

**An Exploration of State and Non-State Actor Engagement in
Informal Settlement Governance in the Mahwa Aser Neighborhood and
Sana'a City, Yemen**

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ABSTRACT

Informal settlements are a relatively new phenomenon in Yemen, first documented in the 1980s (El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007). They have since grown at a very rapid rate. Sana'a City, the nation's capital, alone has an estimated 35 informal settlements that together contain 20.5 percent of that urban center's population (El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007). To date, the Yemeni government has paid limited attention to informal settlements. The government has not developed any specific planning policies to address their needs, partly due to meager resources and professional capacities, and partly as a consequence of conflicting (and higher priority) needs (World Bank, 2010a). The unchecked growth of informal settlements has alarmed local and national authorities as well as international organizations and recently caused officials in these entities to begin to consider seriously how to address this new community reality.

This dissertation explores the engagement of state and non-state actors in informal settlement governance in Sana'a. The analysis offered here

employs Mahwa Aser, the largest and most controversial informal settlement in Sana'a, as an exemplar for a broader set of concerns for all of Sana'a's informal communities. The dissertation provides a nuanced portrait of Yemeni government capacities, policies, and practices related to Sana'a's informal settlements generally and to Mahwa Aser particularly via the perspectives and activities of multiple stakeholders, including, importantly, the community's residents. It explores the active governance roles of non-governmental and international organizations seeking to provide services in these communities as well. It also explores ways to build informal community residents' capacities to work with government and with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and international governmental organizations (IGOs) to address their many basic needs.

The analysis draws on personal interviews with key stakeholders, including long-time residents of Mahwa Aser, responsible government officials, and relevant leaders of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen, U.S.A., and Egypt. The author also examined government and international organization reports and documents to gain insight into the governance challenges linked to continued growth of informal communities in Yemen. The study identifies a number of factors that have led to worsening living

conditions in Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a. Taken together they suggest the Yemeni government and its partners may need to work far more self-consciously with informal community residents to establish shared goals and clear expectations. Those entities engaged collectively in governing these communities in Sana'a and in Yemen more generally will need to develop reliable policies and coherent programs within a transparent governance framework if the very difficult living conditions in such communities are to be improved. In particular, governance actors will need to devise ways and means to develop government capacities and resources even as they work to address community infrastructure and service needs in a sometimes daunting socio-cultural and economic context.

DEDICATION

To my family (my Dad, Mom, sisters, brothers, niece, and nephew), to their unconditional love, care, and support, I dedicate this effort.

I love you, All, so much, Wafa.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

DISTRICTS, CITIES, AND GOVERNORATES

Abyan	Governorate
Aden	Governorate; the second largest city in Yemen and the Economic Capital
Al-Hodaidah	Governorate
Al-Mahweet	Governorate
Dhamar	Governorate
Hajja	Governorate
Hadramout	Governorate
Ibb	Governorate
Mukalla	Governorate
Old City of Sana'a	Historical part of Sana'a city
Raymah	Governorate
Sana'a	Governorate and the national capital
Sana'a Municipality	Municipality of Sana'a (Amanat Al-A'asmah Sana'a)
Taiz	Governorate and the third largest city in Yemen
Socotra	Island in the Arabian Sea, part of Hadramout Governorate
Moderiat Alwehdah	Alwehdah Directorate is one of the ten directorates in Sana'a Municipality
Moderiat Maeen	Maeen Directorate is one of the ten directorates in Sana'a Municipality

LIST OF INFORMAL AREAS

Al-Khafgi
Harat Al-Dakik
Madinat Al-Lail in Madhbah
Mahwa Aser (Harat Al-Lakama or Algoba Alkhdhra or Ka'at Almotamarat or Mahwa Akhdam Aser)
Mahwa Aser Adhban
Mahwa Aser Alkassara
Mahwa Bab Al-Yaman
Mahwa Khamsawarbaeen
Suneina

RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS

Al-Berarah in Taiz
Madinat Al-Noor in Taiz
Madinat Al-Sakhaniya in Sana'a (Bani Hushish Zone)
Madinat Al-Ummal in Al-Hodaidah Governorate
Madinat 7th of July in Al-Hodaidah Governorate
Madinat Gholeil
Sa'awan (Sawad Sa'awan/Madinat Sawad Sa'awan) in Sana'a

NATIONAL/GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

General Authority for Land Surveying and Urban Planning (GALSUP)
General Organization for Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY)
Ministry of Education (MoEd)
Ministry of Finance (MoF)
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC)
Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH)
Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA)
National Water Authority (NWA)

KEY EVENTS AND IMPORTANT FIGURES IN YEMEN'S HISTORY

Ibrahim Al-Hamdi	The President of Yemen Arab Republic (former North Yemen) (June 13, 1974- October 11, 1977)
Ali Abdullah Saleh	The President of former North Yemen (Yemen Arab Republic YAR) (1978-1990); Republic of Yemen (ROY) (1990-2012)
Imam	The official name of the Ruler of former North Yemen prior the revolution of September 1962
Revolutionary of 1962	The revolution made against Imam's regime in the former North Yemen in September 26 th , 1962
May 22 nd , 1990	Yemeni unification; the two Yemens (Yemen Arab Republic 'also known as North Yemen' and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen 'also known as South Yemen) merged to form Republic of Yemen (simply known as Yemen)
August 2 nd , 1990- February 28 th , 1991	First Gulf War (Persian Gulf War or Gulf War I) was a war waged by a UN-authorized coalition force from 34 nations led by the United States, against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait
May-July 1994	Civil war in Yemen was waged between the armed forces of the former northern and southern Yemeni states and their supporters
February 2011-2012	Political upheaval occurred in Yemen

RELIGIOUS OCCASIONS AND TERMS

Eid Al-Adha	The Islamic biggest feast (celebration for the end of pilgrimage worship in Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
Eid Al-Fitr	The Islamic small feast (end of Ramadan celebration)
Ramadan	Fasting and holy month in Islamic World
Wqaf (<i>Plural: Awqaf</i>)	is an inalienable religious endowment in Islamic law, typically denoting a building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes for the benefit of other people.

Zakat Zakat is the giving of a fixed portion of one's wealth to charity, generally to the poor and needy. It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

SOCIAL CASTE TERMS

Sadaa (*Sing. Sayyid*) The first social stratum and the highest level of social caste in Yemen. Believed to be the descendants of the Prophet Mohammad (PUH). They are the lawmakers and the owners of lands.

Qodhah (*Sing. Qadhi*) (Fuqaha or Mashayikh) The second social stratum. They are slightly lower on the social scale and perform the same social functions.

Gab'ail (*Sing. Gabili*) (Tribesmen) The third level of social caste. They control their territory and caravan routes, own arable land, and carry weapons.

Mazainah (*Sing. Mezayen*) (Abna'a Al-Khumus or Masakeen or Du'afa) The lower strata in tribal system. They are an underprivileged group and live under tribal protection. They engage in low-status occupations, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, brokers, barbers, and butchers.

Akhdam (*Sing. Khadem*) (Servants) They are the ex-slaves of African or Ethiopian descent and not listed in the traditional social structure but are considered to occupy the lowest ethnic and caste group in Yemeni society.

Abeed (*Sing. Abd*) (Slaves) They are also the ex-slaves of African or Ethiopian descent and not listed in the traditional social structure. They occupy a lower level than Akhdams. They were considered at one time the worrier.

CULTURALLY UNIQUE TERMS

Al-Sailah (Wadi Al-Sailah) It is the flood channel, flood path, flood prone areas, or water beds; it passes through the Old Sana'a City.

Amin Al-Mantiqa'a Government appointed area chief

Amin Notary public

Ashwa'yyat (*Sing. Ashwa'iy*) Ashwa'yyat is the Arabic word used in Egypt for informal housing settlements or slums. It literally means 'random' or 'haphazard.' The Egyptian government uses the terms Ashwa'yyat, informal settlements/areas, and slums interchangeably, and U.N. Habitat uses slums. While slum usually has the connotation of indecent housing or lack of infrastructure and basic services, informal usually refers to the extra-legality of the home due to lack of building permits or security of tenure. This lack of formality may be accompanied by a denial of service delivery.

Alshohada'a (*Sing. Shaheed*) Martyrs

Basira	Traditional/customary title to land; it stands in place of official land deed.
Bast-yad	Placing one's hand on a piece of land, which means claim the land illegally and without official deed or title.
Gat	(Qat or kaht) A flowering plant native to the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Chewing Gat is a daily social custom (usually takes place from early afternoon to early evening). Many Yemenis waste most of their income on buying that plant. They get addicted to chewing the leaves of this tree and they waste tremendous amount of time chewing Gat in a daily social gathering.
Moderi'yyat (<i>Sing. Moderiat</i>)	Directorates
Muhamasheen (<i>Sing. Muhammash</i>)	The marginalized group, most likely Akhdam
Rafah-yad	Sell the occupied land, which once was claimed without official deed or title, unofficially; literary means sell the building but not the land.
Sheikh	Community leader.
Zanka-wa-Marboa'a	Sell the aluminum sheets <i>Zanka</i> and the walls that are built of wood or cement blocks <i>Marboa'a</i> .

NATIONAL PARTIES

Al-Eslah Party	Islamic Brotherhood Party, the second largest party in Yemen.
Al-Mowtamar Alshabi Party	General People's Congress (GPC): the biggest party in Yemen and the former ruling party; "the President's party".

COMMON LAW

Customary Law	What has always been done and accepted by society, tribes, and law.
Sharia Law	The moral code and religious law of Islam. It has two primary sources: the precepts set forth in the Quran (the Holy book of Muslims), and the example set by the Islamic prophet Mohammed in the Sunnah; where it has official status, sharia is interpreted by Islamic judges (Qadis) with varying responsibilities for the religious leaders (Imam).

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAC Bank	The Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CAS	Country Assessment Strategy
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDA	Country Director Assistant
CPPR	Country Portfolio Performance Review
IDA	International Development Association
IGO	International Governmental Organization

INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
MENA	Middle East and North Africa region
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
RPF	Resettlement Policy Framework
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
YR	Yemeni Ryal (Yemen official currency; 1USD=250YR at the time of conducting the interviews of the research project with Mahwa Aser residents August-September 2011)

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ADRA	Addictive, Disorder, Regulatory and Authority; international non-governmental organization, USA
AFESD	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development; regional financial institution, Kuwait
AUDI	Arab Urban Development Institute; a regional, non-governmental, non-profit urban research, technical and consulting, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
CARE International	Non-governmental organization located in Geneva; it operates in 84 countries, including Yemen (CARE Yemen)
COHRE	Center on Housing Rights and Evictions
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
GTZ	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation); international enterprise owned by the German Federal Government
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
JSDF	Japanese Social Development Fund, non-governmental organization, Japan
KFW	(Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Reconstruction Credit Institute); government-owned development bank, Germany
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Oxfam International	International confederation of 17 organizations networked together in 92 countries, including Yemen (Oxfam Yemen)
Save the Children	International non-governmental organization, USA
SFD	Social Fund for Development; non-governmental organization, Yemen
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; non-governmental organization, Geneva
UN-ESCWA	(United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia); international non-governmental organization, Lebanon
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund); international non-governmental organization, New York
UN-Habitat	United Nations Center for Human Settlements, international non-governmental organization, Nairobi
UN-Habitat (ROAS)	United Nations Human Settlements Program, Regional Office for Arab States; international non-governmental organization, Cairo
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
World Bank	International governmental organization, Washington District of Columbia, USA

NATIONAL AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Al-E'etezaz Association
 Al-Mahabah Association
 Al-Sada Organization
 Al-Saleh Charitable Organization
 Belad Al-Ta'am Association
 National Union for Supporting the Poorest Groups (NUHPG)
 National Women Committee (NWC)
 SOUL Association
 Water Irrigation Users Association (WIUA)
 Yemen Women Union (YWU)

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Informal settlements remain among the greatest challenges that governments face in developing countries, including Arab States. They are a relatively new phenomenon in Yemen, first documented in the early 1980s (El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007). Widespread lack of economic opportunities in Yemen outside major urban centers has spurred increased rural-to-urban migration. Meanwhile, the specific social and cultural characteristics of those migrants, coupled with a dearth of government capacities and resources to address the needs created by this massive movement of population, have made crafting an appropriate governance response to these swift developments extremely difficult to develop and bring to successful fruition. Yemen's informal communities have grown rapidly and today about 20.5% of the total urban population in Sana'a lives in so-called *squatter settlements* (Al-Waraqi, 2009; El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007). In Taiz, approximately 40% of that city's population resides in informal communities and in Al-Hodaidah, about 50% of residents live in such settlements (World Bank, 2010a).

This unchecked growth has alarmed local and national authorities as well as international organizations and caused these officials to begin to think about how to address this new community reality. Although formal intervention in informal settlements by the Yemeni national government and its partners is quite recent, these actors may need to think differently to tackle this population's manifest needs effectively. Public officials may need to work far more self-consciously with informal settlement groups as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations to share ideas and

resources and to coordinate efforts to assist this population. That is, all of these stakeholders will need to develop an effective governance response to the peculiar challenges created by the explosive growth of informal settlements. They will need to work jointly to develop effective adaptive policies, strategies, and concrete programs to assist residents of existing communities while also discouraging the continued rapid growth of informal settlements. The resilience, local knowledge, and self-reliance of residents of these communities are significant, but by no means sufficient to address their needs. These capacities and the necessary infrastructure and social services must instead be encouraged and employed under the auspices of Yemen's governments combined with the expertise of other interested stakeholders. All of the stakeholders involved will need to develop and ensure uniform implementation of reliable policies, good practices, and coherent programs within a transparent governance framework and strong institutions if the very difficult living conditions in Yemen's informal settlements are to change.

1.1. Research Purposes

This inquiry examines and shares the story of Sana'a, Yemen's informal settlements and especially that of its best known such community—Mahwa Aser—through the lens of multiple stakeholders, including community residents, government officials, and directors of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and international governmental organizations (IGOs). In this qualitative analytical study, I sought to explore how the following factors have contributed to aggravating the situation of informal settlements in Sana'a, particularly Mahwa Aser:

- Limited government professional capacities and resources;

- A lack of efficient public land ownership policy; and
- A deficiency of continuing donor interest.

I investigated the specific roles of different stakeholders in informal settlements in Sana'a. I also sought to understand how Mahwa Aser residents viewed their government's policies and activities and those of major NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in their community as an example of such dynamics in one significant Yemeni informal settlement. Finally, I sought to explore how most effectively to build resident capacities to work with government and with INGOs and IGOs to address community needs.

1.2. Research Problem

Mahwa Aser (Harat Al-Lakama) is among the oldest and most populous informal settlements in Sana'a. Established in the early 1980s, of the identified 35 informal settlements in the city (Madbouly, 2009; 2007; El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007), Mahwa Aser may be considered the most controversial because of its geographic location, the unique characteristics of its population, and the many needs of its residents. Nevertheless, Yemeni government officials turned a blind eye to the existence of the settlement until the early 1990s. The site also drew the interest of some military commanders and government officials who were interested in acquiring the land for private development in the mid-1990s. However, the community continued to grow without any intervention or interruption by the government until the land on which it is located became quite valuable for public and/or commercial redevelopment. A State ordinance passed in the early 2000s foresaw a government compound on the state-owned land occupied by Mahwa Aser and located at the intersection of two major roads (the 60th Road and Zubayri Street) in Sana'a. Beginning in 2000, the State sought to prevent any new or additional construction

and so began to limit the provision of public services and extension of infrastructure to prevent the expansion of the settlement in order to prepare its residents for future relocation.

While the parcel of land on which the community is located is of interest to multiple parties for other purposes, Mahwa Aser current residents live in very difficult conditions. The area lacks the basic elements for decent community life, including a steady supply of clean drinking water, a sewerage system, and continuously functioning health centers and schools. Moreover, the few attempts that state and non-state actors have undertaken to assist community residents in assuring ongoing provision of these basic services have been unsuccessful. Those interviewed for this study involved in these efforts argued that the cultural and social backgrounds of Mahwa Aser residents have proven a difficult challenge to address successfully. Mahwa Aser, which was first established by at least 328 households and 2,261 individuals (El-Shorbaji, 2007), is home to a majority of the Akhdam population in Sana'a. Akhdam are the most impoverished group in Yemen and the lowest in the nation's social strata. As a result, they are the target of cultural and popular discrimination, according to the Habitat International Coalition (2006). Given this reality, it has often been difficult for interested advocates to attain government interest and action on behalf of the settlement's residents to address its population's needs.

Despite the fact that informal settlements are a growing challenge in Yemen and in other Arab states, few researchers have studied these communities and government and interested stakeholder capacities to address them systematically. The international development literature has always looked at one side of the story—government policies

and planning practices and the engagement of various stakeholders in informal settlements. Little literature has examined the other side of the narrative—the lived experiences of informal settlement residents and their responses and reactions to the intervention of state and non-state actors in their communities, whether to provide services, offer educational opportunities, or to seek their relocation. This odd lacuna is particularly evident in the relatively small literature concerning informal communities in Arabic-speaking countries, which has so far left many questions unaddressed. For example, what are the specific cultural and social dimensions of these communities? How and why is it reportedly “difficult” to work with them? What are the most effective approaches to build resident capacities to work with government and national and international non-governmental organizations to address community needs?

1.3. Research Questions

Scholars know very little about informal settlements in the Arab world, including Yemen, except for the fact they are growing rapidly. This dissertation will connect the little collected knowledge we know about Arabic and Yemeni informal settlements and the engagement of various stakeholders to an examination of the role of these different stakeholders in addressing the dynamic character of change and growth of informal settlements. I will focus also on the various challenges and tensions in addressing the needs of these communities effectively in a government characterized by the following fundamental realities, also identified by the World Bank (2010a), Madbouly (2009; 2008), Sims et al. (2009), and El-Shorbagi (2007):

- No systematic land assignment and land ownership system;

- Challenges of professional capacities and resources among the key actors in governance efforts, especially the Yemeni government and Mahwa Aser residents;
- Ineffective or non-existent planning processes, ongoing public safety issues in the community, and widespread public official corruption; and
- Challenges arising from the social characteristics of the community's residents.

I examined Sana'a's informal communities generally and Mahwa Aser particularly, not only within the frame of what is known and not known concerning this form of community in Yemen, but also in the context of what is known about governance as a potential frame for thinking about how the government and other actors may be responding to changing conditions in these neighborhoods. My research questions included:

1. What factors play a role in informal settlements in Sana'a and Mahwa Aser in particular?
2. How do Mahwa Aser residents view government policies and activities and those of major NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in their community?
3. What are the required potentials, resources, and partnerships for the governments and other actors to address the rapid growth of informal settlements while assuring residents of such settlements habitable communities?
4. What are the strategies local, national authorities, NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs can adopt to address the needs of informal settlements such as Mahwa Aser, build the capacities of its residents, overcome the cultural realities of discrimination against its residents, and develop effective strategies to address longer-term challenges?

1.4. Significance of the Study

This dissertation begins to fill a gap in the literature about the different roles of state and non-state actors in informal settlements in the Arab world and the roles of effective governance in responding to their rapid growth and the needs of their residents. This study provides a capsule portrait of informal settlements in Sana'a via the lens and perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including, importantly, one informal community's residents. The dissertation contributes to the literature by exploring and identifying the cultural dimensions and social characteristics of informal settlement population, the types of challenges these communities have posed for the Yemeni government in the short and long term, and the strategies and programs offered by international organizations to help these residents improve the government's capabilities to address their ongoing needs.

Mahwa Aser is used as an exemplar or representative informal community for Sana'a not only because exploring its population and challenges provides rich insights into the nature of informal settlement communities in the nation's capital city, but because it also provides distinctive qualitative data on how residents have responded to the government as well as interested NGO, INGOs, and IGO initiatives aimed at assisting them. Mahwa Aser does not simply provide an interesting site example through which to analyze Yemeni planning/housing policy regarding informal settlements in Sana'a, but it also offers an opportunity to understand better the different roles of multiple stakeholders in informal settlements in a significant Arabic nation.

This dissertation offers information that may assist government agencies, community groups, NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs, and planners in Yemen to gain a better understanding of the specific characteristics of informal settlements as communities and

to rethink their current planning policies and practices. It offers empirical guidance to different stakeholders concerning how to develop more effective governance responses to the peculiar challenges posed by the explosive growth of informal settlements as well as how to work jointly to develop and ensure uniform implementation of coherent programs aimed at improving specific living conditions in these settlements.

In addition, this dissertation provides an outlet for the voice of one key informal settlement's residents (Mahwa Aser) as a lens into like concerns in similar communities in Sana'a. I hope the perceptions and insights from residents catalogued here will assist governmental and nongovernmental organizations to become more sensitive to the needs of the informal communities they seek to serve. Residents of Mahwa Aser and of other informal settlements in Sana'a meanwhile may benefit from this effort's analysis of state and non-state actor initiatives aimed at helping residents build capacities to address their community's challenges and become more actively involved in determining their own future.

Overall, this research sheds light on the character of informal settlements in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. I hope this research will positively influence local and national planning practices in Yemen as well as in other Arab states, which are confronting similar challenges. I also hope this inquiry will open new options for exploring new governance and planning strategies to assist informal settlement residents as they work to overcome the challenges that confront them each day.

1.5. Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into nine chapters. Chapter 1 presents the context of the research, including its principal objectives and scope, guiding questions, and

significance. Chapter 2 examines the growth and state of governance of informal settlements in developing countries generally and the Arab States particularly. The chapter discusses governance as a relatively recently adopted framework for dealing with informal settlements resulting from a shift in political thinking away from considering governments alone as the ultimate arbiters of legitimate public action. Chapter 2 also traces the recent turn in urban service delivery to a more participatory cast with a marked emphasis on developing and sustaining public-private partnerships (PPP). Chapter 3 includes a more specific discussion of informal settlements in Sana'a and Yemen. It provides an overview of the characteristics of Mahwa Aser (a significant and established informal settlement in Sana'a used here as an illustrative type for the larger set of such communities in that city and elsewhere in Yemen). The chapter examines the causes of informal settlement formation in Sana'a, including land related issues, poor urban planning, weak institutional structures, and multiple social factors. Finally, it provides an overview of Yemeni government responses to informal settlements generally and Mahwa Aser, specifically. Chapter 4 articulates the study's research design and methodology.

