

**Displacement and Appropriation:**

**Documenting the implications of inadequate resettlement policies in Cairo**

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## ABSTRACT

Urban displacement is an emerging challenge for cities, triggered by an expanding array of factors that range from political conflict and climate induced disasters to environmental hazards and unsafe living conditions. The most prominent manifestation of the challenges of displacement is the need to evacuate or the actual destruction of housing within a neighborhood or region, resulting in a dire need for immediate temporary sheltering and consequent, long term housing options such as relocation of residents. This paper is a double-tiered inquiry that first; documents the policies of relocation in Cairo, then examines their efficiency through the study of two communities post relocation. This will be done by first, unpacking the government's preventative mechanism of categorizing unsafe areas developed by the Informal Settlements Development Facility (ISDF), as a backdrop for understanding relocation strategies. Secondly, using a community survey to assess issues of belonging, convenience, and social coherence, accessibility to services, adaptations, expectations, and overall satisfaction. The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of how government strategies of identifying and resettling vulnerable communities could become more sensitive to the actual needs of the relocated residents. It also aims to highlight the potential impact of using top-down approaches on the actual institutionalization of displacement, by not fully accounting for the nature of relocation and the socio-economic and spatial needs of vulnerable families, leading to potential future displacement of the relocated communities in search for better accommodations.

**Keywords:** Resettlement, Appropriation, Socio-spatial Adaptation

## INTRODUCTION

Urban displacement is an emerging challenge for cities, triggered by an expanding array of factors that range from political conflict and climate induced disasters to environmental hazards and unsafe living conditions. The most prominent manifestation of the challenges of displacement is the need to evacuate or the actual destruction of housing within a neighborhood or region, resulting in a dire need for immediate temporary sheltering and consequently, long term housing options. In response to the possibility of displacement, many governments use preventative procedural strategies, by assessing the risks posed at vulnerable communities and acting on either eliminating these risks, or relocating residents of areas that are designated as high risk ones.

In recent years, a significant amount of academic scholarship on displacement within the urban planning discourse has been dedicated to the issue of slum clearance and the consequent loss of housing or eviction. This is often done abruptly, without prior notice, compensation or without offering alternative housing in the wake of large-scale urban economic development projects such as Hydro power projects, transportation infrastructure. Development induced displacement could also be triggered by what Greene calls 'city staging', a process of artificial

and hasty beautification that accompanies global events such as the Olympics, processed under the rubric of urban renewal (Greene, 2003). Cemea calls this a process of "compulsory displacement" and anticipates its growth in the developing world, due in part to strong urbanization ambitions (Cemea, 1990).

Beyond the physical understanding of displacement, the term can also bear deeper socio-cultural connotations that are often expressed in the form of attempts to alter physical space in ways that reflect identity, ownership and adaptation. In that sense, displacement can also mean a process of physical and emotional uprooting, and a disruption of socio-spatial associations, manifested by individual and collective appropriations.

This study aims to contribute to a better understanding of how government strategies of identifying and resettling vulnerable communities could become more sensitive to the actual needs of the relocated residents. It also aims to highlight the potential impact of using top-down approaches on the actual institutionalization of displacement, by not fully accounting for the nature of relocation and the socio-economic and spatial needs of vulnerable families. Through observations made through case studies in Cairo, this study offers examples of appropriation patterns that demonstrate how residents are coping with unmet needs. It is argued that the current strategy framework undermines basic needs beyond the notion of safety and shelter, and that this could potentially lead to another cycle of abandonment and displacement of relocated communities in search for better accommodations.

### **Displacement and Informality - A Cairene perspective**

Displacement in the Egyptian context is largely correlated with a longstanding parallel informal development that has evolved slowly yet steadily since the 1950s. Today, it is estimated that over half of Greater Cairo's population lives in housing that is categorized as informal, dubbed universally as slum settlements and locally as '*ashwaeiyat*', which translates more or less into 'the random'.

