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The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**MOBILIZING DISSENT: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR
INFORMAL HOUSING**

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Political Science

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

by

Hatem Zayed

May 2014

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ABSTRACT

Rapid and uneven urban growth across the globe has been accompanied by increasing informality. In Egypt, as the state attempts to address urban housing informality, its urban development plans have been accused of being economically driven, unrepresentative of the demands of residents of informal areas, and threatening to their livelihoods and wellbeing, thus prompting many acts of resistance and dissent by those who dwell in informal areas. This thesis aims to explore reasons behind mobilization of residents of informal areas and their subsequent resistance to state urban plans by addressing a) the role played by the state in framing and identifying the present housing crisis, b) the role played by non-state actors in providing support to the state, and c) the avenues of participation available to residents of informal settlements through which they can partake in the decision-making process. It is hypothesized that resistance occurs within informal settlements in response to the inability of the state to play the role it set out for itself, reflecting a misdiagnosis of the nature of informality and an incomprehensive understanding of the housing crisis. Moreover, while non-state actors have been unable to compensate for the state's shortcomings, and as there are no formal channels of participation available for the residents of informal settlements, communities have found no other way but to resist through informal means. Additionally, this thesis explores the main drivers of social mobilization by examining two case studies, Bab El-Nasr and Ramlet Boulaq. In the latter, residents had been able to successfully mobilize resources and mount strong resistance against state housing policy; while in the former, efforts at resisting state policies were short-lived, scattered, and failed to bring about real change. In these case studies, perception of threat and deprivation, access to moral, cultural, human, material, and socio-organizational resources, along with the presence of networks of trust were found to be determining factors in explaining the transformation of granular acts of protest into structured and patterned collective action.

Chapter I

Introduction

The deepening of democracy, not in rhetorical, concept-stretching or electoral terms, but in terms of contestation, enhancement of capabilities, and genuine decentralization of decision-making, rests on renegotiation of state-society relations that inevitably depends on coming to grips with informality. *Garth A. Myers*¹

With rapid and uneven urban growth across the globe, informality has become a concern to many developing countries that has proven difficult to understand. In Egypt, it is estimated that close to 20 million people live within informal settlements; an issue that has presented itself as a challenge to state plans for urban development. While the state has given itself the task of identifying and framing the challenges tied to informality, forms of mobilization and activism have contested the manner in which the state does this and have pressured it into a different path. Efforts in expanding development discourse to present alternative means for viewing informality have varied in method and effectiveness. Because many urban development plans do not reflect the demands of the residents of informal areas, are economically driven, and consequently at times threaten their livelihoods; they have been met with acts of resistance. Many of these acts have commonly been random, short-lived, and unorganized. Asef Bayat characterized resistance by residents of informal areas in Egypt as being "marked by quiet, largely atomized and prolonged mobilization with episodic collective action – open and fleeting struggles without clear leadership, ideology or structured organization."² Yet, some acts of resistance have been organized and have been successful in pressuring the state into reevaluating its

¹ Garth A. Myers (2011), p. 194

² Asef Bayat, (2013)

strategy in dealing with informality in Egypt – reflecting a desire to "renegotiate state-society relations" as put by Myer.

This dissertation aims to understand what drives residents of informal settlements into resisting housing-related policies and plans. In order to answer this question, it will examine the role of both state and non-state actors in tackling the housing crisis, their diagnosis of the crisis, the residents' perceptions of their role, and the avenues of participation available to them. Subsequently, the thesis will present two case studies to understand when efforts of resistance develop into organized movements, if at all. The case studies will compare the incentives and disincentives for resisting, the perception of threat and deprivation, and the resources available to the residents and the ability to mobilize such resources. It will be argued that resistance occurs within informal settlements in response to the inability of the state to play the role it set out for itself, reflecting a misdiagnosis of the nature of informality and an incomprehensive understanding of the housing crisis. Moreover, while non-state actors have been unable to compensate for the state's shortcomings, and as there are no formal channels of participation available for the residents of informal settlements, communities are likely to resist through informal means. Yet, not all efforts of resistance develop into organized movements, as will be illustrated in the two case studies. While many movements remain to be random, short-lived, and unorganized, some are able to organize and successfully resist policies and plans due to an ability to mobilize needed resources, strong networks of trust within the community, and the mutual recognition of imminent threat between the residents.

Research Questions and Objectives

To reiterate, this thesis will aim to answer two main questions, listed below, and a number of sub-questions for each.

1. Why do residents of informal areas resist state policies?
 - a. How does the state identify and frame the housing crisis?
 - b. What is the role played by the state?
 - c. What is the legal framework that binds the state to this role?
 - d. How do non-state actors pressure/assist the state in tackling the crisis?
 - e. How do residents of informal areas perceive the role of non-state actors?
 - f. What avenues for participation are available to the residents of these areas to voice their demands?
2. When do efforts of resistance develop to organized movements?
 - a. What are some of the incentives and disincentives for resisting?
 - b. How do residents perceive threats and the degree of deprivation?
 - c. What resources are available for the residents of informal areas?
 - d. How do they access and utilize these resources?

Through probing this set of questions, the thesis aims to understand the different angles and causes of the housing crisis in Egypt along with the roles played by both state and non-state actors. Furthermore, it aims to examine the perceptions of these roles by the residents of informal settlements and the means to which they can voice their demands to support or change these roles. Using two case studies, it will attempt to understand how residents of informal settlements resist policies that threaten their well-being and examine these efforts to highlight why and how resistance of some groups is more likely to develop into organized movements in comparison to others.

Methodology

In attempt to answer the questions of this research, I employed a mixed-social science methods approach that draws primarily from qualitative tools.

First, to understand the changing role of the state in the housing sector, the thesis relied on data for public and private expenditure into housing. Using information from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAMPAS) – the governmental agency tasked with information dissemination in Egypt – data was collected on the investment and construction of both the public and private sectors in the time period between 1994 and 2011. This data was then used to compare with data on the building of low-income housing units over the past decade to illustrate the impact of the retreat in the role of the public sector and strengthening of the private sector on the building of affordable housing units. Second, articles in the constitution pertaining to housing, along with domestic and international laws, which define the role of the government in providing adequate housing to its people, are textually analyzed to identify legal loopholes and assess the degree to which the state adheres to the obligations set in these legal documents.

Third, six in-depth interviews were conducted to understand the role and perceptions of both state and non-state actors in the housing sector. A representative from the Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF), the organization tasked with categorizing and developing informal settlements in Egypt, was interviewed to inquire on the mandate, strategy, and challenges of the ISDF. The housing officer at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), one of the more influential human rights NGOs in Egypt, was interviewed to reflect on the role of NGOs in the housing sector, and to shed light on the changing role of the state in the past few decades. An "Urban Planning and Community Development Consultant" at UN-HABITAT was

interviewed to explain the influence of international organizations on the Egyptian government in reviewing housing-related policies. A lawyer at the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR), an NGO that worked on many legal cases with residents of informal settlements, was interviewed to help in understanding the legal framework shaping the role of the state and the details of the lawsuit pertaining to one of the case studies discussed in this thesis. Two members of *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*, a student-led national campaign that promotes the right to adequate housing and that has worked closely with the two case studies selected, were interviewed to bring to light the differences and commonalities between the two cases.

Fourth, two case studies were selected to understand when resistance transforms to organized movements. The first case study, Bab El-Nasr, is a cemetery near downtown Cairo that is home to an estimated 400 families who have dwelled in the area informally. Residents of this area have been subject to threats of eviction on two different occasions and currently live in harsh conditions with little or no services or amenities. Recently, residents organized a demonstration to demand for adequate resettlement or for the development of the area to improve living conditions. However, this demonstration was attended by a small group of people and the residents did not pursue resistance afterwards despite that the government did not respond to their demands. The second case study, Ramlet Boulaq, is an area located on the Eastern brink of the Nile and is home to an estimated 3,000 people. The residents of the area were recently threatened by a "seizure of land," decision issued by the governor. However, groups within the area organized and successfully resisted the decision, both on the ground and in court. These two areas were selected because they both received the same kind of external support from the same actors. *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*, the national campaign referred to above, was strongly present in the two

areas with an aim to mobilize the people in demanding their rights. Moreover, human rights NGOs were also present in the areas and offered legal assistance when needed. And thus, external support is a variable that is held constant between the two cases; in order to examine other determining variables – particularly the perception of threat and deprivation and the ability to internally mobilize resources. Two focus groups (one in each area) were conducted for the case studies. Using convenience sampling, the participants of the two groups were residents of the areas and were key players in resisting the threats referred to above.

Before attempting to answer the two abovementioned questions, literature on informality and social movements will be reviewed in Chapter II to then act as a means to conceptually understand the remaining chapters. In the first section of Chapter II, varying definitions of informality, its incentives, and its 'remedies' will be discussed with the aim of understanding how different actors in the housing sector perceive their role and diagnose the phenomenon – and will particularly be examined and applied in Chapter III. The second section of Chapter II will define social movements and outline different factors impacting the organization of such movements. These factors will be used in evaluating the cases of Bab El-Nasr and Ramlet Boulaq – which will be discussed in Chapters IV and V respectively.

Due the sensitive nature of this topic, a number of challenges presented themselves. First, attaining raw data was time consuming and difficult due to the complicated means as to which CAPMAS publishes its data. Second, one of the in-depth interviews – namely in the ISDF – required a permit to conduct the interview that was approved with difficulty from their behalf. Third, due to recent political events and due to the hardships experienced by the residents of these areas, gaining the trust of the participants in the focus group could have been challenging. To

overcome this challenge, I was accompanied by a member of *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*; who had previously cultivated trust among the residents owing to the relationship they developed through the campaign's work in the two areas.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Changing paradigms in urban research have led many away from using the word "slums" in favor of the term "informal housing." However, definitions of informality vary in meaning and in implication. This section will attempt to define informality within the frame of the Egyptian housing context, and outline the different views and perceptions of this prevalent phenomenon. Moreover, pull and push factors that influence informality and the social exclusion that ensues resultantly will be discussed. The second half of this section will explore the phenomenon of urban social movements, with an aim to highlight the opportunities through which social movements organize, the different resources needed for organization, and the dynamics of collective action and group incentives, and will then draw upon the concept of the "right to the city." The rationale behind the choice of these themes is that the growth of informal areas – and the inability to identify and frame informality – has contributed to the social exclusion of its residents, and due to their inability to participate through structured means; they have resorted to resistance of state policies through social mobilization and protest. Through understanding how social movements organize, one can understand why community organization and mobilization occurs in some occasions and not in others.

The Formal and the Informal

The fast pace of urbanization that led to the growth of informality is not a challenge exclusively faced by Egypt, as it is a phenomenon common in most of the developing world. The high level of urban population growth leads to inadequate quality of life, a lack of equitable access to health care and other social services, a

weakened ability for institution building, a lack of social cohesion, and instability.³ The pace of urbanization is tied to the pace of economic growth, as was demonstrated in a study by Kazuhiro Yuki, who posited that the speed of urbanization of middle-income nations is the highest in the world, while that of developed nations is the lowest.⁴ The gradual pace of urbanization in developed states assisted them in adapting to this change well and thus informality did not arise as a challenge. On the other hand, the inability of the developing states to adapt in the same way contributed to the growth of informality as a means to compensate for weak state capacity. While urbanization has a number of economic benefits due to the concentration of resources, the resulting informality has presented a different set of challenges – starting with the very understanding of what constitutes informality.

While informal housing has become a characteristic of most urban cities in the global south; the study of what constitutes "informality" remains greatly disputed. Volker Kreibich states that "it [informality] has become a generalized mode of urbanization," as informal urbanization is usually tolerated and accepted by the state and its people and has been economically, socially, and culturally embedded.⁵ Diane Singerman quotes Hernando De Soto, when studying informality in Lima, Peru, as he explains that informality has become so entrenched in everyday activities that "you only have to open the window or step onto the street," to experience the phenomenon of informality.⁶ De Soto defines informality as being any activity that lies "outside the statutory sector."⁷ However, this definition is commonly rejected for placing the formal and the informal as binary opposites without taking into account the ways through which they intersect. For instance, Ananya Roy defines informality as being

³ Vernon Henderson (2002), p.89

⁴ Kazuhiro Yuki (2007), p.1

⁵ Volker Kreibich (2012), p. 149

⁶ Diane Singerman (1997), p. 174

⁷ Kreibich (2012), p. 150

"deregulated rather than unregulated system."⁸ This implies that informality is not a synonym to illegality (unregulated), as posited by De Soto, but is simply a system where the government has little control (deregulated). Ananya Roy and Nezar Al Sayyad argue in another article that even "unregulation" is in and of itself a form of regulation and that urban informality has an "organizing logic."⁹ Sharing their view, Jean-Louis Van Gelder, in "Paradoxes of Urban Housing Informality in the Developing World," argues that informal settlements have their own "internal systems of normative ordering which are related to, but separate from, the external state legal system."¹⁰ In her study on Egypt, Diane Singerman notes that informal extralegal norms regulate the informal sector just as governmental statutes regulate the formal economy.¹¹ Similarly, Asef Bayat attempts to rid the terms informality and marginality from their negative connotations and argues that they can serve as cures just as much as curses. He explains that marginality offers a "space where those who cannot afford the cost of the 'normal' and the mainstream can survive and thrive."¹²

Informality in Housing: Perceptions and Views

When this term is applied to the housing sector in particular, we see that the abovementioned complexities can easily be illustrated. The relationship between what is considered "formal" and what is "informal" becomes an essential factor that determines the livelihood of those dwelling in the informal. Furthermore, the view of what is informal also impacts societal interactions and state attitude towards the informal sphere. The very term that is used to describe informality is indicative of such perception. Ashwa'iyat, the word used for slum areas in Egypt, can be translated

⁸ Ibid, p. 150

⁹ Nezar AlSayyad, Ananya Roy (2006), p. 8

¹⁰ Van Gelder (2013), p. 497

¹¹ Singerman (1997), p. 205

¹² Asef Bayat (2012), p. 14

to mean random, chaotic, or unplanned.¹³ This is not unique to Egypt; as the Tunisian and Algerian equivalent of the word can be translated to 'anarchic.'¹⁴ Chilean squatters, Callampas, can be literally translated to 'fungus.'¹⁵ David Sims, in his study on Cairo, notes that slums are usually portrayed very negatively in Egyptian movies, books, and media. Despite that informal areas have been around for decades and house around two thirds of the population of Greater Cairo, there still remains a perception that these areas are remote and marginal. Sims describes how Egyptians see slums as simply "a repository of poverty, backwardness, crime, misery, and all that is wrong with Cairo. It is, in addition, [seen as] a cancer that is gobbling up precious agricultural land."¹⁶ Sims argues that this negative perception of informality is fueled by the portrayal of media, movies, and books of these areas. He notes that many journalists, although supposedly reporting on the '*ashwa'i*' phenomenon to raise awareness, further cement the stereotype when condemning the state for not "dealing" with these areas and for criticizing the migrants from rural cities that continue to populate informal areas in Cairo. In one Ahram article, following the Doweika cliff collapse in 2008, the journalist interviews a political sociologist who states that "the slum dwellers are not city-dwellers in the proper sense of the word, they are not even citizens....They tolerate rising heaps of refuse. They live beyond the regulations affecting the residents of the city proper. Indeed, some of these slums are inaccessible to outsiders. This is why we desperately need a comprehensive plan of action."¹⁷

More recently, the Egyptian state started rejecting the term '*ashwa'iyat*' in favor of the term '*manatiq al-gheir mukhattata*' (unplanned areas), as it becomes easier to draw strategies to deal with informality when they are given such a

¹³ Agnes Deboulet (2011), p. 215.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Roel Klaarhamer (2012), p. 177

¹⁶ David Sims, (2012), p. 92

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 94

definition. This is similar to how Sims defines informal areas in Cairo: "they are the result of extralegal urban development processes that first appeared around 1950, and they exhibit a complete lack of urban planning or building control."¹⁸

While Sims rejects the negative perceptions tied with '*ashwa'iyat*,' he uses a definition that relies on the same dichotomy rejected by De Soto's critics – as he restricts informality to issues of legality and planning.

Agnes Deboulet, in her article "The Dictatorship of The Straight Line and The Myth of Social Disorder: Revisiting Informality in Cairo," studies the way in which such dichotomies are born and sustained. She studies two families in two informal neighborhoods; one in Dar al-Salam – an area located between Maadi¹⁹ and Old Cairo – and Istabl Antar, a poorer neighborhood located next to Dar al-Salam. This article illustrates the way in which perceptions of the "other" are inevitable even within areas that many would perceive to be homogenous.

Every time I visit Atef's family [in Dar al-Salam]....they ask me, jokingly, when I am planning to see those unvisitable people up 'over there' on the plateau [referring to Istabl Antar]....One younger member of the family suggests that the plateau is a lawless domain of criminals by miming a knife cutting his throat.²⁰

Deboulet illustrates that residents of Istabl Antar are significantly more vulnerable, are of a less socio-economic background, and have access to less resources. While most residents in Istabl Antar are unemployed and rely on day to day jobs for make a living, residents of Dar al-Salam have more stable jobs due to skills they have gained from better education (usually vocational) and are likely to own assets as well. Residents of Dar al-Salam do not perceive themselves to be living in a *ashwa'i* area, as they consider themselves the majority and the '*sha'b*' (the people); while the "others," who

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 95

¹⁹ Maadi is an upper class area located in west Cairo.

²⁰ Agnes Deboulet (2011), p. 203

are more fortunate, are likely to be the minority. On the other hand, Deboulet explains that both areas – despite their obvious differences – are categorized by the "formal" realms of Cairo as informal; signifying the extent to which the term *ashwa'i* is elastic, as it groups a wide variety of areas that can be seen as very different by the residents.

Whether informality is defined as being illegal or extra legal, or as being unplanned and unregulated, it implies a binary that is based on a great deal of subjectivity. Many areas of what are currently referred to as being informal have residents with tenure and contracts (making them legal) that moved in after the state planned and built the neighborhood (making the areas "regulated" and planned); nonetheless, these areas are at times not distinguished from areas that were completely built and planned by citizens without legal permits or contracts. Many "legal" areas were originally planned by the government, but were then populated by residents without legal permits to slowly drive the government away from controlling the area. In a recent book titled "Popular Housing and Urban Land Tenure in the Middle East," contributing authors aim to break away from the abovementioned dichotomy between the formal and informal through intentionally using the phrase "popular housing" as opposed to "informal housing." Instead of highlighting differences between one group in society and the other, they highlighted ways in which "continuums" are established between different groups and rejected the need to identify categories within society.²¹

A System of Self-help: Contentment with Informality?

While informality is usually portrayed negatively – whether in the media, literature, or in development studies – it presents a set of benefits for its residents who

²¹Myriam Ababsa, Baudouin Dupret, and Eric Denis (2012), p. 2

often times grow content with the system of self-help which they likely helped in building and with the community that they share it with.

Informal areas in Egypt are a perfect example for outstanding communal organization. The residents can meet all of the needs of their households without even needing to leave the area....they utilize public space, despite it being lacking, but they join together with simple acts, such as a ping pong marathon, or a market....What is more important is the way these areas were planned, they were built with a logic! - *Mohamed Abo Samra, UN-HABITAT.*²²

Yet, the opinion of Abo Samra is not shared by all, as many consider informality a disease that needs a cure and view ending it as the solution to the problems found in these areas. It is based on these negative stereotypes towards the informal sphere, which Oscar Lewis coins as the "culture of poverty," that states justify eviction and demolition as solutions to informal settlements.²³ It is also on this backdrop that theorists like De Soto recommend that abolition of the informal is not the solution and that the legalization of the illegal should be a means to solve the housing crisis. De Soto argues that the poor, although owners of valuable assets (what he calls dead capital), have failed to benefit from capitalism because they are not recognized by the "formal" legal system.²⁴ Since these assets are not recognized by the formal legal system; they are not convertible into capital; entailing that they cannot be traded "beyond a narrow circle of trustworthy acquaintances, and cannot be used as collateral for business and home improvement loans."²⁵ De Soto argues that the economic advancement of the North can be attributed to their successful legal systems that induce development and growth through allowing everyone in society fair access to the benefits of the market.