The last four chapters explore the perspectives of multiple stakeholders concerning Sana'a's informal settlements and especially, Mahwa Aser. Chapter 5 investigates the perceptions and perspectives of the residents of Mahwa Aser concerning their situation as one mechanism by which to gain insights into the concerns of such residents in similar informal communities in Yemen. Chapter 6 discusses the perspectives of the Yemeni government on the governance challenge it confronts in addressing rapid informal settlements growth. Chapters 7 and 8 analyze the perspectives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations working in Yemen and headquartered

there and in the U.S. and Egypt. Finally, Chapter 9 provides a summary of the study's key findings and offers recommendations to both the Yemeni government and international organizations concerning how they might more effectively act to improve the living conditions of Sana'a's informal settlement residents. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

The dissertation includes a list of definition of terms at the beginning. It also includes 6 appendices: appendix I and II include the interview questions specifically designed for different stakeholders—Mahwa Aser residents, government officials, and leaders of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in and outside of Yemen—in the preliminary and major research phases; appendix III contains a copy of the VTIRB (Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board) approval letters and consent forms. Appendix IV includes a chart outlining the organizational structure of the formal urban planning process in Yemen; appendix V contains a table detailing statistical information concerning informal settlements in Sana'a; and finally, appendix VI provides photographs taken in Mahwa Aser, to offer a sense of the conditions in which its residents live and additional information concerning Mahwa Aser.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1. Informal Settlements in the Developing World and the Arab States

2.1.1 Introduction

The international community increasingly views informal settlements in the world's developing countries, including the Arab States, as a contemporary urban crisis that must be addressed and better managed. Their rapid growth represents a great concern not only for the international community, but also for local and national authorities. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (2011) reports that the urban population in developing countries is expected to double, from 2.6 billion in 2010 to 5.2 billion in 2050 and most of that growth will occur in the Global South. Informal settlements are growing at least twice as fast as planned settlements (Choguill, 1996). Today, one-sixth of the planet's population lives in informal settlements (Beardsley and Werthmann, 2008). That percentage is projected to increase to one-third of total global population by 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2006). Such rapid growth is already burdening local and national authorities in the developing world and it will become a still more challenging problem in the years to come. The lack of professional capacities and resources and the absence of adequate urban governance structures in many developing nations worsens these nations' predicaments. Initiatives, such as the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure (UN-Habitat, 2006) and Cities Alliance's *Cities without Slums*, are working to address this issue by encouraging affected governments to consider shifting from the traditional paradigm of *government* or *old governance* to one that has been

dubbed *new governance*. This approach encourages more involvement by stakeholders in informal settlements, from their design to construction and occupancy by strengthening state-society relationships and developing effective public-private partnerships (PPP) to provide residents needed services. The new governance also aims to improve the performance of local and national authorities by building government professional capacities and reforming official procedures.

2.1.2. Evolution of Informal Settlements

Scholars in the world's developed nations have offered three major theories aimed at explaining why and how informal settlements emerge and grow, depending on the development status of their host nations:

- The Chicago School in the 1930s, which argued informal residential areas result from the different income levels of various ethnic groups who compete for valuable or desirable urban land (Abu-Lughod, 1997; Kusmer 1997; Katz, 1986);
- Alonso's neo-liberal theory of slums which viewed informal settlements as a realistic response to the housing needs of urban dwellers who could not afford more formal dwellings due to discriminatory urban regulations and public spending (Stokes, 1962); and
- The post-modern theory of urban landscape, which perceived informal settlements as the product of skills segregation within urban spaces with urban dwellers settling according to their occupations, skill-sets, and social status (Sietchiping, 2004).

Meanwhile, analysts of informal settlements in the developing world have offered four theories to describe the emergence of these communities:

- The inefficiency of urban authorities, along with poor land management practices and inadequate urban planning schemes (Fekade, 2000);
- Political and historical factors, especially civil and political instabilities (Roy and Al Sayyad, 2004);
- The introduction of a new economic system that created differences in income and class, which translated into residential discrimination and social exclusion (Huchzermeyer, 2002); and
- A continuing disequilibrium of demand and supply of urban commodities (Sietchiping, 2004).

Other scholars and international development agencies have attributed the formation and growth of informal settlements to similar factors. The World Bank (2008), for example, has argued the tension between leapfrogging development, centrifugal forces, and densification around business and economic nodes or sub-centers is the main force influencing informal settlement development in developing countries. In these cases, government policies encouraged heavy urbanization and redistribution of the population into newly claimed lands. The government then failed to keep pace with the rapid growth of urbanization and became unable to provide adequate land, infrastructure, and homes to the cities' urban centers, which forced the less privileged urban majority to find housing in self-made settlements (Sabry, 2009; Ploeger and Groetelaers, 2006). Tsenkova et al. (2008) have described several critical factors affecting the creation of informal settlements and the quality of life with in them for their residents once they are established. These include: rapid urbanization brought on by an influx of people over a

short time, widespread poverty, a shortage of low cost housing and serviced land, inefficient public administration, and inadequate planning policies and land management.

Fekade (2000) has argued that the rigidity of urban planning regulations is itself associated with other factors, such as poor governance, corruption, and nepotism and that these factors together have led to severe shortages of land and urban housing for the poor in many developing nations. Scholars have identified two additional factors as key contributors to the massive growth of informal settlements:

- A political reluctance in many states to provide support to informal settlements; and
- The inability of many developing country governments to attract sufficient foreign investment and donor interest to address the challenge.

In short, informal settlements are not simply an outcome of massive urban population growth, rural-to-urban migration, or the perception among the poor in many countries that urban centers offer a better quality of life. In addition to these factors, they are also the result of a range of inadequate national and regional policies and practices. That is, multiple factors have caused the creation and growth of informal settlements in developing countries, especially in the Arab States. In addition to the specific history of local environments (i.e., social, political, and economic characteristics) that vary from country to country, several factors common to each case have led to the development of informal settlements. These include a dearth of necessary government professional capacities and resources, dysfunctional land markets, social and political insecurity, poor management of public land, inadequate urban policies, fragile governance structures, corruption, unsuitable regulations, inefficient institutional integration systems, poor economic performance, and lack of political will.

Among others, Fernandes (2008), Potsiou and Ioannidis, (2006), Dale (1997), Payne (1997), Turner, (1977), and Abrams (1964) have described the evolution and growth of these communities in many developing countries. For these analysts, the incapability of the state to provide adequate alternatives to access land and formal housing in urban areas has driven many poor residents to consider more feasible and available approaches to securing shelter for themselves and their families. As a group these scholars have suggested that the lack of sufficient and affordable land and the poorly functioning housing markets constitute the most important causes of squatter settlements. Moreover, people, particularly the urban poor, routinely violate such public regulations as do exist and obtain land illegally because the bureaucratic system for legalization is both inefficient and ineffective and because there is little or no public capacity to oversee land ownership once properties are purchased. Such processes as exist are complex and require both time and money that the poor often do not possess. These authors have also argued that outdated national and regional planning and zoning regulations, and the inability of developing nation states to apply national master plans, or to enforce development and building regulations have prompted many poor families to fulfill their immediate needs by squatting on available land.

Madbouly (2009) has investigated the causes of the emergence and continuous growth of informal settlements in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) and argued that the high cost of land and poor public land management, coupled with the high price of housing in the formal market have constituted the main reasons for the growth of informal settlements in this area. Egypt leads the growth of informal settlement in the MENA region with 30% of its urban population now residing in such communities.

Political instability (especially in Palestine, Iraq, Sudan and, most recently, Syria and Yemen) has contributed to the formation of informal settlements in cities throughout the region. Madbouly has also suggested that poor economic policies and governance, coupled with slow implementation of economic and political reforms, have impeded local government capacity to finance, deliver, and manage urban services in the MENA region (2009).

2.1.3. Typology of Informal Settlements

Informal settlement size and make-up vary from country to country according to the framework and context in which they have emerged. In the Egyptian context, Fekade (2000) has argued that informal settlements may be classified based on the quality of housing:

- *Affluent* settlements, characterized by the highest housing quality and best housing conditions;
- *Moderate* settlements, which have less housing quality and density; and
- *Disadvantaged* settlements, which have the most inferior quality of housing and worst housing conditions.

Hamilton et al. (2012), however, have classified informal areas in Cairo into four broad categories based on the type of land on which they are constructed:

- Private lands;
- Former agricultural lands;
- Desert state lands; and
- The deteriorating sections of the historic city and in the inner core of the city.

In the Syrian context, according to Fernandes (2008), informal settlements may be classified based on the legal status of the housing located within them:

- Informality resulting from land tenure;
- Informality resulting from non-compliance with land use and planning regulations;
- Informality resulting from non-compliance with building regulations; and
- Informality resulting from non-compliance with registration requirements.

Despite these different classification strategies, scholars have recognized four basic forms of informal settlements. The first form involves squatting on state-owned land. In this case, people construct their housing in violation of state laws, and their action creates slums in cities. Public authorities routinely clash with occupiers whenever they try to control these settlements (UN-Habitat, 2003). This settlement type is common in all developing countries. The second sort of informal settlement often occurs when houses are constructed without permission on legally-owned land parcels or illegally-sold land without a formal registration. The third form of informal settlement occurs when residents construct illegal building extensions. To avoid complex bureaucracy and high taxation systems, informal community residents often prefer to add stories to a one-story building to increase the space available to their families. This sort of construction is a common practice in many Arab countries (Potsiou and Ioannidis, 2006). The last type of informal settlement occurs with illegal conversion of land use, such as shifting agricultural property to housing or industrial use or converting industrial land to residential settlements. This practice is common across Latin America (De Soto, 2000) and some of the Arab States, including Egypt (Tarbush, 2012; Sabry, 2009).

2.1.4. Definition of Informal Settlements

Exactly what constitutes an informal settlement also varies widely from country to country. Definitions appear to be context-specific and depend on a variety of political, economic, sociological, and environmental factors. Moreover, definitions vary with the planning and legal framework of the region in which settlements are located. For their part, scholars and practitioners have suggested varying definitions of informal settlements. For example, the Syrian-German Technical Cooperation GTZ program has defined informal communities as illegal settlements that are: built on disputed/unregistered land, or constructed in contravention to existing master plans, land use, zoning regulations, or building standards (Abdul Wahab and Wakely, 2009). Sitchiping (2005) perceived an informal settlement as any residential area in an urban center that does not comply with existing land use regulations and/or construction standards. Likewise, the Center on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) (2009) has argued that informal communities should be viewed as illegal settlements that have been developed on state land without regard to construction, land use, or zoning regulations and without the authorization of public agencies or planning officials.

According to the Handbook of the Western Cape Department of Housing and the City of Cape Town (2003), informal settlements violate land use plans and the legal requirements for formal housing. They emerged because of the uncontrolled rapid urbanization where the State became unable to provide enough land, housing, or even proper infrastructure to these growing communities (Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006). The Vienna Declaration on regional policy and programs on informal settlements in south eastern Europe defined informal communities as human settlements constructed without

respecting urban planning regulations or the formal requirements of legal property ownership, transfer, or construction. Further, such population centers do not meet requirements for legal recognition and hamper economic development (Vienna Declaration, 2004). The UN Habitat Program has defined informal settlements as: 1) residential areas where people construct their houses with no legal claim to the land and 2) unplanned settlements where housing is not in compliance with building regulations and current planning policies (United Nations Statistics Division UNSTAT, 2005). Practically, all definitions emphasize the illegal status of informal housing, the similarly unlawful occupation of land, and the lack of compliance with legal procedures.

Mason and Fraser (1998) have defined informal settlements as self-constructed shelters built of diverse materials, such as plastic, tin sheeting, and wooden planks. They are typically the product of an urgent need for shelter by the urban poor. They are characterized by high population density, dynamic proliferation, degradation of the local ecosystem, and severe social problems. Meshack et al. (2006) have highlighted the lack of service and infrastructure provision in their understanding of key informal settlement characteristics. They explained that informal settlements are characterized by unguided housing densification and spatial disorderliness that inhibit provision of basic services, such as potable water and access roads. These different definitions of informal settlements share at least one common characteristic, their emphasis on the lack of a requisite permit or legal title for the use of property. The UN Habitat Program definition remains the most widely adopted definition for informal communities.

Analysts have not agreed on how best to label informal settlements (Vincent, 2009). The most commonly used synonyms are squatter settlements, slums, favelas,

shantytowns, unplanned settlements, illegal settlements, marginal settlements, inadequate housing, and out of compliance housing. In the Arab States, including Yemen, the term “*ashwa’iyyat*,¹” literally meaning *random*, has long been the only term used officially to identify deteriorated or under-served urban areas, including informal communities (El-Shorbagi, 2007). However, during the last decade, the term *informal settlements* has gained currency in official circles and is now used along with *ashwa’iyyat* to address unplanned and illegally constructed areas (Madbouly, 2007).

Interested observers and officials first identified informal settlements in the developing world during the late 1950s (UN-Habitat, 2003), but the phenomenon is relatively new to the Arab region. For example, informal settlements emerged in Greater Cairo in Egypt in the late 1960s (Sedky, 2000), in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia in the early 1970s (Karimi et al., 2007), and in Sana’a City in Yemen in the early 1980s (Madbouly, 2009; 2008; El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007).

Challenging problems remain both in defining informal settlements and in obtaining reliable data on the number of people who live within them in the developing world. Formal censuses routinely inadequately cover inhabitants of such neighborhoods. Indeed, their residents may not be registered or officially recognized, which limits information concerning even the number of people living in such settlements. Most population data are therefore estimates subject to considerable uncertainty. Obtaining adequate data concerning the scope and extent of informal settlements in Arab States is especially difficult as no accurate data is available to identify the size and the number of informal settlements in those nations. The best available international organization data from 2001 show that 43% to 78.2% of the total urban population lived in informal

¹ See the definition of terms list.

settlements in the world's least developed countries (UN-Habitat, 2003). In Cairo, the majority of the population lives in informal areas. For example, of the 4.5 million dwelling units in Cairo, 57% were informal and unregistered and another 13% had once been registered; only 27% could be considered formal in 1996. In 2005, only 7-10% of properties were registered. In fact, 78% of housing units were purchased from individuals or small informal developers between 2003 and 2008 (Sims, 2010). According to Tarbush (2012), informal settlements are now home to more than 60% of Cairo's estimated 17 million inhabitants and consume more than half of the city's physical space.

2.1.5. Characteristics of Informal Settlements

Irrespective of the paucity of reliable information on informal settlements in developing countries, including the Arab region, these communities share many common characteristics, as the discussion above has suggested. For example, in terms of land tenure, homes in these settlements are illegal dwellings characterized by insecure land tenure, which results in depriving their inhabitants of adequate access to basic services and infrastructures. These communities also generally lack minimum health standards (as a result of high and uncontrolled population densities and overcrowding). Sanitation, food storage facilities and drinking water quality are often poor, too, with the result that inhabitants are exposed to a wide range of pathogens and their houses may act as breeding grounds for insects that carry disease. These settlements generally lack adequate sewerage systems and cooking and heating facilities. Since informal settlements are home predominately to the urban poor and to marginalized groups, their residents are typically excluded from the larger mainstream society. Long-term social and cultural exclusion very often leads to poor access to education and employment opportunities, which

contributes to increased family and inter-resident violence as well as to problems with drug abuse. Finally, the makeshift character of informal settlement dwellings both makes them fire hazards and subjects their inhabitants to weather-related illnesses and injuries as well.

2.1.6. Costs and Impacts of Informal Settlements

Informal settlements create costs not only for their residents but also for the state. Fernandes (2008) and Potsiou and Ioannidis (2006) discussed the typical implications of informal settlements for residents and cities. They examined these costs from both the perspective of residents and that of affected states. From the point-of-view of state officials, informal settlements burden governments financially. Government officials typically argue that informal settlements not only are deeply fragmented, inefficient, polluted, and difficult to administer, but also imply high costs to regimes due to the enormous amount of money that must be dedicated to them. Furthermore, the state generally receives little or no revenue from inhabitants of these neighborhoods from taxes and building license fees since it is very difficult to track transactions for individuals residing in informal buildings. The state expends resources when it develops utility and road networks in informal settlements and when it repairs environmental damage within them, but it rarely receives payments from residents in return to help offset those expenditures. Finally, informal community residents routinely mistrust government officials even as they are the target of similar attitudes by state officials and the broader population. Informal settlement inhabitants routinely believe the state discriminates against them, especially in terms of securing affordable housing, while mainstream society residents believe that the state should penalize informal community residents for

their illegal acts. More broadly, developing states often suffer the mistrust of all groups due to their frequent failure to control corruption, safeguard the poor, and monitor environmental development, together with the persistent unfairness of what often are unreliable legal frameworks.

From the perspective of those residing in informal settlements, living in them is both expensive and unfair. In their view, they have been forced to invest their life savings in problematic properties that cannot further be developed or traded in the formal land market because the government failed to address their needs. They are also often forced to pay a much higher cost for poor products and have limited access to public services and infrastructure (including, as outlined above, adequate water and sewerage system, electricity, street cleaning, schools, and social and health services) (Fernandes, 2008; Potsiou and Ioannidis, 2006). In terms of legal costs, their lack of tenure security exposes residents to the possibility of forced eviction.

Overall, Potsiou and Ioannidis (2006) have observed that analysts should highlight the direct and indirect costs associated with living in informal settlements as a corrective to the common belief that living in such communities is inexpensive. These informal communities not only impose high costs on the state—as is commonly known—but they also impose a much higher cost on the residents themselves (socially, culturally, financially, legally, and health-wise). Most informal community residents hold their governments responsible for their living circumstances.

2.1.7. Official Actions and Public Interventions

By default, disadvantaged and poor communities are not involved in the legal housing market. But, once they have established their own shelter *informally*, they may

be at risk, as governments do not readily tolerate the presence of so-called *blighted* areas in their cities. Very often, officials in developing nations view the invasion of urban areas by disadvantaged groups and the development of informal settlements as social evils to be eradicated (Nawagamuwa and Viking, 2003). Therefore, the official response toward such settlements is often either active hostility or benign neglect, as evidenced by many African states, for instance. Zaghoul (1994) has described the actions of African governments toward informal settlements as ranging from passing tough, rigid regulations aimed at excluding such communities from any infrastructure extension plans to banning their integration into any urban or municipal services to outright demolition. In Cairo, the government's response to such neighborhoods has been characterized by negligence, demolition, and relocation (Fahmy, 2004). More generally, Ahsan and Quamruzzaman (2009) have suggested that governments in developing countries have adopted three basic approaches for dealing with informal housing settlements: upgrading, demolition, and eviction. The range of responses to informal settlements varies from country to country and from case to case. The most common responses in the last five decades, as identified by Arimah (2010), have been benign neglect, forced removal and demolition, involuntary resettlements, slum upgrading, and enabling strategies. Nonetheless, Arimah (2010) pointed out that forced eviction remains the most frequent action adopted by developing countries when the policy of benign neglect fails.

Fekade (2000) has argued that different programs have been designed to deal with informal settlements in urban areas, such as the public housing programs of the 1950s, the sites and services initiatives of the 1970s, and the slum upgrading programs of the 1970s and 1980s. Unfortunately, to date, these efforts have not made any significant

difference in meeting the shelter needs of the majority of urban poor residents. Most of those previously targeted by these programs remain residents of informal communities and continue to live in poor quality housing, degraded environmental conditions, and with ready access to few public services.

Fekade (2000) and Malpezzi and Sa-Adu (1996) have contended that a paradigm shift toward more enabling policies as opposed to direct government involvement and intervention should occur, aimed at assisting the rising numbers of urban poor. According to Malpezzi and Sa-Adu (1996), governments should provide a policy and regulatory framework for land management and encourage financing markets for housing. More likely, the shift has to consider more involvement of non-state actors, including the residents of informal settlements.

2.2. Informal Settlements and Governance

Among others, Sivam (2003), Rakodi (2001), Fekade (2000), Ahmed (2007), Van Marissing et al. (2006), and Tsenkova (2009) have argued that in addition to the rapid growth in population and urbanization in many developing countries, which resulted in an acute shortage of adequate housing and services for the urban poor, inferior governance must be considered one of the main elements to affect the development of informal settlements. In fact, the ongoing global economic downturn, corruption, fragmentation and duplication of public agency responsibilities, and cronyism in many developing countries have made the day-to-day life of the growing number of urban poor even more miserable than it otherwise might be.

In countries where planning policies and housing and governance structures are not functioning properly, the phenomenon of informal settlements needs to be addressed

and managed appropriately, especially given the high priority in the UN Millennium Declaration (Goal 7-Target 11) assigned to improving the lives of the world's 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2003). Since the middle of the 1980s, developed nations have expressed growing concern regarding the urgent need to secure affordable shelter for the poor and the accompanying necessity of developing better urban governance and management for urban areas in developing nations (Jones and Ward, 1994; Ploeger and Groetelaers, 2006). One important prerequisite for improving conditions in informal settlements is local intervention strategies developed on the basis of good governance and active engagement of all stakeholders, including informal community residents.

2.2.1. Governance

Governance may be defined in different ways (Widianingsih, 2005). International development organizations, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2007), have defined urban governance as including government responsibility and action and civic engagement. In a more general sense, it refers to the processes by which local urban governments—in partnership with other public agencies and different segments of civil society—respond effectively to local needs in a participatory, transparent, and accountable fashion. Van Marissing et al. (2006) have described urban governance as the political response to broader developments and changes in society, such as globalization, privatization, and internationalization. To them, urban governance is associated with the welfare of all citizens, regardless of their official categorization or legal urban status. Pierre (2011), nonetheless, defined governance in light of the context in which it operates. For example in urban politics, governance, for Pierre, is defined as a process

through which public and private resources are coordinated and managed in pursuit of a defined collective interest or interests. In the academic context, Pierre contends that governance is a process rather than an institutional structure that draws more attention to public entrepreneurship and public-private partnership than to the exercise of political and legal authority.

For developing countries with limited human and financial resources and with great dependency on donors and international development agency aid, it is imperative that any unjustified expenditure of resources be minimized. According to the UNFPA (2007), in many developing nations, urban problems are only the beginning of the policy and governance concerns those nations must confront. As globalization continues, massive future urban growth is likely inevitable and necessary, but the way it occurs will make all the difference. Effective governance will indeed be essential for the cities of the developing world in the future and governments in those nations should create long-term strategies to address the social challenges they can now identify.

Good governance has emerged as a response to urban poverty and as an initiative for its reduction. Donors and international development agencies suggested that good governance is an essential step towards overcoming the failure of cities to accommodate the growing numbers of urban poor. They believed it is an essential means for reducing corruption and promoting efficient urban management. Many scholars have addressed the importance of adopting new governance paradigms in the face of contemporary urban problems, including the dynamic growth of informal settlements in particular. Sivam (2003), Rakodi (2001), and Fekade (2000), for instance, suggested that good urban governance enables all citizens, including residents of informal communities, to enjoy the

benefits of equal urban citizenship. It guarantees access to services, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, a clean environment, health, and education. Sarker (2008) distinguished the value of good governance from other scholars in terms of citizens' rights, participation, and democratization. Good governance not only enables active participation of all stakeholders, it also organizes the priorities and mechanism in which the new system ought to be operated. Fjeldstad et al. (2005), for instance, have suggested that good governance created effective mechanisms for citizen involvement in city planning and priority setting processes. Osborne and McLaughlin (2002), however, perceived good governance as a broader concept that emphasizes coordination among diverse stakeholders through horizontal linkages.

