).

4.1.3 Conditions and Procedures Related to Funding

Article (10) of the Law stipulates that upon the establishment of the organization, MoSS shall send a letter addressed to a bank that is subject to the oversight of the

Egyptian Central Bank to open a bank account under the name of the organization. Only bank accounts opened for NGOs through MoSS can be used to receive any funds or process any transactions related to the work of the organization. Also, under all circumstances, the organization cannot accept an amount of money exceeding 500 EGP without a bank cheque or a bank deposit, through one of the banks regulated by the Egyptian Central Bank. Article (41) of the Executive Regulations indicates that any funds or charity, either from Egyptian or non-Egyptian natural or corporate persons, can be received on the condition that it is transferred through its bank accounts and upon notifying the Unit within 30 working days from receiving the funds (Government of Egypt, 2021, § 2.42). However, the Unit has the right to object to receiving the money within 60 working days from receiving the notification. The article further explains that the fund is considered approved if the Unit does not object within 60 days. This means that the fund cannot be spent before the lapse of 60 days unless the ministry issues the approval/rejection before that. In the case of objection, the organization must contact the bank to return the money to the donor and provide evidence of refund within five working days from receiving the decision of the Unit.

4.2 Challenges Facing CBOs as a Result of the Legal Framework Governing NGOs in Egypt

All the interviewed CBOs (and the two that were not interviewed) are unregistered, and thus, are not functioning in compliance with the Law. Only one Eritrean CBO took a legal umbrella by operating through another registered organization. When asked about the registration steps, the term "crippling" was repeatedly used by CBOs to refer to the registration requirements and conditions. The main two challenges that these CBO

consider the most crippling are the percentage of foreigners allowed among the founders of an NGO, and the documents required to legally register. The following sections briefly describe the main obstacles prohibiting CBOs from registering.

4.2.1 Absence of a Legal Definition for CBOs

CBOs are aware of the lack of a legal category for their CBOs in the Egyptian Law. While none of them explicitly said that the Law lacks a definition for their CBOs, when asked about the registration steps, they mentioned some of the criteria of establishing national NGOs. A PO of UNHCR's provides CBOs with legal awareness sessions on how to register their CBOs and the importance of taking a legal form. There is, thus, awareness of the importance of registration and the registration steps among the CBO leaders, with the exception of one CBO that did not know the requirements. By reflecting on Bayat's definitions of the marginals, the lack of a legal category for CBOs can be considered as the starting point to the State's marginalization of CBOs. This is because with disregarding the unique character and shape of CBOs that are founded and led by refugees, the Law pays no attention to the limits of refugees' capacity to fulfill the requirements in terms of documentation. While this is true for some other refugee communities, one CBO mentioned that Eritreans, in particular, face a bigger number of restrictions than other nationalities (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022). That being said, addressing this problem should not be through creating a parallel channel for CBOs' registration, as this would contribute to further exclusion and marginalization. However, it could be addressed through, for instance, accepting UNHCR cards as a replacement for passports.

4.2.2 Percentage of Foreigners Allowed Among the Board

The CBO leaders interviewed expressed concerns towards an arrangement where 75% of the CBO's board of directors are non-Eritrean (Egyptians). Firstly, several CBOs mentioned that convincing this number of Egyptians to be on the board is a requirement that is especially difficult for Eritreans. According to one CBO, Eritreans do not have strong networks with Egyptians. This is unlike Sudanese and Syrian refugees who have stronger ties, that can even be familial, with the Egyptian community; which facilitates registering their CBOs (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022). Secondly, several CBO leaders expressed safety concerns of having non-Eritrean members, or even being under an umbrella organization that is not strictly Eritrean. They believe that such intervention from non-Eritreans would sabotage their work; making them lose the advantage of being a CBO from the community serving the community (CBO3, Personal Communication, 7 September 2022). "Seven Egyptians? That is a lot!" is how a CBO leader responded to the requirement (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022).

The only Eritrean CBO that is taking a legal form, however, decided that the benefits of being under the legal umbrella of an organization that is not strictly Eritrean outweigh the benefits of having their CBO be formed and managed by Eritreans only. The leaders of this CBO managed to set an arrangement where they provide the umbrella organization with 15% of their income with no intervention from the umbrella organization in their matters or operations. The income is generated through partnerships with other organizations or researchers who rent rooms on their premises for awareness sessions or FGDs. Surprisingly, the umbrella organization is also a CBO, the founders of which are

of different nationalities representing the refugee communities (CBO5, Personal Communication, 26 August 2022). They managed, however, to legalize their status through their connections with Egyptian nationals. Unlike this CBO, another CBO was offered a legal umbrella through a Sudanese registered CBO in return of 5,000 EGP, but they refused due to the same concerns expressed earlier (CBO6, Personal Communication, 4 September 2022).

4.2.3 Required Documentation

4.2.3.1 Proof of Legal Residence

While the allowed percentage of foreigners on the board of directors is a considerable challenge, even if Eritreans were to agree to constitute only 25% of the board; the problem of documents remain a bigger challenge. As previously highlighted, a proof of legal residence is required to register the CBO, which is feasible for refugees and asylum seekers (as all the Eritrean CBO leaders are refugees). However, the expiry of the membership in the CBO with the expiry of the legal residence constitutes a major issue. This is mainly because refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to a six-months long residence that is renewable. In order for the residence permit to be renewed right when the 6 months lapse, refugees have to re-apply every four months. Some even mentioned that they have to initiate the process of renewal every two months (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). The procedures take around two months and requires multiple visits to different governmental entities before the residence permit is granted (Ayoub & Abdel Aziz, 2021, p. 37; Hetaba et al., 2020, pp. 307–308). The Law does not explain whether non-Egyptians whose residence permit is expired could re-apply to be members/board members of the CBO. In all cases, and even if this is allowed, re-

applying every 6 months is a challenge. The short residence permit duration is an issue that was highlighted by both the CBOs and the interviewed refugees, as it has implications on all aspects of life.

4.2.3.2 Passport Number

The second required document that is considered a challenge by CBOs is the passport number. The Law only specifies the national identification number or the passport number (for non-Egyptians) to be included in the organization's statute. No reference was made to any other forms of identification such as the UNHCR card in case of refugees. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, Eritrean refugees, in particular, have no access to any form of documentation if they arrive in Egypt without it, which is the case for the majority. Most Eritrean refugees cannot approach their embassy in host countries. In order to request the issuance of any documents (including passports); Eritreans must be paying a monthly 2% income tax from the time they left their home country. Additionally, the overwhelming majority of those who fled Eritrea are considered draft evaders and are, thus, considered traitors. Before the embassy agrees to provide them with any documentation, they have to sign a form in which they apologize to the Eritrean State and acknowledge that they are traitors who failed to fulfill their national duty. Even if such requirements are satisfied, the Eritrean Embassy requests documents that refugees who fled irregularly normally do not have. These include: an old national identity card, identity cards of Eritrean parents and birth certificates, which are all almost impossible to provide. Another way of obtaining their documents would be having three Eritrean witnesses, who have paid their taxes regularly, testify that the applicant had paid their taxes and performed their national service, which is also a very difficult requirement

(Ayoub & Abdel Aziz, 2021, pp. 51–53). In fact, the issue of documentation is one of the main issues that expose the Eritrean population in Egypt to a number of problems that will be tackled in the following sections.

4.2.3.3 Opening a Bank Account

A consequence of the passport problem is the third obstacle that CBOs face. The issue is related to owning a bank account through which funds can be channeled. While the Law stipulates that a bank account should be initiated through the Ministry to receive or process money, even CBOs functioning informally cited this as a major issue. The Central Bank of Egypt regulations require non-Egyptians to provide a valid passport for opening a bank account. The UNHCR yellow or blue identification card is not accepted by banks as a replacement for the valid passport (Ayoub et al., 2012, p. 16; Ayoub & Abdel Aziz, 2021, p. 61). Given the aforementioned restrictions by the Eritrean embassy, it is nearly impossible for Eritreans to open a bank account. Not only does this affect their ability to register the CBO, but they also face difficulties receiving any remittances/donations from their relatives or other CBOs abroad. One CBO stated that although they have very strong networks with other CBOs in the diaspora, the lack of a legal channel to transfer funds render the help of these networks useless (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). Others resort to collecting donations informally from community members. These donations include not only money, but other in-kind items such as food, clothes, or even medication, as thoroughly explained in Chapter 6.

Finally, and as previously highlighted, the Law prohibits recruiting any non-Egyptian workers or volunteers in any capacity before attaining the approval of the

relevant authorities. This also constitutes a problem given that all the workers in CBOs are Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers. Hiring non-Eritreans would be counterintuitive to the idea behind a 'community-' based organization. Additionally, given that the Law states that those non-Egyptians are subject to the labor laws of Egypt, Eritrean refugees have no chance of being hired, even as volunteers; given the difficult requirements to obtain a work permit for non-nationals (Hetaba et al., 2020, p. 108) as will be explained in detail in the second section of this chapter.

4.3   Navigating as an Unregistered CBO

Despite the various limitations to registering a CBO and the very high fines, all the interviewed CBOs found functioning without registration to be quite smooth in terms of state intervention. Of the nine interviewed CBOs, the only one that is registered is so for the purpose of regularizing the status and facilitating partnerships with other organizations and funding streams, not for conforming with the Law per se (CBO5, Personal Communication, 26 August 2022). None of these CBOs were ever approached by authorities. One of the CBOs has been functioning from the same location for years with no interaction with the authorities at all (CBO3, Personal Communication, 7 September 2022). Interestingly, the only CBO that was approached by the authorities was not approached for the reason of being unregistered. It first started with the authorities asking the neighboring shops about the CBO and what it does. Afterwards, the authorities approached the CBO because they thought that the name of the organization was an abbreviation for a sentence they did not understand, and thus, they interrogated the manager. Once they found the meaning of the name to be harmless, they let the CBO founder go with no action with regards to the irregular status of their CBO (CBO8,

Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). Three CBOs had an explanation for this phenomenon. They explained that the authorities know about their existence and operations, but they choose to intentionally turn a blind eye, as long as the CBOs do not cause any 'security issues'. However, they could and would close the CBOs at their discretion. This, in fact, is a common practice by the Egyptian State towards refugees. For instance, Hassan found that the authorities allow Syrian refugees to access the labor market (2021, p. 72). Similarly, Norman showed that the Egyptian state generally turns the blind eye to refugees and mostly allows them to engage in activities, unless they constitute a threat to national security (Norman, 2017, p. 41). This is a case in which the positive impact of marginality, as explained by Bayat, is very pronounced. CBOs and the community are able to engage in "alternative social arrangements" and function freely. However, the aforementioned incident with the authorities raises the question of whether these CBOs are truly free to function, and if the positive impact of marginality outweighs the negative one. Another question to raise is when would the State consider the CBO as a security threat, and what would be the implications.

This, thus, does not mean that the unregistered status of the CBOs does not constitute a challenge. The lack of channels to function legally equals losing a lot of the merits that registration gives an organization. Besides being always at risk of closure, the main challenge that CBOs face is the lack of funds. INGOs and donors cannot send funds to CBOs if they are unregistered, and naturally, CBOs cannot apply to calls for proposals because they are irregular. Moreover, partnerships between CBOs and POs inside Egypt are not feasible, due to the legal limitations placed on the POs. In case of functioning under an umbrella organization, they are subject to exploitation or are forced to give out

a percentage of their received funds, the thing that one of the CBOs said to be unfeasible because they "already have too many commitments". The same CBO stated that there is a lot of wasted resources, as they have a lot of connections with diaspora networks and CBOs abroad. Yet, they are unable to receive any support from them (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). Moreover, due to the lack of funds, CBOs rely heavily on unpaid volunteers, who eventually leave the CBO and work at an INGO after gaining enough experience to make a living. Even the board members are unpaid and have to fund some activities out of their own pockets. While the lack of intervention from external actors helps CBOs maintain their autonomy, the precarious way in which they function challenges their sustainability every day.

4.4   Social Protection Gaps Resulting from the National Legal Framework

This section tackles the indirect impact of the State on CBOs. It analyzes the main two social protection gaps that most of the respondents indicated as the most severe. Those are: access to work and access to education. The first part covers the national legal framework governing Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt with regards to access to work and education. This is followed by an overview of the challenges that result from these legislations. The role that CBOs play in filling in these gaps is presented in chapter 6.

Before laying out the national legislative framework regulating access to work and education, it is important to note the following. As previously mentioned, Egypt has no national asylum policy. Moreover, Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNHCR in 1954, in which the activities and operations of UNHCR are laid out, and the relationship between the Egyptian state and UNHCR are regulated. In this MoU, Egypt delegated the responsibility of conducting Refugee Status Determination and undertaking refugee census to UNHCR. Additionally, the MoU grants UNHCR the responsibility to facilitate voluntary repatriation of refugees, promote their resettlement when applicable, and coordinate activities that aim to serve refugees, that are authorized by the Government of Egypt. The role of the Egyptian state is restricted to issuing residence permits and travel documents as well as authorizing NGOs that aim to serve refugees. The durable solution of local integration is not mentioned nor acknowledged in the MoU; meaning that the Egyptian state views the presence of refugees as temporary and that only voluntary repatriation and resettlement are accepted as durable solutions for them.

Egypt later ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 Organization for African Union Convention (OAU). Moreover, a presidential decree was passed to call for establishing a permanent committee for refugee, which was established and later incorporated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Department for Migration, Refugee Affairs, and Combating Human Trafficking (Badawy, 2010; Hetaba et al., 2020, p. 43). A draft asylum law has been in the process of being developed for years, but it has yet to be enacted. The absence of a national legislative framework specific to refugees means that their right to work is governed by the same legislative framework that applies to all other non-citizens (Hetaba et al., 2020). Thus, the next section highlights to what extent the national legislative framework allows Eritrean refugees to access both work and education.

4.4.1 Access to Work

Refugees in Egypt are granted different degrees of the right to work by several international, bilateral, and regional legal instruments. These include the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the International Covenant on Economic, and Social, and Cultural Rights, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. The most relevant and straightforward legal instrument that grants refugees the right to work is the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Theoretically, refugees have the right to work in Egypt, however, access to the formal labor market for non-Egyptians is highly regulated by the Egyptian State.

The Egyptian Labor Law lays out the requirements that non-Egyptians must fulfill in order to access the labor market of Egypt. First and foremost, any non-Egyptian needs to obtain an authorization of entry, a work permit and a residence permit for the purpose

of work before being able to join the labor market (Government of Egypt, 2015, § 28). Moreover, the percentage of non-Egyptians in any workplace cannot exceed 10% of the total number of employees (Government of Egypt, 2015, § 4). In order to obtain a work permit, the skills of the foreign employee need to match the requirements of the job, and the years of experience should be a minimum of three years. Additionally, the foreign employee must not compete with an Egyptian on existing work opportunities. The employer needs to consider the benefit of hiring a non-Egyptian as well as the economic need. Each non-Egyptian expert hired needs to train two Egyptian assistants, and the priority should be given to non-Egyptians who were born and are permanently residing in Egypt (Government of Egypt, 2015, § 5).