²² Mohamed Abo Samra, Interview by Hatem Zayed. Tape Recorder. Cairo, 8th of January, 2014

²³ Carmen G. Gonzalez (2009), p. 243

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 244

However, De Soto has received considerable criticism for offering what many perceive as a reductionist argument that puts too much weight on the role of legal status. For instance, Gonzalez contends that it is tenure security – rather than a formal title – that will result in a willingness to invest in what De Soto deems "dead capital."²⁶ Furthermore, De Soto does not take into account the many push and pull factors that come into play when studying informality. Gonzalez lists a set of incentives that would continue to pull residents towards informal housing:²⁷

- The urban poor will become subject to taxes and utility bills they cannot afford if legalization occurs.
- Formalization may impair the social capital of the urban poor, as social solidarity and community organization is what enables the thriving of the informal areas and sustain it.
- Since informal dwellings are usually substandard and unacceptable for human habitation, it can seem that formalization will be reinforcing the inferior social status as acceptable, which results in double standards for health, safety, and environmental quality. If such standards become acceptable, the attempts of the people to demand for better conditions may be weakened.

Sims as well, in his book "Understanding Cairo," outlines a number of incentives to sustain informality:²⁸

- Informal areas offer affordable housing with a wide range of choices
- The proximity of relatives and trustful neighbors helps in times of crisis, in daily chores, and in flows of information on jobs and business opportunities.²⁹
- Close social ties limit crime and sexual harassment.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 245

²⁷ Ibid. p. 247-249

²⁸ David Sims (2012), p. 120-121

²⁹ A 2009 GTZ publication reflects the same results

- Job opportunities are available; as it is common for as much as half of the workforce to be employed within the area itself.
- Proximity to key areas in the capital, and more job opportunities are made available in near-by central markets and in jobs in the formal sector.
- Usually these areas are located in the middle of the city, which means that it provides the residents with an easy access to different areas in the city – including employment opportunities in the formal sector; making transportation more affordable than in new cities on the outskirts of Cairo.

Yahia Shawkat, a prominent Egyptian activist and researcher, produced a number of documentaries on informal areas in Egypt that highlight the way in which communities within informal areas have been organizing and cooperating with each other to compensate for the retreat and neglect of the state to these areas. This is seen in the series of films he produced, titled "Issues in the Right to Housing," illustrating the way in which the self-help system operates.³⁰ It is common for electricity wires to be connected between all of the houses in an area to compensate for lack of electricity; trenches are commonly built to act as sewage systems, pipes connect homes to converge water from the main water source; and court yards and fields are built by residents to create public space. Accordingly, the films illustrate how many residents do not wish to resettle, formalize, or be part of regularized housing. Their demands predominantly revolve around their expectation from the state to assist them in their self-help system; and to maintain a certain amount of social justice.

In sum, the definition of informality and the recognition of its benefits and disadvantages can severely impact urban policy. Within Egypt – whether on the level of the state or society – negative stereotypes persist and lack of recognition of the true

³⁰ YouTube page of the "Shadow Ministry of Housing." <https://www.youtube.com/user/IskanAlZil>

problem of informality is evident. Such stereotypes and perceptions add to the many challenges faced by informal areas, leading to systematic social exclusion and marginalization of the residents of these areas.

Urban Exclusion of the Informal

Social exclusion was born as a term, in the 1960s, to describe a phenomenon that could not be adequately defined using terms like "poverty," "deprivation," and "marginalization."³¹ Poverty describes a state of being without explaining its causes. Deprivation rests upon the psychological feelings of individuals, as it is born out of a recognition that one possesses less than others. Marginalization, similar to poverty, does not explain cause; nor is it necessarily a negative term as Bayat implies above. Thus, exclusion becomes a more popular term because not only does it describe social disintegration, but it also entails that an agent – most likely the state – plays an active role in the exclusion of a particular group. There are many different definitions of exclusion. For one, "[s]ocial exclusion is a process that deprives individuals and families, groups and neighborhoods of the resources required for participation in the social, economic and political activity of society as a whole."³² This can be exclusion from an adequate income, from resources, from the labor market, from social services, or from social relations. Moreover, other dimensions of exclusion include exclusion from consumer culture, political choice, and from mainstream society. With that said, exclusion has a two-way causal relationship with poverty. Poverty is likely to lead to exclusion and simultaneously exclusion leads to further poverty. This means that those who were excluded due to their poverty are likely to grow even poorer; which

³¹ Michal Nowleski (2012), p. 370

³² Ibid. p. 372

can result in what is called "urban polarization;" the growth in both the bottom end and the top end of the socio-economic classes.³³

The question of "exclusion from what" becomes essential in understanding the term and in seeking remedies for the phenomenon. In the case of Egypt, Ray Bush argues that people's poverty is not the result of their exclusion from government policy, but from development.³⁴ He considers exclusion to be a direct result of capitalism, which must exclude groups due to the necessity of having a shortage – a scarcity – for the system to work. Likely, the victims of this shortage will be the lower socio-economic classes. However, the version of exclusion introduced by Bush implies that remedies to exclusion must be of an economic nature as inclusion can be very economically sound. Yet, the kind of exclusion that residents of informal areas face is of a more complex nature. Although it is true that they are excluded from "formal" economic activity, those in the informal sphere are able to find job opportunities and have access to a very affordable life due to the system of self-help that they have developed. It is for these reasons that it is commonly more appealing to those of low socio-economic status to live in an informal area than it would be to live in a government-sponsored city on the outskirts of the city. Thus, inclusion into the legal sphere, as proposed by De Soto, and into the formal economic sphere, as proposed by Bush, may not be all that is needed to achieve social inclusion. By this token, Patrick Commins suggests that social inclusion is a package, where incorporation into four systems of society must occur. These systems are the: democratic and legal system, the labor market, the welfare system, and the family and community system (interpersonal integration).³⁵

³³ Ibid. p. 375

³⁴ Ray Bush (2012), p. 8

³⁵ Nowleski (2012), p. 377

Social inclusion, which is considered the remedy for exclusion, has two main forms: interdependence and participation. The former is the inclusion in the social division of labor and in social networks. The latter has material, political, and cultural dimensions to it.³⁶ However, while inclusion is considered a remedy to exclusion, it is not necessarily the opposite of it; as it is a part of the same process of social polarization. Nowleski explains that "increased social inequality and social division result in the social inclusion of one part of society and the social exclusion of another part. In all cases, inclusion accompanies (if not causes) exclusion."³⁷ Thus, the "zero-sum" nature of inclusion and exclusion has encouraged many to avoid the usage of the word inclusion as a remedy to exclusion. Moreover, the term *integration* has become a more desirable one; as it aims to achieve the incorporation of all groups in society. Yet, integration as well may have two meanings; as it can entail assimilation of the initially excluded to be part of the dominant culture, or the accommodation – of both the excluded and the dominant society – of one another.

The demands of the people illustrated in Yahia Shawkat's films and the rationale behind the usage of the term "popular housing," and not "informal housing" link to the school of thought that stipulates that integration is the adequate remedy for exclusion; as only integration – and not inclusion – would be able to overcome the dichotomies and dualisms presented in this section. Moreover, it is also important to note that remedying exclusion should not be a goal in itself, but a means to reach the goals of those who are "excluded." It is through inclusion that citizens are more able to participate and contest policies that impact them. Otherwise, citizens are driven to resist through informal means and may or may not be able to organize.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 376

³⁷ Ibid.

The Right to the City

The more the city grows, develops, extends itself, spreads its tentacles everywhere, the more social relations get degraded, the more sociability is torn apart at the seams.– Henry Lefebvre³⁸

The right to the City is a concept that was born in the 1960s, pioneered by Henry Lefebvre. It was conceived in reaction to the growing disenfranchisement of citizens and their deprivation from the right to "space" in the City. It is a call to take back control over the city and to end exclusion, alienation, and marginalization. Peter Marcuse, in explaining what kind of right it is, stated "[i]t is multiple rights incorporated into one, not just a right to public space, or a right to information and transparency in government, or a right to access to the center, or a right to this service or that, but the right to a totality, a complexity, in which each of the parts is part of a single whole to which the right is demanded."³⁹ Those who studied what the right to the city is argue that citizenship must be reviewed as a concept. Mark Purcell argues that citizenship is being rescaled, re-territorialized, and reoriented away from the state as the "receptor of loyalty and as the partner in the social contract."⁴⁰ He, in line with Lefebvre's view, believes that citizenship should be unhinged from its tie to the nation-state and membership should be based on inhabitation rather than citizenship and legality. It is based on this conception that Lefebvre coined the term "citadin," as a replacement to citizen to incorporate the right of extra-legal inhabitants in defining the space in which they live.⁴¹ Lefebvre's model suggests that inhabitants have two

³⁸ Andy Merrifield (2011), p. 473

³⁹ Peter Marcuse (2009), p. 192

⁴⁰ Mark Purcell (2003), p. 565

⁴¹ Mark Purcell (2002), p. 103

main rights, under the right to the city, which are: 1) the right to appropriate urban space, 2) and the right to participate centrally in the production of urban space.

Although the right to the city, as proposed by Lefebvre and his main supporters, entails a number of very radical implications, it has gained a great deal of popularity in urban social movements across the globe, and even in Egypt. Tadamun, a joint project by a local Civil Society Organization (CSO) called Takween and the American University (Washington, D.C.), uses the "right to the city," as its slogan in its campaign to highlight the importance of local democracy in the citizen's ability to overcome urban challenges – aiming to put an end to the weak local municipality system in Egypt.⁴² Thus, it is essential to rid the concept of the Right to the City from its radical propositions that undermine the realm of the nation-state and the global capitalist system. As Andy Merrifield suggests in her article, "The right to the city and beyond," it would be useful to go past the initial recommendations of Lefebvre and take only what can be translated into movements that will guarantee the overarching goals of Lefebvre without using his means. Whether urban social movements across the cities of the world are led by a "cultural frame" inspired by the concept of the right to the city should not matter – as many of the demands made today are similar to the notions introduced by Lefebvre, but are not based on the same strategic framework.

Social Movements

The first half of this chapter aimed at setting a framework for Chapter III, which explores some of the possible explanations of resistance and mobilization of residents in informal areas with the conjecture that exclusion and lack of formal avenues through which residents can participate spur popular resistance. To

⁴² Tadamun, "About Tadamun,"

understand this resistance, the following section will aim to set a framework for Chapters IV and V, which attempt to explain why some efforts of resistance develop into organized movements as opposed to others. The section will define social movements, emphasize obstacles challenging collective action, and explore factors that contribute to the development and management of movements, along with outlining the types of resources needed in urban social movements.

Defining Social Movements

Mario Diani defined social movements as "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity."⁴³ It can be noted that he defines the interactions as "informal," as to not constrict the term to certain structural elements. Charles Tilly defines social movements as a "series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others."⁴⁴ Tilly adds in another article that social movements are not a group, but a complex form of "social interaction."⁴⁵ This does not mean that the movement cannot be formed by a group or an organization, but that it is simply not exclusively reliant on one. Sidney Tarrow defines social movement as "a collective challenge by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities."⁴⁶ Tarrow's understanding narrows the definition and adds to Tilly's and Diani's in that collective action is likely to be in opposition to "elites, opponents, and authorities." While the three definitions complement one another, Tarrow's definition will be used for the purpose of this

⁴³ Mario Diani (1992), p. 13

⁴⁴ Charles Tilly (2004), p. 1

⁴⁵ Charles Tilly, (1993-1994), p. 5

⁴⁶ Sydney Tarrow (1994)

thesis, as the case studies presented in Chapters IV and V demonstrate that collective action occurred in opposition to particular opponents. It will be argued in this thesis that an agreement among the group on the opponent of the movement acts as a driving force behind collective action and consolidates the perception of threat. Yet, regardless of the definition used for social movements – whether relying on formal or informal structures or on groups or social interactions – social movements will always rely on collective action and on prevailing incentives for individuals to participate.

Collective Action and Free Riding

An atomic pile "goes critical" when a chain reaction of nuclear fission becomes self-sustaining; for an atomic pile, or an atomic bomb, there is some minimum amount of fissionable material that has to be compacted together to keep the reaction from petering out....The principle of critical mass is so simple that it is no wonder that it shows up in epidemiology, fashion, survival and extinction of species, language systems, racial integration, jaywalking, panic behavior, and political movements - *Thomas C. Schelling* (1978).

Mancur Olson, in his book "The Logic of Collective Action," outlines free riding as one of the main problems of collective action. Olson argues that "rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests," due to the phenomenon of free riding. As long as a group of individuals will be the ones disproportionately paying the price for a certain public good, others may be disincentivized from sharing the burden, and may choose to only reap the benefits at the end.⁴⁷ As long as a public good can be characterized by non-excludability, then the phenomenon of free-riding will be evident. A non-excludable good is a good that if provided to one member of a group will inevitably be enjoyed by all other members. The example offered by Marwell and Oliver (2004), in their discussion of Olson's work, is the building of a public park. The authors posit that one may

⁴⁷Gerard Marwell and Pamela Oliver (1993), p. 3

rationality hesitate to contribute money for the purpose of building a park if one knows that owing to the contributions of others, he/she may still be able enjoy the park after it is built without having to spend any money. However, Olson warns that if everyone in the group is "rational," then the bigger likelihood is that the park will not be built. Olson points out that he refers to "interest groups" that do not have particular explicit organizational or institutional structure in and of themselves, and that are merely brought together by shared interests. Thus, collective action becomes more difficult when this organizational nature is lacking, due to the presence of conflict between the individual's personal interests and the needs of the group as a whole. Olson's remedy to this obstacle to collective action is to provide "selective incentives" for only those who participate in collective action; treating those who do not participate differently. Yet, he adds that such selective incentives are more easily managed in small groups than in large groups; with the exception of the selective incentives offered by the state – as the state is uniquely able to coerce citizens to act for the public good in return for certain privileges.

Marwell and Oliver – along with a number of social movement theorists – reject Olson's work for a number of reasons.⁴⁸ Quite simply, if everyone in society were "rational" as defined by Olson, then volunteering, philanthropy, NGOs, non-profit organizations, riots, labor unions, strikes, and protests would not occur. First of all, individuals join collective efforts because they realize the extent to which interdependence matters. For an example, the larger the number of people participating in a protest, the less likely it is for them to be arrested, and the more workers partaking in a strike, the less vulnerable they are to penalties or dismissal. And thus, in protection of social capital, and in the realization of the value of interdependence, it is

⁴⁸Ibid, p. 9

likely that people would choose not to free-ride and to participate instead in collective action. Many social movement theorists add that free riding only occurs when individuals perceive that participating in collective action is likely to result in a decelerating production function. Yet, the strongest disincentive for free-riding is that a need for collective action is likely to come during times of perceived scarcity – where the option of not participating is more deleterious.⁴⁹ This leads us to an important question in social movement theory that contributed to the development of what is called "New Social Movement Theory": is material deprivation necessary for collective action and mobilization? While arguments of scarcity and deprivation were adequate in explaining why labor unions formed, or why the poor went on bread riots; it failed to explain why people mobilize for civil rights, or for "green movements," leading to the birth of term "New Movements."⁵⁰

While material deprivation acts as a strong discouragement to free-riding, more variables are needed to understand the causes and forms of resistance; as will be discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter. Moreover, this debate will be explored further in the case studies presented in Chapters IV and V, through investigating the incentives and disincentives of resistance reflected in the results of the field research.

Political Opportunity, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing

Across the literature, scholars agree on three factors that contribute to the emergence and development of social movements: political opportunities, the forms of organization (mobilizing structures), and the collective processes of interpretation that

⁴⁹Ibid, p. 11

⁵⁰Russel J. Dalton, Manfred Kuechler (1990).

mediate between opportunity and action (cultural framings).⁵¹ These factors move away from the obstacles posed by free-riding in collective action and introduce a plethora of variables that can push individuals to or from social movements and collective organization.

When people come together to pursue collective action in the context of the modern state they enter a complex and multifaceted social, political, and economic environment. The elements of the environment have manifold direct and indirect consequences for people's common decisions about how to define their social change goals and how to organize and proceed in pursuing those goals. (McCarthy, Britt, and Wolfson, 1991).⁵²

McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald note that there were two different research questions that brought about the study of political opportunities in relation to social movements. First, scholars explored how to explain the emergence of a particular social movement on the basis of changes in the institutional power structure or informal power relations of a given national political system. Second, cross-national differences in the structure were compared through examining the extent of success of comparable movements on the basis of differences in the characteristics of the structure of nation states in which they are embedded.⁵³ Either way, writers focus on the way in which political structures act as incentives for forming social movements. Sidney Tarrow describes that there are two ways of understanding political structure: one can view it as a "cross-sectional and static structure of opportunity," or as an "intrasystematic and dynamic" system.⁵⁴ Depending on the way through which they are viewed, movements will arise as a result of "new" or "expanded" opportunities and will lead to state vulnerability. This

⁵¹ Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, N. Mayer Zald (2008), p. 2

⁵² Sydney Tarrow (2008), p. 41

⁵³ McAdam et.al (2008)

⁵⁴ Tarrow, (2008), p. 41

vulnerability is likely lead to a response from the state that will act as either a new opportunity for the same collective group, or another group.⁵⁵

As suggested by McAdam et al., after examining political opportunity, one must look at the mobilizing structures to understand social movements. McCarthy defined mobilizing structures as "agreed upon ways of engaging in collective action which include particular "tactical repertoires," "social movement organizational" forms, and "modular social movement repertoires"including the range of everyday life micromobilization....[such as] family units, friendship networks, voluntary associations, work units, and elements of the state structure itself."⁵⁶ Within these mobilizing structures, groups decide on their common interests, their strategy, and the opportunities that they will take advantage of. While heterogeneity is likely to characterize the group itself; a pre-requisite for this mobilizing structure is that a common goal is defined. The mobilizing structure of this group can be formal – through what is called a social movement organization (SMO) – with clear structure, leadership, and boundaries; or can be informal – through what is called a social movement community (SMC) – with flexible structure, leadership, boundaries, and division of labor.⁵⁷

The third factor crucial in understanding social movements is cultural framing. Zald defines frames as "the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action."⁵⁸ These frames are defined by cultural and ideology and are set by "a diverse set of actors in relation to a variety of audiences

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 61

⁵⁶ John D. McCarthy (2008), p. 141

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 143

⁵⁸ Mayer N. Zald (2008), p. 262.

inside and outside of a movement."⁵⁹ Moreover, they are subject to competition from within the group – in effort to design the strategic frame – and are threatened by external counter-movements that aim to impact this frame to their advantage. Yet, while studying framing of social movements may be beneficial for new social movements or when using dramaturgical models in understanding collective action; it does little in explaining movements that are born out of scarcity and deprivation – which would best be explained using the grievance model.

Urban Social Movements and Resource Mobilization Theory

Pioneered by Manuell Castells, urban social movements are defined as "cross-class alliances among residents of urban communities...around the shared interests of improving collective consumption in the cities, creating and maintaining the cultural identity of their cities and promoting political self-management."⁶⁰ A clear difference that can be noted right away is that Castells emphasized the importance of 'groups' in his definition. This concept then grew to include grassroots citizen initiatives, ethnic self-help organizations, and community based developments, locally focused political advocacy, among many other kinds of 'groups'. Naturally, the definition of the causes for organization – the shared interests – between these groups also expanded. Frans J. Schuurman defined urban social movements as "social organizations with a territorially based identity, striving for emancipation via collective action."⁶¹ Schuurman's definition adds another distinction to urban social movements from other movements in that they are "territorially based."