Among other key factors that have encouraged formation of informal settlements are the inadequate financial resources and the short supply of qualified professional staff in developing nations' governments. Good governance aims to bridge this gap at multiple institutional levels and works as a concrete foundation for motivating efficiency and effectiveness and for inspiring effective participation in planning, management, and public service delivery. Good governance, indeed, offers many potentials. For instance, it offers a more realistic approach than government to integrate urban poor into governmental decision-making processes so their voices can be heard and their needs addressed properly—a fundamental prerequisite, which has always been missing in the government policies and practices in most developing and Arab States.

Good governance, however, must successfully meet several criteria to reach its goals and benefit all beneficiaries. Ahsan and Quamruzzaman (2009) has addressed a number of these key factors, which include:

- Adequate mechanisms for accountability of official performance;
- Effective management and coordination of inter-organizational networks;
- Efficient monitoring system of government performance;
- Adequate administration and professional capacity; and
- Adequate system for allocating responsibilities to various state and non-state actors who are involved in infrastructure and service provision.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) has argued that good governance has eight major characteristics: participatory; consensus-oriented; accountable; transparent; responsive; effective and efficient; equitable and inclusive; and follow the rule of law. However, OECD has also suggested that these criteria are especially difficult to attain in developing countries. Many concerns, therefore, need to be overcome, or at least mitigated, before applying the new model of governance, such as a rooted bureaucratic system, social and cultural biases, and receptiveness of communities. Thoughtful reforms with well-organized strategies to realize them need to be adopted not only by the state, but also by non-state actors, including communities.

The characteristics, challenges, and progress in country governance play a significant role in public sector capacities to implement international development aid projects. They allow alternate types of reforms to proceed (whether service delivery, administration, or financial management changes) with appropriate programmatic and democratic accountability. They also ensure suitable design of aid projects. National governance capacities are also necessary to monitor existing and evolving political and bureaucratic structure and political will in each country. However, governance indicators

differ widely according to the scope and purpose of a project. They need to be defined and assessed in a context-specific framework. Levy and Kpundeh (2004) have proposed four major purposes of indicators:

- Recognizing country-specific difficulties and challenges in public sector governance, which can assist the country and its partners to properly address and identify the challenges set for achieving good governance. This form of assessment helps in identifying weaknesses and proposing solutions.
- Monitoring the results of governance reforms and development cooperation, which aims at overseeing the short-term reforms that can be logically linked to particular reforms or operations supported by donors. This mechanism can also be used as a tool for monitoring medium- and long-term changes in overall governance implementation. This type of evaluation assesses the progress in assuring documentation of results.
- Allocating aid according to the outcome of the performance assessment of governance and reform trends of each country. Experts conduct assessment, based upon explicit performance criteria, to make sure that aid is dedicated for poverty reduction. Competency of a country to use aid effectively, however, remains the main factor for allocating such support.
- Promoting global awareness and public debate about the importance of different dimensions of governance and the weak performance of individual countries and regions in this respect.

Discussion in the earlier sections suggested that there is a great dependency on the state in developing countries for managing cities at different levels, including urban

growth and service delivery. Nonetheless, since governance is now understood by the international community as a process of decision-making that is reached by active engagement of formal and informal actors and the process by which decisions are implemented, government is no longer the authoritative and autonomous actor. Rather, the public sector is now conceptualized as depending upon the private sector in a number of different ways, and much public policy is developed and implemented through the interaction of public and private actors.

2.2.2. Shift from Government to Governance

Rhodes (1997) and Stoker (1999) explained that the changes in both urban and national bureaucracy over the last decades have been described as a shift from *government to governance* or as a move from the *old governance* to the *new governance*, according to Peters (2000). The emergence of the new governance was because of the failure of the older styles of government; the styles that were characterized by hierarchical organization of government agencies and centralization of decision-making. In the 1980s, new public management system evolved. The new mode of management is best described by explicit measures of performance, transfer of private sector management principles to the public sector, privatization, citizens' empowerment, competition, and decentralization. In the 1990s, new governance emerged; a rise of networks and dissolution of public-private boundaries have become the main traits of this era (Kjaer, 2004; Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 1997; Peters and Wrights, 1996; Weber, 1978).

The rise of governance has accompanied the rise of the information age (Castells, 1996). According to Castells (1996), networks constitute the new social morphology of modern societies and the dissemination of network logic substantially adjusts the

maneuvers and outcomes in processes of production, power, culture, and experience. This significant transformation caused an unprecedented rapid flow of knowledge around the globe and that fact has progressively fragmented the sovereign power of the state as globalization has generated rich and diverse sources of power (Innes and Booher, 2003). Rhodes (2007; 1996), however, has argued that the rise of networks was not the end of state authority per se but a redefinition of it, characterized by opening the ground for more actor's involvement at the decision-making level, and for experimentation (Rhodes, 2000; Kickert et al., 1997).

Devas (2004) has suggested that governance of cities has been greatly affected by three separate but related shifts in the international political economy: globalization, decentralization, and democratization. According to Cassen (2000), trade globalization has worsened inequalities between and within nations, especially within poor countries and between those nations and wealthy ones. Decentralization is the process of transferring responsibility from central agencies and institutions to lower levels of government, management, and administration (Haque et al., 2006). The most significant change to affect city governance has been the emergence or restoration in many countries of democracy at the local and national levels (Devas, 2004). This remarkable transformation has altered the traditional paradigm of governance and city management in terms of state-society relationships and public-private partnerships. Also, a more active role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and international governmental organizations (IGOs) in supporting governmental agencies as well as societies has been in place.

State-society relationships also distinguish governance from government (Pierre, 2011). Societies, in the new governance, occupy greater space in the decision-making processes than before, which allows better involvement of marginalized communities in this process (Pierre, 2011). Similarly, public-private partnerships have created a more active role of the private sector in managing cities, especially in the provision of services and infrastructure. To some extent, these partnerships may benefit informal settlement dwellers because in governance, the delivery of public services is no longer the sole responsibility of the public sector. In fact, it becomes a shared responsibility between public and private sectors and mainly relies on the mobilization of resources. It coordinates service production among state and non-state actors at multiple institutional levels. The new notion of governance changed the concept of urban politics. It now focuses on more active and transparent public-private exchange and mobilization of resources. The new approach suggests a shift in analytical foci from government towards governance—a shift that implies less attention to formal structures of local government and instead focuses on the process through which cities relate to their environment, for instance, in public service delivery (Fjeldstad et al., 2005).

The negotiable role between state and non-state actors has opened the chance for different stakeholders, the local community in particular, to be involved in decision-making processes (Widianingsih, 2005). The old style of government-dominated development programs is no longer trusted. Instead there is an urge to ensure direct participation of the community in conceptualizing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating development programs. For example, in the case of Cairo, Hamilton et al. (2012) and Dorman (2009) attributed the emergence of informal areas to the authoritarian

political order embedded in the informal control tactics used by Egyptian governments to reinforce their rule. They argue that extreme centralization of decision making over land and lack of democracy resulted in under-investment in planning capacity at the local level because nearly all decisions about land and planning were made and implemented by central ministries. Hamilton et al. (2012) and Ben Nefissa (2009) also explained that Cairo, like the rest of Egypt, suffers from a weak administrative system, due to extreme centralization, lack of transparency, and communication failures between the administrative apparatus and citizens. In the case of Syria, Fernandes (2008) argued that planning order was largely defined at the national level and that less power was given to local administration. He believed that centralization of decision-making contributed to the rapid growth of informal settlements.

Saito (2000), in a discussion of good governance, argued that decentralization contributes to a better management approach to cities because it changes the relationship between central government and local government and strengthens the relationship between government and civil society. Many scholars, including Samarasinghe (1998) and Rondinelli and Cheema (1983), argued that governance would find its best performance within decentralized systems where legal, administrative, and political authority is transferred to lower level government to decide and manage public functions. Conyers (1990) explained that when more than 62 developing countries implemented decentralization system, communities found a good ground to be involved in decision-making and development planning processes. Finally, Fjeldstad et al. (2005) perceived decentralization policy as a fundamental grassroots for empowering active participation of all stakeholders in the planning processes, especially in terms of service delivery.

2.2.3. Governance and Planning

In developing countries, including the Arab States, land classified by the government as informal still carries negative connotations with local and national authorities (Deboulet, 2009). These perceptions are used to rationalize privileging elite-planned developments at the expense of the majority of urban citizens, especially the urban poor, and to support privatization and self-reliance policies. Dorman (2009) and Ben Nefissa (2009) have argued that such negativity was used to justify state failure to provide services to large numbers of Cairo's citizens. Furthermore, Hamilton et al. (2012), Sims (2010), and Denis (1996) have suggested that urban planning in Cairo is characterized by institutional complexity that results in a failure of planning, as well as limited response to residents' needs, the poor in particular.

Khan and Swapan (2012) underscored that top-down planning and administration, such as that widely practiced in the Arab region, has generated master plans that do not reflect population needs. Devas and Rakodi (1993) have also contended that the blueprint approach to planning is seen as the key contributor to inefficient urban planning, underestimating the demands of stakeholders, non-participatory decision-making, underperforming development authorities, and non-cooperative service provision. In terms of resources mobilization, Rakodi (2001) has argued, meanwhile, that the blueprint or master plans often produced in developing nations to guide the development of urban areas have routinely paid little attention to resource requirements and implementation.

Good governance, on the other hand, offers the potential to deal with the undesirable results of blueprint planning. In Cairo, for instance, Hamilton et al. (2012) have attributed the failure of that nation's central government's attempts to provide

affordable housing to the mainstream Cairene poor to inadequate attention to how people live and the swiftly changing character of informal areas of the city. In such efforts as it has initiated, the Egyptian government chose relocation sites in areas that are unacceptable to residents. Lack of transportation alternatives isolated informal settlement residents from their social networks and places of employment. Additionally, the government never sought to increase awareness among informal settlements' residents of the planning process. Lack of citizen participation and consultation in these efforts generated resistance among residents and made them more wary of government efforts, which in return led to undesirable failures of public housing policies and strategies.

Indeed, poor planning policies result in undesirable failure of cities to serve the residents. Arnstein (1969) has argued that true involvement of citizens in decision-making processes leads to more legitimate politics and wiser policy decisions and thereby leads to improved planning and management of long-term initiatives. Citizens' participation should not simply consist of informing people about a plan. It should ensure that the effort is developed by and for people it will serve because they are its end users.

The participatory approach to planning has evolved over time and contemporary models promote direct democracy and engagement of all stakeholders, including residents of informal communities (Rahman, 2008). Khan and Swapan, (2010), Sandercock (1998), Healey (1992), Forester (1989), and others have emphasized the need for participatory, need-based, and socially acceptable planning in place of the conventional top-down expert driven approach. To achieve these objectives, sustained, and on-going planning reforms are required.

In the early 1990s, there was a global effort to integrate sustainable development concepts into every aspect of development. International development organizations, such as many units of the United Nations, emphasized democratic planning through participatory urban development and improved governance (Freeman, 1996). The UN also called for scaling up participatory approaches in projects along with investment in capacity development of local urban agencies (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). In the context of developing countries, one significant factor that should be kept in mind when considering these reforms is donors' interest. Aid providers play a key role in determining the scope and extent of reforms in developing countries.

Shrestha (2012) has argued that politics, policy, and planning are very much linked to the term governance. According to Healey (2006), these terms refer to governance activities or define particular styles of governance activity. Healey (2006) argues that planning is thus more than the translation of knowledge into action. It is a style of governance within a policy-driven approach, which emphasizes knowledgeable reasoning and argumentation. Likewise, political institutions in each city, according to Di Gaetano and Klemanski (1999), are linked together by informal arrangements, which may be referred to as modes of governance.

2.2.4. Changing Perspectives of Urban Service Delivery

According to Nabutola (2007), good governance should be associated with a number of economic and political principles, all of which emphasize the multiple, yet equal, roles of state and non-state actors in the planning and development processes to ensure successful outcomes of the new governance. In terms of the political principles, three sets of requirements have to be implemented. First is effective and equal

representation of all stakeholders. In this approach, the civil society has the freedom of expression and association, and non-state actors have the opportunities to become engaged in service delivery. Second principle is good institutions where sets of rules govern the actions of individuals and organizations and the negotiation of differences between them. Third principle is adopting good policies where the rule of law is sustained through an unprejudiced and operative legal system and the credibility of state and non-state actors is maintained through a high degree of transparency and accountability in public and corporate processes.

In developing countries, including the Arab States, a huge dependency on the state for service delivery still exists. Njoh (2011) and McCourt and Minogue (2001) argued a top-down hierarchical mechanism dominated the provision of public service until the turn of the century. This phenomenon is either attributed to state discouragement of the involvement of the non-state actors in service delivery or it is due to the loss of interest of private and non-governmental agencies because of the complexity of legal and institutional processes. Some analysts advocated that the failure of accommodating urban populations could never be linked to one particular entity, which suggests that an entire system is responsible for such failure. Ahmed (2002) suggested that urban service delivery appears to be a problem, which cannot be addressed by taking the organizational context as a given and attempting to change the behavior of one organization within it. Paul (1992) argued that the problem of urban service delivery is embodied in the delivery system and it should not be linked to a distinct organization per se.

This implies that the deficiencies in service delivery are attributed to the public sector in a holistic way, which can be addressed by looking at the variety of factors that

influence the performance of the public sectors, such as lack of finance, poor government, limited functional responsibilities, inefficient technical knowledge, and limited government professional capacity (Njoh, 2011). Paul also argued that the constraints on service delivery involve a broader set of hardships in the relationship among central and local governments as well as other stakeholders. This is true with respect to informal settlements. These factors play a major role in depriving informal areas from obtaining services, but most importantly is government denial to provide services to illegally built settlements to discourage their growth.

To discourage the dynamic growth of informal settlements, governments in developing countries consider a whole set of preventive procedures. For instance, the state either discourages or delimits the provision of services and infrastructure to the illegal areas. In Syria, Fernandes (2008) illustrated that among the preventative procedures the Syrian government had considered for controlling the growth of informal settlements were preventing unauthorized constructions that violated the code and master plans. He argued that firmer governmental attempts have even been applied to control the formation of new informal zones in the 1980s and 1990s, yet the perpetual influx of immigrants who tend to occupy state land has worsened the situation. Residents and informal developers invest the land through demarcation of plots and implementation of basic infrastructure that inspires more growth of informal settlements. Once the settlement is established, a growing, dynamic informal land market is formed to promote the re-sale of constructions on the occupied land.

In Egypt, Sims (2010) argued that historically, the Egyptian government has always discouraged service delivery to informal areas in Cairo. Dorman (2009) indicated that

this official discouragement of service provision to informal areas has diminished, particularly after 1991, because the local council elections, in which the voices of residents were heard, ended. Residents in informal areas, however, have always had a system in place to accommodate government negligence and thus to substitute informal alternatives that provide some sort of access to services. The process for gaining access to services goes without any formal legal framework and the state remains unable to enforce its codes in the informal areas. In this sense, states in the Arabic-speaking countries face two types of challenges: the burden of service delivery to urban areas, including informal settlements, and the burden of law enforcement in lands that have never been legally formalized under state regulations.

In a search for cheaper alternatives of service delivery, Fekade (2000) demonstrated that in the 1970s, growing realization of the costliness and ineffectiveness of direct public provision of housing led the governments of Sub-Saharan Africa to adopt a more realistic approach, which is known as sites and services programs. The World Bank, among other financiers, promoted a model where governments provide the necessary infrastructure and services to land but low-income residents are expected to build their houses. The program was intended to recover the plots' cost because residents would have to cover the costs of service provision. Despite the obvious improvement, sites and services programs did not achieve their objectives for many reasons, including burdening the states with significant public financing and subsidies, especially with the increasingly shrinking budgets of many African governments and the reduced inflow of funds from multilateral and bilateral sources.

A number of approaches have been adopted by different states to facilitate the service provision to informal settlements. McCourt (2012), for instance, has identified three alternatives to provide service delivery. The first approach for service delivery and management is bureaucratic control, which reflects the performance management models of the top-down hierarchical system that mostly dominated developing country public service provision until recently. Top-down service delivery refers to services where priorities come from the top, from either bureaucrats accountable to politicians or directly from politicians themselves. The models set clear lines of accountability between ministers and their departments, defined performance in an explicit and measurable manner, monitored performance, and established a reward and punishment incentives system. To some extent, this approach fulfilled part of the needs of the urban poor, but was unable to keep pace with the growing numbers of the urban population. The rise of public-private partnerships and network governance has not displaced that model (Kuriyan and Ray, 2009; Rhodes, 2007); on the contrary, technology has improved the system of monitoring service delivery performance.

The second approach is voice and participation. In this approach, citizens participate in governance and set their priorities. Voice policy was applied to public service. It was first linked to democracy and then to the delivery of basic services and needs in the late 1970s. In the late 1990s, a new poverty agenda was set and the term *voice* became the center of the World Bank mission for poverty reduction. In this sense, public officials were held accountable more to their hierarchical superiors than to the people they served which reduced the quality of public service (World Bank, 2001). The general perception has then become that public agencies were among the key institutions

that drove people to poverty because public officials worked for the interest of their managers not for the interest of the poor. The World Development Report (WDR) (2000/2001) indicated that public agencies should directly be accountable to the public via the media, the courts, and civil society organizations (World Bank, 2001). Also, communities should be organized so they can participate in a decentralized authority structures while keeping local governments accountable.

The third approach is control and voice, used when donor-driven, top-down reforms so often failed to win local support, and the World Bank and other international development agencies seriously began to think about the influence of local institutional and political factors. The failure of those reforms somewhat explains the rise of the bottom-up approaches, which were more flexible and reliable in helping the poor. Bottom-up service delivery refers to services where priorities are set directly by citizens, through their exercise of what Hirschman (1970) called *voice*, which is still lacking in Yemen.

McCourt's proposed approaches are more or less similar to the enabling strategies, which have been recently suggested by international development organizations for helping deal with informal settlements and assisting their residents. According to Malpezzi and Sa-Adu (1996), the focus should be on limiting the direct intervention of government and more emphasis should be made on indirect public-sector support through provision of policy and regulatory framework. They advocated that promoting the private sector in the land market and urban service delivery might be a more realistic approach to service delivery to the poor once coupled with serious reforms in the government overall system.

Paul (1992) argued that the objective of reform is not to create strong local government, but rather to create an efficient and responsive system of urban service delivery. The performance of a service delivery system can thus be evaluated both in terms of its efficiency in transforming inputs into products and of its efficiency in producing the mix of products, which matches the effective demand of consumers. However, efficiency is not the sole criterion by which an urban service delivery system should be evaluated. Technical efficiency and responsiveness may be the paramount objectives. Urban service delivery cannot be isolated from other objectives of the public sector. Decisions on the level and financing of municipal services have important distributional implications, ultimately.

2.2.5. Participatory Urban Governance and Public-Private Partnerships

Fjeldstad et al. (2005) perceived decentralization as fundamental to empower active participation of stakeholders in planning processes. In practice, however, stakeholders are rarely invited to participate in Yemen. Apparently, government, civil society, private for-profit actors, and citizens together shape the future of cities. Their equal involvement, therefore, in the decision-making process is fundamental. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), government is one of the actors in governance while all other actors represent the civil society. All parties, including government, international donors, and multi-national corporations, play a key role in the decision-making process, or at least influence its processes (Nabutola, 2007). Political actors attempt to influence government decision-making in ways that benefit them and the interests they represent. Their success, however, usually depends on their ability to forge partnerships with actors of different

institutional bases of support (Stone, 1993; 1989). These governing alliances, then, are the means by which urban political actors seek to define, shape, and implement policy agendas (DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1999).

In Cairo, for example, Hamilton et al. (2012) indicated that the involvement of local and international NGOs and international development agencies, such as the World Bank and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation GTZ, in many informal settlements has helped weak local authorities, particularly in service delivery. NGOs even have links to government and may act as an unofficial arm of the government agenda via contracts and advocacy. Hamilton et al. (2012) argued that parallel to greater service delivery, motivated civil society and NGOs have also led to the unrestricted privatization of the functions of the government. Dorman (2009) has explained that influential citizens were able to supply electricity, water and sewage, telecommunications, and public transportation to many informal areas. In Cairo, according to Dalzell (2006), a policy to upgrade informal areas gained traction in the 1990s in response to security threats. The government became more interested in counter-terrorism and began to fear that if nothing were done, informal areas would become a breeding ground for radical movements.

A widely held view among advocates of community participation is that engagement of citizens in the planning process helps to ensure that planning decisions and policies reflect the interests of the plan beneficiaries (Sutton, n.d.). Kamete (2006), for example, advocated that community participation should enhance planning efficiency as well as sustainability. Chambers (1995; 1997) also argued that poverty reduction efforts in developing countries are likely to be more successful when members of the targeted communities are given the opportunity to explore and address their own needs. It

is believed that community needs are more likely to be identified in planning policies, decisions, and outcomes if citizens are party to the plan-making process. Chambers (1995) also argued that in order to improve the lives of the poor, development initiatives, “will have to question conventional concepts of development; to challenge ‘us’ to change, personally, professionally, and institutionally; and to change the paradigm of the development enterprise” (p. 204). More importantly, contemporary development efforts seek to place community engagement in a political context and tie it to issues of popular agency (Hickey and Mohan, 2004). According to Widianingsih (2005), the emergence of the New Public Management in the 1980s and 1990s and the call for establishing good governance have opened the chance for the public to be involved in decision-making processes. Direct participation of the community in conceptualizing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and assessing development programs has taken place in many developing countries, which have incentives to do so, such as qualified professional capacities.

The shift to state and non-state actor collaboration in governance establishes the ground for public-private partnerships (PPP). PPPs have become increasingly important in the national and international development agenda, as decision-makers have recognized the need to understand who is affected by the decisions and actions they take. These partnerships aim to improve the capacities of local authorities and the quality of public service delivery.

Perez-Ludena (2009) has defined PPPs as a mutually trusting and secured working relationships between public and private sector participants for the construction of public infrastructure or the delivery of a public services in which resources, risks, and

responsibilities are shared among all stakeholders. Ahmed and Ali (2004) defined it as an alternative to full privatization in which government and private companies assume co-responsibility and co-ownership for the delivery of city services. To Nabutola (2007), PPPs constitute a risk-sharing relationship between the public and private sectors to achieve a common objective while both players pursue their own individual interests. In a perfect situation, each partner shares the responsibility and has access to the different phases of planning, management, and implementation, so there should be some forms of legitimate interactions between the state and non-state actors. In reality, partnerships between the two sectors are not easy to achieve. Certain enabling environments are prerequisite to promote trust and collateral working relationships.

