LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF DISPLACED INDEPENDENT ERITREAN YOUTHS IN CAIRO: EXAMINING AGENCY AND VULNERABILITY

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Abstract

Eritrea is one of the largest refugee producing countries, as many exit to escape arduous National Service (Amnesty International 2015). Egypt is an important transit country for Eritreans, with the majority settling in Cairo. Based on fieldwork with displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo from May-August 2017, this thesis applies the livelihoods framework to independent displaced youths to study their agentic capabilities, amidst vulnerability. They are primarily able to negotiate their livelihoods through their housemates, often those they meet 'en route'. Furthermore, their housemates are frequently their only source of support, regardless of their ability to provide adequate support. Despite their experiences of vulnerability, mainly determined by their security context, youths enact their agency in managing social, institutional, and financial resources. Gender was the predominant marker of identity that influenced their livelihood strategies. This thesis critically examines the key livelihoods issues facing displaced youths and makes practical and theoretical recommendations.

Land Acknowledgement

I recognize that many Indigenous nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been cared taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. I acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

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With humility and gratitude,

Amanda Elizabeth Siino

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BIA: Best Interest Assessment

BID: Best Interest Determination

EPLF: Eritrean People's Liberation Front

RSD: Refugee Status Determination

StARS: Saint Andrew's Refugee Services

UCY: Unaccompanied Youths

UNHCR: United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UYBP: Unaccompanied Youth Bridging Program (at StARS)

Chapter 1: Introduction

Eritrea is one of the largest refugee[1] producing countries in the world with no ongoing conflict, but many exit to escape indefinite and arduous National Service (Amnesty International 2015). Many youths become 'stuck' in transit to Europe due to a lack of funds, dangerous conditions, or changing policies (Jacobsen et al. 2014). Though most literature on independent youths focuses on those who seek asylum in the Global North, they are a relatively small number compared to South-South migration (Huijmans 2015, 4) this research addresses this gap by focusing on Eritrean youths in Egypt. As Egypt is the closest country with Mediterranean shores to Eritrea, it is an important transit country where the majority settle in Cairo (Danielson, 2015, 13).

Displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo are primarily able to negotiate their livelihoods through their housemates, principally others in the Eritrean community. Furthermore, their housemates are frequently their only source of support in Cairo, regardless of their ability to provide adequate support, be it financial, psychosocial, or knowledge-sharing. The majority of youths live with other youths, often those they met 'en route' to Cairo. Despite their experiences of vulnerability, mainly determined by their security context, youths enact their agency in managing social, institutional, and financial resources. Gender was the predominant marker of identity that influenced their livelihood strategies. Young women are more likely to find work with 'madames' in Egyptian

[1] This paper aims to avoid the term refugee/asylum-seekers as much as possible, in preference of the term displaced person as my study includes those who have not been determined to be in the legal categorizations of 'refugee' or 'asylum-seeker'. This is also in an effort to avoid some of the stigma attached to these terms, and take a more inclusive approach to the experiences of those that have been displaced. The term will only be used as it pertains to a citations/paraphrases of sources, and/or as it specifically refers to the legal status, when appropriate, of a displaced person.

households, and through this support other youths (both men and women) in their own households. These findings de-homogenize the experience of 'independence' of independent displaced youths, as at different stages in their migration they may be more, or less 'independent'. Youths do not experience a univalent state of being throughout their entire migration process, which influence their decision-making strategies. The findings of this research are an empirical, analytical and theoretical contribution to the literature as there have been no similar studies at the point of completion.

In both the academic and practical context, independent displaced youths[2] are considered to be the most vulnerable population (Clark 2007, Orgocka 2012). Recent scholarship has problematized the relationship between the vulnerability and agency of these youths (Orgocka 2012). Though independent displaced youths are frequently framed within the discourse of vulnerability, they simultaneously exert agency within this context (Orgocka 2012). For youths in Cairo, though they experience a particular set of vulnerabilities, they nonetheless enact their agency to secure their livelihoods. Livelihoods literature focuses on people as "active agents responding to social and

[2] This thesis uses the term 'independent displaced youths'. Though this group is also referred to in both literature and in the field as 'unaccompanied youth', 'unaccompanied refugee children', 'unaccompanied minors' or 'separated refugee children', I follow Denov & Bryan's (2012) justification that though 'separated' (and I also argue 'unaccompanied' as well) "is often used in the literature to invoke the realities and challenges of separation from significant kin, it fails to encapsulate the strength, resilience, and capacities of these children. Furthermore, it serves to obscure the at-times self-propelled nature of their flight and eventual resettlement." (14). I prefer the term 'youths', over 'child', in order to denote age as "an important relation of social differentiation and not merely as a marker of static age categories" (Huijsmans 2015, 2). UNHCR defines a separated child as "a person who is under the age of eighteen years, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier and who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has the responsibility to do so" (cited in Denov & Bryan 2012, 14). I use 'youth' to include beyond these static age categories of "under eighteen years of age", but to understand through a relational approach how youths operate.

economic change within the circumstances in which they find themselves" (Oberhauser et al., 2004, 206). As a result, I aim to further explore this relationship between vulnerability and agency through the lens of the livelihood[3] strategies of youth. The aim of this research is to understand, from the perspective of displaced independent youths, how they are able to negotiate their livelihoods amidst limited circumstances in the Cairo. The objectives to achieve this aim are threefold;

1- To critically examine the key livelihood issues facing displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo.
2- To critically examine how they manage these challenges and opportunities with attention to their intersecting markers of identity[4] and community relationships.
3- To critically examine the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

To attain these objectives, I conducted qualitative research, interviewing thirty-four displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo, and five community leaders, from May to August 2017. The specific research questions for this project were;

1- How do young Eritreans who have migrated on their own to Cairo negotiate their livelihoods?
2- How are their livelihood strategies linked to their markers of identity, and community relations?

Context

This chapter will briefly highlight the salient factors of Eritrea's history, and causal factors of youth departure. It will also feature the main aspects of Egypt's reception of refugees into contemporary period.

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[3] Though I will further define livelihoods in the *Relation to the Literature*, one helpful definition I draw on is Al-Sharmani's (2003) definition of livelihood as "legal, economic, educational, and social capital that refugees strive to secure and maximize in order to get by … and plan ahead for their futures" (4).
[4] I use "markers of identity" to encapsulating the varying intersecting subject-positions that youths can inhabit, especially gender, social age, religion, and ethnic groups. Due to the security threats, LGBTQIA have not been included in this study (see *Context* section). Though ability was considered, I was unable to access any persons with disabilities for this study.

Eritrea as "Sending State"

Colonialism, Independence and Continued Tensions

Though a substantive history of Eritrea is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will do a brief periodization to highlight issues influencing the present. Italy colonized Eritrea from 1890 to 1941, until it became a protectorate of Great Britain from 1941 to 1952 (Hepner, 2009, 185). Eritrea became a federation with Ethiopia (ibid) through the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 390(V) leading to Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea in 1962. In 1961, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) led an armed struggle, and within ten years the ELF splintered into the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) (Hepner, 2009, 185). As both groups fought against Ethiopia, they also fought a civil war amongst themselves (Hepner, 2009, 185). In 1991, the EPLF gained control of the government and defeated the Eritrean army (Hirt 2014, 117). Eritrea gained formal independence from Ethiopia in 1993, with the EPLF in control, creating the single-party government that remains in power today, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), led by President Isaias Afwerki (Hepner, 2009, 185). During the thirty years war of independence, during the height of the Cold War, the EPLF did not receive support from neither Eastern nor Western powers, leading to "two structural characteristics of the EPLF/PFDJ government; the insistence on self-reliance coupled with a deep mistrust od the international community, and the institutionalization of the diaspora as a funding source" (Hirt, 2014, 117). After independence, the Eritrean government formalized their ties with their diaspora in the creation of the National Constitution of 1992 (Tecle & Goldring 196). There was an understanding of Eritrean emigrants as participating in a

national project through which there has been an economic and ideological contribution to the liberation struggle (Arnone 2008, 330).

The conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia re-emerged as an all-out war in 1998 until 2000, with approximately 100,000 casualties (Hirt, 2014, 118). Nicole Hirt (2014) argues that three distinct factors emerged within Eritrea as a result of the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia; the government transitioned from moderate authoritarianism to totalitarianism, there was a militarization of society justified by the conflict, and an increasingly isolationist foreign policy (118). After the border war, fifteen high-ranking PFDJ members demanded political reforms, 11 of whom were arrested, as well as independent journalists (Hirt, 2014, 118). The 1997 constitution was disaggregated and the elections were indefinitely postponed (Hirt, 2014, 118). It can be explained that "the post-war period saw entrenchment of the idea that *tegadelay* [liberation fighters] were the 'vanguard of the people' and must decide the destiny of liberated Eritrea without debate, until new generations have been imbued with the same values forged during the guerrilla period" (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2014, 4). The end of the 1998-2000 war furthered their mistrust of the international community because the Algiers Agreement, ending the conflict through the Ethiopia-Eritrean Boundary Commission (EEBC), was stalled in 2002 by Ethiopia (ICG, 2014, 3). This refusal to implement the findings of the Commission lead to further frustrations that the international guarantors had dismissed their responsibilities to Eritrea in favour of Ethiopia (ICG, 2014, 3).

Eritrea has also been involved in armed conflicts with its other neighbours, Yemen in 1995, and Djibouti in 1996, and 2008, and has poor links with other countries

in the region (Hirt, 2014, 119). Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 1709 in December 2009 imposing sanctions on Eritrea through a weapons embargo, freezing assets, and a travel ban on civilian and military leaders (Bereketeab 2013, 146). The reason for these sanctions were allegations of Eritrea's support of Al-Shabab militias in Somalia and insurgencies in Ethiopia, as well as the troops present at their border with Djibouti (Hirt 2014,120). More recently, Eritrea is also the site of the regional struggle for influence between Saudi Arabia and Iran — Eritrea switching allegiances from Iran to Saudi Arabia in 2015 (Hovil & Oette 2017, 8). There are also periodic re-emergences of border clashes with Ethiopia, most recently in July 2016 in Tsorona (BBC).

Emigration from Eritrea is not a new phenomenon but has experienced different iterations and motivating factors. Around 25-30% of Eritreans left the country between 1961 to 1991 (Hepner 2009, 185). Approximately one million Eritrean nationals fled, and the EPLF created transnational structures from the end of the 1970s, which expanded to the organization of festivals and events that strengthened the ties between the exiles and the EPLF (Hirt 2014, 122). Tricia Redeker Hepner (2009) argues that those who left during the independence war form a distinct group, whom she refers to as Generation Nationalism (184). Through re-enforcing these ties before and immediately after independence, the Eritrean exiles formed "a global diaspora distinct for its geographic spread and highly coordinated ideologies and practices of pro-independence, long-distance nationalism" (Hepner, 2009, 185). As a result, they defined citizenship law to include the contributions of the diaspora for their integral role in the independence

struggle — resulting in *The Eritrean Nationality Proclamation No. 2111992*, a form of dual citizenship to anyone born of one or two Eritrean parents (Tecle & Goldring, 2013, 194). The government, as well as members of the diaspora were involved in drafting the institutionalization of remittances, and also created a *2 percent Income Tax on Eritreans Working Abroad* (Tecle & Goldring, 2013, 195-6). The state nationalized personal contributions to form a national resource for state reconstruction, as developing countries were mostly excluded from the global economy (Tecle & Goldring, 2013, 195). However, this also means that, for the diaspora, there is not much room to abandon citizenship or exit if one chooses to do so (Tecle & Goldring, 2013, 197).

As there was a move towards totalitarianism after the 2001 border war, there was a new generation of exodus from the country. Hepner (2009) identifies those leaving after 2001 as 'Generation Asylum' (184). She argues that each generation is internally differentiated by politics, ethno-regionalism, religion, class and education, but nonetheless maintain stronger ties with their homeland than host societies (193). Hepner (2009) emphasises the strong tensions between both generations, with the former describing the newly arrived as deserters, traitors and economic migrants and deny any political repression (200). Thus, those included in my study would, arguably, fit into Hepner's (2009) group of 'Generation Asylum'.

This 'generation' of exodus is also influenced by several other factors in the condition of their country. President Afwerki has been in power since 1991, there have never been national elections, and the transitional national assembly has not met since 2001 (Human Right Commission (HRC) 2016, 16). The majority of Eritrea's economic

enterprises are state controlled, and it is one of the least developed countries in the world (HRC 2016, 17). The government controls the internet and telecommunications, leaving most Eritreans unable to access international media or have much knowledge of the outside world if it is not through family or friends abroad (Women's Refugee Commission, 2013, 16). United Nations Development Program's 2016 Human Development Index ranks Eritrea 179 of 188 countries (Hovil & Oette 2017, 10). Similarly, the 2015 World Bank report on Eritrea identifies it as one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world, with chronic fiscal deficits since 1998, leading "to a highly unsustainable public debt burden, most recently estimated at 115 % of GDP in 2012" (World Bank par. 4). By other measures, Eritrea also does poorly on questions of governance and transparency; Eritrea is placed in the bottom 165 of 180 countries according to the NGO Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index; in the 2015 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Eritrea ranked 50 of 54 on Rule of Law, and 53 of 54 on Human Rights (HRC 2016, 18). Though these various indicators should be further examined to understand their exact meaning, the purpose here is to give an overall idea of Eritrea's international standing in its development, economy, and governance, to elucidate the context from which youths leave.

'Motivating Factors': Mandatory Military Service and Human Rights Abuses

Eritrea is a small country, with a population of 5.2 million, approximately 5,000 of whom leave the country every month (Hovnil et al, 2017, 9). Though there is debate about the population of Eritrea, and exact amount of those who leave, overall the movement out of the country is a significant amount of the small populations (ICG 2014,

4). There continues to be an exodus of Eritreans from the country. In 2015, Eritreans were 24.7 per cent of those that arrived by the Mediterranean to Italy, which is the largest single country of origin. UNHCR estimates, as of June 2015, that the global total of refugees and asylum seekers from Eritrea is around 444,091, which equates to approximately 12 per cent of the population (HRC 2016, 18). The government of Eritrea calculates its population at 3.6 million, but other sources, like the World Bank, estimate the number is closer to six or seven million (HRC 2016, 17). The majority of Eritreans refugees/asylum seekers are hosted in Ethiopia with UNHCR estimating about 155, 000.

Amnesty International's December 2015 report "Just Deserters: Why Indefinite National Service in Eritrea has Created a Generation of Refugees", explains that

> "Eritrea is hemorrhaging its youth. Children are walking alone, often without telling their parents, to another country, to avoid a life of perpetual forced labour on low pay with no genuine education or viable work opportunities through which they or their families could live. These young people repeatedly told Amnesty International that they had seen their parents and older siblings subjected to indefinite and prolonged service and that they were determined to avoid it at all costs." (7)

This report largely attributes this exodus to the prolonged and indefinite nature of the national service, the conditions of the service, the impact on their ability to survive economically, and see their families (ibid 7). Additionally, according to the International Crisis Groups's August 2014 'Update Briefing' on Eritrea, "witnesses inside Eritrea say youths are extremely scarce not only in the capital, Asmara, but also in villages and towns, especially in the highlands (*kebessa*) as well as the borderlands next to Ethiopia and Sudan. 'When a child reaches the age of fifteen, no matter the sex, it's clearly time to leave before getting trapped in the military service', one said" (ibid 8). The exodus of

youths in the country seem especially weighted towards those in urban areas, leaving a greater proportion of those "with a more pliant pastoralist and peasant background" — making them more easily 'manageable' for the government (ICG 2014, 10).

The Eritrean National Service, or *hagerawi agelglot* in Tigrinya, was established by law in 1995, requiring every adult to perform 18 months of duty in the service — however service, in practice, lasts indefinitely (Amnesty International 2015, 6). The 2015 Amnesty International Report was originally a response to some countries, like the United Kingdom and Denmark, claiming an improvement in the National Service, and removing their claim for asylum (ibid 6). They found that there have been "no discernable changes in National Service practices as of November 2015" (Amnesty International 2015, 6). The main problem associated with the National Service is its indefinite length. However, there are many other issues such as assigning conscripts to civilian roles, like construction, teaching, agriculture, and civil service — amounting to forced labour in violation of international law (Amnesty International 2015, 7). Another major problem is the pay, with every person interviewed for the Amnesty International report saying it was not possible to meet a family's basic needs on the salary of 450 Nakfa, or even on the higher salaries of 600, 800, or 1000 Nakfa (ibid 7). Access to health care during conscription is also severely restricted (Amnesty International 2015, 33). Many family members could be conscripted at once and assigned to posts far from each other, seeing their family only once per year (ibid 33). This prolonged conscription of parents and other family members has led some "children to assume the economic

burden of families which has also contributed to some children leaving school early" (ibid 33).

Conscription for National Service happens through two ways, the education system and 'round ups' (*giffa* in Tigrinya) (Amnesty International 2015, 19). Grade 12 of high school for all schoolchildren takes place at the Sawa National Service and Training Center (Sawa), which is approximately half the year in school, and the other half in military training (ibid). Many of those in their year at Sawa are 16 or 17 years old, and could have been deployed to active duty once their six months of training was complete, under the age of 18 (Amnesty International 2015, 26). The conditions at Sawa are considered harsh, with 100 to 150 students in one dormitory, with high levels of heat in the daytime, and inadequate and poor-quality food (Amnesty International 2015, 20). Furthermore, the punishment for attempted evasion or desertion is, in practice, arbitrary detention, for unspecified and varying lengths of time, without charge, trial, or access to family members or a lawyer (Amnesty International 2015, 38). There is also a longstanding 'shoot to kill' policy for those seen crossing the border to Ethiopia (Amnesty International 2015, 52). Those in detention centers are in dire conditions, over-crowded underground cells or shipping containers with little food, drinking water and/or sanitation (Amnesty International 2015, 54). Thus, the Amnesty International Report also argues that though the National Service does not officially start until adulthood, it has a negative impact on children, through the means of 'rounding-up' that begin before the age of 18, as well as the effects of long-term conscription of their family members,

leading them to take on economic responsibility and leave school, as well as emotional stress (Amnesty International 2015, 53).

In tandem with Amnesty International's report, the United Nations Human Rights Council's 2015 "Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea" scolded Eritrea for human rights abuses and a lack of cooperation with the UN. Their follow-up report in 2016 furthered these findings. The June 2016 updated report found that

> "there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in Eritrea since 1991 … They have committed, and continue to commit, the crimes of enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture, other inhumane acts, persecution, rape and murder." (83).

The Commission report gross human rights violations,

> "including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture, killings, sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnicity, and reprisals for the alleged conduct of family members. In addition, many of those subjected to enforced disappearance in the past remain unaccounted for" (ibid 83).

These violations were frequently described as their main motivator for fleeing the country, including by unaccompanied minors (ibid 83). Drafting for military/national service continues to be for an indefinite duration in overall abusive conditions (ibid 83). Though youths may not necessarily cite these crimes against humanity and human rights violations as their impetus for leaving, this forms the background for their decision to migrate. In the Women's Refugee Commission's 2013 Report, "Young and Astray: An Assessment of Factors Driving the Movement of Unaccompanied Children and Adolescents from Eritrea into Ethiopia, Sudan and Beyond", their study specifically with 'unaccompanied children and adolescents' found that the main reasons youths cited was a "lack of education, unemployment/economic need, fear of military conscription, religious persecution, family reunification or sponsorship" (10). Thus, though there are specific,

individual reasons for migrating, and each individual's story of migration is important, the main overall reason is attributed to the National Service. This section is not intended to quash these individual differences, but to demonstrate the common reasons already documented in other studies. These specific reasons are beyond the scope of my research but touched upon briefly in the *Route* section.

Thus, there are many complex reasons for leaving the Eritrea, but frustrations often continue into their next country in transit, primarily Ethiopia or Sudan. UNHCR's November 2014 Briefing Notes noted that there has been an increase of young asylum seekers and "growing numbers of the predominantly young refugees in Ethiopia and Sudan have become frustrated with the shortage of services and absence of self-reliance opportunities in the camps [in Ethiopia and Sudan]". They also explained that in November 2014, Eritrean arrivals to Europe were 90 per cent between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. Hovil & Oette (2017)'s study explains that,

> "Eritreans who decide to migrate have a clear knowledge of the fact that they are taking a huge risk, but are usually only vaguely aware of the specifics of that risk, and how to avoid it. Family links play an important role in the context of decision-making: most people get their information from family and friends, rather than from state institutions, NGOs or the media." (5).

Furthermore, in their examination of the policies by states in the region through the Khartoum Process, Hovil & Oette (2017) find that

> "Many of those who move from the region to Europe do so as a result of failures in refugee policies and practices in first countries of asylum, policies that have left millions of people living for years and sometimes decades in a protracted situation of exile with no prospect of any real solution. These failures hinge primarily around the emphasis on encampment for those in exile and failures around access to work and durable solutions. Combined, these policy failures have created a

> semi- permanent state of emergency, jeopardising quality of life and bringing the humanitarian system to breaking point" (5)

Hovil &Oette (2017) recommend that there is a conceptual shift to recognise "forced migration, as a logical response to a deep-seated governance crisis in the region." (6). Thus, these contextual factors, primarily regarding objections related to the National Service, spill over into countries in transit, whose conditions often necessitate they continue on their journeys.

Egypt as "Receiving State"

Political and Economic Situation in Egypt

Understanding the situation of Eritrean youths in Cairo is inevitably linked to the broader situation in the city and country at large. As of 2012, Cairo's population is over 18 million people, spanning over 453 kilometers squared, with one of the highest urban densities in the world, and large urban outskirts that are not always measured (Fabos, 2015, 58). Distinguishing factors about life in Cairo are the large wealth and opportunity disparities, a concentration of young and poor populations, and most people living in "rickety concrete-and-brick multi-family apartment blocks" (Fabos, 2015, 58). Egypt is "a developing country with chronic problems where the nationals themselves struggle to live with dignity" (Danielson, 2015, 15). The political instability since the 2011 revolution, economic uncertainty, rising unemployment and rising prices is also coupled with a deteriorating security situation through increased crimes such as burglaries, and assaults in areas of the city previously considered safe (Petrini, 2014, 54). As of November 2016, Egypt's inflation rose to 19.4 %, from 13.6 % in October according to the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (cited in Daily News

Egypt, 2016). As this is negatively affecting the livelihoods of Egyptians themselves (Daily New Egypt, 2016), it is highly likely that this has also affected the livelihoods of displaced persons.

Amnesty International's 2017/2018 Human Rights Report names a "human rights crisis" in Egypt, with authorities using "torture and other ill-treatment and enforced disappearances against hundred of people and dozens were extrajudicially executed with impunity" (152). Arbitrary arrest, especially of those with perceived membership to the Muslim Brotherhood, the systematic use of torture and ill-treatment in detention centers, and a crackdown on 'human rights defenders' or NGOs, are other major problems in the country (Amnesty International 2018, 151-2) Additionally, there has been the "worst crackdown in over a decade" on LGBTQIA persons in Egypt, with authorities rounding and prosecuting people based on their perceived sexual orientation, with at least 76 being arrested, and five undergoing anal examinations, which are practices amounting to torture (Amnesty International, 2018, 155). For women and girls, there continues to be problems of persistent sexual and gender-based violence, and gender discrimination in law and practice (Amnesty International 154).

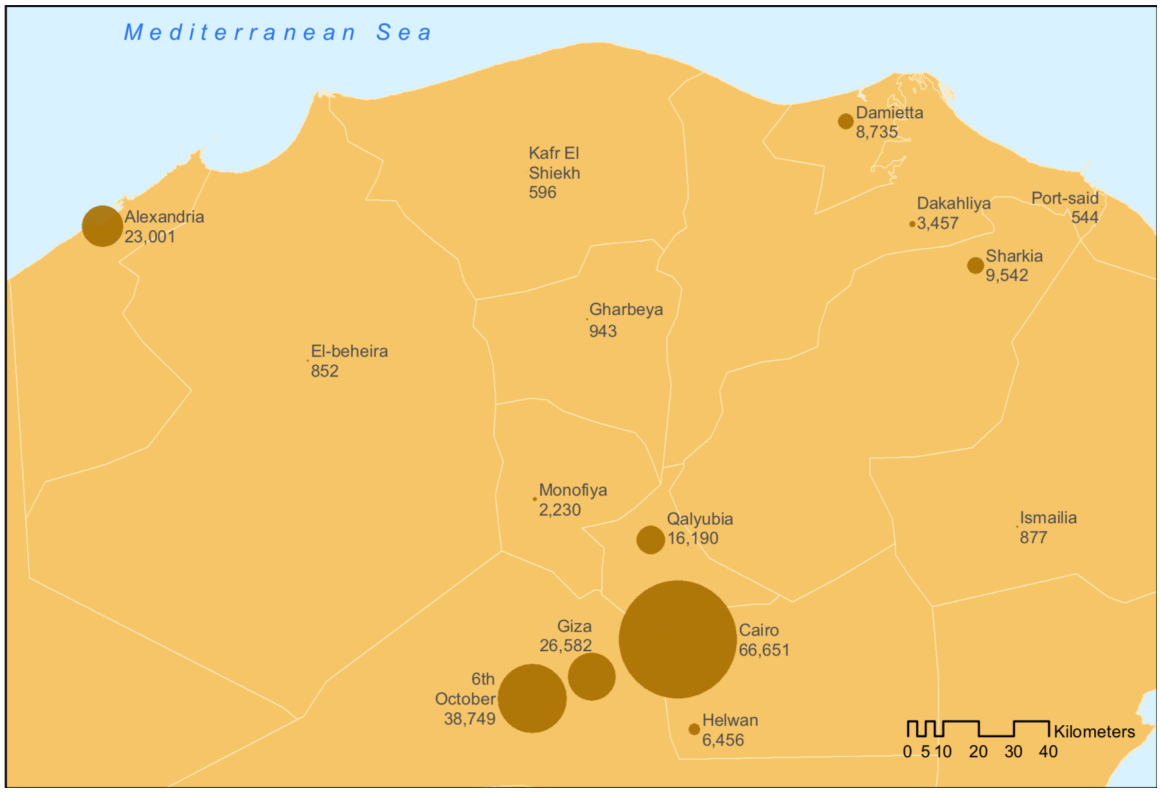
Displaced Persons in Egypt

In the July 2017 UNHCR Egypt's "Monthly Statistical Report" there were 209, 393 refugees and asylum seekers[5] in Egypt, with the majority being in Cairo and the surrounding areas (see breakdown by location below). Syrians form the majority of the

[5] In this section I use the term refugee and asylum-seekers to refer to the specific legal categorizations as referred to in other sources. I still defer to the term displaced person more broadly.

refugees in Cairo (122, 203), then by population size there are Sudanese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and South Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers. There are 10, 447 Eritreans in Egypt, 1,853 are refugees, while 8,594 are asylum-seekers.

Diagram 1: Location of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Egypt



(UNHCR Monthly Statistical Report July 2017)

Egypt is a signatory of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (Jacobsen et al, 2014, 147). In 1954, Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding which stipulates that UNHCR is responsible for refuges in Egypt (Jacobsen et al, 2014, 148). It also restricts the application of five articles of the 1951 Convention (12(1), 20, 22(1), 23 and 24), concerning personal status, rationing, access to primary education, access to public relief

and assistance, labour legislation and social security (Jacobsen et al, 2014, 147). Furthermore, refugees must acquire a work permit, as stated in Egypt's domestic legislation, law no. 137 of 1981 (Grabska, 2006, 292). As refugees in Cairo are excluded from national citizenship, they must partake in one of UNHCR's three permanent solutions, "resettlement (generally an impossible dream), return to their own country (at what future date can only be guessed) and integration (dependent on the political will and resources of the host countries, refugees have to 'make the best of it')" (Hoffsteadter 2015, 9). Some argue that "the possibility of full integration in Egypt for refugees is effectively ruled out" (Grabska 2006, 292). One of the major 'pull' factors to Cairo is that it had one of the largest resettlement programs in the world (as of 2006), though few have the opportunity to be resettled (Jacobsen, 2006, 278). This option is only available to a minority of legally recognized refugees, which is decided through UNHCR's Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process in Cairo (Kagan 2006, 47). UNHCR is the largest refugee status decision maker in the world and there is sometimes the concern that when UNHCR determines refugee status, it is in conflict between its role as refugee protector, and refugee decision maker (Kagan 2006, 47-48). Similarly, Ward (2014) asks us to question the role of UNHCR as a state-like actor in the Global South (92).

In Grabska's 2006 study of the marginalization of Sudanese refugees in Cairo, she found that though deportations are not common, even during surprise round-ups that end in bribes, those without passports, invalid visas, residency permits and/or legal status through UNCHR are always at risk of arrest, detention or deportation (296). There are also often 'random' arrests and police harassment of the "black foreign population" (ibid

296). Through an unstable legal status, and the hostility of the local population, many fear arrest and harassment, and this fear determines their coping strategies and living in Egypt (296). Grabska (2006) argues that the minimal abilities of UNHCR to provide refugees with assistance leads to the fact that "refugees in Cairo are and must be self-sufficient" (298). This insecurity affected their daily livelihood strategies and their psychosocial well-being (298). They primarily depend on their community/family networks for information. Grabska (2006, 297) and Zohry (2003, 15) point out that African displaced persons in Cairo experience racism, and marginalisation both structurally and in the streets. Jacobsen et al.'s (2014) further explores the physical mistreatment experienced by Egyptians, like having stones thrown at them, dumping water on drying clothes and stealing from vendors, also noting an increase in harassment during and after the Egyptian Revolution (156-7).

The deteriorating political and economic situation in Egypt has exacerbated the struggles facing displaced persons in Cairo, especially the increase in the displaced population since the start of the Syrian war (Danielson 2015, 14, Petrini 2014, 51). Additionally, the Egyptian government's treatment of displaced persons has certain problems according to Amnesty International (2018),

> "Asylum-seekers and refugees continued to face arrest, detention and deportation for entering or exiting the country irregularly. Between January and April, immigration officials deported at least 50 asylum-seekers from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan, including young children, to their countries of origin without giving them access to legal representation or to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. The forced return of Eritrean asylum seekers, as well as Ethiopian and Sudanese nationals with a well-founded fear of persecution, constituted *refoulement"* (155).

In Egypt, nationals themselves struggle to manage their livelihoods amidst a difficult economic and political situation. Thus, the situation for youths once they arrive in Egypt already bears a host of challenges for them, in addition to those faced by Egyptians. How these broader conditions in Cairo effect Eritrean youths is further explored in this study.

Chapter 2: Relation to the Literature

This literature review will examine the theoretical and conceptual frameworks in connection with my research question, to understand how young Eritreans who have migrated on their own to Cairo negotiate their livelihoods, and how their strategies are linked to their markers of identity, like gender and religion, and community relations more broadly. I will draw on two main fields of study that on livelihoods strategies, and that on independent displaced youth[6]. First, I will review the main debates in the livelihoods literature and identify the gap specifically on displaced youths livelihoods. Second, I will speak to the literature on independent displaced youths, particularly those that problematize the relationship between vulnerability and agency. Finally, I will demonstrate that the gap in the livelihoods literature on independent displaced youths is compatible with the literature on youth vulnerability and agency, placing my research within the intersection of these fields. To my knowledge at the time of completion, no similar academic study on the livelihood strategies of displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo has been completed.

Livelihoods Literature

[6] See *Introduction* for definitional note.

The livelihood approach entered development discourse in the mid-1980s by Chambers (1983) and has since become more popular, though with differing variations (Oberhauser et al. 2004, 205). Chambers and Conway's interpretation in 1992 is at the core of the field, explaining that "livelihood refers to the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets, such as store and resources, and intangible assets, such as claims and access" (Chambers & Conway, 1992; cited in de Haan & Zoomers 2005, 27). The livelihoods approach arose in development studies as a response to the dependency theory of the 1970s and 1980s, towards an actor-oriented approach — emphasising both inequalities in the distribution of assets of power as well as people's agency (de Haan & Zoomers 2005, 28). Livelihoods studies emerged as a micro-orientation in development, with a clear focus on local actors, often households, and merged with household studies, particularly household strategies of the poor (de Haan & Zoomers 2005, 28). Household studies beginning in the 1980s utilized the concept of 'survival strategies', which also began to be called 'livelihood strategies' (de Haan & Zoomers 2005, 29). This shift in the literature can be pointed to the move away from focusing on how poor households were excluded from the benefits of economic growth, to their active role in "providing for their own sustenance despite their lack of access to services and to an adequate income" (Schmink, 1984, 88). The livelihoods approach also specifically grew into a "sustainable livelihoods approach", contributing to the debate on poverty reduction in development (Jacobsen, 2002, 98). The conceptual value of the livelihoods approach for my research was its move into the practice of development. The intention of this practice was "to search for more effective methods to

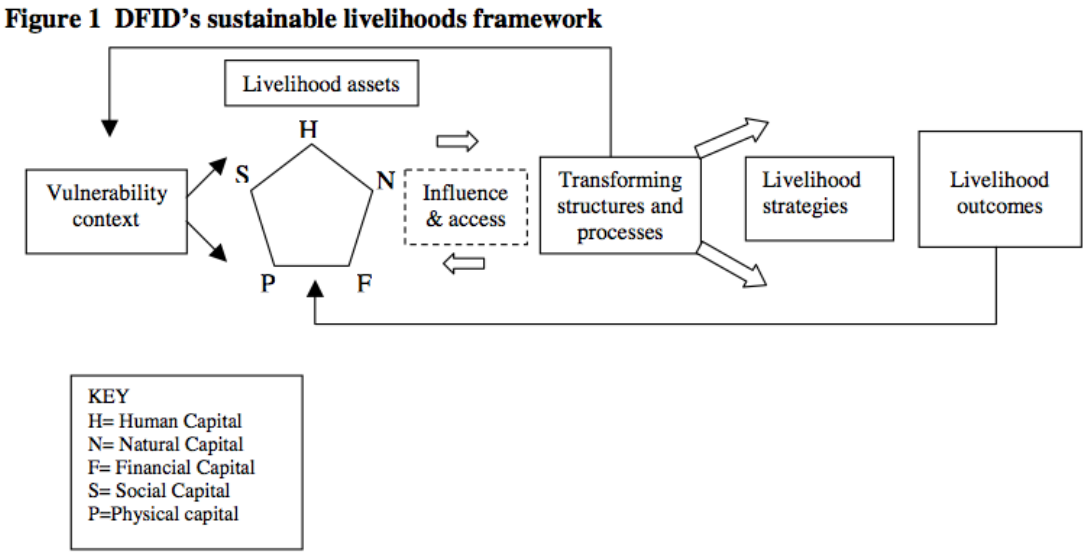
support people and communities in ways that are more meaningful to their daily lives and needs, as opposed to ready-made interventionist instruments" (Appendini 2001, 24, cited in de Haan & Zoomers 2005, 30)

Although livelihoods approach frameworks differ in their details, throughout this evolution in the literature the basic elements of resources, strategies, and outcomes remain present (Oberhauser et al. 2004, 205). Furthermore, the appeal of the frameworks are the premise of capturing the dynamic, historical and relational processes that inform the 'diverse ways people make a living and build their worlds" (Bebbington 1999, cited in Oberhauser at al. 2004, 206). As Long (1997) explains, "the often neglected element … the identity-constructing processes inherent in the pursuit of livelihoods … this is especially relevant since livelihood strategies entail the building of relationships with others whose lifeworlds and status may differ markedly" (11). Bebbington (1999) advanced a framework for rural livelihoods which combines the material means with which people manage poverty, but also their perceptions of well-being and poverty related to their livelihoods, through an actor-centered, hermeneutic approach. His framework centralized people's access to five types of capital assets, with particular attention to social capital (2022). Key aspects in his framework explain "peoples' assets are not merely *means* through which they make a living: they also give *meaning* to the person's [sic] world," clarifying that meaning is one of the factors in the decisions people make about their livelihoods strategies (emphasis in original, 2022). Furthermore, he defines the scope of assets;

> "assets — or what I call capitals in this framework — are not simply *resources* that people *use* in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the *capability* to be and to act. Sen (1997) has noted that the possession of human capital not only means people produce more, and more efficiently; it also gives them the capability to engage more fruitfully and *meaningfully* with the world, and most importantly the capability to *change* the world. The same is also true, in other ways, for the other types of capital. The framework thus understands these assets not only as things that allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation: they are also the basis of agents' *power* to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources (cf. Giddens, 1979)." (emphasis in original, Bebbington 1999, 2022).

