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MIGRANTS SHARING THE STREETS OF CAIRO: CAN THEY ASSERT THEIR RIGHT TO THE CITY? A CASE STUDY OF SUDANESE MIGRANTS

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Introduction

This paper is a study of international migrants in the more than 14 million people metropolitan area of Greater Cairo. The focus of the study is on Sudanese who represent the largest and oldest group of immigrants in Egypt, most of them living in Cairo. The paper stands on Assef Bayat's theory of the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary', according to which the activities of the urban poor have to be looked at as a *"silent, protracted, but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied, powerful, or the public in order to survive and improve their lives"* (Bayat, 2009: 56).

Bayat advocates the concept of the 'quiet encroachment' in an attempt to theorize and understand the activities of the urban poor. Earlier definitions of the phenomenon referred to 'the passive poor', the 'survival strategy', 'the political poor', and the 'everyday forms of resistance'. However, such definitions appear to describe the conditions of the urban poor in a less than satisfactory way. The notion of 'the passive poor' fails to recognize the agency of the poor, since it perceives the poor as passive individuals who are trapped in what is referred to as the 'culture of poverty'. Though arguing that the poor are not passive sitting waiting for fate to determine their lives but rather are actively engaged in a number of negative survival strategies that can harm them as well as their societies, the 'survival strategies' perspective essentially confirms the negative traits advocated by the culture of poverty. While taking a very different stance, highlighting the political awareness of the poor and their ability to organize collectively to voice their needs the 'political poor' perspective considers only the confrontational attempts by the poor towards the authority but fails to recognize the many non-confrontational struggles that characterize the daily life of the urban poor. Finally, the 'everyday forms of resistance' advocated by James Scott provides an intermediate position as it realizes the agency of the individual, the complexity of power relations in the society, and the existence of many forms of struggle that are not necessarily confrontational (Bayat, 2009: 46-65).

The concept of 'encroachment' advocated by Bayat like that of 'resistance' advocated by James Scott, looks at the activities of the poor as 'non-confrontational' but still powerful and able to lead to change. However, the 'resistance' concept put forward by Scott focuses on activities that aim

to protect/defend acquired gains but fail to recognizes the ability of the poor to improve their lives by making new gains. Everyday forms of resistance, although representing a progressive move in understanding the activities of the poor as compared to earlier approaches, still imply some degree of passivity. Encroachment is a more powerful concept since it recognizes the agency of the poor who constantly try hard to expand their space and win new positions without government assistance (Ibid).

In his discussion of how the activities of the poor to survive have changed the city and asserted their right to it, Bayat argues that the practices of encroachment "*have virtually transformed the large cities of the Middle East and by extension many developing countries, generating a substantial outdoor economy, new communities, and arenas of self-development in the urban landscapes, they inscribe their active presence in the configuration and governance of urban life, asserting their 'right to city'*" (Bayat, 2009: 15).

The urban poor try hard to improve their lives with no government support. To find shelter they encroach on public and private lands, grab electricity from public power poles, and settle on the street to sell their goods or offer their services. In this daily struggle performed by millions, the urban poor are not only changing and re-shaping the city in which they live but also asserting their right to it (Bayat, 2009: 15, 56).

A recent study on Sudanese living in Cairo revealed that the majority among them makes a living by selling in the street. Do they share the same space used by Egyptian vendors? How do they gain access to such space? How do they interact with Egyptian vendors? Are they welcomed or are seen as intruders and competitors? Are they able to assert their right to such space? Through a case study of Sudanese Street vendors who share the streets with the local poor in Cairo, these and other questions are answered by investigating the modes of Sudanese integration/incorporation into local processes of 'place-making and space-grabbing'.

The possibility for local integration of international migrants has always been examined in the light of the host country's policies and strategies to integrate migrants and refugees. It is very difficult to discuss the issue of migrants' integration in the light of policies in a city like Cairo whose population is fighting to ensure and assert their right to such city. Accordingly, rather than looking at the policies that can encourage or discourage integration, this study focuses on the relationship between migrants and the host population. Through the case study of Sudanese street vendors, the paper intends to provide new elements for understanding if and how international migrants in Cairo are able to make a living and find a space, resist exclusion, assert their rights to the city, and protect whatever gains they make.

The paper is largely based on a survey study on the livelihoods of Sudanese refugees in Cairo. The survey study, which was headed by the author of this paper, took place between 2009 and 2011. The first phase from July 2009 to October 2010 focused on mapping the Sudanese population of Cairo while the second phase from October 2010 to July 2011 implemented the survey. The survey sample was 565 individuals, out of which 49.9% were women. The survey revealed that the majority of Sudanese refugees in Cairo (89% of the sample) were economically active. The survey also revealed that such economic activities are usually in the informal sector and that the majority of men work as street vendors.

This paper attempts to qualitatively examine the experience of Sudanese street vendors. The paper is based on 10 in-depth interviews with Sudanese men whose livelihoods in Cairo depend on selling in the streets and who were identified by a Sudanese local informant who is known to the author. The interviews took place during the summer of 2012 (one year after the January 25th Egyptian Revolution) and tackled the following issues: their use of the space, their relationship with Egyptians, and the impact of the revolution. In addition to these ten semi-structured interviews, the author had conducted few un-structured meetings with Egyptian street vendors.

The paper starts by introducing the position of Egypt in the international migration system as a sending, receiving and transit country. Since the 70s, Egypt has been perceived as a sending country because of the massive emigration of Egyptian workers to the gulf countries. However, this same part of the paper highlights the position of Egypt also as a receiving country hosting a considerable number of foreign migrants and refugees. The second part reviews Egyptian migration policies and the impact of such policies on international migrants in Cairo. The rest of the paper is devoted to 'Sudanese migrants' focusing on the history of Sudanese immigration to Egypt, the current number of them, the livelihoods strategies they set up and the challenges they have to face. The final part presents the case study of Sudanese street vendors in Cairo and their interaction with Egyptian vendors.