According to Ahmed (2002), PPPs require a much more practical shift in defining the roles and attitudes of state and non-state actors. Traditional client-contractor approaches should be avoided; a risk-sharing relationship in every phase of planning, management, and implementations should instead be in place. Efforts to collaborate should also be ongoing and continuous (Pessoa, 2008). If PPPs do not function in a well-structured environment, it can be problematic because of the involvement of diverse players and deals (Ahmed, 2002). The allocation of risks and rewards is always difficult and may result in conflicts between partners over a long period if the distribution of responsibilities and ownership of assets are not carefully negotiated (Perez-Ludena, 2009).

NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs engagement, state-society relationships, and public-private partnerships may potentially play a significant role in improving the governance practices and efforts to reduce poverty and to improve the living conditions of the urban

poor. However, the participatory approach of the new urban governance, which requires full participation of all affected stakeholders, requires sophisticated exchange and communication processes in which each party understands and accepts its roles and responsibilities.

2.2.6. Social Inclusion and Urban Governance

Negative perceptions of informal settlement residents have caused their exclusion from mainstream society and from the overall planning processes. Officially, informal settlements are often omitted from maps, plans, and service delivery initiatives; likewise their residents are often ignored or neglected by city officials. For example, Fjeldstad et al. (2005) have argued that poor education of informal settlement residents and poverty limited their participation in Ondangwa's planning processes, as justified by the officials of the Local Council. Official personal biases against the residents of informal settlements have deprived these communities from practicing their rights as urban citizens and excluded them from decision-making process. In Namibia, for example, excluding Ondangwa's residents raised the resentment among the residents. Fjeldstad et al. (2005), in fact, demonstrated this with the Ondangwa community's complaints about poor communications between residents and the council. Local Council staff on the other hand, complained about the mistrust on the part of residents. However, complaints by residents were often based on unfounded claims, according to the council officials. This contrasts with the perceptions of the informal settlements residents, who felt that on the infrequent occasions when the council held meetings in the informal settlements, their members already had a set agenda and they used the meetings merely to inform the

affected population about those decisions, rather than seek dialogue (Fjeldstad et al., 2005).

In practice, participation efforts range from simply informing people about a plan to ensuring that the plan is made by the people (Arnstein, 1969). In the good governance model, there are several actors and as many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of different interests in society to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural, and social contexts of a given society or community (Nabutola, 2005). This implies that government officials and planners not only need to include informal settlements' residents and articulate their needs, they also need to understand the specific social and cultural characteristics of these communities. The people who live in these settlements have been disenfranchised for a very long time in the Arab States. During elections, they are called upon to vote, but that is where it all starts and ends. The facilities available to these groups in such communities across the globe suggest that the slum dwellers have almost totally been excluded from the schemes of things. It is as if they do not exist at all. In fact they do not feature in the planning system except as populations that must be removed and relocated elsewhere, but nobody wants to say where that should be and how it will be available.

The well-being of any society depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream. This requires all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, to have opportunities to improve or maintain

their well-being. Only by developing good governance can the voice of residents of informal settlements be heard and their needs addressed properly. The more the poor, who often represent the majority of urban populations, are included in governance decision processes, the more responsive cities are likely to be to the needs of all city residents.

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief description about informal settlements in the developing countries, including the Arab States. It addressed the overall concept of informal settlements, including the typology, characteristics, and costs and impacts of informal settlements. The discussion also reviewed the literature that covered the governance of informal settlements. It examined the major shifts from government to governance and how this particular shift has changed the perspective of all stakeholders involved in project and program delivery to informal settlements. The chapter discussed the shift in the mode of service delivery to informal settlements and the significance of public-private partnerships and the state-society relationships. Further discussion about informal settlements in Sana'a is in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Informal Settlements in Sana'a, Yemen

3.1. Informal Settlements in Sana'a

3.1.1. Overview

Analysts first documented informal settlements, a relatively new phenomenon in Yemen, in the early 1980s (El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007). The World Bank (2010a; 2008) and Al-Waraqi (2009) stressed that unprecedented rapid urbanization and poverty contributed to the swift growth of informal settlements in Yemen's major cities, in particular in Sana'a. According to the World Bank (2010b), Yemeni cities are expanding quickly due to large rural-to-urban migration in addition to natural population growth. The Yemeni urban population growth rate of 4.7% per annum during the past decade (Sana'a alone was 5.6% per annum) was the highest in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) and one of the fastest rising rates in the world.

Despite a reduction in urban poverty in Yemen during the past decade, 21% of city households in the nation still fall below the poverty line—75% of all urban poor are concentrated in the cities of Sana'a and Aden (1,800,000 and 600,000 inhabitants respectively). Most of the remaining urban poor live in other major cities, including Al-Hodaidah, Taiz, and Mukalla (450,000, 540,000, 200,000 inhabitants respectively). The extreme urban poverty and income inequality so pervasive in the nation contributed to heightened social unrest (World Bank, 2010a).

Population growth coupled with increasing urban poverty has created a number of serious challenges for the residents of urban areas. According to the World Bank (2010a;

2010b), these include a rapid growth in informal settlements during the past 20 years. Yemeni cities most severely affected by the quick expansion of informal settlements include Taiz, Al-Hodaidah, Sana'a, and Aden. In Taiz, for example, a majority of the housing development that has occurred since the 1980s has taken place in informal communities. Today, almost 70% of the total residential area of Taiz is informal. The vast majority of the poor residents of urban areas live in these informal communities, which are characterized by poor access to basic infrastructure and services, lack of security of land tenure, and severe health and environmental problems.

Public service delivery in Yemen in key infrastructure sectors, such as water supply and sewerage, is not keeping pace with rapid urban growth, especially for informal settlements. Moreover, delivery of urban infrastructure in the nation is constrained by weak local public revenue generation capacity and correspondingly low levels of capital investment. Indeed, the government has reduced dedicated revenue for infrastructure in recent years. An overall scarcity of resources prevents local government authorities from self-financing development projects, which, as a result, are almost exclusively paid for with development grants. Such aid, however, does not typically provide for operation and maintenance of the newly built infrastructure or assets. This situation has exacerbated the problem of low levels of capital investment at the local level. On average only 10-15% of total local expenditures is devoted to capital investments, which represents about 6 USD per capita per year (World Bank, 2010a).

According to the World Bank (2010a), Yemeni national government officials do recognize that informal settlements require a different approach. To date, however, the national government has paid limited attention to the issues of informal settlements. The

World Bank claimed that Yemen requires an estimated 80,000 new housing units per year to provide shelter to the approximately 66% of the nation's urban population that lives in informal settlements. Based on recent experience of the World Bank in Yemen, average costs for resettlement would be approximately 13,000 USD per household. Meanwhile, investment to upgrade the conditions of life where citizens already reside costs less than 1,000 USD per household. Given the number of people living in informal settlements, it is neither practical nor affordable for the government to rapidly provide new housing for people living in informal settlements. Providing basic municipal services is the best that government can accomplish. Taking into account the added complexity of land issues, the best alternative to moving people or replacing their homes is in-situ upgrading (World Bank, 2010a). That said, it is important to highlight that upgrading may not address the broader issue of housing supply, but it does create visible impacts in terms of improving the living conditions of the poor. Upgrading also tends to retain the social fabric of the communities and allows for greater densification of neighborhoods (UN-Habitat, 2003). But, the lack of effective land registration and unclear records of ownership in Yemen pose a risk to urban upgrading in informal settlements in the event of future land disputes. Nonetheless, the reality in Yemen is that informal settlements continue to expand rapidly in urban areas and therefore upgrading in these areas remains the most viable solution to improving resident access to basic infrastructure.

Although upgrading has been adopted as an approach for addressing inadequate living conditions in informal communities, governmental experience in Yemen with upgrading has been limited. There have been no integrated attempts at in-situ upgrading of deprived urban areas (Madbouly, 2009). That is, most of the interventions in terms of

basic service delivery in informal settlements in urban areas have been sectoral and ad-hoc. In addition, there is no policy at the national level that systematically addresses issues related to informal settlements. That said, in order to develop any national policy, it is critical to demonstrate an integrated approach to urban upgrading at the local level, which cannot be achieved without accurate information about informal areas.

3.1.2. Existing Studies Related to Informal Settlements in Sana'a

It was difficult to identify scholarly work that provided an in-depth discussion or analysis of informal settlements in Sana'a or in Yemen. Although the nation's capital city has faced unprecedented growth in its informal settlement population since 1990 (Al-Waraqi, 2009), no scholarly research in the past twenty years has systematically examined the implications of this trend. According to El-Shorbagi (2008; 2007), no analyst has yet undertaken a comprehensive inventory or classification of informal settlements in Yemen. The available information about informal areas is limited to brief descriptions of the main features of the settlements.

What exists are unsystematic studies conducted by the Municipality of Sana'a, the Ministry of Housing, currently part of the Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH), CARE, Oxfam, the Social Fund for Development (SFD), and the World Bank (El-Shorbagi, 2007). These analyses are largely descriptive, noting aspects of the physical environments of slum areas, such as of the existence of shacks and precarious structures built with non-permanent materials. Few described economic and social structures. Oxfam, for example, conducted a study in 1997 on participatory socio-economic needs for urban settlement dwellers in Sana'a (Al-Ahmadi and Beatty, 1997). Although the main focus of the investigation was women, the study only covered living conditions and

the types of income they earned. It did not discuss the backgrounds and composition of families living in informal settlements, the character of social and gender interaction, and the resources available to assist women. The study did not examine the role of women in these communities and how community residents and outsiders perceived gender roles and their racial-ethnic background, and social class (i.e., Akhdam, Gaba'il, and Mazainah)². Further, this inquiry did not discuss critically the role of Oxfam and other NGOs or international organizations in informal settlements. Another example is a study undertaken by the City's Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH) in 2003. That analysis only covered the condition and physical structure of houses and street networks. It did not address the history of these settlements and why they emerged in Sana'a and Aden. The study did not consider the common features and differences among the types of informal settlements in these two cities. It also did not analyze the social and cultural structures within the settlements and in their larger urban contexts.

The World Bank has directed part of its aid recently to help the Yemeni government address the challenges associated with the proliferation of informal settlements. Two main World Bank projects are currently underway, *Integrated Urban Development Project* and *Port Cities Development Project*. Accordingly, the World Bank has produced some reports on its efforts. Nonetheless, few researchers and scholars have focused on the broader question of the problem of informal settlements in Sana'a and in Yemen despite the rapid growth of these communities in the nation and the pressing demands that their growth has occasioned.

² See the list of definition of terms; also, these terms are defined later on in the chapter.

3.1.3. Overview of Sana'a

The Municipality of Sana'a (Amanat Al-A'asmah Sana'a³) is the symbol of Yemeni unity, the nation's historic and cultural center and a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is also the largest city and the political and administrative center of Yemen. The capital of the former North Yemen, following the reunification of the nation, Sana'a was named the political capital of the Republic of Yemen on May 21, 1990. The city is the hub of the nation's commercial and industrial activities. It is a frequent destination for all Yemeni citizens and businesses; almost 9% of the country's population lives there. According to Zeug and Eckert (2010), that fact has created serious pressure on the urban center's out-of-date infrastructure and services. Rapid urban growth, in fact, led to the establishment of the Municipality of Sana'a by Presidential Decree No. 13 of 1983. Another presidential decree, No. 2 of 2001, divided the Municipality of the Capital Sana'a into nine administrative areas or directorates (Muderiat⁴) and added Bani Hareth to the north as the Municipality's 10th directorate.

According to the World Bank (2010a), the municipality can be broken down into three areas: the Old City of Sana'a and the modern downtown, which are characterized by high densities; inner neighborhoods, which are well developed and slightly less dense than the Old City; and the sprawling suburban and fringe areas, which mostly evidence very low densities. The World Bank advises that the radial and sprawling growth of the city presents serious problems because it leaves large areas of the community under-developed, (mostly in between main radial roads), it increases costs to provide services and infrastructure and it creates discontinuation among different parts of the city.

³ See the definition of terms list.

⁴ See the definition of terms list.

At the time of this research, Sana'a was the home of approximately 2 million people (Zeug and Eckert, 2010)—a remarkable shift from the number of residents in Sana'a in 1977 and 1986 when the urban center accommodated 162,000 and 427,500 inhabitants, respectively. The community's population growth has been accompanied by a dramatic rise in the number of informal settlement areas in the city. Zeug and Eckert (2010) have argued that rapid urbanization posed considerable social and environmental challenges to city authorities and planners. Uncontrolled population growth, increasing social inequality, economic disparities, and poverty all increased the potential for conflict over land and resources. Poor urban planning and housing development led to construction of informal settlements that lacked access to basic infrastructure and offer poor living conditions. Consequent increased in unregulated traffic, noise, and under-developed sewage and waste management facilities caused further environmental degradation. The World Bank (2010a) has argued that the major challenges facing Sana'a include, but are not limited to:

- High poverty and unemployment;
- The highest rate of population growth in the region;
- The proliferation of informal settlements;
- Poor urban planning and management;
- Limited access to land;
- Alarming water shortages; and
- Severe environmental problems.

However, according to the current Sana'a City Development Strategy (CDS), a shortage of water and the proliferation of informal settlements constitute the two most

important challenges that will confront the Sana'a Municipality in the next twenty years (Sims et al., 2009). Madbouly (2009) has suggested that the total number of informal residents in Sana'a is 390,000 or about 20.5% of the city's total population. The Sana'a Urban Strategy Report has stressed the current expansion of residential areas takes place mainly informally and that all indicators suggest that in Sana'a this trend of informal urbanization will continue for some time to come (El-Shorbagi, 2008). As Madbouly (2009) has argued, the State cannot control the rapid development of informal areas. It cannot also provide enough affordable housing to the urban poor or migrants. A strategy that deals with informal residential settlements therefore has a larger responsibility than merely to remedy problems related to the existing situation. If it is actually to contribute to improving housing conditions in the long run, it will need to address informal development dynamics and not only the condition of informality. That is, the strategy must acknowledge the needs and understand the underlying factors that drive informal residential development (Spruit, 2008).

3.1.4. Proliferation of Informal Areas and Squatter Settlements

El-Shorbagi (2007; 2008) has identified 35 informal settlements in Sana'a (Appendix V). Four communities of this total are located close to the core of the city and the remainder are scattered on its periphery (El-Shorbagi, 2007; 2008) (Figure 1). Informal settlements are usually developed on vacant land owned by the state, *Awqaf*⁵, or individuals (Al-Waraqi, 2009; Ahmed, 2007). According to Dabbas and Burns (2011) and Sims et al. (2009), most of the construction of informal settlements has taken place in unplanned areas without building permits and without accompanying infrastructure and

⁵ An *Awqaf* dedication is an endowment of property held in trust under Islamic Law for religious or charitable purpose; also, see the definition of terms list.

municipal services. Generally, residents of poor and marginalized communities illegally squat on unoccupied state and privately owned lands—most of which are located in flood plains or are considered hazardous or marginal in character—which raises safety, health, and environmental concerns for those who reside there. Illegal land occupation also increases concerns about the vulnerability of squatter populations to rational or irrational forced evictions and residents' rights to access adequate infrastructure and public services.

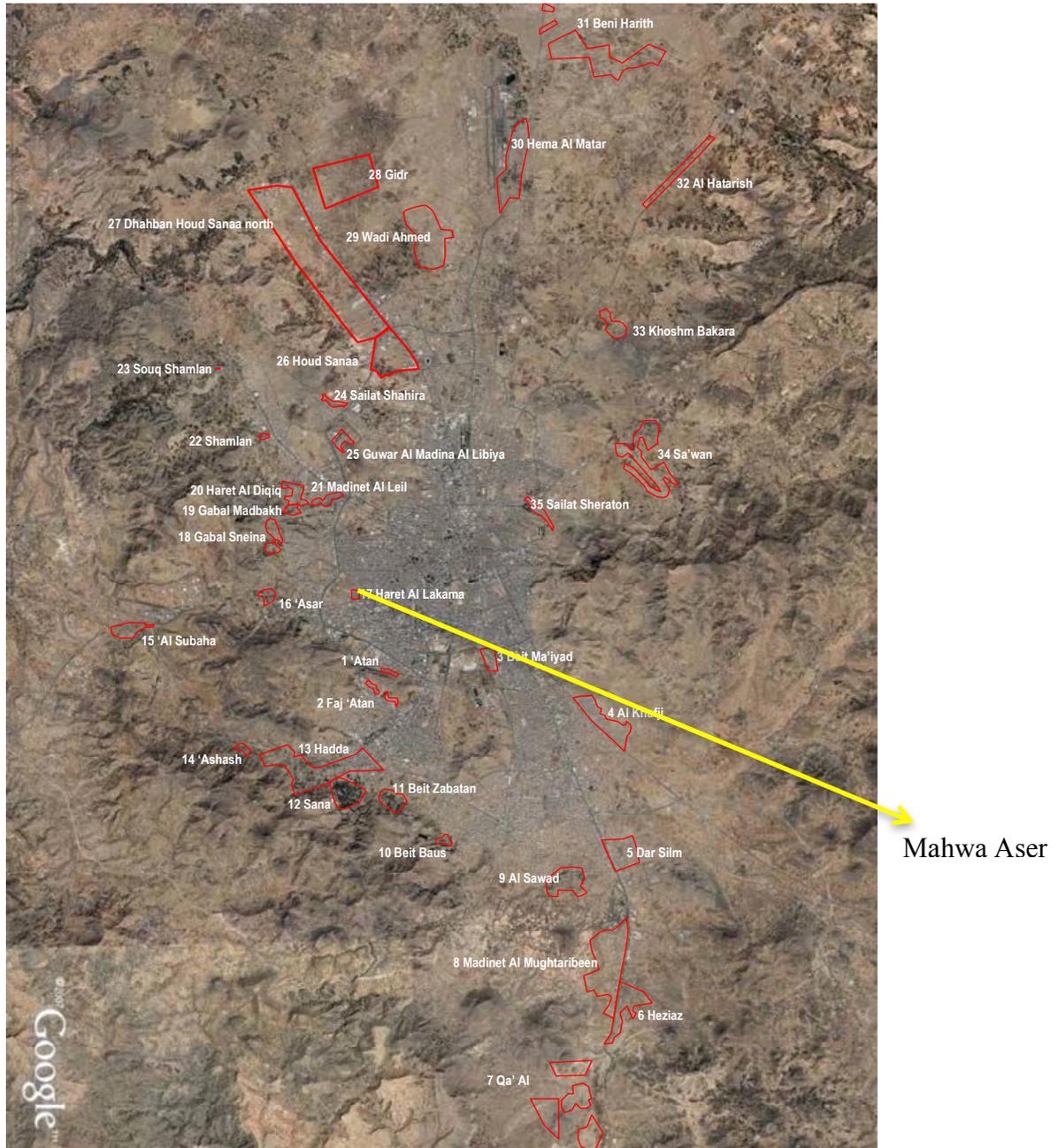
Sana'a's city planners have responded to the ongoing dynamic of illegal land occupation by taking a number of steps to cope with the challenge. City planners, for example, have prepared detailed neighborhood plans for some of these sprawling areas after development was underway. These efforts typically followed the conventional neighborhood planning unit approach without paying attention to underlying issues of land ownership or tenure patterns. This orientation may be attributed to the City's lack of a proper land ownership and classification information system. Besides the insufficiency of the suggested plans (Sims et al., 2009) to meet the current urban crisis, no landowner was willing to give up their land for public goods (i.e., services or infrastructure) and enforcement of law remained very weak. As a result, the official plans were rarely implemented.

The municipality has also undertaken several initiatives either to upgrade squatter settlements or resettle such individuals living in flood prone areas, such as Al-Sailah⁶, by moving them to public housing projects (i.e., the Sawad Sa'awan project). Dabbas and Burns (2011) and Sims et al. (2009) have emphasized that the improvement of living conditions in squatter settlements and the socio-economic integration of the poor into the

⁶ See the definition of terms list.

city's larger urban fabric are pressing priorities and are explicit aims of Sana'a's local authorities.

Figure 1: Informal Settlements in Sana'a City.



Source: Al-Waraqi (2009).

3.1.5. Concept of Informal Settlements in Sana'a

As discussed in earlier sections, the definition of what constitutes an informal settlement varies from country to country and from one context to another. The fact that little information exists about such communities in Sana'a has likely discouraged the development of an official definition for this phenomenon. The few studies that have been conducted previously, however, did seek to define several types of informal settlements, which in turn helped official authorities to develop a definition of their own based on these efforts. For example, the General Authority for Land Surveying, and Urban Planning (GALSUP)—the responsible authority for detailed planning of new residential neighborhoods inside cities—has defined informal areas as those locations in which residential development takes place without an official land use and services plan and where construction is undertaken without building licenses. Officially, such areas are labeled *ashwa'iyat*⁷ Recently, the term *informal settlements* has started to replace *ashwa'iyat*, but this descriptor is still not used in legal circles or in the courts.

A recent study carried out by Cities Alliance and the World Bank in Sana'a has adopted a broader definition for informal settlements in Yemen. The definition seeks to capture the wide range of informal development dynamics that need special attention in planning and development efforts. These institutions have defined informal settlements as the lands on which people squat or that they subdivide without complying with official subdivision plans. They are also developed informally without adhering to planning and building regulations.

These are much broader definitions that include all areas that have been developed without an official subdivision and land use plan and in which construction

⁷ See the definition of terms list.

has occurred without an official permit. In more than one respect, El-Shorbagi (2007), however, considered these definitions problematic. She has argued that the few available surveys and studies on *ashwa'iy*⁸ settlements focus on slum pockets in urban core areas only. For her, the definition of such communities does not present a clear picture of the scope, dynamics, and problems related to informal residential development in a broader sense because analyses of them have not drawn distinctions among different types of informal settlements. Consequently, the definition cannot be generalized since it does not encompass all informal settlements in Sana'a. El-Shorbagi's argument implies that there are informal settlements that have been developed in compliance with a master plan and with construction licenses, but they were classified as informal in all other respects. Both definitions focus on the legal status of the informal settlements.

For the purposes of this study, therefore, informal settlements will be defined as unlawful settlements, developed on State or *Awqaf* lands without official permit and/or without adhering to official planning standards and building regulations.

3.1.6. Classification of Informal Settlements in Sana'a

Madbouly (2009) has grouped Sana'a's 35 informal settlements (Appendix V) into six districts. This classification scheme included four main groups with some sub-groups:

- Slum pockets (Akhdam areas, according to Spruit, 2008), which include two settlement areas; Mahwa Aser is one of them. These communities are located primarily on state land. They are characterized by high density and precarious structures.

⁸ See the definition of terms list.

- Eight informal areas within or near the urban core located principally on state-owned land, private previously agricultural land, or state land originally seized with unclear mechanisms and traded informally. These communities consist of low-cost buildings constructed on small plots by their owners who expand their houses gradually, as they can afford to do so. These settlements are rapidly filled and are characterized by medium to high population density.
- Informal areas in the far urban fringe located close to major roads or village extensions. This type includes six settlements situated on private previously agricultural land or on hills immediately adjacent to such properties. Generally, they are small, single-family houses that are built incrementally with some accompanying medium-sized multi-story buildings.
- Informal areas that squat on lands previously reserved for the public (water resources or airport property, for example) or other non-residential purposes. They include 10 settlements. Houses located in these range from small, low-cost dwellings with some precarious structures to larger, more costly buildings. Densities vary from high to low, according to the location of the buildings.