As for the work permits, they cost a fee which is 5,000 for the first year, with a 1,000 EGP renewal fee for the first three years. The fee of renewal increases to 10,000 on the fourth year, with a 1,000 EGP renewal fee for each year until the seventh year. The fees of renewal increase once again to 15,000 EGP on the seventh year with a renewal fee of 1,000 EGP for each year until the eleventh year, in which the renewal fees increase to 20,000 EGP with an annual renewal fee for each following year, with a maximum of 50,000 EGP. Additionally, there is a retroactively paid 15,000 EGP penalty for each year spent in Egypt with no work permit. Moreover, non-Egyptians are prohibited from working as tourist guides or in the sectors of export, import, and customs clearance (Government of Egypt, 2019a).

Besides the restrictive requirements, refugees must also find an employer who is willing to sponsor them and pay such high fees (Kagan, 2011a, p. 18). Decree no. 485 of 2010 issued by the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration also lists the documents

requested to hire a non-Egyptian, which include a copy of the passport (Government of Egypt, 2010). Specific groups are exempted from some of these conditions, under which Eritrean refugees do not fall. As for self-employment, namely starting a business, refugees are able to do so but after fulfilling certain requirements. These include providing a valid passport, the business plan, identification documents for the applicant's representative and a power of attorney to the Ministry of Investment. If the application is accepted, the applicant has to undergo a security clearance (Government of Egypt, 2017). It is claimed that the application is usually rejected on the grounds of a denied security clearance or the lack of financial resource (Hetaba et al., 2020, p. 113).

4.4.1.1 Social Protection Gaps Related to Access to Work

The aforementioned laws make it nearly impossible for all refugees to access the formal labor market. As previously mentioned in the section on NGO Law, obtaining a valid passport is a major constraint for refugees in general and Eritrean refugees in particular. This, in addition to the other rigorous requirements for obtaining a work permit or a business license, prohibit refugees from joining the labor market or starting their own businesses. Thus, Eritrean refugees, as all other refugees, find no solution but to resort to the informal labor market, the disadvantages of which are numerous. However, it is important to note that the research participants never mentioned that they are searching for jobs in the formal labor market. Working in the informal labor market means that refugees are unable to benefit from the protection afforded to those who fall under Egypt's Labor Law. They work with no contracts, which subjects them to abuse, exploitation, and marginalization. Men often work in low-skilled unstable jobs such as janitors, drivers, and servers at restaurants with limited wages and long working hours, which they might lose

at any moment. As for women, they often work as domestic workers which subjects them to many forms of abuse including sexual abuse (Hetaba et al., 2020, p. 116). With regards to self-employment, even if refugees manage to obtain a business license, they do not possess the capital to start their own businesses.

Of all the 27 FGD participants, only 7 were engaged in the informal labor market. Women constituted 5 out of these 7, and they all worked as domestic workers. They were not interested in working in the formal labor market, however, some stated that language is one of the biggest barriers to finding proper employment. In the aged out UASC group, they stated that Egyptians are usually prioritized even in the informal labor market "They tell you no, this is for an Egyptian" (FGD1, Personal Communication, 1 September 2022). The aged out UASC found it very challenging because the financial assistance (FA) they receive from UNHCR is discontinued suddenly once they reach 18. While the FA is never enough to cover all the expenses, it at least covered the crucial basic needs, such as shelter; and the rest can be covered by working purely technical job which do not require communication in Arabic. However, they complained of the lack of security due to the absence of a contract. They mentioned that it is not uncommon for employers to deny them their wages at the end of the month. They also complained of the wages that can be as low as 70 EGP per day.

Furthermore, one of the FGD participants mentioned discrimination at the workplace. When she aged out, she created a resume and applied to jobs, but once they found out she is Eritrean; they denied her the job despite the presence of foreign workers from other nationalities. She attributed this to stereotypes about Eritreans being illiterate or incompetent. Another added a very interesting insight, which is that Eritreans who

come from Saudi Arabia have more awareness about what the labor market requires. So, for instance, if the job is an office assistant, they know how to dress and how to speak, while people who came directly from Eritrea are a lot less aware about these things due to the extreme conditions they live in at home. They are also a lot more resistant to going beyond their own culture (FGD2, Personal Communication, 1 September 2022).

It was noted during the FGDs that those from the older generations have a harder time finding jobs. A participant indicated that Eritreans compete with poor Egyptians over jobs, and they always lose the competition. "There are one hundred million Egyptians, some of them cannot find a job, so it does not make sense that Eritreans will" is how he explained the reason for the problem (FGD3, Personal Communication, 6 September 2022). Moreover, due to their old age and the lack of proper healthcare, they suffer from chronic illnesses which make it hard for them to work the exhausting jobs that they find.

As for women, they stated that many of them are single mothers with little children. They complained that the working hours are long, and the wages barely cover rent and food. Given that they rarely find any jobs other than domestic work, most employers require stay-in domestic workers or nannies, which is problematic for single mothers who have no one to care for their children while they are away. These women also explained that it takes time and several trials for them to gain the skill and wisdom to evaluate the safety of the houses in which they work. They, however, managed to create networks to find safe jobs as domestic workers. Those who are lucky are able to rely on their employers for extra cash in cases of emergency, but many others fall prey to denial of wages and accusations of theft (FGD4, Personal Communication, 6 September 2022). It was generally noted among the participants that most young women are more likely to

find work compared to young men. They also stated that the most vulnerable are UASC, the elderly, and those who do not speak Arabic.

The situation is worse for those whose files have been closed (rejected asylum-seekers). They have very limited work opportunities even in the informal labor market due to the absence of an identification document. Those who are hired without IDs are subject to detention and deportation in cases of police roundups in workplaces, which indeed happened to one of the FGD respondents. He was able, however, to talk his way out of it after 12 days of detention (FGD5, Personal Communication, 8 September 2022). Refugees are not targeted, the police arrests whoever does not have formal identification. The FGD participants indicated that the lack of work has implications on all aspects of life including housing, health, and education. Moreover, some community leaders stated that the lack of work for young people eventually results in mental illness or drug addiction.

4.4.2 Access to Education

The second most common complaint amongst all the participants is lack of access to education. Refugees in Egypt are granted different levels of educational entitlements under several international, regional, and bilateral instruments. These include the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the ICESCR, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The entitlements differ based on the educational level (primary, secondary, or tertiary education). While article 22 of the Refugee Convention grants refugees and asylum seekers the right to elementary education on equal footing with nationals, Egypt placed a reservation on paragraph (1) of article 22 on the grounds of preserving the State's discretion with regards to offering refugee children access to primary education on equal footing with Egyptians (Hetaba et al., 2020, p. 124). However,

Egypt did not place any reservations on similar articles that grant refugees the right to education such as articles 13 and 14 of the ICESCR (providing free primary education to all), article 28 and 22 of the UNCRC, and article 3 of the UNESCO Education Convention. As for secondary and tertiary education, refugees are granted the right to access education on equal footing with other non-nationals under the same instruments.

The national legislative framework that regulates access to education for refugees in Egypt is inconsistent. Egypt's Child Law states that all children, regardless of their nationality, are entitled to education. However, Decree No. 284 of 2014 negates this law, as it prohibits non-Egyptians from accessing public schools but allows their enrollment in private schools. The decree allows students from certain nationalities and categories access to public schools for a higher fee; however, Eritreans are not included in these categories[4]. It also allows non-nationals to apply for scholarships provided by the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), or by UNHCR. The recipients of these scholarships can enroll in public schools with no additional fee. The enrollment in Egyptian public schools requires a valid birth certificate, proof of legal residence, and permission from their embassy to enroll in a public school, in addition to a recent educational certificate. The embassy permission is not enforced for refugees, as per the Ministry of Education officials' words, but there is no Law to formalize this exemption (Hetaba et al., 2020, p. 146). Students whose education was interrupted for two years or have no school certificates have to fulfill lengthy requirements (Government of Egypt, 2014, § 8).

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[4] Syrian, Sudanese, Libyan, Yemeni and specific Palestinian students.

Non-Egyptian students can enroll in private primary and secondary schools that fall under the supervision of the MoETE and the educational directorate of each governorate. However, the owner of the school must be an Egyptian national. Thus, refugee community schools owned by persons from the refugee community are rarely accredited by the Egyptian governments, which renders the certificates acquired from these schools unbeneficial for those who want to pursue higher education in Egypt. As for vocational or tertiary education, non-nationals legally staying in Egypt can enroll in Egyptian universities in return of the fees indicated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR). While refugees and asylum seekers have educational entitlements under the Egyptian Law, albeit expensive; rejected asylum seekers cannot benefit from these entitlements given the lack of residence permit. During the academic years of 2020 and 2021, UNHCR advocated with the Egyptian MFA and the MoETE to allow refugees and asylum seekers to enroll in public schools with expired documents that are taking longer than normal to be renewed in light of COVID-19 (Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt, 2022; UNHCR, 2021c).

The last channel that refugees can seek for education is that of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Refugees and asylum seekers are allowed to enroll in TVET institutions in their residential areas with no fees, as long as they are registered with UNHCR. However, they should provide the following documents: filled application, original certified and notarized educational certificates, birth certificate or the birth date indicated in the passport, valid passport and a study residency, a document indicating the approval of the student's embassy or an official body to receive education in Egypt, in addition to a health certificate to prove that the student is not suffering from

HIV. Those who have lost their educational certificates, or have unnotarized certificates, or holders of certificates on which two years have lapsed can sit through a levelling exam relevant to their age and academic level, which requires a valid residency permit (ILO, 2021).

4.4.2.1 Social Protection Gaps Related to Access to Education

The lack of access to education was repeatedly mentioned as the biggest challenge facing Eritrean refugees in Egypt throughout the FGDs and interviews. All of the research participants found access to education impossible for the reasons highlighted below. First and foremost, language is considered one of the biggest challenges in accessing education. As previously mentioned, most Eritreans do not speak Arabic as a first language, especially those who come from the Eritrean highlands. Several participants indicated that only those who have lived in Saudi Arabia or spent a long time in Sudan are able to enroll in schools where tuition is in Arabic (PO1, Personal Communication, 30 August 2022; PO2, Personal Communication, 29 August 2022). Some also stated that even if students speak Arabic, the Egyptian curriculum is perceived to be extremely difficult for Eritreans whose education was most likely interrupted or was of low quality at Eritrea.

The second obstacle mentioned by the respondents is related to documentation. Most Eritrean refugees in Egypt are unable to attain their certificates from Eritrea. Thus, they are unable to undertake the high school examination. Accordingly, some of the respondents stated that only migrants, but not refugees, can benefit from the available educational opportunities. Moreover, and as previously mentioned, Eritrean refugees are unable to issue valid passports from their embassy. Only those who lived in Saudi Arabia

are able to do so, given that their stay in Saudi was dependent on their embassy there. Many Eritrean refugees do not even possess a birth certificate for their children. As for closed-file refugees, they have absolutely no prospects for education due to the lack of proper documentation and residence permits.

Additionally, while Eritrean students are allowed to enroll in private schools, all the participants stated that the tuition fees are extremely high. One CBO stated that the fees are as high as 500 USD (CBO2, Personal Communication, 4 September 2022). The FGD participants mentioned fees that range from 3,900 EGP to 12,000 EGP. Most Eritrean refugees resort to community schools that teach the Sudanese curriculum. However, they can only study up until the eighth grade. After the eighth grade, students are supposed to undertake the Sudanese examination to receive the certificate that would qualify them for enrollment in a university. This examination fee is very expensive for most Eritrean refugees, which was 250 USD in 2020, and increased to 500 USD in 2021 (FGD4, Personal Communication, 6 September 2022). Even if students are able to pay these high fees, Egyptian universities do not accept UNHCR cards in place of valid passports. For those who manage to overcome all these obstacles, the university fees are considered extremely high. Thus, the vast majority of Eritrean refugees have no access to higher education.

Another major challenge highlighted during the interviews is related to the lack of awareness and some misconceptions among Eritrean refugees in Egypt. First, most of the participants firmly believe that they will eventually be resettled, and thus, this discourages them from committing to education. UASC usually drop out of schools due to the lack of family support and the need to provide for themselves after they age out

Therefore, they resort to taking courses at UNHCR's POs or CBOs to compensate for the lack of education (FGD1, Personal Communication, 1 September, 2022; FGD2, Personal Communication, 1 September 2022). Many women stated that their children face discrimination in Sudanese community schools because of their dialect, which results in dropping out. Furthermore, women complained that the lack of education causes their children to suffer from depression to the point of taking dangerous routes to escape the country (FGD4, Personal Communication, 6 September 2022). Finally, some expressed concerns regarding safety and security issues that force Eritrean families to constantly change neighborhoods, and that prohibit Eritreans from committing to one school. As highlighted in Chapter 3, Eritrean refugees usually leave their country with the help of smugglers, who continue to exploit them in Egypt for money.

4.5   Conclusion

This chapter aimed to investigate the first scale that the thesis is concerned with, which is the intersection and interaction between CBOs and the State. The intersections between the two happen at a direct and an indirect level. The direct level was presented by thoroughly analyzing the NGO Law, that CBOs should fall under; highlighting the main gaps that hinder CBOs from legally registering. The main gaps identified included the percentage of Eritreans allowed on the board of the CBO, the documentation required to register and to initiate a bank account, in addition to documents needed from Eritreans to be able to become members of the CBO's board. However, despite the restrictive Law, CBOs have rarely had any negative or any interaction with the authorities on the basis of their legal status, suggesting that marginality can sometimes enable a degree of freedom. However, the marginal position in which the CBOs are places huge obstacles concerning

funding and sustainability, depriving them of the opportunity to receive regular funding. As for the indirect point of intersection between CBOs and the State. This chapter presented a brief overview of the main social protection gaps left by the national framework governing Eritrean refugees in Egypt. It was found, through this overview, that refugees are unable to access the formal labor market, nor public education in Egypt. By presenting this overview, this chapter has laid the foundation for exploring the role of CBOs in filling in these gaps, as explained in chapter 6. The next chapter tackles the second scale that this thesis is concerned with, which is the interaction between CBOs and UNHCR and its POs.

Chapter 5: CBOs and UNHCR and its Partner Organizations

Introduction

This chapter seeks to present the relationship between CBOs and UNHCR and its POs, the second scale that this thesis examines. Similar to Chapter 4, it explores both the direct and indirect intersections between CBOs and UNHCR and its POs. It first explores the direct impact by providing background information on the Community-based Approach (CBA), which is the approach that UNHCR gradually applied in the last two decades; and is also the most relevant to CBOs. The CBA manual, produced by UNHCR is then analyzed, with the aim of presenting the main guidelines that UNHCR provides for both its staff and its POs to apply the approach. Afterwards, the chapter examines the implementation of the CBA in the context of Egypt in comparison with the manual, highlighting the key gaps. Finally, the chapter examines the indirect influence that UNHCR and its POs have on CBOs. This is done through exploring the role of UNHCR and its partners in addressing the two social protection gaps left by the State addressed in chapter 4, highlighting the main gaps left by them that CBOs intervene to address as presented in chapter 6. This chapter mainly relies on the narratives of the CBOs, two POs, and the FGD participants[5].