Egypt: A Sending, Receiving and Transit Country[1]

Historically, Egypt has been a receiving country that has attracted a considerable number of immigrants from within and outside the Arab world. They were mostly entrepreneurs from Greece, Syria, and Lebanon who fled Egypt after the 1952 military coup d'état led by Gamal Abdel Nasser and the nationalization programs that followed. As of the 1970s, Egypt emerged as a sending country. This was due to the oil boom, which increased the demand for migrant labor from countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq and other Gulf states as well as from Libya. The rate of emigration from Egypt continued to be high through the 80s but slowed down after the gulf war in 1990 (Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2003: 26-28). According to the latest census (2006) that enquired if the household had a family member abroad, the number of Egyptian migrants was 3,900,000. In the same year, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated the number of Egyptians abroad to be 4,727,396, based on consular records.[2]

1. Unless stated otherwise with in-text citation, the information in this paper is based on the earlier survey conducted by the writer in 2011. Access to this study is through http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/paper%20No.%203.pdf, accessed July 15, 2013

2. See i-map (interactive map on migration) www.imap-migration.org/index.php?id=2, accessed July 15, 2013

The largest number of Egyptians can be found in the neighbouring Arab countries. Table 1 presents the geographical distribution of Egyptians abroad in 2006, based on the estimates provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration.

Table 1. Egyptians abroad by major destinations (2006)

Region	Country	Number	Total
Arab Countries	KSA	1,350,000	**3,346,859**
	Libya	950,000	
	Jordan	500,000	
	Kuwait	250,000	
	UAE	160,000	
	Oman	40,000	
	Other Arab Countries	96,859	
Europe			**510,828**
North America	USA	635,000	**776,000**
	Canada	141,000	
Oceania	Australia	80,350	**83,350**
	New Zealand	3,000	
Other Countries			**10,359**
Total			**4,727,396**

Source: Zohry, 2009

On the other hand, migration to Egypt, the focus of this study, is greatly restricted to protect the local labor market from foreign competition. Population growth and high levels of unemployment pushed the government to adopt policies encouraging outmigration while obstructing immigration in an attempt to ease pressure on the local labor market and alleviate poverty. As such, most migration to Egypt today is forced migration of people fleeing conflict and war in neighboring countries (Roman, 2006: 1). The various wars that have affected the Horn of Africa since the late eighties led to a refugee influx from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. Similarly, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the recent conflict in Syria forced a considerable number of Iraqis and Syrians to seek refuge in Egypt. This is in addition to the Palestinians who fled to Egypt as well as to other Arab countries after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the Israel/Arab war of 1967 that led to further displacement (Grabsca, 2005: 4).

With the exception of the Palestinians, the majority of forced migrants in Egypt perceive their situation in the country as temporary. Many of the Iraqis had returned or were resettled to other countries such as the U.S., Canada, Australia and various European countries, and those still in Egypt are planning for either return or resettlement. The same is with Syrians who hope to return to their country once the conflict ends. The majority of African forced migrants are hoping to be resettled as many of them were personally persecuted and do not perceive return as a safe option, and at the same time, they perceive local integration as extremely difficult given the current economic situation in Egypt.

Adding to it, in Egypt, there is no asylum system and the responsibility of receiving, registering and interviewing asylum seekers for refugee status determination is entrusted with UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) following a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Egyptian government in 1954. As such, a forced migrant entering Egypt must register at UNHCR for protection and assessing his/her eligibility for assistance.

Entering Egypt is mostly through regular visa. Arabs from neighboring countries like Syria, Jordan, and Sudan are entitled to get their visa upon arrival for a maximum period of 3 to 6 months during which they have to adjust their status either by providing proof of studying or working in the country or through acquiring refugee status from UNHCR. Most Ethiopians, Eritreans and other African nationalities, who need a visa prior to arrival, enter Egypt bearing a three-month tourist visa after which they need to adjust their status. Some of them reach Egypt irregularly through the southern border with Sudan. However, those who enter irregularly are mostly using Egypt as route to another country and do not intend to stay, as will be explained in the coming section.

Upon registering at UNHCR, the person gets the asylum-seeking card (yellow card) which enables them to stay in Egypt under the protection of UNHCR until they are scheduled for a Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interview. The period between receiving the yellow card and the RSD interview varies, and can be years. When the RSD is granted, the person becomes a recognized refugee and receives the blue card. The main difference between a recognized refugee (a blue card holder) and an asylum seeker (a yellow card holder) is that the former becomes eligible for one of UNHCR durable solutions: local integration in Egypt, voluntarily repatriation to their country of origin, or resettlement to a third country. A durable solution is one in which refugees regain the protection of a state and are no longer considered to be refugees.

Egypt, like many countries in the developing world, is not in favor of local integration due to its economic conditions. The MOU between UNHCR and the government indicates voluntarily repatriation and resettlement as the only alternative. However, because both resettlement and repatriation depend on factors outside the control of UNHCR and the Egyptian government, local integration becomes a de facto condition.

In case, the person is rejected after the RSD interview, he/she is entitled to ask for another interview. If he/she is rejected after the second interview, the file is considered closed by UNHCR. A 'closed file' means

3. See UNHCR website: www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html, accessed July 2, 2013

4. Cairo and Giza are part of Greater Cairo which consists of three governorates Cairo, Giza, and Qalyubia.

5. State Information System, www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=6, accessed July *15, 2013*

that such person is no longer of concern to UNHCR, and is expected to leave Egypt. In practice, however, there is no mechanism through which either the government or UNHCR make 'closed file' people leave Egypt. As a result, they continue to live in the country with no legal status and as such constitute the most vulnerable group among refugees.