Despite the broad mixture of features and dynamics of different structure types in the city's informal areas, Madbouly (2009) and Spruit (2008) have identified several common challenges to informal settlements in Sana'a:

- Challenges of service and infrastructure delivery
 - Lack of adequate mechanisms for service and infrastructure delivery.
 - Lack of investment and funding resources for service provision and/or upgrading poor services.

- Difficult access to most areas for service delivery due to rough or dangerous topography.
- Difficulties in securing land for infrastructure and service provision due to trespass on state property and inflated land prices after planning processes begin to occur.
- Inflated costs to extend infrastructure and provide services to low-density areas and to areas with difficult access and topography.
- Challenges of land and planning management
 - Land disputes that sometimes become violent.
 - Lack of suitable planning vision and policies that incorporate informal areas in a more comprehensive plan for the city.
 - Insecure land tenure, particularly in squatter areas.
 - Difficulties in preserving public goods threatened by ongoing informal urbanization.
- Social challenges
 - Lack of social services, particularly schools and health care facilities.
 - Socio-economic problems related to poverty and a high concentration of poor and low-income residents.
 - Caste and social exclusion.
- Environmental and security challenges
 - Pollution problems and health hazards; for example, the pollution of Sana'a's water basin and spread of insects that transport disease due to garbage piles on public space, and open sewers.

- Overcrowded and unhealthy housing conditions.
- Problems of public security due to inappropriate location (mainly the communities located near to existing and planned airports).
- Dangers of landslides or other hazards related to the difficult topography of some areas.

3.1.7. Causes of Informal Residential Development

El-Shorbagi (2008; 2007) explained that there were no records—official or unofficial—on informal settlements that could identify the number of individuals residing in them or even the precise locations of the dwellings. They were not shown on official maps. They were also designated by different names and thus very difficult to identify. Also, the boundaries between the Municipality of Sana’a and the surrounding governorate of Sana’a, in which most of today’s informal residential development is taking place, were not clear. This is true also when it comes to the administrative boundaries within the Sana’a Municipality, where most districts include both formal and informal areas. Evidently, this is problematic in terms of officials’ capacity to understand the size and extent of informal settlements in each area and to suggest appropriate remedies for addressing their population’s needs (El-Shorbagi, 2007). El-Shorbagi (2007) argued that GALSUP could overcome some of these problems with serious and more organized efforts. GALSUP, however, needs first to overcome official denial of the presence of informal settlements and include them on official maps and records of the municipality. Thereafter, further steps can be developed to manage better the various challenges created by informal settlements.

Despite the lack of accurate documented information concerning informal

communities in Sana'a, analysts have offered some common causes for their dynamic development in the city. In the specific context of the social, economic, and political urbanization of Sana'a, Madbouly (2009) and El-Shorbagi (2007) have suggested that the driving forces of informal settlement development in Sana'a are various and have evolved over time. Their development resulted from rapid rural-to-urban migration. According to El-Shorbagi (2008), Sana'a began to experience rapid growth beginning in the 1960s because of inward migration from the surrounding countryside and other governorates after the establishment of the Republic in 1962 in the former Northern Yemen. Some of the poorer migrants and workers in low paid jobs squatted on state or *Awqaf* land at what was then the periphery of the city. These movements resulted in a number of informal settlements in the eastern part of Sana'a that were later upgraded and regularized as well as in the establishment of a number of slum pockets, most of which were later demolished and their residents resettled. This period was followed by a boom growth in informal urbanization, which started in the early 1990s. Zeug and Eckert (2010) and the World Bank (2006), reported that this second period of unprecedented growth of informal areas arose as a result of the 1990 National Unification of the former Northern and Southern Yemen, which prompted approximately 130,000 inhabitants to move to Sana'a during this period as well as the deportation of about 1 million Yemeni expatriates from the Gulf States during the first Gulf War in 1990—approximately 85,000 of whom returned to Sana'a. A third phase of informal settlement growth took place from the late 1990s onward. During this stage, these areas continued to grow robustly as a result of ongoing liberalization of the market, which increased rural-urban migration from throughout Yemen to Sana'a. Population growth also encouraged young,

low-income starter-families, who could not afford housing in the formal sector, to settle in informal areas. Reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that an influx of refugees from the Horn of Africa, mostly from Somalia, has greatly contributed to the expansion of informal areas in Yemen as well. Sana'a alone received 20,262 of more than 74,000 Somali refugees in 2009, according to Zeug and Eckert (2010).

Returnees and other mostly lower income strata population segments in Sana'a can easily find cheap land in informal areas at the periphery of the city. In some cases, private individuals buy, subdivide, and sell large parcels of land, particularly in areas where urbanization is likely to take place at rapid speed because the ongoing urban expansion has placed these areas close to major transport lines and services. Landowners in fringe areas also often encourage informal development around their own plots to increase pressure on the government to provide utility and water and sanitation services. Prices increase gradually once urbanization has taken root. More than anything else, the post-planning mechanism seems to fuel land speculation, according to Sims et al. (2009).

In light of the literature, other key factors may also be considered driving forces in encouraging the dynamic growth of these settlements in Sana's. These influences are discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.1.8. Land Related Issues and Strategies

According to a World Bank study (2010a), Sharia Law⁹ in Yemen recognized four types of land ownership: privately-owned land or *melk*, state-owned land or *miri*; communal land, and land endowed in religious trust or *waqf*. However, under Yemeni civil legislation, land may be classified into a larger array of categories, including

⁹ See the definition of terms list.

privately-owned land, government land, communal land, endowment/waqf land, agriculture land, land for neighborhood rights, and squatter-occupied land (World Bank, 2010a). Both Sharia and secular classifications are recognized and employed in the Yemeni official system. The main institutions responsible for land-related issues are GALSUP through the Land Department, the Planning Department, Notary Public Department, and the Control and Inspection Department. The Ministry of Public Works and Highways, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) as well as the Local Councils, which also play institutional roles in regulating land issues.

Land Registration and Land Ownership

According to the World Bank (2010a), the land titling and transaction registration system in Yemen is ineffective, both in terms of its coverage and its perceived value in securing property rights. A 2010 World Bank study reported that since creation of the first land registry branch in Sana'a in 1977, only 240,000 transactions concerning privately-owned land and real estate have been recorded across Yemen. Although Sana'a has the highest registration rate, the capture rate of the land registry is estimated to be no more than 20% of actual annual land and property transactions. The World Bank study also reported that the public has exhibited little interest in the land registration requirement.

This is so for a number of reasons, according to the same study of the World Bank. First, the act of registration is not legally conclusive and can thus be challenged in court, according to existing law, which diminishes the system's credibility. Second, the Yemeni courts view registration with little confidence because the legal dimension of the registration process (i.e., adjudication of property rights) is accorded much less weight

under Yemeni law than is its technical component (i.e., surveying). Third, the costs of registration can be very high, especially when past land transfers have been unregistered and untaxed. Fourth, lengthy bureaucratic procedures for obtaining a land title place a burden on individuals pursuing them that is especially onerous for the poor or those with modest means. Finally, the judicial procedure for authentication to transfer deeds is widely perceived by the public as an alternative form of land registration that provides the same added value as obtaining land tenure security.

The general public perception of authentication as an equivalent and cheaper form of securing property rights has weakened the process of title registration. Inadequate quality of land and property registration services has also contributed to the problem. More specifically, the lack of regulation governing the conveyance process, insufficient registration and registry maintenance procedures, restricted regulatory oversight of the notary public (locally known as *Amin*¹⁰) activities, and an unsatisfactory legal and technical framework associated with a transition from a former person-based to a new parcel-centered deed registry system. Deeds registration with the *Amin* is the most widespread form of legal land right declaration in Yemen. The Land Authority under the Land Registration Act (No. 39 of 1991) also maintains a registry system in Sana'a that covers parcels in that city's urban and peri-urban areas.

Lack of recording of rights in land and consequent difficulties in proof of rights noticeably contributes to insecurity of tenure in Sana'a. In addition, a lack of adequate dispute settlement arrangements also plays a significant role in ownership insecurity. The inadequacy of the land registration system in Yemen frequently causes disputes over land ownership (Dabbas and Burns, 2011). A large volume of land dispute clog the judicial

¹⁰ See the definition of terms list.

system and cases may take two or three generations to resolve in the courts. According to UN-Habitat (2012), about 50% of Yemen's court disputes are land-related. However, according to Dabbas and Burns (2011) and USAID (2010), land dispute cases count for about 85% of all court cases while approximately 90% of land ownership remains informal. The lack of an efficient system for land registration in addition to weak enforcement of judicial verdicts has worsened the land titling issue. In Sana'a, for example, it is common that dispute over property leads to violent conflict. Conflicts may arise among individuals, between private individuals and the state, and in inheritance cases, between a private landowner and a tribe with customary rights to an area (Dabbas and Burns, 2011; USAID, 2010).

Access to land and housing, thus, has become more difficult and more problematic for the poor as well as for the State. According to UN-Habitat (2012), governments in the Southern Tier countries, which include Yemen, Sudan, Comoros, Djibouti, and Somalia, have been unable to secure enough affordable housing for low-income or poor families or to prepare the ground for private sector investment in medium-income housing. The UN study also reported that in Yemen, from 2005 to 2008, an estimated 95% of housing was built by the private sector, most of which was incremental construction by households in informal settlements.

Access to public land remains a challenging issue facing local authorities as they attempt to secure service delivery (i.e., schools, health centers, and public amenities) to all urban dwellers. In Sana'a, the majority of vacant land (formerly agricultural property) is privately-owned and even acreage that can be deemed state-owned—generally mountain slopes—is subject to ongoing disputes with the private landowners of adjacent

lands who claim that this land is theirs by virtue of their historic rights to water near it. Faced with a marked shortage of state-owned/controlled land, local authorities often must acquire private land, often at very high prices, to deliver public services.

In terms of access to land by the poor, land markets in Yemen, in particular in Sana'a, tend to function badly, due to an ongoing lack of clear land records and investor speculation. Consequently, Sana'a faces serious land market distortions, which is arguably the city's most complex problem (Sims et al., 2009). Access to land has become more problematic not only due to the actions of business owners and investors, but also to the poor who are forced to bargain to fulfill their survival needs. On the one hand, difficulty in accessing land severely hinders the ability of the indigent to gain entrée to housing markets, which in large part explains why these remain so undeveloped in the country and why squatting on state land illegally has become so common. On the other hand, as a result of speculators who took advantage of low prices, especially after national unification in 1990, land values throughout the country, especially in Sana'a, have risen, leaving few or no alternatives available to the poor to access formal housing.

Access to Land and Caste/Ethnic Minority

While all Yemeni citizens suffer under the current "non-system" of land ownership, a few communities with significant ethnic minorities have long suffered from non-recognition with respect to access to land. According to a World Bank study (2009), three groups of minorities historically have suffered such discrimination.

- Mazainah¹¹ are described as artisans, such as butchers, shoemakers, barbers, and hair-stylists. This segment of Yemeni society does not intermarry with landowning

¹¹ The terms Naqseen and Abna'a Al-Khumus are used in some profiles, reflecting different local terminologies (see the definition of terms list).

families and thus does not inherit land. The World Bank study found that while these residents could not inherit land, they are permitted to purchase property.

- Ahgur¹² are described as dark-skinned people from East Africa, whose ancestors often came to Yemen as slaves. The study reports that this population does not own land, but is not absolutely barred from land ownership.
- Akhdam are best described as also of East African decent, often from Ethiopia. They typically reside in their own small temporary settlements in small huts of mud and palm leaves. Most often, they work at the least attractive forms of manual labor and in despised professions, such as waste disposal. This group is prohibited by custom from land ownership.¹³

The Akhdam often establish their settlements illegally on state-owned land outside Sana'a and in and around the center of the city. Because there is a need for their labor, local governments tend to tolerate such squatting not only in Sana'a, but also in other governorates. This becomes more problematic, however, when urban sprawl reaches their informal settlements, at which time local authorities begin to pay more attention to Akhdam occupied areas (Sims et al., 2009).

Land Market Distortions

According to Madbouly (2009), public land in Sana'a is very limited. The State only controls properties located in the mountains in and around Sana'a as well as alongside storm water channels (Al-Sailah). Most of the agricultural land, meanwhile, is

¹² See the definition of terms list.

¹³ Al Sharjabi, (1990): "They were not allowed to possess agricultural lands or work as partners in an ownership or in the places where they have their homes. ... In view of their poverty and their inability to buy land to build homes, they take possession of the lands where they have their homes and most of the time it is state-owned land" (p. 300).

privately-owned. The State does not have accurate records of its properties, which facilitates violations of its ownership by squatters of all sorts. Private landowners, for example, often claim land as agricultural to support their claims of ownership. The State has to prove title in case of first registrations. Since the government often cannot demonstrate the exact boundaries of its known public lands, it is often difficult to show that its ownership has been usurped. Land transactions are complicated and costly. Moreover, the capacity of the State is very weak and its recordkeeping still fragile. It is thus often unable to protect either its own or private property owner rights. In response to the State's inability to facilitate the land market, property is in most cases traded informally with the use of written documents, locally known as *Basira*¹⁴ and certified by the *Amin Al-Mantiqa*,¹⁵ a government appointed area chief or notary public. The country does not have a system for authenticating titles, deeds, or land documents (formal or customary), a condition that creates space for fraud and often results in land disputes. Land conveyance is subject to corrupt practices and as a result the land registry is not able to arbitrate conflicting claims and can end up formalizing conflicting claims rather than resolving them (MPWH, 2010; World Bank, 2007). According to Madbouly (2009), land claims were difficult to verify in any case due to the absence of exact land surveys, as well as the fact that the *Basira* system made it relatively easy to generate documents that appear to prove ownership.

Under such a complicated, costly, and time-consuming system, it is relatively easy for the poor to find cheap land in unsettled areas at the periphery of the city or even

¹⁴ See the definition of terms list.

¹⁵ See the definition of terms list.

in its core. Land prices are least expensive in informal areas where construction is otherwise prohibited due to environmental hazards or for security reasons.

3.1.9. Poor Land Management and Unplanned Urban Sprawl

The phenomenon of uncontrolled urban sprawl is especially prominent in Yemen's highland cities. Sana'a, like many other cities in Yemen, suffers from poor land management and unplanned urban sprawl. A recently completed City Development Strategy (CDS) for Sana'a pointed out that the capital is confronting serious planning problems related to housing and land management (Sims et al., 2009). According to Sims et al. (2009), in most urban areas, including Sana'a, uncontrolled urban expansion was far ahead of plans. Urban sprawl already covered large areas, which, if used more efficiently, likely could accommodate the expected population of Sana'a until 2025. Sims et al. have argued that the Sana'a municipal government remained a mix of decentralized and de-concentrated entities with duplicate and overlapping responsibilities even though reform measures are being carried out nationally. The city, for example, contains 10 elected district councils within its boundaries.

In the absence of a universal land inventory or registration system, the nation's planning framework remains undeveloped and uncoordinated. Local governments, such as the Sana'a Municipality, are responsible for preparing planning studies as well as public construction and environmental plans before submitting these to national public agencies for approval. However, due to capacity constraints, most of the review work at the national level is completed by GALSUP.

According to Spruit (2008), two main forces drove the uncontrolled urban expansion in Yemen and in Sana'a: demand for affordable land for individual housing

and speculative investment. Government institutions and their urban planning teams felt helpless and frustrated in the face of urban expansion that, according to them, was leading to chaos and is stretching cities beyond their feasible limits to provide needed services, Spruit (2008) explained. Among the factors discussed above, a lack of professional capacities and resources has figured strongly in making the State weak in the face of the uncontrolled spread of informal settlements, according to Sims et al. (2009). These analysts have suggested that the Sana'a Municipality employees lacked necessary skills and were poorly motivated to oversee urban expansion. Moreover, the Sana'a Municipality had very weak local revenue generation capacity and depended strongly on central government transfers and subsidies to provide the services it offers.

Sims et al. (2009) and Spruit (2008) described and summarized the urban planning process in Sana'a as follows.

- The city lacked an official plan that defined a clear and comprehensive vision for its spatial growth. Meanwhile, Sana'a had grown beyond the boundaries envisioned in the community's 1978 Master Plan, which was discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, the master plan exercise of 1998 (also discussed in a later section) was only partial in its reach and was never formally approved.
- The region's recent pattern of growth is taking the shape of scattered development without any phasing or sequencing to guide infrastructure provision. This helter-skelter pattern of relatively high-density development increased the cost of infrastructure, and had negative economic consequences in terms of the long distances that residents must travel to obtain services and reach their employment.

- Sana'a lacked a well-defined urban planning structure and mechanism. Several laws and presidential decrees allocated these concerns to different governmental bodies. At the time of this research, the only active body was the Sana'a branch of the General Authority for Land, Survey, and Urban Planning, which principally prepared detailed neighborhood plans. This office mainly responded to the on-going development pressures of landowners, in particular in areas where construction had occurred informally either on private or state-owned land, or a mix of both. The agency sought to prevent the rapid development of informal settlements by preparing and publishing detailed plans for such areas. However, those plans were prepared without either well-defined land uses or planning standards, building codes and criteria. The current planning standards, in fact, were unrealistically high and existing neighborhood unit plans largely ignored realities on the ground and themselves had become stimuli for land speculation.
- There was no restriction on converting existing land to other uses, which created forms of unacceptable mixtures of several land uses within neighborhoods.
- The city suffered from an absence of areas for industrial development. The existing areas were very limited in terms of space and infrastructure.
- The city lacked effective monitoring mechanisms that: 1) ensured implementation of detailed urban plans for local areas and 2) prevented development in prohibited areas or areas that had been allocated for public services.
- The city lacked current maps and satellite imagery.

The World Bank suggested a number of principles to manage the rapid urbanization of existing and future informal settlements, which included not only the

enhanced policies outlined, but also a call for political will, as reflected in governmental commitment and leadership. More specifically, the World Bank urged the nation's government to decentralize certain of its functions by delegating fiscal and administrative authority for those responsibilities to local governments, strengthening its own and local institutional capacities, and by clarifying the organizational mandates assigned the Ministry of Public Works and Highways, GALSUP, and Local Councils (World Bank, 2010a). For example, responsibility for the existing Master Plan for Sana'a is formally delegated to several Neighborhood Plan Units (NPU). According to the nation's decentralization plan, GALSUP should develop plans while the Ministry of Public Works and Highways is supposed to complete the civil works necessary to realize them with the investment funds provided by the Local Council. Lack of institutional clarity and a scarcity of revenue sources and professional capacity at the local level, however, have prevented effective NPU realization. This situation prevented pro-active urban planning for new settlements as well as for the city at large.

3.1.10. Urban Planning Efforts for Sana'a: An Overview of the First and Second Master Plans

A brief description of the organizational structure of urban planning in Yemen helps to understand how planning policies are produced in the country (Appendix IV). Urban planning decisions are centralized and municipalities, including Sana'a City, must adhere to national policies. The Council of Ministers is responsible for policy development in light of adopted political, economic, and social strategies. The council identifies methods for implementing its policies and oversees those efforts. The national Ministry of Planning and Development then prepares development proposals based on

the Council's guidance and in coordination with the concerned ministry. The Supreme Council for Planning develops urban planning policies and sets urban development objectives and goals in the context of the development framework of State public policy. The Technical Committee for Planning, administered by the Deputy Minister for the Planning Sector of the Ministry of Planning and Development, reviews and authenticates proposed plans. Finally, the Urban Planning Sector, which includes the General Directorate of Urban Planning, General Directorate of Regional Planning, General Directorate of Planning Information, and General Directorate of the Secretariat of the Technical Committee, prepares comprehensive and detailed plans by sector.

Master Plans (First and Second Master Plans)

The contemporary history of urban planning in Sana'a began in 1978 when Yemen's President invited Louis Berger and Kamsax International Inc., an American planning firm, to create the city's First Master Plan (FMP). The President asked the group to prepare comprehensive plans for five major cities in Yemen, including Sana'a. The resulting master plan of 1978 for Sana'a saw a regional role for the city as a hub for major transport corridors, supporting its role as an important center in the Yemeni and southern Arabian trade network. The firm argued that the plan it offered would address the current and future trends of development of each city examined for the next 22 years. The national government initiated another master planning exercise in 1996 and a joint Yemeni-Cuban team of planners completed that effort in 1998 (Madbouly, 2007). The Cuban firm collaborated with the Yemeni Ministry of Construction, Housing, and Urban Planning to prepare the Second Master Plan (SMP) for Sana'a City. The team wound up simply updating the 1978 master plan. The national government, nominally the sponsor

of this initiative, has to date not approved the 1996 update and it remains an unofficial document (Madbouly, 2007).

I next provide a brief description of the first and second master plans based on information obtained from officials at the GALSUP and Municipality of Sana'a, and several personal discussions with professors of the Architecture Department at Sana'a University and from the few studies that have analyzed the two plans (Interviews, November 2009-February 2011 in Yemen). This analysis is based on my limited access as a researcher to information concerning the two master plans. Further analysis, however, is needed of these efforts in order to understand more fully the government planning policies and processes regarding the region's informal settlements. Also, more information about forms of land registration, customary practices, and institutional structures and capacities is needed to enrich the analysis and understand better the interactions between informal settlements and government planning policies.

The first city plan sought to meet challenges facing the Sana'a region in the next 22 years. It included analytical studies of the current situation and projections of future economic and demographic trends. The American team considered land development as a key objective for the city's future development. The physical development trends identified in the 1978 master plan were based on the construction of new roadways. Those preparing the analysis argued that opening new rights-of-way would generate rapid linear development generally consisting of residences with ground-floor commercial space. The planning team also saw the location of major industrial or institutional facilities on a main road as an incentive for planned growth. Based on that perception, the

team developed guidelines for development that were to direct the policies and objectives of each of the region's development areas. These included:

- Development and improvement of the city's land-use planning to improve urban living conditions;
- Regulation of rapid urban growth and promotion of improved city infrastructure, in particular for water and transportation;
- Optimum use of existing infrastructure investments and land resources to promote a more effective and efficient pattern of land and infrastructure use;
- Reduction of the cost of urban development (land-use);
- Maintenance of the cultural and traditional character of the city; and
- Preservation and improvement of the historical heritage of the city.