5.1   The Community-based Approach

The community-based approach (CBA) is an approach adopted by UNHCR in light of its 2001 Community Development Policy and is founded on the same principles of

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[5] As previously mentioned in the limitations section, securing an interview with UNHCR was unsuccessful. Accordingly, this chapter relies only on the CBA global manual for information on the approach. The chapter does not aim to discredit UNHCR Egypt in any way, but contrasts the CBA published guidelines to its implementation in the Egyptian context; with the overall aim of identifying areas of strengths and those of improvement.

participation and empowerment as the rights-based approach. This policy shifted the focus from the benefactor-beneficiary model to viewing refugees as equal partners and utilizing the collective capacities of the community. The policy acknowledges that the populations of whom UNHCR and other actors are concerned can be better protected and their ability to identify sustainable solutions can be strengthened when they are partners in developing protection strategies and decision-making. The main document in which all aspects of the CBA are thoroughly explained is UNHCR's 2008 '*A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations' manual,* which was developed as a follow-up to the 2002 evaluation of the community-services function recommendations. The manual was mainly developed for all of UNHCR's staff, but also serves as a complementary guide to the tools and guidelines of its POs (UNHCR, 2008). UNHCR defines "Community" as

> A group of people that recognizes itself or is recognized by outsiders as sharing common cultural, religious or other social features, backgrounds and interests, and that forms a collective identity with shared goals… what is externally perceived as a community might in fact be an entity with many sub-groups or communities… A community might be inclusive and protective of its members; but it might also be socially controlling, making it difficult for sub-groups, particularly minorities and marginalized groups, to express their opinions and claim their rights (UNHCR, 2008, p. 14).

It also defines the CBA as a way of working in partnership with communities at all stages of the program cycle. The approach recognizes and acknowledges the capacities, skills, resources, and resilience of the communities and utilizes it to provide it with the needed protection and solutions. The approach, as the manual advises, should not be restricted

to a certain area of UNHCR's work, but should guide all the agency and its PO's work. it further affirms that the agency needs to be transparent about its goals, responsibilities, and obligations, and that it should work towards building mutual trust and understanding, while listening to the community. Chapter 3 of the manual explains, in detail, how the CBA can be implemented as envisioned by UNHCR. The implementation section is divided into several steps according to the stage of intervention.

The implementation of the CBA chapter is divided into three stages according to the stage of intervention.

5.1.1 The First Stage: Situation Analysis

This stage precedes the design of projects and formulation of its goals. This stage entails the following steps, which help, in the end; to come up with a Country Operation Plan:

1. Collecting and analyzing pre-existing information about the community, including the formal and informal structures within the community. The findings should also be validated through a participatory assessment with the community.

2. Identifying all potential actors (including CBOs) who could influence or be influenced by actions taken towards the community. The activities of these actors and their influence level should also be mapped.

3. Establishing contact with the refugee community using a "clear outreach strategy", which ensures the inclusion of all the community groups. In this step, CBOs are considered a valuable source of information and a channel for establishing contact with the rest of the community.

4. Conducting a participatory assessment with the community, followed by a participatory planning for projects. This step aims to identify key protection risks

and its possible solutions, in addition to establishing the responsibilities of the actors involved, in consultation with the community.

5. Analyzing the data collected from the previous steps, to be used in planning programs. In this step, all the different actors should come together to identify the key priorities, responsibilities, duties, and goals of each of them (UNHCR, 2008, pp. 27–55).

5.1.2 The Second Stage: Community Mobilization and Empowerment

This section sets the guidelines for mobilizing the community with the aim of assisting them in understanding and attaining their rights by working in partnership with them on strengthening their capacities, identifying long and short-term solutions for protection risks, setting their priorities, and establishing community action plans. This stage entails:

1. Mapping, documenting, understanding, and establishing connections with management structures formed by the community, then sharing the information from the mapping activities with the community for validation.

2. Working with existing community leaders and management structures (including CBOs) that are representative of the wider community and promoting representative leadership and fair elections.

3. Collecting data on protection risks and livelihoods challenges that the communities face, in consultation with community leaders; and identifying the mechanisms that the community established to face these challenges.

4. Supporting community members and community leaders by delivering capacity building trainings that are based on their objectives, skills, and capacities, and that are designed jointly with the community.

5. Establishing an action plan with a smaller representative group (in the form of a community-action team or planning committee) based on the community's priorities, in addition to the data collected during the previous steps. this smaller group is responsible for developing the plan and monitoring its implementation, while the wider community can be involved in the implementation (UNHCR, 2008, pp. 55–88).

5.1.3 The Third Stage: Monitoring and Evaluation

The final stage of implementing the CBA is community monitoring and evaluation. According to the manual, this is the most essential activity of all given that it helps identify gaps and ensure transparency and accountability. The manual explains that monitoring is best done with persons responsible for and those who participate in projects, as well as those who should receive its benefits. It entails putting monitoring systems in place with the community from the onset of the projects to ensure service provision, update UNHCR and its POs on the status of persons, receive feedback about the quality of services and attitudes of its implementers from the community. Additionally, accessible complaint mechanisms should be created. UNHCR is also to conduct regular random visits to service providers to monitor the projects implementation. Moreover, it must provide the community with information about its role, mandate, and policies in a language that is suitable and accessible; to ensure that the community understand their rights and the standards against which UNHCR is to be evaluated. Some of the important monitoring tools mentioned in the manual include establishing confidential complaint mechanisms to allow people to present them to UNHCR and its POs. In this particular tool, the manual clearly states that referral systems for persons at heightened risks must

be coordinated with the community, and participatory assessments to review projects and evaluate their efficiency must be conducted (UNHCR, 2008, pp. 88–94).

Nearly a decade later, a policy paper titled "understanding the community-based protection" was published by UNHCR to reflect on twelve key lessons learned throughout the decade since when the CBA was first adopted. Much like the manual, the policy paper explains that a true CBA is one in which all aspects and stages of programs that affect communities are developed in partnership with the community and in which they can participate "meaningfully and substantially". The policy paper mirrors much of what is been mentioned in the manual. It affirms that throughout the years of implementing CBA, it was found that it cannot be implemented only through brief meetings with the communities, but rather through involvement in the entire process (UNHCR, 2013).

5.2 General Framework of Applying the CBA

While the previous section provided a summary of the manual's step-by-step guide on applying the CBA, there is a number of key elements that re-appeared throughout the manual, that serve as a general framework guiding the implementation of the CBA.

5.2.1 Identifying and Mapping CBOs by UNHCR and its POs

While the manual does not define CBOs per se., it does mention, in the situation analysis stage, that the formal and informal structures of the community; and the role they play should be identified using an "age, gender and diversity perspective" (UNHCR, 2008, p. 30). Additionally, community members and leaders, CSOs, and faith-based organizations are among the actors that the manual calls for mapping in the stakeholders analysis phase. The manual maintains that any potential partners in the operation (local, national, or international), including local CBOs should be included to mitigate duplication

of services and allow for a smoother handover if UNHCR and its POs withdraw from the field. The manual urges its users to identify, respect, utilize the skills and networks of, and share information about the role and objectives of the agency with formal and informal community leaders; to avoid losing the trust of the community. Additionally, any CBO or existing committee that could help facilitate access to the rest of the community should be identified. The manual also specifically calls for encouraging the establishment of community committees in urban settings "to strengthen informal networks" (UNHCR, 2008, p. 61).

5.2.2 Working in Partnership with the Community

In its very first step, the manual calls for including CBO representatives in the inter-agency and stakeholder planning meetings (UNHCR, 2008, p. 28). It affirms that establishing contact with the refugee community is crucial, given that the early interactions pave the way for the future of the relationship between UNHCR and its POs, and the community. CBOs are considered a valuable source of information and a channel for establishing contact with the rest of the community. However, the manual warns of leaders who become gatekeepers, preventing others from communicating their needs. Most importantly, the manual calls for working with CBOs along with other partners and promoting the accountability and the role of community leaders. In order to work with the community, a "clear outreach strategy", which ensures the inclusion of all groups, should be established in coordination with other actors identified by the situation analysis (UNHCR, 2008, p. 43).

The manual urges the users to consult with the community representatives before conducting the participatory assessment. It also states that community representatives

(of all ages and genders) should be invited and kept informed about the results of all the previously conducted steps. They must be supplied with a summary of the planning phase outcomes. Additionally, it urges UNHCR and its POs to work and communicate with community leaders to ensure identifying protection gaps and taking collective action to address them, with the overall aim of providing sustainable solutions that the community can provide even if all agencies withdraw. The manual states that in order to avoid duplication of services and competition over funding, information about allocation of resources should be made available to all stakeholders. The community planning group might need to enter negotiations with donors, local governments to collect resources. UNHCR and its PO's role at this stage to make information about the negotiation process and potential support sources available to the community.

5.2.3 Maintaining Two-way Channels of Communication with the Community

The manual specifically states that "communication should flow both ways" from and to humanitarian agencies, community members, and community representatives (UNHCR, 2008, p. 81).

Thus, pathways for communication and exchanging information with leaders should be established and the transmission of information to all members of the community must be ensured. Moreover, the manual states that referral pathways and complaint mechanisms should be established with the community to identify and address protection gaps. As for the community at large, the manual states that it is important to ensure that community structures are representative and include all community groups. This can be done through maintaining direct and prolonged contact with the community (through participatory assessments) to understand whom they perceive as leaders and identify which of the

management structures constitute a good example. The manual further discourages working with leaders with strong political agendas and encourages verifying that the management structures that were mapped are respected by the community and are open to dealing with all of its groups.

Another important point raised in the manual is ensuring transparency with the community. it is important for humanitarian workers to communicate with the community about the capacities and limitations. It also warns of giving false or incomplete information. The manual calls for regularly meeting and talking informally with the community, and ensuring complete transparency and consistency when dealing with it. Most importantly, the manual states that information resulting from the mapping activities should be shared with the community for validation. Pathways for regular feedback and communication, in addition to mechanisms for joint problem solution should also be established. The manual further instructs of assisting displaced communities in reaching information about issues, such as durable solutions and other relevant information, to help keep them informed and maintain a transparent environment.

5.2.4 Capacity Building, and Monitoring and Evaluation

5.2.4.1 Training Community Leaders

In its tips section, the manual advises of training community members in documenting good practices, participatory methods, and data collection and analysis using an age, gender, diversity framework. Furthermore, the manual states that leaders must be chosen by community members. Thus, UNHCR and its POs must invest in training and assisting those community chosen leaders with trainings that they request. The manual then presents a section on "community-action teams" which are small

informal groups, through which leadership skills can be fostered, by encouraging them to set up their own activities. According to the manual, these groups have more flexibility and are less hierarchical than larger structures, in addition to their attraction to young adults and children. These should be enhanced through trainings on participatory research and networking with others facing similar problems (UNHCR, 2008, pp. 56–87).

5.2.4.2 Training the Community

As previously highlighted in the first stage, the community should be trained on key areas that are relevant to its needs, capacities and objectives. Harmful practices should be analyzed and eliminated by raising awareness. The manual then dedicates a section to ensuring working with the community at an early stage to address harmful practices or cultural beliefs that might not conform with human rights. This includes clarifying UNHCR's stance on human rights and identifying community members who are open to engaging in a dialogue about sensitive issues. This section stresses the need to "spend a lot of time in the community (UNHCR, 2008, p. 75)", and to work on organizing awareness raising campaigns. The key areas of capacity building that the manual argues are most important include leadership and communication and organizational skills, collection of data and project planning, management and evaluation, in addition to specific technical skills such as basic accounting. Moreover, community members should be provided with trainings on the rights-based approach and their role as duty-bearers and rights holders, in order to facilitate communication between them and other organizations.

5.2.4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

As previously mentioned, monitoring and evaluating the programs must be done with the people who benefit from, responsible for, and participate in planning of the

projects. The important point to raise here, is that the manual affirms that participatory assessments should be held regularly rather than once a year. Furthermore, all members of the community must be involved in the process of monitoring and feedback (UNHCR, 2008, pp. 28–53). The manual further states that that community leaders should be involved in the process of establishing community-monitoring systems.

5.3   The Implementation of the CBA in Egypt

As the manual of CBA highlighted, the approach can be applied differently according to the context in which UNHCR and its POs are operating. According to Egypt's website, UNHCR adopted a CBA while serving refugees, and community-based protection (CBP) is one of its main activities. UNHCR Egypt also acknowledges that in applying the CBA, refugees should be consulted and involved in all stages of programs (UNHCR, 2023a). It is, thus, suitable to compare the aforementioned guidelines to its implementation on the ground in Egypt's context; in order to draw conclusions and identify the key gaps.

5.3.1 Defining CBOs by UNHCR and its POs

One of the first questions that was asked to both CBO leaders and the POs was "What is the criteria that an organization has to meet in order to qualify as CBO?". The question mainly stemmed from the need to identify how all the interviewees (including POs) counted precisely eleven Eritrean CBOs. At the end of the day, these CBOs are not registered; thus, they did not gain legitimacy through the State. It is clear through the CBA manual that all forms of collective and individual social structures formed by refugees are worthy of consideration and partnership. No list of CBOs acknowledged by UNHCR, or

any other POs was found on any of their websites/publications, yet all of UNHCR's operational and implementing partners are presented in its yearly published bluebook.

It could be argued that UNHCR avoids publishing such mapping due to the fact that these CBOs are not legally registered. However, and despite the presence of registered CBOs, albeit not Eritrean[6], none of these were mentioned either. According to the CBOs interviewed, there is no clear criteria that UNHCR sets for an organization to be considered a CBO. Based on their experience, a CBO gains legitimacy if "it works with the entire community, and if its leaders have connections with UNHCR." (CBO2, Personal Communication, 4 September 2022). This, in fact, is how one of the CBOs managed to be quickly recognized by POs and UNHCR despite being one of the newest; given that its leaders have work experience with POs. Despite the manual's repeated warnings of creating gate keepers who are not representative of the community, this finding suggests that UNHCR seems to fall into the trap, which could result in the exclusion of the groups who have no personal connections with UNHCR.

Setting clear criteria for what UNHCR counts as worthy of creating partnership with was one of the recommendations of two of the CBOs interviewed. They further added that they wish UNHCR would visit the CBO and evaluate it and acknowledge it formally. The first PO interviewed stated that the organization does not need criteria to recognize CBOs, given that it can rely on its staff who live among the community to map these CBOs. However, they only work with those who "actually work, and meet with cases rather than those whose role is restricted to exchanging correspondences with UNHCR (PO2, Personal Communication, 29 August 2022)". While having such close contact through

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[6] The respondents stated that there are several registered Syrian CBOs and another of mixed nationalities.

community workers is promising, the lack of criteria could also lead to confusion among CBOs, as to what is needed from them to be considered as partners. Another feature of CBOs that make them more likely to be recognized by this organization, is that they have different departments serving different roles such as psychosocial support, legal aid, protection, etc.

That being said, there are also good practices that have been mentioned by CBOs, which will be explained in detail in the following sections. One PO has designated a department to outreach to CBOs. The criteria that they set are clear and well known among the community. According to a CBO leader, first, they map the community structures through their department designated to outreach. Afterwards, they visit the organization and assess its services, its credibility, and the necessity upon which it was founded. For instance, an organization that sustained its operations for a long time with no external support is one that is considered serious about its cause and thus, qualifies as a CBO. Additionally, they have to have a vision, a mission, and goals. The PO further monitors the operations for a period they name "trust period" which lasts for up to a year, and in which they test their ability to implement activities that they allocate to them. It also assesses the scope of coverage of the CBO and prioritizes supporting CBOs that cover areas with a smaller number of CBOs. There is structure that the CBOs are advised to maintain. The current structure includes an executive board, a Director, a Field Director, and a Coordinator. The structure is constantly assessed and can be changed if needed. However, CBOs also must include certain services in their operations such as psychosocial support, legal aid, education, and finance.