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 261.

⁶⁰ Gordana Rabrenovic (2009), p. 240

⁶¹ Frans J. Schuurman (2013), p. 9

Urban social movement theorists posit that groups organizing such movements have, at their acquisition, a number of resources; inspiring the resource mobilization theory (RM). Edwards and McCarthy (2004) outlined five main types of resources: 1) moral resources, 2) cultural resources, 3) social-organizational resources, 4) human resources, 5) material resources; that can be used by different groups to reach shared goals.⁶² Moral resources refer to the ability to gain legitimacy and support from external actors. Cultural resources refer to the strategic ability required to mobilize, organize events, or access additional resources. Social-organizational resources are divided into three forms: infrastructures, social networks, and organizations. Infrastructures are the resources that are available to everyone to the same extent, while social networks and formal organizations, on the contrary, are limited to small groups and insiders. Human resources refer to capabilities, expertise, and skills of the participants. Finally, material resources refer to the financial and physical capital of the movement.

There is a debate on how social movements obtain the abovementioned resources. More recently, researchers have agreed that social movements gain access to their resources from both internal and external sources. Internally, mechanisms to obtain resources include self-production and aggregation; where resources are produced through the agency of existing organizations, activists, and participants within the mobilizing communities and where dispersed resources are converted into collective resources. Externally, resources can be obtained through appropriation and patronage, where movements utilize either the expertise or the funds of external supporters as long as resources are used in mutually agreeable ways.⁶³

⁶² Ibid. p. 241

⁶³ Bob Edwards, Patrick F. Gillham (2013)

Overall, in addition to the different types of resources, the success or failure of these movements relies on political and structural opportunities, as they can provide both constraints and incentives. Structural opportunities are conceptualized as the degree of openness of a political system, the level of decentralization, among other indicators. While some resource mobilization theorists argue that structural strains and relative deprivation are less relevant to movement participation when compared to the availability of resources,⁶⁴ such claims are often questioned for undermining the impact of grievances, particularly suddenly imposed grievances, on the organization of social movements.⁶⁵

From Theory to Practice: Understanding Reality through Literature

While literature on informality remains to spark a great deal of controversy, and may not perfectly reflect the reality in Egypt, pressures have increased towards understanding the informal housing realm in Egypt. As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, attempts to define informality, along with initiatives taken by NGOs and development organizations can impact state urban policies. The perception of informality defines whether it is in need of a remedy or a cure, and also defines the means through which one can tackle social exclusion. Past and present urban policies and initiatives will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter III, as the views and perceptions discussed in this section can be reflected in the positions adopted by the state, civil society, and international organizations when approaching informality in the housing sector in Egypt.

Essentially, this research aims to see whether there are grassroots groups in Cairo that actively seek to exercise more influence in the space in which they live. If

⁶⁴ Mayer N. Zald, John D. McCarthy (1987)

⁶⁵ Warland R. H. Walsh E J (1983)

so, then the "avenue for participation," as used by Diane Singerman in her study of *sha'bi* communities, must be clearly identified. Since the residents of informal areas lack municipal channels for pressure, as highlighted by *Tadamun*, then the only option left for residents is to organize, mobilize, and attempt to exert influence through resistance with whatever means they have. As referred to earlier, Asef Bayat described acts of resistance in Egyptian informal areas as lacking in leadership, ideology, and structured organization – what he deemed '*social non-movements*.'⁶⁶ Thus, it is essential to understand what a social movement entails in order to assess and elucidate current efforts of grassroots groups in Cairo. While social movement theorists differ as to what is more important in forming and managing movements, there is a general consensus on the disincentives for collective action, the impact of political opportunities, and the types of resources needed for mobilization. These variables and factors will be used to examine and better understand the case studies that are presented in Chapters IV and V.

⁶⁶ W.J. Dorman (2012), p.274

Chapter III

The Housing Crisis in Egypt: Policies and Perceptions

There is a great deal of discrepancy in estimates on the size of informal settlements in Egypt. For instance, David Sims cites that 67 percent of Greater Cairo (12 million inhabitants out of 18 million) and 40 percent of Alexandria's population (around 1.8 million out of 4.5 million) lives in informal neighborhoods.⁶⁷ In 2010, The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) issued a report estimating that there are 12-15 million citizens living in informal areas in all of Egypt, not just Cairo. On the other hand, the Egyptian Center for Housing Rights, an independent NGO, estimated that there are around 20 million people living in informal settlements in Egypt. Moreover, CAPMAS counts 1,221 informal areas in Egypt, while the National Planning Agency counts 1,109; the Cabinet's Decision Support Center counts 1,034.⁶⁸

This discrepancy is a result of the fact that there is no clear definition of what constitutes an informal area. The Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF) is the agency tasked with forming this definition, yet it estimated a number that is the furthest away from the other estimates – 404 – seeing that it only focused on "unsafe" areas and was not tasked with categorizing all informal settlements, reflecting the lack of a comprehensive definition for informality.⁶⁹

Regardless of the exact numbers, the housing crisis in Egypt is very palpable and is indisputable. In recent years, the crisis has not abated, rather it has escalated – particularly as the cost of subsidized housing has gone up 260 percent, and land prices

⁶⁷David Sims (2013)

⁶⁸M. Ibrahim. (2009)

⁶⁹ Amnesty International, (2011 A)

have increased 16 fold what they were in the last decade – leading to an even bigger gap between real estate prices and income.⁷⁰

World Bank studies estimate that 45 percent of new housing units constructed in the ten years between 1986 and 1996 were informal.⁷¹ Further, the growth of informal areas is significantly outpacing that of formal areas in Cairo – with a growth rate estimated to be around 2.57 percent per year, in comparison to the 0.4 per cent growth of formal Cairo. A UN-HABITAT publication characterizes the role of the state as that of "risk avoidance," in which the state actively and consistently attempts to avoid policies that are likely to ignite strong reactions by the community. Yet, when examining the policies applied by the Egyptian government, a contradiction is easily noted. Since the state has applied inadequate policies in much of the past few decades, one would safely conclude that UN-HABITAT's description of the state's desire to "avoid risks" is accurate. However, the state has consistently aimed to be the sole responsible actor in the housing crisis, has continuously sought out hegemony over the sector, and has in turn applied many policies that placed its interest as a priority to that of its people. Its pursuit of hegemony over the sector has not entirely excluded other pertinent actors such as international organizations and donor countries who have attempted to guide the state's policies. Additionally, the state has often been subject to pressures by NGOs to review policies and laws in utilizing recently opened up political opportunities that have resulted from some positive political gains since the January 2011 revolution. Yet, both state and non-state actors have often demonstrated their inability to agree on how to define informality in Egypt, and have at times contributed to the deepening of the housing crisis. Since there are no formal channels for the participation of residents of informal areas, and since they

⁷⁰ Yahia Shawkat (2014 A)

⁷¹ UN-HABITAT and the American University in Cairo (2012)

perceive the media as playing a negative role, residents are driven to protest and demonstration as their only means for participation. To understand why residents of informal settlements resist housing-related policies and plans, this chapter will explore the role played by both state and non-state actors in the construction of the housing problem, and in the pursuit of a viable “remedy” to the ongoing housing crisis; in light of conflicting definitions, narratives, and perceptions of responsibility.

The Role of the State

Pinpointing the main causes of the housing crisis is a highly controversial issue. While many scholars use poverty as an explanation, others deem it as overly reductionist. Some of the factors that may have led to informality include unsound public policies and urban plans, particular market dynamics and public spending patterns, and flawed laws relating to rent, tenure and property, and expropriation. This section will not attempt to analyze how the phenomenon of informality was born. Rather, it will examine the role played by the state in reaction to a growing housing crisis to understand some of the policies and plans that are resisted by residents of informal areas. Thus, this section will explore the policies and plans of the state over the past few decades, examine public spending and the allocation of resources (primarily using government data), and textually analyze legal texts and documents that have underpinned housing policies. It will seek to demonstrate that state policies have been more or less static over the past decades and have continued to be so today – despite changing dynamics in the sector. Secondly, public spending has been decreasing in the housing sector in order to match the market-led economy – which resulted in the over-supply of middle to upper income housing units with a shortage in middle to lower income housing units; as the former proved to be more profitable for investment. Thirdly, the state has not been adhering to its commitments under

international law, and many of the country's legislations may at times act as a further obstacle to the housing crisis. However, recommendations from international bodies, and relative gains secured in the 2014 constitutions, present a political opportunity opening to pressure the state to adhere to its commitment of providing adequate housing for its citizens.

Trajectory of Urban Plans

W.J. Dorman, in his description of informal urban growth in Cairo, argues that urban plans since 1952 have been failing in Egypt due to "the regime's exclusionary nature and the presence of autonomous centres of power such as the Egyptian military."⁷² He deemed the Egyptian state a "lame leviathan," as it has a very elaborate security apparatus and attempts to play the role of care-taker for its people through offering the necessary services and providing them with work opportunity through its massive public sector – which employs half the city's formal sector labor force.⁷³ The lame leviathan is usually used to describe the authoritarian state in many African countries for being weak in terms of institutional capacity, but remaining to dominate the political landscape.⁷⁴ The term is used in the literature when defining a state that is "omnipresent but...hardly omnipotent," or when it is "excessively authoritarian to disguise the fact that it is inadequately authoritative."⁷⁵

The Egyptian state spent most of its recent history aiming to be the sole hegemonic institutional power, which unintendedly resulted in the growth of informality – whether in the housing or labor markets – due to the state's inability to play the role it had aspired for. Just as the state was unable to provide its growing

⁷² W.J. Dorman (2012), p. 1

⁷³ Ibid, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Michael Bratton (1989).

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 407

population with jobs in the formal sector, it was also unable to provide its urbanizing population with adequate housing units and comparable services.

Sims posits that one cannot be sure when informal settlements started growing in Cairo. He argues that it simply was not a priority and that observers of Cairo in the 1950s and 60s, the early years of the Egyptian republic, were more focused on the expansions made by the government in supporting its growing industrial economy.⁷⁶ He does, however, mention that one can rely on old maps and stories from the residents of the areas today to understand when these cities were built – and he estimates that their growth came in the early 1960s. Sims notes that the wars with Israel, namely the wars of 1956, 1967, the war of attrition, and 1973, took a toll on the Egyptian economy. In turn, formal Cairo had become more or less static throughout the 1950s, 60s, and 70s; but informal Cairo had been growing at a much faster rate.

This growth was not completely ignored by the state. Many national plans were made to counter this fast rate of growth. From as early as 1956, the Egyptian government set master plans to control the population growth. The first plan was to contain Cairo's population to 3.5 million and to divert excess growth into satellite communities in the desert.⁷⁷ Yet, this plan never saw any success; in fact it was never even accepted or implemented. By 1960, Cairo's population was well over 4 million. Dorman argues that Nasser's government feared the building of cities in the desert so that it would not diminish their control over the city. It was for this reason that industrial development occurred closer to the centers of the city, on arable land. This of course attracted the growing population of Cairo – particularly those migrating from rural areas in search of job opportunities – to the city centers. Another plan was set in the late 1960s to cap Cairo's population as to not exceed 9.5 million by 1990;

⁷⁶ David Sims (2012), p. 59.

⁷⁷ W.J. Dorman (2012), p. 6.

once again through the building of desert cities that would have been completed by then. However, the wars once again crippled the state's ability to carry out this plan and Cairo's population had reached 8 million by 1976.⁷⁸

While Nasser's public housing plans (*masakin sha'biyya* and cooperatives) slowed growth of informal settlements to a certain extent, the economic liberalization that Egypt experienced in the 1970s under Sadat's *Infitah*, along with the highly constrained public budget, prevented the state from enforcing national housing plans for lower income families.⁷⁹ Moreover, the *Infitah* permitted urban migration more freely as the economy was opened to private investments – which increased the pace of urban growth. Thus, in the decade of the 1970s, 84% of new units built were considered illegal.⁸⁰ New migrants to urban Cairo started purchasing farmland on the city's periphery as it was much cheaper, yet still close enough to the city center and the job opportunities concentrated there. The infrastructure and services were installed by the people themselves in what has been described as a "self-help" system. In the 1970s, authorities denounced these settlements for violating many regulations, but the state generally ignored them and was more interested in urban development as a means of funding construction projects. Under Sadat's rule, desert cities were built, but these plans proved to be expensive and eventually turned into a process of what Dorman deemed "elite urbanism," because the cities were isolated from job opportunities – making them unfit for the settlement of lower income families.⁸¹ Consequently, the phenomenon of informal housing continued to grow and the state started recognizing these areas after Western aid agencies pressured it to provide the

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ GTZ (2009), p. 18

⁸⁰ Ibid,

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 8

areas with basic public services.⁸² This public service assistance, however, was very superficial, and the self-help system dominated in most informal urban centers.

Sims explains that the neglect of these areas persisted throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s until the early 2000s; and particularly with the completion of the Ring Road – which mustered up a great deal of awareness on the issue.⁸³ The massive road that surrounded the capital made people realize how expansive informal settlements have become, as they viewed what had previously been unseen and neglected on the outskirts of the city.

Ranking officials and middle-class drivers began to use the Ring Road, and to their consternation could see from their vehicles massive reddish-hued informal housing areas stretching far into the agricultural plain....No longer was the phenomenon out of sight, conveniently dismissed as a marginal aberration.⁸⁴

While the past decade has seen a number of different plans to tackle informal areas (discussed in detail in the section titled "overview of current urban plans and policies"), the state has only made superficial changes to its policies towards informal areas. The past five decades can be characterized with neglect, denial, or forceful eviction and resettlement into desert cities to solve what the state perceived as a threat. However, the government was at many times advised not to pursue such plans. In one case, a USAID study in 1982 documented that over 80% of the added housing units in the five years that preceded had been added by the informal sector – leading the development agency to conclude that this phenomenon was a positive dynamic that could be utilized by the government and that this kind of urban expansion fit the needs of the population well.⁸⁵ However, such recommendations were ignored with hopes to end informality, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

⁸² Ibid, p. 7

⁸³ David Sims (2012), p. 69

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 66

Overview of Current Urban Plans and Policies

Housing policies currently implemented in Egypt are at times sporadic and lack in vision or strategy. The growing size of informal areas, and the fact that around 44% of Egypt's population does not have legal tenure, has led the state to resort to eviction and resettlement as the main urban strategy and plan.⁸⁶ Since 1993, the government has been adopting plans that have evicted around 41 thousand families, and resettled two thirds of them in new areas on the outskirts of central cities.⁸⁷ Since the January 2011 revolution alone, there have been 21 cases of either resettlement or demolition of areas without proper reparations or fair compensation to hundreds.⁸⁸ The government has not implemented evictions solely through directly displacing residents from their neighborhoods; indirect means include cutting off electricity and water or breaking sewage pipes⁸⁹ to forcefully move residents to other areas.⁹⁰

Other than the fact that they solely rely on resettlement as the means for urban development, government urban plans are problematic for further reasons. The National Housing Project (NHP), which was implemented between 2005 and 2011, aimed to provide 500,000 subsidized housing units for the "most in need," but was only capable of providing 360,000.⁹¹ This plan disproportionately benefitted higher middle income families more than it did "the most in need" as a result of an inaccurate legal definition of low income families. In fact, due to rigid criteria for qualification, the plan mostly benefitted those in the top half of the second quintile of earners up to the upper levels of the fifth richest quintile.⁹² Such qualifications included having a formal job (excluding around 60% of the Egyptian workforce), being a male applicant

⁸⁶Yahia Shawkat (2003), p. 80

⁸⁷Ibid, p. 83

⁸⁸Habitat International Coalition – Housing and Land Rights Network

⁸⁹Cam McGrath, (2010)

⁹⁰Amnesty International (2011 A)

⁹¹Yahia Shawkat (2014 B)

⁹²Ibid

from a professional syndicate or government agency, not having more than two children, and having to prove that their wives had a college degree and were employed.⁹³ Moreover, corruption and fraud was common in the process of allocating housing units to deserving families, and there was little or no transparency or monitoring of the process.

The Informal Settlement Development Fund:

To fully understand the government's policies towards informal settlement, one must understand the role of the Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF). Since 2009, the ISDF has been the government agency responsible for tackling the issue of informal settlements through presidential decree no. 305 for 2008.⁹⁴ This fund was tasked with: 1) collecting information on "slums" across Egypt, 2) classifying them into categories, 3) forming policies for the development of unsafe areas, 4) drawing a plan for the development of slums with priority to remove "unsafe areas," 5) monitoring the implementation of these plans in coordination with the governorates, 6) encouraging civil society and private sector to develop slums, 7) developing a plan to remove buildings in unsafe areas, 8) providing evicted residents with alternative housing, 9) and preparing periodic reports on the results of the ISDF's work.⁹⁵ In my interview with Engineer Souad Nageeb Ismail – ISDF Project Officer in Greater Cairo and Upper Egypt – she mentioned that the decision came after the Doweika accident⁹⁶ and that before this incident, "the government had no strategy in dealing with slum areas....they would just send money to the governorates."⁹⁷

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Informal Settlement Development Fund, "Map to document "unsafe areas" in 2012."

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ In 2008, 119 died and 55 were injured after rocks tumbled from the mountain on which Doweika is built. See: Marwa Rakha (2008)

⁹⁷ Interview with Engineer Souad Nageeb Ismail – 2nd of March, 2014

Engineer Souad mentioned that the greatest accomplishment of the ISDF is that it created a vision for the state in dealing with slums through creating four categories and defining a set of policies for each. She explains that the term used to refer to informal settlements, "ashwa'yat," was divided into "unsafe areas," and "unplanned areas." Between these two definitions, the "ashwa'iyat" were divided into four categories – based on levels of priority for development:⁹⁸

1. Life-threatening areas that are located on unstable geological topography
2. Inadequate housing built on the property of the state
3. Adequate housing, that may still threaten public health as a result of lack of proper sanitation and sewage systems or exposure to industrial pollution
4. Adequate housing, not posing a threat to the public, but illegally built without contracts.

She then explained that the first category is only dealt with through resettlement, and that the areas in the second and third categories are usually developed (depending on the case), while the fourth category is dealt with through legalization of the area and monitoring of basic services and facilities. In the baseline report of the ISDF, they classified 404 areas in the abovementioned categories as being "unsafe," and have completed the "development" of 58 areas. Estimates show that completed areas previously housed 15,000 homes and that around 90% of all households were resettled outside of the city.⁹⁹ In the most recent update in August 2013, the ISDF classified 26 areas under the first category, 259 under the second, 61 under the third, and 19 under the fourth.¹⁰⁰

Engineer Souad emphasized that "we (ISDF) respond to the demands of the people, so we have to incorporate a consultation process and fair compensation....we even leave room in the planning of the new areas for markets so that the residents have employment opportunities as well."

⁹⁸ Mohamed Adel, Malek Adly (2012).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Informal Settlement Development Fund, "Map to document "unsafe areas" in 2013."

When asked how the January 2011 revolution impacted the vision of the ISDF, she replied that the revolution prohibited resettlement in far away cities and conditioned that resettlement will only occur in the same geographic area until development of the old area is complete so that the population can return to their homes. She added that they ensure that these standards are met in all cases the ISDF worked with. In my interview with Yahia Shawkat, he drew a different perspective and stated that since the revolution, there was only one case of development within the same place, as eviction and resettlement remain to be the dominant state policy.¹⁰¹

When referring to some cases of eviction where the abovementioned ISDF standards were not met, Engineer Souad explained that the ISDF is merely a government agency responsible for planning; while the implementation of these plans are usually administered by the different governorates. Yet, she did not believe that this was an obstacle to the plans of the ISDF, as she explained that the only obstacle that it faces is the unavailability of land for the resettlement to new areas.