It was important to identify aspirations that would significantly affect the growth and development of Sana'a. The team identified three main goals. First, they sought to develop a plan that would manage growth trends by identifying natural constraints and ensuring an adequate administrative structure. Second, the team developed several key alternatives for development built by studying and analyzing the current situation of Sana'a through land surveys, population projections, and land-use maps. The group evaluated what it took to be the implications of possible plan options and examined the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative to develop a durable and practicable plan for the city. Finally, the group counted on city officials refining and developing the selected alternatives adaptively over time. After reaching a consensus among the team concerning the most practicable alternative for an area, the working group sought to refine that option and to develop the detailed maps necessary for its thoughtful implementation.

According to the plan, linear residential/commercial development was to occur first, followed by intensifying residential use. Patterns of infill development between major roads could then be carefully determined. In accordance with this pattern, new expansion of Sana'a in a linear mode along major roads has indeed occurred. The arteries leading north to the airport, south to Taiz, and west to Al-Hodaidah have exerted the strongest pull on development. The 1978 report considered growth trends for the north and south of the nation separately. The planning team did not organize its information around the other two directions (east and west), mainly because of the presence of natural barriers (high mountains and slopes).

Twenty years after the 1978 master plan, two main development aspirations have been realized. First, the actual road network was 90% similar to that proposed in the FMP. Second, the three poles of development proposed in the region's first plan, one in the north and two to the south, had been entirely developed in the south and partially developed in the north. The two development poles in the south presented street patterns characteristic of a planned sub-city, while in the north, the major roads were constructed, but the street pattern was left to more informal development.

According to Al-Waraqi (2009), the American planners did not identify informal communities as a major problem in the first master plan, but their final recommendations warned of an expected proliferation of such settlements in the future. Also, the group urged the nation and city to develop a stronger housing policy to address more effectively the rapid growth of the city, increased rural-to-urban migration, and housing demands of low-income residents, who constituted the majority of the urban population of Sana'a at that time.

The team paid close attention to the methodologies and strategies it employed to conduct its study. As Al-Waraqi (2009) pointed out, the American group employed well-grounded methodologies and contemporary planning theories. This approach enabled the consultants to identify key growth trends, select appropriate alternatives, and to suggest needed planning policies, programs, and implementation steps. Their resulting proposed plan was indeed comprehensive.

The team successfully identified appropriate forms for growth (sector growth¹⁶), given the difficult topography of Sana'a. The group also created a general policy for each part of the master plan (i.e., economic trends, and land-use strategies). It was successful, too, in identifying the programs and objectives for each part of the plan and then suggesting policies and implementation strategies for each. Finally, the team proved insightful concerning how the city would grow in the future. According to Madbouly (2007), the 1978 Master Plan did indeed serve as the touchstone for development of the city's current infrastructure. Nonetheless, by 1990, the city had already exceeded spatially the targeted urban development for the year 2000 in the 1978 master plan.

Assessment of the First Master Plan (FMP)

The shortcomings of the FMP led to its failure overall, as Al-Waraqi (2009) and Sims et al. (2009) have found. They have argued that the plan ultimately failed for several reasons. First, the plan employed population projections based on the lowest estimated averages despite the rapid population growth in Yemen, and Sana'a in particular. Second, no community leaders or residents were involved in the planning

¹⁶ Seven sectors were planned for the city at that time. The radius of each sector did not exceed 7.5 km; so all inhabitants had equal opportunity to benefit from the available services in the sector.

process. Third, the First Master Plan recommendations did not take into account the complex system of land ownership rooted in Sharia Law and customary law.

In my view, the following additional factors limited the use and application of the FMP. The American team brought an advanced planning package to Yemeni cities, which were not ready administratively, politically, economically, or socially to take advantage of it. Furthermore, after the 1962 revolution¹⁷ against the Imam Regime,¹⁸ the country had no planning authority or specialized or trained planners who systematically could apply the principles of the FMP. Finally, the English language was barely used in the country. The master plan documents were written in English and Yemeni engineers were largely unable to read them.

Assessment of the Second Master Plan (SMP)

For preparation of its Second Master Plan (1998-2028) in 1998 the Yemeni government invited another foreign planning firm, this time from Cuba, to team with its Ministry of Construction, Housing, and Urban Planning. As noted above, the effort ended up revising and updating the plan previously prepared by Louis Berger and Kamsax International Inc. Like its predecessor, the nation's second major plan sought to create a system of centers within concentric developments. However, this effort sought even more thoroughly and aggressively to plan for development of the city on a north-south axis to account for the more difficult topography of the eastern and western areas around the capital.

The new plan addressed the city's development—its growth trends and their relationship to the previous national plan and to various regional policies. It included

¹⁷ See the definition of terms list.

¹⁸ See the definition or terms list.

current economic and demographic studies as well as estimated costs for development. It aimed to evaluate the FMP, identify development objectives in the short- and long-term, promote urban life and control urban growth, define a different land-use plan, limit rural-to-urban migration, improve the transportation network, and preserve the city's unique cultural and historical heritage. The Cuban-Yemeni plan also focused on environmental issues, such as the region's high level of deforestation, severe soil erosion, critical water supply situation, threats to high-value agricultural areas, and numerous quarries and stone processing plants within the city.

The team employed a similar methodology to that used for the FMP: identifying objectives, choosing alternatives, evaluating alternatives, and refining and improving selected options. The 1998 group also followed the same steps the American team had used to chart growth trends, strategies, and land-use forms. Basically, no great disparities existed between the first and second master plans. Indeed, Al-Waraqi (2009) identified only two differences in the 1978 and 1998 planning efforts. The second effort differed in the development principles on which it was predicated and in the number of city sectors for which it developed forecasts.¹⁹ One very significant advantage of the SMP was that it was written in Arabic but, unfortunately, this plan, too, was never officially adopted and it remains an unauthorized document. This is due to the absence of coordination among local authorities and the conflicts of interest that arose among the relevant agencies, including GALSUP, MPWH, and Sana'a Municipality. Each agency believed that credit for the initiative should go to it. Conflict of interest and lack of coordination have resulted in an extended suspension of the plan since its release in 1998.

¹⁹ The second master plan named nine sectors for the city, given the rapid growth of the population and the expansion of the city.

Al-Waraqi (2009) argued that the 1998 team should have considered initiating a new master plan to address current and future challenges instead of updating the existing effort. Be that as it may, the second master plan had its own shortcomings in addition to those linked to the 1978 plan. The team only focused on the outcomes desired (suggesting proposals and recommendations) without detailing the process by which these recommendations could be implemented. Nor did it consider examining the current situation and identifying the potentials and obstacles to the future of the city. The plan did not suggest any policies, objectives, or programs for the city's future development plan. It disregarded existing land-uses, land ownership system, land prices, the nature of development, and the culture of the society.

It is unfortunate that the SMP was not formally adopted. As a result, the city's urban planning efforts have concentrated on addressing short-term problem-solving rather than long-term strategic planning. Today, the Sana'a Municipality, in order to fix the existing gap in the land-use plan and to cope with fast informal residential development, is forced to prepare neighborhood plans for candidate areas for urban development without an eye to a larger canvas of proposed development.

3.1.11. Institutional Structures and Capacities

The Yemeni Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation is in charge of development issues and mobilization of external resources to implement these master plans. The Ministry of Finance's Department of Public Domain and the MPWH oversee the use of urban lands. In addition, the GALSUP is responsible for urban and rural land inspections and surveys, layouts, and planning; management of state, private, and *Awaqf* land; administration and registration of land, including maintaining land records; and

valuation of land. However, due to the lack of law enforcement, professional capacities, resources, and conflicts of interest among officials, ministries often have difficulty coordinating their actions at either local or national levels. They are not able to develop a clear planning policy or land ownership system as a result. In addition, in terms of land registration, as I have argued, very few Yemenis seek to employ the formal legal system for resolution of land issues. The lack of capacity, administrative support, poorly trained staff, and judges translates into a dysfunctional system and widespread corruption (Yemen Fact Sheet, 2012).

3.1.12. Service and Infrastructure Delivery

The capacity of Yemeni governments to supply infrastructure services to informal communities is negatively affected by several factors. According to El-Kholy et al. (2010), a range of capacity, technical, financial, and organizational fragilities within the public sector were responsible for poor service delivery. Madbouly (2009), however, emphasized that the most critical issue was the existing land pricing system in which new property subdivisions were created without services.

Madbouly (2009) summarized the main challenges related to infrastructure provision in informal areas. First, drinking water and sanitation, electricity, street pavement, transportation, and emergency and security services were often insufficient, inadequate, or even missing altogether. In Sana'a, however, all except six informal settlements were at least nominally connected to the public electricity network. Usually, only parts of these neighborhoods were covered by the public system and households in the other parts extended electricity cables informally. Connections to private households were often quite hazardous, executed with substandard material, and with cables hanging

everywhere. Local distribution networks were overburdened and residents therefore coped with frequent outages.

Second, in Sana'a, there were serious water supply constraints threatening the future growth and survival of the entire city and these were felt more keenly in the city's informal communities, which received their water mainly by tankers and sometimes from private wells. Wells, in fact, were available in only 13 of the city's 35 informal neighborhoods. In addition, informal communities located in areas on steep slopes and with unpaved streets were difficult to access for water tankers; in such locations, residents have to pay higher prices or must carry the water to their homes on foot. Three of the city's informal communities were at least partially connected to public sewerage network. But, even in these cases, a lack of funds for the maintenance of existing services and capital investment was a chronic problem for these settlements. In addition, obtaining basic commodities was burdensome for informal community residents who sometimes must walk long distances even to access transportation. Emergency situations can be quite desperate because ambulances, fire fighters, and other service personnel often found it difficult to reach locations in informal communities. Schools and health and social centers rarely exist in these areas.

3.1.13. Challenges of Related Social Issues

Yemeni society has experienced dramatic change over the last three decades, especially with the emergence of a new governance system and with the creation of the modern unified state in 1990. These transformations in livelihood and governance structures have had significant implications for equity as well as poverty. An increasing concentration of economic and political power during this period involves the risk of elite

capture of development benefits, which risks further widening an already large gap between rich and poor. According to the World Bank (2006), two key historical processes have driven the nation's transformation in recent decades: 1) following unification in 1990, the economy witnessed a great shift from subsistence agriculture (in the north) and a command economy (in the south) to a more liberal market economy model; and 2) the roles of the state were expanding and changing as were those of local institutions, both formal and informal. These factors changed the rules of the game in terms of who did or did not have access to resources, thereby contributing to the inclusion or exclusion of specific socio-economic groups, the processes that enhanced or weaken cohesion within and among groups, and the modalities by which people can hold institutions accountable.

Social Caste

Social caste remains an important lens for understanding roles and responsibilities within Yemen's informal settlements. In Yemen, class, ethnicity, and regional identity play major roles in the social structures of everyday life and in the identities of individuals residing in cities more generally. They also play significant roles in defining social and class interactions. The traditional social structure in Yemen is very complex and defines the role of each group in the community. A simplified version may be offered as follows.

First, enjoying highest social prestige and standing is the stratum of the *Sadaa*,²⁰ a minority of elites who belong to scholarly families, sometimes claiming descent from the Prophet Mohammed. They are the nation's lawmakers and as a group they also own much of Yemen's land. Second are the *Qodhah*²¹ (*Fuqaha* or *Mashayikh*), who are also a

²⁰ See the definition of terms list.

²¹ See the definition of terms list.

minority of elites. They are slightly lower on the social scale and perform the same social functions as Sadaa. Sadaa and Qodhah together represent about 5% of Yemen's population. *Gab'ail*,²² (*tribesmen*), constitute the third level of the nation's social caste. Along with fishermen, they comprise about 80% of Yemen's population. They control their territory and caravan routes, own arable land, and carry weapons. Fourth, the *Mazainah*²³ (*Abna'a Al-Khumus, Masakeen* or *Du'afa*) are a lower stratum in the tribal system. They are a minority of service providers and constitute about 5% of the population. They are an underprivileged group and live under tribal protection. By custom, they have been deprived of land ownership and are not allowed to bear arms. They engage in low-status occupations, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, brokers, barbers, musicians, and butchers. Finally, the lowest rung of the social case is comprised of a variety of marginalized and mainly landless people who do not have recorded genealogies, such as *Akhdam, Ahgur, and Abeed*. They represent about 10% of the total population. They are often not listed in the traditional social structure, but are considered widely to occupy the lowest ethnic and caste group in Yemeni society. They endure particularly degrading conditions and treatment in Yemen (Habitat International Coalition, 2006). The majority of Akhdam and Abeed are of African or Ethiopian descent and they usually work in menial occupations, such as washing and burying the dead, cleaning latrines, cleaning streets, begging, and sex work.

Based on the classifications of social strata in Sana'a, and so far as I am able to ascertain, most informal settlement residents come from a mix of minority groups, drawn from the Akhdam, Abeed, and Mazainah. After reunification, however, poverty increased

²² See the definition of terms list.

²³ See the definition of terms list.

among different social groups, making informal settlements more attractive for all poor and recent migrants in Sana'a, regardless of their social caste, so while these groups predominate, they are not the only sub-populations represented in such settlements.

Challenges to Social Inclusion

According to the World Bank (2006), Yemen faced four challenges to addressing its very significant political, economic, and social challenges: inequality in access to land and water; economic marginalization of certain social groups; social and economic ostracism of urban shanty dwellers; and inequity in state expenditures, which tend to favor the non-poor. Rapid changes in the rules governing land ownership are occurring as a result of insufficient and unsystematic integration of modern and customary norms for ownership. This is resulting in concentration of productive land in the hands of a small number of powerful families, while the poor have limited access to property and, especially, to its ownership. Systems for protecting the property rights of the poor remain weak and generally disadvantage the low-income and socially marginalized groups. In addition, opportunities to access government resources are fundamentally unequal. As a result, the possibility for economic mobility across social groups is severely restricted.

Urban migration is also resulting in new forms of social exclusion with the growth in squatter settlements in Sana'a. Urban areas in Sana'a have developed an important line of social cleavage around class, which creates a spatial marginalization of people with clear segregation of these living in informally developed areas. Informal settlement residents tend to be poor migrants who lack political connections and formal representation, such as *sheikh*,²⁴ to defend their rights and address their interests. There is also a growing popular tendency to label all informal settlement residents as Akhdam,

²⁴ See the definition of terms list.

irrespective of their social status, which simply exacerbates the challenge of these residents' social standing since this group is widely held in disrepute. Akhdam were first brought from Zabid²⁵ to Sana'a as street sweepers, but when the conditions in Zabid worsened for the poor, other non-Akhdam joined these jobs in Sana'a until the offensive term of Akhdam became synonymous with dark-skinned residents from different backgrounds in these settlements. Many groundless beliefs about Akhdam are widespread, such as non-execution of Islamic burial practices and unacceptable social behaviors, and so popular discrimination against this group has deepened in recent years (Seif, 2005).

Although no systematic and reliable data are available on a national scale, there are indications that rates of unemployment and underemployment in informal settlements are high (World Bank, 2006). Social marginalization creates further vulnerabilities. For example, informal area residents are routinely subject to arbitrary eviction and selective arson, when their communities are located in areas desired for other purposes by landowners. These residents are generally unable to defend their rights and interests because they are excluded from patronage networks and have no mechanisms for expressing their voice. Unlike, middle-income and wealthy families, who tend to have solid networks, poor families tend to split and fragment. Informal community urban dweller heterogeneity weakens network solidarity in urban areas (World Bank, 2006).

Security Threat Challenges

Yemen is subject to multiple threats that have weakened state capacity and depleted limited government financial resources. These dangers arise from terrorist acts of the Al-Qaida organization, the Houthi insurgents in Sa'adah governorate as well as

²⁵ Zabid is a town located in the Al-Hodaidah Governorate.

secessionist movements in the South (El-Kholy et al., 2010). The most recent threat was political upheaval against the Saleh regime. Those attacks damaged Yemen's already overstretched basic infrastructure and public sector capacity to offer basic services. They also adversely affected the government's efforts to diversify the economy and discourage local and foreign investors. Moreover, such threats and attacks exacerbated poverty resulting in an increase of unemployed people in Sana'a, in particular among residents of informal settlements. Finally, in spite of Saleh's departure from the scene, the ongoing (at the time of this research) political crisis in the country has further decreased the efforts as well as the interest of non-state actors, especially international development organizations and donors, to fund or pursue poverty alleviation and reduction efforts in the nation.

3.1.14. Donor Interventions

Yemen is one of the least developed countries in the world and it relies significantly on external donor support for such development as it is pursuing. The following entities are among the donors and international development organizations involved in the development process in Yemen: the World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Islamic Bank for Development (IsBD), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Until recently, these agencies did not view informal settlements in Yemen as a priority. In fact, water shortage and security conditions in Yemen, and in Sana'a in particular, have long dominated the aid agenda for the nation among its principal funders. However, the rapid growth of informal settlements has begun to alarm the international organizations (World Bank, 2010a) and these have undertaken joint efforts with national and local authorities and other interested groups to target aid to informal settlements in Sana'a and four other major Yemeni cities.

For its part, in an effort to develop a long-term plan for the city, the Sana'a Local Council initiated the Sana'a City Development Strategy (CDS) process in September 2005 in coordination with the World Bank and the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI). The Cities Alliance allocated funding for the CDS in October 2006. The Minister of State and Mayor of Sana'a launched the two-year CDS process in that same year. The Urban Development Strategy effort brought together stakeholders from the public, private, and civil society sectors to envision the future of Sana'a in the next 20 years (Sims et al., 2009).

Stakeholders also agreed that Sana'a's development strategy should concentrate on five themes or components: institutional strengthening; improved urban planning; a comprehensive approach to urban upgrading; economic development; and better financial management (Madbouly, 2009). The urban upgrading component suggested in the strategy not only focused on slum pockets, but also targeted all unplanned sprawl areas in the urban fringe surrounding Sana'a. If implemented as envisioned, this strategy would have assisted the city in addressing its many urban challenges more effectively.

The experience of international development organizations in informal settlements in Yemen is still at the baby-step stage, however, and is unfortunately being accompanied by declining interest among donors in Yemen. A number of key factors have contributed to a diminishing interest in the nation, according to UN-Habitat (2012). Business development in the Southern Tier countries, which includes Yemen, now faces major constraints, such as inadequate available investment capital and dysfunctional institutional structures. In spite of these attempts to implement decentralization, local authorities continue to lack adequate funding, and training to discharge their

responsibilities effectively and equitably. The overlap of municipal and district councils is another significant challenge in attracting donors and investors. Sana'a, for example, has a municipal council as well as 10 district councils, which each offer their own services, resulting in confusion concerning roles, responsibilities, and revenue collection as well as duplicated departments. According to UN-Habitat (2012), the government was highly controlled by traditional power elites, local capacity was poor, and service delivery was inadequate. These key areas require continued international and donor support, but it is not clear that such will continue to be forthcoming. Besides the general institutional and economic constraints, marketing the sub-region's potential has been made difficult by political instability and civil strife. UN-Habitat reported that although Yemen was trying to attract more investment to the country, it was challenged by a number of setbacks, including burdensome administrative processes, a difficult business environment, lack of transparency, the high cost of credit, the difficulty in acquiring securely-titled serviced land for development, degraded infrastructure, and unreliable electricity and water supplies.

3.1.15. Government Responses to Informal Settlements

The Yemeni government has no specific planning policy towards informal settlements. The nation's government deals with this type of community on a case-by-case basis, according to one official in the MPWH (Personal interview February 08, 2010). That stance could be attributed to the denial that exists at the ministerial decision-making level. For example, in a personal discussion with an official in the GALSUP in January 2010, he denied the existence of informal settlements in Sana'a. He claimed that GALSUP planners took care of the urban growth and thus Sana'a was wisely planned.

The stance could also be attributed to other factors, such as unsatisfactory urban planning policies and master plans. Whatever the reasons for lacking a clear set of policies to address the challenge of growing informal settlements, from the studies and reports I reviewed, I identified several actions by the Yemeni government to address the nation's informal settlements. While they may not actually constitute policies, some authors do so label them.

According to Al-Waraqi (2009), for example, the Yemeni government developed two major policies towards informal settlements: eviction (with possible resettlement) and upgrading. Al-Waraqi argued the Yemeni government favors upgrading policies for two reasons. First, once established, it becomes difficult to remove people from where they and their families live. Upgrading in place is also less expensive than building new houses for a relocated population. Second, the government appeared convinced that allowing legitimate possession of land encouraged informal settlement residents to invest in their homes, land, and neighborhoods. Notably, Al-Waraqi did not provide any empirical evidence to support his conclusions concerning these government policies. His brief analysis depended on a theoretical framework adapted from authors and cases from Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Other studies have argued that the government adopted different responses for different settlement types, as reported above by Sims et al. (2009). The Sims et al. report did not provide well-justified or well-supported explanations for this classification. They did not indicate whether the government responses represented an official scheme adopted by the Yemeni government. Except for indicating that slum pockets were illegal and unacceptable and were therefore the most vulnerable areas for government-led

eviction and demolition, and that the government has formally prohibited further expansion of informal settlements, but was unable to enforce that stance; the report did not provide any further explanation of government policies on informal settlements. The Sims et al. report also argued that the government has no overarching strategy to control, contain, or guide informal community residential development.

Habitat International Coalition (2006) offered some evidence concerning the Yemeni government's practices toward informal settlement residents, mainly Akhdam. A 2006 Habitat study argued that because Akhdam were often not welcome within the city's existing neighbourhoods, they tended to build their (often make-shift) homes on its outskirts or close to communal dumpsites. The broader population generally perceived these locations as undesirable. However, these previously unwanted places suddenly might become marketable spaces or zones for public or private investment. Akhdam hold no titles to their residential spaces, nor do they otherwise possess any legal right to own the land they occupy. Consequently, when land values change, owners often evict them and destroy their homes while offering no compensation.

According to the Habitat report, the first five years of the millennium saw an increase in evictions of Akhdam by government authorities. With the fast expansion of municipal borders and increasing demand for new construction at the outskirts of city centres, government officials resorted to raiding and burning Akhdams' settlements whenever urban expansion brought their settlements closer to mainstream neighbourhoods. The report indicated that an entire family or a whole community might find itself without shelter and deprived of its belongings in a single bulldozing operation. Otherwise, police attacked slum neighbourhoods and ordered residents to leave

immediately without explanation and simultaneously fenced the entire settlement. In such cases, the police allowed inhabitants only to exit the site. However, different outcomes to forced evictions were concluded from interviewing Mahwa Aser residents pertaining to government actions against Mahwa Aser, as outlined in Chapter 5.

According to international standards aimed at securing adequate and safe eviction and displacement and according to international human rights principles, these periodic Yemeni government actions against Akhdam were illegal. These actions violate Akhdams' rights to housing, to privacy, to security in their home and to equal treatment. Accordingly, international organizations, especially the World Bank, have urged the Yemeni government to adopt other actions toward these informal settlements, including, especially, upgrading. The World Bank has urged the nation's government to improve the lives of informal settlement residents and to offer adequate housing alternatives and due process in the event relocation was necessary. As an incentive, the World Bank has offered the government financial and technical support to pursue its suggested policy course.