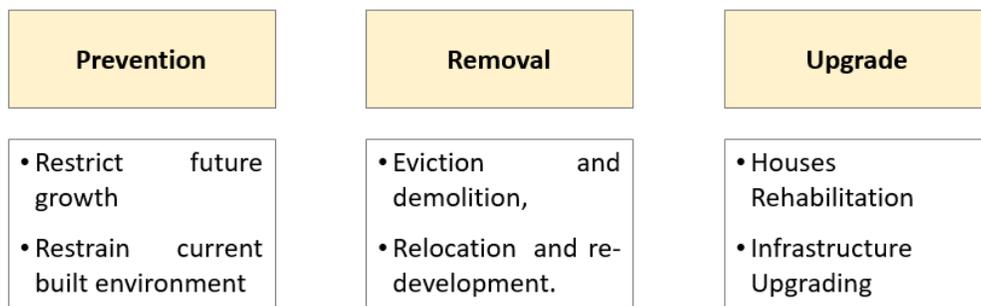
Despite the deluding homogeneity that these terms entail, the practice of informal urbanism is iconic for its distinctiveness, dynamic nature and flexibility. This nature is very often dismissed by a sweeping consensus that only recognizes the dichotomy of the formal and the informal, the legal and the illegal, and the governed and the uncontrolled. It is thus understandable, that informality is both seen and portrayed by various stakeholders as a problem that needs to be addressed rather than a mode of self-administration to fulfill an unmet need. The word itself summons to think a consistent image across different geographies -ones of poverty, squalor, congestion, crime and fragility. The physicality of the informal has been hallmark aspect of it, captured most accurately by the definition provided by The United Nations Human Settlements Program UN-Habitat in 2003, which describes slums as an area that "combines, to various extents, the following characteristics: inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality and durability of housing; overcrowding; insecure residential status" (UN-HABITAT, 2010). While indicative in many ways, this widely used definition does not allude to the socio-spatial nature of slums (Mandhyan, 2014). This conceptual

deflation of a complex, multi-dimensional practice has trickled down into policies that very often fail to capture why and how the informal is produced.

### Interpreting State action

Observers of slum related government policies in Egypt summarize the realm of state action into three broad categories: Prevention, removal and upgrade. Prevention usually encompasses regulations that both restrict future growth and restrain the current built environment such as belting and urban growth boundaries.

Removal is a much more aggressive practice that initially starts by surveying and identifying unsafe housing areas, then - through a case by case approach - determining a suitable course of action that could be eviction and demolition, or relocation and re-development. Upgrade is a form of rehabilitation that takes place within the same area. It may or may not entail temporary relocation in order to perform physical and infrastructural improvements, with an intention to bring dislocated residents back in the end.



**Figure 1** Types of action towards resolving the slums

So, state efforts in the field of informal areas development before ISDF establishment varied between Removal (e.g. Hekar Abu-Doma), In-situ resettlement (e.g. Zenhom housing), Relocation (e.g. Eishash Mazloum and Ezbet Abu Al Nur) and Upgrading (e.g. Ezbet Arab elwalda and Arab-Muhammadi). These efforts were usually orchestrated by the Ministry of Housing, Public Authority for Urban Planning, the Municipalities and Ministry of Local Development. The decision to pursue a certain discourse was largely arbitrary, influenced by a multitude of externalities such as the onset of catastrophes, the availability of funding opportunities, or a political motivation.

However, in the wake of a massive landslide in the Duweika neighborhood, which caused the death of 31 persons (Alahram Newleter, 2008), the government established an institutional body that came to be known as the 'Informal Settlement Development Facility (ISDF)', with the objective of coordinating efforts and financing the development of informal areas (Presidential Decree #305/2008). It was also charged with the task of benchmarking the notion of safety in urban settings. ISDF started its mission by acknowledging the difference between areas that were 'unsafe' and ones that were 'unplanned'. Making this distinction has been a crucial first step in identifying and prioritizing communities based on vulnerability. According to the ISDF's 2009

statistics, over 400 areas across Egypt were identified as unsafe. Unsafe areas were defined as territories where 50% of its housing stock satisfy one or more of the following conditions, ordered according to the degree of risk and thus the urgency for intervention (ISDF, 2010):

**First Degree Areas**

Type: Location Risks - Life threatening: Location in areas that are prone to natural hazards such as below geological formations, flood areas or other location related risks such as proximity to railway tracks.