5.3.2 Partners or Sub-contractors?

5.3.2.1 Engagement of CBOs/Community Leaders in Decision-making

'Communication with Communities' is one of UNHCR Egypt's crucial and main components of its activities. There are several avenues through which UNHCR can engage Eritrean CBOs in its operations in Egypt. The agency has the Community-based Protection Unit, through which it maintains contact with the community (including CBOs). Its activities include monthly area-based thematic community meetings, the aim of which is having a two-way communication channel to discuss latest updates and concerns. UNHCR also has an info line, and social media pages (UNHCR, 2020c). As for CBOs and community leaders, UNHCR designated a WhatsApp group for community leaders, to both share information and updates, and respond to "collective community concerns". They also have a "functional email" through which they receive referrals and communication from community leaders, outreach workers and CBOs. UNHCR also relies on the information community outreach team of its partner, PSTIC, to channel updates to the communities. In November 2022, UNHCR stated that it was allegedly in the process of mapping 150 to 180 "self-managed structures" that should form a basis for a network (UNHCR, 2022d). While the mapping activity conforms with UNHCR's CBA, the rest of the aforementioned channels of communication do not necessarily mean that they community is engaged in decision making. It is rather more important to look at the level of engagement of CBOs in conversations that take place between UNHCR and its partners, to tell if CBOs are also considered as partners.

UNHCR holds several meetings on different coordination levels. These include the Inter-agency Working Group in which policy issues and protection gaps and issues are

discussed by partners, the Inter-sector Working Group, in which different sectorial working groups come together to come up with a standard approach, and sectoral working groups that discuss specific topics such as health, education, cash-based intervention, and communication with communities. These sectoral groups usually involve certain relevant stakeholders such as donors, ministries, INGOs, and local NGOs. Some of these sectoral working groups are divided into sub-working groups, and they all meet on monthly basis (UNHCR, 2020b).

When asked about the extent to which UNHCR engages them in decision making and program planning, members of CBOs interviewed have expressed their disappointment with the level of engagement. In fact, some counted lack of communication as one of the main challenges they face. One CBO member/s stated that despite their being Eritrean community leaders who live among the community and are the best to tell their concerns and risks, they never receive field visits from UNHCR that aim to consult with them regarding the community's issues and needs. They do not feel seen as partners nor key actors. Two of the CBOs interviewed stated that the closest they have ever gotten to interacting with CBP unit was hearing the name of the unit. Only one mentioned that UNHCR maintains contact with them. As for the WhatsApp group, they completely denied it being a two-way communication channel. They only receive updates and information on this group, and they never receive replies to their inquiries. One of the oldest and most known Eritrean CBOs was coincidentally only added to this WhatsApp group one day prior to the date of the interview for this research. Another CBO stated that they are rarely invited to any meetings, and when they are, they receive an address with

a request to send one representative from the CBO. This happens only once or twice a year.

Even when CBOs are invited to online meetings, they often leave because they feel like they neither want their opinion nor are they interested in speaking a language they can understand. They, thus, think that their involvement in such meetings is only to "tick a box" (CBO3, Personal Communication, 7 September 2022). The same CBO stated in their recommendations that they wish to have a chair on the table of decision making. They believe that many of the challenges that UNHCR faces when dealing with the Eritrean community can be solved through CBOs, yet UNHCR refuses to utilize them as a resource. The CBO also believes that their lack of involvement and consultation in designing projects lead to wasted resources and duplicated unbeneficial projects. For instance, they believed that instead of giving unaccompanied youth seed-funds to start their own projects, they believe that they should teach them skills. There is also disregard for the situation of these community leaders as refugees, who might not be able to afford the transportation costs to their meeting places. None of the CBOs had been regularly invited to the sectoral/sub-working groups, and the majority have never even heard of it. The only two CBOs that were more frequently involved in meetings happen to have already worked at different POs.

The impact of such lack of consultation and involvement in decision making is grave on the daily lives of refugees. For instance, two of the CBOs and one of the FGD participants stated that even the socio-economic assessment questions they receive are detached from reality and indicate that UNHCR and its POs are less aware of what happens on the ground. Some leaders are aware of the funding and resources limitations.

However, they wish UNHCR would give them the chance to speak about the community's needs, which would help Eritreans become more independent, and would lift the pressure off of UNHCR. It is not uncommon for CBOs to counsel and ease the tension between refugees and UNHCR. In fact, one of the interviewed CBOs managed to dissuade a group of Eritreans from pursuing a sit-in in front of UNHCR's premises during lock-down and raised their awareness about the need for lock-down for every one's safety.

Most of the CBOs feel distrust and lack of transparency on the part of UNHCR. Despite being the frontliners, they believe they are used by UNHCR as a buffer to calm down the disappointment of refugees at times of tensions. As for their experience with POs, the engagement of CBOs is slightly stronger. However, it is achieved on an ad hoc basis. Additionally, some CBOs highlighted that due to the lack of consultation with the community leaders, POs implement short-term project based, which translates into repeated activities that do not achieve any sustainable impact.

The opinion of POs varied, while one thought that CBOs are not treated nor perceived as partners; the other stated that service provision is far more complex than the abilities of these CBOs. According to this PO, CBOs do not possess the skills to screen cases and respond to the needs of the community. They also attributed the lack of engagement of CBOs to the very large number of CBOs and the limited time and resources of UNHCR.

5.3.2.2 Referral Pathways and Communication Channels: Two-way or One-way?

As mentioned in the CBA manual, it is important to establish referral pathways between UNHCR, its POs, and CBOs and community leaders. In its operational updates, UNHCR allegedly "continues to maintain two-way communications and daily engagement

with communities" to receive updates regarding the needs of the community from over 130 community leaders through regular phone calls (UNHCR, 2021a). On the ground, Eritrean CBOs still feel marginalized and invisible as key actors who are able to detect, report, and respond to protection risks and concerns. While UNHCR designated a functional email to receive referrals and information from CBOs/community leaders; all the CBOs complained of the lack of responses to such channels of communication. They agreed that there are no effective pathways designated to the community. If they want to report a vulnerable community member, they have to go and wait in line just like everyone else. Several CBOs stated that they never receive replies to their emails. Before COVID-19 lockdown, they used to receive a call or an email every 5 months at most, and only then were they able to "squeeze in" a few referrals. However, communication was completely cut off after COVID-19 lock-down restrictions were lifted (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022). "During lockdown, our phones were ringing 24/7 because CBP was requesting our help, now they never reply." was how another CBO commented (CBO2, Personal Communication, 4 September 2022). That being said, CBOs were able to register cases through the phone since UNHCR's office was closed.

Due to the difficulties, they face in reaching UNHCR, one CBO stated that they find it easier and faster to resort to a local NGO to respond to an emergency situation than to reach UNHCR. The CBO further stated that when they try to refer specific cases requiring immediate response to UNHCR through email or WhatsApp, they receive a reply to refer the case through the 'usual channels', meaning through email or through UNHCR's window. When they do receive replies, it is usually only an acknowledgement of receipt of the correspondence, with no actual action (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2

September 2022). Only three of the nine interviewed CBOs found it less challenging to refer cases to CBP, through CBO members who work at other POs. One CBO highlighted that even CBP is reached through personal connections. According to them, this is problematic because it creates gatekeepers, or leaders, randomly assigned by UNHCR and its POs, who are not necessarily representative of the whole community (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022).

As for communication with POs, it is still considered very sporadic and happens through personal connections with employees or para-social workers who work or have previously worked at these POs. While some POs map and create referral pathways with CBOs, the activity only lasts for a short duration, as these are usually short-term project-based pathways. Sometimes, CBOs are able to refer cases when these POs implement activities at their premises. The event in which UNHCR and the majority of its POs resort to communicating with CBOs, as found during the interviews, is when they need to conduct information sessions at their premises. Additionally, one CBO mentioned that POs sometimes "outsource" their projects to be implemented by CBOs, yet at the end of the day, the PO takes the credit. This led some CBOs to believe that they are being used as tools for collecting data and caseloads, rather than partners.

5.3.2.3 Communication with the Community at Large

As seen in the section summarizing the manual, establishing contact with the entire community is a crucial part of applying the CBA. Given the lack of contact with the CBOs, which the manual acknowledged as a valuable resource to establish contact with the community; the FGD participants also complained that they can rarely secure an interview or reach UNHCR. They generally complained of the barricaded long lines they have to

wait in at UNHCR's premises, the busy info line and lack of effective complaint and feedback systems, and the impatient attitude when they manage to meet with a caseworker. They also felt like the way UNHCR, and its POs assess their socioeconomic situation is detached from reality and incompatible with their precarious situation. The lack of direct contact has led to some misconceptions being essentialized among the community, in addition to a general atmosphere of distrust. During the FGDs, some participants firmly believed that resettlement is the inevitable and automatic durable solution for every refugee, and thus, they expressed frustration for not being resettled years after receiving the blue card. When asked if they were counselled on durable solutions and resettlement eligibility during registration or RSD interviews, they stated that their inquiries are usually met with "we will call you if we need you". Furthermore, youth stated that they often feel like POs and UNHCR are interrogating them rather than assessing their situation. Losing the trust of the community is something that the manual mentioned as a repercussion if information about the agency's objectives, capacities, and limitations do not reach the community. Naturally, there is no communication between UNHCR and rejected asylum seekers, since they fall outside the scope of UNHCR.

5.3.3 Training, Action Plans, and Monitoring and Evaluation

As previously mentioned, according to the manual, training community leaders, and community members, and raising their awareness regarding their roles (while keeping their priorities in mind) facilitates and lays the foundation for partnership between the community and other organizations. In its latest Communication with Communities report, UNHCR Egypt highlighted that it maintains contact with 140 community leaders through CBOs; and that it is currently in the process of establishing a network to "build on

communities' capacities" (UNHCR, 2022d). Moreover, in another report, UNHCR also stated that it previously (in 2018) delivered trainings on the CBA to 197 community and outreach volunteers (UNHCR, 2020c, p. 31). UNHCR, also, allegedly provided capacity building trainings for 85 community leaders of different nationalities on CBP, adaptability skills, and attitudes during the pandemic (UNHCR, 2021a). It is difficult to tell if any of the Eritrean CBOs interviewed were part of these trainings without verifying from UNHCR; but the CBOs highlighted that they have not received any trainings directly from UNHCR.

As for POs, trainings for both community leaders and refugee communities are perhaps the only form of interaction that consistently exists between these organizations and CBOs. For CBOs/community leaders, three models of capacity building trainings appeared to be provided by POs during the interviews. The first is project-based trainings, in which short-term projects at POs provide a training for selected community leaders. The trainings include leadership skills, project management, proposal writing, and basic psychosocial support. It is not clear how POs select these leaders. One CBO mentioned that they have been approached due to the previous involvement of its leader in the activities of the POs. This suggests that short-term projects either do their own mapping of community leaders/CBOs, or they rely on their networks through previous activities/projects. While making use of the organization's networks in the community is good for gaining access to the community, it could create gatekeepers and does not guarantee that the leaders selected are representative of the entire community. In the case of this specific CBO, this might be the case, as none of the other CBOs had the same type of connections with this particular project. Moreover, and even if all CBOs receive the same trainings, some expressed frustration of the duplicated trainings. This,

according to one CBO, is indicative of the fact that POs do not document their activities, nor do they maintain a record of which CBOs received which trainings.

The second model includes POs that provide capacity building trainings for CBOs specialized in providing certain services such as those for women and children, youth, or persons with disabilities. One CBO benefitted from such model and seemed relatively satisfied with the cooperation. The leaders of the CBO were enrolled in a three-month long training to enhance their capacities and were supported with a few needed equipment that facilitate delivering their services. The POs also maintained contact with the CBO and continues to share updated information with them. While this model seems better received by the CBO, the trainings seem guided by the PO's priorities rather than the community's needs. This deprives other CBOs from the opportunity of benefitting from this kind of support. "Each organization has to follow the donor's agenda", was how one CBO commented (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). However, they stated that if each organization specializes in one type of trainings, to be complemented by other POs, the benefit would be greater for CBOs, and duplication would be mitigated.

The third model includes POs that have a unit, department, or team strictly dedicated to community outreach. One example is a PO that seems to be the closest to following the community-based approach. "CBOs make life easier for both POs and refugees because they can speak the language of the community and can respond to 60% of what POs cannot respond to (PO1, Personal Communication, 30 August 2022)". Thus, based on the acknowledgment that the community is better suited to address its own issues, they work closely with CBOs to build their capacities. Before training the CBO, they conduct a needs assessment; and they tailor their trainings to the needs of the

community, or the most common protection risks. They design their trainings with filling the gaps left by 'seasonal projects'[7] when they phase out in mind. They try to diversify the sources of support for these CBOs by connecting them with larger networks of service providers. They also expand the networks of Eritrean CBOs by connecting them not only to one another, but also to CBOs of different communities. Furthermore, they work on building the capacities of CBO leaders by delivering organizational skills, leadership, fundraising, and resources management trainings, in addition to referral pathways, case documentation, and formal channels of communication with organizations, as well as building a management structure and a policy. The PO also enhances and expands the operations of the CBO by providing incentives in the form of food boxes, computers, and implementing projects through the CBO. All of these capacity building efforts are done in close coordination with the POs, which include regular meetings, and by providing them with staff members to work with them on daily basis.

Another example is a PO that follows a slightly different method but rests on the same foundation of a community outreach team. The outreach team maintains strong and regular contact with the community, mainly due to the proximity of the team to the community.[8] They help not only channel information from and to UNHCR; but also work on supporting the community leaders respond to the most common protection risks or problems reported by the CBOs. The PO also provides regular trainings for two community leaders from each CBO leaders twice a month on basic response and counselling skills such as conflict resolution and child protection. However, unlike the

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[7] A term used by the interviewee to refer to short-term projects often implemented by UNHCR's partner organizations.
[8] The team is comprised of mainly refugees who live among the community.

aforementioned model, this PO does not strictly adhere to formal pathways and allows for receiving inquiries or support requests through personal communications. Moreover, this PO sometimes resorts to CBOs, or the community at large, to respond to urgent cases until a long-term plan has been arranged by POs. The two aforementioned models have acknowledged that CBOs are important to them, as much as they are important to CBOs. "They treat us like as their technical supervisors" was how the PO described the relationship.

As for trainings delivered to the community, most POs and also UNHCR deliver trainings and awareness raising sessions at the CBO premises. The trainings include RSD and registration procedures, updated information about service providers, in addition to awareness sessions (i.e women empowerment, dangers of drug addiction) that many of the FGD participants found beneficial.