Though Bebbington's (1999) framework is based in Sen's (1997) capabilities approach, it demonstrated that their assets enable their power to act. This framework moves beyond the limitations of understanding poverty in a material sense, but also its contributions to the meaning of one's life (ibid). Furthermore, Bebbington's (1999) framework advances the idea that "the distinction between access and resources breaks down because access becomes perhaps the most critical resource of all if people are to build sustainable, poverty alleviating rural livelihoods." (2022). Though this approach was initially advanced for rural livelihoods, it has also become integral to understanding the urban context in which the availability of resources does not equate to access (Beall, 2002, 72). Beall (2002) also further specifies that there can be intra-household barriers to accessing resources specific to gender and age by individual household members that must be considered in this approach (73). This is explored in my study in order to understand if gender, as a marker of identity, plays a role in intra-household relations, if there are barriers to accessing shared resources based on gender. Relative differences in age are also important to consider, for example if there is a 'head' of household dispersing resources based on their being the 'oldest youth'.

Diagram 2: DFID's sustainable livelihoods framework



(Carney 1998, cited in Longley & Maxwell, 2003, 2)

A sustainable livelihoods approach became central to the United Kingdom's development policy in the Department of International Development (DFID) (de Haan & Zoomers 2005, 31). They slightly modified Chambers' and Conway's original definition and they developed sustainable livelihood frameworks as analytical tools to support poverty eradication (ibid). The DFID's Adapted Livelihoods Framework is subdivided into "livelihood assets", "livelihood strategies", and "livelihood outcomes", but adds the consideration of the "vulnerability context" (Longley and Maxwell 2003, 2). The vulnerability context then informs access to assets, wherein there is a 'pentagon' of livelihood assets with human, natural, financial, social and physical capital, at each apex (Longley & Maxwell 2003, 2 — see Diagram 2). The vulnerability context is constituted by the broader environmental, social, political and economic contexts, "as well as the

institutions and structures that influence the manner in which individual, households and communities utilise their assets and how they gain and maintain access to and control over them" (Longley & Maxwell 2003, 2).

The conceptual value of the vulnerability context allows the inclusion of the specific contextual aspects that influence people's access to their livelihoods assets, and ultimately influence their livelihoods outcomes in a variety of locations and circumstances. However, Murray (2001) identifies some weaknesses with the DFID framework and the vulnerability context in particular (7). He explains that one of the shortfalls of the vulnerability context is that not all vulnerabilities bear equal weight, and that in instances where there is conflict, or rampant inflation, these changes in vulnerabilities are much more important than the structure of a vulnerability context allows for (ibid, 7). Though these criticisms are valid to consider, one effective means of addressing these issues in my study is by following Jacobsen's (2006) approach not to invoke the specific DFID livelihood framework, but to focus on its key components of vulnerability context, assets and strategies, and outcomes (280). This is exemplified in Jacobsen, Ayoub & Johnsen's (2014) study of the livelihoods of Sudanese refugees in Cairo, as it utilized the core aspects of the DFID framework, but did not explicitly implement it in its entirety. Thus, Murray's (2001) criticisms can be addressed in relying on the essence of the framework, as Jacobsen (2006) suggests and adopts, without distorting the importance of social relations and weight of the vulnerability context. Furthermore, Jacobsen (2006) argues that the DFID framework is the most useful in examining urban refugee livelihoods due to its emphasis on the concept of vulnerability

and attention to power relations (279). The key conceptual value of the DFID framework is that it allows an inclusion of how the 'vulnerability context' of youths in Cairo affects their ability to access assets. It also allows for the consideration of different experiences within the Eritrean youth population based on intersecting markers of identity, as well as how their social relations influence these interactions and access to recourses.

Thus, the field of livelihoods studies, particularly sustainable livelihoods, though initially a means of analysing poverty in stable situations, began being applied to refugee livelihoods by Hansen (2000), Kibreab (2001), Lassily-Jacob (1996) (cited in Jacobsen, 2002, 98). Jacobsen (2002) explains that using the sustainable livelihoods approach for refugees needs to emphasise the vulnerability of people exposed to constant threats of violence and displacement. One of the key themes in her (2002) paper identifies the role of humanitarian assistance in increasing economic security in the refugee hosting area by supporting livelihoods and rights among refugees and host communities — thus both a theoretical and practical use for the livelihoods approach (96). In Jacobsen (2014), she further argues for a specific theory of 'displaced livelihoods', since the "pursuit of livelihoods by forced migrants is different from those of other migrants or those who are equally poor or discriminated against" (99). She argues that the three key differences between them and other marginalized groups are: first, that they begin from a position of loss of assets, community, etc; second, differences in the legal, socio-political, and policies of the host country; and thirdly, their potential to receive humanitarian assistance, which may have positive and negative consequences (ibid). Furthermore, within 'displaced livelihoods', there is also a distinction between those who live in

camps, or urban areas, those who are internally displaced persons (IDPs), or displaced across national borders, and those who arrive in the Global North or Global South (a "South to North" migration, or "South to South" migration). My research will fall into the categorization of "South to South" migration, from Eritrea to Egypt, and in urban areas.

Within urban, 'displaced livelihoods', recent scholarship seems to follow Jacobsen's (2006) approach of using the essence of the DFID framework, without the rigid structure. Dale Buscher's (2011) study of refugees in Kampala, New Delhi and Johannesburg uses the cite-specific examples to elucidate, at the macro level, that urban refugees use a variety of economic coping strategies, and many of these strategies place them at risk. Buschner's (2011) examination of the role of assets in livelihood strategies argues that social capital is the most valuable asset for urban refugees (7). Unlike in the DFID model, he does not equally weigh all five aspects of capital, as seen in the pentagon of 'livelihoods assets', but emphasises social capital as the norms and networks that individuals can use to advance their goals. This is an important consideration for my work, as not all aspects of the 'asset pentagon' were given equal weight in my research question or analysis. Though I do not exclusively apply Buscher's (2011) argument that social capital is the most important, it serves as a useful lens in understanding the operational value of the analysis of different forms of capital. Similarly, Jacobsen (2002) argues that displaced persons who manage their livelihoods in refugee hosting areas "are able to rely on new forms of social organization and networks that form as a result of having to cope with the loss of property, traumatic flight, social dislocation, and the antagonism of local authorities and the host population" (99). As a result, I seek to

include this approach to dynamic and changing social relations in my study. Kibreab's (2001) study of the resettlement of displaced Eritreans during the war of independence similarly emphasised the important role of social capital in the success of resettlement. He specified that reformed social organizations and networks that transcended the old kinship and/or ethnic affiliations were key — this "shared suffering cemented national cohesion and created new stock of social capital which facilitates cooperation" as a substantial resource in reconstructing livelihoods (8). Kibreab (2001) further draws on the literature of Putnam (1993) and Wildner and Mundt (1998) to argue for the positive role of social capital as a source for development and the importance of this resource in particular for the success of the resettlement of Eritreans in Eritrea at the time (8). Though in different iterations, these works demonstrate the specificities of the role of social networks in displacement, and that though a livelihoods approach in displacement is necessary, particular consideration to the social aspect is important. As a result, my research objectives include an examination of social and community relations though not drawing especially on social capital literatures.

Criticism of the livelihoods framework, including of Bebbington (1999), has pointed to the gap in including the role played by gender and generation in affecting access to resources (Beall, 2002, 73). However, emerging works by feminist researchers have been addressing this need through understanding gender-based constraints and barriers, and considering household configurations (Oberhauser et al. 2004, 206). For example, Whitehead & Kabeer (2001) echo more general feminist arguments that "households are not necessarily sites of sharing and equity — an approach which entails a strong challenge to the neo-classical assumption of

household unity in the modelling of household behaviour" (2). They suggest a broader livelihoods approach, specifically the idea of sustainable livelihoods, as best to understand the important aspects of gender-poverty-growth linkages (3). This approach is similar to Beall's (2002), who explains that there need not be' additional tools' to include 'missing ideas' of the productive and reproductive activities and the related social relations of gender and generation — these are the intrinsic principles of the livelihoods perspective itself (73). Thus, the gap in addressing gender, and age, is not in the livelihoods approach in itself, but in its analysis. Furthermore, Whitehall & Kabeer (2001), though acknowledging that the household can be a critical area of gender inequality, challenge the interpretations of gender as only a source of conflict in the household, favouring a more nuanced understanding of the household as a space of both joint and competing interests (23). Additionally, Oberhauser et al. (2004) explain the role of diverse social identities such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, place and life-course in livelihood strategies, and how their "livelihood strategies involve transformative struggles through which women work to empower themselves by reshaping their identities, lives and relationships within households and communities" (206). As a result, due to the independent displacement of youths, my study incorporates the individual and household nature of livelihoods strategies, centralizing individual youths. Beall & Kanji (1999) similarly argue that "identities are formed, social markers are provided and informal and formal rules exist which regulate gender relations … not only gender but also class, race, ethnic and generational differences", they draw on the link of these relations between broader power structures and the household level (no pagination, point 8). Their perspective is essential in explaining that the nature of social relations, even within a household, are not rigid or homogenous and need to be

treated as such, especially in terms of gender and age (ibid). Furthermore, a gender-based analysis cannot include women "as an undifferentiated and passive group at the mercy of wider social processes but as active agents responding to social and economic change" (ibid). In specifying their agency amidst the larger context, they exemplify these most important aspect of why this approach is appropriate for examining the livelihood strategies of displaced independent Eritrean youth.

Furthermore, within 'displaced livelihoods' specifically there has been growing emphasis on the need to examine the new forms of vulnerability created by displacement, especially regarding gender and age (Jacobsen, 2002, 98). Jacobsen (2006) also explains that legal status for refugees should be a mitigating factor in the risks facing refugees, thus determining their vulnerability context, the situation is highly variable in practice (280-1). However, as Jops et al. (2016) demonstrate, there continues to be a lack of data overall, both qualitative and quantitative, on the role of gender and generation in accessing resources for individual household members (87). Crisp et al. (2012) explained that most work in the humanitarian community focused on gender-based violence in refugee camps, not in urban settings (s29). However, there needs to be further research into how the safety of urban refugee women may be compromised by going to work where they may be vulnerable to sexual abuse by employers as maids or waitresses, especially as they are usually more likely than men to find work (Crisp et al. 2012, s30). Additionally, Crisp et al. (2012) explain how livelihoods programming aimed at women, including childcare provision, are important to mitigating the dangers of the choice of working in an abusive situation as housemaids or sex workers (s37). Additionally, Jops et als. (2016) study of Chin refugee women in New Delhi, emphasises that

there is a lack of research on how women's livelihoods are linked to risk in urban areas (87). They address this through their findings that the experience of risk of Chin women in India is a hindrance to their ability to become self-reliant and live in safety (92). Other criticisms in the field of displaced livelihoods is that one of the main challenges facing theory and empirical work on livelihoods research is a lack of quantitative data, resulting in a preponderance of qualitative-bases studies (Jacobsen 2014, Jacobsen & Landau 2003). Jacobsen (2014) further argues that there is a notable lack of quantitative data from nationally representative probability samples, making the impact of livelihoods difficult to measure, due to overwhelmingly qualitative studies (101). Though my study does not address this challenge in the field due to the limitations of my study, it does add to the qualitative gap in the literature that Jops et al. (2016) highlight on both gender and age. Furthermore, despite the growing specificities of displaced livelihoods, to my knowledge at the time of writing this thesis there remains a gap in the studies regarding the livelihood strategies of displaced independent youths in urban settings. Though some studies include youths as part of the household unit, there remains a gap on those who are displaced independently.

There are few livelihoods studies on urban refugees specific to Cairo. Many are specific to Sudanese refugees (Jacobsen et al. 2014, Petrini 2014). Gozdziak and Walter's (2012) large study of diverse populations of urban refugees in Cairo has a specific subsection on livelihoods. The only consideration for youth and livelihood in the report is a single bullet point on negative economic coping strategies — they advocate that child labour must be made compatible with their education pursuits (23). Though the reasons for this gap are unclear, this exclusion leads to a lack of information about the strategies

of independent displaced youths. Thus, my research fits in the niche of urban refugee livelihoods, specific to Cairo, but focuses on the knowledge gap regarding independent displaced youths. Accordingly, my research also draws on the literature of displaced youths, specifically that problematizing the distinctions of vulnerability and agency.

Independent Displaced Youths Literature

Broadly, there is considered to be an adult-centric approach to migration research, thus focusing on independent children and youth can challenge this (Seeberg & Gozdziak, 2016, 7). Nonetheless, there is a growing focus on child and youth-based studies of migration. In both the academic and practical context, independent displaced youths, or 'unaccompanied minors', or those who have migrated without a legal guardian or parent and are under the age of 18, are considered within a discourse of vulnerability (Clark 2007, Orgocka 2012). As a result, most international prescriptions emphasise protection strategies on the basis of the preconceived assumptions of vulnerability, as UNHCR denoted unaccompanied minors as a particular group of "vulnerables" (Orgocka 2012, Clark 2007, Clark-Kazak 2014, 8). However, recent scholarship has problematized the relationship between the vulnerability and agency of these youths (Orgocka 2012).

Children and migration has developed into a distinct area of study since the early 2000s, in both academic literature and policy reports, such as the 2009 United Nations Development Program Report, and the International Organization for Migration's 2011 Report that detailed its support and protection for 'unaccompanied migrant children' (cited in Huijmans 2015, 2-3). Huijmans (2015) breaks down the field of study into two

main categories, children who are "left-behind", affected by migration without migrating themselves, and children who are themselves migrants, within which is the distinction of those that migrate with or without their families (3). The breakdown is further spatially demarcated as internal migration (often rural out-migration), migration in the Global South (to neighbouring countries), and long-distance cross-border migration to the Global North (youths seeking asylum, referred to as 'unaccompanied minors', especially regarding legal questions) (Huijmans 2015, 4). The work on 'unaccompanied minors' included the push-pull factors that influence their desire to leave, and ability to access 'receiving' countries. Some scholars have pushed back on this representation of children as exclusively 'vulnerable', also incorporating the nuances of their agentic capabilities (Orgocka 2012, Huijmans 2015) For these scholars, this evolved to become 'independent child migration' and focus on "the importance of studying children involved in migration in their own right as agents of their development, as well as powerful players in influencing the lives of their families, communities, and societies of countries of origin and destination" (Orgocka, 2012, 2). Though children migrating independently is not a new phenomenon, scholars are moving towards addressing youths not necessarily as victims of trafficking, but as agents in migration (Huijmans 2015, 6). As a result, I favour the term 'independent child migration', which has evolved as a response to the lack of agentic capabilities imbued in other terms commonly used in literature and policy like separated minors, unaccompanied minors and trafficked children (Orgocka 2012, 3-4). Orgocka (2012) defines independent child migration as "all independent movements of

children from their current resident location for a period longer than one month across localities and borders" (3).

There is also a significant legalistic focus in the literature on displaced independent youths, which centers on both domestic laws, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Bhabha (2000) argues that there is a bias towards work focusing on trafficked children, in lieu of those who exert some agency through being smuggled (293). She explains;

> "the dominance of the immigration enforcement perspective has distorted policy making to the detriment of rights-based approaches. Unaccompanied children need as much attention in the trafficking as in the smuggling context. Whether they are victims of the exploitative plans of the traffickers or the consensual participants in an unauthorized migration process that transports them to safety, they converge at the point of arrival in the host state." (ibid).

Additionally, she explains that this trafficking/smuggling dichotomy is also conceptualized as a dichotomy between coercion/consensus (ibid) — that youths are either victims or connivers. This divide necessitates additional attention to the varying capabilities of children, in which a fixed age definition for access to guardians or dismissing their views is inappropriate (Bhabha 2000, 293).

In other fields, there has also been a movement to understand the complexities of youth migration. Ensor & Gozdziak (2010) argue that;

> "research, policy, and advocacy efforts undertaken on behalf of migrant children have commonly focused on those living in situation that are dangerous, abusive, or exploitative, either inherently or because of the young age of the children involved. Refugee children, child asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, child soldiers, and trafficked children are frequently targeted. These children, and by

> extension all child migrant, are often represented as passive victims of exploitation, reflecting dominant notions of trauma and victimhood" (1).

Ensor & Gozdziak (2010) continue to argue that there has not been an adequate appreciation of the complex realities of child migration (2). Thus a child-inclusive, flexible and holistic framework is necessary wherein age-related vulnerabilities and coping strategies must be investigated rather than assumed *a priori* (ibid). They argue that it is important to acknowledge that children's agency and ability to overcome challenges is framed by "their evolving capacities and reflects their own individual and socially generated vulnerabilities and resilience" (7). Similarly, Orgocka (2012) emphasises that the vulnerability and agency of youths are not mutually exclusive but "depending on their perceptions of self-efficacy, young people can exercise their agency to identify and seek solutions to situations of vulnerability" (3). Huijmans (2012) argues that work on child migration has created artificial boundaries that distract from a relational understanding of their agency and vulnerability; instead "this analytical frame resists a series of common compartmentalizations of child migration such as a rigid chronological age frame, compartmentalization by purpose, duration, or destination of migration, and so on." (30). Huijmans (2012) also emphasizes that the importance of networks, though well-recognized in migrant literature, has been overlooked with regards to youths (35). Parallel to Ensor & Gozdziak (2010), Huijmans (2012) addresses the lack of consideration for the manifold situations of youths, but specifically argues for a relational approach. Huijmans (2012) explains that this approach "refocuses research and policy concerns toward young migrants as social actors, and away from viewing them solely as passive victims, and subsequently, toward the quest of addressing vulnerability

by strengthening their agency in migration." (43). As a result, my research specifically seeks to address this focus on youths as social actors who enact their own livelihood strategies.

This field also draws on conceptualizations that seek to deconstruct the strict models of childhood and youth that is detrimental to the response to displaced independent youths. The concept of social age seeks to problematize fixed categorizations among displaced youths. Social age, as opposed to chronological age, refers to the social construction of the meaning and roles assigned to varying stages in life, from birth to death, and the power relations between and within groups (Clark-Kazak 2009). This concept can be understood in tandem with the challenges to the 'global model of childhood' which defined children by their weaknesses and limitations, following strict biological development, removed from social contexts (Ansell 2005, cited in Ensor & Gozdziak, 2010, 17-8). In a similar vein, Huijmans (2015) also specifies that there is a need for a relational approach to age that supplants the current system of treating age as a static category (2). Additionally, Ensor (2014) explains that there is a "(de)gendered assumption underlying prevalent constructions of childhood and youth" (16), which has led to a lack of examination of how this construction has influenced notions of protection, deservedness of aid, acceptable survival choices and changing social roles (ibid). These related approaches are important to consider the need for understanding how the construction of childhood and youth influences the lived realities and livelihood strategies of displaced youths.

Most of the literature on displaced independent youths has a disproportionate focus on those who seek asylum in the Global North, though they are a relatively small number compared to other migrations (i.e. South to South migration) (Huijmans 2015, 4). This is seen in another major body of literature regarding youths on their psychological/psychosocial well-being, and/or coping mechanisms (Gladden 2012). Most research about displaced persons in Cairo focuses on Sudanese populations, the largest displaced population in Cairo until the Syrian war (Jacobsen et al. 2014, Gladden's 2012) Other studies on displaced youths in Cairo specifically mostly focus on youth gang activity, especially of Sudanese youths (Lewis 2011), framing participation in gangs as a livelihoods activity outside of the prescribed structure of refugee assistance (78). Maxwell & El-Hilaly's (2004) study is a thorough rights-based analysis of separated children in Cairo. However, the specific intersecting subject position of displaced Eritrean youth in Cairo is missing in the literature, thus my research fills an important gap in the literature.

Most academic literature on displaced Eritreans broadly, and on youths in particular, has been in the context of the Global North, especially from their migration after crossing the Mediterranean, into Italy, and their secondary movements on the continent (Belloni 2016, Arnone 2008, Goitom 2015, Al-Ali et al. 2001a, 2001b), or in their context of the relationship of the diaspora to the Eritrean government, especially through the 'Remittance Tax' (Tecle & Goldring 2013, Hepner 2008, 2009, Hirt 2014). Much information on Eritrean youths in Eritrea, and in neighbouring countries of asylum is found in grey literature, most importantly Amnesty International's 2015 Report "Just

Deserters: Why Indefinite National Service in Eritrea has Created a Generation of Refugees". Similar to this report, but with a greater focus on the experience outside of Eritrea, is the Women Refugee Council's May 2013 report "Young and Astray: Assessment of Factors Driving the Movement of Unaccompanied Children and Adolescents from Eritrea into Ethiopia, Sudan, and Beyond". The yearly "World Reports" by Human Rights Watch (2018) and Amnesty International (2018) document the human rights abuses within Eritrea, the influence on out-migration, and the dangers along the route north through the Mediterranean and into Europe. Furthermore, the United Nations Human Rights Council completed a "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea" in June 2017, with a specific section on Eritrean refugees, enumerating the specific concerns of unaccompanied children (section 36-37). Hence, in both academic and grey literature, there is a lack of completed studies specific to displaced independent Eritrean youth in Cairo, especially on the topics of livelihoods. My research intends to fill this gap.

Conceptual Framework: Livelihood Strategies and Independent Displaced Youths

I place my research within the analytical framework of the livelihoods approach to allow for the agency of youths to be placed at the forefront, while also considering their vulnerabilities. This approach is used in tandem with the literature on displaced youths which allows a problematization of the dichotomy between vulnerability and agency. As a result, using the livelihood framework as the tool with which to study displaced youths allows for the complexities of the relationship of agency and vulnerability to be examined. Additionally, a livelihoods approach to work on displaced

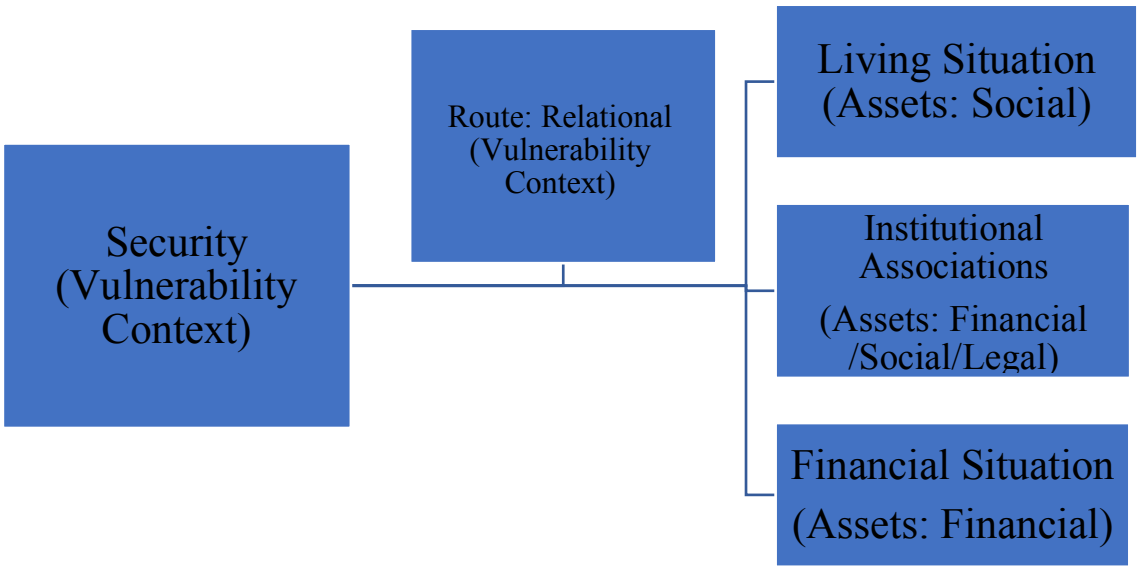
youths attempts to dispel the compartmentalization in the literature that Orgocka (2012) underlines, between studies in relation to "what are considered age-appropriate activities such as education … and age-inappropriate ones such a work" (5). This framework also seeks to both include the influence of differing markers of identity, while not reducing them to fixed categories. Jacobsen (2014) explains that this theory of displaced livelihoods must address the diverse outcomes of displaced livelihoods — not all displaced persons arrive impoverished, nor do all nationalities fare equally. As a result, my study will operationalizes an intersectional feminist approach[7] to the study of youth livelihoods in displacement, to include the varying experiences in displacement as regards their markers of identity, whilst not reducing their experiences to those markers. Thus, adopting a livelihoods approach that accounts for the vulnerability and agency of youths, while acknowledging that varying, fluctuating markers of identity influence these factors as well.

Thus, this theoretical framework informs the subsequent findings sections of this thesis. Based on the interviews, the best means of understanding the 'vulnerability context' of youths, is through the proxy of 'security'. The issues that arose in their interviews demonstrated the varying dimensions of their security concerns, as well as in their neighbourhoods. Examining their vulnerability context allows an understanding of

[7] Despite my intentions of an intersectional approach, one group that remained missing from my study were persons with physical disabilities — whom I was not able to find to interview. Another intersecting marker of identity is sexual and/or gender identity. This was explicitly left out of the research question due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, and the danger of exposing this non-heterosexual gender identities in Egypt, where there has been a growing crackdown (see *Context*). Thus, certain difficulties accessing populations, and safety concerns, were barriers to a fully intersectional approach in this study.

how this context influences their decision making. As my study intends to foreground the experiences of youths themselves, the focus is on how they self-define their security concerns, and not on more structural concerns. Thus, their vulnerability context is reflected in the *Security* chapter. The subsequent section *Route*, explains how the experience of youths prior to arriving in Cairo influenced both their vulnerability and their agency in accessing assets and managing their livelihoods. This section also includes how much information was available about Cairo, and how much 'planning' went into their routes prior to arrival in Cairo. Therefore this incorporates their agency in decision-making, as well as the vulnerabilities they encounter throughout the route. In the next section, I examine their living situation, and how this plays into their livelihoods strategies, specifically through the interplay of their social networks, and how that influences their access to housing. Subsequently, I look to how their relationships with organizations/international institutions influences their ability to access their livelihoods. Finally, I explore the varying factors that influence their ability to access financial resources.

Diagram 3: Application of Livelihoods Framework in this study



Chapter 3: Research Process & Methods

My research examines the livelihood strategies of displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo, primarily based on interviews and observation. The aim of this research is to understand, from the perspective of displaced independent Eritrean youths, how they are able to negotiate their livelihoods amidst limited circumstances in Cairo. Furthermore, my research intends to analyse the potential effects of their varying markers of identity and community relationships on their livelihoods strategies.

First, I recruited a team of research assistants, themselves displaced independent Eritrean youths, who would also act as interpreters. Participants were recruited through a snowball sampling method through my research assistants. Interviews focused on displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo, meaning those who migrated on their own to Cairo, without their parents, and who do not have legal guardians in Cairo. There was an effort of inclusion of varying markers of identity of youths, aiming to reach the main Eritrean ethnic groups in Cairo (Tigrinya, Bilen, Tigre and Saho), the main religious groups (Muslim, Roman Catholic and Christian Orthodox), and both women and men. Participants needed to self-identify as youths, and would not be excluded according to their chronological age, though it was be noted in the study. They would not be excluded based on registration status with UNHCR. I also conducted five interviews with Eritrean community leaders; non-youths who have experience working with youth for additional contextual information.

Interviews were semi-structured, as I had pre-set questions but allowed open-ended responses directed by the interviewee, and each interview varied in order of

questions, and number of questions asked. The interview as a method aims to probe an issue at depth for greater understanding and is notable due to its potential scope for probing meaning and emotions (McDowell, 2010, 158). Each interview with youths followed a general set of recurring themes, though certain specific issues would arise based on their personal experiences. I followed the approach of interviews as an interpretive methodology based in social interaction, not data extraction, between interviewer and interviewee (McDowell, 2010, 158). The general themes included security concerns in their neighbourhoods, their financial situation, their living situation and their social situation. Though face-to-face surveys were one potential method (McLafferty, 2010, 82), I favoured face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to allow for flexibility in question and answer process. The open ended-style intended to leave space for additional commentary that was not included in the scope of my questions, and the ability to further explore related topics I had originally overlooked (O'Leary, 2004, 164). Face-to-face interviews allowed me to attempt to build a sense of trust with participants, while also reading non-verbal cues and examining their relationship to the environment of the interviews. Observations were key both during my interviews, as well as with my interactions with research assistants, especially in the neighbourhoods where most youths lived, and most of the interviews took place. This allowed me to take note of the social relationships that form both within and outside the community (Lofland & Lofland 1995). This qualitative methodology of semi-structured interviews and observation allowed me to examine social relationships, community relations, and social links and networks between youths to understand their livelihood strategies.

Positionality

Establishing the methodological foundations for my research must incorporate an analysis of myself as researcher, as the tool for this data collection. To analyse the self as researcher subverts the contention of the impersonal observer and of neopositivist assumptions of research findings (England, 1994, 244). In lieu of purporting to stand at the point of objective neutrality, reflexivity is the "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher" (England, 1994, 244). Though the risk of this approach is that one can verge on the side of confessionalism, narcissism and egoism (England, 1994, 244), the purpose of the self-critical gaze is to inform how I engage in the politics of representation. I use a reflexive approach, despite its limitations (Finlay, 2002, 226), to underline that my collaborative aspirations are not meant to erase the inequalities present in my research, and reflexivity about power relations does not remove them (England, 1994, 249). Thus, it is with this in mind that I examine the relationship of my positionality to my fieldwork in Cairo, Egypt, from May to August 2017 investigating the livelihood strategies of displaced independent Eritrean youths.

To do so, I elaborated on my relationship to displaced youths, and to Cairo more broadly, before field work. I had already lived 'in the field' for nearly a year and a half, intermittently since 2011. I first lived in Cairo from August 2011 to June 2012 on academic exchange for my undergraduate degree. Though I was not working with refugees at this time, the experience nonetheless informed my understanding of the city, and those who live there. From January to July 2016, I returned to Cairo to volunteer at

Saint Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS), an NGO servicing refugee populations in Cairo through legal, educational, and psychosocial programs. I interned as a Volunteer Legal Advisor in the Refugee Legal Aid Program at StARS, which involved doing one-on-one interviews with refugees, usually with interpreters, to assess their eligibility for resettlement based on UNHCR's criteria, and potentially apply for resettlement on their behalf. Most refugees I interviewed in this position had been in Cairo for some time and were over 18 years old, from all displaced populations in Cairo, mostly Sudanese and South Sudanese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Somali and Syrian. During this time I also interned in the Unaccompanied Youth Bridging Program as an English Teacher. I taught the Level 1 Afternoon English class four days a week for one and a half hours to unaccompanied youths from different backgrounds, though predominantly Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali, South Sudanese and Yemeni. The class size varied significantly over the six months of teaching, and many students fluctuated in and out of the course. In my classroom I worked with Teaching Assistants, themselves displaced youths and UYBP Alumni. In this role, I also participated in the weekly UYBP staff meeting and planning sessions, and helped with various UYBP activities and field trips, as well as with registration for the new term and exams. I worked closely with much of the staff, both youth and others, from all different population groups, and was generally known as a 'Teacher' by other youths. Even for those who were not my students, it was still a relatively small community where I would have been recognizable to most as a 'Teacher' from the program. As a result of this experience, I had a sense of how I would be received by youths.

When I returned for my Fieldwork in the summer of 2017, I also completed my internship in UYBP at StARS. The position was intentionally created to avoid working very closely with youths, but working on the monitoring and evaluations of the program, aiding in the restructuring of the program, and worked with all staff (including youth staff) on several workshops. However, my research project was entirely separate and not affiliated with StARS. Prior to beginning this internship, the organization and I established a formal contract in which my personal research was entirely separated from my work at StARS; I could not recruit participants through them, and I could not use their spaces. This was intended to mitigate the potential of using my position as a member of StARS to influence their participation in my research. As independent displaced youths have no legal guardians, I sought extra care to avoid all potential of using my position of power as researcher working in an organization where they may receive services (educational, legal, psychosocial). Though I was usually not familiar to most participants from my work at StARS, this position at StARS could have affected their responses if they felt I could give them access to certain services, regardless if I explained to them this was not the case. Though I would seem exclusively to hold the power as the one working for the organization, one means through which they are able to negotiate power is through their answers. Furthermore, the university 'Ethics' process was also very thorough regarding the caution of working with these youths. Thus, I returned to the Cairo contemplating the duality of the vulnerability, but also the agency of these youths in participating in my research, and the importance of working within this space.