**Second Degree Areas**

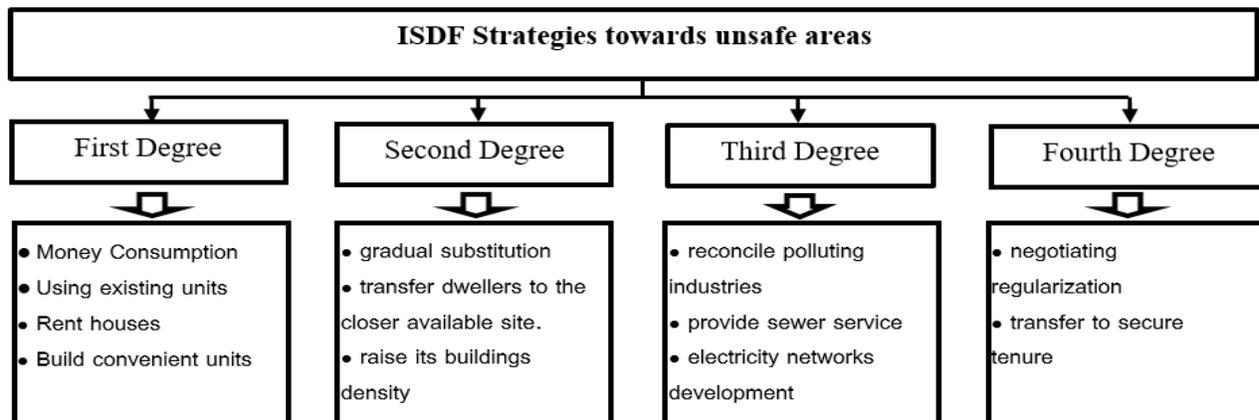
Type: Housing Condition Risks: Identifies areas with housing with unsuitable shelter condition such as buildings made of makeshift material, also sites unsuitable for building such as solid waste dumps and ruins areas.

**Third Degree Areas**

Type: Health risks: Housing built in areas lacking accessibility to clean drinking water or improved sanitation; or built in the vicinity of industrial pollution; or built under high voltage power cables (water & sanitation, air pollution, electricity).

**Fourth Degree Areas**

Type: Tenure-related risks: Residents with unsafe tenure over housing units, land and commercial spaces



**Figure 2** ISDF strategies towards unsafe areas

For each of this four types of risk, the ISDF laid out a number of potential practices as shown in Figure (2), such as monetary compensation, gradual substitution of units, or building newer units in different locations. Ideologically, these practices can be summed up in three main courses of action: In-situ - resettlement, planned relocation, and self-relocation.

- **In-Situ Resettlement:** It is often used in unsafe areas second degree of dilapidated buildings and medium density.
- **Planned Relocation:** It is often used in areas of first degree. Sometimes in areas with high density that are difficult to reset in-situ, to follow strategic plan or national project and may the site itself is inappropriate.

- **Self-Relocation** : Inhabitants take financial compensation and resettle themselves

### **Identifying inadequacy in the ISDF's framework**

As discussed in the previous section, relocation decisions are made through a reviewing process that looks at the degree of risk, as defined by a set of criteria demarcated by the ISDF. As it stands, the ISDF prioritizes action in cases of first and second degree risks only, relocating first degree 'High Risk' communities,- usually at the outskirts of the city. Sites of second degree risk described as 'non-life threatening' are treated differently due to the potential of upgrading and re-settling residents 'in-situ'. Typically, residents evacuate and move to a temporary housing, followed by the demolition of the existing housing and re-building the site at a higher vertical density. The densification process aims at lowering the built-up area's foot-print, thus allowing for economic return through re-sale of the remaining land as parcels for development.

In order to be able to fully demonstrate the physical manifestation of inadequate state strategies towards unsafe slums, we must first carefully unpack what the policy framework entails in terms of implementation

The ISDF adopts a three step approach towards resolving the problem of unsafe communities of the first and second degree risk category (ISDF, 2010):

#### **1- Documentation**

The main goal of documentation is to create a comprehensive community/ area profile that guarantees a proper understanding of each at risk community exclusively before deciding a prior to relocation. It involves statistical enumeration of buildings, their types, structure, construction material and condition, as well as status of tenure. It also involves socio-cultural studies of individual and collective activities, patterns of livelihood, and demographic make-up. Demographic data such as the number of families, average family size, education, and employment is of particular relevance and is pursued at more detailed level. This step is usually carried out by local government agencies and NGO's.