Individuals who flee their countries as a result of prolonged conflicts or generalized violence as opposed to individual persecution (as is the present conditions of Syrians) are declared 'prima facie' refugees, i.e. refugees who do not have to go through RSD procedures. They just need to register at UNHCR upon arrival and are automatically entitled to assistance and protection.[3] Egypt has no policy of encampment (settlement in camps assisted by humanitarian agencies), and as such refugees settle among the local population. Almost all of the refugees and migrants arriving in Egypt settle in the governorates of Cairo and Giza, which in this paper are referred to as 'Cairo'.[4] The total population of Cairo is approximately 14 million (Cairo governorate 7.8 million people and Giza Governorate 6.3 million).[5] As of January 2013, the total number of refugees residing in Egypt was 109,933, and asylum seekers amounted to 16,952 (UNCHR, 2013).

Table 2 presents the number of refuges and asylum seekers according to nationality based on the latest available data. In 2013 the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt has grown more than three times due to the Syrian conflict

Table 2: Number of refugees/ asylum seekers residing in Egypt by nationality

Nationality	Asylum seekers	Refugees	Total	%
Sudan	14,595	10,339	24,934	56
Iraq	1,307	6,132	7,439	17
Somalia	956	6,328	7,284	16
Eritrea	946	1,041	1,987	4
Ethiopia	996	616	1,612	4
Others	649	765	1,414	3
Total	**19,449**	**25,221**	**44,670**	**100**

Source: UNHCR fact sheet, January 2012

However, the figures do not provide a true indication of the real number of refugees and asylum seekers as they include only those who are registered with UNHCR. Many of those who fled war or persecution and as such are eligible for 'refugee status' do not approach UNHCR either out of ignorance that UNHCR office exist in Cairo or out of fear of the political implication of approaching the office.

In addition to refugees and asylum seekers, there is a number of other foreigners residing in Egypt including students from neighboring Arab countries who come to study in public or private universities as well as in El Azhar University.[6] There are also foreigners working in multinational companies, private schools and universities as well as in the business sector. In addition, there is a small number of foreign employees in government and public business sectors. The restriction imposed by the labor law, as will be explained shortly, means that the number of labor immigrants in Egypt is very low. As a consequence, refugees and asylum seekers make the bulk of the immigrant population of Egypt.

In addition to being perceived as a 'transit country' by forced migrants, Egypt is increasingly being used as a 'transit route' by migrants originating mostly from the horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia) who reach Egypt through its southern border with Sudan and aim either to reach the Northern Mediterranean via Libya or reach Israel, using the Sinai based Bedouin smuggling networks.[7] The amount of money paid for guidance across the Sinai desert to the Israeli border ranges from USD 350 to USD 7,000. This migration route (Horn of Africa-Sudan-Egypt-Israel) emerged in the mid-2000 and reached its peak by 2010 when the total number of migrants to Israel from Egypt was estimated at 33,273 as compared to 17,000 in 2008 (Jacobsen and Furst-Nichols, 2011: 1). The trend is continuing although at a slower rate. The decline in the rate is attributed to the ongoing construction of a security fence along the 240-km Egypt-Israel border as well as to the ongoing clashes between terrorist gangs and the Egyptian army.[8]

Migration Policies

The total population of Egypt has grown from 21.5 million in the 1950s to nearly 84 million in August 2013.[9] The majority of the population is young (38.1% between the age of 25-54 and 18.2% between the age of 15-24)[10] and thus actively seeking employment. At the same time, the level of poverty and unemployment is high.[11] In this context, outmigration is perceived as a tool to alleviate poverty and ease pressure on the labor market. Policies since the 1970s reflect such perception of outmigration as a solution to unemployment and poverty. Article 52 of the 1971 Constitution grants all Egyptians the right to emigrate and to return. In addition, laws and presidential decrees were issued to further promote outmigration, such as Law no. 73 of 1971 that allowed public-sector employees to return to their jobs if they have resigned for up to two years. Egyptians are usually hesitant to emigrate out of fear to lose their public offices that are highly secured. Allowing employees to return to their jobs encouraged many to emigrate knowing that they can come back to their secured jobs if the emigration experience is not successful. Moreover, law no. 111 of 1983 includes provisions encouraging Egyptian migrants to invest in the country as well as the right to acquire a second nationality while retaining the Egyptian (Roman, 2006: 1-3).

6. Al Azhar university is a centre of Islamic learning where students study the Qur'an and Islamic law as well as secular subjects.

7. See IOM website: www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/where-we-work/africa-and-the-middle-east/middle-east-and-north-africa/egypt.default.html?displayTab=contact-us, accessed July 15, 2013

8. The Jerusalem Post, "Illegal Migration from Africa continues to drop", 30/9/2012 www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Illegal-migration-from-Africa-continues-to-drop, accessed June 17, 2014

9. See CAPMAS website www.capmas.gov.eg/database.aspx, accessed July 15, 2013

10. See www.indexmundi.com/egypt/population.html, accessed July 15, 2013

11. Level of unemployment in Egypt has averaged at the rate of 10.27% from 1993 to 2013. However, this year it reached 13.20%. See CAPMAS website: www.capmas.gov.eg/database.aspx, accessed July 15, 2013

Immigration, on the other hand, is perceived as a threat to the local labor market. Controlling the number of migrants and protecting the labor market is performed through the labor law, which restricts the employment of non-Egyptians. It stipulates that the number of non-Egyptian employees in any establishment must not exceed 10% of the total work force, greatly restricting the number of labor migrants (Smith, 2012: 6). As a result, to make a living migrants resort to the informal sector like most of the Egyptian poor.