These extrinsic factors of my work and relations in Cairo interact with my other subject-positions. My approach to reflexivity follows Finaly's (2002) description of reflexivity as social critique, openly acknowledging the tensions arising from different social position such as class, gender and race (220), but also acknowledging the multiple shifting researcher-participant positions (222). Furthermore, this discussion of positionality is meant to address the issue that "preoccupations with collaboration and egalitarianism can result in claims which disguise the inequalities actually present" (Finlay, 2002, 226). I am a white, Western cis-gendered, able-bodied female, with Canadian citizenship, raised Roman Catholic, but presently agnostic. This association to Canada seemed to be central to how I was perceived by youths in my "power" to change their situation and spread awareness about their situation. It seemed that, to the community, my main marker of identity was my "Canadianness" more than whiteness or female-ness (though it is important to acknowledge perceptions of Canadian identity and whiteness). However, the major unintended consequence of my positionality was also from the inference that I, as a Canadian, had the power to influence Canadian interaction with refugees in Cairo and could ameliorate their condition there. Almost every single interview ended with the participants asking me to bring this information to Canada, as explained by Ahmed; "if you want to make conclusion of this in Canada show the problems of the Eritrean people" (Interview 2, 5 July 2017). Often these supplications would come after my notebook had been put away, after the interview was over. I brought this issue to my research assistants in one of our weekly meetings, and I asked them specifically what I could do to stem this perception that I could "do" something.

They responded that essentially there was nothing more that could be done. As per the instructions for recruiting participants, research assistants emphasised that this work would not be able to help them directly, and I repeated this in the verbal consent interview preamble. My research assistants explained that this perception was inevitable, that whenever a foreign person shows this attention they expect that it will do something for them. I inquired with my research assistants and other contacts both in and outside of the community, but no solutions other than the status quo was offered. Ultimately this unintended consequence of my positionality was unavoidable. Nonetheless, potentially having raised the hopes and expectations of youths is not mitigated by my recognition of this problem. Instead, I seek to examine this in the light of Kobayashi's (1994) words that, "this is not to say that my subjects are part of my project, but that I am part of theirs … I am personally committed to acknowledging my research as political and to using it most effectively for social change" (78). As Stanley and Slattery (2003) note in their study, "I think, to a certain degree, the students in the study were observing us as much as we were interviewing them" (721). This passage informs one interpretation of this situation of these unintended consequences of my research — inasmuch as those students observed Stanley and Slattery, these youths were observing me. Their observations informed how they utilized their power to inform me of what I need to do with this information.

Not being an Egyptian also allowed youths to be very open about the problems they faced with Egyptians, as well as the problems and discrimination they faced accessing services at other NGOs with a large Egyptian staff (StARS is mostly refugee

staff and Western foreign workers). As a non-refugee, with citizenship, I had the power of exiting the country when I wanted, which was a huge crux of the power imbalance for youths who felt "stuck". As I worked at StARS, and may have been familiar to some due to this, there was also the possibility that they felt their responses could help them gain access to services. However, most youths did not know me previously, and I was also very explicit about the separation of this work from that of StARS, though a total distinction could not be guaranteed.

Though my research was not focused on issues of sex and gender-based violence, these topics would arise in the interviews with young women, which may not have been the case had I been a male researcher. In an interview with Paul (pseudonym, interviewed 1 August 2017), a community leader, he mentioned a young woman who was pregnant from being trafficked and raped on the way from Eritrea. He explained the basics of the story and indicated that I could meet with her, and would likely get more details since I was a woman — he indicated that she might be more open with me (female) than with a male Eritrean community leader. In other informal conversations with female youths about Egyptians, one girl mentioned that I, as a woman, knew what Egyptian men were like, referring to the experience of sexual harassment in the street. Though the specificities of our experiences were different, she drew on the commonalities of these incidents. I was initially uncomfortable with this inference of the sameness of our experience, recognizing that my economic power in living in 'safer' neighborhoods, using 'safer' transportation could mitigate this harassment, however these experiences were inevitable every time I left my apartment. Kobayashi's (1994) article, however,

provided some useful insights into this experience, highlighting that "a focus not on difference, but on commonality, recognizing that commonality is always partial, and that difference is the historical condition that results from racism and sexism [there is] more to gain from building commonality than from essentializing difference" (76). Thus, I interrogate the intersection of these subject-positions not to essentialize difference, nor to ignore the structural inequalities that create this difference.

My religious affiliation also played a role in an unexpected way. Though I was used to living in Cairo where the vast majority are practicing Muslims, I thought my being a non-Muslim might affect interviews with Muslim youths. However, there seemed to be no indication of this, and, in following up with this in conversation with my research assistants, they explained that it was cross-religious friendships were common among Eritrean youths (which was has been relatively corroborated in my preliminary findings). As someone who was also able to demonstrate a more thorough knowledge of Islam, culturally and in religious practice, I feel I was also able to earn more trust from my research assistants (as these topics would not necessarily arise in the interviews). However, in a context where religious identity can be important, my perception as a Christian person could also have affected certain responses. The unexpected effect of my religious affiliation was being acceptable to participate in a Roman Catholic service with my research assistants and learn more about the community. During the community announcements portion of the service they told me to introduce myself to the congregation. Though unexpected and anxiety-inducing, the trust I built with my research assistant granted me access to their religious space and allowed me to introduce myself to

their congregation, becoming 'known' in the community. Thus, through my research process, though I am not an Eritrean youth, I still "experienced moment of being both an insider and outsider, but that these positions are relative to the cultural values and norms of both the researcher and the participants" (Merriam et al. 2001, 416). The purpose of this reflexivity is to understand how these "multiple insider/outside positionalities and complex power dynamics [are] factors bearing on knowledge construction and representation in the research process" (Merriam et al. 2001, 416). In moving beyond a static understanding of insider/outsider status (Merriam et al. 2001, 414), I can more thoroughly reconcile how, though I originally felt that I would approach this situation as purely an outsider, the nuances of positionality influenced my interactions with youths. As Merriam et al. (2001) explain, "the notion of positionality rests on the assumption that a culture is more than a monolithic entity to which one belongs or not" (411). Thus, my interactions with Eritrean youths were shaped by these internal variations, as the culture of displaced independent Eritrean youths is not a monolithic entity — based on their differing subject-positions, as well as life experiences, these youths interacted with me differently. Merriam et al. problematize these fixed notions of insider/outsider by offering an alternative typology, in which I seem to fall between the position of external-insider, where the researcher becomes an "adopted insider" and external-outsider, where one is socialized in a different community than the research community (412). Though, at the start of my research I would not have hesitated to characterize myself as external-outsider, through a reflexive process on my positionality, it seems more blurred — that I have been "adopted" by some in the community, and that my relationship with them is

not exclusively related to research, as I had been invited for dinners, or asked to participate in events that were not part of my research intention. Katz (1994) refers to a similar experience as one of subject positions being constituted in spaces of betweeness (72), and further cites Mascia-Leess as a "a position that is neither inside nor outside". It is in this 'betweeness' as neither entirely an outsider, nor entirely an insider, that it is best to understand the nuances of the interaction of my positionality with the multiple non-monolithic identity of youths.

Furthermore, Stanley and Slattery (2003) also highlight the complex and fluid ways in which their personalities interact with their main markers of identity — meaning that no single isolated characteristic can be pointed to as the influencing factor (710). Though not necessarily the most obvious marker of positionality, my personality and mannerisms inevitably influenced these interactions as well. From my previous experiences working with youths and other potentially distressed (yet agentic) people, I developed an approach for the interviews that was soft and kind, as opposed to a more boorish approach to extract answers from them. Inevitably, my approach could have annoyed some and comforted other, but their judgement of their comfortability with me informed their agency to cooperate, or not. My relationship with my research assistants allowed more space for humour, engaging with them on a variety of topics as we had the space to build more longstanding relationships.

Thus, my approach to reflexivity follows Finaly's (2002) description of reflexivity as social critique, by openly acknowledging the tensions arising from different social position such as class, gender and race (220), but also acknowledging the multiple

shifting researcher-participant positions (222). As with all researchers, positionality and biography play a central role in my research process, in the field and in the final text, but is also intensely personal (England, 1994, 251-2). Part of the 'personal' for me was best understood through Hyndman's article "The Field as Here and now, not There and Then" (2001), in which the perceived boundaries of 'the field' in time and place are deconstructed. Since leaving Cairo in July 2016, I remained in contact with many of my students and colleagues who are unaccompanied refugee youths, and the supposed 'subjects' of my study. Without these personal relationships, I would not have chosen this research. Constructing 'the field' as an entity separate from the rest of my life is highly contentious for me, feeling that 'the field' is a "term deployed to normalize differences and to buttress existing socio-political hierarchies" (Hyndman, 2001, 264). Going to 'the field' insinuates that my 'real life' is in Canada, while my research life is 'in the field, creating a further dichotomy between an 'us' and a 'them'. Cairo, and working with displaced youths, has been part of my life since before the research process and will likely continue to be upon completion. The 'personal' that both England (1994) and Hyndman (2001) refer to is at the core of why I did this research, and this reflexivity regarding my positionality in this process is intended to critically engage with its advantages and disadvantages.

Potential Bias in Methodology

Though my interview participants were relatively well distributed by gender, ethnicity and religious group, there are potential shortfalls and biases inherent in the snowball sampling method. Jacobsen and Landau (2003) emphasise that this method, as

opposed to a random sampling method, is likely to lead to a biased sample, and exclude those who are not at the center of the snowball (13). Nonetheless, I applied methodological rigour to my sampling and attempted to widen the sample as much as possible. I encouraged my research assistants to recruit participants from all ethno-religious groups, and especially to ask young women as they tended to be 'shy' and less likely to participate. At each week's meeting with assistants I would point out a growing imbalance in gender and/or ethno-religious groups being represented, and ask for feedback on how to better include all groups in this study. Furthermore, my access and degree of trust within the community was entirely dependent on my research assistants — it would not have been possible to access this community through a random sampling method. Though this relationship formed the basis of my access, there remained the potential bias of being perceived as a Western NGO worker. Though I attempted to address this, as previously mentioned, by thorough explanations of my limitations in being able to support them, it had mixed results of the continued perception. Overall this association was not overtly considered positive or negative, and likely had little effect on their responses, as the purpose of trying to have their perspectives heard for resource allocation and programming was aligned to my general purpose. However, the negative consequences would clearly be in the expectations of the participants themselves, as explained above.

Additionally, there may be a potential bias based on my research assistants. As youths who spoke English, many of whom had gone through the UYBP program, and/or now worked in it, they each exhibited a sense of community leadership. They also had a

relative amount of privilege in their community due to their language skills, making them better able to advocate for themselves and get information. Though I explained that my intention was to be as inclusionary as possible, based on their own subject-positions within the community it is possible that this led to certain exclusions I was unable to prevent. Since all the youths were not necessarily close friends before working together, I also followed up with each of them on these questions more informally in a one-on-one setting before or after interviews to ensure that they still felt able to share outside of our group meetings. However, my small team of research assistants, though from various ethnic/religious groups, can also contribute to a bias in my understanding of these issues. The participants of my research reflect those that my research assistants were able to recruit, often being acquaintances from class or religious services, generally those with whom they had some former relationship. This could present the bias of my participants reflecting those that were similar to my research assistants in beliefs and backgrounds. I shared my initial interview questions with research assistants in an attempt to be as participatory as possible and get their feedback on the effectiveness of these questions. One question they pointed out that would not be helpful was that on the divisions or differences within the Eritrean community, as they said there were no divisions. Though their participation and feedback was key, I decided to keep this question as a means of attempting to guard against reproducing the potential bias of my research assistants in their responses. Though an imperfect solution, it was one avenue of attempting to balance the participation and potential bias of my research assistants. Additionally, unanimous responses to certain of their questions would also be a useful finding. Jacobsen and

Landau (2003) emphasize one concern in working with research assistants, that of being unaware of local researchers belonging to an ethnic/religious/social/economic group that the participant is uncomfortable with. For this reason, I specifically included my research assistants in this discussion and inquired as to these dynamics. I also informally consulted with many peers and non-youths Eritreans who worked in the NGO about any such concerns. Though I originally conceived that it would be best to have interviewers and participants aligned by gender and ethnic group, my research assistants responded that this was likely unnecessary, and as long as they shared a language, it wouldn't be a problem. Some participants would request a female interpreter, which was often linked to the nature of their experiences in Cairo and on the route from Eritrea. Thus, I tried to address Jacobsen and Landau's (2003) criticisms through my methodological design, especially through the working with my research assistants and informally verifying information with other community members.

As there were no interview recordings (since youths did not feel comfortable with recordings), I would transcribe my interviews from my hand written notes as soon after the interview as possible, so as to minimize potential mistakes in transcribing. During the interviews I would specifically indicate passages as direct quotes that seemed especially important, to ensure dependability. I also completed some interviews I did in the downtown locations with my computer (as I felt 'safer' carrying my laptop around in this area). I differentiated these within my transcripts, as it was easier to copy direct citations in this medium. I reviewed my transcriptions and field notes and began the coding process. I used Bernard's (2011) guide on coding, based in an open coding approach of

starting by a general annotation of the transcription at first and highlighting some emerging themes (493), then looking for repetitions, and looking for commonalities or tensions (494). I noted these themes by a colour and alphabetical shorthand manually, maintaining a record in "code notes" memo (499), as well as keeping operational notes of aspects that were notable, linking to theory, etc. (499). The main themes that emerged were 'housing/housemates', 'security', 'route', 'social', 'religion', 'gender', 'advice', 'money', and 'organizations'. I would then group all the relevant coded passages for each theme together in a new document and subdivide into categories. For example, under the 'security' theme, subsidiary categories emerged such as 'neighbourhoods', 'police', 'housing', 'racism', 'psychological effects' and 'self-defence'. I referenced these themes back to my research question to establish my findings.

Ethics

Due to the young age of participants, and their lack of legal or parental guardians, certain provisions had to be made to justify this research would take care in the treatment of youths. The nature of this project required an additional Rationale to the Ethics Review Board (see Appendix D). In this Rationale I justify that these youths should not be excluded from research due to their lack of guardianship, since their voices are necessary for an inclusive understanding of their needs as self-defined. Additionally, as they have migrated on their own at a young age, they are arguably more mature that those in a non-migration context with adult accompaniment — the standards in the West may not be useful guides in this context. With this additional Rationale, the project was approved by the Ethics Review Board of York University (see Appendix C).

Nonetheless, great care and attention was necessary to avoid coercion or ill-informed consent and ensure that these were fully autonomous decisions by youths. I attempted to mitigate these risks by working with youth research assistants, not much older adults in the community, to avoid a sense of being strongly encouraged by those who may be parental-like figures in their lives. Though I entrusted each of my research assistants to clearly explain my role and the purpose of the interview to each participant, I re-iterated this again at the beginning of each interview and took verbal consent (see Appendix D). From my previous work, I knew that asking for signed consent would be highly inappropriate, alienating and suspicious for participants. As a result, I also did not ask my research assistants to sign any such document but went through a detailed explanation of the need for confidentiality and ethical duties as per my university standard in our first meeting. None of my participants wanted to be recorded, which my research assistants described as being quite normal due to a continued mistrust and fear from the youths of the Eritrean government. As a result, I would take notes of the interviews by hand, and transcribe them as soon as possible on the computer so as not to confuse any notes or miss any aspects of the interview. Participants introduced themselves and their names were included in the written (soft) copy only, and verbal consent was noted in this written copy. I reiterated to my research assistants that it was key to emphasise the voluntary nature of this project, and before the interview I would emphasise that we could stop at any moment at all without repercussions to them or anyone in the community. I also underlined that I was not affiliated with any organization and would not be able to support them concretely with any services, though I would

provide any information on accessing services if they seemed unaware of a program or resource.

Research Assistants

As a result of having previously worked in Cairo with unaccompanied youths, I was already aware that the three main language groups of Eritrean youths in Cairo (Tigrinya, Tigre and Bilen) would likely necessitate multiple interpreters. I created a "Job Description" for the position (see Appendix E), which I shared with a few community members and NGO workers previously known to me from my work in Cairo. I received two responses by email, one phone call, and asked a former teaching assistant of mine whom I had encountered in person. In discussion with one community member, they recommended two youths, whom he called directly, and I later met with through this referral. I met with each of the six research assistants individually for approximately one hour to explain the position in detail, the time commitment, my research questions, and take any feedback on the project. Three of the research assistants also worked as teaching assistants in UYBP at StARS, where I was also completing my internship. As I began my work during the holy month of Ramadan, while the teaching assistants were on leave, I did not meet them at StARS. Though they were not participants but would be remunerated for their contribution to the project, I nonetheless took the similar approach as I would with participants to ensure they were fully aware of what the project entailed, and the potential of hearing and discussing difficult topics. Due to my previous work in UYBP, and being referred by trusted members of the community, there was an initial layer of trust towards me to build upon, but I wanted to ensure that, as they were

displaced youths themselves, they did not feel any sense of pressure or obligation. Of the six, three were male and three were female, three were Muslim and three were Christian (two Catholic and one Orthodox), in terms of ethnic group, two were Tigre, two were Bilen and two were Tigrinya, and most had a basis in Tigrinya, as well as other languages linked to their ethnicity (ie Tigre or Bilen). I did not received any applications by Saho youths, nor could I find any that were interested in the position. In consultation with my research assistants, they explained that they are one of the smallest ethnic groups of Eritreans in Cairo, and usually spoke Tigrinya, and would not be a major research challenge. Overall, I accepted all who applied or were referred for the position. Fortuitously there was a relatively even breakdown by religion, ethnic group, and gender.

The rationale for having a team of youth research assistants was based on two main considerations. Firstly, the assistants would act as my primary points of entry into the community of Eritrean youths, thus acting as leaders of the snowball sampling method. Though my research placement was with the UYBP program at StARS, which serves many of the displaced Eritrean youths, recruiting from this group and conducting research via StARS was explicitly prohibited in my contract (see *Positionality*). Furthermore, there is a greater likelihood of earning the trust of participants if it is from other youths themselves. One aspect of particular importance in research with youths is considering possible coercion, meaning that they feel in any sense obliged to participate in this study, which could stem from social pressures. Thus, for my research methodology, I initially explained my project and earned the trust of my research

assistants, who would then be able to better explain who I am, my work, and my relationship to those who I would like to interview.

Secondly, and most importantly, working with a team of research assistants allowed me to approach a community-based research design through a continual dialogue with youths and an opportunity to hear their feedback. Furthermore, Tang's (2008) chapter on "Community-Centered Research as Knowledge/Capacity Building in Immigrant and Refugee Communities" was central to my research strategy. Through her own research project, she explores creating a methodology that "underscores community production of knowledge to support community efforts in self-representation and self-advocacy" (238). The problem she tries to solve through her methodological design is that immigrant/refugee community practitioners often use their multilingual/multicultural skills for others' research, but this research process does not allow them to enhance their own competencies (243). Therefore, she establishes the role of "co-researcher" for these practitioners, through which she also does skills sharing and capacity building with these frontline workers in a collaborative research process (247). There were several logistical limitations to implementing her design in my own work, most importantly the limitation on time and ethics approval. Tang's research occurred with the Khmer American immigrant/refugees, thus in the context of a 'developed' nation, where both the resources available to her, and to her co-researchers look rather different than those available to me in Cairo. However, one main way I attempted to move towards this methodology was through weekly meetings with my research assistants. Every Friday afternoon, from 5 to 7 pm, we would all convene at my home and discuss various topics; sometimes emerging

from some of the interviews I had had the previous week, community topics, or anything they would like to discuss. These weekly RA meetings were also intended as a measure of triangulating and potentially corroborating preliminary findings —to assess whether or not I had understood certain points, or was emphasising the wrong aspects in my research. Since most participants were known to the research assistants previously, though I did not ask assistants to do so, they would often follow-up with the interview participants afterwards, to see how the experience was like for them, or how they felt about it, etc. This was usually discussed one-on-one with me, or at the weekly meetings, and helped understand, overall, of how the interview process was being received by participants in an 'unofficial' sense. This helped inform how the interview process was experienced by the participants, and what they thought about the process — it informed my analysis of the research process itself and how I came to understand the extent to which mitigating expectations was difficult.

Tang (2008) describes her meetings, especially the initial ones, involving "demystifying the work of research as an 'academic enterprise' and motivated community practitioners not only to take ownership and responsibility over the knowledge production process but to view and embrace the research process as a "critical practice." (247). This aim was the intention of my initial, individual meeting with each of them to clearly demystify this academic process. Furthermore, one of the main points I shared with them was their "ownership" of this project, namely that it was also their responsibility to make sure that I asked the right questions and that I properly understood the issues facing Eritrean youth, to then be able to properly translate that through my

thesis. As my interview questions did not shift drastically through this process, it may be that regardless of these explanations they did not feel comfortable with disagreeing with me, or that the questions generally made sense. As I explained to them the source for my research questions, based on informal observations from the previous year working in UYBP, they agreed that the premise and questions were sensible. Their most useful response to the questions were in providing greater insight into the broader issues in the community.

In our final meeting, I asked them to provide feedback on this experience and process. Many of them noted that the discussions were useful for practicing English, specifically on topics that they do not usually discuss in English about their communities. They also explained that this was an interesting process in developing new skills about a research process, and especially related to doing advocacy for their community, as they saw this research as being able to increase the knowledge of the challenges that they face. They all mentioned that they felt it was useful in feeling they are helping their community, in discussing the problems facing them. Though I had emphasized that potential practical implications are limited, they felt that overall being able to contribute to disseminating information about the problems facing their community was important. I considered asking them to complete a feedback survey, this seemed very uncharacteristic of our entire working relationship (through discussion groups) and I thought it would be more fruitful to have an open discussion about it, after they had been paid for all the work and could reflect on the experience. Thus, though I may not have been able to implement a specific co-researcher structure as Tang (2008) recommends, this feedback discussion

allowed me to understand the extent to which there was skill sharing beyond a strict researcher to research assistant relationship. They echoed the sense of community production of knowledge and the role of self-advocacy in their feedback, which suggests that though imperfect, at least strides were made towards a more collaborative research design.

One main methodological question I encountered was that of the role of quality interpretation versus that of the role of having youth research assistants. Some of the Eritrean adult practitioners I spoke with warned that the interpretation skills of my youth assistants may not be as good as that of some adults, and that the quality of the interpretation may suffer. The research assistants did not have formal training or experience as interpreters, though often their work as teaching assistants would require this, working in English and interpreting for other students. Others pointed out that it was not a concern that they were misinterpreting the main points, but that their interpretation was less finely tuned then it could/should be. Jacobsen and Landau (2003) write about the methodological considerations of refugee research, specifically critical of the potential bias in working with local researchers for translation (195). Though I acknowledge these potential biases, here Tang's (2008) methodological design became the most useful point of reference for my work. She explains that "to fully understand and respond to current needs in the communities, our research design must also be linked to the specific history of development of the community as well as the roles, values, and commitments of community practitioners" (256). Ultimately, the practitioners closest to the youths were

these youths themselves, who either officially or not, often worked in a 'helping capacity' for them.

Location and Demographics

Diagram 4: Map of Cairo

(Google Maps 2018, Modified)

The majority of my interviews occurred downtown near Tahrir Square, or in Ard el Lewa, close to Selim Elysee, as indicated on the map.

All my interviews were held in various locations across Cairo from May to August 2017. I explained to my research assistants that they were responsible for telling me which space was the most comfortable for the youths, without concern for cost, as I would cover a beverage and/or food at any location. I intended, as much as possible, to interview them in their homes to have the added opportunity of observations in their

homes, but this was not always possible. I did 30 interviews with youths, with 34 participants (two interviews with two participants from the same household), and five interviews with non-youth Eritrean community leaders and/or those who worked with youths. Of the interviews with youths, most occurred in Ard el Lewa (Selim Elysee or Selim Lewa), with half at the homes of participants, and half in cafes. The other interviews occurred in various cafes downtown (either near Sadat or Nasser metro stations), or near El Behoos Station in Dokki. Many of those who chose downtown locations did not live in Ard el Lewa, and it was easier for them to travel to downtown. For interviews with non-youths, two of them occurred in their homes in Ard el Lewa, and three occurred in cafes downtown. I consciously attempted to not frequent the same locations too often in the same week, or at the same times, as a safety precaution for the youths and myself, in an effort to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Most interviews with youth were between one, and one and a half hours long, though interviews with non-youths were generally between one and a half to two and a half hours.

Originally, I had not planned to interview non-youths, either community leaders or those who worked with youths, as I wanted the project to be based on a youth perspective. Additionally, when I first met with my research assistants I asked if there were any leaders I should speak to, and they did not know of any in particular. However, as it emerged from the interviews that some youths depended on certain community leaders for support, I re-evaluated this. I decided to wait until I had completed a substantial amount of interviews with youths (approximately 15) before meeting with

non-youths so that their perspective would have formed the original basis of my knowledge.

Table 1: Location and Demographics of Youths Interviewed

Int.#	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity/Religion	Location of Interview
1	Paulos	20	M	Bilen/Catholic	Home, Selim Lewa
1	Isais	20	M	Bilen/Catholic	Home, Selim Lewa
2	Mohammed	17	M	Tigre/Muslim	Behoos Cafe
3	Birhane	22	M	N/A	Behoos Cafe
4	Roma	15	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Downtown
5	Sammy	18	M	N/A	Downtown
6	Hanna	15	F	Tigrinya	Downtown
7	Semira	18	F	Saho/Muslim	Downtown
8	Saba	15	F	Tigrinya/Catholic	Café, Selim Elysee
9	Aklilu	15	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Downtown
10	Rahwa	16	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Downtown
11	Dawit	17	M	Bilen/Catholic	Home, Selim Lewa
12	Petros	17	M	Bilen/Catholic	Home, Selim Lewa
12	Amanuel	15	M	Bilen/Catholic	Home, Selim Lewa
13	Fadi	17	M	Tigre/Bilen/Muslim	Home, Selim Elysee
14	Aziz	17	M	Tigre/Muslim	Café, Sudan Street
15	Mebrihit	18	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Downtown
16	Mustafa	17	M	Bilen/Muslim	Downtown
17	Luwam	17	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Café, Selim Elysee
18	Ermias	18	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Home, Selim Elysee
19	Mary	17	F	Bilen/Catholic	Home, Selim Elysee
20	Fatima	18	F	Saho/Muslim	Downtown
21	Hamid	23	M	Tigre/Muslim	Downtown
22	Fiyori	15	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Downtown
22	Winta	14	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Downtown
23	Omar	17	M	Tigre/Muslim	Café, Selim Elysee
24	Efrem	13	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Café, Selim Elysee

25	Jemal	16	M	Saho/Muslim	Café, Selim Elysee
26	Mustafa	20	M	Bilen/Muslim	Downtown
27	Kedija	16	F	Bilen/Muslim	Home, Selim Elysee
28	Osman	17	M	Saho/Muslim	Café, Selim Elysee
29	Haile	16	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Café, Selim Elysee
30	Ali	11	M	Saho/Muslim	Café, Selim Elysee

Interview Questions

All interviews occurred in either Tigrinya, Tigre, Bilen or English, with the exception of one in Saho, doubly translated into Tigrinya by a friend of the participant, and then into English by a research assistant due to an unexpected language need and difficulties finding an interpreter. This semi-structured research interviews allowed flexibility with my questions. As a result, I altered my questions slightly as I noticed some being more or less effective. I removed the questions about their self-perception as refugees and their understanding of themselves as youths. These questions did not seem to be well understood in terms of my goal of understanding if they felt a difference between those who had been recognized as refugees by UNHCR, and those who were still asylum-seekers, or those with 'white paper'[8]. I was also trying to understand how they felt about the end of financial support through Caritas, for those that were eligible, at age 18, and how this effected their relationship with their housemates. I found it most challenging to address this theme through questions that would not hint at an answer.

[8] Though further elaborated on in the *Age Determination* section, upon registration with UNHCR, displaced persons receive an appointment slip with the date indicated to return, at which point they will either receive a 'Yellow Card', or asylum-seeker card, or an 'white paper', which is an asylum-seeker certificate, and if they are formally recognized as refugees by UNHCR they receive a 'Blue Card'. Youths are only eligible for Caritas financial assistance if they have a 'Yellow Card', or a 'Blue Card', not if they have a 'white paper'.

Overall, I decided that the best way to understand this was through other questions about financial assistance and relationships with housemates, and what they would do after their financial assistance ended if that was in the near future.

One main question that was added around the tenth interview was a specific question about their route to Cairo, how much time they spent along the way, who they met, and if/how they helped them in Cairo. This was added as it became clear that in some cases those who they encountered on the way could become the crux of their social network once arriving in Cairo. I also further explored through questions the topic of life skills, such as how they learned to live in Cairo like taking the microbus, going to UNHCR, and even how they learnt to cook or clean (which also gave insight into social relationships, and the gender dynamics of certain households).

Observation

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I also took detailed field notes of observations (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, 109). These observations were gathered from the times between my interviews, en route to Ard el Lewa, in Ard el Lewa, either at cafes, or in their homes, and my participation in a Roman Catholic Sunday service. I attempted to go to the Christian Orthodox church in Ard el Lewa, but I was not allowed to enter (see *Living Situation*). This unofficial time in Ard el Lewa allowed me to observe the conditions of their lives both inside and outside of their home, their interactions with each other (especially as regarded gender and religious considerations), and their interactions with the Egyptian population. As I was in Ard el Lewa at least once a week for this period, (often more like two or three times) I was able to see different parts of the

neighbourhood, at different times and also to familiarize myself with the location. My observations were also affected by my positionality as a white, Western female in a neighbourhood of the city that was rather rarely frequented by Western foreigners. My placement at StARS expressly prohibited any research purpose, thus no formal observation were accounted for during this time.

Challenges

Thankfully, I anticipated most of the challenges prior to my work in the field and was able to work some safeguards into my plan to try to mitigate them. One of the main challenges I faced in completing my research was the initial difficulty of recruiting participants. I knew from my previous work with youths that many were quite 'shy', especially young women, and that it would be hard to convince them since they often associate interviews with the UNHCR Refugee Determination Process, which is rarely a positive association. In our first RA meetings, they mentioned that they faced many challenges in finding youths who wanted to participate, mostly due to trust issues. Though I asked my research assistants what I could do to help with this, they recommended we proceed as planned. Around our third meeting, they noted that it became easier as youths heard from others about me and my work, and that the interview was a non-threatening process. Additionally, one of my first interviewees, a friend of one of my research assistants, became very involved in finding other participants, and became somewhat of an honorary research assistant, but could not participate fully as he did not speak English. He was a key liaison with other youths in the community who were somewhat more difficult to reach perhaps.

Though I had initially hoped to conduct focus groups with all the members of a household, it soon became clear that this would be not be possible due to the logistical difficulties of having everyone at home at the same time. I was closest to a focus group in my first interview where two people formally participated in the interview, two other members of the household were present and observed and/or occasionally commented, and the other two persons were not present. My hopes for a focus group were twofold, both for observations and to shift the balance of power towards having conversations among participants (Bosco & Herman, 2010, 195). As a result, I attempted to work on this 'conversation' aspect through my research assistant meetings, and on observations through the interviews conducted in their homes, even if it was with only one or two participants.

Other challenges were sometimes more logistical, like having a suitable time for all the research assistants, having them all attend, and timeliness. I did the best possible to make this work and adopted a 'go with the flow' attitude, especially as I was very familiar with the challenges that youths face with transportation in the city, in their neighbourhood, and their lives in general. I would often wait from thirty minutes to an hour for interviewees and/or my research assistants to arrive, which was only problematic in so much as a white woman waiting in Ard el Lewa was rather strange and I would not necessarily feel comfortable standing on the street corner for such time. Overall, I was not really able to solve this problem.

The biggest challenge that I faced was that of giving the youths hope that I could fix their situation (see *Bias* above). This became clear to me in my final meeting with my

research assistants as they explained that “if they [Eritrean youths] complain of their problems to someone from the West, they always have hope” (25 August 2017), which is also a means through which youths exert their agency in communicating their challenges to effectuate change. In further discussion, it seemed that my initial explanations of my work and limitations were clear to the participants, and my research assistants explained that likely nothing more could have been done to prevent this. Thus, my greatest challenge will remain to see what I can do with this research to honour the needs of my participants.

Chapter 4: Security Situation[9]

This section explores the security situation of youths in Cairo as a means of understanding their experiences of vulnerability. Youths experience varying sources of vulnerability in Cairo. Their vulnerability is not inherent to their age, but context specific to their particular experiences and relational. Their experience of vulnerability is linked to their relationship to other means of mitigating these vulnerabilities, as explored further in subsequent chapters. In this chapter, I will explore how youths are able to negotiate their livelihoods amidst this security situation. I will firstly elucidate the main components of their security situation, then analyse how this informs the vulnerability context of youths, as per the livelihoods approach. In every interview, youths expressed at least one type of security concern, though to varying degrees. Some spoke of security concerns as the general experience of interactions in the street varying from harassment to assault, to kidnappings and sexual violence — by Egyptians as well as other displaced populations.

[9] Content note: this chapter, as well as the subsequent findings chapters, deal with themes of violence, harassment, sexual assault, and other themes that readers may find distressing.

Diagram 5: Neighbourhoods of Participants (Approximate)[10]

Neighbourhoods

Ard el Lewa

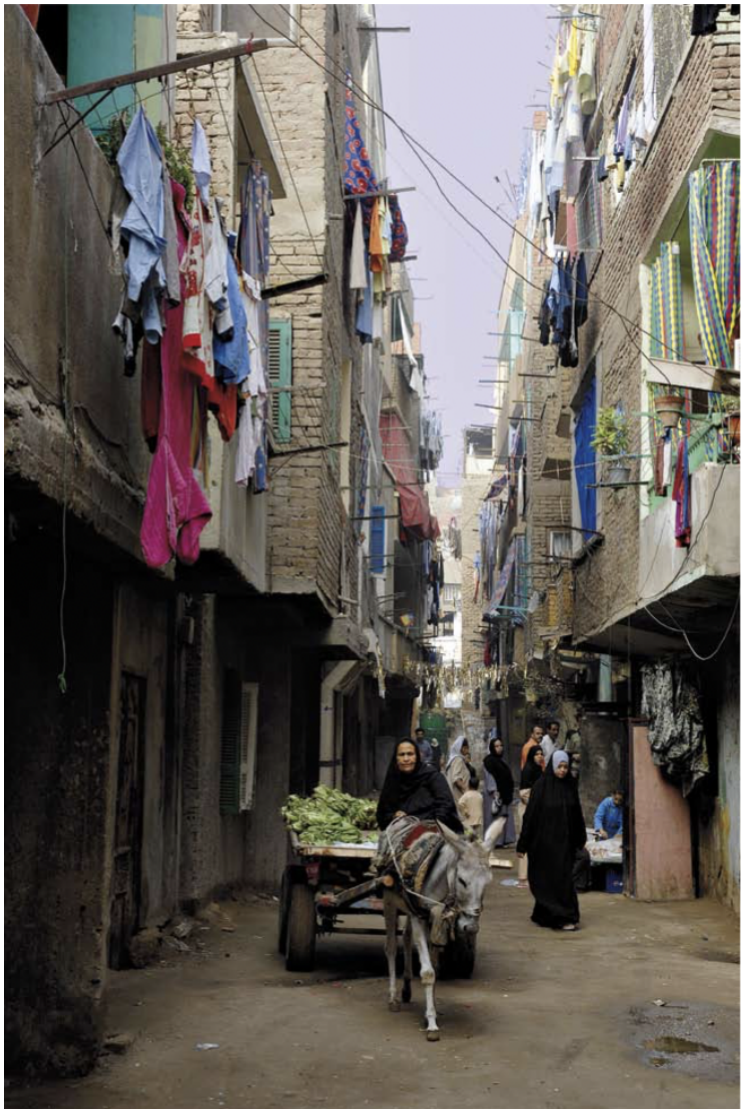
Though statistics on the demographic breakdown of where refugees live in Cairo are unavailable, it is commonly known that Eritreans live in the neighbourhood Ard el Lewa — most of my participants lived there. Approximately half of my interviews took place in Ard el Lewa, either in the homes of youths, or at cafes. Additionally, three of my interviews with community leaders occurred in this neighbourhood. Based on the collective observations from these interviews, I will describe the neighbourhood, with

[10] Modified version of this map online: http://www.pinsdaddy.com/map-of-el-giza_92MPtIIVz6*OrmHHBjnTQ39WC1PSJM69ht3gvJt6u4Y/

particular attention to factors that influenced perceptions and experiences of security, as described below. Ard el Lewa is accessible by public transportation by taking the metro to El Behoos station, and taking a microbus for approximately fifteen minutes towards Selim Elysee or Selim Lewa. *Selim*, the Arabic word for stairs, refers to the stairway overpass that brings one over the railway tracks; from el Sudan Street, over to Ard el Lewa. Ard el Lewa refers to the area directly near Selim Elysee, while the area near Selim Lewa (approximately five minutes by microbus after Selim Elysee) is generally referred to as Lewa. The proximity of both areas, and overall resemblance, lends itself to being referred to as the same neighbourhood, which I will continue to do for this thesis.