#### **2- Work-plan Proposal**

This phase is primarily geared towards creating a blue print for a comprehensive community plan including a site master plan, architectural and urban designs of building blocks, infrastructure, services and amenities, and housing unit prototypes. The design process is accompanied by supplementary documents that explain the scope and intent of the designed community and the expected outcomes. The document also speaks to the specific process of decision making, declaring how and why a certain discourse was taken. Finally, the document describes budgeting, funding, management, timeline and prospective delivery date. This phase is usually carried out by private consultants, local agencies or NGO's.

#### **3- Implementation of Proposal**

This phase includes delivering the master-plan, laying down infrastructure, construction, and lastly; housing a specific population. It also involves allocating socio-economic

support programs for the incoming residents such as ones for women healthcare, youth empowerment, skill-building workshops etc... This phase is also carried out by local agencies and NGOs.

It's important to note that the three step process falls short in offering post occupancy follow up such as monitoring, maintenance and evaluation. These three steps are crucial to the upkeep of the success of a project, or as key indicators of problems within the process itself.

This paper inspects three areas in Cairo that were recently categorized by the ISDF as unsafe: Ezbit Khairallah, Istabl antar, Manshiyet nasser. Residents of those areas were relocated in two zones: Haram city and Masaken Othman. The study investigates whether there's a relation between some of the gaps existing in the areas hosting relocation and the strategies followed by the ISDF.

The field study highlights those gaps with special focus on those materialized through appropriations. For doing so, the researchers observed and documented the amendments done by residents in their new urban context and sought the reasons behind them through observations and interviews with appropriators.

### **Appropriation as an indicator of strategies deficits:**

Appropriation is a creative phenomenon that refers to the action of making something "suitable". It applies to many fields of life including urban spaces and the built environment and is often referred to by guerilla urbanism, insurgent urbanism, and urban acupuncture of DIY urbanism. In all terminologies, it's the attempt to modify things - usually in a way that was not officially predetermined- to better suit the needs of a certain group of people. Appropriation is usually undertaken for a variety of reasons, such as mastery and control or self-expression. Moreover, Appropriation is also thought to allow users to establish self-identification, which implies a level of dominance over space and simultaneously makes appropriation an expression of the public realm. Proshansky et al., argues that appropriation allows users to be active pursuers of their own interests. He also adds that it enables users to make active attempts to satisfy their needs in their interactions with the physical environment (Proshansky et al.1970).

Therefore, appropriation indicates the presence of unmet needs, challenges or issues of local importance that formal bodies did not and will probably not address. This urges people to conceptualize, construct and install their own "unauthorized urban design contributions" (Douglas 2011a), or what (Iveson 2013) refers to as "micro-spatial urban practices."- Aka "appropriation". This is why theorists such as (Carr et al., 1992), (Lynch, 1981) & (Hansen, 1989) defend appropriation as a legitimate public right, supported by (Lefebvre, 1996) who argues that "The right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation are implied in the right to the city" (Gottdiener et al, 2015)

Appropriation is the tool recruited in our research to detect the unmet needs of relocated communities and hence assess their satisfaction of the relocated communities. In an attempt to better understand appropriation, we shall first break it down into its constituent parts. As argued before, appropriation starts with an unfulfilled "need" that the provided urban environment failed

to afford, hence urging people to intervene. In our case this urban environment is the host environment as provided by the government for relocated communities.

Those needs urge a group of "appropriators" to react. Actors could be a single person applying mastery over space (individual actor) or a group of people (collective actors) sharing certain needs and pursuing a certain action. Though their action, appropriators serve the "beneficiaries". Both appropriators and beneficiaries could either be outsiders coming from another district or local inhabitants of the neighborhood. Appropriation encompasses high dynamism of space with relevance to time because it takes place for varying lengths of time and with different frequencies. For instance, some activities may occur "occasionally" on weekends, feasts or over certain seasons of the year.

There are also cases where appropriation takes place habitually, or even daily. The more frequent appropriation takes place, the more eminent and persistent is the need it covers. It is important to note that most of the literature render appropriation as an informal act since the users of the space are the pursuers of the action. However, the broader meaning for appropriation as in "using the space in a different way from its original intent" gives room for formal interventions as well. This may include licensed interventions initiated by community organizations or NGO's.