Apart from the labor law, Egypt has no immigration policy since it does not perceive itself as a receiving country. The main legal instrument that governs the presence of refugees and asylum seekers, as in many other countries, is the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The most important right accorded to refugees under this convention is the right against forced return to the country of origin. Other rights under this convention include the right to work and the right to access primary education. However, Egypt placed reservations on the articles pertaining to these rights on the basis that the economic situation does not permit the government to enforce them. At the same time, Egypt has ratified other conventions and bi-lateral agreements that give such rights to refugees.

With regard to primary education, Egypt has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which gives everyone under 18 the right to free primary education regardless of their nationalities. Bi-lateral agreements with countries like Libya, Sudan, and Jordan give children of these countries the right to enroll in Egyptian schools regardless of their residency status. Article 5 of Law 22 of 1992 states that any student funded by UNHCR (which is the case for many refugees in Egypt) is entitled to enroll in school. As such, despite the reservation to the 1951 convention, refugee children are administratively allowed to enroll in public schools.

The same is with regard to refugee employment. Egypt did not place a reservation on wage-earning employment, but on social security for non-nationals, including refugees. Moreover, Article 53 of the 1971 Constitution states that foreigners who are granted political asylum may be eligible for work permits. The problem is that obtaining work permits is quite complicate and expensive. First, the person must have an employer to sponsor him/her, including paying the fees. Second, to apply for a work permit it is mandatory to have a valid residence permit while the temporary residence permit provided to refugees by the Ministry of Interior is not clear about permission to work. Finally, applicants for the work permit must prove that they are uniquely qualified (their work cannot be performed by a local). This condition is particularly challenging for most refugees as they are generally low skilled -- like most poor Egyptians. Consequently, while officially refugees can get work permits, in practice doing so is almost impossible.

Though refugee's rights are clearly restricted, such restriction results primarily from the weak economic and social infrastructure that hinders the ability of refugees to access education, formal employment and health services as it does for the local poor.

Sudanese in Cairo

The Sudanese population represents the second largest and oldest group of migrants in Egypt after the Palestinians. As compared to other groups of migrants, due to the long history of migration between the two countries they have strong social ties with Egyptians. The section below will start with a brief account of the migration of Sudanese to Egypt. The rest of the section will be devoted to discussing the livelihoods conditions of Sudanese in Cairo

Sudanese Migratory movement to Egypt

Egypt and Sudan are historically linked and under the British rule, they were considered one country. Sudanese, mostly from the North, and Egyptians used to move back and forth between the two countries. As such, the few Sudanese who fled to Egypt during the earlier conflicts in Sudan between 1955 and 1972 were neither perceived as refugees nor they perceived themselves as refugees. They perfectly blended with the larger number of Sudanese already living in the country (Grabska, 2005: 16).

With the imposition of Islamic rule in northern Sudan in 1989, many southerners who opposed the Sudanese government's policy of *Arabazation* and *Islamisation* fled to Egypt. However the flow of Southern Sudanese began only with the 1976 Wadi El Nil Treaty, which granted Sudanese the right of residency, work, education, health services, and ownership of property. As such, Sudanese who fled the 1983 civil war were allowed to stay in Egypt without having to go through UNHCR. However, with the continuous increase in their number, in March 1994 the government requested UNHCR to be responsible for registering and interviewing the growing wave of Southern Sudanese (Ibid: 17).

An important development in Egypt/Sudan relations came in June 1995, after the attempted assassination of president Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, attributed to Sudanese Islamists. The repeal of the 1976 Wadi El Nil Treaty following the attack dramatically changed the situation of both the Sudanese entering Egypt and those already residing in the country. After that date visas and residence permits requirements were imposed on Sudanese entering the country, while Sudanese residents were subject to stronger security checks. Another wave of Sudanese migrants came in 2003 with the outbreak of the conflict in Darfur.

The end of the 90s and early 2000s saw an increase in the rate of resettlement from Egypt to western countries through UNHCR in Cairo. It reached its peak in 2004 when 4,110 refugees were resettled. This increased rate of resettlement rose great expectations among refugees and UNHCR

Cairo gained a reputation as a resettlement office. It has been argued that this increased rate of resettlement encouraged more refugees to come to Egypt from Sudan and other African countries. However, in June 2004, following the ceasefire between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), UNHCR suspended the refugee status determination for all Sudanese (not only Southerners). UNHCR rationale was that given the potential peace in Sudan, providing asylum seekers with temporary protection against refoulement offered better protection than the risk of rejecting a large number of applicants on the basis of change of circumstances in the country of origin. The suspension of the RSD reduced the access to resettlement for additional Sudanese refugees since resettlement depends on the allowed quota by receiving countries on which UNHCR has no say, though Sudanese refugees held UNHCR responsible for reducing their chances for resettlement.

Following the suspension of refugee status determination procedures, dozens of Sudanese asylum seekers and refugees initiated a sit-in that went on for three months. Meetings and negotiations took place between the refugee community leaders, UNHCR, and a number of other parties. However, all attempts to end the sit-in failed and on December 30, 2005, the police removed the demonstrators by force killing 27 Sudanese. The removal of the protest created an atmosphere of distrust among Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers towards UNHCR, in addition to straining the relation between the Sudanese refugees and the Egyptian government as well as between the government and UNHCR (Azzam, 2005: 5).