Ard el Lewa translates roughly to "the land of the General", adjoins the area of Boulaq al-Dakour in West Cairo, and is considered a poor, informal settlement (Kipper 2009, 83). Ard el Lewa is characterized by cramped streets where cars can barely fit, with most transportation in the neighbourhood being via tuk tuks or on foot. The roads are uneven, most produce vendors or corner stores run into the street, livestock roam freely in front of the butcher, and cafés tables are primarily on the street as well (Field Notes). In all my visits to the neighbourhood, I did not see women at these cafés. In conversation with one of my research assistants, I asked if they would take me to a café with them, and they replied that this would be inadvisable, as women do not sit in cafés. The main café in Ard el Lewa seats around 50 people, most on the street, smoking sheesha and drinking tea at all hours. Most apartment buildings were concrete with uneven, narrow staircases, averaging five floors, without elevators. The difference between 'better' buildings or apartments was rather apparent once inside.

Diagram 6: Narrow Street in Boulaq al Douquor, close to Ard el Lewa[11]



(Claudia Wiens, in Kipper & Fischer, 2009, 34)

This description is intended to provide a detailed account of the security concerns that youths (and many other visibly non-Egyptians) encounter in these neighbourhoods. Almost all participants noted that they experienced some form of verbal or physical

[11] I have chosen not to use any photos of the areas near where I spoke to youths to maintain anonymity and security as much as possible. This photo, though from 2009 and not in the exact neightbourhood (but right close by) is intended to give an idea of what the neighbourhood looks like overall, the narrow streets, etc.

harassment/assaults from Egyptians on a daily basis. Most of the verbal harassment is in the form of racist slurs, the physical assaults take the form of being hit or beaten, as elucidated in the following quotes;

> "If you want to go on the street they treat us badly but hit on the wrist and bad words and treatment. Egyptian people if they see a black person they treat they badly and hit us." (Saba, Int. 8).[12]

> "It is a very hard and bad situation in the street, they beat us and so there is no relationship with Egyptians. I don't feel safe in the street because they need to take my phone and bag and I cross my bag [strap] on me and phone." (Mary, Int.19)

> "We don't speak at all with each other Egyptians, sometimes we have problem that when we went to Lewa one day with my sister and we walked in street and one Egyptian threw something at my sisters back. Whenever they go they say something black you know, and call us these things and we don't speak with them, they see you like a different person." (Fatima, Int. 20)

> "Once when I wore a white shirt they threw eggs on me and it got on my shirt" (Aziz, Int. 14).

Though the participants did not speak to this aspect directly, through observations it became clear that the cramped spaces in the neighbourhood of Ard el Lewa make these altercations difficult to avoid. Most perpetrators are those that live or work in near immediate proximity and are inescapable. Efrem describes his interaction with this problem of proximity.

> "Some people live near us and sit in front of our door and always if we go out for the market or sit with friends they hit me, once I hit them back and now I just stay in home so I am worried for my education when I have to leave the house and it gives me more stress." (Int. 24)

[12] Transcriptions in this thesis have intentionally been left in their closest original form. Though these are translations, all interviews were done with other youths as interpreters, and the translations reflect their way of speaking, and have been left in tact as a result.

Overall, youths explained how this harassment and assault were deterring factors in their ability to leave their house and access that which they need.

Furthermore, Ard el Lewa provides an important point of study because of a specific problem that arose during my fieldwork. A group of Egyptians wrote and signed a letter addressed to the police demanding that all refugees be expelled from the neighbourhood (see Appendix F). There is no date on the letter, but sources in the community seem to believe it began to be circulated in June 2017. I obtained a copy of this letter via my contacts, but it was originally circulated on Facebook, and then was included in an online article in Arabic on the website Al-Dostor (explained further below). In translation, the letter reads,

> "To the director of the Giza security,
> Hello, we are some of the people who live in Ard el Lewa, Giza. Nowadays there are a lot of Eritrean and Sudanese in Ard el Lewa. They say they are in Ard el Lewa as refugees. But they rent houses that are very expensive. We don't know from where they bring the money, what is their income because they are without work. And nowadays they open a lot of cafes and restaurants by their own money and they spend all the night there and they have drugs and alcohol and they do things that are not proper. More than once we complain to Agouza police station and no one does anything and they all live in Hassan Abdulatif street, Mustafa el Asal street, Abudulla Auaghi street, Yusuf al Bendrawi street, Ahmed Hatab Owled Aslad street. Because of these problems we feel that we are strangers in our home. And here the question is the country security are they working on observing these nationalities? These African nationalities because they are doing things illegally like terrorism and travelling illegally from here to Europe or to Sudan and do business with drugs. Last question, all these people did they enter Egypt in legal or illegally. Please Sir do something which is necessary / take needed action because in reality we will lose our patience.
> Long live Egypt."

The letter is then signed by 15 Egyptians. Community leaders described this as Egyptians reaching a "boiling point" with non-Egyptians in the neighbourhood. During my internship in Cairo in 2016, prior to my field work, I had not heard of such serious

problems in Ard el Lewa. Through conversations with my research assistants, as well as with colleagues and friends, I learned that the security situation in the neighbourhood had deteriorated significantly since 2016. I could not find evidence of these accusations during my interviews, however the perception by Egyptians in the neighbourhood clearly influences the experience of youths in Cairo. Though, understandably, it is unlikely that youths would self-report 'illegal' activities. Fatima explained her experience,

> "Some Eritrean people with lack of language they don't do anything and hard for them to live here. Most of Eritreans go to Mediterranean Sea because they couldn't live here but now it's closed so it's become crowded and the refugees get bigger in number and life gets harder and Egyptians don't like that and make especially in Ard el Lewa many problems and crime and stealing, and fighting happened in Faisal too and Egyptians don't see us as normal people that makes us not like to live here." (Int. 20)

Other sources similarly explained that since the Egyptian police shut down the sea route through the north coast of Egypt, there has been an increase in the amount of displaced persons, especially displaced Eritreans, in the Ard el Lewa. In October 2016, Egypt's parliament passed a new migration bill that would criminalize smuggling, which is the first of it's kind in Egypt (al-Kashef & Rollins, 2016). There have also been discussions between Egypt and the European Union, and bilateral agreements between member states and Egypt, on cooperation to limit migration (Rollins, 26 December 2016). Youths explained that there has been a form of "bottlenecking", as, previously, those exiting via the Mediterranean were replaced by newcomers from Eritrea — this created a sort of equilibrium. As the means of exit (taking the boats from the North Coast) have shifted, there has been an increase in those who remain, without as well established an exit route — though some are leaving through Libya. Thus, the large, visible population of

displaced persons in Ard el Lewa, has a particular effect on the experiences of independent Eritrean youths. Some participants and community members who had lived in the neighbourhood for a longer period of time described how things used to be better in the neighbourhood, that there were less problems.

On 30 September 2017, Al-Dostor, an Egyptian online news site published an article entitled "In video — Egyptian Complaining: An African Colony in Ard el Lewa" by Nadia Abd el-Bari (see Appendix G). Though under the "Investigative Journalism" section, the piece reads much more as an opinion piece, with several factual errors, including that the UN pays refugees 800 USD per month. The article uses a photo of the aforementioned letter by Egyptian neighbours, and also laments the rise of non-Arabic signs in the neighbourhood, using a photo of a sign in Ge'ez script (which is used for Tigrinya and Amharic). The article echoes many of the complaints in the letter that refugees in the area are increasing the cost of living and causing problems.

The experiences by youths in Ard el Lewa, as explained in interviews, and the broader security concerns of escalating tensions between them and their Egyptian neighbours demonstrates multilayered problems they face in the area. Though there are not a substantive number of participants who live in other neighbourhoods, a few key findings emerged about differentiations in the experiences by area. Through discussion with research assistants, and general conversations/observations, the experience in other neighbourhoods was corroborated. In these neighbourhoods with a sizeably smaller Eritrean populations, it seems the effect is a double-edged sword of sorts, presenting both benefits and specific challenges.

Individual Experience: Mohammed

Mohammed is 18 years old. He arrived in Cairo in June 2015, via Sudan, after escaping from prison in Eritrea in April 2015. He explains an incident that happened to him in the summer of 2016, "I was in Ard el Lewa at night with my friends and then I tried to leave to go to Faisal (where he lived) and Egyptian people called me and asked me about a street but they did something, I don't know what, and took me about one month, I was with four Sudanese and two Eritreans. The people who took me were two Egyptians and two Sudanese. I don't know where they took me, it's very far from Cairo. They took blood from us. And about 29 days with them. When it was close to Eid they left us. The Sudanese were body builders and took the guard and put him under and tried to escape, and I ran away with one Sudanese and I don't know Arabic well or Egypt, and he took with me to Ard el Lewa, and then I never saw him again the Sudanese, he gave me money for a cab." Mohammed realized that some of his kidnappers "started to watch me and follow me, and then I saw the person who kidnapped me at café in Faisal so he tried to call someone when he saw me to make me afraid. So the people I lived with drove me out of home because they were afraid. I took my things and went to a café." At this café he met a thirty-year-old Eritrean man named Ali who helped him find somewhere to live. He sought support from Saint Andrew's Refugee Services, who referred him to Medecins Sans Frontieres. On the way to MSF, in June 2017, he saw them again, on a motorbike. They beat him, and tried to kidnap him but he was able to escape. As a result of these experiences Mohammed changes apartments often. Though Ali supported him for some time, Ali was resettled and was no longer able to help him in

this manner, but set him up in an apartment with Eritrean adults. The repercussions of his kidnapping extend to the relationship with other youths, "before this happened we were so good and so connected and talked to each other but now they are afraid of me." He explains, "my friends are afraid of me because they are afraid for themselves, after they knew I had a problem they run from me – after the problem I didn't meet them a lot."

Mohammed's story demonstrates the complicated layers and fluctuations in vulnerability that youths experience. Though all youths encounter vulnerable situations, their vulnerability is not inherent, but can be mitigated, ameliorated or exacerbated by their circumstances. For Mohammed, though he was able to overcome the initial situation of being kidnapped, he continued to experience varying levels of vulnerability, as he was able to get the support of Ali, some of his concerns were temporarily alleviated, but he remains a social outlier due to these concerns. Understanding the vulnerabilities of youths necessitates a relational approach, looking not only to the extrinsic causes of their vulnerability but its relationship to the other factors in their lives, such as sources of support, and how they exert agency in relation to this.

Ain Shams

The neighbourhood of Ain Shams has a smaller Eritrean population than Ard el Lewa. Youths who live(d) in Ain Shams describe that the problems there are predominantly between gang members, specifically between Egyptians and South Sudanese gang members. One youth described that he moved out of Ain Shams to Sherea' Sudan (the main street on the other side of Selim Elysee/Lewa); "I hated Ain Shams because there were not many Eritreans and it became really bad because of South

Sudanese and always seeing people injured and cut in the street and they always beat us when we come back from StARS" (Int. 29). He also described targeted violence in their homes; "Also now they come to the door knocking hard and then go into the apartment and beat us. This creates stress for us". Osman lives in Ain Shams and described the targeting in the street by gang members for their phones and money, sometimes through beatings or with machetes (Int. 28).

During my fieldwork there seems to have been an escalation of gang violence, resulting in a rise of police arrests of non-Egyptian Africans. Osman explained that around mid-August there was a physical altercation between the South Sudanese gangs and Egyptians, resulting in the death of one Egyptian (Int. 28). Osman further explained that after the police heard of the murder "anyone in Ain Shams who doesn't look Egyptian they take to prison even if they have documents, because they killed an Egyptian we have problems because they have Eritreans who go to prison" (Int. 28). He explains that this situation has changed their habits in the area; "before you could be a group and play football and come home or go out for tea but now, especially these last 2 weeks it has stopped" (Int. 28). Osman explains that clearly this security situation has impacted his habits and ability to leave the house and socialize in the community.

To the best of my knowledge at the time of completion, there are no Eritrean gangs. Though there have been some studies of the involvement of youths in gangs in Cairo, they mostly focus on Sudanese youths (Lewis 2009, Lewis 2011). I inquired with my research team, community leaders, and any who may have insights into this outside of the Eritrean community, but there was no indication that any such gangs existed, or that

Eritrean youths were participating in other gangs (Somali, Sudanese, Egyptian). Though it is possible that this gap could reflect a desire to protect the reputation and standing of the community, based on my thorough investigation, I have not found any indication of this. I used my informal contacts outside of the community to further inquire into this issue and did not see any indication.

6th of October

In 6th of October neighbourhood, there is a relatively small numbers of Eritreans as it is mostly populated by Syrians. In 6th of October, there also seems to be an issue with gangs. However, it does appear that the gang was somewhat less predominant in this neighbourhood. They also identify them as mostly Sudanese or Egyptian gangs. One youth described their experience of having their home robbed;

> "Me and all my housemates were home at the time and they came at night at like 10 pm. Before that they focused on us because they knew we were refugees and knocked on our door and we thought it was our housemates then 10 to 15 of them came in, mostly Egyptians shebab (youths), we were 5 people in apartment before." (Int. 23)

As in the case of Ain Shams, this is intended to give an overview of how youths defined the problems they face for themselves, not according to external sources. Whether or not those who broke into their homes were actually gang members is not as relevant as their experience of assaults and feeling fear, and how this influences their lives in Cairo.

Faisal

Faisal similarly has a much less sizeable population of Eritrean youths than in Ard el Lewa and is generally considered a safer neighbourhood. This safety is sometimes attributed to the less visible presence of Eritreans. However, one participant noted (int. 20) that there had been safety in the area previously, but the area was becoming crowded

with refugees. They explain that they had seen Sudanese people fighting with Egyptians, linking this to a sign of escalating tensions in the neighbourhood. However, the general consensus, despite this potential growing problem, is that Faisal is safer than Ard el Lewa.

Transportation

The problems of verbal and physical harassment/assault in each neighbourhood described above also occur more broadly throughout the city. Their experiences in transit demonstrate their broader security problems.Though the security concerns within each neighbourhood form the majority of their security concerns since they spend the most time in those areas, they also face problems once they leave these areas. The large distance between neighbourhoods in the city exacerbates some of the security issues. However, it is useful to analyze these security concerns through the lens of their neighbourhoods because of this problem of proximity. Most transportation for youths is by microbus, a van that seats approximately twelve people, following approximate routes and stop by passengers yelling out to the driver (Field Notes). It is one of the least expensive forms of transit, with the price varying according to distance, usually from 2 LE to 6 LE at the time of my field work. UNHCR is located in 6th of October, and it takes approximately over one hour, depending on traffic (for which Cairo is notorious) to get from Ard el Lewa to UNHCR. A big part of this route is the 'Ring Road' or a long stretch of relatively isolated and deserted highway. One of the youths described some problems that he and his friend encountered on the way to UNHCR for an appointment;

> "The bus says it cannot go anymore, all the Egyptians got out before [6th of] October. Even though we two Eritreans paid and left – the same bus guy knows us

> and takes us from Lewa to October and just makes us to go down – he said he will turn around and shouted at us. While waiting for bus, a taxi came, the man asked us, saying knows we are refugees, why are you waiting here on desert road between here and October – and the time was close to the interview and at this time there was no busses at 6 am and even if we don't trust them he was older man and said will take us without paying. So we go and he locks the door and he says you know where all the refugees live, and we pretend not to know Arabic and a lot of people stolen from Lewa for organs. He turns off ring road and says we need benzene (gas) – stay locked in car for 15 minutes, and no one is there and talking to a man and says this man searching for something and my friend says we are trying to call someone. He comes back and takes us to the Ring Road back because we said they come – he says I have no benzene this guy will take you. ***In the Ring Road a lot of things happen if you are alone there a lot of things can happen – it is dangerous."*** (Int. 21, emphasis added)

Microbuses, though a commonly used means of transportation, also leaves the driver with a lot of discretion. Though, usually, the microbuses are packed, leaving problems of being in such close proximity to others, there is also the danger of being alone with only the driver. This is not intended to criminalize microbus drivers, or portray them as dangerous, but mostly to describe the perception of a lack of safety by youths in microbus situations.

The other form of commonly used transportation is the metro system. From each of these neighbourhoods, one would need to take a microbus to a metro stop to access it. Though, generally, this is considered a safe means of transportation due to the set fee (2 LE), set routes, and a separate metro compartment for women and children, problems can nonetheless occur. One youth described an encounter on the metro;

> "One time I was waiting for the metro and these security people asked us for our IDs because we weren't Egyptian. They didn't believe us and we knew our papers and they took us to office, like police office, and tell us to pay. We saw [redacted, NGO workers]. Because they are not refugees and white they respond saying we can leave but say first we have to pay 150 LE, but they say we will not pay. He was so angry he says ok just go to the metro. They only accept us because they came, if not they would've even charged us more." (Int. 21).

Transportation and interaction with Egyptians is an essential part of accessing UNHCR, NGOs, and/or employment. The long distances between these locations worsen these concerns. Though both these experiences by youths are not necessarily the norm, they are one portion of the spectrum of occurrences during transportation. As with other facets of security concerns, the threat of altercations also influences how they interact in these spaces.

Assaults & Police

Youths expressed an overall inability to defend themselves from these assaults, and to have justice. In one interview they explain, "you can't do anything, if you want to defend yourself and speak you can't. When you go home, you think and it makes you stressed." (Int. 29). Another participant similarly explained, "Egyptians hit us and say we are blacks so it is difficult for us, and call us words we don't know. We get angry about that but we can't do anything. If they hit us we say sorry." (Int. 1). Be they physical or verbal assaults, youths feel frustrated by this sense of powerlessness in the face of Egyptians. This feeling of being unable to defend themselves also extends to the lack of police willingness to do address their problems; "if you go to the police they don't do anything, most people give up even if they have problems, don't go to police." (Int. 28). Furthermore, police can sometimes also be a direct source of conflict for youths. In mid-August, Egyptian police raided Sudanese restaurants in Attaba area arresting around 20 people (Field Notes, 21 August 2017). During this time, one Eritrean youth who had been

working in the restaurant was also arrested and held in prison (Field Notes)[13]. I was unable to follow-up on their whereabouts.

Though this research intends to amplify and centralize the voices of youths themselves, consulting with some adults from the community provided some key contextual information. One Eritrean community leader I spoke with, Paul, accompanied people to the police station, going somewhere between three to seven times per week, sometimes none, depending on the week. He has assisted with problems in the community for over a year and a half and noted that the robberies and rapes have increased recently. He explained that "now because the police have a problem with me and see me as enemy police say not to go to police station. I take the people and advise them tell them to go but I stay away from the station because of the warning" (1 August 2017) — though this had not always been his relationship to the police. As the problems between the community and Egyptians in the neighbourhood grew, even community leaders with previously relatively positive police relationships have deteriorated, increasing community tensions.

Security and Decision Making

In addition to the specificities of the security problems youths face, they also explained the psychological effects of these experiences on them. Regardless of whether or not the youths themselves experienced some form of assault, they all knew someone who had such an experience, and frequently spoke to the collective problems youths

[13] I was unable to find additional sources in English regarding this event. There may be some in Arabic that I have not been able to access due to linguistic limitations.

faced as part of their social environment. At least half of participants indicated that the security situation specifically influenced their psychological wellbeing, their decision to leave the house, and their sense of fear. Though quantifying incidents of violence is valuable for further investigation, to understand their livelihood strategies, it may be more useful to look at the collective psychological effect of this 'fearing'. For example, Mary described the effect of hearing about Eritrean girls being kidnapped by Egyptians, "I hear of a lot of people because some girls were kidnapped in their houses, it's very bad and has a very bad effect on me" (Int.19).

Hence, the security situation works in the conceptual framework of livelihoods as elucidating the vulnerability context of youths. Their vulnerability context seems to have a causal effect on their decision-making and livelihood strategies. The psychological compounding of these experiences, resulting in a fear, creates the vulnerability context which influences access to the sources of capital which youths strive to secure and maximize in order to live. Though, as previously mentioned the majority of studies of unaccompanied refugee youths involves their psychological well-being, or coping mechanisms (see *Relation to the Literature*), this field of work is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this aspect cannot be ignored, as it applies to their livelihood strategies. Through a relational approach which examine the relationship between their security context and their state of mind, we can examine the effects on their decision making. Mary explained, "It's like we are in jail, we are not going out. We hate it because we don't have any freedom" (Int. 22). Similarly, Saba expressed "We cannot feel well

because thinking of what happens today or tomorrow live in fear and there is no peace. What will happen to us?" (Int. 8).

Furthermore, these security concerns can be linked to their social isolation. This can be illustrated through Kedija's experiences (Int. 27). Kedija is 16 years old, has a white paper from UNHCR, no Caritas support, and lives in Ard el Lewa with five housemates, three other young girls and a couple with a baby. She explains, "my biggest problem after the UN is that staying alone here is very hard because there is no one to tell my problems to or joke with, I can't go out and if I do I have problems with Egyptians." (26 August 2017). Since an incident when Egyptians beat her and took her purse, she is scared and does not leave the house. She explains that since she does not leave the house, she cannot meet people. She says, "I just sit and listen to music". This social isolation can have multiple sources, but a common one that surfaces from the interviews is fear associated with security concerns. Another participant explains, "The security problem affects me wanting to leave the house. Probably would be more sociable if it wasn't for security problem. I am not social because I prefer to stay at home because of security problem that's why I don't know anything about the situation outside" (Int.11). Therefore, accessing social support, even in the most basic form of social interaction can be limited by the youth's perception of the security situation.

Individual Experience: Mariam

Mariam is 18 years old. She was born in Saudi Arabia to Eritrean parents living without status. In 2013 the Saudi government deported her and her family to Eritrea, she arrived in Cairo in August 2014. Her father was arrested in Eritrea and her mother sent

her and her sister to Sudan soon after. Since then she has not heard from her mother and other siblings. In February 2017, she lost her UNHCR card, and, since UNHCR will not replace the card without a police report, she went to the police station. She explains she "took tuk tuk and he took me to people in the car and they tried to kidnap me and they pushed me in the car and put me inside, and tried to go out the door and push out the door into the street." Mariam escaped this kidnapping attempt, but the perpetrator continued to resurface in her area, and was "always waiting for me in the station." He followed her to work, and to another service-providing NGOs. As a result, "I left the job and I stayed at home", and also declined an educational opportunity. In May 2017, "in Faisal I was coming from the hospital and at 11 pm was very sick and didn't see him and he walked behind me and by knife he told me if you scream of say anything I will put this in your stomach and I walked with him and he took me in places I don't even know dark places then I saw three Egyptian men and they were coming and I screamed and tried to go from me and he grabbed my hand and held my mouth and hurt my head, fell in the earth and these men beat him (her assailant)" Mariam's arm was still in a cast when we met in July. She also explains that "I want them (UNHCR) to look about our problems because the problems that happen to us don't only hurt us physically it hurts us psychologically and makes us think to go by the sea and it is hard for us and all the problems are so difficult and some girl I know the problem that happens here and normal people live here and she think that she has to go by the sea and she died."

The individual experiences in this chapter are intended to give a more thorough account of the experiences of these two youths, who each experienced particular and

recurring security concerns. These cases are more serious than the common experience of youths, but also inform the common knowledge that youths have about what happens to those in their community. For both Mariam and Mohammed, their experiences of continued targeting by the perpetrators of their respective attempted kidnappings during unavoidable uses of public transportation had direct consequences on their livelihoods; Mariam could no longer go to work or school, Mohammed no longer has a stable living condition and has been socially excommunicated. Both youths experienced the psychological effects and social isolation of the change in their lives, having a negative effect beyond the immediate physical consequences. Their specific experiences demonstrate the broader themes of this chapter, how the security situation in Cairo (in their neighbourhoods, in transit, in their relationship with police and Egyptians overall) influence their ability to access their livelihoods and demonstrates the vulnerability context in which youths operate. For displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo, the vulnerability context that informs their access to livelihoods is primarily formed by their personal and collective experience of violence. Both the actual violence, and the threat of violence, informed their decisions to limit interactions outside their homes, becoming socially isolated, as well as the involuntary psychological effect 'fear' and insecurity. Despite the vulnerabilities that youth experience in Cairo, they nonetheless manage to enact their agentic capabilities to access livelihoods and survive.

Chapter 5: 'Route' to Cairo

Though this thesis focuses on the livelihood challenges of youths in Cairo, the social linkages youths made prior to arriving in Cairo, or 'en route', influenced their ability to access livelihoods in Cairo. This became most evident when youths were asked about how they met their current housemates. Thus, for youths, their ability to access livelihoods in Cairo is both negatively and positively impacted by their 'route' to Egypt. Though there are a variety of experiences in transit, some present more serious challenges. As a result, I will begin this section with Luwam's story. Though her experience is not necessarily the 'norm', it highlights the gender-based vulnerability experienced in transit with traffickers, as well as the broader themes described later in this chapter.

Individual Experience: Luwam

Luwam is 17 years old. She left Eritrea in April 2016 and stayed in Khartoum until January 2017 — she worked as a cleaner for a 'madame' while there. She decided to leave Khartoum to Cairo. She waited at the border of Sudan and Egypt with three other women, one who had a baby, one who was pregnant, and another independent youth. "[We] stayed at smugglers home one day and then they left for Aswan and they locked me in the door after 1 hour I am afraid and I shouted and then a man came to the house and took me somewhere, I'm not sure if he was Sudanese or Egyptian but I'm guessing he's Sudanese." He took her about an hour away from the smuggler's house they were at, but she did not know where she was. She explains, "I was changing from place to place in the tent passing two to three places, and [he] has a car and some smugglers came and

bring him food. Just the smugglers and no one else. At first he raped me and he hit me if I cried he used me body, he treated me like an animal and not like a person…I stayed for 2 months like this, I was so sick and shocked and couldn't eat and had fever and then he took me to the Aswan train station and took the train to Cairo. He left me when I was so sick. When I first came I met some people at the train and asked if they were Eritrean and speak Tigrinya. They are new but they take me to the church and one guy asks me and brings me to [name redacted] and tell him everything and he takes me to MSF." This boy from the church brought her to a community leader who helped her through the process of accessing services at Medecins sans Frontieres, as she had become pregnant from the repeated rapes. Luwam was highly distressed by her situation and did not want a baby. Her baby was due November 2017.

Though she is clearly one of the most vulnerable youths, she is still reliant on social networks for housing. Accessing aid in housing is difficult even in the most precarious situations. Luwam has a 'white paper' so she is not eligible to receive Caritas money. She avoids taking any form of transportation alone, but will walk if necessary, "I don't know places well so only if someone can take me and the problem with money" Luwam didn't know anyone in Cairo and found people to live with through the help of those she met in the first day at the church. "First I was living with many people and they were good to me and overage left to go to Libya then I lived with underage and they say I have to pay rent but I have no money so I try to find a job and that's when I go to the restaurant and talk to the woman." She then moved in with this woman she met in the restaurant but had only been there for a week or so when we spoke. Until that point, her

roommates did not ask her for rent, and shared food with her. She is unsure of how many others live in this apartment, but she believes it is mostly male Eritrean youths. In Luwam's difficult situation, she was reliant on the ability of others in her community, even if she did not know them personally. Though her experience is not necessarily typical, her reliance on the social support of her community is. Her specific experiences and vulnerabilities do not necessarily further her access to services or material goods. She didn't know anyone in her community before arriving, and is now completely reliant on them, more than any organization.

Diagram 7: Map of Main Points 'en route' from Eritrea to Cairo

(Google Maps 2018, Modified)

'Standard Route' From Eritrea to Cairo

Though Luwam's experience was out of the ordinary, there are some general trends in the migration experience that can be described. Based on interviews with youths, as well as the feedback from research assistants, there is a relatively 'standard' route that youths take to arrive in Egypt. The majority of youths walk from Eritrea to Sudan. Once in Sudan there are two options; go to Shagarab Camp in Kassala province and register with UNHCR, or go to Khartoum and 'hide'. Registering as a refugee and receiving assistance is only possible in camps in Sudan (Hovil & Oette, 2017, 47). Hovil & Oette's (2017) report details the unequivocal condemnation of the physical and security conditions in these camps by their participants — they described it as a smugglers camp where security forces sell refugees, or Eritrean security members take people away (ibid). This is also echoed in the Women Refugee Commission's (2013) report in which most Eritrean refugees do not remain in the camps and youths reported major concerns of "a real threat of kidnapping and forced abductions in Sudan; potential *refoulement* by the Sudanese government; and potential forced conscription by an Eritrean opposition movement in northern Ethiopia" (1). With this in mind, the majority of youths that arrive in Cairo do not go to Shagarab, but to Khartoum, where they do not register to get refugee status, and do not have assistance. From Khartoum they find a smuggler to take them over the border to Aswan in a "Toyota" pick-up truck with a tarp over the back, approximately a four-day journey (Field Notes, 8 July 2017). From Aswan, they take the train to Cairo. Only two of my participants went through Ethiopia, staying in Adi Harush camp (Int. 25, Int. 30). In conversations with other youths, they noted that

the border through Ethiopia is generally considered more dangerous than that with Sudan, thus the majority of Eritreans arriving in Cairo pass through Sudan. Overall, interviewees reported that the length of time their journey from Eritrea to Cairo, be it through Ethiopia or Sudan, was anywhere from two months to over a year. However, many did not have a plan to come to Cairo initially. There would also be additional delays, such as from being held for ransom by smugglers. Due to the length of time of the journey, and the potential obstacles they may encounter, youths may leave Eritrea under the age of 18, thus qualifying as unaccompanied youths, but may arrive in Cairo and able to register with UNHCR over 18, thus no longer able to qualify for financial assistance and/or other NGO programming for unaccompanied youths. This highlights that strict age categories for unaccompanied youths may overlook the length of the migration process and create an arbitrary barrier between a 'child' and an 'adult'.

A) Experiences in Eritrea

Though beyond the scope of this research thesis, some youths chose to share certain information about their experiences in Eritrea. Excluding this from my questions was deliberately intended to mitigate the possibility of re-traumatizing youths. However, though there is only a handful of cases to draw from in this study, it is important to honour their decision to share this and include it in here. For those who did choose to share these experiences, nearly all of them explained that at least one member of their immediate family members was missing, imprisoned, or had been killed by Eritrean security forces. Though the general reasons for leaving Eritrea is to escape the mandatory military service (see *Context*), these youths explained that there are also very specific

circumstances and problems that cause them to leave. Additionally, these conditions continue to occupy their mental space after arriving in Cairo. Thus, this selection of examples below highlights that, though there was not the intention of delving into their personal histories in Eritrea, but to explore their lives in Cairo, they independently decided to share these previous life experience and the effect it has had on their lives. Mohammed explains his experience

> "I did school in [redacted] but stopped because of the dictatorship who imprisoned my brother and my father. Because of the lack of money after their arrest, I went to work, and then I left for Sudan. They killed my brother. Problems started in 2015 and I decided to leave in 2016. After I entered Sudan I found other Eritreans and left right away for Egypt." (Int. 2)

Mohammed became the sole caregiver for himself after his father and brother were imprisoned. He no longer had access to money, and had to work for himself, after which point he left for Sudan for work. His arrival in Cairo was not necessarily premeditated but reflected those he happened to meet while in Sudan and his need to continue to be self-sufficient. The loss of a 'caregiver' or parental figure is a rather common experience. Fatima describes what happened to her and her younger siblings after her older siblings were no longer able to care for them,

> "My older sister died when she was raising us in Eritrea, and then we had to leave. My older brother raised us, then military came to take him and he couldn't leave us alone, and three times they (Eritrean government) sent us the letter and then they came to take him, and we then lived with uncle and he moved to Sudan then we followed him." (Int. 20)

Though Fatima left with her uncle, due to issues she did not wish to describe in detail, she did not migrate further with him. In this rushed circumstance, though she theoretically could rely on a 'parental' figure, they were unable to help her along the way,

and she did not arrive in Cairo with a firmly set plan. In Winta and Fiyori (Int. 22)'s experiences both of them had one of their parents imprisoned, and being unsure of the whereabouts of some of their family members;

> "I have a family problem I don't know where my father is from 4 years and I took my young sister along, but I don't know anything about my family now. After, [the government] took my mother to jail in Eritrea, then I came here, and sisters in Eritrea don't know but I'm not sure. My young sisters I left them at home [in Eritrea]." (Fiyori, Int. 22)

> "I want to tell you how I was living in Eritrea my mother she was sick and she died and they took my father to jail and they don't know anything about him. Then my brother went to Sudan, then to Libya and we don't know anything about him and I have three sisters younger then me in Eritrea and I don't know anything about them. I don't have their number to call in Eritrea." (Winta, Int. 22)

For Winta and Fiyori, they both described how concern about their siblings in Eritrea, and their family members whose whereabouts are unknown, constitute some of the major continuing concerns they have, even in Cairo. Overall, these examples elucidate some of the specificities of the challenges that youths face in Eritrea prior to leaving. Most include the loss of a parent or older sibling/caretaker, resulting in their becoming the caretakers. Therefore, for some youths, the 'independent' portion of 'displaced independent youths' precedes leaving Eritrea. Furthermore, this 'independence' can also be a motivating factor for leaving Eritrea after those family members who had been their caretakers were no longer present. Despite their difficult circumstances, they are not passive victims but enact their agency by being 'independent' in portions of their migration process, and react by making decisions based on what they encounter along the way. As much as this problem of the youth exodus of Eritrea is systematic, it is also based in individual experiences which influence their decisions during and after migration in complex ways.