Finally, and for monitoring and evaluating programs, it is worth noting that in its country strategy evaluation; UNHCR Egypt has acknowledged that despite the investment in mechanisms to ensure communication with communities two problems persist. The first is that it is not clear whether interventions have been adapted based on the participatory assessments, as the evaluation found that some concerns continued to persist despite arising in previous participatory assessments (UNHCR, 2021e, p. 36). This is despite the fact that UNHCR stated that the findings of the participatory assessments are incorporated into the plan of the next year (UNHCR, 2020c). The second is that the community feels unheard and that feedback mechanisms are not as efficient as needed. It is important to worth note that the CBA manual specifically calls for regular participatory

assessments rather than annual ones. Yet, UNHCR conducts participatory assessments annually in Egypt (UNHCR, 2020c).

5.4 Social Protection Gaps Left by UNHCR and its POs

This section aims to explore whether UNHCR and its POs properly fill the social protection gaps left by the State. By doing so, this section identifies the indirect influence that UNHCR and its POs have on the role of Eritrean CBOs, which may have to intervene to fill these gaps. As previously mentioned in chapter 4, the national legal framework that Eritreans fall under has left two main social protection gaps. Education and work are the two gaps reported to be the most challenging according to the Eritreans interviewed. Based on Volker Türk and Rebecca Dowd's proposition, UNHCR and its partners allegedly intervene to replace state structure in the case of the presence of implementation gaps. Thus, the role of these organizations in filling in these gaps, and the efficiency of such role is presented below.

5.4.1 UNHCR and its POs' Services Related to Work

As seen in Chapter 4, the current national legislative framework severely restricts Eritrean refugees' access to the formal labor market, causing them to turn to the unsafe and unstable informal labor market. UNHCR and its POs intervene to try and address this gap. However, it is important to note that, in the past; Egypt has allegedly opposed UNHCR's attempts to implement vocational training projects for refugees in Egypt unless there were guarantees to their voluntary repatriation (Kagan, 2011a, p. 19). This suggests that UNHCR and its PO's attempts may be limited by the State's stance on the employment of refugees. That being said, UNHCR and its POs try to improve the prospects for livelihoods of refugees. Their interventions usually take three shapes. The

first is improving access to wage earning employment through capacity building, career guidance, and rights at work trainings. The second is promoting self-employment through providing cash grants for businesses, and business management trainings and mentorship. The third is and providing financial aid to cover basic needs for those most in need (Hetaba et al., 2020, p. 117; UNHCR, 2020b, pp. 36–40). UNHCR also creates partnerships with private sector to provide job opportunities for refugees through job fairs and skills matching (UNHCR, 2018). These services are usually provided through its partners such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Refuge Egypt, Don Bosco, Plan International and Caritas (UNHCR, 2023b, pp. 24–25, 2023c).

Despite their attempts at improving work prospects, the services available are far from filling in the gap. They are limited by the limitations highlighted in Chapter 4, the budget constraints, and the employers' lack of awareness of refugee issues (Sharafeldin, 2020, pp. 56–57). Some women who previously tried to access these services complained that the job opportunities offered were not appropriate for single women with children, which included a stay-in maid or nanny. Some have also approached POs to apply for job training or micro-grants and never heard back from the organization, which suggests that the demand is much higher than UNHCR and its POs' ability to fill in this gap. Additionally, one of the CBO leaders complained that the services sometimes do not match the skills of its beneficiaries. For instance, they found it problematic to provide UASC with cash grants, while they do not possess the skills to run a business at such a young age. Generally speaking, none of the respondents were able to secure a stable job opportunity through UNHCR and its POs. The only respondent who was able to benefit from these services is a CBO leader who was able, through one of POs programs, to

secure funding to start a nursery. Naturally, none of the closed-file refugees are able to benefit from these services as they fall outside the scope of UNHCR and its POs.

5.4.2 UNHCR and its POs' Services Related to Education.

The second challenge that Eritreans interviewed find the most difficult to overcome highlighted in Chapter 4 pertains to access to education. UNHCR provides educational services in the form of cash grants, which constitutes 91% of its education programme. Through UNHCR's PO, CRS, the Standard Educational Grant program provides parents or caregivers with direct cash assistance upon providing a proof of enrollment in the school and attendance and based on criteria that is published June of each year. However, the amount offered depends on the nationality, which is determined based on the specific limitations they face according to the law. Cash grants given to Eritrean children enrolled in private schools was 4,000 EGP in 2020, and 1,250 EGP for children enrolled in community schools. Additionally, the cash grant offered to UASC enrolled in private schools was 4,500 EGP (which include 500 EGP for transportation). The grant is given directly to the school or handed to the child. As for higher education, UNHCR allegedly provides individual students with a four-year grant through the German-funded DAFI scholarship (UNHCR, 2020a). Moreover, UNHCR provides bridging programs and language classes for children enrolled in Sudanese community schools to assist them with enrolling in public schools (Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt, 2022, p. 13). There are other educational services provided by a few POs. For instance, St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) utilizes the Sudanese curriculum in the English language to offer preschool, primary, secondary, and high school education, in addition to English and Arabic courses. CRS also offers English and Arabic courses.

When asked about these services, most respondents were unsatisfied. While many of them were the recipients of CRS's educational grants, the vast majority complained that the amount offered to them is significantly lower than the tuition fees at their private schools. For instance, one of the youth FGD participants reported that CRS only offered him 1,000 EGP out of the 4,000 EGP of total fees. Moreover, and given that these youth arrived in Egypt as UASC, they stated that they are forced to drop out once they reach the age of 18; due to the cessation of the financial assistance. Similarly, a man complained that he received 1,000 EGP out of 3,800 EGP. Having four children, he does not find this service helpful and would rather pull his child out of school. Moreover, some complained that the quality of education in schools eligible for grants by CRS is extremely low. Another respondent stated that CRS does not provide cash grants to parents whose children are not on their file number, which is the case for many Eritreans who face documentation obstacles when adding their children on their file. Similar to all other services, closed-file refugees are not entitled to any services from UNHCR and their POs, and their children normally do not receive any education.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the second scale that the thesis set out to examine, which is the direct and indirect interaction and intersection between CBOs and UNHCR and its POs, in addition to the social protection gaps that remain inadequately addressed by UNHCR and its POs. In absence of a clear policy framework that regulates the relationship between UNHCR and CBOs, this chapter provided an overview of the guidelines provided by UNHCR's CBA manual and contrasted these guidelines to the implementation of the CBA in Egypt. Despite the acknowledgment of the importance of

both CBOs and the community at large as equal partners in providing solutions for refugee issues, the findings make it clear that CBOs are largely sidelined by UNHCR and its POs. Despite the clear instructions listed in the manual, the findings show major challenges in the communication between UNHCR, its POs and Eritrean CBOs. The challenges listed include general lack of direct communication channels, vagueness with regards to the criteria of CBO, and lack of engagement of both community leaders and community members in decision making. Most importantly, the findings show that there are no unified referral pathways between these actors, and most partnerships are done randomly and on ad hoc basis. The findings highlighted some positive examples and initiatives on the part of POs, yet, they reach a limited number of CBOs; and do not amount to describing the relationship as one of equal partnership. It can be concluded that while there is a very strong potential to create well-founded partnerships between the two parties, CBOs are still marginalized by UNHCR specifically. That being said, it is important to acknowledge that the policies of the State towards CSOs, as presented in chapter 4, could be a major factor in UNHCR's inability to strictly adhere to the manual's provision. As for the indirect impact, the chapter highlighted the main services provided by UNHCR to fill in the social protection gaps left by the State. The findings show that the services are not enough to fill in these gaps. The next chapter will look into the role that CBOs play in the lives of Eritrean refugees, and their way of navigating the margin. It will also look into challenges arising from within the community.

Chapter 6: CBOs, Refugees, and CBOs

Introduction

The third and final scale that this thesis aims to explore is the relationship between Eritrean CBOs and Eritrean refugees. It is important to keep in mind that CBOs are initially formed and managed by refugees, so their relationship is a two-way one, hence the title of the chapter. This chapter starts by exploring the motivation behind establishing CBOs and the role they play in addressing issues that are unique and specific to Eritreans in Greater Cairo, filling in social protection gaps, and improving the lives on Eritrean refugees in general. It also investigates the question of sustainability, and the mobilization of resources in a shrinking space. Finally, the chapter looks into the main challenges facing CBOs, intentionally or unintentionally stemming from within the community.

6.1 The Birth of Eritrean CBOs: Motivations behind their Establishment

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, CBOs have largely been looked at as gap fillers, and while this is one of the functions that this thesis assesses, it is also interested in uncovering roles that are related to the specific and contemporary needs of the Eritrean community. As such, and to avoid fitting CBOs into a preconceived mold, the CBO leaders were asked about the motivation behind establishing their CBOs. The answers to this question were interesting and insightful, to say the least. The founders of these CBOs were refugees, who also felt marginalized, but had slightly more advantages/resources than other Eritrean refugees in Cairo. These advantages include speaking the Arabic language, being in Egypt for a long time, having strong diaspora networks, having strong community networks in different locations across Greater Cairo, having a relatively stable source of income, or having experience working in refugee-serving INGOs.

The spark that ignited the idea of establishing a CBO amongst most of the leaders was noticing a certain hardship that the community -including the leaders themselves- faced, and not only social protection gaps left by the formal refugee regime. For instance, lack of access to information about registration, service providers, and other resources was the single most cited motivation behind starting CBOs. However, there were also reasons that are specific to the Eritrean community behind establishing CBOs that continued to be the determining factor of the services provided or activities implemented by the CBOs.

As previously mentioned, Eritrean UASC comprise the largest number of UASC in Egypt, and two of the CBOs interviewed were alert to this. Thus, one was established to provide psychosocial support and a safe space for youth who do not have any familial ties in Egypt, especially during the COVID-19 lock-down. In fact, they mentioned that depression was quite spread during this period, and they wanted to encourage youth to be productive and not surrender to the mental health repercussions of the isolation (CBO5, Personal Communication, 26 August 2022). The other CBO noticed the problems that youth in general and UASC in particular face due to the language barrier and their being in a more vulnerable position than others. They thus, established the CBO with the goal of preventing youth from resorting to harmful practices such as drug addiction, and spending their time aimlessly roaming the streets without doing something that would eventually benefit them (CBO2, Personal Communication, 4 September 2022).

Other CBOs were established to help what they perceived as "the most vulnerable of the vulnerable" which constituted the elderly who lost their families, or single mothers and women in general. According to the CBO leaders, these people are often isolated

from the community due health problems or fear of harassment (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). Another motivation behind establishing CBO was the novelty of the flows of Eritrean refugees to Egypt during its initial phase. As a member of the oldest CBOs mentioned, the CBO was established because the number of Eritreans who sought asylum was on the rise with no community associations or centers available for them. Thus, they wanted to create a center for the community to provide them with a sense of belonging (CBO3, Personal Communication, 7 September 2022).

Interestingly, two representatives of the CBOs interviewed mentioned that they started the CBO with the thought that resettlement is the goal of every asylum-seeker. Thus, the CBO was established to help refugees and asylum seekers prepare for their lives in resettlement countries by learning how to manage and navigate life in a foreign country and culture. Furthermore, and as similarly indicated in chapter one, one CBO was established as a response to the availability of a seed-fund that was provided by a PO (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). Most of these CBOs evolved to serve additional functions as their experience expanded and resources increased. That being said, all of the CBOs interviewed also shared a common general goal, which is filling social protection gaps, especially those pertaining to education and livelihoods, as well as developing the community and promoting independence and self-reliance.

6.2   The Role of CBOs in the Lives of Eritreans in Cairo

As highlighted in the section above, Eritrean CBOs were established to serve several functions. It was, thus, important to understand the range of activities and roles they play in the lives or living conditions of Eritrean refugees. This section aims to provide an overview of the main services that they provide, while providing context specific data

about the need for these services. The section is split into two parts, services that are related to social protection gaps left by both the State and UNHCR and its POs, and a section on services/activities that CBOs found necessary to provide, the leaders of which are refugees who are aware of the issues of the community.

6.2.1 Filling Social Protection Gaps

6.2.1.1 Access to Education

When asked about the most important service that CBOs provide, the interviewees stated that educational services were certainly the most important for Eritrean refugees in Egypt. Most of the interviewed CBOs have a school associated with them, and some have more than one. Those that do not have an associated school hold educational language classes at the very least, which is considered the most important step towards receiving an education in Egypt. CBOs also help with information-sharing and connecting refugees with CRS, which provides school grants for children enrolled in schools. All of these community schools teach the Sudanese curriculum up to high-school level, for a lower fee than all private schools in Egypt. While some CBOs consider the Sudanese curriculum to be weak, they still try to compensate by hiring skillful teachers (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022). Additionally, two of the CBOs opened a nursery for young children, which is considered an asset for working mothers, and a safe space for children to learn.

CBOs which have been operating for a while managed to find creative solutions to ensure a beneficial and a high quality education. For instance, one of the CBOs managed to form a partnership with an Egyptian governmental school and offer Eritrean children formal education using both the Egyptian and the Sudanese curriculum. Due to their

success, they were able to open four branches in different locations, and have around 1,500 enrolled students (CBO3, Personal Communication, 7 September 2022). Another CBO created an academy in which they offer language courses, and a third formed a partnership with an Egyptian center to teach computer skills with certification. The same CBO offers courses for both Egyptians and Eritreans, and they hire Egyptian teachers; with the aim of integrating Eritrean refugees into the host community and encouraging Egyptians to accept them. During COVID-19 lockdown, some CBOs offered online educational classes. These schools are very valued by Eritrean refugees due to the lower fees and their proximity to their homes. Additionally, they act as a safe space which helps mitigate the risks of harmful practices among youth. The majority of these schools require a blue, yellow, or a white card to accept children in order for children to be able to take the annual examinations. However, there is one school that was initiated to help unregistered children receive education (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022).

That being said, CBOs face significant challenges running their schools. The first and biggest challenge being funding. While these schools charge a fee, it is not enough to cover the needed equipment, supplies, and proper furniture. This is especially true because some parents are unable to pay the fees, while CBOs continue to offer them the service. Moreover, most of the teachers are volunteers which raises issues of sustainability. CBOs are unable to keep up with the demand, nor are they able to raise the fees in fear of disadvantaging children and depriving them of the already limited educational opportunities. Finally, many of these CBOs are bound by the rules of POs that offer them support, and thus, they are only able to serve registered refugees, denying

closed-file asylum seekers and unregistered Eritreans the opportunity to educate their children.

6.2.1.2 Access to Work

The role of CBOs in filling in the gap in access to work starts from the documentation process. As previously mentioned, at least a UNHCR card is needed to find a job in the informal labor market. CBOs help assist unregistered asylum seekers through guiding Eritreans to UNHCR's services, or through direct referrals to UNHCR. During COVID-19 lockdown, CBOs helped asylum seekers register online. Additionally, there are CBOs that provide youth with life skills training to help prepare them for work. They also provide referrals to livelihoods programs at UNHCR's POs such as Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, and Don Bosco. In preparation for the engagement of refugees in the Egyptian labor market, some CBOs provide non-Arabic speakers with Arabic language courses, English courses, and handicraft trainings such as knitting, sewing, henna drawing, and makeup for a low fee. One of the most important contributions of some CBOs is that they open the doors for refugees to join POs as volunteers. CBOs provide them with recommendation letters, raising their chances in being accepted at these POs. They are, however, mostly youth who know both English and Arabic. CBOs also guide youth to available job training/workshops at POs. Another CBO is specialized in training refugees on graphic design and the basics of computer programming, and International Computer Driving License (ICDL). Others offer courses in mobile phones repair and maintenance.