## **Methodology**

This study is based upon an inductive inquiry that materialized through preliminary observations of relocated communities and content analysis of ISDF document. Two case studies were then chosen - Masken Othman and Haram city - as exemplary areas that showcase recent relocation and appropriation. A survey of 150 relocated families in Haram city was conducted, coupled with two in-depth open ended interviews with personnel from two ground operating NGOs in Masaken Othman housing - The Environmental protection group and Sha'arawy organization. Both sites were closely documented through photography and mapping.

## **Case studies**

Appropriation was studied in two relocated communities in Cairo: Haram city and Masaken Othman. Ezbit Khairallah, Istabl antar, Manshiyet nasser are located at the edge of the Muqqatam plateau, which borders downtown Cairo to the East. All three slums are in proximity to major administrative, health, and educational services. They are also accessible through public transportation, and well connected to other areas in the city.

In the aftermath of the Duweika landslide in 2008, the government formed a technical committee to assess the risk of habitation within other hazard prone areas as a preventative measure of safety. The committee identified Ezbit khairallah, Istabl Antar and Manshiyet Nasser as areas of first degree risk, strongly recommending eviction and relocation of their residents. A large segment of the population was consequently relocated into two housing projects known as

Masaken Othman and Haram city housing, both at the 6th of October city, a distant suburb west of Cairo metro.

### **1- Masaken Othman 'The most care worthy'**

In 2005, the National Housing Project was launched in the aftermath of the presidential election, with a target of building 500,000 housing units within six years, composed of seven key projects. “Awla bi-l-Ri`āya” which translates into “The Most Care-Worthy” - better known locally as Masaken Othman - was one among the seven. Despite its original purpose as a public housing project, Masaken Othman became eventually a major destination for relocated residents evicted from high risk areas. Currently, it is estimated that 3500 families have moved to Masaken Othman from Ezbit Khairallah, Istabl Antar and Manshiyet Nasser. Only one 42 square meter unit option is available.

### **2- Haram City Housing**

The Haram city project was also established under the umbrella of the National Housing policy. Launched in 2007, the goal of the project was to provide 70,000 housing units upon completion. It currently houses 11,000 families, out of which 1750 come from the Ezbit Khairallah, Istabl Antar, Manshiyet Nasser communities. The development offers two unit options for relocated residents, a 48 square meter unit, and a 63 square unit one.

The following points summarize the current problems that were observed during fieldwork and re-iterated in the survey findings:

- Unreliable water supply
- Incomplete infrastructural amenities (street paving - sidewalks - landscape etc...)
- Lack of accessibility to transportation (only one bus stop )
- Lack of accessibility to basic services (elementary school, hospital etc...)
- Lack of basic services (supermarkets, post office, trash collection etc...)
- Lack of public-open and green space in Masaken Othamn

A lot of appropriation patterns were detected in both areas, apparently indicating lacking services and amenities. Appropriation also occurred on both the individual and collective levels.

In Haram city, each relocated family was given a 63 m<sup>2</sup> unit either a ground floor with garden or a first floor. While some of the families stuck to the preplanned use of the backyard- as playground for their kids or for social gathering with their friends and neighbors, yet, it has been observed that a substantial number of families have appropriated it into a workplace. The garden was in many cases turned into a retail shop for sanitary appliances or electric supplies, public gym or a car-repairing workshop. This is a form of a habitual appropriation in which is active on a daily basis.



**Figure 3** Appropriation of ground floor at Haram City, Source: Author

Although different in spatial configuration, Masaken Othman witnessed a similar appropriation pattern. In Masaken Othman, relocated families were put into high rise buildings with no yards on the ground floor. A lot of the ground floor residents cut out a room off their house and appropriated it into an economic retail activity or a street cafes.



**Figure 4** Appropriation of ground floor at Masaken Othman, Source: ISDF 2011, Tadamun 2015

In those two glimpses, appropriation is a habitual action that took place to satisfy the same need. Interviews have shown that people had to do this for earning their living since adequate job opportunities that met their qualifications were not available in the new area. Although appropriation in this case is an individual decision that developed case by case, however, it was so common that it developed over time into a pattern.