Their complex circumstances prior to migration can also elucidate why youths in Cairo did not have much information, or a plan about their destination preceding departure.

b) Sudan

Though youths had a variety of experiences in Sudan, the majority interviewed stayed in Khartoum for a period before going through the border with smugglers. The length of time in Khartoum ranged from one week to over a year. Approximately half of those who were in Khartoum worked while there, mostly as cleaners for 'madames', or in the homes of wealthy families (Int. 12, Int. 17). Participants who were in Shagarab camp before coming to Cairo were usually there for a shorter amount of time than those in Khartoum, around one to three months.

They also noted certain concerns about life in Sudan, broadly regarding staying 'in hiding' from the Sudanese security forces who were said to deport Eritreans. Some alleged that the Sudanese forces were working for the Eritrean government. Hovil & Oette's (2017) report supports these claims that there is a threat of arbitrary arrest by Sudanese security forces and refoulement (11). There has been a trend towards crackdowns on displaced Eritrean and Ethiopian populations in Sudan (ibid). The Sudanese government tasked its Rapid Support Forces (RSF)— it's paramilitary force mostly used for counter-insurgency in Darfur, an semi-autonomous force under the control of the Sudanese Armed Forces, accused of war crimes and human rights violations — with elements of it's border control, which is highly controversial (ibid). Omar describes his experience in Sudan,

> "I didn't know I wanted to come to Cairo when I left Eritrea. When I was in Sudan the government made us fear and said to pay them money or go to Eritrea.

> The governments go to town and look for strangers and take their money and if you're Eritrean they make you go back to Eritrea. Because of this I decided with my friend to go to Egypt or to Libya." (Int. 23)

Similarly, the Women's Refugee Commission Report (2013), found that "regular police round-ups, reported deportations and general harassment from the Sudanese community mean that if means are available, the refugees move on." (18). Though it is possible to find work in Khartoum, and some youths did so, mostly working as cleaners, many stay in order to make money to proceed in their journeys. There were also concerns of being kidnapped and held for ransom in Libya, as Haile explains;

> "In Sudan it is a bad situation and some Eritreans have Sudanese going into their homes and taking them to Libya even if you don't want to go and force you to ask your family for money, even if don't plan it. This is a bad situation because if they arrest you they have your documents and they can break it and so they make you give the government money" (Int. 29)

The perception of the threat from traffickers, and from Sudanese security forces were most often cited as the reasons for leaving. The desire to leave Sudan due to these security concerns did not necessarily mean that they wanted to go to Egypt.

A few youths also cited more personal reasons for leaving Sudan. Hanna described an altercation with extended family members;

> "At first in Khartoum I was with my uncle and my family and something happened to them and I fought with them and from this time I do not trust anyone. I left Eritrea with my uncle and family and then something happened and separate from them. They are not in Cairo." (Int. 6)

Though she did not elaborate further, these personal reasons in Sudan were clearly an important factor in her leaving to Egypt. Rahel, is Eritrean, but born in Sudan (Int. 15). Orphaned at a young age, she grew up with her aunt (aged around 10 years her senior), and her young cousin. She explains why she left Khartoum, "my first thought was to go

to Europe to help them [her aunt and cousin] but I was wrong and it was not good. I thought it would be easy". Rahel wanted to leave Sudan to be able to financially support her aunt, who had supported her since her mother died. Rahel enacts her agentic capabilities to not only help herself, but with the intention of improving the situation for her aunt, who is an 'adult', though she is a 'child'. Though
their family relationships differed, Rahel and Hanna both migrated in their own right as agents of their own well-being, guided by their circumstance, but not victims of it.

In highlighting the interplay of personal factors, as well as those more generally experienced by displaced youths in Sudan (threats from Eritrean security forces, and Sudanese forces), my research intends to de-homogenize the experience of 'independence' of independent displaced youths, as at different stages in their migration they may be more, or less 'independent'. Youths do not experience a univalent state of being throughout their entire migration process, which influenced their decision-making strategies overall; Rahel intended to migrate past Cairo, but it was too difficult, Hanna migrated with her uncle, a 'caregiver' who was unable to care for her, Omar explained his decision to go to Egypt with a friend he met since he did not feel safe in Sudan. Their state of 'independence' varied throughout their route from Eritrea to Cairo based on external factors such as family relations (both positive and negative), and friends they met who helped them manage their experiences of insecurity. These cases serve as examples of the complexities of the experience of 'independence' not just at their point of asylum, but the variations that occur along the way, and in Cairo, that influence their decision-making and experiences.

c) Expectations about Cairo

Prior to leaving Eritrea, most youths described that they did not know anything about Cairo or Egypt, but that this was usually due to what they heard from friends or people they met in Sudan. The most common reasons for leaving Sudan were threefold, hearing about the services of UNHCR in Cairo, friends leaving for Cairo, and/or the dangerous situation in Sudan (see above). Dawit explained "I only came here because I heard from some guys that there is a UNHCR." (Int.11). Similarly, Petros and Amanuel explained "(Petros:)I heard from people that there is a UNHCR in Cairo. (Amanuel") I heard the same thing" (Int. 12). Mary and Haile (respectively) describe their experiences;

> "I had no plan to come to Cairo, life in Sudan was hard and some were talking saying they were coming to Cairo so I just came here. They talked of UNHCR in Cairo and when I came here no one can help me. In Sudan I preferred to come here." (Int.19)

> "I didn't think of Cairo when I left Eritrea. I was told it by friends in Khartoum who say Egypt is better than Sudan, they say it is a safe place, not like Sudan where at night they will take you. They take you and send you to Eritrea. They said Egypt is nice and safe and the UN will help you and you will be resettled and have your freedom in Cairo so I expected many things I didn't get. What I expected I got the opposite." (Int.29)

In these previous examples, youths described that their expectations about Cairo stemmed from others specifically sharing this information with them. Conversely, Mohammed explains that they sought out the information about Cairo.

> "No one told me about information but I got the information myself and in Sudan. I expected organizations to help refugees but refugees themselves have to find the information." (Int.2)

Though the sources of information differed, overall, they expected that there would be support systems for them in Cairo — these expectations were not met, as will be

demonstrated in the *Living Situation* section. The Women's Refugee Commission (2013) report contextualizes that a limitation in sharing travel plans was due to the telecommunications restrictions in Eritrea, as well as generally poor phone connections, and youths would leave hoping to join relatives eventually (15). Family support 'en route' to Cairo did not come up in interviews, some noted that they would like to meet up with some family members abroad, even though they did not necessarily know where they were.

d)Smugglers/Traffickers

Another factor that influenced the lives of youths in Cairo were the diversity of experiences with their smugglers/traffickers. Youths migrate from Sudan to Egypt through smugglers whom they pay for this transportation. Though "smuggling is illegal, by definition those who opt to use smugglers choose to do so…smugglers are often seen effectively as travel agents or service providers – or possibly even as humanitarians – inasmuch as they help people to flee the country and then continue their journey" (Hovil & Oette 2017, 13). However, smugglers can turn on their clients, kidnap, abuse and/or extort them for money in order to continue on their journey (ibid). At this point, there is the distinction between smuggling and trafficking, which are different crimes often distinguished by the issues of consent (in trafficking cases they have not consented), exploitation (in trafficking cases there is ongoing exploitation, not necessarily ending after the point of arrival), and transnationality (trafficking can occur both within and between national boundaries) (ibid). However, most youths would use the term smuggler for both cases of smuggling and trafficking.

The experiences of youths with smugglers varied from the expected hardships of the journey (thus, relatively neutral), to the relationship with the smugglers turning to one of being trafficked (either by being held for ransom at the border between Egypt and Sudan), to being kidnapped, physical and sexual assault (though there is overlap in these categories). One surprising finding (elaborated upon in subsequent sections) was that the social linkages with others en route could also help mitigate the negative effects of dealing with the smugglers.

Some youths described being held for ransom near the border between Sudan and Egypt, sometimes being unsure of their exact location on either side. Sammy explained; "[He] took us to Aswan and then asked for money – took 1 month and we don't know where we are after my cousin gave them the money it took like 2 months" (Int. 5). He told me that his cousin lives in Germany, who had not previously supported him, but at the border, they called him and he sent the money for them to release him — he does not know the amount they received. Omar noted similar experience of family members being extorted;

> "On the way to Egypt with the smugglers when they took us to Sudan they captured us in a small house and told us to pay money and call our family in Eritrea to pay, say will, help us. They tortured us until they received the money. From Sudan to Egypt, for 15 days in that house near border." (Int. 23)

Saba told me of their poor treatment and conditions with the smugglers more broadly;

> "I remember the biggest thing for me was that on the way, from the smugglers, they hit us and we didn't have any food or water. We were trapped in and mistreated then same from Sudan to here and smugglers mistreat you and hit you." (Int.8)

These instances of physical assault were both for no particular reason, as well as part of extorting them for more money. Aziz, a 17 year old boy, described his experience with the traffickers continuing after arriving in Cairo.

> "When I escaped from Eritrea in Sudan, UNHCR registered and didn't give you any services, or RST and they can't care for you. Me and a group of people collected in a place through smugglers. I didn't have any money, but that I have an uncle who will pay if I get in Cairo. When I came here told me to give money and I said it will take 2 or 3 days but they weren't patient with me and they took a knife and called my uncle to the phone and said they would kill me and made noise in the call with the knife." (Int. 14)

Two days later, they received the money from his uncle in Sudan. As he was living with the smugglers during this time in Cairo waiting for the money, they agreed to take him to Europe; "Smugglers always take 7000 LE[14] and they took from me 5000 LE and they deceived me and broke the agreement and didn't take me. They disappeared from the place with my 5000 LE." (Int. 14). The traffickers extorted them for money from their extended family, as well as taking their money without completing the trip.

There were also experiences of sexual assault by smugglers. When asked about her biggest problem in Cairo, Fiyori, a 15 year old girl, living in Cairo for over six months, began to cry and explained "Problem was on the way coming — when I was coming I didn't get someone to pay for me and they raped me." (Int. 22). Though I deliberately chose not to pry further to elaborate on whether it was an inability to pay for the asked fee, or for additional ransom, Fiyori self-described this experience as one of her biggest problems in Cairo. The effects of this experiences continue into her time in Cairo.

[14] Approximately 510 Canadian Dollars.

Ali's experience of migrations was the most complicated of those I encountered. Ali was 11 years old at the time that I spoke to him, but left Eritrea nearly a year prior. He left through the Ethiopian border, spending some time in the Adi-Harush camp, then followed a group of young Eritreans to another region in Ethiopia, then to Sudan. In Sudan, they were apprehended by traffickers and asked for 1600 $ (the currency, other than dollars, was not specified). He wanted to leave due to the difficult conditions, but was then taken to Aswan, he described,

> "When I arrived in Aswan they asked me for money but those who arrived some paid and some escaped, after one month let me go after crying all the time. They let me leave with an Oromo man who came, then I went to Maadi with him, He got a number from Sudan of an Eritrean and told them he had a young Eritrean boy and he took me to where I am living now. It was somebody he knew in Sudan, a friend of a friend." (Int. 30).

Though he explained this journey with difficulty, and could not exactly remember a timeline of sorts, overall his explanation of the relationship to smugglers was a difficult one in which he was held ransom for money for over a month until they let him leave in Aswan. He was dependent on the kindness of someone who was not Eritrean, but Ethiopian, and did not share a common language to help him find links in Cairo.

Kedija described her experience being helped by other travellers. She describes that due to her poor health in transit (which continues to be unresolved in the year since arriving in Cairo as she does not have the money for medication), it was thanks to her previously unknown fellow travellers that she had help to get through her trip,

> "On the way I had health problems and I didn't deal much with smugglers because of my health. While going from Eritrea to Sudan the girls helped me but from Sudan to Egypt it was more difficult for them to help me because it was a more difficult trip." (Int. 27).

Her social links en route (see below for additional) protected her from the problems of dealing with the smugglers. Furthermore, the help of her fellow passengers also continued to their arrival in Cairo; she lives with them and they support her financially until this time.

e) *Arriving in Cairo*

Despite the variety of occurrences from Sudan to Cairo influencing their experiences, there were some commonalities. One such was the difference between their expectation of who would help them in Cairo, and the reality once there. Echoing the comments of the previous section, the main experience upon arriving in Cairo is relying on others, specifically fellow Eritreans, for help. Another commonality was the experience of asking strangers at the Ramses train station in Cairo. Youths would take the train from Aswan, up the Nile until they reached Cairo. Mohamed and Mebrihit (respectively) describe their experiences arriving at Ramses,

> "I got information in Sudan, I heard groups of Eritreans in Ard el Lewa and when I left Sudan I went through the South and here I asked Eritreans and Egyptians where Ard el Lewa was, but when I came here I didn't think Eritreans would help me, but organization [referring to organizations like UNHCR], I was surprised." (Int. 2)

> "First when I got here I found a black man who wasn't Egyptian and asked him for Eritrean places and he took me to Faisal and went to the people he made me meet there and then lived with them. After that I registered with UNHCR and then Caritas gave me money then to Ard el Lewa. Maybe he was Sudanese but when I saw he was black I thought he might know of Eritrea but I think maybe Sudanese. He knew Eritrean people and took me to the ones he knew. I stayed living with them about 8 months. 4 people, they are adults, 2 are 23 and the other are like 35. These people helped me go to UNHCR and to Caritas to get money and financial support." (Int. 5).

Relying on the good will and knowledge of strangers also involves certain vulnerabilities. Mebrihit's experience demonstrates that the need to ask strangers for support can have a positive outcome of finding people to live with. However, in the experience of Omar, it took him one month to find someone who could bring him to a home, resulting in temporary homelessness;

> "When I came to Egypt I lived in the street for one month. At the time, I was a newcomer and I didn't know of any places. Finally, one Eritrean saw me and took me to 6th October. When I came in Egypt my friends from Sudan when their own way and I was alone in the street. Would take things from different places to stay alive. I was in different places in the train station. When in the street I asked Egyptians to help me but didn't, go in the mosque — people who helped me were just walking in the street." (Int.23)

In the case of Hamid, they described that the smugglers took them to the entrance stairs of Ard el Lewa, "When smugglers took us to Ramsis, to Lewa, once you get down the stairs they leave you and if you are not smart anything can happen to you and be taken" (Int. 21). He explains that he went to the café and spoke to Eritreans, leading to his living with four Eritreans, "they take you with them to the house to know everything, and take you to UN and write the form with them, and to organisations but then if you are not underage you have to work to pay for house" (Int. 21). His experiences accessing services in Cairo were entirely reliant on those in his community whom he met when he arrived at the café in Ard el Lewa. These experiences demonstrate the variety of encounters that can result from the dependence on strangers when arriving in Cairo. Their expectation of finding organizations that would support them were unfulfilled, and their need to rely on others for access to their basic needs such as housing and food.

f)Social Linkages 'en route'

For some youths, their social linkages on the route from Eritrea to Cairo were most formative to their experience accessing their basic needs upon arrival. In some cases, youths met people en route who would become the core of their social network in Cairo. Rahwa describes how she met other youths on the way, who knew someone in Cairo, and that person helped both of them;

> "We knew one person, my friend's cousin and when we first came in Cairo they accepted then they took us to UNHCR and registered and he asked some brokers to help us rent a house. He was like 30 something. When first we went to UNHCR office they told us about Isaaf [StARS] and asked some people to go to Isaaf registered and started school." (Int. 10)

From these accounts, the social linkages 'en route' can be seminal to their livelihood strategies in Cairo. Fadi describes a similar experience;

> "All the people who came with me went on boat. Now I only know my roommates. No one told me or helped me to live in Cairo, I speak a bit of Arabic. The guy who came with me knew other people so I went with them." (Int. 13)

As they did not know someone themselves, they relied on the social networks of their fellow displaced youths to find somewhere to live. Though all of Fadi's initial contacts left in by boat in the Mediterranean, they led to finding his current main social network, his roommates. Others also describe that those they met continue to be social presences in their lives; "I met people on the way and I still know them here, they are like us and overage." (Int.12, A). Similarly, in Hanna's experience, "At first I came with many people and they rented a house, then we didn't agree with each other then I started school and I met these people and joined them" (Int. 6). The links she made en route enabled her initial housing situation, before meeting others in the education program at StARS to

move in with. These social links facilitated her agentic capabilities amidst the difficulties of her experience en route.

Conclusion

The livelihood strategies of displaced independent youths in Cairo cannot be understood without examining their situation before arriving in Cairo. The findings in this section demonstrate that the experiences of youths 'en route' from Eritrea to Cairo affect their livelihood strategies in Cairo. This 'standard route' is intended to demonstrate that, among youths, there is a 'common knowledge' of sorts about how youths arrive in Cairo and their prior experiences, but inevitably there are variations for each individual. Most aspects of the journey are described as a 'matter of luck'. This 'luck' determines who arrives in Cairo. This self-described 'luck' factor applied to whether or not they were caught by Sudanese security forces, or by plainclothes Eritrean government members in Sudan, to if their smugglers treated them relatively well or assaulted them, to if they asked the right person at the train station upon arrival or could not find anywhere to live. Their experiences en route are notable not only because of the route itself, but also because of the effect that has on their lives in Cairo. Their social linkages frequently form the backbone of their networks after they arrive there. Thus, their route from Eritrea to Cairo can be understood within the livelihoods framework as both informing their vulnerability context (through negative experiences that continue upon arrival), and influence their ability to access assets, especially social networks (and potentially housing through these social links).

Chapter 6: Living Situation

One of the key livelihoods issues facing displaced independent Eritrean youth is housing. For all youths, housing situations involve navigating complex social and spatial relations. According to Hendriks (2010) in studying urban livelihoods, space can be characterized "both as ways to conceive or perceive opportunities for engagement to organise a livelihood and as actual sites that are attended and used by the poor." (paraphrased in de Haan 2012, 351). For youths, households are both this engagement in their livelihoods and the sites they use, social and spatial. Spatially, this relationship it is both the external location of the apartment in the city (see Security), and the internal space of the apartment.

This chapter explores one of the key findings of my research; that displaced independent Eritrean youths in Cairo are primarily able to negotiate their livelihoods through their housemates. Furthermore, their housemates were frequently their only source of support in Cairo, regardless of whether or not they were in a position to provide support themselves, be it financial, psychosocial, or knowledge-sharing.

Spatial

Most youths described feelings of isolation, and self-described as deciding to stay home all day instead of facing the problems on the street (see *Security)*. It is useful to include considerations of the space in which most youths spend the majority of their time, their apartment, and not only their broader spatial relations in the city. As several of the spatial considerations of housing have already been covered in the *Security* section, I will draw on my Field Notes to elaborate particularly on describing the apartments and

buildings themselves. I will use the compounded versions of my Field Notes in this section, excluding specific dates and pseudonyms, to protect the privacy of participants.

Of the approximately fifteen apartments I visited in Ard el Lewa, there were inevitably variations in the quality of the living space, though overall, they tended to be quite low. Youth's apartments were generally over cramped, between four and eight persons, usually in a two-bedroom apartment, occasionally apartments had beds in the common areas as well. In some apartments, I would count more people living in the apartment than spaces in beds (counting a double bed as fitting two people at least). The furniture was often limited to a few folding chairs, or plastic chairs, occasionally there would be couches or other pieces of furniture that were relatively run-down. Most apartments had small, old televisions, which were frequently left on playing the state-owned, Eritrean National television channel, Eri-TV. During one interview, Eri-TV showed the high school graduation of youths in Asmara. One person commented that what the government channel doesn't show you is that all these people have nothing after, and that next year they will be here in Ard el Lewa. Apartments in which all the members were Roman Catholic had iconographic religious representations, mostly of the Virgin Mary, in the form of a paper poster, a quilt or stitched photo hanging on the wall, or sometimes a photo in a frame. One home with mixed Christian and Muslim housemates had a framed Muslim blessing in Arabic calligraphy by the door.

Most apartments were located off of narrow alleyways, anywhere between less than two meters wide, to able to fit nearly two cars, tightly. In one apartment building, off an alleyway in Ard el Lewa, there were piles of garbage on the ground floor whose odour

wafted upwards into the entire building, the stairs had steps that were jagged and unfinished, and poorly lit, making it difficult to walk up. Piles of garbage in, or near the doorways to apartment buildings were relatively common and can present obvious health concerns during the especially hot months.

Moving

Many youths expressed wanting to move out of Ard el Lewa, and change apartments but explained that this was almost impossible due to their lack of funds. Moving apartments is also the main recommendation given by organizations to youths in Cairo facing problems in their neighborhood or with housemates. However, logistically, this is often very difficult, if not nearly impossible — most practitioners in organizations are fully aware of this but lack further resources to aid them (Field Notes, 9 August 2017). It is usually less difficult to leave one apartment as an individual to join another one that is already formed, not having to pay the deposit. Some youths explained that they were able to move apartments upon meeting other youths in the UYBP program. Sometimes Eritrean brokers are used because they "know who has rooms in the house" (Int. 10). Rahwa also explains "all same story as Eritreans if we want to rent house we rent by sharing, when two or one people find house we find another people". However, most youths also expressed that they do not really socialize with others outside of their apartment, as it is difficult to find others people to share an apartment with. Thus, despite the difficulties of the spatial considerations of their living situation both externally, as regards their sense of security, and internally, as regards the physical space of their apartment, moving is not necessarily a solution to these difficulties. Youths try to manage

the vulnerabilities of their spaces by enacting their agency and overall staying in their apartments. Furthermore, though difficult, they also try to improve their living situation whenever possible.

Social

The main means of understanding the social dimension of the housing situation of youths is through their housemates. As previously explained in the *Route* section, frequently, finding housing and housemates can be facilitated or hindered through their social linkages 'en route'. Broadly, the relationships of youths to their housemates fell on a spectrum of being close with them and relying on them, to being near strangers to them. However, regardless of how close they are their housemates were frequently the only persons on whom they could rely for any support, other than strangers. Trying to quantify the specificities of their living arrangements quickly proved to be a complicated task, as it often necessitated explanation of previous apartments and/or housemates and was a tedious task for youths to describe. Additionally, they did not always know the exact age or ethno-religious group of their housemates, which in itself is important to note. Despite these challenges, one useful means of analyzing the social relationships within housing units can be through the lens of varying markers of identity, and the means of support (or not) between housemates that influenced their ability to secure their livelihoods.

1-Characteristics of Household Makeup:

a)Age: Terminology

Prior to delving into the relational aspects of youth households and livelihoods, it is necessary to clarify some of the terminologies used by youths and in this thesis. Youths themselves drew on the chronological age-based categories of 'underage'

and 'overage'[15], referring to those who are below or above the chronological age of 18 years old. Those who are 'underage' qualify as 'UCY' (or unaccompanied youths), and youths use this acronym even if they do not speak English. This category primarily means they are eligible for Caritas funding through UNHCR, and education services at StARS, while those who are 'overage' are not eligible. Though there may be other implications on the usage of these terms, this is their primary meaning, beyond the difference in chronological age. These categorizations are based on the social construction of meaning imbued in these age categorizations, but they also have tangible effects on their negotiation of access to resources. External actors, especially UNHCR as the arbiter of refugee status determination and access to Caritas funding, uphold and reinforce the meaning behind these categories. Though this study used a relational, inclusive approach to youth categorizations, youths themselves drew this distinction between "overage" and 'underage' or 'UCY'. As a result, specifically as it pertains to their housing situation, I adopt their language for this section. However, to the best of my ability during the interviews I attempted to distinguish what age-range 'overage' meant; such as in the early 20s range, over 30s range – usually using the marker of marriage or having children or other indications of being in a different life stage. Another distinction I attempted to draw in the use of the term 'overage' would be to find if the 'overage' were 'aged-out UCY'. 'Aging-out' refers to those who were recently 'UCY' but have since reached the

[15] I was, however, unable to further investigate the pre-migration application of overage/underage for Eritrean youths. Since mandatory military service in Eritrea begins at age 18, youths may already be predisposed to a more chronological age based distinction in age that is imbued with the meaning from external actors.

legal age of majority and are no longer eligible for child protections (Field Notes). 'Aging out' is mostly used in refugee literature about the refugee status determination, and age determination process, which generally focuses on the Global North perspective (Crawley 2007, Silverman 2016). Silverman's (2016) study analyzes the developing phenomenon she cynically terms 'imposter-children' in the UK's RSD system — she argues that this category is being "discursively constructed to justify popular and official suspicion of spontaneously arriving child asylum-seekers" (30). She further notes that this creation can be linked to diminishing welfare safeguards for young people and examines why the normative belief that "non-citizens no longer deserve protection from the harshest enforcement once they 'age-out' of minor status" (30). Also focusing on the UK, Crawley's (2007) report emphasises that there is a 'culture of disbelief' towards separated asylum seeking children and youth (26), and documents the negative effects of an RSD process on age disputed children, and their fears of reaching the age of majority, as 'aging-out' can result in the end of their protections from detention or removal from the UK. Robinson & Williams (2015) study of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK notes the "sharp demarcation between the treatment of asylum-seekers determined as either over or under eighteen and they have access to very different services" (86). In a similar vein, 'aging out' is also commonly used in literature about Foster Care, to refer to those who have aged-out of the foster care system, most literature examines the challenges they face (Scannapieco et al. 2007, Atkinson 2008). Atkinson defines the term 'age-out' as "the termination of court jurisdiction over foster care youths" (183). Atkinson (2008) specifically argues that the 'aging-out' process needs to

be reformed since "these youths, for whom the state assumes responsibility and then abandons at an arbitrary age, are our most vulnerable youths and deserve the state's support as they make the important and difficult transition into adulthood" (212). Though foster care, and displaced independent youths are different (the former focusing on citizens, the latter non-citizens), the similarity is that 'aging-out' is the process by which they 'officially' become responsible for themselves, and in it's critical accounts. In both sets of literature, they also document the deleterious effects on youths of aging out.

b) Typology of Household Makeup

With these definitional aspects in mind, overall, the types of household structures could be broadly broken into four main groupings. The main category, which comprised the majority of the households in this study is, "youths living with youths" which can be subdivided into "UCY living with UCY", and "UCY living with 'overage'". Approximately six youths were in the category of "Youths living with Adults", where in the distinction of 'adulthood' the adults having children or being married, or generally seeming to be at a different stage in the life cycle. "Youths living with older siblings/adults" is a small group of those I spoke with. The final group is "Very young UCY, living with older UCY/ 'aged-out' UCY". These groupings are used to create a greater understanding of the breakdown of household structures in this study and explore any major differences or similarities therein. The emergent finding across these categories is that youths, whether UCY or not, do not necessarily benefit from living with those who are chronologically older than them and qualify as 'adults', as they do not necessarily have the financial resources to support them. Conversely, in some cases, 'UCY' are the ones supporting 'aged-out' UCY who are now chronological adults, and

no longer receive Caritas funding. Furthermore, these findings suggest that the closest social relationships youths have are with those they live with, and their well-being, both financial and socially, is influenced by the well-being of their housemates. Despite their housemates often being their closest social relationships, this does not inevitably indicate that they have a positive relationship with them. Their main means of finding people to change apartments with is through meeting others in UYBP, or asking strangers (usually on the street). This is not to suggest that there are not other means of building social relationships or meeting potential housemates (such as participating in education programs), but that, overall, they have difficulty building strong social networks due to the prevalence of isolation within their apartment as a means of self-protection from the difficulties they encounter in the street (see *Security*)

1) Youths Living with Youths: UCY living with UCY

Most youths did not only live with other UCY. In this section I include households where their housemates recently turned 18, or were described as 18 or 19. Aziz (Int. 14) lives in Ard el Lewa with six boys, one of whom is recently 18. He had changed apartments three time, from Faisal, and knew two of his housemates from his previous apartment. He met some of his housemates in UYBP, and some in the neighbourhood in Ard el Lewa.

> "In the apartment there are two Tigrinya (Christian), two Bilen (one Christian, one Muslim), two Tigre and one Afar (Muslim). So 7 in total with me. I have yellow card and get Caritas and it is 3 of us who get Caritas. Some have relatives who support them. Sometimes we share the rent in the house, food and clothes. Those who have more finances can help us. None are working…Sometimes we collect money together and rent 2000 LE and those money collected do priority of rent, then buy food from market. Some pay more, some pay less. All of us have some responsibility, all are decision makers, each individual responsible has a

> responsibility if wants to eat with us or outside, all can do what want, all independent."

Though all but one are UCY, only three of them receive Caritas funding, and the others have to rely on outside remittances. Overall, they are able to be flexible as to how much each contributes to the collective finances of the household. He also describes the social dynamics with his housemates,

> "Generally I don't have a strong social group but I have those living with me I trust them and they trust me, I encourage them and they encourage me. We support each other and live in peace."

However, unlike many other youths I spoke with, Aziz was rather sociable outside of his household as well, he explains,

> "I spend my time with friends going to Gamet el Dewal[16] meeting people who live there to enjoy and be happy and to specific places for watching football match in a café, [name redacted, in Ard el Lewa] we watch TV match and return back to our home. I choose [name redacted] because it is cheap, a tea is 2 [17]LE, coffee 2.5 LE and they give you free water if you order."

Despite being generally sociable outside of his own household, he nonetheless describes his housemates as his closest social relations. He specifically describes the two housemates with whom he had previously lived in Faisal as his closest friends, "those are most family friends, I ask them for advice and have close relation even though we have other friends introduced from school". In Aziz's household they are all UCY, and depend on each other both financially and socially, even if he isn't necessarily as socially isolated in his apartment as is often the case for other youths. Securing their own livelihoods can

[16] Gamat el-Dewal (alternatively spelled Gameat ad Dewal) is a major street in the neighbourhood of Mohandessin with a large 'Midan' or square along it, and other smaller green patches along the street where people will gather, sit about and 'hang out'.
[17] At the time of the interviews, 2LE is equivalent to approximately 0.15 Canadian dollars.

often only be accomplished through the support of their housemates, even if their housemates are their same age and face similar challenges.

In the case of Winta and Fiyori (Int. 22), they also lived with almost all UCY or having turned 18, but had different experiences. Both knew each other in Eritrea but arrived to Cairo separately, and did not know that the other was in Cairo. They live together in one room with two other girls, and in the other room are five boys, all of their housemates are Tigrinya and Orthodox or Catholic. Both of them first lived with those with whom they had arrived in Cairo. Fiyori's housemate with whom she arrived from Shagarab camp in Sudan, then left Cairo for Libya, therefore she had to move. Winta explained their dynamic in the household;

> "All of us pay the same amount – we have to pay. All of us pay even in food. If one make today another make tomorrow. Cleaning the same. The boys don't cook and clean. Always the boys sleep and in the night the boys they are awake and in the day sleep and girls vice versa. The boys don't work get Caritas. If the boys wake up they clean and cook."

Though it was somewhat difficult to understand these contrary factors in this statement, further explanation indicated that the boys in her house would sleep all day, and if they needed something while the girls were asleep at night, they would do it themselves. They are each responsible to cover their own portion, unlike in Aziz's household. However, Winta and Fiyori don't have an especially close relationship with their other housemates;

> "Not really just us two, don't have other friends. No one else to rely on. When I wake up I come to class then we sit and chat together then after that I go to meeting or appointment, in the house we stay. Together we do the same thing. Don't trust other Eritreans here. We don't know them that's why. Only we go on Sunday to church, church in Ard el Lewa. No we don't have the card until now but we will get it. We heard that it is 50 LE. Don't make any friend with people in church."

From the interview itself it was clear that they were very close to each other and relied on each other for psycho-social support. When asked about their greatest problems in Cairo, they both began to tear up as Fiyori explained her experience being raped en route to Cairo (see Route section), and Winta explained her problems with her missing family members. They described that they basically do everything together, from going to church and trying to find employment,

> "We were coming back from the work and Egyptians took our mobiles at 11 pm, two months ago. We were working in Lewa in a café. We left the work, not working now because they hit us and take our mobile when we come back from the work. Worked there just two days."

Their experience with work, and the problems with that experience were also shared, and they relied primarily on each other to deal with these experiences of assault in Cairo. They further describe living in Cairo in this sense, "it's like we are in jail, we are not going out. We hate it because we don't have any freedom. It is hard for the girls, a boy he can leave when he wants." Winta and Fiyori explain their limited ability to leave their home due to their experiences of harassment. Though they found work, their negative experience afterwards became a hindrance to their ability to do so, and translated into the other aspects of their lives in becoming 'jail'-like. In their experience living with other UCY, Wenta and Fiyori were only able to depend on each other, not on all those in their household.

These two interviews were chosen in this section to provide complementary accounts and are by no means intended to provide conclusive examples of all their experiences. These examples, however, are rather representative, based in this study, of the gender-based dynamic. Young women were much more likely to stay home, and

isolate themselves in their apartment, compared to boys. Though not all boys are necessarily as sociable as Aziz, and still experienced being harassed, boys were more likely to socialize in a café, or in the street in the neighbourhood, or in the 'midan' in a nearby neighbourhood. During interviews in Ard el Lewa, though I would not be there past nine o'clock pm, there would be no women (of any nationality) sitting in the cafes, but there would be young Eritrean men (Field Notes). I only saw young women occasionally in the indoor Eritrean cafes, sometimes in small groups or with a friend. Overall, based on my observations and interviews, young women were more likely to experience this 'jail-like' experience that Winta and Fiyori described, and be dependent on their close housemates for support, while young boys, like Aziz, had more opportunities to widen his social networks. Accessing spaces within the neighborhood, in this case Ard el Lewa, was gendered both for Egyptians and displaced populations. Whereas boys had the possibility of interacting in public spaces, in cafes or in the street, girls were generally excluded from this 'hanging out' on the steps of buildings, on street corners, etc. Though many boys decided to isolate themselves socially within their apartment, nearly all the girls de facto did so, limiting their presence to private, or domestic spaces. As a result, it is important to consider the gendered access to public space in informing their need to have strong social relations their housemates, and ability to seek the support of other Eritreans they did not know in the street.

2) Youths Living with Youths: UCY living with 'Overage'

Most youths who live with other youths fall into this 'mixed-age' category, with many housemates being those who recently 'aged-out'. Petros, 17, and Amanuel, 15, (Int.