That being said, some noted that the capacities of CBOs are limited in terms of equipment and resources. It was clear during the FGDs that women who were registered

with UNHCR benefit the most from CBO job training services, while closed-file refugees in general and men in particular do not find them very beneficial. One of the CBOs explained that this is because most women were single mothers who have no partner to support them, as such, they tried to maximize their benefits to be able to provide for their children. They said that 80% of their beneficiaries are single mothers (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022). All of the participants agreed that CBOs help lift off some of pressure on them through things like food boxes and medication, but the resources are still extremely limited. When asked about their opinion about the role that CBOs play in access to work, a PO stated that other than capacity building, CBOs were not capacitated enough to make a big difference (PO1, Personal Communication, 30 August 2022).

6.2.2 Responding to the Needs of the Eritrean Community

While the role that CBOs play in filling in social protection gaps left by the formal refugee regime is undeniably important, they have done much more for the Eritrean community; due to their proximity to it, and their awareness of and sensitivity to its issues.

6.2.2.1 Documentation

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the issue of documentation is one that is widely faced by Eritrean refugees, with no potential solution given the lack of cooperation of the Eritrean Embassy in Egypt. The impact of such lack of documentation directly affects Eritrean refugees from the moment of registration until more specific stages such as seeking education. They are often unable to prove the age of their children, nor their educational level, among other things also related to their RSD. While it is less common of a service, one of the CBOs realized the issue and took steps to address it. The CBO

provides anecdotal evidence in the form of letters to POs or UNHCR signifying the name, tribe, the situation in the origin country, and family name of Eritreans who lack formal documentation. They also provide letters to landlords who request personal identification documents from Eritreans who have no documentation and are seeking to rent an apartment, where the CBO leaders act as guarantors. They also stated that they were in the process of providing letters verifying marriages between couples who lost their marriage certificates during the flight (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). Unfortunately, none of the FGD participants received this service from the CBO to verify the extent of its benefit. However, the CBO leaders stated that most Eritreans in Egypt had known or at least heard of one another's families back home, and that these letters were, indeed, considered by whom they are presented to.

6.2.2.2 Creating Community Bonds and Nurturing the Eritrean Culture

Eritreans, as presented in chapter 3, have been fleeing to Egypt for years, and new flows continue to arrive until the present day. Thus, CBOs build on the experience that older generations of Eritrean refugees in Greater Cairo gained and the relative stability they achieved to assist new arrivals. Some CBOs resort to families already registered and settled in apartments to take in unregistered Eritreans who share with them a tribal affiliation; until they register and "stand on their feet" (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). As another CBO stated, the first thing Eritreans do when they arrive in the country is look for other Eritreans, and "civil society initiatives are the most important resource for them" (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022). Thus, CBOs work on fostering community ties to utilize it as a resource for Eritreans. This explains why all the CBOs interviewed have stated that one of their goals

is to create a safe space for Eritreans where they can come together and connect with one another. They try to help Eritrean refugees regain their sense of autonomy and self-determination. For instance, one of the CBOs mentioned that every or every other month they have a discussion on a topic that was raised by the CBO's beneficiaries. Additionally, two of the CBOs mentioned that they have a cultural day where they bring together Eritreans to celebrate their culture, wear their traditional clothes, and listen to their traditional music (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022; CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022).

Moreover, two other CBOs work on teaching youth, especially UASC, about the history of the Eritrean history and its struggle over the years. They do so to avoid the loss of the Eritrean culture among its youth who did not have the chance to live in the country long enough. Some CBOs have mentioned that the goal behind holding educational classes is to give youth and their parents a safe place to spend their times, instead of spending it unproductively, eventually falling into the trap of idleness and harmful habits such as drug addiction or taking dangerous trips to cross the Mediterranean. The FGDs' participants have shared positive experiences about the CBO they frequent, stating that they go to the CBO on daily basis to have a drink, chat with their friends, or use the free internet. Another CBO holds meetings for single mothers to come together, talk, and share tea, in order to provide them with a sense of solidarity and belonging in exile (CBO9, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). Moreover, one CBO started an initiative titled "Inspiring Eritrean Women", where they speak to women who have an influence on their community or managed to overcome a tough situation (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). These activities are done alongside activities that

aim to provide Eritreans and their children with an outlet, such as renting playgrounds and having sports competitions, going on trips, or holding classes at their premises such as positive discipline for parents, cooking classes, and embroidery and sewing classes. Moreover, one CBO provides temporary shelter for women in tough situations (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022).

Their accessibility and proximity to the homes of Eritrean refugees, the shared culture and language, the shared sympathy, and the honesty and transparency between Eritreans and Eritrean CBOs have been praised by many of the FGD participants, especially youth. In order to give the community a sense of ownership, and due to the workload, most of the CBOs have their doors open for any Eritrean who wants to volunteer and support them. In fact, one of the CBOs has a volunteering charter, on which the volunteers read the terms and conditions and sign to adhere to it (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022).

Another major role that Eritrean CBOs play in the life of Eritrean refugees is reconciling the longstanding differences between different groups of Eritreans. The first group constitutes Eritreans who fled to Egypt directly from Eritrea or Sudan, and those who spent some time, or the majority of their lives in the GCC states, and specifically Saudi Arabia, before coming to Egypt. As stated by the youth FGD participants, the two groups are completely isolated and tend to avoid one another (FGD2, Personal Communication, 1 September 2022). The reason behind this, as explained by two other CBO leaders, is the misconception that Eritreans raised in Saudi Arabia are richer, more privileged, and as previously mentioned in chapter 3, are the only Eritreans that pay the 2% diaspora tax. This misconception, sometimes, creates tension between them, and

Eritreans who "lived the struggle" of displacement from Sudan or Eritrea (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). One of the CBOs, according to some of the FGDs' participants have paid attention to this issue and they made sure to bring the two parties together through group activities to teach them about their shared history and culture.

Another group constitutes Eritreans from the highlands and those from the lowlands or on the Sudanese borders. According to one CBO, Eritreans from the highlands are typically Christian non-Arabic speakers, while those from the lowlands are Muslim and Arabic speakers. This CBO stated that one of the most important services they provide is bringing the two together, and teaching highland Eritreans the Arabic language to lessen their isolation from the other Eritreans, and the host community. Their second most important service, that often goes unnoticed, is resolving family feuds between children and parents, or even married couples. Through their status as community leaders, the CBO leaders mediate between family members to resolve any disputes (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022).

6.2.2.3 Bridging the Gap with the Host Community

One of the aims of this thesis is to examine all potential types of social capital that Eritrean refugees in Egypt rely on. After all, Eritreans share neighborhoods, workplaces, and transportation with Egyptians. Throughout the interviews and FGDs conducted for this thesis, it has been noted that the relationship between Eritrean refugees and the host community is quite weak and superficial. When asked about their relationship with Egyptians around them, most of the interviewees stated that the relationship is non-existent at best. It has been stated, by most of the FGDs' participants and CBO leaders, that the relationship depends on the behavior of the person. They mentioned that

Egyptians usually reciprocate the treatment of an Eritrean, or any foreigner, whether it is good or bad. They also mentioned that it highly depends on the neighborhood. For instance, if the neighborhood is known for the presence of thugs, they are susceptible to being harassed or intercepted. Some reported negative experiences such as being overcharged for goods, rent and transportation, being reported to the landlord for having too many visitors or for making noise, and being the second priority after Egyptians when they stand in queues at supermarkets. Children are the ones who suffer harassment the most in streets and at school (CBO1, Personal Communication, 27 August, 2022). Interestingly, most of the research participants complained of harassment by other refugee communities more than Egyptians.

A fewer number of participants reported positive experiences with the host community. These experiences include receiving help from their Egyptian neighbors in times of crisis such as lending money, or food, in addition to sharing weddings and funerals. However, the vast majority stated that their relationship with the host community does not exceed formal greetings and necessary daily interactions with shopkeepers and doormen. The reason for such lack of interaction has been widely attributed by the research participants to the nature of Eritreans as pacifist who keep to themselves most of the time. As a result of their long-term exile and in their search for a place to call home, most of the Eritreans interviewed stated that they are grateful to be hosted by Egypt, as one of the women interviewed stated: "If you are a stranger, be polite"[9] (FGD4, Personal Communication, 6 September 2022). They have no expectations from the host

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[9] An English translation of the Arabic proverb "Koun adeeb ya ghareeb" which means that a person should be on their best behavior if they are at a guest's house.

community. Accordingly, most Eritreans "walk by the wall"[10] and prefer to avoid any interaction with people outside their close circle of relatives or acquaintances. Some even avoid interaction with other Eritreans. Moreover, one of the research participants stated that Eritrean, of all other nationalities, fear deportation the most, due to the grave repercussions it puts on their lives if they go back home. Thus, they maintain a low profile.

The second reason mentioned is related to the difference in traditions and dialects. For instance, some Eritrean families live in mixed homes (both males and females); which is unusual for Egyptians. They also tend to visit one another and stay over for days, and sometimes weeks; in cases of death or weddings, which sometimes raises the suspicion of their Egyptian neighbors. Lack of awareness about the Eritrean people, their history with Egypt, and what led them to flee their countries to Egypt has also been cited as a reason for the lack interaction. As one participant said: "People fear whom and what they do not know" (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). The third reason, as one CBO and one of the FGD participants explained, is related to sharing resources with Egyptians who are also marginalized. According to them, Egyptians could potentially be afraid of losing their resources to their non-Egyptian competitors (Eritreans). This issue is compounded by the misconception that refugees they are rich since they receive assistance from international organizations (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). This finding was reached in Grabska's study (Grabska, 2005, p. 80), and has been extensively explained by scholars using the Realistic Conflict Theory (Coenders et al., 2005; Zárate et al., 2004).

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[10] An Arabic proverb which means to stay off the radar and maintain a low profile.

While some CBO leaders also adopted the same technique of isolating themselves from the host community to avoid conflict, several CBOs detected this isolation as a problem and took an active decision to solve it. The first important approach that CBOs adopted is educating Eritreans about the host country, its culture and traditions, and how to mitigate risks. Four different CBOs have attempted to try and bridge the gap between Egyptians and Eritreans, in order to mitigate the risk of exclusion and discrimination. The first held an entertainment event that aimed at connecting Syrians, Eritreans, and Egyptians who share the neighborhood. They invited 10 families of each, however, only one Egyptian family showed up. Despite the difficulty in assessing the impact of this event, the CBO continues to deliver awareness sessions about acceptance of others for both Egyptians and Eritreans whenever they can (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022).

They also started buying items used to make food boxes, given out to people in need, from neighboring shops. This has strengthened the relationships between Egyptian shopkeepers and Eritreans in the area, as they see them as potential source of income. Additionally, the same CBOs does not hesitate to provide Egyptians in need, in their area, with food boxes and other in-kind assistance. Moreover, they deliver awareness raising sessions for Eritreans on how to avoid being over-charged, how to tell if the rent fees are reasonable or not, or how to tell if a utility bill is accurate. They also deliver awareness raising sessions about the Egyptian culture and what is acceptable, in addition to the most common risks and how to mitigate them.

Another CBO invites Egyptians, Syrians, and Eritreans to a range of activities such as fitness classes, bazars, and cultural days where they present their native food, music,

and clothes. Moreover, a few CBOs include Egyptians in their services with Eritreans such as Quran, ICDL, and English classes, in addition to hiring Egyptian teachers. A PO acknowledged these attempts stating that CBOs teach Eritreans how to survive the everyday life in Egypt, which he considers as one of the most important beneficial services that CBOs assist Eritreans with. For instance, they teach them how to use public transportation like the metro, how to deal with shopkeepers, and most importantly, how to respond to being stopped by the police, their entitlements, and their duties.

6.3   Sustainability and Mobilization of Resources: Making Ends Meet

When exploring the role of CBOs, especially in a context where they have no access to formal sources of funding, sustainability comes into question. As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, given their unregistered status, CBOs do not have access to funding channels that registered NGOs usually have. Thus, all the CBOs have been asked about the means by which they ensure their sustainability, not only in terms of funding; but also, in terms of maintaining their human resources. The answers of the CBOs revolved around three key resources.

6.3.1   *Social Networks with the Diaspora and the Eritrean Community*

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, the Eritrean community has been named a diasporic community, due to the long history of displacement across all destinations. Moreover, Eritreans maintain very strong social ties, which act as the most important source of support in exile. Despite the marginalization and hardships, most of the participants reiterated that the Eritrean culture is community and family-oriented. As one of the participants said, "It is highly unlikely for an Eritrean to see a brother in need and not intervene to help with even the little resource they have" (CBO1, Personal

Communication, 27 August, 2022). It is, thus, not a surprise that all of the CBOs, but one, were bootstrapped by the Eritrean community. Even the one CBO that started with a seed-fund from an organization metamorphosed from a nursery to a CBO through personal efforts of its leaders. Some CBOs started with no premises at all. For instance, one CBO used coffee shops as a space to listen to the community's issues; then saved up money together for a few years to rent an office. Little by little, the CBO leaders reached out to their community, and their acquaintances to furnish their premises. Another CBO settled for renting only a room in other community center out of their own pockets, until they were able to be legally register, which opened the door for funding channels. Throughout their lifespan, none of the CBOs interviewed had to close their premises except for one. When it was no longer sustainable for the CBO to operate, they networked with a Syrian CBO and implemented their activities at their premises until they were able to re-structure the operations and collect funding through community donations.

As for sustaining the everyday operations, Eritrean CBOs largely rely on donations from Eritreans. The donations range from in-kind donations such as clothes, food, equipment, and furniture to sums of money to respond to a major crisis such as COVID-19. One CBO resorts to Facebook groups and other platforms with a large number of Eritreans to open the door for donations when the need arises. The support of the Eritrean community is not limited to Egypt, as CBOs maintain strong networks with the Eritrean diaspora, and even other Eritrean CBOs in Europe and Saudi Arabia. While they are a great source of donations, the flow of support is not consistent and is limited to religious occasions such as almsgiving during Ramadan or during major crises such as COVID-19, or sponsorship of families in long-term dire situations. Some have stated that the

Eritrean diaspora is also struggling at their destinations, which disables them from sending support to Eritreans in Egypt. They also would rather support their families who did not manage to flee Eritrea (CBO8, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). Moreover, receiving the money, even if it is regular, constitutes a problem; given the inability to open bank accounts. However, some CBOs found trustworthy parties who can help channel the money in, in the form of in-kind items.

6.3.2 Income-Generating Activities

The second source of support for Eritrean CBOs interviewed is income-generating activities and services. CBOs, especially the ones that offer education services charge a small fee in return of their classes. These fees, along with the donations are enough to cover the rent and basic facilities. Additionally, POs and researchers sometimes rent the CBO rooms to implement an activity or conduct an FGD with the Eritrean community in return of a fee, which also constitutes a source of income for the CBOs. In addition to the income-generating activities, some POs implement projects that aim to enhance and build the capacities of CBOs. While these POs are very limited in number, they play a substantial role in the continuity of CBO operations and its expansion. The support they offer, in addition to training community leaders, include providing CBOs with in-kind items such as computers, furniture, in addition to food and other forms of assistance that the CBO can provide to the Eritrean community. However, these POs often offer short-term support, which, in some cases, can be extended. The longest a CBO has ever been enrolled in a program of that sort was 3 years. It is worth noting that four of the Eritrean CBOs currently functioning in Greater Cairo are receiving support from one of these POs.