This tragic event and the success of the peace process pushed many Sudanese to consider repatriation. However, until 2011, the number of Sudanese who repatriated did not exceed few hundreds. It was only after the referendum for the independence of South Sudan and the Egyptian revolution in 2011 with its aftermath of political unrest that repatriation increased significantly. In February 2011, 1,500 Southern Sudanese were registered for repatriation. The Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRC) received 4.5 million Sudanese Pounds to start repatriating southern Sudanese from Egypt. Between February 2011 and January 2012, 1,931 Southern Sudanese had been assisted by UNHCR for repatriation. The SSRC was particularly interested in repatriating youth who were perceived as the most vulnerable group as many had tried to cross the border to Israel and got caught while others were engaged in criminal activities.

Despite the repatriation process, the number of Sudanese asylum seekers entering Egypt is increasing as the intensification of the conflict in the Nuba Mountains area has led to new arrivals. It is estimated that from 2011 to 2012 the number of Sudanese entering Egypt increased by almost 7%. Currently RSD is still suspended for Southern Sudanese because the creation of the state of Southern Sudan does not qualify them for getting the refugee status. However, with the asylum-seeking card, they remained entitled to assistance and protection and are offered the option of return to South Sudan on voluntary bases. RSD with Sudanese from Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile State is ongoing.[12]

Number of Sudanese in Cairo

The number of Sudanese in Cairo has always been unclear. A recent study estimated them to be between 55,000 and 65,000.[13] Compared with the 24,850 Sudanese registered with UNHCR (Table 2) this would mean that refugees and asylum seekers represent less than half of the Sudanese population in the city.

The Sudanese living in Cairo today can be divided into two groups. There is the older, more integrated group, mainly from North of Sudan, which migrated when there was no restriction of movement of people between Egypt and Sudan under the Wadi El Nil treaty and has lived in Cairo for decades. Most of them are relatively poor but socially integrated, particularly those who have acquired the Egyptian nationality by getting married to nationals.

The second group is made of those who have arrived more recently and largely identify themselves as refugees after fleeing for insecurity or persecution reasons since the war broke out. They come from different regions of Sudan including the North, the South, Darfur, and the Nuba Mountain and are composed of a complex mix of migrant categories: recognized refugees, asylum seekers, closed files, and few labor migrants who either came to Egypt looking for better opportunities or wanted to reach Egypt en route to other countries.

Studies with Sudanese refugees indicate that there is a clear separation between the two communities that do not mix and have very different types of livelihoods and social support. However, as will be described shortly, the ability of the newcomers (second group) to access the informal market depends on their connection with the Sudanese from the older group who have been living in Cairo for a long time, a connection that not all of the newcomers have.

The distinction between migrants and refugees in general is blurred. Refugees are those who are registered with UNHCR. However, some of those who flee persecution and are entitled to refugee status do not approach UNHCR either because they are not aware of it or out of political concern to be registered, as it seems to be the case with Syrians. On the other hand, many economic migrants use UNHCR with the hope to resettle to another country.

Sudanese Livelihoods in Cairo

Work, Income, and access to Social Network

In 2004, Egypt and Sudan signed the Four Freedoms Agreement. This agreement is thought of as a partial return to the Wadi El-Nil Treaty as it accords Sudanese a 'special status', exempts them from prior to entry's visa

12. See UNHCR Egypt website http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486356, accessed July 15, 2013

13. A forthcoming study by the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo

14. The study referred to in this section is the survey upon which most of the information of this paper is based. Access to this study is through www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/paper%20No.%203.pdf, accessed July 15, 2013

requirements and guarantees reciprocal rights of residence, work, movement, and ownership of property. According to interviews conducted with Sudanese, the positive impact of the new agreement is that it exempted them from the requirement of applying for visa and work permit before entering Egypt. Sudanese can get a visa upon arrival, which is treated as a residency permit that allows them to apply for a work permit. However, as already mentioned, getting a work permit is very difficult. As a consequence, most Sudanese, like other groups of migrants and refugees, find work in the highly insecure, underpaid often dangerous informal sector.

Like the Egyptian poor, Sudanese in Cairo do not accept passively their poverty but are actively engaged in a number of survival strategies, such as sharing residency and food and sometimes borrowing from friends and family. A recent study shows that work is the main source of income, with 89% of the poor Sudanese in Cairo engaged in economic activities. Among the 89%, only 19% are employed in the formal sector while the remaining majority (70%) is engaged in informal activities. Less than 3% run small businesses or are engaged in translation or language tutoring activities. Only 8% of the sample reported that they are not engaged in economic activities in Cairo, they either depends on remittances from family members or stipends from agencies. The informal activities mentioned in the study include house-cleaners, factory workers, street vendors, waiters in coffee shops or restaurants, 'suitcase traders' either going themselves to Sudan or buying from a supplier who goes back and forth, and security guards. However, the majority of Sudanese men in Cairo work as street vendors, and the majority of Sudanese women work as domestic workers.[14]

The monthly average income of a Sudanese family in Cairo is 600 Egyptian Pounds (USD 107), mostly derived from their economic activities, an amount equivalent to that of a poor Egyptian family, with an average of five members per family. Since the Sudanese diaspora does not have strong ties, unlike other groups such as the Somalis, most Sudanese have to make a living from work. Only occasionally members of the same family or community living abroad provide financial support, essentially in case of emergency, while families and friends living in Sudan can hardly provide resources in cash or kind.

Housing

Housing is possibly the main problem Sudanese have to face in Cairo, and paying the rent the largest household expense. The problem relates essentially to the rent control system introduced in the 1950s, which is argued to be the reason behind the difficulty of finding affordable housing and the growth of informal settlements. This section will address the issue highlighting how it impacts on Sudanese immigrants.