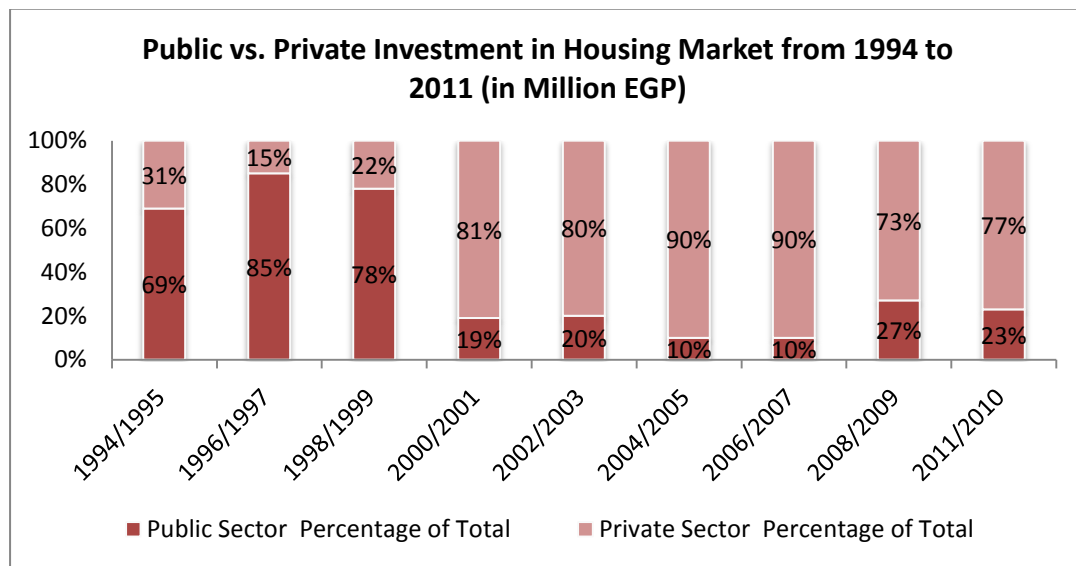
Public Spending and Allocation of Resources

The government budget and public spending are key indicators for understanding the priorities of the state. The percentage of state budget allocated to housing has ranged from 3% to 3.5% in the past few years. Comparing to other social service sectors in the country may not be indicative of much, and thus it is most useful to look inside the state budget and examine how this money is spent and how it used to be spent before. First, public spending on housing has decreased in the past two decades to promote the structural changes in the Egyptian market and to leave room for the private sector to grow. This can be seen when comparing the shares of the public and private sectors in investment in the housing sector in this time period.

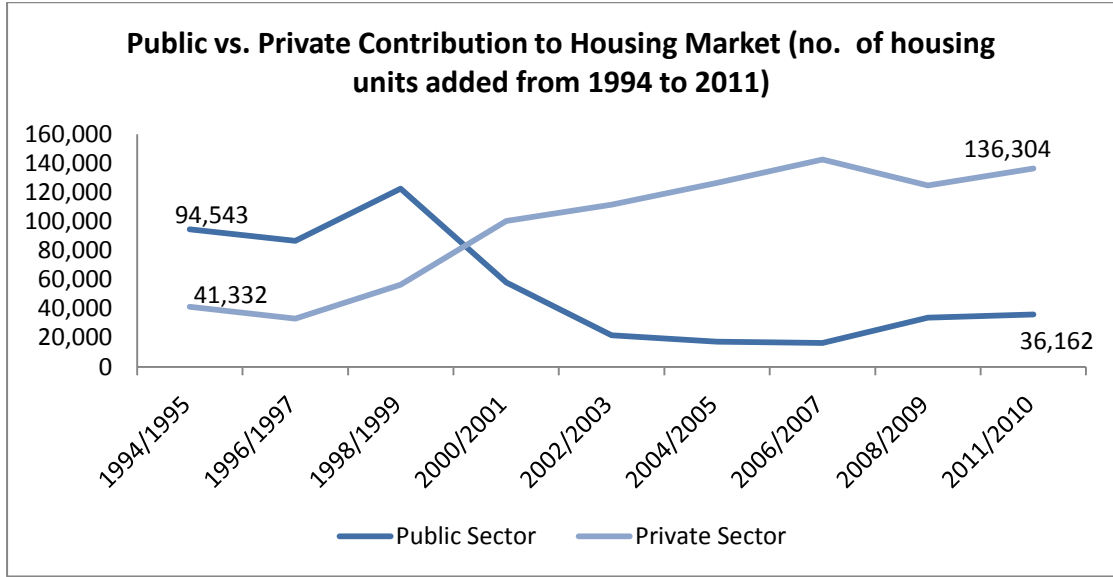
¹⁰¹Yahia Shawkat Interview – 8th of December

Graphs 1 and 2 rely on CAPMAS data to illustrate public and private investment and contribution to the housing sector for the years between 1994 and 2011. Second, within this decreased public spending, there is an evident discrepancy in the allocation of funds between socio-economic classes and regions (urban vs. rural); resulting in a discrepancy in regards to the availability of necessary services and facilities. Also relying on CAPMAS data; Graph 3 illustrates the decrease in the construction of low-cost dwelling units in the time period between 2002 and 2011.

GRAPH 1

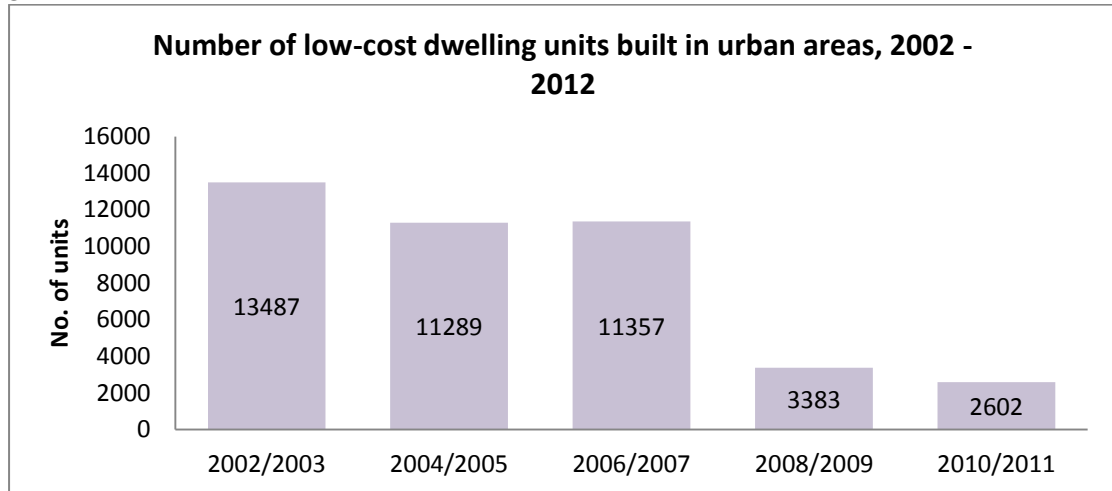


GRAPH 2



The public sector contributed the majority of investment in 1994 (69% - 942 million EGP) in comparison to the private sector (31% - 424 million EGP). This break-up changed over the years, and in 2011, the private sector contributed 7.5 billion EGP, 77% of the total 9.85 billion invested in the market. The same can be observed when looking at total number of housing units added in the same time period (Graph 2), as the public sector provided 94.5 thousand housing units in 1994 (70%) while the private sector only added 41.3 thousand housing units (30%). Again, the break-up changed completely in 2011, as the public sector only provided 36.1 thousand units (21%), while the private sector provided 136 thousand units (79%) in the market.

GRAPH 1¹⁰²



Since the private sector became the biggest investor and contributor to the housing market, the state had less room in deciding how the money is spent. This may have contributed to the phenomenon presented in Graph 3. While Graph 2 reflects that the building of housing units is in a noticeable increase in the past decade, Graph 3 demonstrates that this increase was not reflected in low-cost dwelling units.

Low-cost dwelling units in urban areas have decreased tremendously in the past decade – from 13,487 units built in 2002/2003 to only 2,602 units built in 2010/2011. To further illustrate this phenomenon; of the 172.5 thousand units built in 2010/2011 (Graph 2), the 2,602 low-cost housing units only account for 1.5% of total units. The market shift to the private sector can possibly explain the decrease in the building of low-cost housing units. Since the private sector decides how its resources are to be allocated, it would be economically irrational to invest in low-cost dwelling units, as they are not as profitable as other units – particularly because they can only be provided to the people after being heavily subsidized.

Unsurprisingly, and due to basic economic rules of rationality, the majority of investment in the housing market goes to upper-middle income and luxury units –

¹⁰² CAPMAS, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, 2013. Statistical Year Book (see appendix for data).

making the private sector unable to meet the demands of the housing market. While the overall amount of residential units exceeds the total demand of units, we find a very stark shortage between demand and supply. This is due to the fact that the greater majority of the demand comes from low-income families who cannot afford any of the expensive housing units that flood the Egyptian market. The average price of a housing unit in Egypt is 18 times the per capita income – while it is only 2.8 times in the United States for instance.¹⁰³ Moreover, yearly demand currently exceeds yearly supply by around 300,000 units – despite that CAPMAS estimated in the 2006 census that total number of empty or closed units amount to around 7.2 million units.¹⁰⁴ The acute misallocation of funds is evident when considering that there are around 77,900 families living in kiosks, and 65,800 in tents or huts, tens of thousands on rooftops, stairwells, and many others sharing inadequately small housing units with more than one family while millions of housing units are unused.¹⁰⁵

Within the already highly constrained budget, resources and services are poorly distributed between the different governorates. While Greater Cairo only hosts 22% of Egypt's population, it receives around 74% of investment in housing units. Based on this number, the average area of housing units per individual reaches around 28 meters squared in Cairo, while it is only 2 meters squared in some areas in Upper Egypt and less than 1 meter squared in some areas in Sinai.¹⁰⁶ The same discrepancy can be observed in regards to access to drinking water, electricity consumption, availability of proper sewage systems, access to convenient transportation, health care and services, and number of schools and teachers.

¹⁰³ Kevin Brass (2011),

¹⁰⁴ Yahia Shawkat (2013), p. 121

¹⁰⁵ Joint Submission to the Committee for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

¹⁰⁶ New Urban Communities Authority Portal, New Urban Communities pages.

Legal Framework

Egypt is a signatory party of many international agreements, is bound by a newly voted upon constitution, and by a set of domestic laws that regulate housing policies. Yet, the Egyptian government has at times violated many norms and standards pertaining to the right to housing. Vague language used in the constitution and in domestic laws has allowed the state to not comply with many international standards. This section will explore international standards on the right to housing and will then examine the way in which the constitution and domestic laws can shape housing policies through a textual analysis of relevant documents. Recently, pressures from international agencies, and gains made in the 2014 constitution provide a political opportunity opening, as the role of the state has been more rigidly defined in relation to the housing crisis in an unprecedented manner.

International Standards

Egypt is a signatory of many international agreements that leave it legally bound to respect the "right to housing." International documents pertaining to housing signed and ratified by Egypt include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, the African Charter of the Rights and Well Being of the Child, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.¹⁰⁷ While the context and focus of each of these agreements differ, adequate housing is recognized as a human right in each of them. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – responsible for monitoring the extent to which states comply with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

¹⁰⁷ Christopher Golay, Ozden Melik, (1992)

(ICESCR) – emphasizes that "the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restricted sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one's head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity."¹⁰⁸ In the General Comment No.4 on the right to adequate housing to Article 11 of the ICESCR, six standards were used to define adequate housing:¹⁰⁹

1. Legal security of tenure and protection against forced eviction
2. Availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure
3. Affordability of housing units through subsidies and protection against unreasonable rent
4. Habitability to protect from harsh weather and disease
5. Accessibility for disadvantaged groups
6. Convenient location that is far from polluted sources, but near to necessary services.

Moreover, forced eviction is condemned in all shapes and forms, as eviction is only legal under certain conditions placed by the ICESCR as well:¹¹⁰

1. Opportunity for genuine consultation with those affected;
2. Adequate and reasonable notice for affected people prior to eviction;
3. Information on the proposed evictions and, where applicable on the alternative purpose for which the land or housing is to be used, to be made available in reasonable time to all those affected;
4. Government officials or their representatives to be present during an eviction;
5. Everyone involved in carrying out the eviction to be properly identified;
6. Evictions not to take place in particularly bad weather or at night unless the affected people consent otherwise;
7. Provision of legal remedies
8. Provision....of legal aid to people who are in need of it to seek redress from the courts.

In Egypt's latest periodic report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in November 2013, the committee made a few observations and recommendations to the Egyptian state that pertain to housing-related matters. Recommendation number 6 urged Egypt to "increase the proportion of its budget allocated to sectors directly related to the Covenants rights, particularly

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 4

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Amnesty International (2011 A)

...housing."¹¹¹ More importantly, in recommendation no. 20, the committee made observations on many of what Egyptian NGOs have been lobbying for in the past few years:

The committee recommends that the State party [Egypt] take steps to ensure that ownership of houses and land is formally registered, and that the State party actively raises awareness among affected groups of the population, including through the dissemination of knowledge, on relevant legal provisions and registry procedures. It recommends that the State party establish legal definitions for, inter alia, adequate housing, informal settlements, and security of tenure, including with regard to Egypt 2052 Plan, that are in compliance with the Covenant. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that persons affected by forced evictions have access to an adequate remedy, restitution of their property, and compensation, as appropriate, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 7 (1997) on forced evictions. The committee also draws the State's party's attention to its general comment No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing.

The pressure on the government from the UN Committee reflects a political opportunity opening that is unprecedented. The abovementioned recommendation defines the role of the state far more rigidly than before, as it pressures the government to establish the legal definitions that are currently lacking, binds it to provide adequate housing to its citizens, and advises it not to use forced eviction as a remedy to informality. Thus, this presented an opening for groups to make these same demands and increase pressure on the government, which can be particularly aided with the fact that the Egyptian constitution presented similar pressures on the state.

Housing in the Constitution

Since the abolition of the Egyptian monarchy in the early 1950s, Egypt has seen seven constitutions, only two of which recognize citizens' right to adequate housing. The first recognition of this right came in the 2012 constitution in article 67; which stated:

¹¹¹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, "Concluding Observations on the Combined Second, Third, and Fourth Periodic Report of Egypt,"

Adequate housing, clean water and healthy food are given rights. The state adopts a *national housing plan*, its basis in social justice, the promotion of independent initiatives and housing cooperatives, and the regulation of the use of national territory for the purposes of construction, in accordance with *public interest* and with the rights of future generations.¹¹²

The recognition of the right to adequate housing is a significant step forward and can be capitalized on as a political opportunity opening. However, this article does not cover all aspects related to the matter and leaves room for a great deal of ambiguity. First, the definition of what comprises "adequate housing" is not given – rendering the article vague. While not all constitutions are detailed, Egyptian legislations also do not define what is meant by adequate, as will be presented in the following section. Second, this article states that "regulation of the use of national territory for the purposes of construction, in accordance with public interest..." leaving room for the abuse of loopholes in particular laws that threaten security of tenure under the argument of "public interest." Third, and most importantly, this article does not identify the state as the responsible actor for providing "adequate housing, clean water, and healthy food," and only suggests the responsibility to regulate national territory and adopt national plans for housing.

The 2014 constitution, currently in place, came a long way in comparison to previous constitutions and tackled housing issues from a number of angles. It cleared some of the ambiguity in the 2012 constitution's Article 67, and added two important articles that regulate legal tenure. The primary article dealing with the right to adequate housing in the 2014 constitution – and the equivalent of Article 67 of the 2012 constitution – is article 78:¹¹³

The *State* shall *ensure* the citizens' right to adequate, safe and healthy housing in a manner which preserves human dignity and achieves social

¹¹² Egypt Independent (2012)

¹¹³ State Information Service (2014).

justice. The State shall devise a national housing plan which upholds the environmental particularity and ensures the contribution of personal and collaborative initiatives in its implementation. The State shall also regulate the use of State lands and provide them with basic utilities within the framework of comprehensive urban planning which serves cities and villages and a population distribution strategy. This is to be applied in a manner serving the public interest, improving the quality of life for citizens and safeguards the rights of future generations. The State shall also devise a comprehensive national plan to address the problem of unplanned slums, which includes re-planning, provision of infrastructure and utilities, and improvement of the quality of life and public health....

One can note when reading this article that it identifies the state as the responsible party for "ensuring the citizens' right to adequate housing," a positive step in realizing the right to housing. While it still does not explain what "adequate housing" entails, it describes the characteristics of the plan that the state will implement in regards to urban matters. Moreover, this article is the first among all Egyptian constitutions to use the word "slums," possibly reflecting a policy shift that officially recognizes informal settlements as an issue that is deserving of a "comprehensive national plan."

But, this article did receive some criticism for dealing with the right to housing much more loosely in comparison to the constitution's detailing of other rights. A group of eight NGOs working on urban matters – through the urban constitution campaign – criticized this article for using weak language. In a joint press statement by the organizations, they argue that the usage of certain language, such as "the state shall ensure," is weak when compared to the way in which the constitution presents other rights like the right to health and the right to education – as the words used were: the "state protects," or "commits to protecting."¹¹⁴

In regards to security of tenure, the 2014 constitution protects against "forced displacement," through article 63, which states that "all forms and types of arbitrary forced displacement of citizens shall be prohibited and shall be a crime that does not

¹¹⁴ The Housing Coalition (2014).

lapse by prescription." While this article was considered to be a big step forward to many, it was also criticized by the group of NGOs in the "Urban Constitution" campaign for using the word "displacement" instead of "eviction." They argue that this word was carefully used, as displacement is only one type of eviction; referring to the resettlement of people from one area to another area – while eviction can also mean they are evicted from their homes and remain in the same geographic area. They add that the word "eviction," and not "displacement," is what is usually used in international covenants and that it was intentionally avoided because some cases of eviction are not considered displacement.¹¹⁵

Another article in the 2014 constitution that pertains to security of tenure is Article 35, which states that:

Private properties shall be protected....It is not permissible to impose guardianship thereon except in the cases defined by Law and by virtue of a court judgment. Expropriation shall be allowed only in the public interest and for its benefit, and against fair compensation to be paid in advance according to the Law.

This article was criticized as well by the same group of NGOs for not defining what "public interest" is – and for relying on the law's definition of the term, which was criticized by the group for being too ambiguous.

Despite the fears that the 2014 constitution does not sufficiently guarantee the right to adequate housing due to many ambiguities, it reflects an important shift in the policy of the state. While some disagree on the degree of this shift, this constitution can present a political opportunity opening for groups to make demands based on the rights given to them in the constitution.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Domestic Laws Regulating Housing

The abovementioned shortcomings of the constitutions could have been irrelevant if existing legislations protected the right to housing and security of tenure. On the contrary, current legislation does not adequately address many of the abovementioned issues and tend to contain loopholes that can easily be abused through corruption. Moreover, they also do not comply with international standards.