Local authorities do act to remove informal settlements, as they believe it necessary and appropriate to do so. Government officials justify these actions and positions in a variety of ways, including the State's right to the land and health concerns (more discussion about that in Chapter 6).

Spruit (2008) provided a more specific analysis of Sana'a local authority responses to informal settlements and highlighted the fact that the city's CSD indicated that the Municipality had no formal strategy to manage or guide informal residential development in and around the city. Al-Waraqi (2009), El-Shorbagi (2008; 2007), and

Madbuoly (2007) all agreed that Sana'a's planning system is reactive instead of proactive. Two actions, however, were commonly used to address the challenge of increasing numbers of informal settlements within the city: impose regulations prohibiting their expansion, which were difficult to enforce, or produce ex-post planning mechanisms. The latter were generally detailed neighborhood plans that consist of the street layout and location of basic services, when any are provided.

These detailed plans were not framed in any broader structural planning or strategic vision and were not enforced. Practically, most post-planned areas looked the same. Planners use the term of *Takhtit Ashwa'i* (random planning), which reflects the fact that development in post-planned areas continues largely informally. As part of the First Urban Development Project, in the 1980s and 1990s, the older informal areas in the eastern part of the city were upgraded and regularized with the support of the World Bank. This more comprehensive and integrated upgrading approach has not been repeated since, but in most informal areas at least some needed infrastructure and services have been introduced, including Mahwa Aser.

This discussion suggests that the presence of blighted zones in the middle or on the fringe of the city constitutes a difficult challenge for local officials in Sana'a. Government authorities often tolerate informal settlements unless they face strong pressures from large developers when communities are on private property or from political leaders, when settlements occupy government land. In such cases, eviction and relocation (forced or otherwise) becomes the *solution* to the unwanted *problem*. In some cases residents have been compensated, while in other instances, those affected have not received compensation. If an informal settlement is eligible for upgrading and resources

are available to provide such support, officials will typically pursue upgrading or planned relocation. In short, the government appears to respond differentially to informal areas, as the issue of their relocation or upgrading arises. Its reaction, therefore, depends on the perceived character and location of the informal area involved and the resources that can be marshaled at the time. This said, formally, the Sana'a Municipality favors planned relocation and/or upgrading, rather than eviction without compensation.

The next discusses Mahwa Aser neighborhood, my example of informal settlements in Sana'a. It provides an overview about this particular informal neighborhood, including its emergence and living conditions. Mahwa Aser will be used to provide specifics on informal settlements in Sana'a.

3.2. Overview of Mahwa Aser

Since accurate data on existing informal settlements in Sana'a is very scarce, I collected most of the information on which I rely here concerning Mahwa Aser in the field, through observation and interviews. I investigated the Mahwa Aser—known also as Harat Al-Lakama and Ga'at Almo'atamarat—neighborhood. I asked the following questions:

- Who lives there?
- What sorts of challenges are residents encountering?
- Which kinds of housing are in evidence?
- What were typical land transactions?
- What was the level of government services and infrastructure supply?
- How was the community being assisted and by whom?
- Which interventions were most needed?

- How did Mahwa Aser residents' view the government's policies and activities as well as those of major national and international organizations regarding their community?

Given the limited scope of this research project, I did not seek to address all policy, political, social, and economic issues related to Mahwa Aser. The collected evidence, however, led to a reasonably clear picture of the living situation for residents in this particular informal neighborhood.

At least 328 households and 2,261 individuals (Table 1)—mainly Akhdam—established Mahwa Aser in the early 1980s (El-Shorbagi, 2007).

Table 1: Mahwa Aser (Harat Al-Lakama)²⁶

Area Size m3	Density Family/Acre (Low)	Density Family/Acre (High)	No. of Families (Low)	No. of Families (High)	Estimated Population (Low)	Estimated Population (High)	Rate of Population Growth
32,770	100	110	328	361	2,261	2,487	Stable with a natural population growth

Source: El-Shorbagi (2008).

The area was first inhabited by Akhdams, considered the lowest social caste in Yemen, who migrated to Sana'a from coastal areas, such as Zabid and Al-Hodaidah, searching for jobs. Akhdam were first brought to Sana'a during Al-Hamdi's²⁷ era, in the late 1970s as menial laborers. They originally lived in the center of the Old City of Sana'a, in a settlement known as Mahwa Akhdam Bab Al-Yemen, which over time became a slum. Part of that original population of Akhdam occupied what is now Mahwa Aser in the early 1980s and when the government cleared Mahwa Akhdam Bab Al-Yemen in the 1990s, the remaining original residents of that settlement moved to Mahwa Aser, Sawad Sa'awan, and other informal communities in and around the city.

²⁶ The estimates are based on El-Shorbagi's study, conducted in 2007.

²⁷ Al-Hamdi, Mohamed Ibrahim served as the second President of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) after the revolution against the Imam regime in 1962. He ruled YAR from June 13, 1974 to October 11, 1977.

Originally built on trash strewn government property, Mahwa Aser was the home to more than 361 families in 2007 (El-Shorbagi) although the neighbourhood's population is likely larger than that figure (this is the only documented census available). I observed during my fieldwork in 2009-2010 that the area was inhabited not only by Akhdams, but also by various migrants from rural areas, other poor residents from Sana'a, and a few Somali refugees. A Maeen Directorate official²⁸ confirmed my observation in a telephone conversation with me: "Besides Akhdam, Mahwa Aser houses impoverished migrants from villages and other Yemeni cities and Yemeni workers who were repatriated from the Gulf War I (1990-1991)" (Phone conversation, November 20, 2010). Moreover, the proxy interviewer (more details about the proxy interviewer are in Chapter 4) reported that "Today, the neighbourhood is a home for variety of groups that belong to different regions and to different social and cultural backgrounds, including Akhdam and Somali refugees; though the area remains occupied by the poor and destitute" (Personal Skype interview, February 10, 2012). The residents of Mahwa Aser live in extreme poverty and need. The neighborhood attracted the poorest returnees from the war, refugees, and other impoverished and marginalized families, according to El-Shorbagi (2007). The social structure between and among the different groups, especially Akhdam was very homogenous and community ties were quite strong among each group. Mahwa Aser continued to attract residents because of its central location in the city.

The neighborhood is located at the intersection of two major roads Al-Zubairy-Aser Road and the Sixtieth Road (Figure 2) in Maeen District,²⁹ in one of the most vibrant parts of the city: from the South, the area is bordered by the Presidential Auto

²⁸ A government official from Maeen Directorate.

²⁹ Sana'a is divided into ten districts; Moderiat Maeen (Maeen District) is located in the western part of the city.

Maintenance Center and a military facility for Corp Maintenance, which borders the government land allotted for establishing a government compound for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, Central Public Library, and National Center for Documentation, on the north (Figures 2 and 3). The government separated the government compound from Mahwa Aser by a fence and gates before beginning construction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in about 2005 (Personal correspondence³⁰, September 17, 2012). The government fenced the area from the north and the west in an attempt to impede any further expansion of Mahwa Aser onto the State's land. Once the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was completed, the national government began construction of the Yemeni Parliament and Central Public Library, which were not yet completed at the time of this research. It is not yet clear when construction of the National Center for Documentation will occur.

Prior to Akhdam occupation of this parcel in the early 1980s, the government had not announced any intention to use the site for public buildings. However, the rapid growth of the population in Mahwa Aser alarmed government officials, who then announced the land would be targeted for redevelopment (Personal correspondence³¹, September 17, 2012). Although the land is state-owned, multiple parties, including military generals and high-ranked government officials (as discussed in Chapter 7), have competed since to acquire the property. The government took a number of steps to prevent additional growth, including prohibiting any new construction or expansion of existing houses and limiting services and infrastructure to the outer parts of the neighborhood. The government undertook these official actions to discourage further

³⁰ A government official from Sana'a Municipality.

³¹ A government official from Sana'a Municipality.

growth of the community and to prepare its residents for future eviction and/or resettlement.

The City Development Strategy, Sims et al. (2009), officially classified Mahwa Aser as a *slum pocket*, increasing the threat of eviction for its residents. Actually, Mahwa Aser was the only known slum pocket left in Sana'a and it is formally scheduled for resettlement, but no schedule to do so has been published and the government has taken no such action to date (El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007).

Meanwhile, the State has been largely unable to prevent new construction in Mahwa Aser. This failure was attributed to the officials' patronage and bribery system and overlapping responsibilities between relevant local authorities. The State perceives its efforts to limit additional growth in Mahwa Aser as legitimate because the community is located on public property. Legally the State has a full right to consider any procedures it wishes to regain the land so long as it provides fair compensation to residents for the costs of their relocation. Nevertheless, this issue is separate from denial of services to existing residents and, in the spirit of *equal citizenship to all*, many scholars have argued the state's punitive and discriminatory sanctions against this population should be lifted (Hamilton et al., 2012; Miller and Rose, 2008; Widianingsih, 2005). These actions have simply made difficult living conditions for the very poor, principally Akhdam, that live in Mahwa Aser still worse.

Whatever one makes of this debate, both the State's representatives and Mahwa Aser residents believed and claimed that they were the victims of the uncontrolled growth of informal settlements. Thus, the government believed it has the legitimate right to react and respond and residents believed they must be compensated and provided an alternative

place to live before relocation. The nonexistent space for negotiation between the State and residents of Mahwa Aser and the weak role of non-state actors in the area widened the already huge gap between these major stakeholders.

Apart from ongoing conflict concerning the land on which it is situated, the nation's (and city's) fragile governance system and the specific cultural and social backgrounds of Mahwa Aser residents, who are largely from marginalized groups in Yemen, have made it quite challenging for interested parties to gain sustained political support to assist the community. Indeed, the neighborhood continues to lack the basic elements for decent residential life, including a steady supply of clean drinking water and adequate sewerage and school systems. Moreover, the few attempts that state and non-state actors have undertaken to assist community residents to obtain ongoing provision of these basic services have been unsuccessful.

Residents of Mahwa Aser suffer from a poor housing and an unhealthy living environment.³² Houses are poorly structured and attached to one another. Mahwa Aser residents live in very small one-floor houses with roofs of non-permanent materials. Some live in shacks built of plastic or metal sheets or cardboard (Appendix VI). Only very narrow alleys exist between houses, which are not accessible by car (Appendix VI). One part of Mahwa Aser has caught fire multiple times, which has prompted the state to relocate residents from that area for safety reasons. Inhabitants were safely relocated to Sawad Sa'awan resettlement project.

Like other informal areas in the developing world and in the Arab States that reflect weak urban planning and service provision, Mahwa Aser lacks sanitation (what is

³² Personal observation: During the preliminary field research in Sana'a (November 30, 2009; December 15, 2009 and January 8, 2010). Observations by the proxy interviewer: during the main research phase (August-September 2011).

available is predominantly by pit latrine) and harbors dangerous diseases in the rainy seasons. The area also lacks clean water (which, when supplied, is made available for purchase by private vendors by tanker and container), electricity (usually rigged informally when available from nearby areas), paved streets and health and educational services.

Mahwa Aser is the home of the majority of the Akhdam population in Sana'a; it remains also a favored destination for such migrants. Apparently, some of Sana'a's poorest groups as well as some of the Somali, Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees³³ who left the UNHCR refugee camps in Aden in search of low-paid jobs joined the Akhdam in the slum pockets (El-Shorbagi, 2007). According to the World Bank (2006), inclusion of marginalized groups, including Akhdam, Abeed, and Mazainah, in Yemen is a challenge; the official biases against these groups joined with the long-rooted mistrust of these populations among other Yemenis has made their integration into the broader population quite difficult. Approaches to good governance that seek to encourage citizen participation in planning and priority setting, as suggested by many scholars including Sarker (2008), Van Marissing and Van Kempen (2006), Fjeldstad et al. (2005), Sivam (2003), Osborne and McLaughlin (2002), Rakodi (2001), and Fekade (2000), may therefore require changed state norms and sustained government support if they are to involve these groups effectively in city planning processes or in creating plans for their own futures.

³³ The descent of Somalia into civil war and the accompanying disintegration of the economy in the 1990s generated a large exodus of Somalis to neighboring countries. Some Somali refugees and smaller numbers of other refugees from Eritrea and Ethiopia left their reception camps, which had been constructed for them by the Yemeni Government with assistance from UNHCR and certain donors, for Sana'a. They left their camps in search of jobs. They usually find low-paid jobs within the urban economy setting, living mainly in slum pockets of in Sana'a.

Figure 2: Aerial view for Mahwa Aser as part of the government compound



Source: Google Earth; accessed in October 03, 2012.

Figure 3: Aerial view for Mahwa Aser



Source: Google Earth; accessed in October 03, 2012.

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the story of informal settlements in Sana'a and Mahwa Aser according to the existing literature and personal observations. It discussed the specific typologies and characteristics of these settlements, including the causes for their emergence and the resulted challenges. The discussion also covered the overall living conditions and addressed the challenges faced by the government and by the residents of informal settlements. Finally, this chapter discussed government responses and degree of involvement of non-state actors in informal settlements. The next chapter explains the research design and methodology for the two research phases: the preliminary research phase and the main research phase.

CHAPTER 4

Research Design and Methodology

4.1. Research Design

Despite the fact that informal settlements are a growing challenge in Yemen, few researchers have studied these communities or government and interested stakeholder capacities to address them systematically. Due to the lack of available information on informal settlements in Yemen and in Sana'a, the city on which this inquiry is focused, this dissertation adopted a qualitative and case study approach.

I investigated one community with unique characteristics and needs. A descriptive and analytical study of Mahwa Aser, a large informal settlement in Sana'a, provided a good opportunity to address my research questions. Mahwa Aser was used as an exemplar for a broader set of concerns that I treat for all of Sana'a's informal communities. The history of this particular location provided thick and textured data on how the dearth of government professional capacities and the lack of resident capabilities influenced the development of the informal community, how government policies and practices are perceived by residents of that settlement, and how inhabitants assess the relative efficacy of the interventions of local and international organizations aimed at assisting them.

Examining Mahwa Aser as a particularly good example of Yemeni informal communities that I sought to highlight allowed me to address the research questions that intrigued me, based on the perspectives of three main actors: those who reside in the setting, government officials, and directors of local and international non-governmental

and international governmental organizations. I based my selection of Mahwa Aser as an illustration of Yemen's informal communities worthy of deeper study on the following criteria.

- The settlement's social and cultural characteristics. Mahwa Aser houses poor and disadvantaged migrants and groups, a majority of whom are Akhdam. The informal community continues to attract new Akhdam and other disadvantaged group residents.
- The State's legal right to the land. Mahwa Aser is located on state-owned land. The government intends to use the site for major public buildings and has so intended since the late 1990s. This is a desirable location for the Yemeni government and its military generals especially. The government plans ultimately to relocate Mahwa Aser residents.
- External aid. Relatively few non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organization (INGOs), and international governmental organizations (IGOs) are offering assistance to the Mahwa Aser community.
- Other significant factors. Mahwa Aser is the oldest informal settlement in Sana'a and it occupies an important place geographically because of its proximity to the city's center.

I employed qualitative methods for this dissertation with embedded units of analysis. I used both primary and secondary sources of data to address the research questions. I interviewed thirteen participants in a preliminary research phase to refine the interview questions and process. Thereafter, I collected the primary data for this study through twenty-two additional open-ended key informant interviews. I conducted interviews with two groups: inside actors—Mahwa Aser residents—and external actors—

government officials and directors of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen, the U.S., and Egypt. While not a case analysis in the traditional sense, I do use a thick description of Mahwa Aser's experience to help illuminate broader trends and dynamics in informal community governance in Yemen.

4.1.1. Inside Actors

Mahwa Aser Residents

I oversaw the collection of semi-structured interviews with residents of Mahwa Aser who had lived in the community since at least 1995 or earlier, and who had witnessed its development. The settlement's residents constituted the insiders group. I administered open-ended interview questions to members of this group (Appendix I and Appendix II) in order to document:

- Government practices concerning Mahwa Aser from residents' perspectives;
- Residents' perceptions of government policies toward informal settlements;
- The demographic composition of Mahwa Aser;
- Cultural dimensions and social characteristics;
- Residents' access to resources and day-to-day challenges; and
- The type of aid the Mahwa Aser community receives from NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs.

The researcher and proxy interviewer³⁴ conducted direct observations to explore and experience first-hand the physical and social setting of Mahwa Aser. In addition, I analyzed existing national, regional, and local planning policies concerning informal communities in the nation (Mahwa Aser and others) in an attempt to assess the

³⁴ The proxy interviewer is the person who conducted interviews in my place when I was unable to travel to Yemen. This is further explained in the major research phase section later in this chapter.

implications government policies have had for the development of informal settlements in Sana'a.

4.1.2. External Actors

Government Officials and Directors of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen, the U.S., and Egypt

I conducted open-ended interview questions with several groups of outside actors active in informal communities in Yemen. This group included three categories: officials of the Yemeni government; directors of NGOs working in Sana'a and Mahwa Aser and staff members working for INGOs, and IGOs working in Yemen; and officials of international organizations in Egypt and the U.S. My intention in interviewing officials of INGOs and IGOs in the U.S. was because the World Bank staff, who were responsible for urban projects governance in Yemen, in particular informal settlements, were located in the World Bank Headquarter office in Washington D.C. Having my degree at Virginia Tech also gave me a convenient access to these officials. For the interviewees in Egypt, officials of the World Bank were chosen because of their involvement in preparing some inventory and analytical studies concerning informal settlements in Sana'a, including Sana'a City Development Strategy (CDS). The UN-Habitat officer was chosen for the interviews of this research project because this INGO has a long standing history in dealing with informal settlements in developing countries and recently it established its regional office for the Arab States in Cairo, Egypt.

I limited my selections to individuals who were or had been involved in activities in informal settlements in Sana'a, and in particular in Mahwa Aser. I administered three

sets of open-ended interview questions (Appendix I), which I revised for the main research phase (Appendix II).

Government Officials

Interviews with government officials were intended to document:

- Existing official policy for informal settlements in Sana'a, in particular for Mahwa Aser;
- Official perceptions of Mahwa Aser and other Sana'a informal communities;
- Government policies for informal settlements;
- Government intervention in Mahwa Aser and other informal communities;
- The Yemeni government's future plan(s) toward Mahwa Aser and informal settlements more generally; and
- Partnerships and collaboration with NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs inside and outside of Yemen to assist residents of these communities.

Officers of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs

This group included directors and officers of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen and outside of Yemen. Regarding the group in Yemen, the interviews documented:

- The perceptions of these organizations towards government policy and practices concerning informal settlements;
- The critical role that these organizations play in government policy formation and/or alteration; and
- The existing roles these organizations perform in Mahwa Aser and their current and future programs for Mahwa Aser and for informal settlements in Sana'a, more generally.

Regarding the interviews with officials of INGOs and IGOs outside Yemen (U.S. and Egypt), interviews sought to capture:

- Implemented and/or planned programs for improving the lives of Mahwa Aser residents and those of inhabitants of other informal communities in urban areas in Sana'a;
- The degree of intervention of INGOs and IGOs in current programs and future plans for informal settlements in Sana'a, in particular in Mahwa Aser; and
- The degree of collaboration between these organizations and government agencies and existing NGOs in Yemen for assisting residents of Mahwa Aser and other informal communities in Sana'a.

I employed a qualitative methodology in this research, as the questions I sought to address required a holistic approach (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). This study sought to understand the story of the governance struggle experienced by Mahwa Aser and other Yemeni informal community citizens, through the perspectives of the multiple stakeholders involved—the community's residents, government officials, and directors of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in and outside Yemen. Qualitative research, thus, was appropriate to uncover the deeper meanings of the phenomena under study and to understand them more fully by asking how, what, and why (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006) and by verifying the arguments with multiple data points (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

I sought to capture the concerns I was examining through the lenses of those people most engaged with them, that is, through their language, social class, race, gender, and ethnicity (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). To comprehend the

story of Mahwa Aser and other Yemeni informal communities, therefore, I used a diverse range of data types and forms of collection—open-ended interview questions, direct observation, and documentary analysis (reports, government and official documents, articles, and academic theses). I sought to connect feedback from different groups of respondents to gain a robust picture of how governance was being practiced and why, vis-à-vis Yemeni’s informal communities (Appendix V). That approach helped to facilitate analysis of the responses I obtained from representatives of the two main groups and two subgroups involved in the interviews. It incorporated residents of Mahwa Aser and officials of government and international organizations. I identified the common themes offered by residents, government administrators, planners, and directors of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs with a particular focus on the involvement of state and non-state actors in addressing the dynamic character of change and growth of Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana’a. Moreover, I sought to glean from my data how government officials particularly were viewing the multifarious challenges and tensions implicit in addressing the needs of their communities effectively. At the same time, documenting the social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics of Mahwa Aser and the relationships among these factors provided broader analysis of the nature of the settlement as a community and as an exemplar of other informal settlements in Sana’a and beyond.

Table 2: Source of Data³⁵

Unit Being Characterized	Unit of analysis: Individuals	Unit of analysis: Non-governmental and government staff members		
	Interviews with Key Informants (Mahwa Aser Residents)	Interviews with Key Informants (Officials and Directors at the Gov.; IGOs and NGOs)	Official Documents; Policies; Studies; Reports; and Articles	Direct Observations
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of government policies and aid offered by local and international organizations. - Government practices concerning Mahwa Aser. - Access to resources - Day-to-day challenges. - Cultural dimensions and social characteristics. - Demographic composition of Mahwa Aser. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background about Mahwa Aser. - Cultural, social, economic, and political characteristics of Mahwa Aser. 	Social environment; Physical setting
Government Agencies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official current policies and future plans. - Official perceptions toward informal settlement/Mahwa Aser. - Partnerships and collaboration with NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs inside and outside of Yemen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official policies - Urban growth - Planning and land management history. - Organizational structure of urban planning 	
NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of government policies. - Role in helping and supporting Mahwa Aser residents. - Role in altering government policies. - Degree of collaboration(s) with government agencies and with other national and international organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forms of intervention in government policies. - Forms of engagement in informal settlement governance. - Forms of helping informal settlement residents. 	

³⁵ Approach is adopted from Robert Yin, (1984).

4.2. Methodology

The first stage of research for this study collected the views of Mahwa Aser residents. This phase documented the existing situation in the informal community and the challenges that its residents were daily confronting. Also, I sought to use this research stage to document how the settlement's residents viewed their government's policies and activities as well as those of major national and international organizations regarding their community. I set out to document the extent of state intervention and non-state actors' engagement in Mahwa Aser and in other informal settlements in Sana'a. This step provided empirical data about informal communities and their specific social and cultural contexts.

The second stage involved documenting existing government policies, practices and capacities for land management and urban planning—more precisely, those related to informal settlements in general in Yemen and to Mahwa Aser in particular. It also involved documenting forms of partnerships between state and non-state actors concerning informal communities in Sana'a. This fieldwork provided empirical data about existing strategies for governing informal settlements in Sana'a.