6.3.3 The Host Community

The third and final source of support for CBOs is the relationships they maintain with the host community. As mentioned in the previous section, CBOs are aware of the importance of their ties with the host community and local institutions. Through their amicable behavior and the inclusion of Egyptians in some of their activities, some CBOs managed to find sources of funding and services through the host community. One CBO mentioned that they are known in the area as a "place for charitable activities", and thus, they often receive donations from the nearby Egyptian mosques (CBO3, Personal Communication, 7 September 2022). Others managed to form informal partnerships with neighboring Egyptian service providers. For instance, a CBO connected with a healthcare center and they provide healthcare services for Eritreans in need. Additionally, the same CBO is frequented by the Egyptian Red Crescent, which provided over 600 Eritreans with basic healthcare services, vaccinations and first aid training (CBO2, Personal Communication, 4 September 2022). Some Egyptian charity organizations such as Mersal and Resala also accept some referrals from CBOs or provide them with in-kind services (CBO4, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022; PO1, Personal Communication, 30 August 2022). Another CBO has a partnership with an Egyptian educational center to provide computer skills at a reduced cost. One interesting form of support is one between a CBO and Syrian teachers, who provide language courses and charges only 50% of the fee (CBO7, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). Finally, CBOs prioritize their services based on a list of people that they keep, given that their resources are not enough to cover every Eritrean.

6.3.4 Human Resources

The second issue that comes to mind when exploring the question of sustainability is human resources. As previously explained, the CBOs provide a variety of services, which requires committed teams to manage service provision. When asked about how they guarantee that their human resources do not leave them, CBOs mentioned several methods. Firstly, four of the CBOs mentioned that they appointed their members based on their qualifications and their interest, to ensure that they do something that they are skilled at, and that they are passionate about. Secondly, all the CBO leaders are volunteers with the exception of one, who receives an incentive from an organization in return of connecting the organization to the community, as part of their project goals. The vast majority of the CBOs maintain an operation model of voluntary work only. It has been mentioned during the interviews that the community leaders expect no income out of their work at CBOs.

All the CBO activities are managed and run by volunteers. Some CBOs maintain a list of permanent volunteers, and another of temporary ones. The temporary ones are only reached out to in times of need, to avoid overwhelming them; and also to ensure the constant presence of a back-up. As for the permanent volunteers, they are usually the ones that started the CBOs. The majority of volunteers are also youth. A CBO fully acknowledged that relying on volunteers with no payment can always lead to them leaving for a job that provides them with an income. Instead of trying to stop people from leaving, they make sure they train a large number of Eritreans to always have people to replace those who leave either for RST, personal conflicts, or a job. During the time of the interview, 6 women and men were being trained by this CBO. As the CBO. Leader said:

"We are sustainable because we have a vision and a goal. If you have a goal, you study the possible challenges and you take your precautions" (CBO2, Personal Communication, 4 September 2022).

Other CBOs only function with its establishers while also maintaining networks with other community members who are contacted when the need arises. A good question that comes to mind is: Why would these people continue working at these CBOs if they are unpaid? which was asked to the CBO leaders. They stated two main benefits for volunteers. First, it helps them a re-claim their feeling of control over their and their community's lives, defies the feeling of helplessness through ownership, and provides them with a safe space and a sense of belonging. The second is that youth often work at these CBOs to gain experience working with refugee communities, then apply to work as para-social workers or interpreters at POs. None of the CBOs saw this as a loss. In fact, they stated that they offer them recommendation letters when needed, as a payback for their service. A CBO also stated that these volunteers often return to train them and provide them with the experience they gained at POs, making it beneficial for both the CBO and the volunteer. That being said, the turnover does have its repercussions on CBOs. Finally, POs that implement projects which aim to enhance the capacities of CBOs hire a few employees to be working from and supporting the CBO.

6.4 Challenges and Opportunities within the Landscape of CBOs

As much as this thesis set out to explore the importance of CBOs for Eritrean refugees, and the challenges they face a result of the way the refugee regime operates, it also acknowledges and considers any potential challenge that may that arise from within the community. The interviews with the CBO leaders, and most importantly the FGD

participants revealed several challenges. The most pronounced, and common, of which are four as highlighted below.

Clan/tribal affiliations and the resulting fragmentation within CBOs is a central theme that is recurrent in literature about CBOs both globally (Griffiths, 2000; Hopkins, 2006; Sahin Mencutek, 2021) and in Egypt (Grabska, 2006). It was, thus, necessary to explore if tribal affiliations influence the way Eritrean CBOs function in Egypt; especially since Eritreans belong to nine different tribes. When asked about whom they serve, without implying any discriminatory practices being questioned, all the CBOs strongly stressed that they follow a non-discrimination policy. In fact, all nine CBOs mentioned that they serve people of all nationalities, which are usually Yemenis, Sudanese, South Sudanese, Syrians, Ethiopians, and sometimes even Egyptians. One of the CBO leaders highlighted that in addition to serving all nationalities, they do not differentiate between a Muslim and a Christian. However, it is usually Eritreans who approach these CBOs, given that other nationalities have also established their own CBOs. The only CBO that is selective of who is served is one that does not discriminate based on age but rather has a 'scope' and a 'target group.' This is mainly because they started the CBO to support youth from 18 to 35 of age. One of the two POs interviewed also stressed that tribal affiliations do not have much of an influence on Eritrean CBOs compared to other nationalities.

That being said, some of the FGDs' participants revealed a different story. For instance, one of the young participants stated that she had been repeatedly re-directed by a CBO to another because she did not belong to the same tribe as the CBO leaders. While they did not ask her about her affiliation, they were able to tell from the dialect or

from the birthplace, if written on the UNHCR card. Another explained that when she asked a certain CBO's leaders why they were inquiring about her tribe, they stated that they usually help their tribes from their own pockets or charity donations directed at their tribe rather than from the resources of the CBO. This was reiterated by the second PO interviewed, which stated that this is actually one of the main issues of CBOs. The PO referred Eritreans to some CBOs who were denied services, and they were only offered the service when the PO intervened (PO2, Personal Communication, 29 August 2022). Most of the other participants, however, mentioned that Eritreans in general help each other, regardless of the tribal affiliation. It was mentioned by several CBOs that Eritrean community leaders tried to form a unified committee for Eritreans and hold elections annually to select a spokesman to represent Eritreans before UNHCR and its POs. However, and due to biases related to tribal affiliations, the election process has been interrupted and did not yield any results.

The second issue detected during the interviews pertains to the influence of the formal refugee regime and funding channels on CBOs. As previously mentioned, some POs provide CBOs with support in one form or another. Some CBOs adopt the same way of operations as formal refugee-serving organizations. It has been noted, during the interview, that one CBO only serves Eritreans who are registered or have an intention to register with UNHCR. Moreover, conforming with the way POs operate was reflected in the term used by the leaders to refer to their organizations. Those who have closer ties with POs or receive their support usually use the term endorsed by UNHCR and its partners, justifying this by saying: "CBO is the term we prefer because we have the structure of an organization" (CBO3, Personal Communication, 7 September 2022).

Interestingly, the same CBO, when referring to their organization in its former shape, before partnering with a PO; they used the term "initiative." Those, functioning completely independently, however, used terms that reflect their own autonomy such as "initiative", "association", "cultural center", or most interestingly: "It does not matter, as long as it serves Eritreans" as one CBO leader stated (CBO7, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022).

While the term used, on its own, does not pose an issue, the tendency to conform with what UNHCR and its POs endorse as what constitutes a CBO translates into institutionalizing the way service recipients are selected and filtered. This so called 'NGO-ization' of CBOs, as previously referred to in Chapter 1, has led some closed-file refugees to fall off the radar of some of the CBOs. Even though the majority of CBOs mentioned that they serve anyone regardless of their refugee status, some of the closed-file refugees mentioned that they do not even approach CBOs because they ask for a file number. As one closed-file refugee stated:

> I am with CBOs on this one. Your donor will always ask you who you gave money and support to, and without a card and a file number, how will you be able to prove where the money was spent? (FGD5, Personal Communication, 8 September 2022).

Whether it is a misconception on the part of closed-file refugees or a reality, it has eventually led these Eritreans to feel excluded from the scope of these CBOs altogether. That being said, the institutional way of operating is not without its merits. For instance, the leaders of one CBO who work at POs have gained good knowledge about the do no harm and non-discrimination policies from their work and started applying it in their CBOs.

The third issue that CBOs face is the turnover rate of their volunteers and leaders. As Jones argued, community leaders and refugees who work at UNHCR and its POs are more likely to be qualified for and to seek resettlement (2015). This means that these individuals who managed to form networks, gain experience, and receive training leave abruptly along with the skills and the know-how they acquired during their time at CBOs. Furthermore, these leaders, as well as volunteers, sometimes argue, get sick, or seek paid jobs. While CBOs try to pro-actively address this issue by keeping a database of volunteers and constantly training new persons, the accumulation of experience that the leaders gained throughout the years is still unmatched by new volunteers.

Closely related to the narrative about NGO-ization is the sense of competition that it creates. Despite the existence of a good number of CBOs and their presence since as early as 2015, they have not established any kind of formal referral pathways between one another. As one CBO stated: "There needs to be cooperation between CBOs, instead of it being a competition" (CBO7, Personal Communication, 2 September 2022). In fact, one CBO used the term "competition" as they said: "We have a lot of competitors, so we need to always be innovative and attractive with our activities" (CBO9, Personal Communication, 3 September 2022). Only CBOs that are enrolled in the capacity building program by a PO have a relatively stronger network and share information and services with one another. This network is important because it prevents duplication of services and allows for a better resources management. That being said, many of the FGDs' participants expressed that the support of Eritrean CBOs will have a much better influence on them if they unite, to avoid fragmentation and the loss of the voice of the Eritrean people amid all the disputes.

6.5   Conclusion

This chapter aimed to achieve three goals. First, it aimed to explore the third and final scale that this thesis is concerned with, which is the relationship between CBOs and one another, and refugees. Second, it aimed to conclude the thesis by exploring the roles that CBOs play in the lives of Eritreans in Egypt, by building on the findings of the previous chapters. Furthermore, the chapter sought to examine the main challenges that the CBOs face and how they overcome it. The chapter explored the CBO leaders' motivation behind the establishment of CBOs, which was found to be stemming out of the closeness to the community, living its struggles, and wanting to utilize the slightly better resources they have in helping themselves and their community. As for the role of Eritrean CBOs, it extended far beyond filling in social protection gaps left by the State and UNHCR and its POs. Eritrean CBOs were found to be a great source of support in addressing Eritrean-specific issues such as documentation. They also act a place to foster and celebrate the Eritrean culture, create community bonds, and provide Eritreans with a space to exercise agency. One of the key findings of this chapter is that CBOs help bridge the gap between the Eritrean and the Egyptian community. This suggests that Eritrean CBOs act as not only bonding capital, but also facilitate access to bridging capital. As for the challenges that arise from within the community, the findings suggest that tribal affiliations play a role in determining who receives a service. However, adopting the agenda and the refugee-serving organizations' way of operations is a bigger challenge, as it causes some groups of the community to be neglected or excluded (such as closed-file refugees). It can be concluded, from this chapter that social capital is the most important resource not only for Eritrean refugees but also for their CBOs, which flows both ways. From CBOs to refugees

in the form of services, and from refugees and the Eritrean diaspora in the form of donations and voluntary work. Finally, the chapter has highlighted the unmatchable resilience and ability to self-mobilize among Eritreans, which when and if utilized correctly, by the formal refugee regime can help reach more sustainable solutions for Eritreans in Egypt.

Conclusion

During the formulation of the research questions, this thesis had three primary aims. By presenting an overview of the contemporary Eritrean CBOs currently operating Eritreans in Greater Cairo, the thesis aimed to explore the role that Eritrean CBOs in play in the lives of Eritrean refugees, asylum seekers, and closed-file refugees face in Greater Cairo. These roles entail filling in social protection gaps left by the formal refugee-concerned actors (the State and UNHCR and its POs), as well as other potential roles that contribute to improving the lives of Eritreans in Greater Cairo. Second and building on the global shift towards promoting self-reliance and UNHCR's adoption of the community-based approach, this thesis sought to examine the extent to which these CBOs are dealt with as key actors among the formal refugee-serving organizations. The third goal of this thesis was to identify the main challenges that hinder Eritrean CBOs from performing their intended roles and explore how they navigate these challenges.

In order to answer the main research question concerning the role of Eritrean CBOs in improving the lives of Eritrean refugees in Greater Cairo and the challenges they face, the following secondary research questions were examined: *'What are CBOs? What is their role? And who do they serve?', 'what are the main social protection gaps that Eritrean CBOs fill?', 'what is the relationship between Eritrean CBOs and UNHCR and its POs, and how does this relationship impact the CBOs?', 'what are the main procedural challenges facing each of the Eritrean CBOs currently functioning in Greater Cairo?', 'How do Eritrean CBOs in Cairo ensure their sustainability?'*. This thesis adopted a multi-scalar approach; through which the various intersections and interactions between CBOs and other actors concerned with refugees were investigated. The actors whose

relationship with CBOs was investigated were the State, UNHCR and its POs, Eritrean refugees, as well as CBOs themselves. The findings showed that establishment of Eritrean CBOs in Greater Cairo have, in some cases, stemmed out of social protection gaps left by the formal refugee regime. As Chapters 4 and 5 showed, and based on Dowd & Türk's concept of implementation gaps (2014), the legal framework governing refugees in general and Eritrean refugees in particular in Egypt makes it difficult for them to access essential rights. For Eritreans in Egypt, access to education and work were reported to be the two most challenging gaps. While the traditional service providers try to intervene to fill in some of these gaps, their intervention is far from enough. Thus, most of the CBOs were found to offer services that help address these two gaps.

That being said, it was evident throughout this research that the role of Eritrean CBOs extends far beyond mere gap filling. Being founded and led by Eritrean refugees, the findings indicate that CBO leaders are aware and alert to the specific needs of the Eritrean community. Eritrean refugees in Egypt stand at a marginal position. They mainly rely on their social networks to navigate life in Egypt, and this is when the role of CBO becomes most evident. Owing to the long history of displacement and the precarious conditions in which they live, Chapter 6 shows that CBOs offer for Eritrean refugees more than only services. They act as sites in which Eritreans can re-claim their connection to their culture and create ties to replace those lost as a result of displacement, through their bonding capital. They help to reconcile prejudices that have developed over the years between different groups of Eritreans, and they also provide a space for Eritreans to re-claim and exercise their agency through the opportunity for volunteering and helping one another. But one of the key interesting finds of this study is that they help, through their

inclusion of Egyptians in their activities, to create bridging capital between Eritreans and Egyptians.