Interviews with the residents revealed that the areas of the units in Masaken Osman were barely sufficient; however, earning one's living has become an urgent and immediate need. It has become a priority over space and this is why they were urged to give up part of the residential space.

Street vending is another pattern of appropriation that took place in Haram city in response to lack of job opportunities... Despite the availability of a formal local market, relocated inhabitants created their own internal informal economic system. Residents occupied the areas in front of their houses and set up their temporary vending business. Interviews showed that relocated residents prefer to buy from street vendors because they are cheaper than the formal shops. The street vending started out with appropriators and beneficiaries both from the relocated community. However, it expanded by time to include original inhabitants as well. Cheaper

prices started to attract beneficiaries from the higher standard areas, the thing that sustains the street vendor phenomenon and creates general approval on it. On the other hand, in Masaken Othman Street vendors exist because of formal markets lack and to provide their daily needs.



**Figure 5** Street Vendors at Haram city & Masaken Othman, Source: Author & Tadamun 2015

On a broader scale, Education and transportation were lacking services in the host districts. Due to the distant location of haram city, the government dedicated a scheduled public bus for transporting the relocated community to and from their original neighborhood. This is because some of the residents are still affiliated to their Jobs and students to their schools there. However, this service was not sufficient because it was scheduled only twice daily: once in the day and another at night. Consequently, People created a substitute informal transportation system that depended on privately owned minibuses to make up for the insufficient transportation facilities. As a result, a vacant plot of land was collectively appropriated by microbus drivers into a microbus stop and is now a central transportation hub for the whole district. In Masaken Othman, people also depend on an informal transportation system through Tuktuks.



**Figure 6** Self Transportation in Haram city & Masaken Othman, Source: Author & Tadamun 2015

Adequate schools were also not provided in Masaken Othman. Students could not afford going to the schools they were originally enrolled in due to the big distance and high cost of transportation. Now residents need a substitute. The nearest alternative available is on the other side of "Al wahat road"- which is a high way. The journey to this school caused safety hazards

and resulted in a lot of accidents. As a result, concerned people agreed to build up a road bump to lower the speed limit of the cars and facilitate safe crossing.

Appropriation didn't only take place to provide missing services but also missing amenities. In Masaken Othman, a private sector (Takween) took an initiative and surveyed the residents missing needs. Given the substantial percentage of children amongst residents, a common complaint was the lack of recreational facilities and play grounds. It was not include in the master plan of the area. Therefore, Takween appropriated an existing vacant land into a playground with games for kids. Interviews shows that the different type of users are satisfied from the new entrainment area.



**Figure 7** The public space “Genina” Provided by Takween, Source: (Coloring a grey city, 2015)

## Discussion

The survey results indicate that residents who relocated to Haram city experienced a number of problems that caused a general sentiment of dissatisfaction with their current living conditions. Among 150 respondents, 60% from families with more than 4 members reported being unhappy with the size and design of their housing unit. This was particularly associated with families that had more than four children. Also, 50% reported their discontent with health service. Through field work we found that the only hospital in their vicinity is 15 km away and caters to the Egyptian elite only due to its high cost. In terms of educational services, 69.2% of respondents complained about the lack of options in the secondary (high) schools within the area. Similarly, public transportation proved to be significantly dysfunctional, as 90% of respondents reported depending on informal means of transportation for their everyday trips. Lastly, 45% of respondents reported depending on alternative commercial activities to but their daily needs.

Through the lens of appropriation as a means to detect inadequate strategies of relocation, implementation was found to be one major area of weakness. The challenge of implementation can be seen as a combination of two types of weaknesses; a logistical weakness- resembled in 'coordination' and a conceptual weakness, resembled in the lack of accountability towards fulfilling needs beyond sheltering.

## **1. Logistical weakness : Coordination**

In cases of multi-stakeholder involvement (mostly governmental agencies and NGOs), coordination efforts represent a great impediment. Managing roles, expectations and extending communication channels is often done haphazardly, creating instances of redundancy and overlap at times, and ones of complete inconsistency at others.

The lack of orchestration trickles down to issues of resource allocation, solicitation of funding from third party agencies, and the capacity to actively involve other potential important stakeholders such as municipalities.