In the late 50s, Egypt introduced a rent control system that forbids landlords to raise the rent and protects tenant from eviction. Though in 1996 the law was modified with the provision of a yearly rent increase and

15. Egypt State Information System, http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=6, accessed July 15, 2013

16. Please visit google maps for more information on the location of these areas of Cairo www.google.com.eg/search?q=cairo+map+pdf&oq=cairo+map&aqs=chrome.3.69i57j69i60l2j0l3.7643j0j7&sourceid=chrome&espv=210&es_sm=91&ie=UTF-8#q=map+of+cairo

five-year renewable contracts, the new rules do not apply to contracts signed before that date. Consequently, tenants who rented their apartments before 1996, never leave it even when they do not inhabit them. As a result, there are a large number of vacant apartments in Cairo that are not available for rent. Moreover, construction of public housing was greatly reduced since the economy moved from being fundamentally state controlled towards a more market oriented model. Under these conditions, even among the middle class those seeking rental accommodation were denied access to the formal sector and the informal market became the only alternative to finding a dwelling (El Batran and Arandal, 1998: 219-222).

Settling informally on private agricultural land where the risk of eviction is almost non-existent became the most common way to access housing for low- as well as middle-class families. Only the poorest families take the risk of invading public, land, since the government is not prepared to accept such, practice and quickly evicts all those who try to settle irregularly on its land. Due to the high housing demand, some owners raze parts of their land to make it unsuitable for agricultural purposes and put it up for construction. The 2006 census estimated the number of informal settlements in Cairo to be 75.[15] However, the phenomenon has tremendously increased after the January 25th revolution. According to recent estimates, since the revolution more than 150,000 hectares have been urbanized (Viney, 2013).

Though Sudanese can be found in various parts of Cairo, a considerable number of them live in informal settlements built through such conversion process of agricultural land, among them *Ard El Lewa, Barageel, Al Marj,* and *Arba wa Nus*. Sudanese are also found in the older parts of Cairo mostly in *Ain Shams, Heliopolis, Maadi* and *El Agouza* as well as the new cities of *6th of October* and *Sheikh Zayed*.[16]

Most Sudanese pay monthly rents between 60 and 100 USD, compared to an average income of approximately 85 USD, as mentioned previously. Not only are such rents high in absolute terms; they are also high in comparison to what Egyptians, pay for similar housing. In formal areas, Egyptians who rented their apartment prior to 1996 benefit from the rent control law paying less than 15 USA per month, in addition to being protected against eviction. Depending on the areas, according to the new contracts rents range from USD 28 to 285. In poor neighborhoods they range from USD 28 to 42. The rent paid by most Sudanese, particularly those who arrived in recent years, are subject to the new law but often landlords, in formal as well as informal neighborhoods, impose rents higher than those set by the law and offer only more expensive furnished flats.

Assistance from Aid Agencies

Aid agencies dealing with Sudanese focus primarily on refugees. As a consequence, those who arrived before the conflict do not benefit from the

services provided by such agencies. In theory, they can be assisted by Egyptian non-refugees oriented NGOs, but interviews with various Sudanese indicated that they never received any assistance from them.

Refugees and asylum seekers can get different kinds of assistance, depending on their status. Cash assistance is provided by UNHCR through Caritas, its main implementing partner, only to refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR, i.e. blue and yellow card holders. However, due to budget constraints, only the most needy become eligible for the approximately USD 100 provided every other month for a period of six months renewable only once upon a new assessment. Caritas along with Refuge Egypt also provide medical and health assistance by referring applicants to hospitals and clinics. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is responsible for education and vocational training for refugees who are in a position to achieve self-reliance.

Other NGOs and grass-root organizations provide legal aid, psychosocial support, and education for children. Such assistance is not addressed only to registered asylum seekers and refugees, as in the case of St. Andrews and All Saints Cathedral refugee centres that provide educational support to children who cannot enroll in schools. The Psycho-Social Institute of Cairo (PSTIC) provides counseling and psychosocial support. Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA) provides legal aid, which is usually provided before applying to UNHCR to assess their eligibility for refugee status or assist those who had been rejected and want to appeal. In recent years, and in an attempt to help the refugees integrate with the Egyptian communities in which they live, refugee oriented grass-root organizations and NGOs began to include Egyptians in their activities. The idea started with the development of TADAMON (the Egyptian Refugee Multicultural Council) in 2006. The organization established to fight prejudice and prevent possible conflicts between Egyptians and refugees. TADAMON is made of representatives from 50 Cairo-based NGOs, community development groups and charitable institutions. Its activities are predominantly designed to bridge the cultural differences that exist between Egyptians and migrant communities and to promote tolerance and understanding, particularly among the youth.

Education and Health

Theoretically, all Sudanese children have the right to attend public schools as per the Four Freedoms Agreement. However, the research work showed that very few Sudanese children attend such schools. This is due to two reasons. The first is that Egyptian public schools are already overcrowded and cannot cater even for Egyptian children. The second has to do with the fear of being discriminated against by local children. Southern Sudanese, who are mostly Christians, are reluctant to try to send their children to public schools because of the imposition of the Islamic curriculum. As a result, attending unaccredited refugee schools known as "refugee learning centers" constitutes the only alternative for many refugees in Cairo. The refugee schools or learning centers are mostly church-based but there are other learning centers for refugees that are run by individuals, often of Sudanese origin. All refugee children, regardless of their legal status (whether they are official refugees, asylum seekers or closed files), can attend these schools. The main problem is that these schools are not recognized by the Egyptian Ministry of Education, by consequence cannot issue valid certificates. To overcome this problem, the Southern Sudanese Teachers' Union (SSTU) in cooperation with the Sudanese Ministry of Education and in agreement with the Egyptian Ministry of Education, has recently facilitated the adoption of the Sudanese curriculum at refugee schools in Cairo (Stephan, 2010: 25-28).