As previously mentioned, this thesis aimed to identify and document the challenges that CBOs face while trying to operate. It also sought to situate Eritrean CBOs within the landscape of actors concerned with refugees in Egypt. As indicated in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the challenges and the placement of CBOs are interwoven. Some challenges preceded the establishment of CBOs. As evident in the analysis of the legal framework that Eritrean CBOs, as civil society organizations, fall under; CBOs are marginalized by the law that set unachievable requirements for legalizing their status. The findings also suggest that CBOs are similarly marginalized by UNHCR and many of its partners, and are not perceived as legitimate partners. This marginalization is manifested in the apparent lack of recognition of and cooperation with Eritrean CBOs, and the inadequate enforcement of UNHCR's community-based approach.

Interestingly, this thesis presents a case of both positive and negative implications of marginality. As indicated by the findings of Chapter 4, while CBOs are practically unable to legalize their situation, they are not targeted by the State. Thus, their marginality has positive implications because it allows them to function freely without bearing the cost of being under the purview of the State's oversight. However, this marginality translates into lack of access to resources that would ensure their sustainability and enhance their operations. As for their sustainability, it was evident that Eritrean CBOs depend on their social networks in the form of the Eritrean diaspora and Eritreans in Egypt, as much as Eritreans depend on CBOs. The thesis also considered the challenges that may arise from within the Eritrean community. The findings suggest that while tribal affiliations

sometimes influence service provision by CBOs, NGO-ization and competition over funding is more likely to cause fragmentation and inadvertently causes some groups to fall outside the CBOs' scope of support.

This thesis has contributed to an evolving global policy (IASC, 2016a; United Nations, 2018; UNHCR, 2021b) and academic (Betts et al., 2020a; Easton-Calabria & Pincock, 2018) debate on the importance of including refugee-led organizations and the localization of funds in humanitarian response and development aid, especially considering their role during the COVID-19 pandemic (UNHCR, 2021d). It also builds on and scarce scholarly work on CBOs in Egypt, and contributes to it by considering their role as providers of social protection. It fills a gap in literature about the contemporary issues, needs, and collective forms of survival among Eritrean refugees in the urban setting of Greater Cairo; a group of refugees whose UASC constitute the largest number among UASC in Egypt, and whose numbers in Egypt have been on the rise in the last decade. The thesis also traces the history of displacement from Eritrea to Egypt across different eras (chapter 3), which helps contextualize their presence, and sheds light on the uniquely protracted nature of their displacement. This historical overview could serve as a reference for others looking into the characteristics of the Eritrean displacement and its trajectories.

On the methodological level, adopting a multi-scalar approach helped provide a holistic view of the different scales intersecting with Eritrean CBOs through a relational framework, both bottom-up and top-down. The multi-scalar approach combined with the Global Governed and Post-protection concepts acted as a compass that helped in keeping CBOs at the center of the analysis. Rather than solely focusing on the

relationship between CBOs and the State, or CBOs and UNHCR; the thesis first identified all the different forces that could possibly influence, enable, constrain, and intersect with CBOs, and how they relate to one another. Furthermore, instead of limiting the research to a few Eritrean CBOs as a case study, this thesis has mapped all the existing Eritrean CBOs across Greater Cairo. This allowed for examining all the roles they play, the challenges they face, and the strategies they adopt to navigate.

The relational examination revealed that each of these scales do not function in a vacuum and are tightly interlinked. As presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the State has a direct impact on CBOs through its restrictive law that makes it impossible for these CBOs to register. It also has an indirect impact on CBOs by conditioning UNHCR and its POs' adherence to the CBA, causing their marginalization. Furthermore, it indirectly contributes to the CBOs' prioritization and selection of the services they provide, through leaving social protection gaps unfilled by the legal framework governing Eritrean refugees. Likewise, UNHCR and its POs' are directly influenced by the States policies and laws towards refugees in general and Eritrean refugees in particular, allowing them to only partially address these gaps. This serves as an indirect influence on CBOs that have to intervene to offer alternative solutions for these gaps.

This is linked to the way in which this thesis can be utilized on the practical level. As shown in chapter 4, the thesis examined the first scale comprising the relationship between CBOs and the State through analyzing the law of NGOs that CBOs fall under, and the ways in which these CBOs navigate despite the limitations. This analysis is important for two reasons. First, no other studies were found to analyze the articles of this law, given its novelty. Second, it pinpoints the specific articles that CBOs are unable to

fulfill the requirements of, which provides a clearer pathway for advocacy. The second scale, as presented in chapter 5, looks into the relationship between CBOs and UNHCR and its partners. This is done through critically analyzing the CBA and investigating the extent to which it is implemented in the context of Egypt. This analysis helps specify the precise areas of improvement that need to be addressed by these organizations, whether through advocacy or through improving organizational practices, in order to achieve the intended goals of the CBA. Chapter 6 presents the third and final scale, in which the relationship between CBOs and refugees and CBOs and one another is investigated, and all the roles that Eritrean CBOs are presented. The findings of this chapter, could in turn, be utilized in planning projects incorporating Eritrean refugees in general, and Eritrean CBOs and community leaders in particular.

The major limitation of this study was lack of access and time constraints. While it would have added both depth and validation to the findings of this thesis, interviewing UNHCR was not feasible. Thus, the analysis of the relationship between UNHCR and CBOs was based on the narratives of the CBO leaders, refugees, and two POs. Furthermore, only two POs were interviewed for this thesis. The narratives of more POs would have added important insights about their view of CBOs, their level of cooperation with them, and the extent of their inclusion of CBOs in their projects. It would have also validated the findings collected from the CBOs. Moreover, the sample of closed-file refugees was extremely small due to the difficulty in reaching them, as a result of their sensitive legal status. Finally, due to the sensitivity of the research and the critical inputs of the respondents, all the respondents have been anonymized. It would have been certainly helpful to publish the mapping of all the Eritrean CBOs.

There are also areas that could add to the scholarly work on CBOs in Egypt that I was not able to address in this thesis. The scope of this thesis can be broadened by including the narratives of Egyptians that share the neighborhoods with Eritreans and Eritrean CBOs, in order to thoroughly look into the presence of bridging capital. Moreover, it would be of great value to replicate this mapping exercise on CBOs of other nationalities, and compare and contrast their roles, their relationships with the same actors in this thesis, in addition to the impact of their displacement on their mode of operation in Egypt. The scope of the research on community self-mobilization could be broadened by exploring the relationships between refugees and CBOs of different nationalities. As presented in Chapter 5, some POs work on establishing partnerships between CBOs of all communities, which is worth exploring. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a comparative study between registered and unregistered CBOs, the challenges they face, and their placement within the landscape of refugee-concerned actors in Egypt would help identify whether the lack of cooperation and inclusion of the unregistered Eritrean CBOs stems from the lack of registration, or from the political stance on CSOs in Egypt. While one of the interviewed CBOs is indeed registered, it has only been registered for less than two years, which makes it too early to draw conclusions.

In the end, I hope, through this thesis, to have presented a holistic picture about Eritrean CBOs, their roles, and the challenges they face in Egypt; in addition to have encouraged formal refugee-concerned actors, including practitioners and policy makers to start considering ways in which CBOs can be incorporated as legitimate, and equal partners in addressing refugee issues.

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Appendix A

Interviews

Code	Method	Participant	Date of Interview
Refugees, asylum seekers, and closed-file Refugees			
FGD1	FGD	Asylum seeker Refugee Refugee Refugee Asylum seeker	1 September 2022
FGD2	FGD	Asylum seeker Asylum seeker Refugee Refugee	1 September 2022
FGD3	FGD	Refugee Asylum seeker Refugee Refugee Refugee	6 September 2022
FGD4	FGD	Asylum seeker Refugee Refugee Refugee Refugee Asylum seeker	6 September 2022
FGD5	FGD	Unregistered Closed-file Unregistered Closed-file	8 September 2022
FGD6	FGD	Closed-file Closed-file Closed-file	8 September 2022
CBOs			
CBO1	Semi-structured Interview	Registered Registered Registered Registered Registered	27 August 2022
CBO2	Semi-structured Interview	Registered Registered	4 September 2022
	Semi-structured Interview	Registered Registered	7 September 2022

CBO3		Registered	
CBO4	Semi-structured Interview	Registered Registered Registered	2 September 2022
CBO5	Semi-structured Interview	Registered Registered Registered	26 August 2022
CBO6	Semi-structured Interview	Registered	4 September 2022
CBO7	Semi-structured Interview	Registered Registered	2 September 2022
CBO8	Semi-structured Interview	Registered	3 September 2022
CBO9	Semi-structured Interview	Registered Registered	3 September 2022
Partner Organizations			
PO1	Semi-structured Interview	-	30 August 2022
PO2	Semi-structured Interview	-	29 August 2022

Appendix A. Interviews

Appendix B

Interview Guides

CBOs

Personal background:
1- Could you tell me more about yourself? (Age - Length of stay in Cairo -Status [refugee-asylum-seeker-migrant] -Educational background)
2- What is your current position in this CBO?

Background on the CBO
1- How many Eritrean CBOs are in Egypt, and where are they mostly functioning?
2- Could you tell me more about how your organization was established?
    a. When, why, and who established the CBO?
    b. How did you become involved in this organization?
    c. How do you define your organization (Is it a CBO or do you prefer another term)?
3- Could you tell me more about the scope of work of your organization? How different is your CBO from other CBOs? What gaps does it cover?
    a. What services does it provide?
    b. Who does it serve? (refugees/asylum seekers/migrants/all/ age groups/ gender)?
    c. What is the vision/mission/goals of your organization?
4- What is the organizational structure of your CBO? And what model is used to assign Individuals to the different roles (elections)?
5- How do you ensure the sustainability of your CBO in terms of funds and human resources?

Eritreans in Cairo
1- Could you tell me more about the status of Eritreans in Cairo?
    a. Are they mostly refugees and asylum seekers? Or are there many migrants?
    b. Where are they mostly clustered in Cairo?
2- What are the main reasons behind the fleeing of current waves of Eritreans?
3- What are the main challenges that Eritrean refugees in Cairo face/what are the main social protection gaps that are present?
    a. Who are considered the most vulnerable? By whom?
4- How would you perceive the relationship between Eritreans and Egyptians in Cairo?
5- How important and strong are community ties for Eritreans living in Cairo? (Examples)

CBO and the State
1- What is the legal status of your org?
2- What are the steps in order for a CBO to be registered?
3- Since you joined/established this organization, have you reached out to the Egyptian authorities or interacted with them at all?
4- How is the relationship between you as a community leader, and your CBO, with Egyptians? How do Egyptians perceive the work of your CBO in the area/neighborhood?
5- What are the legal and operational challenges?

CBOs and UNHCR/POs

1. How can you comment on collaboration between UNHCR (and other orgs) with your CBOs?
    a. How frequently do you contact UNHCR or any other organizations? and what are the channels of communication (referral pathways?)
    b. Would you say that UNHCR/IPs treats your CBO as a partner organization?
    c. Do you receive any support, fund or training from UNHCR/IPs?
    d. If yes, what are the requirements for a CBO to be acknowledged by UNHCR/IPs?
2. Are you aware of the presence of the Community-based Protection Unit and the community-based approach? Could you elaborate?
    a. How frequently are you invited to participate in working groups/meetings with these organizations?
3. What are the main service gaps that you fill when not provided by UNHCR and its Ips?
4. What are the main challenges that your organization faces in terms of collaboration with UNHCR?

CBO and refugees
1. What are the most common services that refugees resort to your CBO for?
2. Could you tell me about the role that your organization plays for unaccompanied minors if any?
3. What was your role during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?
4. What is the level of interaction/cooperation between your organization and other organizations?
5. Is your CBO involved in any umbrella networks in Egypt/abroad?
    a. Do you receive any support from other CBOs/individuals in other countries?
6. How do you evaluate the relationship between your organization and the Eritrean community in Cairo?
7. What are the main challenges that CBOs face within the community?

Wrap up
1. What recommendations do you have for UNHCR, its implementing partners and policy recommendations in order to better enhance the work of Eritrean CBOs?
2. What recommendations do you have for UNHCR, its implementing partners and policy recommendations in order to improve the lives of Eritrean refugees in Cairo?
3. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Focus Group Discussions

Background on Eritrean refugees in Egypt
1. Whom did you resort to first when you came to Egypt to help you settle?
    a. Did you know anyone in Cairo prior to arriving/do you have any relatives/networks in Cairo?
    b. Do you receive support from any of your relatives? (abroad-in Egypt)
2. Where do most Eritreans live in Cairo?
3. How can you describe your relationship with the host community (Egyptians)?
4. What are the most common challenges that Eritrean refugees face in Cairo?

Refugees and CBOs
1. Who do you resort to, in order to overcome these challenges?

2. When was the first time you visited a CBO?
   a. Which CBO was it?
   b. How did you hear about this CBO?
   c. Why did you resort to this CBO?
   d. Do CBOs offer services based on your status (asylum-seeker/refugee/closed file) or do they offer services equally to any Eritrean?
3. How frequently do you go to/contact this CBO?
   a. Is this the only CBO you go to? If yes, why? If no, what other CBOs do you go to?
4. What services do these CBOs offer? And what activities do you do in it?
   a. What is the most important service that you receive from these CBOs?/What is the most common service that you resort to these CBOs to receive?
5. During COVID-19 lockdown, who did you resort to when you needed support? What kind of support was these CBOs offering?
6. What role do CBOs play in your life in terms of access to UNHCR and other INGOs?
7. What are the challenges that you face when accessing services of CBOs?
8. In a few words, in your opinion, what did Eritrean CBOs do for Eritrean refugees in Egypt?
9. There are other forms of support for refugees in Egypt (such as UNHCR and INGOs), what is the difference between support offered by CBOs and these organizations?
   a. Which of these services are most important for you?
10. What are the main changes that you would like to see in these CBOs in order to enhance their role?
    a. From your point of view, what are the main challenges that you think CBOs are facing in Cairo?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Partner Organizations

Scope of work Collaboration with CBOs:
1- Could you explain the scope of work of your organization/project/unit?
2- How does your organization define a CBO? How many CBOs do you collaborate with?
3- In what capacity and how often does your project/organization engage Eritrean community leaders/CBOs in its project?
   a. Meetings?
   b. Project design?
   c. Project implementation?
   d. Community outreach?
4- Do you provide funding opportunities or capacity building/support to these CBOs? Elaborate.
5- How does your organization outreach to these CBOs? Are there any direct referral pathways between you and these CBOs? Which areas/services?

Background on Eritrean refugees in Egypt

1- What are the main protection/livelihood challenges that Eritrean refugees in particular face in Cairo?
2- What services does your organization offer for Eritrean refugees?
3- Some reports mentioned that there is an influx of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt, How do you relate to this based on your caseload?
   a. If yes, what are the main reasons behind them fleeing their country recently?
4- Compared to other nationalities that you work with, how can you comment on the level of engagement among social networks and community ties among Eritreans in Cairo?

CBOs

6- How many Eritrean CBOs are currently functioning in Cairo, and what is their legal status?
7- What are the main services that they provide that you are aware of?
8- What role do they play from your experience in improving the lives of Eritreans in Cairo?
9- How do you evaluate the efficiency and the relationship between your organization and CBOs? Do you find them crucial in implementing your work?
10- What are the main challenges that you face when dealing with these CBOs?
11- What are the main challenges that these CBOs face, that you are aware of?
12- How can the role of CBOs be better enhanced (on UNHCR level, policy level, and POs level)?
13- Is there anything else that you would like to add?