For one, adequate housing is definitely not guaranteed through law. The only definition of a housing unit in any Egyptian law can be found in the "Unified Construction Law" (number 199 of 2008); a residential unit was defined as "the place that provides people with accommodation and the basic needs of daily life, which includes a bathroom, kitchen, and at least one residential room." This definition does not identify most of the standards of adequate housing mentioned above. Moreover, affordability of housing is threatened due to laws that grant excessive privileges to real estate investors and landlords such as the "Landlord-tenant Law" (Law number 4 of 1996) and the law regulating "The Rental of Non-Residential Units and Commercial Shops" (Law number 6 of 1997).¹¹⁶

Recently, most cases of eviction and resettlement have been justified by the state through the "Expropriation for Public Interest Law" (Number 10 of 1990). This law permits seizure of property in eight cases where "public interest" would prevail if expropriation occurs. These cases include the building roads and streets, water and sewage projects, irrigation projects, energy projects, transportation projects, development of facilities and services, among others.¹¹⁷ Moreover, this law allows the council of ministers and the governorate a great degree of discretion to modify what

¹¹⁶ Joint Submission to the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Periodic Review of Egypt.

¹¹⁷ Text of law found in Appendix

constitutes "public interest." The law also does not guarantee consultation with affected communities before the decision is made. The only mention of affected communities is found in article 2 of the law, which dictates that the decision must be officially announced and that residents of the area must be "informed" – without mentioning that they should be consulted beforehand.

As was demonstrated throughout this section, the role of the state has been more or less static over the past decades. As the state does not adequately identify many of the challenges of the housing crisis, resettlement and urban expansion have remained to be the main remedy to the problems of the sector; regardless of the demands and needs of the citizens. While recent political events have led to positive shifts in the policies of the state, pressures come from non-state actors, as many groups are utilizing the openings allotted to them from the abovementioned political opportunities – as will be demonstrated in the following section.

The Role of Non-State Actors

Unlike the more or less static role of the state in the past few decades, the role of non-state actors is more susceptible to change and perceptions of their role have been conflicting. This section will explore the role of intergovernmental organizations and donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the media, grassroots movements and public participation. First, while inter-governmental organizations and donors are presumably tools to pressure and support the government in adhering to its responsibilities towards its people, state responsiveness to their efforts has been superficial. Further, the policies of some donors have complicated the crisis further. Second, the impact of right-based NGOs in the past few years has grown, yet they have yet to gain the same trust from the people as developmental and philanthropic organizations. While this lack of trust can be a result of their increased politicization

and the attacks they are under from the state and sympathetic media, some believe that it is also because they are unable to offer material benefits for the communities they seek to help. Third, while media ultimately aims to raise awareness on the housing crisis, they at times entrench a number of stereotypes on informal areas to the extent that communities prefer to not be covered by the media. Fourth, due to the inefficiency of local governance in Egypt, the people have resorted to protest and demonstrations as a way to voice their demands and have presented a great deal of pressure on the state to reform its urban policies and plans. Overall, all non-state actors discussed in this section – even if unable to significantly pressure the government in reforming its policies – have been playing bigger roles in compensating for the retreat of the state in the sector in the past few years, and in utilizing the opportunities allotted to them by recent political developments.

Inter-governmental Organizations and Donors

UN-HABITAT does not work with the government; we try to improve the policies of the state...but we also are not opposition...we aim to offer alternatives. – *Mohamed Abo Samra*, UN-HABITAT

Dorman and Sims reflect on the important role that inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and donors have historically been playing in Egypt. The change – even if little – in the government's approach to deal with the housing crisis can sometimes be attributed to the pressures of these organizations. Dorman cites that Western aid agencies pressured the government to offer public services to informal areas in the 1970s and 80s and the state in fact started realizing this role to a certain extent.¹¹⁸ In the 1982 USAID report, the agency hailed a positive dynamic of informal areas, noting that it is responding well to the speedy growth of Cairo. This report, even if did

¹¹⁸ Dorman (2012), p. 7

not change the policies of the government, pressured the government to recognize the phenomenon of informal areas.¹¹⁹

In my interview with Mohamed Abo Samra, Urban Planning and Community Development Consultant at UN-HABITAT, he argued that the UN along with many international developmental organizations, such as USAID and GIZ, has led to many paradigmatic shifts in the policies of the government.¹²⁰ For instance, GIZ's introduction of participation in its projects on informal areas has slowly been transmitted to the government. However, he does believe that change will come slow and cites an example of how participation is sometimes only superficial. He adds that when he confronts officials in rejection of this approach, it was not uncommon to get responses like "these people are ignorant, but you are educated and you know." When asked about the impact of the January 2011 revolution on state policy, Abo Samra replied "the approach of the state did not change much, but the approach of the people changed. The people started feeling they are not ignorant and that they mattered, and for the first time, realized that they own the country just as the officials do, and this is a culture that came from Tahrir." UN-HABITAT and other international organizations, in his view, try to play on this newly mustered approach of the people, and encourage the state to respond to the people's demand through reviewing its policies.

While inter-governmental agencies have been working to pressure the government to change its approaches – even if slowly and superficially – some international donors contribute to the complication of the housing crisis in Egypt. The Bank Information Center published a study in March 2013 titled "Impact of World Bank Policy and Programs on the Built Environment in Egypt," arguing that the World Bank's (WB) policies in Egypt tend to simply reflect the Bank's agenda to liberalize

¹¹⁹ Sims (2012), p. 66

¹²⁰ Mohamed Abo Samra, Interview.

the market to meet its standards and do not reflect the needs of the built environment in Egypt. The WB's policies, in their opinion, do not proactively aim to address some of the problems in the housing sector in Egypt, but simply mainstream the policies applied by the WB in all other sectors: investing in private sector growth, encouraging public-private partnerships, decreasing public spending, and removing subsidies. While these policies may or may not be beneficial in other sectors, they have done more harm than good in the housing sector in Egypt, as the market can already be characterized by decreased public spending (as illustrated in an earlier section) and the private sector have proven unable to meet the soaring needs of the people. This study compared the proportion of WB investments by sector and the needs of the sector, reflecting that the WB prefers investing in areas such as the industrial and trade sectors while completely neglecting the need to provide more affordable housing.¹²¹

Thus, while the activity of international developmental organizations (whether financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, or donors) may at times act as a means to pressure the state to adhere to its obligations, they often reflect their own goals – which may not always meet the needs of the people.

NGOs: Friend or Enemy?

A lot of 'rights' people [(Human Rights NGOs)] and organizations [(development organizations)] keep coming to visit us. They come, take photos, and say they will act, but nothing happens. – *Abdullah Sha'awa*, Ramlet Boulaq Focus Group¹²²

The people want something tangible...something we can't offer. People don't know what we can do, how can they trust us? What can we offer? What can we sell? We can't sell anything! – *Yahia Shawkat*¹²³

Non-Governmental Organizations – particularly philanthropic organizations and Faith-based organizations – have traditionally filled the void left by the government in

¹²¹Bank Information Center (2013).

¹²² Ramlet Boulaq Focus Group – 15th of February, 2014

¹²³ Yahia Shawkat Interview.

informal areas. While these organizations were usually welcomed and trusted by the residents of poor areas, a new category of organizations – rights-based organizations – have recently been more active in working with informal areas, particularly following the January 2011 revolution. Yet, much of their work is unclear to the residents of these areas who at times are afraid of trusting these organizations at fear of being used and showcased for ulterior motives.

Yahia Shawkat explains that rights-based NGOs have nothing to offer from the perspective of the people. He argues that not only are philanthropic and development organizations more trusted, but even political parties – that "distribute oil and sugar" for clear ulterior motives – are more welcomed than rights-based NGOs because at least "they offer something material." There is one area where the people have come to trust rights-based NGOs; and that is litigation. In 2012 and 2013, local NGOs, namely the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), among a few others, successfully raised two cases in court to revoke eviction decisions – one on behalf of the people of Ramlet Boulaq and the other for the people of Qursaya Island.¹²⁴

Other than litigation, NGOs are seldom trusted and are not always welcomed. Yet, rights-based NGOs have been very active in the past few years and have been able to utilize the opportunities presented from recent political developments. For instance, the eight NGOs forming the "housing coalition" and the "Urban Constitution Campaign" referred to earlier in this chapter wrote a document to what they envisioned to be a constitution that respects urban rights, and sent this document to the group of 50 that was tasked with writing the 2014 constitution.¹²⁵ This campaign

¹²⁴ Cairo Observer (2013)

¹²⁵ The eight NGOs include: The Housing and Land Network, Takween, Tadamun, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, Shadow Ministry of Housing, the Egyptian Center for Legislative and Civil Reform, Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, and Shehab Institute for Comprehensive

may have contributed to some of the positive improvements in the 2014 constitution in regards to housing-related rights that were referred to in an earlier section.

Another important contribution from such organizations was seen in November 2013, when a group of 55 Egyptian NGOs submitted a report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in parallel to the government's report on the occasion of Egypt's periodic review in front of the committee.¹²⁶ This report was possibly very influential to the Committee, as many of the recommendations made – such as recommendation no. 20 discussed earlier – reflected those made in the report by this group of Egyptian NGOs.

Yet, both the contributions discussed above would not be known by the average Egyptian – let alone those living in the relatively isolated informal areas of Egypt. On the very contrary, the perception of the people towards "rights people," as referred to by Um Fares in Ramlet Boulaq, is very negative. Heidi Abdel Rezk, of the "Ahya' Bel-Esm Faqat," popular campaign, mentioned to me that "people don't trust them [(NGOs)] because they always go and pretend like they will help and then never visit again. Even the good NGOs sometimes do that."¹²⁷ Her colleague Najlaa Taymour adds that "people have also lately been hearing things about human rights centers and many people believe that they are traitors and not to be trusted. Events like what happened with Mohamed Adel¹²⁸ for instance made a lot of people not trust ECESR." In reaction to this issue, Yahia Shawkat declares that "we are losing a war from the media and public opinion....and we need to be more systematic and

Development. The document proposed by the group can be found on their blog:
<http://urbanconstitution.wordpress.com/2013/12/16/a-constitutional-approach-to-urban-egypt/>

¹²⁶ Global Policy Forum (2013)

¹²⁷ Heidi Abdelrezk, Najlaa Taymour Interview. Cairo, 6th of January, 2014

¹²⁸ Mohamed Adel, a leading member of the April 6th Movement, was arrested in December 2013 for organizing a protest without a permit. Adel was a volunteer at ECESR, and thus was arrested in the NGO during a police raid. Find details at: "April 6 Movement's Mohamed Adel arrested for involvement in Shura Council Incidents," *Egypt Independent*.

strategic...we need to let people know what we do....but this is normal, it is still new grounds for us." He also explains that the reason people don't see the point of what rights-based NGOs do is because they have very few tools since January 2011:

As long as there is no parliament and no political mechanism, our impact is very weak. Who are you speaking to now, the army? Who cares! This is the most we can do in this time period....after it is over, we should start moving. You can't mobilize people at this moment, the protest law¹²⁹ for instance is a variable you couldn't control....to win the trust of the people, we have to produce output!

Thus, it is unclear whether residents of poor areas will give their trust to these NGOs due to two main reasons. First, as emphasized by Yahia Shawkat, the output of these NGOs is not as tangible as affected communities would hope for. Second, residents fear that these organizations have ulterior motives due to the extent to which some of them seem to be politicized. A participant (Zein) in the focus group in Bab El-Nasr mentioned that when NGOs attempt to reach out to the people, people are afraid that "they are affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood or the Army, and the people do not want to be politicized because they are afraid they will lose the political battle!"¹³⁰ This may lead to the conclusion that as long as these NGOs show signs of politicization or at least are given that profile due to attacks from the media or state apparatus, the residents of the areas will not trust NGOs unless in extreme situations where NGOs play a positive reactive role through litigation or campaigns.

Media: Perceptions and Coverage

Ticking bombs, explosive belt, "congested loci," "dormant cells," and a threat to national security are all terms that were used to describe informal areas in an article

¹²⁹ In late November 2013, a law was produced that organizes protest and conditions that a permit is needed before any protest or demonstration occurs. See full text of protest law at: "Full English Translation of Egypt's new Protest Law," *Ahram Online*.

¹³⁰ Bab El Nasr Focus Group – 15th of February, 2014

titled "Egypt's slums...ticking bombs waiting real solutions!"¹³¹ This kind of language is not unique to the cited article, as many reports in the media – even after the January revolution – use the same language in describing informal settlements in Egypt. While that article was likely to have been written to shed light on the issue, with hope to raise awareness, it paints informal settlements as threats that must be dealt with through "real solutions," in order to avoid the ramifications of what are deemed "dormant cells." In the article, the author interviewed Dr. Dalia Al-Shimy, a psychologist, who describes the impact of the people's marginalization by saying:¹³²

They lose the connection with the rest of society....the danger is that they lack nationalist sentiments and do not feel any loyalty to their country....they feel envious of the rich because they are close to them, Boulaq Abo El-Ella surrounds Zamalek, Boulaq Dakroul surrounds Dokki and Mohandesin....they have their own rules and accepted behaviors, and have their own laws. Therefore, *ashwa'iyat* [slums] have become a haven for criminals and dangerous diseases, where crime, addiction, adultery is common, as there is no control over them, and they have customary norms and....no one needs to resort to the government.

The article concludes with arguing that the phenomenon of *aswa'iyat* is a threat to national security and not just "human security," and thus it must be incorporated into the national plan. The author then takes the opportunity to present part of Hosni Mubarak's latest presidential campaign – as this article was written following the Doweiga accident in 2008 – that tackled *ashwa'iyat* and is likely to have given birth to what became the Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF).

There are mixed opinions on the role of the media among activists, researchers, and even residents. Najlaa Taymour, member of Ahyaa' Bel-Esm Faqat, emphasized that the media is at times harmful to the cause and that "it always portrays the people of the areas as living in a state of chaos and lack of organization...that isn't true though, and the people living in these areas get bothered by the way they are

¹³¹Hamam Sarhan, (2008).

¹³² Ibid.

portrayed. They don't like the word '*ashwa'iyat*' and don't like it when the media goes to them for a story." Yet her colleague Heidi argued that activists must use the media in their work because it will be useless if they don't. Yahia Shawkat believed that "the word slum was propagated by the media...this acted as a collective punishment for everyone that lives there...this is discrimination and targeting...it does not serve the cause!" Yet Yahia argues that the press is particularly important when there is a violation or a case of corruption, where news organizations are glad to cover the event because "they seek the buzz."

Among residents of informal settlements, there are also many mixed opinions on the role of the media. While some believe that it is essential in raising awareness and in making others act, others believe that the media does more harm than good. In the focus group conducted in Ramlet Boulaq, Mohamed Ismail and his wife Um Fares engaged in a conversation about the visit of Ibrahim Hegazy, a well-known Egyptian television host, to the area. When Um Fares implied that Hegazy came to the area and nothing changed afterwards, Mohamed objected: "No, his job is to speak...we want people to speak so that others move...what can he do otherwise? He is a TV guy, what will he do?" In response to him, Um Fares jokingly tells the story of a woman who came to the area to film but who ended up not leaving her car. Um Fares remarks, "she thought we were animals (giggle) and she wanted to take an up-close look!"

It is indisputable that the media at times plays a positive role in this topic, yet just as it is capable of shaping people's opinions and attitudes; the media itself is a reflection of individuals' perceptions.

Popular Participation: The voice of the people

Local governance remains to be tied by many constraints posed by the intervention of the central government in a number of areas. This can be linked to the

great extent to which they are dependent on the central government for funding. Municipalities rely on the government for 80% of their budget, rendering them largely dependent on the state. Moreover, spending on municipalities only amount to around 12% of the local budget in the annual year of 2012/2013, a number that does not fare well to the global average for comparable emerging economies of 20-30%.¹³³ Thus, municipalities are left with very little power – only able to manage services in their respective areas, with little say to demand change in a particular neighborhood or even in the appointment of governors and officials. Moreover, most citizens do not consider local governance a tool to impact policy making – and some are even unaware of the right to participate. Particularly in informal areas, residents have little or no tools to make demands directly to the central authority through formal means and usually apply the changes they want to see themselves through their own effort – as was illustrated throughout this thesis. And thus, residents started perceiving protest and demonstration as the means to be heard.

Fear won't go away unless our voices are loud...to demand our rights, we must be heard, we won't get what we want otherwise...people's voices are getting loud and we are becoming more aware and those who were quiet can no longer afford to be quiet and will no longer be able to....Egypt will never go back to what we were like before the 25th of January....we now have freedom, and that is priceless. *Zein*, Bab El-Nasr Focus Group.

The question then becomes how residents can demand their rights in light of the inexistence of an official tool such as local governance. *Zein* from Bab El-Nasr, along with many others, believes that the people can only voice their demands through demonstration and protest in the current political environment, and that such a tool is a primary victory of the 25th of January revolution. The masterminds behind the *Ayhaa Bel-Esm Faqat* movement shared *Zein*'s sentiments and formed their vision based on

¹³³ Tadamun, (2013).

it. The movement was created on the 19th of July, 2012 by The Peoples' Socialist Coalition party, with a vision to empower the most in need. It quickly separated from the political party to create its own institution, primarily led by university students and activists.¹³⁴ This movement targeted informal areas in particular due to the extent to which the areas are marginalized by the state. Najlaa Taymour, a member of the movement from early on in its inception, explained that the movement's purpose was:

To give a voice to those who do not have one. We set it at the time as a continuation of the 25th of January revolution. The people who went to the street demanding their rights were later forgotten. We noticed this, we noticed that the revolution had turned into a fight between the different political powers, and so we went back to the people who helped in making Tahrir so strong and tried to make them have a voice once more.

The movement initially reached out to a small number of areas, including Ramlet Boulaq, Doweika, Nahda and Salam, Cemeteries, Istabl Antar, but then started expanding and has more plans of expansion in the future. With around 87 students running the movement, recruitment only occurs through personal relationships to ensure that the intentions of the members in the movement coincide with that of the founders'. They emphasize that the group does not work on housing rights in particular, but primarily aim to give a voice to the disempowered and the "forgotten" by the state and by other groups in society. Their main tool is to convince the people that mobilizing would help their cause without claiming to offer anything else to the people. When asked why the residents of these areas trust them, Najlaa replied:

Some of us lived amongst them, and we had no political affiliation, we were not getting paid, and we didn't want to film them to show the world how they looked. We simply wanted to help. We don't offer them anything, our only role is to make them want to move, make them want to organize. We tell them that they are not getting their rights, and we encourage them to fight for it. We organized our demonstrations as *Ahyaa* and asked them to join us. It wasn't the opposite. We are fighting for them because we want to fight for them.

¹³⁴Heidi Abdelrezk, Najlaa Taymour. Tape Recorder. Cairo, 6th of January, 2014.

However, Najlaa, and her colleague Heidi, explained that people have not been organizing as often since the 30th of June.¹³⁵ They add that many either don't want to threaten the legitimacy of the army by protesting or do not want to be associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. In addition to these cases, Heidi highlights that some simply are afraid of being detained in light of the harsh reaction to demonstrators since the 30th of June, while others believe that no matter what they do now, their demands will not be met at the moment, and that they must wait until the transitional period is over. Both Najlaa and Heidi predict that residents of most areas will not make any demands or voice their concerns until they are comfortable enough to protest once more.

Explaining Resistance

This chapter aimed to explain why groups of informal settlements resist housing-related policies and plans. To answer this question, the roles of both state and non-state actors were reviewed to understand what it is that is being resisted, the extent to which these actors are able to tackle the challenges of informality and the housing crisis, and the degree to which the demands of the people are reflected in their approaches. The state traditionally gave itself a large role in the housing sector – similar to its role in many other social services sectors – and was unable to play this role; warranting Dorman to deem it a "lame leviathan." As the state retreated further to leave room for the growth of the private sector, the housing crisis proliferated as the priorities of the private sector did not reflect the demands of the most in need.