12) live together with six others (five boys, one girl) all of whom are slightly older, in their early 20s. Amanuel had lived in another apartment in Ard el Lewa, but there were "a lot of people who don't understand each other so asked someone, I talked to [Petros] and that's how I came to live here. [Petros] lived here since he got here. [Petros] is someone I knew before and brought me here. There are 8 people living here with us." Amanuel was able to leave his more complicated housing situation since he knew Petros from Eritrea, and joined his apartment. Petros described that when he first arrived, "my housemates taught us many things, how to buy, they tell us everything because we don't understand Arabic. Housemates took me to UNHCR." Petros' ability to negotiate his access to his needs upon arriving in Cairo was mediated by his housemates' ability to support him by sharing life skills. Petros further explained "Many [Egyptians] beat us and take our phone and money – [this is] why we don't go more outside in our home…. we are talking in our house because mates give us advice on what we have to do it is very helpful". Petros describes both the self-imposed isolation from the outside world due to security concerns, as well as this primary dependence on his housemates for advice. Petros explained the different aspects of how their household functions, and their relationship:

> "Everybody works together and helps each other. We divide the work if two clean, one cooks and others bring things from outside. They're all older, mostly 22, some are working, all boys but one girl in the house. We are all sharing in rent and in food. If there is something that happens we discuss it and they give us advice. We play and talk to each other but it's not like the housemates. We just see them in the home, watch TV and discuss. I made friends, still see them from UYBP. I see them mostly in church and on the street sometimes. I go on Friday and Sunday in church. We both know people from church, especially people in UYBP that know in church and discuss."

Though Petros and Amanuel have some social relations outside of this household, through their church and education in UYBP, their housemates still comprise of the majority of those on whom they rely for resource sharing in the household and taking advice.

Haile, 16, (Int. 29) had recently moved into a new apartment on Sudan Street, from Ain Shams. He now lives with six other boys, who are Tigrinya, either Catholic or Orthodox, most of whom he met in UYBP, but some are also 'overage', in their 20s. He is Orthodox but does not describe himself as religious. Three of his housemates were from his previous apartment in Ain Shams. He describes the dynamic in their household,

> "We share in rent and food and cleaning. We pay for someone if he has serious problems, and stop ourselves of our own things. We will eat less times per day to pay for him because the rent is most important. One is working in the house and is overage."

Haile explains that they consciously 'cover' and make sacrifices for each other financially if they encounter problems and ration their money collectively. Skipping meals to pay for rent is an unsustainable strategy, though sometimes necessary. Even though he has an 'overage' housemate, who luckily also has a job, this does not preclude him and his other 'UCY' housemates from financial, and physical, strain — Haile still shares his Caritas money within the household. Haile describes how the experience of leaving the house makes him stay in,

> "You can't do anything, if you want to defend yourself and speak you can't. when you go home, you think and it makes you stressed. You can't go out because you have your own problems and then you go out and you have more problems like it — it's better to stay in with the TV. But sometimes I go out for a bit."

Though he does occasionally leave the house, he explains how the majority of his time is spent in his apartment. As a result, most of his time is also spent with his housemates, not socializing outside the house with others.

Within this group, are also those I spoke with who are 'overage' but live with 'UCY'. Underage youths who received Caritas money would share with those who were overage, often those who had recently 'aged-out' of Caritas funding. Berhane, 22, explains his relationship to his housemates,

> "I live with four boys, they don't work only in the home, do school at StARS in UYBP. I don't get any money from organizations, My roommates get money from Caritas. The persons I live with care for me. They earn money from organisations and help me in food and rent. If I get a job for one or two days I'll take a small salary and help in the rent. I didn't pay rent of the house much, just sometimes. All of us collect the money then pay by the priority rent, food, then the rest of purpose of our home." (Berhane, Int.3)

In Berhane's case, he is dependent on those who receive Caritas funding as UCY for his own well-being. Though he tried to work (see *Financial Situation: Employment*) the challenges he faces make it an unreliable source of income, thus he is ultimately dependent on his UCY housemates. Financial assistance from Caritas seems to have had an (unintentionally) adverse effect for youths in making "overage" youths dependent on "underage" youths for financial support, thus weakening the financial independence and sustainable livelihoods of those who are both UCY and non-UCY youths. He explains his relationship to this experience of not getting Caritas, "At first honestly so hard for me, always thinking of why, not giving money for all UCY people but now think I am adult so I must do the impossible." Despite Berhane's best efforts to 'do the impossible' and become self-sustaining, his means of achieving his livelihoods are through a dependence

on those who are ‘UCY’ and do get financial assistance. Though these financial considerations are rather considerable, there is also a psychosocial importance to his relationship to his housemates. He explains “I met them on the way, I look to them like my brothers. I have no other friends here. They are busy but if I get free time we can go out maybe one time per month.”. Berhane’s relationship with his housemates is both based on financial and psychosocial need. His limited other social interactions, and financial resources, elucidate some of the nuances of household relations.

Through examining these three different cases, their different levels of social interaction outside of the household, and access to financial assistance, some main findings can be gleaned within this category. Overall, the experiences of youths within their households can be described as varying forms of ‘imperfect sharing’, in ways that would not necessarily be expected based on a chronological age-based understanding of dependency between ‘adults’ and ‘children’. Additionally, living with someone who is ‘overage’, or a chronological adult, does not necessarily improve the access to livelihoods of those who are ‘UCY’, as they often make sacrifices and share their limited resources with their housemates. Even if they do have other social interactions outside the home, their housemates are usually also the crux of their social relations as well, are their closest friends, provide advice, and general psychosocial support. The artificial boundary of the age 18 that distinguishing between a ‘child’ and an ‘adult’, as upheld by UNHCR and Caritas as its implementing partner, seems to have the adverse effect of not necessarily helping to protect ‘children’. Conversely, it seems to increase the precarity of ‘children’ who share livelihood strategies with other youths, meaning those in the broad category

that overlaps those who are both 'underage' and 'overage'. One way that youths manage their livelihoods are through decisions about prioritizing rent at the expense of eating. Their lack of funds exacerbates their vulnerability and dependence on others, leading to difficult financial choices. This also creates unsustainable livelihoods, as it becomes a system of dependence between those who receive Caritas, and those who do not.

3) Youths Living with 'Adults'

Overall, only a handful of participants lived with those significantly older than them. As this was a small group, I will highlight one example here, Omar (Int. 23) is the only UCY in his apartment in Ard el Lewa, his housemates are over 30, mostly in their early 50s, and married but their families are not in Cairo with them. He also explained that he doesn't want to ask them too much about their marital status and such to respect their privacy. He had previously lived with other youths in 6th of October until a group of Egyptians and Sudanese 'shebab', or youths, broke into their apartment while they were home, robbing and beating them. He and all his housemates left after this, dispersing into different apartments. He explained, "when I left 6th October, I came here [Ard el Lewa] and didn't know any person just walked in the street and asked persons and they directed me and took me in.". He met his new housemates as 'strangers' in the street

> "Those I live with now I don't know them, I live as a stranger, someone just took me. We shared with money and life, sitting to now don't share, I just go to the market and get and cook to concern myself. I only trusted the people I lived with in 6th October, I don't trust others, just the ones I lived with."

Though he lives with those who are significantly older than him, and chronological adults, his livelihoods strategies were not necessarily improved by moving into an apartment with them, as opposed to when he lived with youths. He explains,

> "In 6th [of October] my relationship with my friends was good and we stayed in peace and the relation was so close, I miss them. Some of them are in Faisal or in other places, we just hang out if they come to Lewa…. I only know those I lived with, then I had a strong social group but now no…. At first, I just had friends advising me but in Lewa, I am new and I don't know who to ask for advice."

Omar had a closer social relationship with his housemates when he lived with youths and felt better able to rely on them. In moving in with those who were much older than him, he lost his core social group. Though there is not a clear problem with these housemates, he nonetheless feels the strain of losing them, and does not necessarily feel that these 'adults' can care for him.

4) *Youths Living with Older Siblings*

Only two youths lived with their older siblings (Int. 4, Int. 20). Fatima is 18 years old and lives with her older brother, younger sister, and an unrelated approximately thirty-year-old woman and her four-year-old son. She explains,

> "House sitting [meaning staying in the house] is hard sometimes it's a bit ok when I started working, my brother wasn't working he didn't understand Arabic and at first the lady was covering all the house by herself but now it is too hard to do that by herself so she changed her behaviour with us so we took food stuff for underage from StARS and I am working and helping her but nowadays it is not enough for her when we first came it was ok but she is changing behaviour but we are doing our best. When I start working here sometimes she covers fee and I bring fees and then another month I help in fees and she covers others. She isn't working now either." (Fatima, Int. 20)

The difficulties she describes from staying in her house were alleviated by starting work, and she is the only person in the household with an income. Though she lives with two persons who qualify in the chronological age category of adults, she is not necessarily having an easier time securing her livelihoods, as she is the only one working and supporting them. They also share their food boxes, which they receive from StARS, with

the woman. This case highlights how in considerations of their strategies, it cannot be assumed that their shared housing with chronological adults safeguards their livelihoods.

In Roma's case, she lives with her older sister, and her sister's three children aged six, three and two. Roma has a white paper, does not receive Caritas, and neither of them work. They are entirely dependent on her brother who is "a refugee in Europe in a camp and he keep some money and send us the rest. It's not enough it's just for the house rent the rest of money we try to save it from the rent". Her brother had some social connections in Cairo and was able to tell them to look for his siblings, and it is because of this that Roma knows of the UYBP program. She explains,

> "My big problem is about the house — at first we rented the house, they took our money and made us leave after four days. [We rented it] After we came from Aswan, it took 1 week. After we left I got another house then the owner told us to leave after 1 month, this is the third house we rented." (Int.4)

They found their current apartment through a broker. Similar to Fatima's case, Roma was not automatically more secure in her housing situation by living with an 'adult' as they both faced the same precarious situation of being evicted from their homes without notice, and without receiving any of their money in return. Roma helps her sister in the home and caring for her three young children though she is, by the standard of chronological age, still a child herself at 15 years old. Thus, in these case of those who live with their older siblings, it is similarly not necessarily the case that they will be financially better off. It is possible that there may be a psychosocial benefit to living with siblings, but I do not have sufficient data in my study to support this.

5) Younger UCY, living with older UCY/ 'aged-out' UCY

In the cases of the youngest participants, Ali (Int. 30), 11, and Efrem (Int. 24), 13, I have separated them since even if they live with all UCY, there is still a significant age difference and developmental considerations (pre/post puberty). Ali lives with "seven other people who are youths … not all UCY some over 18" (Int. 30). He is not primarily dependent on them, but on an adult male, Awate, who knew his family in Eritrea, and someone outside Cairo informed this man to look out for Ali. Ali only speaks Saho, and Awate accompanied him to the interview and provided translation from Saho to Tigrinya, as I did not have any Saho research assistants, as they are a smaller group of those in Cairo (see *Research Process & Methods*). Awate explained "I'm trying to make money for myself and I can't do anything. [Ali] doesn't have money and his housemates can't help him with anything". Ali explained "In general I have [Awate] to depend on but he is busy and I am rarely able to meet him. He tries to give me his phone when he can." Ali does not have his own phone, and service providers contact him through Awate's phone. Though Ali relies primarily on an adult who was a family friend, in other ways his experience is compatible with that of 'older' youths, as he did not necessarily benefit from living with those who were chronological adults. He explained "my housemates help me a bit but I have to pay and they say I have to pay everything the same as them, they are sorry they can't help me more … I work with them in cleaning and try to do food, sometimes I am scared to go out and they always leave me alone at home" (Int. 30). Though he is very young, and his housemates would like to help him, they are unable to do so due to their own financial constraints. He did not further explain why his

housemates were always gone, as in if they were working or not, or out socializing, but they were also unable to provide strong social support for him either, and he relies on Awate instead.

Thus, to understand how youths manage their livelihoods strategies, one must understand how these strategies are tied to their household relations. Through this typology, one can better comprehend the variations in the households, and how that influences their ability to handle the challenges and opportunities of accessing their livelihoods in Cairo. Examining their intersecting markers of identity is intended to provide further insight into their complex experiences.

2- Markers of Identity and the Household

This section is not intended to provide a fully intersectional account of the varying markers of identity in the household, but attempts as best as possible to include different markers of identity. As previously mentioned in the *Relation to the Literature* section, I was unable to access persons with disabilities in this study, nor was I successful in gaining a better understanding of their relationship to the community in discussions with able-bodied community members. I also excluded any questioning about LGBTQI persons, since the current climate in Egypt is especially harsh towards those individuals (Raghavan 2017) potentially pursuing interviews would have been an additional risk. Political affiliations were also excluded due to their sensitive nature. Though I tried to better understand potential class dimensions, overall this line of questioning in asking if there are class differences in the Eritrean community found that they did not consider

there to be, only those who have small business seem to be better off from youth responses, youths did not identify class differences within their age group.

a) Religion and the Household

In asking youths about the makeup of their household, I also tried to be attentive to the potential role of different markers of identity on their household composition. Most households shared the same religious affiliation overall. The biggest difference was the intersection of religion and gender in the household. In my study, no Muslim households were mixed-gender, but Christian households (Orthodox and Catholic) were, approximately half the time, or more. There were some mixed Christian households (Catholic and Orthodox), and some mixed Muslim and Christian. There were also some religious and ethnic crossovers. For example, it seems that many who were Bilen and Catholic also lived with those who were from the same religious and ethnic background, nonetheless they did not describe this as an especially important factor in their strategies. However, most youths would share a common language of Tigrinya, regardless of their ethnic group, and usually that would be the basis for sharing an apartment, irrespective of their being Bilen, Tigre or Tigrinya.

While speaking with youths, I attempted to understand if religious identity was a contributing factor in their household social networks; however, it seems that a shared religious identity was not especially important for household social linkages or trust-building among participants. Most questions of this genre were responded to in a sense of puzzlement as to why I was asking this in the first place, or of this being a 'non-issue'. Some noted that Eritreans do not have religious problems, it is Egyptians who have

religious problems, pointing to the bombing of Coptic churches and their experiences of religious-based harassment. This is compatible with the observations from my field notes and work in the community. However, my sampling is imperfect, and there are limited Muslim young women included in my study as they were only three of my participants. More research is needed to get a more definite understanding of the role of religion in the households, as it is possible this is not an issue for those with whom I spoke. Most pointed to religion being a more prominent issue outside of the household in their interactions with Egyptians (see *Security Situation*).

Though religion was not a major issue for their relationships to their housemates, I also tried to understand if religion played a role in their broader social networks. Overall, most of the participants who were Muslim described that most of the mosques were frequented primarily by Egyptians, and their experiences either did not contribute to their social networks or were negative encounters. Aziz explains his experience at the mosque,

> "Even me while I go to mosque I had UN card and Egyptian took my card and wouldn't give it back and had to grab and burned my arm (shows mark) and forcibly took it. UN said to get police report, brought it and got a new card" (Int. 14)

Others similarly reported problematic encounters of racism, and did not feel that the mosque was somewhere they could be sociable. About half of the participants who are Muslim did not attend mosque, some preferring to pray at home.

Within the Christian Orthodox community, for the most part, housemates of the same religion would attend services together, but not really expand their social networks. The Christina Orthodox Church in Ard el Lewa is at the top of the Selim Elysee. The

church is also use by the Egyptian Orthodox community. With one of my research assistants who is Orthodox, I tried to enter the church one day. However, the two Egyptian guards asked us if we had our cards, and we did not understand what they were talking about (Field Notes 12 August 2017). As we explained that I was Canadian, and just wanted to visit the church with my friend, they were still brusque in their manners and made us leave. My research assistant did not know what card they were referring to. Through discussions with others, and in subsequent interviews, it emerged that the church recently began necessitating a mandatory identification card that costs 50 LE, though some said that the earlier cost had been 30 LE. Ermias explained his experience,

> "I go to church, each Sunday before but then the priest says each person has to pay 50 LE but I don't have any. The 50 LE is to make a card to say that you are Orthodox. I haven't been to church in a month. Without the card you can't get in to the church. Now each Sunday they make in door that you have to show card, it is mandatory. They say it's because some people are not Orthodox and they go in church to make a fire so they are afraid for this. The priest is Tigrinya - Eritrean. Some people say to the priest that they don't have money but they say no you have to pay so I didn't speak to him. They're just afraid that sine guy makes a bomb in the church. When I go to church I relax and pray but now I stay home and worry." (Int. 18).

Ermias describes that church provided mostly psychological support, not really social support, but not being able to attend due to the cost of this new card had a detrimental effect on his well-being and added to his stress.

For Roman Catholic Eritreans, it seems that they were slightly more able to use the opportunity to maintain social networks. I attended mass one Sunday morning, and most people left the church soon after it was over, not really staying around to chat or socialize. However, it seems that many did run into others they knew from education programs, or more broadly within the community, and they would greet each other, if not

staying much longer. There was also a community updates portion of the mass at the end which served to keep those informed of what is going on more broadly in the community. Petros explains his experience with attending church,

> "I made friends, still see them from UYBP. I see them mostly in church and on the street sometimes. I go on Friday and Sunday in church. We both know people from church, especially people in UYBP that know in church and discuss." (Int.12)

For youths who participated in Roman Catholic mass, it could also benefit their livelihood strategies in maintaining their social relations when they might not otherwise be able to do so.

One major gap in my study is the lack of participants that are Pentecostal. In my initial inquiry into this religious group, it seemed that most believers were not independent displaced youths, but mostly families. Though I hoped to gain access to a Pentecostal service, it coincided with other scheduled interviews too near the end of my field work to reschedule, thus the opportunity to observe the presence (or not) of youths was lost. Pentecostalism was considered an "imperialist-created new counterrevolutionary faith" by the EPLF, as stated in Article 7 of the "National Democratic Program of the EPLF", titled the 'Respect Freedom of Religion and Faith' (cited in Hepner, 2014, 159). Pentecostalism evangelized and proselytized Asmara residents, and by the mid-2000s had grown the religious group to between eight and ten thousand members in the capital (Hepner, 2014, 165). Pentecostals were generally seen as a threat to the Eritrean state due to their less-hierarchical religious tradition in which the global community of Christ, and it's transnational linkages, were prioritized over the state (Hepner, 2014, 171). Amnesty International's 2005 report notes that the growing

Pentecostal movement has also caused tensions between them and the main religious groups by receiving converts from them (cited in Kagan, 2009, 1204). It should also be noted that most sources consider the government to treat the Jehovah's Witness the most harshly due to their rejection of the National Service (Kagan, 2009, 1203). I was not able to find or hear of any independent displaced youths that were Jehovah's Witness. These complicated religious tensions are highlighted here to note the gap in my research sample.

Though I was not able to find or directly speak with a youth who was Pentecostal, one youth described the experience when one of their former housemates converted (Int.21). He explains about his housemate;

> "He was living with me and I was helping with everything then he converted and treated me like he didn't know me and said that if friends don't convert then treat them like you don't know them. It's influencing people for bad things. When people come from Sudan the religion takes them before they even know anything, and they take them to UN and do form and help them. Problem is they make their own niches…. Converting doesn't come from the young people it comes from over 30 they know how to change your mind if you are UCY and if you fool with money and treat them well he will see where is comfortable from him and he is right if UN treated him ever good and call him not saying bad – they will help and comfort him and make him educated if you don't have work or education. *If just sit in an apartment for long time it will make you stressed and not anyone's fault*. Stress for family, and the organisation says they will do a travel and give to organisation to Canada and do this and being comforted easily because these are the goals." (Int.21, emphasis added)

Hamid describes that after his friend converted he was given financial support from the church, and told not to interact with those who do not belong to the church. He says that these conversions are "happening a lot", and they practice their religion in an apartment. The implications of Hamid's description are that the older believers in this organization are essentially bribing youths to participate in their church, and 'fooling' them. I was not

able to verify this description with other sources, and also included a description of the tensions between Pentecostals and the other major faiths in Eritrea as potential explanation for this. However, whether or not this is exactly the situation, it is a useful consideration of the question of agency and vulnerability. Hamid's housemate could not be being 'fooled' but making a decision for their own livelihood strategies to join this group for the support they provide. As Hamid describes that sitting in the apartment exacerbates their stress and can also influence this decision. Thus, this merits further study to understand the potential role of proselytizing religions and the livelihood strategies of independent youths.

b) Gender and the Household

Gender was one of the key considerations in household relations, to understand the potential effects of a gendered breakdown of household labour, or the control of resources. From my interviews, Hanna's experience highlights some of the key emergent themes. Hanna is 15 years old, she had lived in her apartment for approximately six months, with fellow students she met in the UYBP program — in total they were two girls and five boys in the apartment. Her household structure falls into the category of *Youths Living with Youths: UCY living with UCY.* She had previously lived for a month with those she had come through Sudan with, five Eritrean adults.

> "From us seven, three guys are new (to Cairo) and didn't start any service of UN and the rest get money from Caritas and the girls get foodstuff (food distribution boxes) so we pay rent from money from Caritas. Rent is 1400 LE so each pays 200 LE only, each person is responsible for this part of the rent. The new people are not starting anything from UN so one of the members of the house is their cousin, so he helps them sometimes. I and others help them also, helping them financially. Most of the time one of the boys who is the cousin of the guy so if he gets more money he helps them. Yes we share food. Girls get food boxes, it's by

> sharing. This is not fair. I don't know anybody else just about myself and what happens in my home. We can't agree because we are all in the same age. Sometimes we fight. We stay and don't talk to each other for one day and then after one day we talk. We agree that first we agree what the problem was and then we communicate and stop fighting. If we (the girls) stopped cooking and cleaning they don't do anything even when I am in school no one cleans the house, they bring some food, eat and leave but the house is not cleaned. They don't care so if we stop cooking or cleaning they will just go somewhere and take some foul and that's it. We don't know each other and only met at school and rented house and newcomers came and that's it – there is no relationship at all with them. I have better relationship with the girl. The big problem is disagreement about the flatmates and the financial problems, many do not have any support from outside so it is a big problem." (Int. 6)

Hanna's housing situation highlights key intersecting considerations regarding gender and access to financial support. Her description emphasises the tension between the gender distribution of tasks in the household, as well as the sharing of the food boxes, distributed by StARS, but funded by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The distribution of these food boxes is only for girls under the age of 18. Though they are intended to split the rent equally between all of them, they often have to share resources for those that are newcomers to Cairo and have not yet received UNHCR status, and Caritas money. Though my study is not intended to consider the role of the food boxes program, from my limited sample, it seems that these food boxes, somewhat paradoxically are intended to support girls, results in being split among those with less resources in the same household, regardless of gender. In Hanna's case she and her fellow female roommate were able to access both Caritas funding and food boxes and shared these resources with those they lived with. This seems compatible with the general trend of sharing resources within the household.

However, there are other considerations then the preconceived notions of the gendered breakdown of household labour. As I progressed in my interviews, I added a question about "life-skills" or if they knew how to cook, clean, was their clothes, and who taught them or when they learned (see Appendix A). Overwhelmingly, most boys did not know how to do so, many responded that this was because in their house in Eritrea when they were younger their mothers and sisters would do this work. As I was not able to ask Hanna's roommates themselves why they did not participate in the housework, it is possible that their not knowing how to cook or clean was also a factor in their reluctance, potentially embarrassment.

Though not all mixed-gender households I spoke with encountered this problem of unequal task sharing, the main differentiating factor seemed to be a relative age difference and financial situation. In Dawit's household, he explained, "when I came here I learned a lot of how to clean the house — in Eritrea I didn't clean or do clothes. [Name redacted – female housemate] taught me." (Int. 11). In Paulos and Isais' household (Int. 1), where they are all around 20 years old, three men and three women, they described that chores were split evenly, and that the night where I did the interview, it was Isais' turn to cook. However, during the interview, one of their female housemates was present, but did not want to participate, was rather shy, and was the only one to prepare the tea, cups and snacks, and to clear it up afterwards. In their household, it may be that the gendered division of labour is less pronounced than in Hanna's case, as the men in the household have learned some chores but might be expressed in smaller ways.

Conversely in all-male households, when asked about chores, they would split it in a rotation of who was responsible for which tasks. They explained that the older members of the household had taught them how to do these household tasks.

> "We shared money equally and collect money and buy things from the market and keep money for other things. For cooking each person has their own turn. I didn't know how to cook before and while I lived with them didn't do it because I didn't know cooking. We are all boys in the apartment and we are cleaning but we didn't know in home country because we lived with family and sisters and cooking is for women so because of this I didn't but I have a desire to know." (Int.23)

Thus, there are some potential other factors to consider in understanding the gendered dimensions of household labour. Though preconceived notions of the distribution of labour can be a significant factor, issues like existing skill sets and power negotiations can also play a role.

The other main factor of consideration in a mixed gender household is the attention that it draws from Egyptians, as it is seen as improper to live in mix-gendered households unless they are a family, and they would identify mixed-gendered households as being Christian. This can cause several problems in their housing situation, as they become targets for abuse and potentially assaults. In speaking with community leaders and youths more broadly, it was well known that mixed gendered household were targeted. Living in these households can also contribute to the specific vulnerability context of each youth that must be coped with.

Hence, in trying to understand how varying markers of identity influence both intra-household relations, and the establishment of these households, it was clear that overall, most households were based on shared religious/ethnic group. For households

with mixed religious/ethnic groups, there was no indications of treatment within the household changing based on these factors. Youths overall did not mention any problems between religious/ethnic affiliation. The marker of identity that seemed to have the greatest effect on intra-household relations was gender, specifically effecting the distribution of tasks. It seems that the experiences of young women who live in a mixed-gender household is formed by additional labour that young men do not experience.

Non-Reciprocity: Shame & Guilt

Several of these factors of the housing situation described above demonstrate the aspects of the livelihood strategies of youths in terms of housing available to them. Though these strategies are successful and result in their ability to maximize their resources for survival, there can be other effects to their overall well-being. "Due to the lack of ability to share things with them, this makes me shamed and I am not comfortable, but I say Alhamdulillah." (Int. 2). Mohammed describes the "shame" associated with this dependence. Due to his lack of financial assistance through Caritas, remittances, or work, he is completely dependent upon his rotating housemates for minimal survival. Complicating their livelihood strategies are also their emotional and psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, though Dawit described having an overall positive relationship with his housemates, he explains; "My relationship with housemates is difficult because I don't give them money. It makes it hard because I don't pay the rent or food but I am ok with them." (Int. 11). The difficulty he encounters is from the non-reciprocal financial situation.

Another lens through which to view this consideration is that this shame and guilt also arises out of a sense of negative agency. One youth explains; "I am in a bad situation but what can I do — when they (housemates) pay for me I feel bad but what to do *I have no options*" (Int. 27, emphasis added). Having no alternative options for survival in Cairo can exacerbate these issues. Youths who received financial assistance from Caritas did not express considerations of guilt and shame[18]. Accordingly, this financial support can also be understood as a means of facilitating positive agency for youths, as opposed to those reliant on the goodwill of their housemates when they have no other options. Financial support can facilitate more than mere financial ability but support the agency of youths in feeling able to contribute to their households and act independently.

Homelessness & Unstable Housing

The instances of the least stable housing situations for youths were often due to a lack of Caritas money, either from UNHCR not having processed their claims, or from Caritas stopping due to their "aging out". For the purpose of this study I adopt "a broad definition of homelessness that includes a range of circumstances from being without permanent shelter (*i.e.*, "rooflessness"), through various forms of relative homelessness, such as "sofa surfing" and crowding. The former definition refers to those people who live without shelter and therefore reside on the streets or rely on public facilities such as emergency shelters (often defined as *absolute homelessness*); while the

[18] Though I did not include explicit questions regarding guilt or shame associated with receiving resources, it emerged from the responses of youths who were dependent on their housemates for financial wellbeing, but not from those who received support from Caritas.

latter refers to those people who possess shelter, but are subject to substandard, unsafe, and/or temporary conditions." (D'Addario et al. 2007, 108).

Mohammed describes his experience of relative homelessness through sofa surfing and crowding, in which he rotates living between several different apartments since he has no work, and no Caritas money due to his having a 'white paper'.

> "I live in 3 or 4 different apartments. I go between the different apartments all with Eritrean people but it changes. I live among them because I know them and they can help me so I rely on them to get help on housing and finances, and to get services. All those I live with are adults. I am forced to live with them to get services. They are older around 25-29 years old and they care for me and see me as their brother even if we are not families. We are not living different genders. In one room there can be 3 or 4 people. I go around different apartments, I have no fixed apartment but it is males with males, females with females. I consider them like my brothers because they care for me like my brothers" (Int. 2)

However, despite his 'brotherly' relationship with his rotating group of housemates, he could not rely entirely on any one of them and had to manage his precarious housing on his own. Whereas Mohammed's relative homelessness has been the situation since nearly his arrival in Cairo, Ermias describes how his situation of relative homelessness has been the result of the end of his financial assistance.

> "When I came to Cairo I changed four times in Ard el Lewa when Caritas stopped. In the first two months, the second apartment didn't have Caritas so told me to leave. The third one all paid and when I came it was paid but then the next month had to pay so they say I have to leave and the fourth is me here. They're both UCY and adults. I didn't know them before when I was in the street I stopped and asked someone and they said I don't have a home and they let me come, wouldn't let me stay." (Ermias, Int. 18)

The similarity in these cases is that they both describe the reason for their precarious housing as a lack of funding from Caritas. In Mohammed's case, it is because he never got the funding at all, and in Ermias' case it was because the funding had stopped. In both

cases their lack of ability to contribute financially is the main challenge to their situation. Ermias doesn't have his own cellphone, but occasionally uses his SIM card in his friend's phone if necessary. These cases demonstrate a correlation regarding the reasons for precarious housing, and a lack of access to financial assistance. Though these youths enact their own agentic capabilities in managing their limited circumstances by reaching out to various social connections, or asking for support from near strangers, the financial precarity from a lack of Caritas support can also further their vulnerability.

There were cases in some household where usually one member was able to live gratis. Overall, these households were those in which the income of the members of the household was not exclusively reliant on Caritas, but other forms of employment that were remediated more substantially, such as working for a 'madame' in a house, or working at an NGO, where there seemed to be somewhat more flexibility in allowing one member not to pay rent.

Though different than the sense of homelessness in the previous two cases, another factor that can lead to unstable housing is that of housemates continuing in the migration process, especially in leaving for Libya. These can be somewhat immediate decisions that leave little time to look for brokers, ask in their potentially limited social networks, or seek the support of other organizations. In the summer of 2017, this became a growing issue where a number of housemates would leave for Libya, intending to continue to Europe, leaving the remaining housemates to pay the entirety of the rent, which was untenable (Field Notes). For example, in Efrem's case, they have moved twice due to housemates leaving for Libya;

> "Before I came here I lived with others and they left to Libya and my neighbour's were friends from Eritrea so they told me to go with them and now with my friends in a new apartment and they have decided to leave to Libya. My first apartment was for 3 months and now since then I have been with friends. First we took financial assistance from Caritas and that helps us in food and shelter. The people I live with are wealthy and have money but now they all plan to go to Libya so what can I do. Most will go but only one will stay because of bad health, and I'll be left with him and he doesn't have any assistance. He is overage… We will only be two people left when they leave me alone and now I'm looking for a new apartment and there is no organisation supporting me and this is a big problem." (Int. 24)

Furthermore, he describes the problem of not having an organisation to support him in this move, and the problems of finding new housing, in addition to the effect of losing all his friends because they travelled to Libya. His friend who taught him the life skills for living in Cairo left to Libya as well, and he described feeling that he no longer has any "fixed friends". Additionally, in Efrem's case, even though he is 13 years old, he will be left in a sense to care for his overage, ill housemate in finding them another apartment. This case demonstrates that strict chronological age-based expectations about the need for support cannot be applied, as 13-year olds can be in situations where they feel they must care for someone in their 20s, without the additional financial support to do so. In Luwam's case (see *Route* for details), she lived with a mixed age group who were good to her, and mostly overage, but when they left for Libya she was left with a group of underage people who needed her to pay for rent, though she did not have any money. Though initially her living situation was not her greatest problem, with her housemates leaving for Libya, her living situation became precarious and she became dependent on the help of a stranger to move to a new apartment where she did not have to contribute financially. Thus, unstable housing can emerge from a crisis-like situation of managing

imminent housing changes but can also be worsened by additional social dependents that would not be anticipated in a strict chronological age-based approach.

Conclusion

This chapter explored one of the key livelihoods issues facing youths, housing. Through the lens of the spatial and social components of their housing we can better understand the challenges and opportunities they face in accessing their livelihoods. Furthermore, through the typology of household makeup, the main finding that emerged is that overall, youths act collectively, despite their chronological age category as 'youth' or 'adult'. Attention to their various markers of identity demonstrated that young women can face specific challenges in mix-gender households. Though most youths lived with those of the same religious/ethnic background, it was not as central a factor in determining their ability to access their livelihoods. When youths are unable to provide financial support, their ability to enact their agency in a positive way is compromised — they are recipients of help from those in their household and not contributors — which leads to feelings of guilt and shame though they are still able to 'survive'. However, for those unable to access housemates who can help them, their experience of vulnerability is exacerbated through homelessness and unstable housing.

Chapter 7: Institutional Interactions: Support & Social Networks

This chapter explores the potential role of service providers in Cairo in supporting the ability of youths to negotiate their livelihoods in Cairo. Though my research did not intend to survey the relationship of youths to service providers, they mentioned the role of some organizations in helping or hindering their access to their livelihoods in Cairo. As a result, I have included this as the recurring theme of their influence in accessing differing social networks. The security situation of the youths informs their ability to access social spaces beyond their apartment, expand their networks, and build their livelihoods strategies.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Though as previously mentioned, youths did not receive the aid they expected in Cairo from what they heard in Sudan (see Route), there are several NGOs in Cairo serving displaced youths. Described below are the organizations that youths reported interacting with for services. Some are more prominent than others, but I will elaborate on the functioning of those mentioned by youths themselves. The intention of this section is not to survey all the organizations that are available to youths in Cairo, but those that youths know about, interact with, and/or use their services.

UNHCR

Youths in my study cited UNHCR as the gatekeeper to accessing legal and economic capital. Though community support is one of the key livelihood strategies demonstrated thus far, legal status as an asylum seeker and/or refugee, certified by UNHCR is one aspect that social networks alone cannot support. Shared knowledge

about UNHCR is key to helping them understand their situation, understand transportation to UNHCR, and understand the meaning of their documents from UNHCR, but it cannot help them guarantee legal status and/or access to Caritas assistance. It is important to distinguish between two types of grievances against UNHCR which youth in my study raised. Firstly, is that of the more "structural" issues against them, such as not enabling their access to education, healthcare, employment, and other basic services. These aspects are are not necessarily within their capacities, within their budgetary system to add to, or manage. In other words, these issues from the "top", are budgetary, structural, and/or limitations from their MOU with Egypt. The second category of issues is specific to their interactions with UNHCR staff, their treatment of them and their discretionary powers for RSD, namely issues from the "bottom", their baseline interactions.