## **2. Conceptual weakness : Accountability**

Apart from the need for shelter, other equally valid needs- such as socio-economic, urban, and spatial needs - receive less attention and are implicitly seen as secondary. Regardless of the type of action (relocation, in-situ re-settlement, or upgrade) the process in theory requires conducting studies using a variety of methods such as documentation, fieldwork and household surveys to capture a sense of how people were living prior to the state's intervention. However, these studies are seldom put to use. For example, despite the geographic, socio-cultural and demographic variations across the sites identified as 1st degree across the entire country, only one prototypical unit plan is being used throughout all newer housing projects. Also, post occupancy evaluation is not mandated or applied within the current strategy, which depicts the lack of interest in assessment, re-design and further improvement of the strategy.

Due to this lack of interest on the part of government in evaluation and monitoring, the study of these communities becomes fundamental to identifying areas of weakness. As Alanyali argues, "These spaces are stages for users' preferences and behavior patterns in space; so designers may use them as inspiring models, deriving design principles from them". This opinion is supported by Lynch and Carr who argue that "When others f act more freely, we learn about them, and thus about ourselves".

In that sense, the study of the overlap between appropriation and relocation can provide feedback on issues such as design and preference, informing both policy makers and professionals about authentic urban solutions for similar future projects.

## **Conclusion**

As with many city governments in the global south, the efforts to address the growth of slums in Egypt are based upon a pivotal yet pejorative notion of informality, one that problematizes unregulated development rather than invests in understanding it. Using a risk based approach to prioritize the state's intervention may sound plausible and - to a great extent - in accordance with the UN's guidelines for 'unavoidable eviction'. The real challenge that this study highlights is the capacity to implement these theoretical approaches.

In many reported cases, ISDF procedures were not carried out in actual practice. For instance, the risk based grading system requires that the government prioritize resettlement of those residents facing the greatest threat to their safety. In some areas, however, the ISDF evacuated residents living in areas identified as Second degree areas due to “poor housing quality” before residents living in Grade 1 “life-threatening areas” (TADAMUN 2014). A desire to beautify the city, attract investment, or to profit from the clearing of valuable land often informs government decisions about which areas to resettle and when, rather than an imperative to protect residents and improve housing conditions.

Through field work observation, interviewing local government agencies in Masaken Othman and surveying residents of Haram city, our findings indicate that residents struggled with adapting to their new setting due to various reasons. **First**, the distance and physical disconnect between these new housing development projects and the Cairo metro area. This has primarily affected prospects of finding jobs for many households, exacerbated by the lack of planned transportation lines to and from the area. The decision to relocate residents from an urban core to a suburban outskirts, without proper planning for accessibility is seen as a major flaw within the current relocation strategy framework. **Second**, the state on 'incompleteness' that is sensed through the absence of key infrastructural and urban elements such as the sidewalks, paved road network, bus-stops, solutions for street crossing, and open public space. **Third**, the clear unaccountability for the provision of basic services and amenities such as planning for retail and commercial activity, allocating an administrative core with a police station and a post office, and ensuring community access to health and education facilities.

This study reveals that ISDF relocation strategies do in fact include - at least in theory - a constituent that requires the study of vulnerable communities as a means of better understanding their needs and incorporating them in the design process. In both case studies however, we have found no evidence of actual consideration of the basic needs beyond the provision of shelter. Instead we have documented many citizen led interventions that answer to those needs using the available resources.

Citizen led interventions in relocated communities are a clear evidence of unfulfilled basic needs that the government failed to provide. As a result, citizens take it upon themselves to fulfill those gaps through appropriation. Appropriation could either be carried out individually to fulfill a personal need, or collectively, where a group of citizens agree upon a certain intervention and collaborate to accomplish it. Consequently, the initial urban environment is reshaped in a way that better fits the relocated communities. As demonstrated in the case studies, those needs vary from missing services such as adequate education and access to the job market or un-provided amenities such as playgrounds. Basic as they are, they were not provided by the government.

There's no doubt that appropriation is a manifestation of a community's need for ingenuity, identity and customization, in response to what is rigid, bare and inappropriate, in what is usually proposed by the formal system. This research calls upon urban designer and planners to engage

more seriously with the production of the informal, by observing practices undertaken by relocated communities, as valuable insights to the actual needs captured within a real setting.

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