Recently, many opportunities were afforded to non-state actors to play a stronger role in assisting or pressuring the government to adhere to its commitments

¹³⁵ After the "Tamarrod" (Rebellion) Campaign collected 22 million signatures on a petition opposing President Mohamed Morsi, and following the demonstration of millions of Egyptians in the streets of Egypt on the 30th of June, Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces, General Abdel Fatah Al-Sissi announced the ouster of President Morsi on the 3rd of July, 2013.

due to positive developments in the legal framework underpinning housing-related matters in Egypt. First, some intergovernmental organizations have been able to induce some change, but it has usually been superficial. Further, some donor organizations, although entering the Egyptian housing market with much-needed investment are argued to have been promoting their own agendas in disregard to the needs of the people. Second, NGOs have been rapidly gaining influence, and the discourse of rights is gaining momentum among residents of informal areas. Yet, they are unable to cultivate the trust among the communities as a result of being highly politicized, and are unable to offer the communities tangible assistance with the exception of a few cases. Third, just as the media helps in raising awareness on the issue of informality in Egypt, it at times harms the cause by negatively portraying these communities – consequently losing the trust of the people.

As a result of the fact that many of the approaches taken by both state and non-state actors do not reflect the demands of the people, and with no formal institutional means to participate, the people are driven to resist through protest and demonstration. Concurrently there is a fear of politicization, particularly in light of the volatile post-revolution political climate. However, it is only through such forms of resistance that these groups are able to contest the policies that they perceive as threatening them – leaving the groups with only the option of waiting for the right moment to call for their demands through protest. As argued in the introduction of this dissertation, not all efforts of resistance develop into organized movements, which will be illustrated through the case studies presented in Chapters IV and V.

Chapter IV

Bab El-Nasr: Living Among the Dead

Cemetery dwellers have been the subject of many news reports in recent years with shocking headlines like "*residents of Bab El-Nasr dream to live*,"¹³⁶ "*Bab El-Nasr cemeteries: where the dead embraces the living*,"¹³⁷ or "*Bab El-Nasr cemeteries....torture for the living, peace for the dead*."¹³⁸

In one article, the author argues that "the cries and demands of the revolution did not reach the dwellers of Bab El-Nasr Cemetery." He adds that:

How is social justice achieved if the marginalized only taste death with the spirits and ghosts of the dead in their graves? Everything in their life reflects the death that surrounds them. Children are no longer able to smile out of fear from the dead.¹³⁹

An easy trap for sensationalism, journalists fall into a pattern of overemphasizing dramatic effect of living in cemeteries – usually only occupied by the dead – forgetting that their situation is not much different from the millions of residents living in informal areas also unfit for living. In both situations, residents do not have legal tenure, are at constant threat of eviction, do not have adequate services, and rely to a great extent on their own efforts to survive. Yet, findings in this chapter will illustrate that residents of Bab El-Nasr are just as connected to the rest of the city as any other neighborhood, due to their proximity to the city's center. Further, not only did the demands of the January 25th Revolution reach them, they partook in constructing them – like any other group in society.

Located in Gamaliya, near Azhar and Khan El Khalili, the Bab El-Nasr cemeteries are very close to some of the most central and densely populated areas in

¹³⁶ El Wadi (2012)

¹³⁷ Ahmed Abdelaziz (2012)

¹³⁸ Hajer Othman (2013)

¹³⁹ Ahmed Abdel Rady, and Mohamed Faheem Abdelghafar (2013)

Cairo. In my visit to the area on 15th of February 2013, I was welcomed by a big group of residents waiting in a sitting area on the entrance of the cemetery where they usually welcome families who are burying or visiting their dead. Zein, the most enthusiastic and outspoken of the group, took me first to the home of Um Hussam – a small wooden shack shut closed with a rusty lock on the door that could only be reached through jumping over a tomb situated in front of it. A group of five individuals showed interest in participating in a focus group. The group was consisted of the following participants: 1) Zein, a middle aged man who claims to have lived in the area since the early 90s, 2) Mohamed, the son of manager of the graveyard (*toraby*), 3) Um Hussam, a woman who played a central role in calling for protest, 4) Hussam, the son of Um Hussam, a teenage boy who was born in the area, 5) and Mostafa, who relies on the graves for work and has lived there for many years.

Due to the unavailability of documented research on the cemetery, this chapter will primarily rely on anecdotal evidence collected from the focus group conducted with a select sample of residents of Bab El-Nasr. I will aim to present a short background on the area; offer a description of the living conditions and the kind of external threat embodied by the state, examine their attempts to organize, and discuss their relationship with external actors during mobilization. While the residents of the area have at times organized to demand their rights, collective mobilization has been very weak despite the support given to the area by *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*, NGOs, and the media. Using Edwards and McCarthy's five main types of resources – moral, cultural, social-organizational, human and material resources – this chapter will examine the extent to which this organizational perspective explains readiness and capacity, or lack thereof, of residents of Bab El-Nasr neighborhood to mobilize.

Background

Unsurprisingly, figures for the number of residents living in cemeteries in Egypt vary. While some claim that there are 6 million people and others claim 1 million, Sims argues that both numbers are enormously exaggerated and that the number is more likely to be around 100,000 people.¹⁴⁰ Even figures from CAPMAS vary between 1 million and 2 million. Moreover, the population of Bab El-Nasr is also indefinite. Censuses are made very informally without proper resources. In a report by Al-Dostor, 400 families were cited; ElBadil cited 1000 families, while Youm El-Sabei claimed that there are 2000 families in the area.¹⁴¹ Thus, there is no reliable census for either the number of residents in cemeteries in Egypt or for Bab El-Nasr in particular.

It is also unclear when the areas were first populated, as all information available is dependent on interviews conducted with residents in the area – making information more or less contingent on memory and subjective testimonies of residents. In the case of Bab El-Nasr, one of the participants in the focus group stated that he has been living in the area for 20 years, and that people were already living there when he first came. Moreover, reasons for moving to the area were usually cited as one of two things: the residents either worked in the cemetery or in a close-by area and needed a practical and convenient place to stay, or simply sought the cemeteries for affordable housing with little or no rent.

Living Conditions and State Threat

These graves are not made for living...they are made for the dead! So how would you expect the state to legally support the people living here and give them services? The only thing they can do is find alternative housing in other cities. – *Mostafa*, Bab El-Nasr

¹⁴⁰ *Cairo Observer* (2012)

¹⁴¹ Abdelaziz (2012), Othman (2013), Abdel Rady (2013)

Unlike other areas in Cairo, the residents of cemeteries are unable to demand legal tenure in order to legitimately acquire necessary services and amenities, and thus their only option and demand from the state is fair conditions for resettlement. In the meantime, residents – like those in other informal areas – get their electricity and water through a home that is legally registered. The manager of the graveyard (*toraby*) has tenure and acts as a landlord among the residents. He collects rent from the residents or agrees with them that they work for him in exchange for their stay at the cemetery. Moreover, he gives them the needed wires for electricity in their huts and shacks and allows them to fill buckets of water from his faucet. While this scenario may not sound appealing in comparison to other informal areas of similar conditions, residents of the area find many incentives in the arrangement. Mohamed, the son of the *toraby* explains "they are *orzageya* (work by the day or by the task), and can't find work elsewhere...they know work here and know how things are done. While some have proper jobs, like mechanics, kiosk owners, etc....there is also those who are beggars and are here only because they know that the lump sum money given to them by those who come to bury or visit their dead is usually quite good!" Mohamed cites several examples of residents who received land in new areas and then sold their apartments to return to Bab El-Nasr.

Zein – a resident of the area for over twenty years – disagrees with Mohamed and believes that people would be willing to leave the place once they have a good alternative. While Mohamed claims that they were in fact previously given one and they rejected it, Zein explains that the reason people returned was that there were no proper services and the areas were very far away from central Cairo – adding transportation costs to their already burdensome expenses. Moreover, the state only intervened in the area in two instances. In 2002, 109 families were resettled to El

Salam and El-Nahda cities, on the outskirts of Giza, for the building of a road that connects Salah Salem with Port Said Street.¹⁴² The second instance came in 2010, when development was supposed to occur on the same road and also entailed the removal of a large number of families. However, the eviction decision was revoked before they started implementing it and resettlement did not occur. Other than these two instances, the governorate has done very little in resettling the area, and not much has changed since the 25th of January revolution. While Mohamed believes the residents do not deserve much from the state because they are unlikely to be satisfied with any alternatives offered, Hussam, a teenage boy in his last years of school disagrees, adding:

That is the role of the state! It is an obligation! They are not doing us a favor, it is their mandate! All politicians are failures, and all political systems fail! No one studies anything....it is indeed *ashwa'y* (random).

Collective Action and its Deterrents

There is no popular committee in the area to represent the people. When asked why, Zein laughed and responded "we deal with the most apathetic people you will meet anywhere. There is no awareness, no education, and people were raised not to care....when you ask people to demand for their rights, they usually tell you that it is futile to do so and that they are afraid of being beaten or detained."

On the 10th of March, 2013, a group of residents organized into a demonstration in front of the governor's office. This group was only comprised of 11 residents, mainly women, who were encouraged to organize by *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*. No response was given by the governor, and according to Um Hussam – one of the leaders of the demonstration – this was possibly due to the very small number that showed up.

¹⁴²Jailan Halawi (2001)

In a report given to me by a member of *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*, reasons behind this low turn-out can be attributed to the following factors:¹⁴³

1. The residents see no point in demonstrating, as their case has seen a great deal of attention in the past few years by the media in particular, and nothing has changed
2. There is no direct threat from the government, or from investors, and thus they are likely not to be subject to eviction. There is also no potent threat that poses a danger to their lives, like there is in Doweiqā (unsafe topography).
3. Residents fear being resettled somewhere distant from where they currently work
4. The existence of the *torabeya* (tomb-keepers) – who often receive rent from the residents or condition that they keep the place clean and suitable for tomb owners– stifles mobilization attempts, since it is in their benefit that residents remain inert so as to continue providing them with both money and services.

The four reasons cited by *Ahyaa* are interrelated. While the demands of the people are clear, they are not sure they want to mobilize due to a fear of losing what they have at the moment for an alternative that may not be better. As mentioned earlier, there were many cases of families that were resettled to distant locations without proper services – pushing the families to sell the new housing units and to return to the cemetery. Zein describes the residents of the area as a "fish out of water...it can't live anywhere else; it can only be where it used to." The group explains that most of residents of the area work in central Cairo, and that most of them work in the service sector with already existing contacts and customers that cannot be easily replaced if resettled

¹⁴³ This report was given to me by Najlaa Taymour and is internally circulated within the campaign.

elsewhere. Furthermore, they add, that when resettling, they may be burdened by other expenses such as rent, transportation, and bills for services and amenities.

Thus, since there is no direct threat of eviction from the state or from investors, residents seem averse to taking the risk of mobilizing – making the "free-riding" factor, as proposed earlier by Olson, the most reasonable explanation for the failure of collective action. Unlike areas like Doweika, where residents' lives are at risk from unstable topography, or areas like Ramlet Boulaq, where the land is attractive to investors; Bab El-Nasr is neither built on unstable topography nor surrounded by dangerous buildings with questionable standards. Moreover, the land cannot be used for investment, seeing that it is ultimately a massive cemetery.

Yet, there was no consensus among the focus group members on the reasons for failed efforts at collective action. While one participant in the focus group attributes this inertia to a lack of hope and a feeling of weakness among residents in light of the current political situation, two participants believe that the main deterrent is apathy, a characteristic implanted in residents by the previous generations. Two other participants believe that people are not mobilizing because they have more reason to stay than to leave. A discussion between Mohamed, Um Hussam and Mostafa illustrates this disagreement:

Mohamed: "The people need their own city. They need a place where they will find work and housing. They need to be self-sufficient. That is why they love it here, because they know that they work where they live...the problem is that the people here that actually have a bad life and are unsatisfied are the minority, while the rest couldn't care less."

Mostafa: "No! No one likes living in poverty; they just don't have alternatives and don't know what to do. No one picks this life! The problem is people don't know how powerful they are. We were raised not to know...our parents and grandparents told us not to stand up for our rights...they taught us to be apathetic, to accept what's wrong."

Um Hussam: "It isn't that they don't know...it is that they are afraid and they feel like they are weak and unable to do anything....others lost hope and feel that no matter what they do, nothing will change!"

The Complacency Argument

As illustrated in the above quotes, participants in the focus group disagreed as to what the explanation was for the residents' inability to act collectively. Some believed that the main reason behind this reluctance to organize is that people are actually content with the life they have. Aside from the fact that they benefit from working in the cemetery, they do not have to worry about rent, electricity, or water, as they receive that from the *toraby*. Additionally, since they are under no direct threat of eviction, they have gained a certain amount of security that they are likely to relinquish if they were to move to some uncertain new area. Finally, new areas are usually on the outskirts of the capital, which entails that they would have to pay a considerable part of their salary to go to work or to take their children to school. Thus, complacency and satisfactions can act as strong deterrents to collective action.

Mohamed, in one case mentioned that: "people will move only when they have to... when they can longer afford staying silent. When transportation becomes difficult, when food becomes expensive, when work is no longer available; when these things happen, the people will have to move, because they will have no choice not to." Yet other participants in the group said that this kind of delayed reaction is likely to be deleterious; at that point, people will likely be very angry, unorganized, and not much good is likely to result from this kind of explosive backlash.

The Apathy Argument

While apathy may at times be linked with complacency and free-riding, it also implies that there is no consensus on whether people are happy with their conditions or not. Mohamed stated that those who are actually unhappy are the minority and that the majority are complacent. However, the rest of the group disagreed with him and

argued that in fact the greater proportion of the residents in the area are unhappy with their conditions but are simply not moving because they do not care enough. As emphasized by Zein, no one chooses to live in poverty, yet not everyone appreciates the benefits of mobilization.

The group explained that the culture of demanding rights was lacking in Egyptian society for many years; and while the silence was only broken in 2011, not everyone saw the benefits that came out of it.

The Fear Argument

"The walls have ears," said Um Hussam, a lesson that was inculcated in her generation by their elders. The group explained that people still live in fear because they were raised to. Some of this fear is the same kind of fear that existed in previous generations, such as fear of loss, or fear of being beaten or arrested. Yet, a new kind of fear was born after the 25th of January revolution, and that is the fear of politicization in a very erratic and hyper-political climate.

There are people that simply ride the wave and go where there is power or where there is a prize...this causes problems...and we are weak and don't want any trouble, we have enough in our lives. So how do we conquer this fear? – *Hussam*

The fear of politicization is very visible, and in some cases, people will deliberately wait on their demands to ensure that they do not fall victim to arrests or beatings and are not associated with any political faction or group that is lustful for power. Um Hussam says that a major concern the people had when she was convincing the families to join her in the protest in front of the governor's office was fear that she was either a Muslim Brotherhood supporter or a supporter of the "liberals." As a result, she was only able to convince 10 other people to join her, and most of them were close friends. Illustratively, this showcases the degree of distrust and suspicion that

prevailed among the residents of the area – even to the extent that it is reflected in their interactions with their neighbors.

External Support

Change can only happen from the outside, not the inside. Someone needs to come to this neighborhood and make residents understand, raise their awareness, and tell them what they should do. People won't know what they do if they are alone, they don't even know what they want! – *Mostafa*

Mostafa's sentiments were shared by the rest of the group who reaffirmed that change is unlikely to occur any other way. In fact, even the demonstration – which was only comprised of 11 individuals – was put together largely by *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*. Members of the campaign urged people to mobilize, prepared posters and made the protestors hold them, led the chants, and even mobilized a group of protestors from other neighborhoods where they are active after realizing that the size of the protest was too small. Um Hussam was one of the main leaders of this demonstration and she was tasked with convincing the other residents with the help of *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* to rally. She remarked that it was much easier to convince people when she had someone from the campaign with her, simply because the residents trusted members of the campaign who appeared educated and shrewd.

Um Hussam, among a few others, was also very welcoming of the assistance afforded by the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) – a human rights NGO based in Cairo. Members in the *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* campaign reached out to the NGO and connected them with the families of Bab El-Nasr. Mohamed Soliman, the lawyer who took on the case of Bab El-Nasr, explained that they went to the ECESR office themselves and asked for help. Yet, Soliman adds that the help they needed was not just with the litigation process, as ECESR has been accustomed to providing litigation services in other areas. In this case, the request of the residents

was that the NGO visits the area, because they needed support with urging the residents to mobilize.¹⁴⁴

The participants in the focus group agreed that anger and deprivation are likely to lead to protests and demonstrations that are unorganized and much less impactful. In their view, in order to avoid this scenario, groups from the outside must go to the area and help the people understand some of the benefits to mobilization. Hussam explained that "you must prepare the people with the necessary knowledge before you expect them to mobilize...if you don't want them to rise out of anger, make them relay their demands the right way, before it is too late!"

Yet, in some cases, residents in the area are not very receptive to support from the outside. As discussed in Chapter III, some of the participants in the focus group warned that while some people try to help, others may be ill-intentioned or end up doing nothing. For instance, the group agreed that while journalists and television often frequent the area, they believed that the kind of assistance provided is not beneficial for their cause because nothing comes out of it. While this may not necessarily be the case, it was the perception shared by the residents in the focus group. In addition, many philanthropic groups go to the area to distribute food, and the residents later discover that they are associated with particular political parties lobbying for votes ahead of elections. Mostafa explains that the people are cognizant that they are being manipulated and can tell the difference between those who want to help and those who have other motives:

People aren't stupid, we don't just listen to anyone for some oil and sugar...we simply want the oil and sugar, and so we take it...that is all.
– Mostafa

¹⁴⁴ Mohamed Soliman, Phone Interview. Cairo, 14th of March, 2014

Still, the group reiterated the need to get support from "the outside." They agreed that there are certain groups who they receive help from that they trust, and that these groups should have the role of raising awareness among residents so that others do not fool them. Yet, they emphasized that not everyone in the neighborhood will immediately trust "outsiders," as trust needs to be slowly fomented.

Evaluating Resources

This case study was selected to showcase that not all acts of resistance develop into organized movements, and that assessing available resources and perceptions of threat, fear, and deprivation can help in understanding why.

Using Edward and McCarthy's categories of resources, one would find that the area of Bab El-Nasr is very rich in moral resources and is able to mobilize on them. Moral resources were defined as "the ability to gain legitimacy and support from external actors." As demonstrated in this chapter, the area received a great deal of external support. Media coverage of the area was common, philanthropic organizations and campaigns visited often, *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* played a very strong role in mobilizing the people, and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights is about to start its research in the area to offer legal assistance. Not only has the area successfully mobilized its moral resources, but the participants in the focus group emphasized that support is the most important and will be the most effective in convincing the residents to demand for their rights through successful means.

Moreover, while the population of the area is large (smallest estimates report 400 families) – meaning the area is rich in human resources – and that they obtain their resources from external support – allowing them adequate material resources – the residents of the area seemed to have been unable to mobilize cultural and social-organizational resources. Firstly, cultural resources are defined as "the strategic ability

required for mobilizing, organizing events, or accessing additional resources." As can be seen from the events presented above, the residents of Bab El-Nasr were unable to mobilize internally and a lack of trust from among the residents prevented them from convincing enough people to move. Second, social-organizational resources are defined as "the networks and organizational structures created by the group along with experience, expertise, and skills of the participants." As mentioned in this chapter, the area does not have a popular committee – and thus no institutional means to organize. Moreover, the inability to convince the residents to join demonstrations illustrates a weak network within the area. It is on this basis, that the participants of the focus group insisted that the way to get around the other residents' complacency, apathy, and fear was for the outside organizations, such as *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* and ECESR, to help the people in understanding the need and benefit of mobilizing.