All the youths I spoke with interacted with UNHCR in some form while they had been in Cairo, mostly to register to receive their UNHCR cards. One common thread of frustrations with UNHCR is the general feeling that they do not care for them. Fadi explains how he feels,

> I feel before that UNHCR would protect me and help me but now I have lost the feeling because UNHCR *did nothing for me and there is none bigger than* UNHCR and all work under them so if they don't do anything to me I do not feel able to help them." (emphasis added Int.16).

As explored in the *Route* section, some youths have certain expectations about UNHCR in Cairo, that after their long route they will have access to some assistance. Not only do they feel that their expectations have not been met, they feel that UNHCR has not done anything at all for them. Though it is important to note that due to structural limitations of

the organization, not all expectations are possible to be met, there is a difference in feeling that no effort has been made. How youths feel about UNHCR, and their ability to be helped at all is important both for their psychosocial well-being, feeling that there is hope, but also for their ability to continue to advocate for themselves in these institutions.

Other commonly noted frustrations regarded accessing the space of UNHCR itself. UNHCR is located in 6th of October City, which entails a long route, generally at least one hour, by transit for most youths who live in Ard el Lewa. The transit process is also a costly one since it generally costs around 6 LE, which many do not have. In addition to the stressors of taking public transportation as already explored in the *Security* section, arriving at UNHCR and negotiating the lineups is described as a chaotic experience. Semira described her experience trying to access UNHCR,

> "If we have a problem and go to UNHCR we need to stay at the night and there are a lot and many lines and we go to the lines and they hear but they don't do for us anything much. They give me my card and didn't say for me the age – I heard that some people they problems of the age but not for me." (Int.7)

The hectic confusion of many people in many lines, needing to be there so early, or even the night before does not improve their relationship to the space, and overall adds to their distress. Additionally, some youths mentioned assaults and/or robberies while waiting at the UNCHR premises.

Once they are able to see staff, one of the major recurring complaints issued were feeling that the staff did not listen to them or care for them. Those who work at the reception windows, the main point of arrival for those who need services, and complete their interviews, are Egyptians. As previously explained in the *Security* section, the difficult relationship between Egyptians and displaced persons, makes them reticent to

trust Egyptians, especially as the gatekeepers of 'aid'. This is not to insinuate that all those who are Egyptian and work at UNHCR exhibit this prejudiced behaviour, but to acknowledge that the overall negative interactions with Egyptians across the city impact the ability of youths to assume that the basis of these interactions with UNHCR are in good faith. Mohammed explains,

> "All the refugees have some problem with UN, not only me or only Eritreans. The UN doesn't care about our files. Other refugees fight with Egyptians and have things stolen in front of the UN office but they don't do anything so the problems is with all the refugees. I don't know who is responsible we inform them of problems and now these problems but don't do any solutions so who are they? Who are UNHCR? If have interview it is only with Egyptian people they hear only but don't want to make solutions." (Int. 2)

He highlights this feeling of frustration interacting with those who do their interviews, and links it to the broader frustration of feeling that there are no solutions to his situation. Aziz explained a similar sentiment, "I know those in UN when they contact them about my life situation they forget us. They don't give us respect and are careless about refugees." (Int.14). Aziz highlights two main sentiments regarding UNHCR's treatment of them, as lacking respect and care. Despite the other limitations of the organization, respect is not limited to funding, and there are non-financial means of communicating care. The overall experience of going to UNHCR intensifies this feeling of being without recourse beyond their community. These hostile encounters with UNHCR Cairo are somewhat of a 'common-knowledge' among those seeking their services, youths know from collective experience that UNHCR cannot support them as much as they need, and in some cases become those who aggravate the situation (see *Age Assessments* below), even in the basic interactions at the reception window. One of the community leaders I

spoke with also elaborate on the broader conditions of the problems the Eritrean community faces with UNCHR, and how they try to report it to them, but are unable to.

> "Also we collect problems and go to UNHCR and go to the window and they are Egyptians, we say your brothers are Egyptian people we don't know if they actually write the report as we say or if they change it. We can't trust 100% that if we say this, it is not good for themselves or their country"[19]

Heexplains that their reports are about the violence, assault and harassment that Eritreans face from Egyptians, thus they distrust that those who are Egyptian working at the windows will actually communicate these reports. Even as he tries to advocate on behalf of his community overall, beyond just the individual level, he mistrusts those that are supposed to be 'helping' them. The purpose of this is not to explore whether or not these reports are ignored, but to demonstrate that within the community there is a deep mistrust of UNHCR, feeling of lack of respect and care that is pervasive. This is a hindrance in the livelihood strategies of youth who are then unable to advocate for themselves to access resources they need through UNHCR.

The difficulties that youths describe in accessing UNCHR staff, in their negative experiences, and overall problems with the institution are supported in Elisa Pascucci's (2017) chapter. She argues that the UNHCR Cairo office reveals that humanitarian organizations can also contribute to the marginalization and entrapment of asylum-seekers (101). Pascucci (2017) demonstrates that UNHCR Cairo's staff lacks "first-hand knowledge and experience of the identities and grievances of the applicants waiting, squatting and protesting outside their office" (99), resonating with feelings of

[19] Due to potential repercussions, and the relatively small amount of community leaders, this is intentionally left without a pseudonym or further identifications.

isolation. She argues that "the growing physical separation of humanitarian workers from asylum seekers and refugees—caused by gated architectures and pervasive security training—has a profound impact on the aid relation." (99). She further highlights that the role of local staff, who have the most face-to-face interactions with displaced persons, should be further studied to understand their role in accessing aid.

Furthermore, some of the frustrations of youths are exacerbated by going to UNHCR, and having to seek support from their fellow Eritreans, instead of being heard by the organization. Sammy described his experience seeking help at UNHCR after an attack in his home,

> "I live with people, my friends. I live with 5 people. After I had some problems in Faisal when I came to Ard el Lewa I asked for apartment and arrived to them but didn't know them before. I met one of them in UNHCR and when I told him my problems and what happened in Faisal, Egyptians tried to hit me, he said you have to move in Ard el Lewa, and he said we have some place for you. He is an adult, he said you will be ok with us so you will move with us. They are all the others adults. When I came they already knew each other, around the same age, not so old and not so young. Around 25 years old." (Int.5)

Sammy's experience demonstrates that though one may approach UNHCR specifically for help in housing situations, they ultimately rely on those in their community for help in these situations. Though he went to UNHCR for support, it was an Eritrean stranger also waiting at UNHCR who was able to help him by sharing his living situation. Though in Sammy's situation he was lucky to be able to find those in the community to help him, that is not necessarily the case with everyone. Additionally, there are also factors to consider like shame/guilt and non-reciprocity (see *Living Situation*) when they can only receive, and not contribute. However, when they approach UNHCR for support there is no expectation of reciprocity as the role of UNHCR is to support them.

Though the intention of this section is to prioritize the experiences of youths as self-described, there are some corroborating studies to include. UNHCR Cairo has a unique history of protest and dissent by displaced persons due to their unfair treatment. On 29 September 2005, a group of 12 Sudanese refugees gathered in the Mustafa Mahmoud park in front of the UNHCR office in Cairo as a reading group on refugee rights (Danielson 17). The *Voice of Sudanese Refugees in Cairo* group had created a petition, signed by others as well, to UNHCR and began their protest (Danielson 17-8). Estimates of the number of persons vary from 800-4000, with numbers increasing over the three months as people moved themselves and their belonging into the park (Danielson 18). Though it was difficult to assess the makeup of the protesters, one survey found that though there were a mix of recognized refugees, asylum seekers, and those with closed files (Danielson 18). The majority were men, women participated as well, often with their children (Danielson 18). The sit-in continued until 29 December 2009 when 4,000 Egyptian police officers circled the park, spraying them with water cannons, beating people, killing 28 and bringing the rest to detention centers (Danielson 18). The demands of the protesters included improved access to livelihoods, housing and services (20), improved security (23), improved asylum bureaucracy (27). One banner in the park read "solve our problems or send us to another country" (Danielson 20). Furthermore, the protests by Egyptians themselves against their government in the 2011 revolution, brought to the fore many of the issues they were protesting against, and they felt abandoned by the UNHCR Cairo office's closure during the revolution (Danielson 31). The displaced persons protesting in the camps made claims against UNHCR, not the

Egyptian government, as per the statement "we live in a country of UNHCR" (361). They do not see themselves as the responsibility of the Egyptian government (Grabska, 2008, 86). This precedent bears light on recent occurrences in Cairo. Since March 2016 in front of the UNHCR Cairo office by displaced Oromo to recognise their communities (El-Sheikh 2016). On 26 July 2016, Asli Nur, an Oromo woman and mother of two, died trying to save two other Oromo asylum seekers trying to set themselves ablaze in an act of self-immolation (Pascucci 2017, 83). As Danielson's study of 2012 reinforced that the basic needs of urban refugees in Cairo remained largely the same as those protested for in 2005 (30), these current protests further underline this argument.

UNHCR Age Assessments

Though the previous section focused more broadly on their problems in accessing the space, and general interactions with UNHCR, the main role of UNHCR for youths is RSD. When they arrive in Cairo, they get an appointment slip with a photo, their name and date of birth, and when they are to return. At this subsequent appointment they will either receive a 'white paper', which is an asylum seeker certificate and needs to be renewed every six months, or receive their asylum seeker card (Yellow Card). They eventually hope to do an RSD interview, to become 'refugees' and get their refugee card (Blue Card). Youths can only receive Caritas funding if they have a 'Yellow Card'. Those with 'Blue Cards', or legally recognized as refugees, are eligible for resettlement and for Caritas funding.

Displaced youths, unlike other groups of displaced persons, often have to prove their age, since their status as minors should grant their extra protections and

services. Approximately one third of those I spoke with had issues where UNHCR did not believe their age, and did not allow them to be 'UCY', thus ineligible for Caritas assistance. Saba describes her experience of going to UNHCR,

> "At first when I came here I registered in UN and they didn't accept me as UCY so they didn't give me Caritas. First, you want to go to UN at the place a lot of people in a line a lot of people and traffic and if you enter they don't accept your problem or trust you. They don't accept your age. Due to this UN didn't give me yellow card only white card and limited services. A lot of people have problems like me and sleep in different roads because they don't have shelter. I went for an interview and they didn't accept me so I left with white paper. If you want to have UN trust you, they need evidence but in Eritrea they don't give you that until 18 give you that have education certificate but how can we get it if no one can bring it from there. I didn't know any other different services here. I went to Caritas to appointment and they told me waiting for UN response but only waiting because not UCY, no message or took information. It is known the operation all know them, when we escaped from home country difficult challenges we didn't get most important need of shelter. All services younger and older looked at us the same, should be different but here just included….When I decided to come in Egypt I expected UNHCR to help refugees when here I saw the difficulties and since I don't work I have no money. My friend has a bit more money so she helps me but we don't take anything. If we don't have anything we are waiting from getting different things…. Even UNHCR didn't hear us or assist us because they think Eritrean open restaurants have money so don't give us money so those without it live in bad situation. UNHCR says Eritreans live in good situation but those without money suffer. UN has news about Eritreans and says we have money but those who have money don't share with us." (Int. 8)

Dawit also had the experience of being told to bring papers as proof, he explains

> "I went twice to UNHCR and say I am underage and I didn't take certificate because I came here illegally. They didn't listen to my problems. Just your white paper not yellow card. Say to bring certificate but how can I do this — if asks for it they would torture my family. The main problem is that no one can help me went many times to UNHCR and don't tell me where I can go. Egyptians beat me and I don't know Arabic." (Int.11)

Dawit feels exasperated because he is told that he needs a certificate for his status that he is unable to obtain. Kedija explicitly notes that it is not UNHCR who told her that she was not believed in her age but found out from another organization. She explains,

> "I only have the white paper, no Caritas. UNHCR didn't tell me why I have white not yellow card but when I went to [redacted] said that because of my age so I need to bring documentation." (Int. 27)

Many are told that they need to bring documentation, that they cannot obtain, as proof. She had been in Cairo over a year with only this white paper, waiting to have a card. In Mebrihit's case, she even tried to get the documents that UNHCR said she needed to prove her age, but was unable to do so. She explains,

> "From UNHCR I still have the white paper, they said I'm not 17 and I'm not Eritrean. I asked my aunt to send some of my papers here but the man she sent it with from Sudan stole it from me. I told [redacted] and she made an appointment with UNHCR and they said they cannot do anything and every 6 months I go to get my white paper renewed." (Int. 15)

Mebrihit's experience demonstrates that even when she tries to obtain the documents UNHCR wants, the difficulties in getting them from Sudan to Cairo were too difficult. Mebrihit had been in Cairo for over a year and four months, not being able to have anything other than a white paper, and no financial assistance, even though she is underage. Jemal describes their experience of frustration at not being believed,

> "I have the white paper and they are not believing me about my age. In the community they say that if you get white paper it is because they don't believe you are underage, but if it is yellow they believe you. I didn't do the interview they just read my form and said I am not underage and she gave me white paper to renew every 12 months…. Most of the problems are that no one helps you and then you lose all hope I have for them because they don't believe my age [UNHCR]. That what they say they will do they don't do." (Int. 25)

Jemal explains and how he is losing hope due to not being believed, and that nothing can be done for him. This issue of being in a state of limbo as to their legal status is difficult on both the level of accessing financial assistance, and going through the process of continually not being believed, but also not being able to obtain the documents that would allow them to be believed.

Though the purpose of this section is to elucidate how youths experience the process of obtaining legal status, not to take on UNHCR's perspective, I will briefly clarify the salient points of UNHCR's process for youths. Based on UNHCR's "Guidelines on the Best Interest of the Child" (2008), they describe the mechanisms with which they identify the best interests of children to protect and promote the rights of children under its mandate (9). They outline the roles of the two main processes, the Best Interest Assessment (BIA) and the Best Interest Determination (BID) processes, both falling under the 'Best Interests Principle' for unaccompanied or separated refugee children. They explain a BIA,

> "A best interests assessment… is essential before any action affecting an individual child of concern to UNHCR is taken, unless a BID is needed. It does not require any particular formality, and should be conducted systematically in many circumstances that occur between the moment a child is identified as unaccompanied or separated or otherwise at risk, until a durable solution is implemented. It should be carried out, for example, prior to initiating tracing or to providing temporary care. The assessment can be done either alone or in consultation with others. It does not require the strict procedural safeguards of a formal determination, but staff should have the requisite skills and knowledge." (22)

Conversely, a BID is a formal process requiring stricter procedural safeguards, necessitating adequate child protection. A BID is required in three situations, to identify a durable solution, to make temporary care arrangements in exceptional situations, or for

the possible separation of a child from a parent against their will (23). They mention that in the BID process, "where the age is unknown or disputed, it provides a comprehensive assessment of the person's maturity, allowing an appropriate response by UNHCR" (24). In their BID Report, in Part III – Current Situation, there is a guide to describe an "assessment of child's age and maturity, physical and mental health and any specific needs assessment." (92). However, a BID is not an age assessment process, and usually only takes place when the youths have a 'Blue Card' (Field Notes). In UNHCR's 2011 BID Handbook, under section 5.5, Age Assessments, they describe,

> "The best interests determination process is established for children below the age of 18, in accordance with the CRC. However, it is often difficult to assess and verify a child's age, as there are no scientific methods for age assessment that are 100 percent reliable. In making an age assessment, the child or youth must be given the benefit of the doubt. Someone claiming to be less than 18 years of age should generally be treated as such. " (71)

However, somewhat contrarily, they also explain that

"Verification of the child's age should take into account:

- The physical appearance of the child and his or her psychological maturity, considering a balance of physical, developmental, psychological, environmental and cultural factors.
- Because there are no scientific age determination procedures that are fully reliable, if scientific/ objective methods are used for age assessment purposes, margins of error should be taken into consideration. Such methods must respect human dignity and do no harm. The youth or child should give informed consent. The procedure should be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team and independent professionals.
- The child should have the benefit of the doubt.
- The child's statements.
- Supporting documentation." (71)

Thus, in the cases of age assessments, where there is no means of proving exact age, they must rely on normative judgements of their appearance and other factors, but also give

children the benefit of the doubt. As seen in the cases above, relying on documents which Eritrean youths have not been able to obtain, is not an effective means of 'corroborating' their statements about their age. From these document, there appear to be no other provisions for an age assessment process, and, based on the explanations of youths, it seems that informal age assessments of youths in Cairo is taking place during the BIA process (Field Notes). Since there is less procedural oversight during the BIA, it is possible that this would remain both informal and unreported. In the context of Cairo, a BIA is necessary before receiving financial assistance (Field Notes). Age assessment processes have been studied more thoroughly in the West, and are notoriously difficult, even for children who do not experience migration, especially since there is no medical or scientific means of doing so (Crawley 2007, 28-9). Crawley (2007) importantly emphasises that the risks of getting an age assessment wrong are much greater than the converse, and cites the evidence supporting that the age of separate asylum seeking children is often wrongly disputed (36).

However, as explored in the above accounts by youths, their exclusion from legal protection based on their age has adverse effects on their wellbeing. In lieu of enabling youths' access to protection, and ability to access livelihoods, their experiences of precarity are exacerbated by their interactions with UNHCR. For the youths I spoke with, not being given "the benefit of the doubt" had serious consequences on their overall wellbeing, and ability to access livelihoods, though this approach would also have budgetary implications. It seems that a more age-inclusive approach to this would be the

best means of circumventing this increased precarity. In this UNHCR document, there are certain provisions for a flexible approach to age,

> "While a BID by UNHCR is normally limited to children, in some operations young adults may be living together in groups with unaccompanied children, and may share the same experiences of flight. In such situations, Field Offices may decide to extend the BID process to young adults of up to 21 years of age, if required by their protection needs or to help identify a durable solution." (UNHCR 49)

There is also a note on age flexibility in the section describing the inclusion of the views of the child in the BID process, "a flexible attitude to age, taking account of relevant cultural and developmental factors is required. Children as young as eight can make good, well-informed decisions about serious matters affecting their lives." (UNHCR 68). This flexible attitude to age should equally apply for 'older youths' and account for cultural and developmental factors beyond the specific BID process. Embracing this approach beyond these narrow prescriptions could serve to circumvent the negative effects of youths being age assessed.

These experiences with UNHCR are highly distressing to youths and impinge their ability to successfully negotiate their livelihoods in Cairo. In Meffert et. al's 2010 study they found a correlation between symptoms of PTSD, depression and anger, and a sense of betrayal by UNHCR, with some participants citing it as worst stressor since conflict in Sudan. Though it is important to distinguish between those Meffert et al's (2010) study, and Eritrean youths, there are useful parallels that support that the experiences of youths with UNHCR can be detrimental to their well-being overall. Meffert et al's (2010) findings usefully point to the problems being not of the intentions

of UNHCR, but of their impact, and the need to understand how these unintended consequences effect the lives of displaced people in Cairo. Youths exert agency in asking for support from UNHCR, but their vulnerability is exacerbated by this system that is not working for them as it should. Thus, their ability to access their livelihoods, though partially supported by UNHCR, is not the case for all youths. Conversely, it can have the adverse effect for some not being able to access funding, as well as losing trust in a system that is supposed to support them, and experiencing frustrations with staff, especially Egyptian staff. As also discussed in the *Living Situation* chapter, the main means through which youths can manage their livelihoods in this situation of vulnerability is through relying on community members, namely other youths.

Education

The main organization that does education for unaccompanied youths is StARS in the Unaccompanied Youth Bridging Program (UYBP), in the Psychosocial Department. I worked in the UYBP program both before my MA and during my field work (see *Methodology*). To my knowledge at the time of writing, there were no other similar educational opportunities for 'UCY' in Cairo. The program is open to all 'unaccompanied youths' (not exclusively Eritreans) and covers Arabic, English, Math, Science and Computer skills primarily, with some extra-curricular activities. Youths overwhelmingly spoke to the positive effects of school in allowing them to make friends with others and have spaces to 'hangout'. The UYBP program also allows school to be accessible by providing transportation money to cover their expenses, has a lunch program, and overall

is at no cost to the students. Youths noted the disappointment when school was over, especially that they are no longer able to socialize with these friends. Sammy explains,

> "I made friends in the school but not outside of school, but don't see them outside because where I should meet them, only see them in school. It's not that bad to not see them because I hangout with my roommates I feel bad but not that bad, just meet at school not to hang out with them." (Int. 5)

Hanna similarly explains;

> "I felt like I had more friends that I met in school but after finished school I don't meet them because we met in the school only. Because we are not in the same place, if they come from different places we meet at the school. I miss them. Only meet at school." (Int. 6)

The main contribution of school for youths was primarily as a space for social activities, as previously explained, youths lacked safe social spaces and mostly only socialized with their housemates. Their social links are key to their wellbeing, and their explanation speaks to the importance of having a social space to use. Their time at school allowed them to meet with friends who came from different parts of the city, but after the program ended (lasting approximately five months), they could not maintain these relationships as well because of the distances. All but one of the youths interviewed in the eligible age range for UYBP were aware of its programs. Older youths (those over 18, thus ineligible for the program) did not necessarily speak about this program in particular but were disappointed and frustrated at the lack of education opportunities available to them, especially noting that they had stopped school long ago.

Conclusion

Overall, institutions can provide both positive and negative support for youths, and not all youths have the same experiences with these institutions. Though UNHCR

can provide some positive support, it is often hindered by their negative experiences accessing the space, and with staff. Though educational opportunities provide positive social support, it is not a long term solution, as their social networks retract when they are no longer able to meet with friends regularly in a safe social space.

Chapter 8: Financial Situation

The financial situation of youths influences their ability to access basic necessities but can also contribute to their ability to improve their housing conditions. As previously explained (see *Living Situation: Spatial*) though the conditions were overall quite poor, there were variations in the quality and the precarity of their living situations. The main means of getting money for youths is through Caritas' Financial Assistance (see *Living Situation*). A few of the youths I spoke with worked, but they encountered several challenges during this time, and gendered experiences of access to employment. Other financial considerations in this section will be remittances, and price gouging.

Employment

As previously addressed in the *Context* section, Egypt restricts five articles of the 1951 Convention on the Rights of Refugees, notably the article on labour legislation (Jacobsen et al. 2014, 147). Refugees must acquire a work permit as stated in Egypt's domestic legislation, law no. 137 of 1981 (Grabska, 2006, 292). Though, in theory, they are allowed to work with this permit, in practice this is essentially not possible. In a 2014 study, Benjamin Petrini (2014) found that none of those interviewed had a work visa, or even knew of anyone who had one (53). As a result, most displaced persons work in the shadow economy or black market in low skilled jobs, where they compete with locals (ie, street vendors, construction workers, cleaners and domestic workers) (Grabska, 2006, 299). The findings in my study support this, as none of those in my study worked in the formal sector or had work permits.

Most of the youths I spoke with were not working. Many noted that they would want to work, but they have not been able to find employment. For those that were working, it was usually those who were slightly older youths, approximately between 20-23 years old. They described many problems with their work. Thus, though youths would like to exert their agency and engage in gainful employment, the main barriers to agency are from the problems they face finding work, and/or in their employment. `

Other places of employment were with NGOs[20]. StARS employs several youth staff both in its UYBP program, as well as in the other departments, especially if their English is of a higher level. For example, the Research Assistants who worked on this research were paid for their work but could have only accessed the job due to their strong language skills. Though the focus of my research was not to examine all the international employers of youth staff, it is also important to note. Overall, those who work for these organizations are in a relatively advantaged position due to the stability and standards of their employment. Additionally, they potentially have access to information on certain processes and new rules by organizations due to their work with them.

The main challenges for those who worked was not being paid. Half of those who had worked reported leaving the job as they had not been paid. Some descriptions of these experiences are below;

[20] Though displaced persons need work permits to be employed in Egypt, working in NGO's seems to operate in a 'grey zone' of sorts, without necessarily having work permits, but not exactly being part of the informal economy.

> "At first in one month I worked around Isaaf but they don't pay so until now I don't work. I have the problem of not having money in the house. I work one month but they don't pay me." (Int.11)

> "I didn't know them [housemates] before I came here. I am not working, I used to work part time but now I am free, I stopped 9 months ago. I worked for 3 months before the employer wanted to fire me because he wanted to replace me with someone else. After that I started a new job after 1 month they didn't give me my salary, it was exploitation. Since that time of the first and second time I work and I expect now without a salary. How can I work — I don't want to work like this." (Int. 3)

In both cases, they highlight the vulnerabilities of youth trying to work, where they are susceptible to not being paid, and/or suspended without reason. These experiences exacerbate their frustrations and difficulties in trying to find other work. Working in the shadow economy as a displaced person can also lead to other particular concerns, such as extortion in keeping their UNHCR cards,

> "I was working in a café but Egyptians didn't give me my salary and the children of the owners mistreated me — they are younger and have to play with children if I'm working. Finally avoided work and not working. Stayed about a few days but they didn't give me my rights they took my UNHCR paper to make me stay there and I avoided them and finally get card back." (Int. 8)

The challenges highlighted here demonstrate how they are susceptible to the whims of their employers, who also have the power to take their only valid piece of identification and leave them at risk of arrest if stopped by police — though they are still at risk of arbitrary arrest with a UNHCR card, but this can worsen the situation. Another challenge they faced was with language;

> "If you want to know of life it is hard for underage because no one allows us to work — only get money from Caritas and the lack of language make it difficult for us to work. I am not working, I started working but because of lack of understanding in work, stopped." (Int. 28)

> "I need to try to work but I have stress and don't speak the language so they make me leave, the people need to speak Arabic." (Int. 18)

This difficulty of overcoming linguistic challenges makes it difficult for youths trying to find work, or during their work, to advocate for themselves and protect themselves. The linguistic differences can make it challenging for Egyptian employers who would rather employ someone with a shared language, even other displaced populations who speak Arabic. Though not the only trial for youths seeking employment, their lack of language skills can be a stumbling block in negotiating their livelihoods.

Working Women: Working with 'Madames'

In trying to understand the financial patterns of household units, one emerging pattern was the commonality of a female housemates working with 'madames', meaning working as housekeepers for wealthier Egyptians. Domestic work is ignored in labour law, and classified as a personal relationship, and one of the main types of employment available to displaced persons in Cairo (Jureidini, 2009, 78). Though my study was unable to investigate the working conditions with 'madames' in Cairo, there have been some studies that provide key contextual information, especially as to the potential vulnerability of this work like Jureidini (2009), Gozdziak & Walter (2012). In Jureidini's (2009) study on irregular and refugee domestic workers in Cairo he highlights some of the major challenges they face; overworking, withholding passports, verbal abuse (especially racist slurs), physical assault, and sexual assault. An important note from the Jureidini's (2009) study is that several domestic workers had lost their jobs when they refused sexual favours. The informal economic structure in Egypt enables women to work more easily than men, and make more money, thus their main coping strategy is

enduring mistreatment with limited means of recourse, dependent on the 'goodwill' of their employers.

These housemates of youths who worked with 'madames' were seldom at home, usually having one day off — this made it very difficult to be able to interview them. However, I did speak with those whose housemates worked with 'madames' to support them (Int. 9,10,15,19, 27). In a household, it would often be the person or persons who worked with 'madames' that financially supported the other members. They usually supported younger displaced youths, including boys, whom they did not necessarily have a strong personal relationship with prior to moving. Employment with 'madames' is an explicitly gendered experience, that supported the livelihoods of several of my participants.

In Mary's case (Int.19) she lives shares a room with one other girl who is also a UCY, and four other women who are "adults over 25", "the adults are all working with 'madames', they are gone in the weeks and come back on the weekends, so there is only me and her" (Int. 19). Her closest friend whom she lives with is someone she had known in Eritrea and knew in UYBP, and both receive Caritas funding. They moved to a new apartment together with these women after their previous housemates 'took the boat'. Mary did not explain if her housemates who work as 'madames' share more of their funds with her and her UCY housemate. However, there were some visible markers of being relatively "better-off", their apartment was one of the nicest ones I had seen, with well-maintained furniture, a couch, dining table and chairs, and was relatively safer, as

the main entrance to the building had a locked gate, unlike most buildings where anyone could walk in.

Kedija's case is different from Mary's in that she does not get Caritas funding and is completely financially dependent on her housemates who work with 'madames'. She explains,

> "Living in this apartment for 4-5 months, living with a man, wife and child in that room and my 3 friends and I in the other room. I am with these girls and they help me. Two are overage and one is underage, she has the same problem as me. The overages work with madame, they cover for me. The last apartment I was with the same girls because we are many for the rent so we came here, we were 10 in the last apartment. The girls who work with madame only come once a week back. Because they are not here I do everything, cook and clean this is the work and the girls help when they come here. The underage girl helps me out now but she doesn't work. I don't feel that I have friends here — sometimes I can ask the wife, the housemates but no older generations. I am in a bad situation but what can I do — when they pay for me I feel bad but what to do I have no options.In this apartment I have an ok relationship with others, it is better here than the other apartment." (Int. 27)

Compared to Mary's case, this apartment is relatively less 'comfortable', they have a few plastic, outdoor chairs and small table, with a bed in the main area. For Kedija, having housemates that work with 'madames' and can cover her rent and expenses is essential to her survival since she gets no extra funding or has any other resources.

In Aklilu's case (Int.9), he lives with one girl who is a youth, both receiving Caritas, and two older women work with 'madames'. He explains,

> "Strong social group are my friends and us at home. The girls working are staying at work for one week then two days off Friday and Saturday – come together and leave together, 26 and 28, one from Asmara and one is from Ethiopia, who speaks Amharic, and understand Arabic and she tries to speak Tigrinya, both Orthodox."

Additionally, he explains their household dynamic,

> "For advice if there is any problem we have a meeting like family meeting we talk of every problem and try to pass this problem through agreement and we all talk about the problem, there is no problem but if something happens we sit and agree. Sometimes the problem is the owner of the house who wants more money after we pay the rent or adding water or gas without receipt if I stay at home alone I can't do anything calls us because of the problems of the owner of the house. There is problems with the owner of the house that is not. Most of the time [name redacted, works with madame] and her cover the rent of the house, we cover Caritas for food and gas and water."

Though I was unable to interview him in his home, understanding their financial breakdown explains that the majority of their rent was covered, and Caritas covered their other basic necessities. Their decision-making dynamic demonstrated that all were included in discussion, and their greatest problems were external, with regards to their landlord. He further explained his relationship to his housemates,

> "For emotional support, just me and the apartment, we act as like family, we respect them because they are older than us and take care of us as big sisters and we respect us, if they give us any advice we accept it."

Thus, those who worked with 'madames', in Aklilu's case, not only supported him financially, but emotionally and psychosocially as a type of 'family'. Approximately one month after this interview, their Ethiopian housemate decided to leave Cairo. She set up her younger housemate in her job with a 'madame'. When speaking to her after starting the job, she said "you know how Egyptians are", explaining the large amount of work, and taking care of their children[21] (Field Notes,). Living with those who work with 'madames' is helpful in assuring their livelihoods, however the under-researched portion of my work is the effect of this work on those who are working with 'madames'.

[21] Though I was unable to schedule a follow-up interview with her, I spoke to her briefly when I encountered her in the community.

These case examples highlight that living with those who work with 'madames' is an important means of assuring their livelihoods, especially if they themselves have limited access to funds. This work also seems to be more available to youths than other jobs based on the age-range of the housemates of those in this study. However, though the vulnerabilities and potential exploitation as noted in earlier studies remain a threat, young women also exert their agency despite this in order to find work to support themselves, as well as other youths even if they are not family members. The livelihood strategies of the youths who live with those working as 'madames' can be considered as attaching themselves to those with more stable and viable, but potentially exploitative, employment.

As there was a limitation in my ability to speak with youths who worked with 'madames' on this issue, I also sought insights from non-youths. One community leader I spoke expanded this gendered work experience to overlap with sex and gender-based violence. It is important to highlight that his explanation was not exclusively pertaining to youths but includes them in a broader conversation about the gendered labour experience.

> "One big problem is that they (Egyptian men) tell girls they have work for them and then they take a girl to 6th October and rob her and beat her in her eye or face. One girl they threw her out of the car and a taxi driver found her helped her and she had community number with her and someone called us and took her to the police station and they didn't do anything, I have the photos and we took her to MSF and did operation but because of problems it is very long." (Int.31)

The problem he mentions here is specific to the stage of 'finding' employment and the exploitative potential of knowing there is a dire need for the work. He also provides further descriptions of their experiences;

> "Eritrean girls, some UCY, some not, take to madame to work for two or three months then ask for salary and say they gave the salary to the one who brought them, the fixer, who robs them. For example, one girl went for work and disappeared for one week and we tried to find her and she came back and said they told her she can't say where she was, we know where you live and we will kill you, she just cries and doesn't even tell us what happened. This girl that was lost for one week was taken from the street. Some girls go to the Zamalek office (of the church) for work and they wait for girls outside the gate and they tell them about work and then they disappear for one or 2 weeks. They don't talk about it, silent and cry. It happens always but we try to advise them to go more together at first to see the home but don't know how Egyptians convince them. They have their own tricks and if you ask the girls they just cry." (Int. 31)

Paul elaborates on the specific targeting of women seeking employment for 'madames' through the technique of waiting for those who approach the offices near the 'church' in Zamalek which is a sort of 'madame' placement agency[22]. This performance by Egyptian men[23] broadly leads to two kinds of experiences. Firstly, stealing their salary as a 'fixer' for an Egyptian family. Secondly, for robberies, assault, and potentially sexual assault. However, Paul also qualified that what he knew about these situations may be affected by the fact that the survivors are women, and they may be more likely to share details with other women.

Remittances

Receiving remittances can be crucial to the survival of displaced households in countries of origin and countries of first asylum (Jacobsen, 2005, 60). In the Eritrean transnational community, there has been research focused on the Remittance tax by the

[22] In Jureidini (2009) half the respondents were placed into their positions in domestic work through a local agency (83). One such program is housed by All Saints Church, a refugee service provider in Cairo, which also offers a two-week training course in the work (ibid). It was unclear if Paul was specifically referring to this church.

[23] Paul described these instances as being committed by Egyptian men, due to the limitations of this work to do more in depth research, it is possible that non-Egyptians, and/or women would be involved in this extortion.