With regard to health services, Egyptian policy does not allow refugees, as well as all foreigners, to have access to public health services. The only way to access health services is through the financial support of Caritas, which covers 50% of medical expenses. In 2005, the Minister of Health issued a decree allowing foreigners to access public primary healthcare services but, as with education, refugees did not benefit from such a decree. The reason has to do with the mistrust with public medical services in Egypt and the rumors among the Sudanese community regarding the stealing of organs and the fear of possible discriminatory treatment. Furthermore, some refugees indicated that they are unaware of such a decree (Grabska, 2006: 22-23)

Sudanese and poor Egyptians in Cairo share very similar livelihoods. They both rely on themselves to find shelter and work, and they both resort to the informal sector to make a living. The average poor Egyptian family as well as the poor Sudanese family has very similar low levels of income. Although poor Egyptians are entitled to public education and health, they actually do not use them due to the deteriorating conditions of such services. With the Sudanese community there is a further problem of mistrust making it reluctant to access their right out of fear of discrimination from the local population.

Sudanese Street Vendors in Cairo[17]

As they rely on themselves to find shelter, the poor in Cairo, like in many other cities in developing countries, rely also on themselves to make a living within the vast unregistered informal economy. As mentioned at the beginning of the paper, Bayat uses the notion of quiet encroachment in recognition of the multitude of strategies the poor adopt in their daily survival struggle. Such strategies, when pursued by millions though on an individual daily basis, can produce policy changes, as it is the case with many urban services initially 'pirated' by the poor and eventually provided by the government in recognition of the poor's needs.

Street selling is a clear example of 'the quiet encroachment of the ordinary'. The poor, in an attempt to improve their lives and find economic

17. This section is based on the in-depth interviews carried out with 10 Sudanese street vendors as well as the informal talk with Egyptian street vendors.

opportunities, took over street sidewalks and other public spaces spreading their vending business and selling their merchandise. In doing so, they not only assert their right to defend such spaces against government's control, but also their power on deciding whom to let in, whom to push out, and what to sell.

As mentioned earlier, previous studies indicated that the majority of Sudanese refugee men in Cairo make a living as street vendors. The next section will describe the dynamic of the relations between them and the Egyptian street vendors in an attempt to understand the degree of their agency and their ability to assert their right to a space in the city.

Selling in the street, though informal and illegal, has it own rules. Entering this labour market can only take place through good connections with the established vendors and depends on the type of goods that will be offered. This explains why the Sudanese are the only non-Egyptians selling in the streets. Due to the long history of migration between Egypt and Sudan, Sudanese get access to the space through other Sudanese who either allow them to share their designated space or give away their designated space when leaving Cairo.

Interviews with both Sudanese and Egyptian vendors revealed that no other nationalities are allowed to get into street vending. In fact, all the street vendors the researcher was able to meet spoke Arabic and the majority of them were from the North of Sudan, most likely due to the fact that Sudanese refugees from the North have some ties with the Northern Sudanese who arrived to Cairo years before. None of the vendors were from the South of Sudan where Dinka is more common than Arabic. In addition, the interviewees reported stories of how Chinese and other nationalities were prevented from entering street vending, sometimes by force. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that language and social ties are the two main factors that enable Sudanese migrants to integrate with the local population. The importance of language and social ties was documented by earlier studies that revealed that Northern Sudanese and Iraqis were the most integrated in Cairo as compared to Southern Sudanese, Ethiopian and Eritrean who were the least able to integrate and build relationships with Egyptians (Feinstein International Center, 2012: 26-27).

Vendors not only assert their right to the city through controlling who gets in the space, but also through regulating and controlling such space. Every group of vendors has control over one specific area and does not try to occupy other areas as if there was a kind of unwritten agreement between vendors that every vendor must adhere to.

Street vendors selling in a certain area usually do not know each other, but they operate within a network described by Asef Bayat as 'Passive Network' which he defines as *"an instantaneous communication among atomized individuals that is established by a tacit recognition of their common identity, and which is mediated through real and virtual space*" (Bayat, 2009: 63).

The 'passive network' becomes active when a newcomer enters the area or when vendors are faced with the threat of eviction from government officials. Once they are faced by a new situation or a common threat, they act collectively even in absence of a structured network. Once a person is accepted in the community of vendors, he automatically becomes part of the collective identity, which transcends class and nationality. The interviews indicated that once a Sudanese vendor is accepted in the space, he becomes part of the group like any Egyptian and is protected from both the police and other vendors trying to intrude on his designated space, even when the intruder is an Egyptian. The ability of the Sudanese to be part of this collective identity is only attributed to sharing the same space with its rules and regulations. This is in line with Bayat's notion of the 'passive network', based on the identity of a vendor as a vendor in a specific area of the city sharing the same space and thus the same interest to protect their livelihoods, well beyond nationality.

Sudanese vendors highlighted in the interviews that the Egyptian revolution raised new challenges. The number of street vendors increased significantly due to the lack of other income generating opportunities and to the weaker control of the police in the streets. At the same time, both demand and supply went down, the former due to the reduced economic capacity of the population, the latter to the difficulty in getting goods from the wholesalers. However, the interviewees indicated that the main problem after the revolution is the harassment by thugs, the number of new entrants who have moved to Cairo from other governorates, and lack of security. Before the revolution, the main problem street vendors faced was the threat of having their merchandise confiscated by the police. However, over the years and through the help of older vendors, they learned how to deal with the police either through bribing (paying as little as five Egyptian pounds) or learning how to hide their merchandise. With the weakening of the police after the revolution, they became under the threat of thugs who, through the use of weapons, either take their money or their merchandise, and no one can stop them. Although this affected negatively all street vendors, Sudanese interviewees argued that they are subjected to more harassment and threat as compared to the Egyptian street vendors.