Yet it seems that the biggest factor that can be used to explain the lack of mobilization is the inexistence of an imminent threat – whether of eviction or any other state infringement. The people do not see the urgency of organizing, and thus are afraid of losing some of the benefits they currently enjoy from occupying this land. As illustrated in this chapter, living in the area did in fact have its incentives – which in turn disincentivized the residents from organizing. In conclusion, one can infer that relative grievance is an important variable in social movements, and can be pivotal in the mobilization of resources and in the exploitation of political and structural opportunities.

Chapter V

Ramlet Boulaq: Resisting Attack

The horns and whistles heard on Cairo's busy *korniche* slowly fade when taking a walk into Ramlet Boulaq (an area in Boulaq Abo El-Ella) – one of Cairo's older neighborhoods, possibly dating back to the 18th Century.¹⁴⁵ To visit the area, one must take a picturesque ride on the Eastern Bank of the Nile; signaling arrival are the massive buildings – the Nile Towers, which hide the tiny huts behind them. After walking behind the towers and passing the garage filled with luxurious vehicles, the area can be accessed through an alleyway between two small huts. Home to 3,000 people, all huts in the area are either one or two floors and are made of brick, mud, and wood. Most of these small huts rely on one of only two public faucets in the area to connect their homes with water; and the same technique is applied for installing electricity.

From every spot in Ramlet Boulaq, the Nile Towers can be seen; and as the only visible part of Cairo from the area, the towers have grown to represent far more than a reminder of the prototypical class rift experienced by residents of the poor areas in Cairo that live in communities surrounding luxurious neighborhoods. The towers, to all those dwelling in the huts of Ramlet Boulaq, have come to represent the struggle between the weak and the powerful. On the 20th of June, 2012, the official gazette released a decision from the governor of Cairo to "temporarily seize the land of the Nile Towers slums," entailing the eviction of all those living in the huts, without specifying the reasons for this eviction or the means through which it would be carried out.¹⁴⁶ Yet the people of the "Nile Towers slums" have not been removed

¹⁴⁵ Adel (2012), p. 3

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

from their homes, as they fought the eviction both on the ground and in court and the decision was revoked in August 2013.¹⁴⁷ Today, just as the state associates the area with the Nile Towers – by deeming them "Nile Tower slums" and not Ramlet Boulaq – residents of the area associate their well-being and ability to stay put where they are with the decision from above (the towers) to leave them be or not.

This chapter will provide a background of the area, detail the events that took place surrounding the "seizure of land" decision, discuss the case raised in court, and assess mobilization of the residents in response to the threat of eviction. Many of the results presented in this chapter are based on a focus group conducted in Ramlet Boulaq and on an in-depth interview with Mohamed Soliman, a lawyer at the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights. Although the residents of Ramlet Boulaq successfully mobilized, organization only occurred after the threat became very visible and with heavy assistance from external actors. *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* and rights-based NGOs like ECESR and EIPR played a very important role in the revoking of the decision and in supporting the grassroots movement on the ground. Moreover, once the imminent threat ceased to be there, with the annulment of the eviction decision, the residents relinquished all talk about mobilization.

The focus group was conducted in the home of Um Fares; a relatively larger hut than the others in the area, with a common room and a bathroom. The hut can only be reached by passing through the entrances of other huts, as there are no streets or even proper alleys in the area. It was home to a family of four. The father, Mohamed Ismail, moved to the area with his father in the late 1960s and started working in a glass factory that was operating before the Nile Towers were built in the 80s and 90s. The mother, Um Fares, has been sick for many years and is no longer

¹⁴⁷ Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (2013)

able to work. The older son, Fares, manages one of the public parking spaces for the workers and visitors of the Nile Towers (*sayes*), and is also an active member of the popular committee in the area. The younger son, Abdullah *Sha'awa*, was injured from one of the police raids following the evacuation decision and has been unable to work since. The four members of the family participated in the focus group, and were joined by their cousin, Ibrahim, who described himself as an *orza'y* – someone who relies on different sources of income each day. The participants in the focus group were asked to describe the kinds of threats they have been experiencing in recent years, the means through which they resisted these threats, and the support they received from external actors.

Background

There is historical documentation that the area used to be covered with water until the Nile became narrower in the 1770s to uncover Boulaq on both sides of the river (Boulaq Abo El-Ella on the Eastern Bank and Boulaq Dakroul on the Western Bank). Others associate the areas with the French expedition in the late 1790s, due to French roots of the name of the area: *belle lac* (beautiful lake) turned to Boulaq and *du Caire* (of Cairo) turned to Dakroul over the years.¹⁴⁸ Either way, it is unclear as to when exactly people started living in Boulaq. According to estimates of many residents, the huts found today on the eastern bank of the Nile (Ramlet Boulaq or Boulaq Abo El-Ella or "Nile Towers Slums") are likely to have been built and expanded throughout the second half of the 20th Century.

Ramlet Boulaq is also known as *ard El-Kafrawy* (The Land of Kafrawy), as the land was owned by the Kafrawy family who allowed the huts to be built and rented the land to factory owners. The area was a hub for many factories through most

¹⁴⁸ Adel (2012), p. 3

of the 20th Century, and according to some of the older residents in the area, there was a steel factory, a glass manufacturing factory, a textile factory, a marble factory, and a wood factory. The residents of the area were employed in the factories and thus saw great incentive for remaining in the huts. In the 1990s, Kafrawy sold the land that the factories were built on to Naguib Sawiris – one of the biggest business men in Egypt – to erect the two massive towers. With the closing off of the factories, the residents had hoped that they would receive similar employment opportunities in the towers. However, since corporations like AIG Egypt, Alico, EFG-Hermes, Mobinil, Motorola, Proctor & Gamble and the Fairmont Hotel ended up being among the tenants in the towers, the desired personnel were not factory workers. Also, with over 20,000 electronic controls for all the amenities of the building, manual labor – which would have benefitted the residents through offering work opportunities – isn't needed to carry out basic maintenance services.¹⁴⁹

When Kafrawy sold the land to Sawiris, he asked him what he will do about the people living here, and Sawiris responded "I will deal with them." He thought he could get rid of us by tempting us with some money...but we didn't leave...he has all the money in the world, but we have god - *Ibrahim*.

Since the towers were built, residents have been claiming that managers of the towers have been luring them to leave by offering them money for the land. However, the money offered – although more than any of the residents make – remains to be less than what is needed for purchasing a new low-income household in another area. In the description of the participants of the focus group to the many threats they have been facing over the years, there is a constant reference to the role of Sawiris. "A command from above," is a sentence frequently repeated in reference to the Nile Towers. Whenever someone would cite injustice, they would point up to the Towers

¹⁴⁹Ahmed Ateya (2012)

and just refer to "them." Moreover, they attribute many of the harsh conditions they are living in to the power and wealth of Sawiris; believing that he has played an active role in making things worse for the residents so as to indirectly force them to leave. It was also common for residents to cite instances where they believed Sawiris used his money to convince others to not do their job. For instance, Um Fares implied that Sawiris bribed the Cairo Governor, when saying:

The Governor came here and pretended like he will solve all our problems...he removed some garbage and declared that he will come back to clean, install water and sanitation networks, and grow gardens. We heard nothing from him again...of course he didn't come; the money would make him not come!

The Story: from Cooperation to Animosity

This section will detail the events that drove the residents of Ramlet Boulaq to mobilize and will aim to reflect the complex relationship between the residents and who they perceive to be the managers of the Nile Towers. It is important to note that the section will be only reflecting the residents' version of the story – which at times differs greatly from other narratives – with the purpose of portraying the perceptions of the residents, without questioning or dwelling on the accuracy of this narrative.

During the violence that broke out on the 28th of January 2011,¹⁵⁰ the residents of Ramlet Boulaq protected the Nile Towers from those who wanted to raid the buildings. While Arcadia mall, just down the street, was stolen, vandalized, and torched on fire, the Nile Towers were untouched. The Security Manager of the towers at the time was grateful for the cooperation of the residents and offered them remuneration for their services.¹⁵¹ After the revolution was over, chaos and crime were still common on the streets of Cairo with the absence of police; and thus the

¹⁵⁰ The 28th of January is considered among the most violent days during the 18 day protest movement that ousted Mubarak in 2011.

¹⁵¹ Adel (2012). p. 5

residents remained to receive remuneration for their services – but only informally, without signing contracts or documenting the agreement in any official means. The remuneration was between 900 and 1000 EGP and the residents continued receiving this monthly salary until mid-2012.

I don't have 10 pounds in my pocket. When you tempt me with 1000 pounds per month, then how do you think I'll feel? He filled our pockets with thousands after we had nothing to eat. – *Mohamed Ismail*

According to Mohamed, it was the first time since the factories left the area that the youth of Ramlet Boulaq had a stable monthly income. He explains that the residents started feeling that perhaps the Towers were beneficial for the area, and the relationship of animosity was replaced with one of cooperation and rejoice at the success of the January 2011 revolution.

However, the romance between the residents and the managers of the Towers did not last long. In June 2012, the decision to seize the land of Ramlet Boulaq was released, marking the end to this relationship. It is noteworthy that the land seizure act was signed on the 19th of October 2011, but was released eight months later in June. Mohamed Soliman, a lawyer at ECESR, argues that there are two explanations for this eight months delay. First, he argues that the governorate may not have wanted to release it in October because it would serve as an additional blow against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF)¹⁵² and that the political atmosphere in late 2011 was boiling to the extent that such a decision may have increased unwanted hostility towards the state and "be used for political motives." Second, he stipulates that the managers of the Nile Towers were probably still in need of security – in light of the unrest that beset the country in late 2011 – and thus did not want to gain an additional enemy, or a reason for more extensive security measures.

¹⁵² The Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), which took over from Mubarak in 2011, directly governed the country until Mohamed Morsy was seated as president in June 2012.

Mohamed Soliman explains that once the decision was released on the Official Gazette,¹⁵³ lawyers from ECESR went to the area and informed the residents that they are at threat of eviction. He adds that not only were the residents unaware of land seizure act, but they were also denying it. "They couldn't comprehend that their trusted source of income for a year and a half was not only about to end, but was going to be a reason for them to evacuate." The residents did not believe the ECESR lawyers at first and those who had worked for the Nile Towers, continued doing so after the NGO's visit. Soliman argues that it took two tragic incidences for the people to start believing they may in fact be at threat of eviction, and that the relationship of cooperation with the managers of the Towers had ended.

First, a fire broke out in the huts on the 27th of June, 2012. In one of the huts, a five year old boy, named Ammar Mohamed Abd El-Naby was trapped. While his family was trying to put out the fire, they asked the Nile Towers' security guards to provide them with fire extinguishers and water hoses. Despite the known availability of these devices, the security guards refused to help the family and the child burned to death.¹⁵⁴ Second, the residents stopped receiving remuneration for their services in June and July. Amr El Bonny, one of the residents who used to receive remuneration from the Towers, went to the security guards and asked for his monthly pay on the 2nd of August. After some conflict between El Bonny and the security guards, he was shot in his legs and in his back and died shortly after.¹⁵⁵ Two of his friends were also shot as they tried to protect him from the security guards, but their injuries were not fatal. The reports of the Ministry of Interior documented that Amr and a big group of his friends raided the towers and threatened the security with knives in demand for

¹⁵³ The Official Gazette is the government portal's news paper that releases all government decisions, agreements, plans, or major events.

¹⁵⁴ Mahmoud Fayed (2012)

¹⁵⁵ Ramez Sobhy, (2012)

money. The report adds that one of the police officers had to defend his colleagues by shooting Amr with a gun as the group tried to take the weapons from the other police officers. It was then revealed that Amr El Bonny had a criminal record for grand theft auto and for the selling of drugs and was only recently released from prison.¹⁵⁶ However, the residents of Ramlet Boulaq denied that this happened, and argued that Amr did not have any weapons.¹⁵⁷ Notably, this incident generated a backlash that aggravated the relationship between the residents and the managers of the towers.

Immediately following the death of Amr, tens of residents of the surrounding huts organized a rally in front of the Towers and clashes broke out between the security guards and the residents of the area. Following the violence, 17 were arrested, and 21 were wanted for arrest. To make the additional arrests, police forces paid two visits to the area. However, from the descriptions given by participants in the focus group, the visits may have had another purpose:

I was not on the wanted list, but I woke up with a gun to my head and a red laser pointed to my forehead....they treated us like we are all crooks, animals, and thugs....I was released, but some of my friends were tortured 'inside' before even going to trial. Abdullah Sha'awa

The group suggested that the police forces were intentionally trying to spread fear in the area so that the residents of the huts would flee and think twice before fighting for their rights. "In the middle of the night, they would come and throw gas bombs into our homes which were filled with our small children, as if they were desperate to drive us out" said Um Fares, while adding that "this violence didn't do much to help them in arresting those on the wanted list...it just let us know that none of us is safe."

The residents of the area slowly started gaining the trust of ECESR, as any doubts regarding the impending eviction were dispelled in the wake of these

¹⁵⁶ Adel (2012), p. 8

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

incidences – that to them reflected the hostility of the managers of the Nile Towers. Moreover, *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*, along with a number of independent activists, had developed tight relationships with the residents and helped in dismissing doubts about ECESR's intentions or motives in filing a lawsuit against the government.

The Case: Battling Legal Loopholes

The decision that was released on the 20th of June 2012 only detailed three ambiguous points through three articles in its description. The first article stated "the land illustrated in the map and report attached will be temporarily seized," the second article added that the land will be only seized for three years, and the third article declared that the decision must be published on the official gazette. Mohamed Soliman argued that "while they gave us very little to play with....that was exactly the point, and that is what made us capable of winning this case. They released a decision that said absolutely nothing and made no legal sense!"

The lawyers at ECESR and EIPR used four main arguments to win the case.¹⁵⁸ First, the temporary seizure decision came in violation of the Egyptian constitution, which protects the right to private property against acquisition, unless it is for the "public benefit." However, there are conditions for "public benefit" that were not specified in the rather ambiguous eviction decision. Second, the justification of the seizure relied on Law no. 10 of 1990, but was in violation of some of the articles in this law. Article 14 of the law specifies that expropriation can only occur through a decision by the President or his delegate and that this expropriation must be for "public benefit". It also stipulates that the decision must be published in the official gazette. These three conditions were not there, as Egypt did not have an acting president at the time, no mention was made as to why this decision would achieve

¹⁵⁸ Soft copy of case memorandum can be accessed through: <http://esep.info/node/513>

"public benefit," and the decision was released eight months after it was signed – signifying lack of transparency, with no signs of public consultation, no mention of compensation, and no guarantee against violence. Third, the decision specifies that there would only be a temporary seizure of land for the purpose of development. Yet, using article 15 in law no. 10 of 1990, temporary seizure can only occur in cases of unsafe areas that present a danger for their residents and those living in their surroundings. Ramlet Boulaq is classified as a second level under the danger classification of the Informal Settlement Development, and not under the first level; signifying that it does not present a substantial danger that would warrant removal. Fourth, the decision violates the state's commitment to its obligations under the International Covenant for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights – and Article 11 in specific.

Soliman argues that "it is very clear they don't want the land because it's dangerous, they want it because it is good for investment...they didn't even care to provide evidence of its danger." Moreover, while the case filed by the two NGOs was successful in nullifying the temporary seizure act in August 2013, Soliman believes that the residents continue to be at risk. "We only delayed a threat," Soliman said, "the land is still desirable for investment, but hopefully the people have more time to organize to fight the next battle." Legal intervention allowed the community to mobilize in resistance to the decision and the winning of the case was a further incentive for them to sustain their mobilization, particularly since the nullification of the governor's decision did not completely eradicate the threat faced by the residents.

Community Mobilization: "They can keep trying to get rid of us, but we won't leave!"

"If it were up to Sawiris, he would prevent us from eating and drinking, he would cut us off from the world completely...he wants us out in any

way...it's us or the towers, he either kills us or we force him to leave and take his two towers with him!" Um Fares

The perception of threat was magnified with the violence that was witnessed – fuelling the residents to organize. *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* played a particularly important role in encouraging the residents to act collectively and in helping the group organize. Najlaa Taymour explains that the residents of Ramlet Boulaq trusted *Ahyaa* because some of the members of the campaign had met the residents of the area in Tahrir during the January 2011 revolution. When the violence broke out in Boulaq, the campaign members called some of their friends in the area and offered assistance. When they first visited the area, the members of *Ahyaa* were quickly welcomed by local residents that were well known and respected in the area – immediately earning the trust of the remaining residents. The relationship that *Ahyaa* built with the residents also served ECESR in getting support for filing its lawsuit in court.

"If it were up to us, we would leave the area. It is devoid of services! The living conditions are unbearable!" Mohamed Ismail says, adding that the government left them no option other than to resist, and that they would have probably left if they had been offered some alternative. He explained that the ECESR lawyers, particularly Khaled Ali,¹⁵⁹ advised the residents not to sell their land for anything less than 50,000 pounds, as the value of the land exceeds this number due to its strategic location. But Mohamed Ismail, along with the rest of the group, argues that it isn't solely about the money, that as long as the residents are comfortable and confident that they will not be under threat of evacuation, they will be satisfied with what they have. Fares then interjected "I'll be realistic, we probably won't get any compensation and the

¹⁵⁹ Khaled Ali is a human rights lawyer who founded ECESR in 2009. He is known for running for President in the 2012 elections.

government is unlikely to suddenly choose to extend services to the area. All we can do is fight for our rights to stay put and let them know that we won't leave this place!"

Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat relied on the popular committee of Ramlet Boulaq as a mediator between them and the residents, and was able to organize with them two large protests during the months of the struggle. The popular committee was initially formed by a group of youths during and after the January 2011 revolution to simply protect the area, with no other purpose. Fares and his father Mohamed were key players in Ramlet Boulaq's popular committee, and they argued that it had played a crucial role in making sure that everyone in the area was on the same page and that everyone would move when needed. Moreover, Mohamed believed that the most important contribution of the popular committee was the negotiations they undertook with the governorate, the police, and the security managers of the Nile Towers when the residents of the area were subject to arbitrary arrest. Thus, the popular committee came to represent the area and protect it, and acted as the organizing mechanism when there was a need for mobilization.

The community organized two major demonstrations: one in September 2012, and one in April 2013. The two demonstrations were attended by large groups each time, and were heavily covered by the media.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the area's popular committee frequently released press statements on the Facebook page of *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* to voice the demands of the residents.¹⁶¹ Yet, the actions taken by the popular committee were never separated from *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat*. While the committee would ensure that everyone in the area supports mobilization efforts, the youth of *Ahyaa* were the ones actually orchestrating the demonstrations. Similar to what occurred in Bab El-Nasr, *Ahyaa* prepared the banners held by the residents and

¹⁶⁰ Alaa Ahmed (2012) and Ahmed Emam, Tamam Abdelhady, and Hisham Zaky (2013)

¹⁶¹ Moatez Nady (2012)

the campaign's name was printed on most of the major posters. Moreover, the chants were often led by members of *Ahyaa*, and were then repeated by the residents of Ramlet Boulaq.¹⁶²

According to Fares, the strong role played by the *Ahyaa* campaign did not bother the residents, as its members had earned the trust of everyone in the area. However, the participants of the focus group showed their reluctance as to whether the popular committee will continue to be present now that the imminent threat of eviction is no longer there. Mohamed Ismail states:

"We listened to Khaled Ali when he came, and he organized a great conference and everyone was excited and we all wanted to help each other. He convinced us not to give up and to continue fighting. But then what? We don't care...we want to resume our lives."

The participants in the group agreed that they do want to resettle if an adequate opportunity presents itself. Yet, none were optimistic that this desired change will happen, and were afraid that resettlement may make matters worse, "banishing" them to an area with harsh living conditions and limited opportunities. Thus, while no one was optimistic about this "fight" for better living conditions, there was agreement about its importance. Abdullah Sha'awa encouraged the group and jokingly stated "at least the hotel isn't working well." His father Mohamed agreed and added that "no tourist wants a view looking at a bunch of filthy slums when they would rather look at nice gardens....we will stay here until they leave."