Eritrean government, and the role of remittances in state building (Tecle & Goldring 2013, Poole 2013). Jacobsen et al.'s 2014 study of the role of remittances in among Sudanese refugees in Cairo found that one quarter of their participants receive remittances, and if they did, they were irregular and not a dependable source of income (145). The 2012 Feinstein Report "Refugee Livelihoods in Urban Areas" similarly found that few households receive remittances regularly (35).

As a result of these considerations in the literature, I inquired into the potential role of remittances in the financial strategies of youth, but it was not a prominent aspect of the financial strategies of youths. However, as Jacobsen (2005) explains "like most people, refugee and migrants tend to under-report income, either because they don't include certain categories, or because they don't wish to reveal all sources … even taking underreporting into account, the proportion of the refugee population in first asylum countries that receives remittances is small" (61). Thus, some youths may have chosen not to disclose this information due to the perception that I, as a white Western researcher, would be more able to plead their case for further financial assistance if they did not receive any remittances.

The majority of youths did not receive any remittances, or outside financial assistance. Some youths did note receiving remittances, and for those that did, it was often unreliable, or one-time sums. Some participants explained that their housemates would share their financial resources with them, but they did not know where their money came from; "Because they care for me, I don't want to ask them where they get the money from. I keep their confidence." (Int. 2). Saba explained;

> "One person sent me money once. Then they didn't because he can't support many people. It is not confirmed how often she [housemate] receives it, it is a difficult question to ask but she looks to find work" (Int. 8)

For Saba, her one-time remittance has been supplanted by the support of their housemates' remittances, but does not ask for too many details, as in the prior case. Additionally, her housemate does not feel that the remittances are reliable enough for her to forgo further job searches. The instability of remittances led to most youths relying on other forms of income available to them. Thus, receiving remittances are not a major tool in the livelihood strategies of youths, but can in some cases occasionally provide support.

Price Gouging

One recurring challenge that youths noted when asked about problems with money was being overcharged for goods. The price gouging by Egyptian vendors was explained as a ubiquitous experience, regardless of the neighborhood. Some participants noted specifically that it was a challenge across different areas of the city;

> "Its not only in Faisal, everywhere you go if they know you are Eritreans they ask you to pay more money. For shopping its all the same but problem is house renting." (Int. 10)

Though I did not ask about if they felt they were being overcharged for apartments, and/or by how much, there is a perception by Egyptians in the neighborhood of Ard el Lewa that refugees drive up the price of rent as per the complaint letter by Egyptian residents in the neighborhood (see Appendix F). Jacobsen et al.s (2014) study found that rent for non-Egyptians, even in Cairo's poorest neighbourhoods, is quite high, as compared to the rental contracts for most Egyptians since the 1960s (Jacobsen et al.,

2014, 156). Additionally, Paul, one of the community leaders I spoke with provided some further insights into the experience of price gouging and/or unjust costs for housing;

> "If we make agreement with Egyptian flat owner, and say rent is 2000 LE, and give 1500 for insurance of what's in the house, they way we broke things in the house, and they say didn't do that because they were already broken, and then don't give back insurance and many complain of this problem." (Int. 31)

One youth also explained how the landlords will do similar things

> "One problem for the rent is paying 1000 or 2000 at first then after one or two months of nice they make any problems to add to the rent — and if you want to leave they don't give you the deposit." (Int. 29)

> "Of course, when we try to buy something I remember when I was buying vegetables I was alone in the supermarket and he costs me a lot says 25 LE. Then an Egyptian woman came and he says 17 LE and I just moved out, I can't talk to him we don't have the *right to speak* I was afraid of him If I say something." (Int. 20, emphasis added).

Thus, this experience with price gouging is not necessarily limited to the additional financial burden on displaced people but tied to their *right to speak.* The livelihood strategies of youths in these instances are affected beyond this financial issue, but engaging with Egyptians, even from the need to buy basic necessities becomes an encounter in which they feel that their rights are being denied. Thus, the vulnerability context of displaced youths in Cairo is also influenced by what seem to be mundane daily interactions where there are both additional financial stressors, and the psychological effect of feeling denied of their 'rights'. This idea of feeling their right to speak is truncated, is also linked to their language abilities. Though some youths do speak Arabic, for those that do not, they describe the frustration of this inability to communicate and contest this injustice;

> "Many times they charge me more, I don't know Arabic so if it costs 5 LE, they say 10 LE so it is difficult to buy. Especially the thing is they don't give the right change for 10 LE. How can I speak or explain this to them." (Int.11)

Furthermore, these interactions are also described as the unavoidable encounter with racism; "If Egyptians see us with black skin if something is 5 LE, they add 5 LE to make it 10 LE because of racism." (Int. 7). These explanations by youths demonstrate that what appears as a financial consideration is layered with concerns about their fear, their right to speak, racism, and their lack of language skills, which combine to create the specificities of each of their experiences of vulnerability.

Conclusion

To understand the financial situation of youths, I have explored how the challenges they face finding employment, and how employment is a gendered experience. Though young women were able to enact their agency in being employed as 'madames', this in turn affected their experience of vulnerability in accessing their livelihoods. Remittances did not have a substantial effect on the livelihood strategies of youths. Moreover, they also faced the problems of price gouging by Egyptians, exacerbating their limited financial means.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis found that, despite the many challenges that displaced independent Eritrean youths face living in Cairo, they are also able to enact their agency to manage their livelihoods. My findings suggest that they are primarily able to negotiate their livelihoods through their housemates, principally others in the Eritrean community. Furthermore, their housemates are frequently their only source of support in Cairo, regardless of their ability to provide adequate support, be it financial, psychosocial, or knowledge-sharing. Through my interviews and observations, I found that the majority of youths live with other youths, often those they met 'en route' to Cairo. This also de-homogenizes the experience of 'independence' of independent displaced youths, as at different stages in their migration they may be more, or less 'independent'. Youths do not experience a univalent state of being throughout their entire migration process, which influenced their decision-making strategies overall. Despite their experiences of vulnerability, mainly determined by their security context, youths enact their agency in managing social, institutional, and financial resources. Though I explored the potential role of varying markers of identity on their livelihood strategies, gender was found to be the predominantly influencing marker of identity. Young women are more likely to find work with 'madames' in Egyptian households, and through this support other youths (both men and women) in their own households. These findings lead to theoretical and practical implications explored below.

Theoretical Implications

Through this research I have demonstrated that one effective means of examining the complex nuances of the vulnerability and agency of displaced youths is through a livelihoods framework. Though livelihoods literature has overall excluded the concerns of displaced independent youths, this framework supports a relational approach between their vulnerability context and their access to assets. My research adds to both the theoretical frameworks of livelihoods literature and independent displaced youths literature in filling an empirical gap in both literatures. Furthermore, my research findings support moving towards flexibility within age-based boundaries for displaced independent youths, like in Huijsmans (2015).

Practical Implications

One of the practical implications of this thesis is a recommendation to explore development programs that seek to address the needs of both displaced youths and Egyptians. Though Cairo is a cosmopolitan city, shaped over millennia of interactions of different ethnic and religious groups, in the 1990s (and arguably still today) the state managed these multiple identities in binaries, in lieu of pluralism (Fabos 2015, 59). Thus, displaced persons in Cairo fall into multiple binaries, citizen/refugee and/or Egyptian/foreigner binaries, and/or the Muslim/Christian binary (Fabos 2015, 59). As seen in the *Security* chapter, the tensions in each neighbourhood, especially Ard el Lewa, between Egyptians and Eritrean youth are very high, and can lead to serious altercations. Though displaced youths face several structural issues, one means of attempting to improve their day to day lives can be to try and engage Egyptian civil society to improve relationships overall. Similar recommendations have been made by Grabska (2008) who

suggests that to break down the binaries set by the Egyptian state there should be more focus on programs that seek to reach the intersection of aid to Egyptians and displaced persons (88-9). This could potentially be done through programs that strengthen community relations between groups and embolden civil society at a localized level (as in per neighbourhood). I see potential for exploring programs that build trust and dialogue between both groups tailored to youths, perhaps through creative programming in sports and arts, with a gender focus. It is "the lack of interaction and the prejudices held by each community about the other [that] further contribute to the cultural exclusion of refugees from the host society" (Grabska 2006, 302). This reinforces the unwritten non-integration policy of the Egyptian government (Zohry 2003, 10). Likewise, Crisp et al. (2012) also explain that

> "While refugees are entitled to certain forms of assistance, targeting support at them in an urban environment can have unintended consequences if the host population is not considered in the process. When the urban poor see neighbours receiving material assistance while they do not there is potential for violence and xenophobia. The challenge therefore lies in finding the right methods and partnerships to assist urban refugees without alienating them from their neighbours." (s34)

Given the complexities of the experiences of social injustice, and the social injustices that are also experienced by the local population, perhaps further study into combined development projects that seek to eschew the temporary nature of assistance to displaced persons in Cairo.

Another practical implication of my findings is to take a more inclusive approach to age by UNHCR. Overwhelmingly, youths depended on their housemates, mostly fellow youths, for financial support. Those who received Caritas funding (thus

determined to be asylum-seekers under the age of 18 by UNHCR) were better able to negotiate their livelihoods due to their access to this financial capital. However, this assistance did not necessarily protect them from unexpected changes to their personal vulnerability context, such as physical or sexual assault. Their housemates would become a sort of 'first line of defense' against changes in their situation. If their housemates were in a fortunate position to support them through a financial challenge they were more likely to positively negotiate their livelihoods. Those whose housemates were not able to do so would experience and increased precarity (like in Ermias' case, Int.18, or Mohammed Int. 2) who are now dependent upon a rotating group of housemates. Furthermore, the strict age demarcations have the adverse effect of leaving those who are chronologically younger, responsible for those who are chronological adults and overall restricting the resources available to youths. Though this is also a broader structural problem that won't necessarily be solved by increasing the upper age limit, a more flexible approach to age can help alleviate some of the more immediate serious dependences between youths that can exacerbate their vulnerability. Kibreab (2001) also highlights that assistance is most effective and equitable when provided on a community-wide basis — as a result, fragmenting the aid that youths receive creates vulnerabilities within the community between those that do and do not have the funding, making one group dependent on the other. Though this approach may also have challenges, balancing the individual and collective needs of Eritrean youths through programming necessitates further research.

Moreover, as demonstrated in the *Route* section, most youths leave Eritrea "underage" (or under the chronological age of 18), but sometimes, after the lengthy process to arrive in Cairo, they will be exactly 18 or slightly older. It is important to also consider the unique situation in Eritrea, wherein most youths try to leave before starting mandatory national service (with training in their last year of high school). As a result, I recommend an age-inclusive funding approach for youths, in which those arriving in Cairo between 18 and 21 can have be supported in a two-year financial transition period. Those that I interviewed in the upper age range of youths overall did not work, or if so the conditions were precarious, and depended on their Caritas-receiving housemates for financial support. My findings demonstrate that their current strict approach to age falls short of enabling youths to be 'protected', with chronological adults dependent on youths for their financial survival.

Additionally, supporting safe social spaces for youths to gather and socialize is a practical implication of these findings. Most youths described being relatively limited to their housemates as their main social circle, with limited opportunities to socialize beyond this other than at school (which is for a limited time and not accessible to all), and occasionally at church (which is not inclusive of all youths). A non-denominational social space would allow youths to meet others, build social networks and a stronger social safety net to absorb unexpected changes in their situation in Cairo.

These findings also leave room for areas of further research. One key aspect is further exploration into understanding the age assessment process by UNHCR Cairo, and the effect that it has on youths. Additional work should include perspectives of youths

from other nationalities in Cairo, as well as those who work for UNHCR Cairo, and other NGO workers who support displaced youths in Cairo to have more thorough understanding of what the problem is, and what potential solutions could be. Further research could also explore a 'group' approach to financial assistance, as opposed to the current individual basis. Based on my findings, since most youths are dependent on their housemates for financial support, it may be worthwhile to explore if it would be helpful to take a different approach to financial assistance. It would be helpful to consider this idea with youths themselves as well as service providers. Additional studies should look more in depth as to the relationship between Eritreans and Egyptians in each neighbourhood, especially Ard el Lewa, with attention to the role of police. A more thorough study could speak to both Egyptians, and Eritreans, not only youths, in the neighbourhood, to better understand their perceptions of each other, and work towards potential planning to mitigate the effect of these tensions. This approach would be able to examine how the relationship between the host population and displaced populations can have mutually detrimental effects, and how to potentially overcome these.

The purpose of this research was to understand, from the perspective of displaced independent Eritrean youths, how they are able to negotiate their livelihoods and assert their agency amidst the vulnerabilities of their situation. By critically engaging with their responses, I have been able to expand understanding of the key livelihoods issues they face, how they manage them, how their intersecting markers of identity play a role, and how these findings have theoretical and practical implementations. I hope this

provides a basis for further research into the livelihood strategies and experiences of displaced youths.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Version 1 (Interviews 1-6 Approximately)

- What is your name? Ethnic Group? Religion?
- Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
- Where are you from in Eritrea?
- How long have you been in Cairo?
- How old are you? Is your same age on your UNHCR card, or did you have any problems?
- Do you feel like an adult, youth, or a child? What does that mean for you?
- For you, who is a refugee, and what does it mean? Do you feel you are a refugee, a UCY, something different? What does that mean?
- How many people do you live with?
    - What is your relationship to them?
    - How did you meet?
    - What is their age/ethnicity/religion?
    - What are do you live in?
    - What are people's roles in your household?
    - Do you feel like someone is more in charge? Do you feel like you are all equal?
- Do you live close to other Eritreans?
- Do you feel part of your community? Do you feel you can rely on them?
- Do you work/Have you worked? Where? How much do you earn? What was your experience like there? How did you find the work?
- Do you go to school? Where? Is there a cost?
- Who else works in your household?
    - Do you share money?
    - What is you biggest expense?
    - How do you manage the money? Do you have enough to cover the basics?
- Are you religious? Do you participate in any religious organization (church/mosque?)
- Do you find you rely on people who share your religious identity?
- Do you trust other Eritreans here?
- Do you feel there are divisions in the Eritrean community in Cairo?
- Do you feel you have a strong social group in Cairo — a group of people that can support you? Why/why not? With whom?
- Do you feel most of your friends are your gender/religion/ethnicity?
- Where do you socialize?
- Do you get support from older generations in Cairo? If yes, how do you know them? What kind of support (financial? Goods (ie clothes, food)? Moral? Spiritual? Social?Skill sharing?

- Do you think there are different economic groups of Eritreans in Cairo? Which are you in?
- How do you access education? How do you access health care?
- Do you get financial support from people outside of Cairo, like family? From where? How much? How old are they?
- Do you get advice of how to live from other people? Are they in Cairo? Outside of Cairo?
- What are some of the biggest challenges or problems you face here in Cairo?
- How does security in Cairo effect your ability to be social?
- What is your relationship like with Egyptians?
- What does a normal day look like for you?
- Do you have anything to add, or is there anything you would like me to know?

Version 2

- What is your name? Ethnic group? Religion? Where are you from in Cairo? How old are you?
- How long have you been in Cairo?
- What is your RSD status? Did you have any problems with your age with UNHCR?
- Where do you live in Cairo? With whom? How do you know them/ meet them? What is your relationship to them? What is their gender/ethnicity/religion?
    - What are the roles in your household?
    - Is everyone equal? Is someone in charge? What they do? Work? School?
    - How do they contribute financially? Caritas?
    - Do you all share equally in expenses?
- What does a normal day look like for you?
- Are you religious? Do you participate in religious organizations? Have you met people you rely on through there? Do you get information through them?
- Do you feel part of the Eritrean community in Cairo?
- Do you trust other Eritreans here? Why?
- Do you feel there are divisions in the Eritrean community in Cairo? How/why? Are there economic differences?
- What is your social group like? How do you rely on them? Where do you hang out with them? How often? Who do you go to if you need advice or have a problem?
- How did you learn to live in Cairo? Who taught you about how to live in the city?
- What did you hear about Cairo before you came here? Is this where you had planned to go?
- How did you get to Cairo? Did you meet people along the way who helped you here? Did you register with UNHCR in Sudan/Ethiopia?
- What is your relationship like with older generations of Eritreans?

- Do you receive financial assistance from those outside of Cairo?
- Did you get advice from how to live in Cairo from anyone outside Cairo?
- As a girl/boy do you feel you face different problems in Egypt?
- What is your relationship with Egyptians like?
- Are there security problems in your neighbourhood? How do these problems effect your life? How do they effect your decisions to leave your apartment or change your plans/ what you would like to do?
- Do you have any problems getting charged more than Egyptians?
- How do you get financial support? Moral support? Spiritual support? Social Support? Skills based support (learning to cook or clean)? Goods/materials (like clothes/foods)? Did you know how to cook/clean before you came here?
- Do you use social media to keep in touch with people?
- What are some of your biggest challenges or problems you face here?
- Do you have anything to add, or you would like me to know about?

Appendix B: Demographics of Participants

Int. #	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity/Religion	UNHCR Status	Caritas Financial Assitance	Time in Cairo	Route	Location in Cairo
1	Paulos	20	M	Bilen/Catholic	Yellow Card	Overage	1 year, 4 months	N/A	Lewa
1	Isais	20	M	Bilen/Catholic	Yellow Card	Overage	1 year, 5 months	N/A	Lewa
2	Mohammed	17	M	Tigre/Muslim	White Paper	No	10 months	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
3	Birhane	22	M	Unknown/Muslim	N/A	Overage	1 year, 4 months	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
4	Roma	15	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	N/A	N/A	Left Eritrea in December 2016	N/A	Lewa
5	Sammy	18	M	Bilen/Muslim	N/A	Stopped	2 years	N/A	Ard el Lewa
6	Hanna	15	F	Tigrinya	Yellow Card	Yes	8 months	Sudan	Lewa
7	Semira	18	F	Saho/Muslim	N/A	Stopped	3 years	Sudan	Faisal
8	Saba	15	F	Tigrinya/Catholic	White Paper	No	7 months	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
9	Aklilu	15	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Yellow Card	Yes	1 year 2 months	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
10	Rahwa	16	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Yellow Card	Yes	1 year	Born in Sudan	Faisal
11	Dawit	17	M	Bilen/Catholic	White Paper	No	4 months	Sudan	Lewa
12	Petros	17	M	Bilen/Catholic	Yellow Card	Yes	10 months	Sudan	Lewa
12	Amanuel	15	M	Bilen/Catholic	Yellow Card	Yes	3 months	Sudan	Lewa
13	Fadi	17	M	Tigre/Bilen/Muslim	Yellow Card	Yes	1 year	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
14	Aziz	17	M	Tigre/Muslim	Yellow Card	Yes	1 year, 1 month	Sudan	Ard el Lewa

15	Mebrihit	18	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Yellow Card	No	1 year, 3 months	Born in Sudan	Faisal
16	Mustafa	17	M	Bilen/Muslim	N/A	Yes	2 years, 2 months	Sudan	Faisal
17	Luwam	17	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	White Paper	No	4 months	Sudan (Trafficked)	Lewa
18	Ermias	18	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Yellow Card	Stopped	1.5 years	Sudan	Lewa
19	Mary	17	F	Bilen/Catholic	Yellow Card	Yes	1.5 years	Sudan	Lewa (6th October)
20	Fatima	18	F	Saho/Muslim	White Paper	Yes	1 year, 4 months	Sudan	Faisal
21	Hamid	23	M	Tigre/Muslim	Yellow Card	Overage	1 year, 9 months	Sudan	Faisal
22	Fiyori	15	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Yellow Card	Yes	N/A	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
22	Winta	14	F	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Yellow Card	Yes	N/A	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
23	Omar	17	M	Tigre/Muslim	Yellow Card	Yes	1 year	Sudan	Lewa (6th October)
24	Efrem	13	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Yellow Card	Yes	11 months	Sudan	Ard el Lewa
25	Jemal	16	M	Saho/Muslim	White Paper	No	3 months	Ethiopia	Ain Shams - Ard el Lewa
26	Mustafa	20	M	Bilen/Muslim	Blue Card	Overage	4 years	Sudan (Trafficked	Ard el Lewa

								in Sinai)	
27	Kedija	16	F	Bilen/Muslim	White Paper	No	1 year	Sudan (Kassala)	Ard el Lewa
28	Osman	17	M	Saho/Muslim	Yellow Card	Yes	13 months	Sudan	Ain Shams
29	Omar	16	M	Tigrinya/Orthodox	Blue Card	Yes	13 months	Sudan	Ain Shams - Sher3 Sudan
30	Ali	11	M	Saho/Muslim	Yellow Card	Yes	4 months	Ethiopia-Sudan	Ain Shams

Appendix C: Ethics Approval

YORK
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Certificate #:	**STU 2017 - 083**
Approval Period:	**05/30/17-05/30/18**

ETHICS APPROVAL

To: **Amanda Siino**

From:

Date: Tuesday May 30th, 2017

Title: **Livelihood Strategies of Displaced Independent Eritrean Youth in Cairo - Examining Agency in Community Networks**

Risk Level: ☒ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

Level of Review: ☒ Delegated Review ☐ Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, **"Livelihood Strategies of Displaced Independent Eritrean Youth in Cairo - Examining Agency in Community Networks"** has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, **"RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE".**

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at:

Yours sincerely,

RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal. **It is the responsibility of researchers to ensure the timely submission of renewals.**
    a. As a courtesy, researchers will be reminded by ORE, in advance of certificate expiry, that the certificate must be renewed. Please note, however, it is the expectation that researchers will submit a renewal application prior to the expiration of ethics certificate(s).
    b. **Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate** (or to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) **may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/ withheld**.

2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved **PRIOR** to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol;

3. **END OF PROJECT**: ORE must be notified when a project is complete;

4. **ADVERSE EVENTS**: Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;

5. **POST APPROVAL MONITORING:**
    a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to post approval monitoring as per TCPS guidelines;
    b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may similarly be subject to Post Approval Monitoring as per TCPS guidelines.

FORMS: As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website:

a. Renewal
b. Amendment
c. End of Project
d. Adverse Event

Appendix D: Ethics Rationale

Additional Memo: Rationale for Lack of Parental Consent — Ethics Review Board
Project Title: Livelihood Strategies of Displaced Independent Eritrean Youth in Cairo — Examining Agency in community Networks

As my research project involves independent displaced Eritrean youths, sometimes referred to as unaccompanied minors/youths, they have no legal guardians available to them in Cairo. Thus, there is no possibility of parent/guardian consent or assent. Furthermore, there is often a discrepancy between the self-stated age of displaced youths, and their age assigned to them by UNHCR, and on their identification cards. To avoid any confusions about their age or legal status, I aim to include those who self-describe as approximately between 14 and 22, maintaining that they are broadly in the youth category, not younger children (ex 8-12). These challenges in assessing their actual chronological age and to their legal guardianship should not exclude them from participating in research. Their voices are necessary for an inclusive understanding of the needs of their community. Furthermore, this inclusive research aspires to influence development programming for displaced Eritrean youth in Cairo upon the completion of my MRP.

In such cases where substitute consent are not possible to obtain, and the persons in question may not be able to consent, there are ethical risks of the consent not being fully informed, and/or the risk of coercion. However, as since these youths have migrated on their own from Eritrea to Cairo, it is arguable that they are more mature than those who share their chronological age, but are in non-migration contexts with adult accompaniment. Nonetheless, as a researcher, I will mitigate these factors by exercising extreme caution when working with this population in taking the time to explain all the necessary factors, such as there being a risk that they will be uncomfortable to discuss such topics as finances and living situations, and ensuring they consent and feel comfortable with an individual interview or focus group.

Furthermore, it is important to note that as these young persons have fled Eritrea independently and have expressed their own agency after separation from their parents. This is also an important population to research as, due to these ethical concerns, they are omitted from mainstream research. To my knowledge, there have been no studies on independent Eritrean displaced youths in Cairo, as most scholarship on this demographic is focused on their migration into the West. Moreover, my supervisory committee, who has been involved in devising an ethically sound methodology, supports this research. Prior to beginning my degree, I worked at Saint Andrew's Refugee Services, one of the major service providers to unaccompanied youths in Cairo, which enabled me to build a connection with the community. As a result, my former supervisor in the Unaccompanied Youth Bridging Program at this NGO supports my work. I feel that having worked with this community before, I have earned their trust and can continue to work with them attentive to their specific needs and concerns.

Statement of Verbal Consent — Ethics Review Board
Project Title: Livelihood Strategies of Displaced Independent Eritrean Youth in Cairo — Examining Agency in community Networks

(This statement will be translated in either Tigrinya, Tigre, Bilen or Arabic by the interpreter)

Hello, my name is Amanda Siino. I am a Canadian researcher currently studying at a Canadian university (York University, Canada). I am working on a study that intends to understand how young people in the Eritrean community negotiate their livelihoods in Cairo, and how they may work together with other people in the community. My study is based on interviews with individuals like yourself who are independent young persons from Eritrea in Cairo. I am very interested to have the opportunity to hear directly from you and others in your community in order to understand how you are able to manage your lives and access opportunities in Cairo. This is an entirely voluntary exercise, there is reimbursement for transit expenses, and refreshments will be available during the interview.

Your answers and point of view will be kept confidential. An overall summary of the opinions gathered from this interview will be included in my study, as well as your individual opinion. However, your name will not be in the study, nor any other identifying information, like your UNHCR number.

The interview will be approximately one hour long. Some of these questions are about money and living situations, so there is the risk you may not feel comfortable answering these questions. However, you have the right to stop the interview at any time, or stop it completely now. Deciding to do so will have no negative affect on you or your community, either through our relationship, or with York University. I will keep the information you have shared with me on file for doctoral studies, to a maximum of fice years, but your name will not be attached to it. Please note that this research has been thoroughly reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Manager for Research Ethic at York University. He/She can be reached at 309 York Lanes, York University, by phone at 416-736-5914, by email at ore@yorku.ca.

The overall summary of the research may help programs for your community here in Cairo to reflect how you live your lives, and maintain your own agency. This research cannot help you personally with any resettlement or UNHCR processes. I am not affiliated with UNHCR, and I am not a researcher for Saint Andrew's Refugee Services where I have an internship position — this is an independent process.

Please refuse to answer any question at any time, and I will just continue on to the next question. I will respect any refusal to answer any questions. You can withdraw any comments even after the interview is over by contacting me (I will give the interviewee my contact

information in Cairo, Egypt, and in Canada on a business card). I appreciate your interest and agreement in participating in this research. Do you consent to participating in my research? I will take an audio recording of this consent.

Draft Interview Questions Ethics Review Board
Project Title: Livelihood Strategies of Displaced Independent Eritrean Youth in Cairo — Examining Agency in community Networks

- Do you identify with the term refugee? Unaccompanied youth? Or something different?
- What is your ethnic group?
- How old are you? Did UNHCR put the same age? If not, what is the age difference?
- Do you feel like an adult, a youth, or a child?
- How old were you when you arrived in Cairo?
- How many people do you live with?
    - What's your relationship to them?
    - How did you meet them?
    - Which area do you live in?
    - Do they share the same religion and/or ethnic group as you?
    - What are people's roles in the household? Do you feel that someone is in charge or is it equal?
- Do you live close to other Eritreans? Are they from the same religious and/or ethnic group? Do you feel you feel they are part of your community? Do you rely on them?
- Do you work? Where? How much to you earn? What is that experience like? How did you find this job?
- Do you go to school? Where? Does it have a cost?
- Who else works in your household?
    - Do you share the money?
    - What are your biggest expenses?
    - How do you manage to have enough funds for basic needs?
- Do you consider yourself religious? Do you participate in your mosque/church?
- Do you find that most people you know or rely on are from the same religious group?
- Do you trust other Eritreans?
- Do you feel that there are divisions amongst Eritreans in Cairo?
- Do you feel that you have a strong social group in Cairo, meaning a group of people that you feel support you? Why/ why not? With whom?
- Do you feel that you socialize mostly with other members of your gender or is it mixed?
- Where do you socialize?
- Do you get support from older generations of Eritreans in Cairo? How do you know them? What kind of support do they give you (ie financial, goods like second hand clothes, moral support, spiritual guidance, socializing, skills transference like cooking)

- Do you think there are different economic groups among Eritreans in Cairo? If so, which group do you see yourself belonging to?
- How do you access services like health care or education?
- Do you get financial support from people outside of Cairo, like other family? If so from where and how much? Are they older than you?
- Do you get advice on how to live/ make ends meet from others outside Cairo?
- What are some of the biggest issues you face living in Cairo?
- Do you have anything to add or anything you would like me to know?

Appendix E: Research Assistant Job Description

Position Application: Research Assistant/ Interpreter

With who? : Amanda is graduate student from a Canadian university working on a research project about the Eritrean youth community in Cairo. The ideas and issues she finds will form her thesis project, with the goal of being shared with the Eritrean community in Cairo when completed. She intends to publish her research findings to improve programming available to the community here. This project is not affiliated with any NGOs in Cairo, it is not affiliated with UNHCR, and it is approved by the University Ethics Review Board of Canada. Further details about the research will be shared in the interview.

What is this position? : This is both a research assistant and interpreting position. As an interpreter, you will participate in one-on-one interviews, and occasionally small group interviews. As a research assistant, you will share your thoughts and ideas on the research project in our weekly group meetings, facilitate in setting up interviews and focus groups, and participate in research-based administrative tasks as needed.

What skills do you need? :

- Strong proficiency in English is necessary.
- Interpreting abilities in one or more of the following languages Tigrinya/Tigre/Saho/Bilen.
- Arabic is an asset, but not necessary.
- Active interest in the Eritrean youth community, interested in discussing ideas and issues about the community in Cairo.
- Able to work on a team.
- Responsible, dependable, and on time.
- Be an Eritrean youth (approximately 17-22 years old)

What do you get out of it? : You would be key to guiding this research project and having your thoughts and ideas included. You would get the experience of working on a research project, and working collaboratively with a small team to discuss issues. This is a chance to act as leaders and advocates in your community, while expanding your skills. You will be also be able to add this to your CV, and include a letter of recommendation as well. This project is collaborative, meaning you can build your skills, explore your interests while helping your community during this time period.

Pay? : This is a paid position, by the hour. Transportation costs will be covered.

When? :

- Minimum 2 hours per week from June 12th to August 28th.
- More hours per week as needed, but flexible.

Where? :

- Various locations in Cairo. Relatively flexible.

How do I apply? :

- Contact {redacted} with a brief paragraph about you, your interests, and your skills.
- OR Call {redacted}
- Interviews will only be for selected candidates.

Appendix F: Ard el Lewa Security Letter

السيد اللواء/ مدير أمن الجيزة

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،

نحن بعض من سكان أرض اللواء/ العجوزة/ جيزة

حيث بدء ظهور انتشار الجنسيات الإفريقية بكثرة في المنطقة تحديداً (الأرتريين والسودانيين) على أساس أنهم لاجين ولكن يقومون بستأجر محلات وشقق بأسعار باهظة لا نعلم عن مصدرها شيء فهم بلا عمل وانتشرت في الأونة الأخيرة فتح مقاهي بكثرة لحسابهم ويسهرون فيها حتى الصباح مع تناول المخدرات والخمور وممارسة الأعمال المنافية للآداب وأكثر من مرة قمنا بشكوى لحي العجوزة وقسم العجوزة ولم يتحرك ساكن أحد ويتمركزون تحديدا في شوارع (حسن عبد اللطيف- مصطفى العسال- عبد العال السوهاجي – يوسف البنداري – أحمد خطاب – أولاد عسران) لدرجة أننا وصل إلينا إحساس أننا غرباء في بلادنا.

والسؤال هنا هل الدولة بأجهزتها الأمنية والرقابية على عمل بأنشطة هؤلاء الجنسيات الأفريقية والتي قد تكون أنشطة مستترة لأنشطة غير مشروعة (إرهاب – هجرة غير شرعية – تجارة مخدرات)؟

السؤال الاخير هل دخولهم للبلاد تم بطريقة شرعية أم غير شرعية (متسللين)؟

نرجوا من سيادتكم اتخاذ اللازم لأننا في الحقيقة فاض بنا الكيل ولكن تحيا مصر.

تفضلوا بقبول وافر الاحترام،،

مقدمه لسيادتكم

سكان أرض اللواء

Appendix G: Al-Dostor Article in Translation from Arabic[24]

With Video … Egyptians Complaining: An African Settlement on Ard El Lewa

Signs in strange languages in incomprehensible alphabets are hanging on the doors of stores and cafes. When you move closer to those doors you hear languages you cannot translate but hear before or after Arabic translation, usually you will find a dark skinned young man whose sole job is to translate for his peers. This is the case of Ard El Lewa which is in Agouza, Giza province. As soon as you descend the Selim Elysee you see people of different ages who have in common their dark skin and African roots walking around the streets and stores and gathering in front of cheap cafes as though this were a small state in southern Africa.

Their nationalities vary and most of them are refugees from African and Arab countries where general problems and unrest threatened their ability to stay in their countries. Most notable of these countries are Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan where most people do not speak Arabic. The Arabs came from Yemen and Syria after the destruction of their countries.

These crowds started coming to Egypt four years ago with the help of the UNHCR. Due to their financial hardships, the UNHCR supports them by giving each family an average of $900 per month. There are two factors in Ard El Lewa which make it the preferred destination for those nationalities. The first is its proximity to El Mohandessin and the Game'at el Dewal El Arabia street. It is also close to downtown and Mugamma el Tahrir — in other words, areas where they can save. The other factor is the low quality of life there.

At first, the locals tolerated the newcomers, but with the passage of time, they were greatly harmed.

Mohammed Abd El Qader is a young man from the original inhabitants of this area who struggles from their effect on real estate, both in terms of buying and renting property. They have the ability to pay high prices which makes real estate agents prioritize them. This is due to the completion of the foreigners and their ability to pay about 3000 LE in rent or buy for 600,000 LE — which is significantly more than what used to be the average in this area.

Abd El Nabi Mohammed, the owner of a barbershop, also suffers from their residence there as they raised the rent of commercial spaces. Since the beginning of their settlement there they started owning and renting commercial spaces to open personal projects they can benefit from, which led the landlords to evict the old Egyptian residents.

That being said, the increasing rate of sexual assault and crime and drug and alcohol abuse in the area pushed the residents to submit complaints and petitions to the neighborhood to keep an eye on the development and problem solve.

The elderly Ramada, the owner of a cafe says that the biggest crisis is the clash of cultures and traditions, as the girls wear socially inappropriate clothes and the

[24] Translation by Rita Al-Salaq

boys get out at night like “bats”, going to cafes that now only they go to, where they drink alcohol and leave in the morning swaying, drunk.

Ramada lives in a building which had three Eritrean families, and suffers from the parties that go on until the sunrise and the garbage which piles in front of the building, but due to the repeated complaints from Egyptians to the landlord, he was forced to evict two of these families.