The previous description highlights the agency of refugees who do not wait passively for assistance from the concerned agencies. On the contrary, they take the initiative of participating in any economic activity to help themselves and their families. Despite that, their activities cannot be referred to as a 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary'. Migrants/refugees are prevented from selling in the streets. The only nationality allowed is the Sudanese who can carry out their trading activity only if they have connection with the older group of Sudanese. In fact, the ability of Sudanese to find new space and make new gains is highly restricted and dependent on the Egyptians they know. Moreover,

despite the fact that once accepted they become part of a network that does not discriminate on the base of nationality, they are more vulnerable at time of difficulty as during the revolution.
The Cairo case shows that migrants/refugees are engaged in survival strategies that, though not at the expense of themselves or others, do not quite represent a 'quiet encroachment' by which they can assert their rights to the city.

Conclusion

From a legal perspective 'local integration' is a situation where refugees are offered permanent asylum and integration by the host government through an ongoing process of legal, economic, social and cultural incorporation that will eventually lead to acquiring the citizenship of the host country (Jacobson, 1989: 1). In short, it means the end of the refugee status and the protection as fully recognized citizens by the host state.
Thus, from the legal perspective in Egypt integration cannot be achieved. The MOU signed by the Egyptian government and UNHCR highlights 'repatriation' and 'resettlement to a third country' as the only two envisaged solutions. This is due to the economic situation that also led Egypt to place some reservations to the 1951 Geneva Convention. Moreover, Egyptian citizenship is only based on descent. However, the continuous unrest in the countries of origin and the decreased rate of resettlement means that over time many refugees become unofficially integrated after they have lived in, and been accepted by, the community for a period of time. This situation of informal integration or de facto integration occurs when refugees are not in physical danger, have freedom of movement, have access to livelihoods opportunities, housing, educational and health facilities, and are socially networked into the host community where intermarriages are common (Jacobson, 1989: 8).
In this framework, the main factors for achieving de facto local integration in Cairo appears to be: access to work and economic opportunities, access to services, to have a similar standard of living as the host population, to have freedom of movement, and to be part of social networks with the host population where intermarriages are common.
These features can be easily found within the older group of Sudanese migrants, much less within Sudanese refugees. Despite facing similar livelihoods challenges, Sudanese refugees are much more vulnerable than the local poor population. Obligation to hold a work permit restricts access to formal employment. Most poor Egyptians resort to the informal economy for lack of alternatives, but their ability to find jobs in the formal market is higher and many of them supplement their formal employment with other forms of informal economic activities. Although they have a similar level of income, they do not share the same social and economic resources. Sudanese, like all other migrants in Cairo, pay higher rent for the same housing. With regard to access to services, although both groups have restricted access because of the deteriorated health and educational infrastructure, Sudanese fear of discrimination and lack of trust towards the service providers restrict them even further from using such services. The fear of discrimination and mistrust is in itself an indication of the difficulty of integration and points out to a situation of 'self-exclusion'. With regard to freedom of movement and physical danger, this paper shows that in times of difficulty and social turbulence like the aftermath of the revolution, migrants are subject to higher risk of physical danger. As such, although the coping mechanism of both locals and migrants may be similar, the resources for social support and buffer against vulnerability are not equal. Poor Egyptians have wider access to the extended family, and as citizens, have greater access to the little welfare services the State provides, mainly education and health.
Nevertheless, Sudanese ability to co-exist with the local population is much higher than other groups of migrants. This is due to the long history of migration between Egypt and Sudan and the social ties that have been established since long between the two communities, in addition to the fact that they share the same language and religion. As stressed by this and other researches, Northern Sudanese are in a better position than those from the South who are mostly Christians and do not speak fluent Arabic.
The fact that Sudanese street vendors co-exist with Egyptians vendors and share the same space can be taken as an indicator of the degree of the Sudanese inclusion within the urban social and spatial fabric. However, Sudanese street vendors are small in numbers and the support of the Egyptian vendors is provided on the basis of individual ties. Sudanese vendors would not be able to share the space with Egyptian vendors nor occupy new spaces by themselves. The strategy of 'quiet encroachment' to gain new positions is not applicable to migrants who cannot improve their situation by themselves but depend on the acceptance by other urban poor. Moreover, protection by the Egyptian vendors is not sufficient to protect them from competition and harassment, as it became apparent after the revolution when they were targeted by thugs and new entrants into street vending. This finding is in line with other studies on Sudanese migrants that reveal that social ties with Egyptians are strong and do protect them where they live and work, much less so in the streets where they are confronted by people they are not familiar with. This is the reason why initiatives such as TADAMON aiming at bridging the cultural gap between the two communities, particularly among youth, can contribute to extend the integration process to the larger urban community. However, without the support of government policies to facilitate permanent residency and integration, it is not possible to argue that migrants have the ability to assert their right to their host city.
Taking the Sudanese as a case study, the paper stresses the ability migrants have to co-exist with the host population. However, such co-

existence appears to be limited to the space of residency and work. Sudanese migrants cannot assert their rights to the city because their ability to share a space in the city is determined and controlled by the local population. As such, the 'quiet encroachment' concept cannot really describe the activities of immigrants in their host cities, as they are unable to improve their situation by themselves, rather depend on being accepted by the local urban poor.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMERA: Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance
CAPMAS: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CRS: Catholic Relief Service
IDPs: Internally Displaced Populations
MOU: Memorandum of Understanding
PSTIC: Psycho-social Training institute of Cairo
RSD: Refugee Status Determination
SPLM: South Sudan People Liberation Movement
SSRC: The South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SSTU: The South Sudan Teachers' Union
TADAMON: The Egyptian Refugee Multicultural Council
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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