Evaluating Resources

Just like Bab El-Nasr, the case of Ramlet Boulaq was legitimized and got the attention of the same external actors; *Ahyaa Bel Esm Faqat* and NGOs. However, due to the violence that followed the eviction decision, the area received much more

¹⁶² See Photograph 3 in Appendix

coverage from the media. While this was at times a double-edged sword because the media coverage did not always serve the benefit of Ramlet Boulaq,¹⁶³ the residents of the area were able to utilize their moral resources and received the kind of coverage they needed – both in the news and through social media outlets such as Facebook.

In regards to cultural resources, it was easy to rally the residents of the area together because they all had a clear common goal. Participants in the focus group repeatedly emphasized that they were all on one side and that the entire area was in support of the cause. This eased the process of mobilization during the two large demonstrations, and helped external actors in cultivating trust. As many of the residents have been living in the same area for decades, they have grown to be a very tightly-knitted community, with high cohesion and familiarity. This was noticed by members of *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* when they first visited the area, as they were quickly trusted by the residents simply because they made their visit with well-respected members of the community.

Both the residents of the area and the external actors were able to utilize the socio-organizational resources of the area, as the popular committee played a very important role. First, the committee acted as a negotiator with security forces to protect the area from attacks and to release the residents that were arbitrarily arrested. Second, they acted as the mediators between the residents and *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* through assisting in the organization of events and in the mobilization of the residents during demonstrations. They also represented the residents when releasing press statements or speaking to the media.

The area was rich in human resources, as it has an estimated population of 3,000 people, and had adequate material resources – seeing that it received all needed

¹⁶³ Particularly following the violence that broke out with the death of Amr El Bonny, some sources portrayed the residents of Ramlet Boulaq as thugs – especially when only covering the statements released by the Ministry of Interior: Ibrahim Ahmed (2012).

material support from *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* and the two NGOs. Although the area was able to access these resources through internal means (self-production and aggregation), it primarily relied on external means throughout the resistance. First, they were informed about the seizure of land (given notice of the threat) by ECESR lawyers. Second, *Ahyaa Bel-Esm Faqat* played a very central role in the mobilization and organization of the group, as they led the demonstrations and chants, printed the banners and posters and gave them to the residents, and even used their Facebook page for the release of press statements and for announcing and organizing demonstrations. Third, the nullification of the seizure of land decision was a result of the law suit raised by ECESR and EIPR.

The participants in the focus group highlighted that they do not want to continue fighting, and that they would stop fighting if they had adequate alternatives (fair compensation and resettlement) after being evicted. Thus, one can argue that the main mobilizing factor in the case of Ramlet Boulaq is the existence of a very imminent threat and a recognizable source of hostility. All the residents were aware that they were in a battle for their land, and had the perception that if they do not move, it will be taken away from them. They were reminded of this threat by the violent raids from the police forces in the middle of the night or even in their everyday intersection with the Nile City Towers – through simply looking "up." And while the threat is currently dormant with the nullification of the decision, the lawyers who worked on the case believe that the residents are still at threat because the land remains to be desirable for investment and the huts are still viewed from the windows of the Nile Towers. Moreover, the residents are aware they are still subject to this threat in the future and live in consternation – and although pessimistic, are resolute on their right to stay put.

It is likely that grievance has played the larger role in the mobilization of the residents in Ramlet Boulaq. Also, efforts from external actors greatly contributed to successful mobilization – as these actors led most of the events and actions that helped in stopping the threat. Yet, the residents were capable of accessing and utilizing cultural and socio-organizational resources; entailing that aggregation and self-production occurred during the process. Thus, in this case, both the resource mobilization model and the relative deprivation model must be used in understanding movement; as Ramlet Boulaq stands out as an example where both grievances and the utilization of resources were factors that led to mobilization.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to present a narrative of a cycle that is characteristic of many developmental challenges faced by Egypt. The modern Egyptian state has historically reserved for itself the biggest role in all social sectors in the country: health, education, housing, etc. As the capacity of the state was evidently limited, it was unable to adequately play this role throughout most of the second half of the 20th Century and these sectors were greatly neglected. Informality grew as a result of the inability of the state to play the role it set for itself, and the private sector grew with global pressure on Egypt to liberalize the market. Since the private sector has had interests that are largely incompatible with the needs and expectations of a substantial segment of Egyptian society, the state remained to be the main actor in what it perceives to be the most pressing crisis in the sector: thriving informal settlements that house around 12 to 20 million people. Residents of these areas have grown to expect very little from the state and have relied on their own efforts to secure needed services and amenities – a phenomenon that has deemed them "self-built communities" by many. Yet, not only is the state unable to meet the needs of the people in these areas, it at times acts as a threat – symptomatic of the state's inability to diagnose the problem; which gives impetus for many non-state actors to attempt to fill the void created by the government and to lend assistance to areas facing state threat. Despite that many non-state actors have capitalized on opportunities given to them as a result of recent positive political developments, they are at times only able to assist in superficial ways, are eager to promote particular agendas that are equally divorced from the needs of residents, are not always successful in cultivating trust, and at times can even harm the cause by portraying informal settlements negatively.

The residents of informal settlements are left with the option of mobilizing to see the kind of change they desire. But since there is no formal institutional means for participation, particularly for dwellers of informal areas, they have only the option of organizing protests; joining the thousands of concurrent demonstrations since the 25th of January 2011 that have been led by workers who have been laid off or are receiving less than minimum wage, families who have suffered from a decaying health system, teachers who demand higher wages, or parents that are displeased with the quality of education in Egyptian public schools – and thus replicating the story seen in many of the other social sectors in the country. Yet, not all of these random acts of dissent develop fully into organized movements. Perceptions of the degree of threat and deprivation, coupled with the ability to access and utilize resources are dictating factors in the shape, form, and impact of resistance.

Why Groups Resist

The first research question in this thesis was concerned with the factors that drive residents of informal areas to resist housing-related policies and plans. It has been argued that the depth of informal housing in Egypt has not been adequately understood, and thus different actors have struggled in reflecting the demands of those affected by this crisis. Moreover, while local administration is almost inexistent in Egypt, no formal avenues for participation are available for residents of informal areas – driving them to protest as a means to make their demands.

Diagnosing the Crisis

Depending on the way in which different actors diagnose the housing crisis, different remedies can be designed. When informality is defined as what lies outside the legal

realm, legalization of the informal is seen as the solution. This strategy is promoted by some academics and is adopted by the Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF) in dealing with the second, third, and fourth levels of danger in their classification of informal settlements in Egypt. Yet, when informality is diagnosed as a problem that poses a threat to the state and its people, removing this threat becomes the solution; which is demonstrated in the state's frequent reliance on resettlement and forced eviction to rid the city from the "threat" of informality. However, some – particularly non-state actors – do not perceive informality as a threat, nor as a problem in need of a cure. Informality can be viewed as a successful organizing mechanism to compensate for the retreat of the state in providing its citizens with adequate housing. The approach taken in this case would be to develop informal areas to ensure that the phenomenon does not develop into a burden on the state as a result of the deprivation of those dwelling in these areas. However, supporters of this belief face difficulty in pressuring the government to review its policies towards informality.

Roles of State and Non-State Actors and Perceptions of Residents

As argued by Dorman, the Egyptian state can be characterized as a "lame leviathan," as it has historically taken on the responsibility of fulfilling the demands of its people, but has lacked the needed capacity to achieve the goals it sets for itself. Instead, the state spent most of the second half of the 20th century denying the phenomenon of informality. With global pressures to leave more room for the growth of the private sector, the demands of the most in need weren't met, as the private sector chose to maximize its profit by pouring money into the middle-income and luxurious housing and neglected investment in low-income housing units – causing informality to further flourish. Despite that Egypt is a signatory party to international covenants that

bind it to commit to its responsibility for providing adequate housing, legal loopholes were found to avoid this responsibility. Many international organizations pressured the government to commit to its role. However, inter-governmental agencies were only able to lead to superficial change while donor organizations promoted their own agendas that did not necessarily meet the demands of the market. More recently, rights-based NGOs have been gaining more influence and have been able to utilize some opportunities presented by the changing political environment, but remain unable to directly impact policy-making and struggle in gaining the trust of the people due to the degree of their politicization in a highly volatile political environment.

Avenues for Participation

Although there are existent institutional avenues for participation in Egypt through local administration, they remain highly constrained by the intervention of central governance and are largely dependent on it for the greater majority of their funding. Moreover, local administration is not available for residents of informal areas, as they are not recognized by the state. The media – as another channel to reach the state – does not always accurately reflect the demands of the people, as it occasionally plays a role in portraying informality very negatively. Thus, the only means for public participation and resistance for the residents of informal areas has become protest and demonstration – which have starkly increased since January 2011.

When They Can Organize

As was demonstrated from the two case studies presented in the thesis, not all efforts of resistance develop into organized movements. Factors impacting the ability to organize include the groups' ability to mobilize resources, the degree of trust

present within the group and their perception of threat and deprivation. The more able they are to access and utilize their resources, and build networks of trust; the more likely they are able to organize. Moreover, it is more likely that groups organize when there is an imminent threat so that free-riding does not impede collective action.

Ability to Mobilize Resources

The five types of resources outlined by Edward and McCarthy's – namely moral, cultural, socio-organizational, human, and material resources – were used to examine the two case studies. Both areas received a great deal of attention from external sources (categorized under moral resources), and thus had comparable material resources; yet differed in their ability to mobilize the remaining types. While demonstrations in Ramlet Boulaq were attended by large numbers and attracted a great deal of press coverage, the only organized demonstration in Bab El-Nasr was attended by 11 residents; reflecting the inability of the residents to mobilize cultural and human resources. Moreover, Ramlet Boulaq was able to mobilize its socio-organizational resources, as the area's popular committee helped in mobilizing the residents and represented them in the media and in press releases. The popular committee also negotiated with security forces to release residents that were unfairly detained. On the other hand, Bab El-Nasr did not have a popular committee, and thus lacked an organizational mechanism for resistance.

Networks of Trust

Having a strong network of trust is a defining factor in collective action. The political environment in Egypt has recently allowed more space for resistance when compared to pre-January 2011. Yet, fears of politicization are very apparent in light of the country's sensitive transitional period; particularly following path-changing political

events such as the overthrow of Mohamed Morsy on the 30th of June. On this note, the case study of Bab El-Nasr revealed that fear of politicization was a strong deterrent to collective action – as the residents did not trust the political affiliation of one another or of the external supporters that are promoting mobilization; and were afraid that their movement would become exploited for political purposes. On the other hand, since the residents of Ramlet Boulaq live in a more tight-knit community, the people trusted those who were organizing the demonstrations and did not fear external actors as they first came to the area with the company of trusted members of the community.

Perceiving Threat

The two case studies demonstrated that perceptions of threat greatly impact collective action. The greater the value of what can be lost when choosing to free-ride instead of engage in collective action, and the more definite this loss is; the more likely groups will pursue collective action. Threat was imminent in Ramlet Boulaq and was very tangible; as the residents perceived their land as attractive for investment and thus understood why they were at threat of eviction. Moreover, they experienced hostility and neglect from the state and the managers of the Nile Towers on more than one occasion – particularly following the "seizure of land" decision. This consciousness of threat drove them to believe that if they did not move, they would likely be resettled to a place that is far away, which would further complicate their pursuit of decent livelihood. On the other hand, residents of Bab El-Nasr do not experience the same threat when living in the cemetery, as the land is neither dangerous nor attractive for investment; and thus eviction is far less likely. While conditions are equally harsh – if not more – in Bab El-Nasr, living in the area comes with benefits for the residents that they are not willing to lose; and some perceive that they may be at threat of losing these benefits if they demand for improvements through collective action.

In conclusion, as the state over-ambitiously sought to play the role of leviathan, only to end up unable to deliver the services it has promised its citizens, a void was created that non-state actors were not able to fill. In the housing arena, this resulted in the flourishing of self-built communities and informality. The state continued to misdiagnose the housing crisis, and following the liberalization pressures exerted on it, it retreated in favor of private sector involvement in the housing sector. This led to a further deterioration of the housing situation, as the private sector's response was largely divorced from the needs of lower income citizens. In the absence of a formal avenue for participation and in light of a growing housing crisis and oppressive state policies against informal residents, mobilization and protest were among a few options left for residents to voice dissent and foment resistance.

In attempting to understand how social movements materialize beyond scattered acts of protest, there is undeniable utility in using resource mobilization theory. Resources such as time, money, and organizational skills are critical to the genesis of social movements. However, other necessary factors complement the theory, which has often been criticized for placing too much emphasis on the significance of external resources. Perception of deprivation and a consciousness of imminent threat seem to be two determining factors in explaining the transformation of granular acts of protest into structured and patterned group action. The nexus between resource mobilization theory and deprivation theory was instrumental in elucidating the process by which the disempowered dwellers of the informal area of Ramlet Boulaq attempted to redress their grievances and in explaining their success in resisting state policies. The ostensible inability of Bab El Nasr residents to mobilize reflects how a lack of imminent threat (evident in complacency arguments put forth by many who dwell in the area) can cripple social movement formation.

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Appendix

TABLE 1: Investment in Housing per Sector (1994-2011) – Data For Graph 1¹⁶⁴

Year	Public Sector		Private Sector		Total
	Value (in Hundred Million Egyptian Pounds)	Percentage of Total	Value (in Hundred Million Egyptian Pounds)	Percentage of Total	
1995/1994	942.779	69%	424.821	31%	1,367.600
1997/1996	1,827.406	85%	333.46	15%	2,160.866
1999/1998	2,108.514	78%	596.269	22%	2,704.783
2001/2000	797.967	19%	3,500.000	81%	4,297.967
2003/2002	971.932	20%	3,905.000	80%	4,876.932
2005/2004	677	10%	5,899.000	90%	6,576.000
2007/2006	1,074	10%	9,520.000	90%	10,594.000
2009/2008	3,027	27%	8,090.000	73%	11,117.000
2011/2010	2,276.9	23%	7,567.800	77%	9,844.600

TABLE 2: Increase of Housing Units per Sector (1994-2011) – Data for Graph 2¹⁶⁵

Year	Public Sector		Private Sector		Total
	Value (no. of housing units added)	Percentage of Total	Value (no. of housing units added)	Percentage of Total	
1995/1994	945,430	70%	413,320	30%	1,358,750
1997/1996	865,810	72%	332,810	28%	1,198,620
1999/1998	1,224,920	68%	565,670	32%	1,790,590
2001/2000	579,770	37%	1,002,240	63%	1,582,010
2003/2002	217,880	16%	1,115,850	84%	1,333,730
2005/2004	174,400	12%	1,264,930	88%	1,439,330
2007/2006	165,870	10%	1,424,820	90%	1,590,490
2009/2008	339,04	21%	1,246,300	79%	1,585,340
2011/2010	361,621	21%	1,363,045	79%	1,724,666

¹⁶⁴Data collected using CAPMAS' 'Egypt in Numbers Booklet: Housing' throughout the years of 1994 to 2011

¹⁶⁵Ibid

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF LOW-COST DWELLING UNITS BUILT BETWEEN 2002/2003 AND 2011/2012 (DATA FOR GRAPH 3)

Year	No. of Units
2002/2003	13487
2003/2004	11343
2004/2005	11289
2005/2006	8901
2006/2007	11357
2007/2008	7563
2008/2009	3383
2009/2010	1358
2010/2011	2602
2011/2012	1254

Articles 1 and 2 of Law no. 10 of 1990 regarding the "expropriation of land for public benefit," (in Arabic only):

قانون رقم 10 لسنة 1990 بشأن نزع الملكية للمنفعة العامة

مادة 1

يجرى نزع ملكية العقارات اللازمة للمنفعة العامة والتعويض عنه وفقا لأحكام هذا القانون".

مادة 2

يعد من أعمال المنفعة العامة فى تطبيق أحكام هذا القانون:

أولاً - انشاء الطرق والشوارع والميادين أو توسيعها أو تعديلها، أو تمديدها أو انشاء أحياء جديدة.

ثانياً - مشروعات المياه والصرف الصحى.

ثالثاً - مشروعات الري والصرف.

رابعاً - مشروعات الطاقة.

خامساً - انشاء الكبارى والمجازات السطحية (المزلقات) والممرات السفلية أو تعديلها.

سادساً - مشروعات النقل والمواصلات.

سابعاً - أغراض التخطيط العمرانى وتحسين المرافق العامة.

ثامناً - ما يعد من أعمال المنفعة العامة فى أى قانون آخر

PHOTOGRAPH 1: BAB EL-NASR SHACK – COURTESY OF MOSAAB SHAHROUR



PHOTOGRAPH 2: BAB EL-NASR FROM ABOVE – COURTESY OF MOSAAB SHAHROUR



PHOTOGRAPH 3: RAMLET BOUFAQ RESIDENTS PROTESTING WITH AHYAA BEL-ESM FAQAT BANNER (PHOTO FROM YOUM EL-SABEI)



PHOTOGRAPH 4: VIEW OF THE NILE TOWERS AND RAMLET BOUFAQ FROM BEHIND (PHOTO FROM "MOBTADA")



PHOTOGRAPH 5: VIEW OF THE NILE TOWERS FROM THE ROOF OF A HUT IN RAMLET BOUQAQ (PHOTO FROM DAILY NEWS EGYPT)



TEXT OF "GOVERNOR'S DECISION TO TEMPORARILY SEIZE LAND OF NILE TOWERS SLUMS" FROM THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE ON THE 20TH OF JUNE, 2012, (IN ARABIC ONLY):

الوقائع المصرية - العدد ١٤٢ فى ٢٠ يونية سنة ٢٠١٢ ٣

قرارات

محافظة القاهرة

قرار محافظ القاهرة رقم ٨٩٩٣ لسنة ٢٠١١

بشأن إصدار قرار استيلاء مؤقت للأرض الواقعة بها عشوائيات نيل تورز

حى بولاق أبو العلا - محافظة القاهرة

محافظ القاهرة

بعد الاطلاع على القانون رقم ٤٣ لسنة ١٩٧٩ بشأن نظام الإدارة المحلية ولائحته التنفيذية وتعديلاتهما :

وعلى القانون رقم ٤٧ لسنة ١٩٧٨ بشأن نظام العاملين المدنيين بالدولة ولائحته التنفيذية وتعديلاتهما :

وعلى القانون رقم ١٠ لسنة ١٩٩٠ بشأن نزع ملكية العقارات للمنفعة العامة ولائحته التنفيذية :

وعلى القانون رقم ١١٩ لسنة ٢٠٠٨ ولائحته التنفيذية :

وعلى قرار رئيس مجلس الوزراء رقم ٣٠٩٦ لسنة ٢٠٠٩ واتفاقي التعاون

بين صندوق تطوير المناطق العشوائية ومحافظة القاهرة بتاريخ ٢٠١٠/١٢/١ ملحق رقم (١) لاتفاقي التعاون لتطوير منطقة رملة بولاق (نيل تورز) - حى بولاق - محافظة القاهرة :

قرر:

مادة اولى - يستولى مؤقتاً على الأرض الموضحة الحدود طبقاً للرسم والمذكرة المرفقين .

مادة ثانية - تحدد مدة الاستيلاء بثلاث سنوات من تاريخ الاستيلاء الفعلى .

مادة ثالثة - ينشر هذا القرار فى الوقائع المصرية ، وعلى الجهات المختصة تنفيذه .

تحريراً فى ٢٠١١/١٠/١٩

محافظ القاهرة

د. ا. عبد القوى احمد مختار خليفة