Finally, the third stage sought to solicit the perspectives of directors of local, national, and international organizations in Yemen, the U.S. and Egypt concerned with the issue of informal communities and governance in Yemen. This work documented the active governance roles of NGOs, NGOs, and IGOs in Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a. It aimed to document the types of support that NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs offer residents of Mahwa Aser as well as government agencies involved in the informal community. This stage of inquiry also helped to uncover the specific roles of

these organizations in the formation or revision of Yemeni government policies concerning informal settlements. This research phase sought to gauge qualitatively NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs perceptions of government policies and the impact of donors and international development organizations on governance reforms.

Systematic examination and analysis of the perspectives revealed in these three stages of inquiry will help scholars and policymakers alike address more effectively the broader question of government capacity in the face of the rapid growth of informal settlements in Yemen. I addressed these three phases of investigation by means of two field research periods, as explained in the following sections.

4.2.1. Preliminary Research Phase

The first data collection stage occurred from November 2009-June 2010. I undertook the second and major share of the inquiry from August 2011-June 2012. I had originally planned the major research phase for March 2011 to October 2011, but Yemen's unexpected political upheaval occasioned a delay. Indeed, I modified my entire proposed research approach to deal with the new governmental and social instability in Yemen. I detail those changes below.

I interviewed directors and officials of government agencies, NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen and directors and officials of INGOs and IGOs in the U.S in the preliminary research phase of my effort. I selected these individuals for interview based on their degree of involvement in work related to Mahwa Aser and informal settlements in the Municipality of Sana'a. Regardless of the participant's age or gender, I chose respondents from public agencies who occupied decision-making positions and were knowledgeable about Yemeni government policies and plans concerning informal

settlements. Participants had also to direct or be involved in one or more programs and/or projects designed for informal settlements. In this research phase, in total, I recruited 13 officials and directors from the government and local and international organizations (Tables 3, 4, and 5).

As noted above, I conducted open-ended interviews (Appendix I) with three groups of officials in Yemen in this phase of my work. The first group included Government Officials (Table 3).

Table 3: Respondent Affiliations and Gender

	Interviewee #	Gender	Affiliation	Total Number from Each Agency
	1 2	M M	Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH)	Two
	3	M	General Authority Land Surveying and Urban Planning (GALSUP)	One
	4	M	Sana'a Municipality	One
	5	M	Maeen Directorate	One
Total number of interviewees in this group: 5				

The second group of interviewees included NGO, INGO, and IGO officials in Sana'a. I was able to conduct interviews with 6 officers from the selected organizations in Yemen (Table 4).

Table 4: Respondent Affiliations and Gender

	Interviewee #	Gender	Affiliation	Total Number from Each Agency
INGO and NGO Directors in Yemen	6 7	M F	World Bank Office in Yemen	Two
	8 9	M F	Oxfam Yemen	Two
	10	M	CARE International; Yemen Office	One
	11	M	Social Fund for Development	One
	Total number of interviewees in this group: 6			

Finally, I conducted interviews with two officials from one INGO in Washington D.C. in the U.S.A. (Table 5).

Table 5: Respondent Affiliations and Gender

	Interviewee #	Gender	Affiliation	Total Number from Each Agency
INGO and IGO Directors in the U.S.	12 13	F F	World Bank Headquarter in Washington D.C.	Two
Total number of interviewees in this group: 2				

Besides personal interviews with selected individuals, I gathered documents from the following government agencies: MPWH, MOPIC, GALSUP, Sana’a Municipality, Ministry of Central Statistical Organization, Maeen Directorate, National Information Center, and Sana’a University. I also reviewed documents from several international organizations: World Bank Headquarters in Washington D.C., World Bank office in Yemen; Social Fund for Development, UNDP office in Yemen, and United Nations Information Center (UNIC) office in Yemen. I also obtained and reviewed documents from two NGOs operating in Yemen: Oxfam and CARE International.

In addition, I visited Mahwa Aser twice. On my first visit, I walked through the neighborhood to obtain a sense of its physical setting. I took field notes to record my personal observations. I talked to people and briefly introduced my research project and the purpose of it. I tried to invite residents to participate in my inquiry. Unfortunately, I was unable to conduct interviews with any of the neighborhood’s residents during this research phase. The political situation at that time—a war in the north, civil-army conflict in the south, and terrorism concerns and incidents in the south and east—made residents reluctant to participate in my study. The principal reason expressed to me for their

reticence was their personal safety, especially once they became aware that I was affiliated with an American university.

Upon my return to the U.S. at the end of February 2010, I transcribed the 13 interviews, which I conducted with government officials and directors of NGOs and INGOs in Yemen and the U.S. I undertook 6 of 13 interviews in Arabic so I first translated those conversations (to the best of my knowledge and understanding) into English. I then analyzed the data and information collected during this phase, including the key informant responses, studies, and government documents and reports. I revised the interview questions in light of my findings during this stage and submitted that new question schedule to the VTIRB (Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board) for consideration for use in the main research phase.

4.2.2. Major Research Phase

Based on the outcomes of the preliminary research phase, I next administered three revised sets of semi-structured interview questions to comprehend better the views of local officials in Sana'a as well as the perspectives of relevant NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen and INGOs and IGOs in the U.S. Upon obtaining VTIRB approval letters³⁶ in February 2011, I planned the major research phase for March-October, 2011 in Yemen and in the U.S. However, the upheaval and civil unrest increased in February 2011 in Yemen. Demonstrations, armed street confrontations, and civil disobedience began to occur daily in the major Yemeni cities at that time, particularly in Sana'a, the site of Mahwa Aser and the other informal communities in which I was especially interested. The situation continued to worsen, which imposed unexpected delays in executing the major research phase. Indeed, visiting Yemen and finishing in-person

³⁶ IRB# 09-1081 and IRB#09-748 (appendix III).

interviews with Mahwa Aser residents, government officials, and representatives of local and international organizations in Yemen became risky. As a result, I had to investigate other alternatives to complete the interviews needed for my proposed research. After considering my options, I selected a *proxy interviewer* located in Yemen to conduct the interviews with Mahwa Aser residents for me. I also employed various electronic forms of communication, including Skype, Yahoo Messenger, and e-mail to complete interviews with official figures in the Yemeni government and NGOs in Yemen, and INGOs and IGOs in Washington D.C. in the U.S.A. and Cairo in Egypt.

This change required an amended protocol to the VTIRB in April 2011. The VTIRB approved the amendment application in July 2011.³⁷ The proxy interviewer was now responsible for resident interviews while I interviewed government officials in Sana'a and officers of INGO and IGOs in Washington D.C. in the U.S. and Cairo in Egypt via electronic means. This phase occurred from August 2011 to June 2012.

For this research stage, I selected only residents who lived in Mahwa Aser since 1990 and/or witnessed the emergence and development of Mahwa Aser to participate for interview. I recruited 12 interviewees on that basis (listed in Table 6). I chose only relevant government agencies that dealt with Mahwa Aser and informal settlements and local and international organizations that claim that they have done, or are doing work involving these settlements in Sana'a. This research phase involved 9 participants from 7 government agencies and local and international organizations (Tables 7 and 8).

The new set of interview questions for government and local and international agency officials involved a number of queries that targeted specific groups of participants. The questions were designed to re-examine three key areas linked to

³⁷ Approval letters IRB# 09-1081 and IRB#09-748 (appendix III).

informal settlements, which I had addressed in the preliminary research phase and discussed in more details in Chapter 6:

- Policy assessment and contribution;
- Community involvement; and
- Collaboration and partnership in governance among the major players and other stakeholders.

At this stage I designed the interview questions to revisit and reassess Yemeni local and national government policies concerning informal settlements, the government's current and future plans for Mahwa Aser and its capacities and resources. I also planned some questions to gauge the degree of involvement of state and non-state actors in Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a.

I structured the interview questions for Mahwa Aser residents so as to attain deeper insight into their informal neighborhood as a community. These interview questions also explored the role of governance in Mahwa Aser: how the community's residents viewed relevant government practices and policies and how they perceived the role of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in their settlement.

The proxy interviewer conducted all interviews with Mahwa Aser residents. Before beginning the interviews, I familiarized that individual with the guidelines of Virginia Tech's *Training in Human Subject Protection*. I submitted a written statement to the VTIRB that the training had been completed, at which time the Board formally allowed my proxy to begin interviews with Mahwa Aser residents. I maintained regular contact with the substitute interviewer, either by phone or via the Internet, to ensure both that I was thoroughly informed and so that I could be of assistance and support, and also

to ensure that my representative interviewer used the open-ended interview questions (Appendix II) I had designed.

Twelve residents (4 males and 8 females whose ages ranged between 32-80 years) from the Mahwa Aser neighborhood (shown in Table 6) agreed to be interviewed for this project.

Table 6: Demographics of Interviewees

Interviewee #	Age	Gender	Place of Birth	Work	Length of Stay in Mahwa Aser
1	80	F	Obal Village in Hodaidah Governorate	Housewife (taught handicrafts to disabled girls at a community-based organizations in the past)	Arrived six months after Gulf War II in 1991
2	40	F	Al-Mahweet	Housewife	Between 25 to 28 years
3	71	F	Raymah Governorate	Housewife	Since before Aden war in 1994
4	40	F	Bani Sa'ad- Al-Mahweet Governorate	Unknown	Unknown
5	45	F	Raymah Governorate	Housewife	Almost 21 years
6	35	M	Raymah Governorate	Activist in community-based organizations and Secretary General of National Union for Developing the Poorest Groups	Since 1982
7	32	M	Shara'ab; Taiz Governorate	Unknown	About 20 years (right after Gulf War II)
8	72	M	Hashid Tribe; Hajah Governorate	Community Leader	Since 1986
9	35	F	Sana'a City	Housewife	Her entire life
10	40	F	Raymah Governorate	Housewife	From the era of Al-Hamdi President (1975-1977)
11	50	M	Raymah Governorate	Community Leader/Daily wage worker Unemployed (former soldier)	Since 1982
12	42	F	Hashid Tribe	Housewife	22 years

Sampling

I chose residents for interview based upon their length of residency in Mahwa Aser. I contacted only residents (males and females aged 30-70).

Gaining Entrée and Building Trust

The proxy interviewer I selected had prior working experience with the Mahwa Aser community. Residents there knew this individual and trusted her. That fact significantly decreased their level of fear concerning being part of the project. Nonetheless, the proxy was cautioned when choosing appropriate means for contacting residents to take into consideration the safety issues in Sana'a at that time, and the social and cultural sensitivities of the community as well.

Recruitment and Interview Process

Considering the advantage of the already existing level of trust between the proxy interviewer and Mahwa Aser residents, the substitute personally contacted residents directly and introduced the research to them. If the individual agreed to participate, the proxy asked him/her to choose a time and location for conducting the interview. All participants chose to have the conversation at their homes. When meeting with the subject, the interviewer again introduced herself and the purpose of the study to the subject. Because interviewees were illiterate, the proxy interviewer obtained verbal consent from all of those participating. She read the consent terms to each respondent and explained that he/she was free not to answer any question if he/she chose not to do so. Also, she explained to him/her that he/she could withdraw from the interview and from the study at any time and there would be no penalties or harm for doing so. If he/she chose to withdraw, he/she had simply to share that choice with the interviewer. If the

participant agreed to the terms of consent, and if he/she felt comfortable starting the interview, the representative proceeded. Prior to starting each conversation, the proxy asked if the interviewee was comfortable with using a digital recorder to capture their remarks. For those assenting, she then began the interview. After finishing the conversation, the interviewer thanked the study participant and gave him/her her contact information, so he/she could easily reach her if questions or concerns about the research or the interview arose after its completion. The proxy wrote her field notes, memos, and reflections on the physical and social environment and participant reaction once she reached her home. She then downloaded the conducted interview(s) and e-mailed them in a password-protected audio file to me. I contacted the proxy on a daily basis to obtain updates by phone and Internet, if the electricity and Internet connection in Sana'a allowed, which in practice resulted in about an hour of conversation every other day while the proxy was conducting interviews. Once I confirmed receiving the recorded interview(s), the interviewer destroyed the files and documents on her personal computer. I then saved the recorded interviews and notes in a password-protected folder on my laptop computer until I could undertake their translation, transcription and analysis. To comprehend the story of Mahwa Aser more fully and to get a better sense of the interviews and interviewees, I also interviewed the proxy interviewer two times once she had completed the interviews.

Limitation

I experienced a number of setbacks when arranging interviews with Mahwa Aser residents. First, using the proxy interviewer limited my direct interaction with residents as well as with the physical and social setting of the community. I therefore assessed the

contextual settings of the interviews through the perspective of a mediator—the proxy interviewer—rather than through direct experience. Second, the interviewer adhered closely to the interview questions, which limited the opportunity to undertake probes and follow-ups to queries, which I might otherwise have been able to do had I been able to undertake the sessions myself. Third, the interviews were conducted at the peak time of the upheaval in Sana’a. During this period, battles were literally occurring in Sana’a’s streets. Random firing and shooting occurred daily. Demonstrations took place close to the representative’s home and near the Mahwa Aser neighborhood. The government imposed a daily curfew for the entire city beginning at 5:00 p.m. These realities restricted the ability of the interviewer as well as the interviewees to move about the community freely. Fourth, given the risky conditions in which the interviews were undertaken, the determined time for conversations, which was supposed to be 45-60 minutes, was often reduced in practice. Indeed, the longest interview lasted for 30 minutes. A fifth challenge arose from the intermittent availability of electricity in Sana’a during this time frame. The government could ensure that electricity was available for only two or three hours a day. And worse, some Mahwa Aser residents had no power at all for days or even weeks. Power outages were a major concern because interviewee residences were very dark, even during the day. This situation made it difficult for the proxy interviewer, who often encountered significant problems reading the interview questions or gaining a full sense of the physical or social settings of those she interviewed, although she used candles. Finally, the time difference between Yemen and the U.S. (seven hours ahead of Virginia) limited the window for communication between the researcher and the proxy interviewer, even when power and the Internet were available.

I also conducted four interviews with directors and officers of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in and outside of Yemen. These involved one to two interviewees from each organization (Table 7).

Table 7: Respondent Affiliations and Gender

	Interviewee #	Gender	Affiliation	Total Number from Each Agency
INGO and NGO Directors in Yemen	14	M	National Union for Development of the Poorest Groups	One
Total number of interviewees in this group: 1				
INGOs Directors in the U.S. and Egypt	15	F	UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Program, Regional Office for Arab States (ROSA) - Cairo Office)	One
	16 17	M	Urban Specialist and Consultant, World Bank Headquarter, Washington D.C.	Two
Total number of interviewees in this group: 4				

Sampling

Regardless of the participant's age or gender, I recruited only officials (one to two male and female officials from each organization) who had been or were involved in the Mahwa Aser neighborhood and/or in other informal settlements in Sana'a.

Recruitment and Interview Process

I contacted the selected interviewees via e-mail or phone. I introduced myself to each and also provided an overview of my research project and shared why I had chosen them to participate. Once an individual agreed to assist, I e-mailed each a copy of the interview questions and the consent form. I undertook the interviews with the World Bank officer in the Headquarters in Washington D.C. and the consultant in Cairo via Skype. However, the UN-Habitat officer in Cairo chose to e-mail her answers. The last individual I interviewed in this group was an officer at the National Union for

Development of the Poorest Groups in Sana'a. I conducted his interview by telephone. I followed the same process for this group as for residents and informed each of the study aims, explained they could withdraw at any time, and inquired whether they were comfortable with me recording our interview. Fortunately, all of the interviewees assented to my recording their responses. I asked each interviewee to sign the consent form and e-mail a scanned copy to me prior to starting each interview. I followed this same protocol for the individual who responded via email, except via that medium. I thanked all those interviewed and informed each that I would be happy to share a copy of my dissertation with them, as they might wish, after I had defended it successfully.

Limitations

I found Skype and other electronic means of conducting the interviews to be reasonable alternatives for in-person conversations, but proceeding in this way did limit my direct interaction with the interviewees and with their physical and social environments. As with other interviews, the time difference between Yemen and Egypt and the U.S. and the availability of a working Internet connection constituted important constraints. For example, I had to reschedule several proposed Skype meetings multiple times due to unstable Internet connection or power outages.

I also conducted 5 interviews with government officials at Sana'a Municipality, Maeen Directorate, and General Authority for Land, Survey and Urban Planning (Appendix II and Table 8).

Table 8: Respondent Affiliations and Gender

	Interviewee #	Gender	Affiliation	Total Number from Each Agency
Government Officials	18	M	Maeen Directorate	One
	19	M	Sana'a Municipality	One
	20	M	General Authority Land, Survey and Urban Planning (GALSUP) (Aden Branch)	Three
	21	F		
22	F			
Total number of interviewees in this group: 6				

Sampling

Regardless of the key informant's age or gender, I interviewed government officials who were in decision-making positions and knowledgeable of government policies concerning Mahwa Aser and informal settlements in Sana'a. I recruited one to two official figures from each agency.

Recruitment and Interview Process

Since this stage of the field research took place at a time of great upheaval in Sana'a, I contacted relevant participants via e-mail and phone calls. I followed the same process for those responding via email. Once the interviews were complete, I also informed all respondents that I would be happy to share my dissertation when I had completed it.

Limitation

As with my other on-line interviews, my lack of a direct interaction with these respondents constituted a constraint. Internet connection and power outages caused a protracted delay in executing the interviews. Skype is not available in Yemen. Thus, I employed Yahoo Messenger instead. Safety concerns and the time difference between Yemen and the U.S. were also issues for my interviewees.

Observations

I asked my proxy to record her observations on Mahwa Aser as a place and as a community and then share her notes with me. The proxy interviewer visited Mahwa Aser multiple times during August-September 2011 at different times of the day. However, social instability during this period limited the number and the times of her observations. The proxy was only able to visit the area a few times in late morning and early afternoon. Nonetheless, she was able to accomplish a range of systematic observations on the physical setting of Mahwa Aser (i.e., landscape, houses, alleys, and public gathering spaces) and on the environmental conditions of the neighborhood, especially during the upheaval time when city services and street cleaning were suspended for a long period. The proxy was able to take photographs of the community (appendix VI) and she shared those and her field notes with me. I saved those in a separate folder on my laptop.

Transcribing and Coding

I translated and transcribed the interviews that the proxy conducted with Mahwa Aser residents and that I undertook with officials and directors from government agencies, NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs. I coded these transcripts and reviewed the field notes and memos as well.

I translated and transcribed verbatim all interviews with participants in the preliminary and main research phases. I translated their responses into English to the best of my knowledge and understanding. This process was sometimes challenging for me for the interviews with Mahwa Aser residents especially, as they often spoke in particular Akhdam idioms. I reviewed each transcript line-by-line upon its completion and read it again as I engaged in initial coding (Anfara et al., 2002). During the initial or open

coding, I organized multiple pages of text and data from different resources into more manageable and smaller segments. I then grouped those parts and began the first stage of analysis. The open coding established a good frame for undertaking more focused analysis. During initial coding, I highlighted key words and phrases in the margins of the texts I was reviewing as the foundation for emergent meanings and themes. I read transcripts for the third and fourth time so that I could begin axial and focused coding (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). During this analytic step, I sought to reduce further the number of data categories by identifying and combining initially coded data into larger groupings that included multiple initial codes (Bailey, 2007). In this step, more conceptualized coding emerged, which gave me analytical insights into my research concerns. I created additional categories and subcategories and possible themes as they emerged. Similarly, I memoed throughout the coding process to identify and question emergent themes, pose hypotheses, and to seek answers grounded in the data (Bailey, 2007). In this phase of analysis, I connected my focused codes to theoretical concepts and previously conducted research on the same topic by other scholars and researchers.

Memos

As I conducted the coding process and during the course of analysis ideas, questions, and issues emerged. I reflected on those by writing different memos (i.e., reflexivity memos, coding memos, topics, or theme memos). Preparing these short analyses helped me create, define, and refine conceptual categories (Bailey, 2007). The process also assisted me in developing tentative notes about links between concepts, and in drawing a sketch of features important for understanding the research problem. I used the memos I prepared as data for subsequent analysis. I included descriptions of the

setting, interactions, and observations that occurred during the course of the field research (my own or those shared by my proxy) (Bailey, 2007). These descriptions enriched my analysis and provided a clearer picture of the research phenomena I was examining.

Coding helped me to classify the data into themes, which contributed to the analysis stage. For data analysis, I adopted narrative as my primary strategy. I analyzed the stories shared by residents, officials, and directors. Their narratives provided a thick description and analysis of the events, characters, place and time, dialogues, points of views, and themes. The results of the analysis were therefore grounded firmly in the data.

At the interpretation stage of the research materials, I relied on good governance theory, which I employed as a primary framework for my research, for making comparisons, raising questions, and providing personal reactions. The interpretations provided evidence on the importance of my research and how it contributes to the literature on government policies on informal settlements, good governance, urban governance and informal settlement governance. I prepared my final analysis as a narrative that included detailed descriptions as well as the key conceptual and theoretical implications of my research.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology that I adopted for organizing my research project. It described, in detail, the two research phases (the preliminary research phase and the major research stage), which I employed for my inquiry. The chapter also explained my reasons for conducting interviews with the targeted community and selected officials from the Yemeni government and national and

international organizations in and outside of Yemen. It also explained the sampling pool, recruitment and interview process, and the limitations associated with each.

CHAPTER 5

Perspectives of Mahwa Aser Residents Concerning Government Practices and Plans

Little scholarly inquiry has examined the perceptions of informal community residents on government policies and practices on informal settlements in Yemen or residents' reflections on their day-to-day living conditions in those neighborhoods. This portion of the analysis explores the perspective of Mahwa Aser residents on government policies and practices regarding their neighborhood, how the government, NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs have served their community, and how that may affect their quality of life.

Twelve residents (Table 6) participated voluntarily in the individual semi-structured interviews with my proxy (Appendix II). Interviewees voiced their personal views about the involvement of Yemeni local and national authorities as well as national and international organizations in Mahwa Aser.

The following section discusses the perspectives interviewees shared in the preliminary research phase concerning government practices and actions.

5.1. Major Research Phase

Five major themes and several sub-themes concerning their treatment by governments, civil society, and international organizations emerged in the interviews with informal community residents:

1. Government Practices
 - a. Resident's views concerning government relocation plans.
 - b. Residents' relocation interest.
2. Aid Issues

- a. Type(s) and sources of assistance.
 - b. Aid distribution.
 - c. Targeted groups for aid.
 - d. Reasons for lack of interest among the NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs toward Mahwa Aser and relative scarcity of support for its residents.
3. Social and Cultural Concerns
- a. Reasons for living in Mahwa Aser.
 - b. Social structure and cultural characteristics of Mahwa Aser
 - c. Interaction and social coexistence.
 - d. Self-perception and societal inclusion/exclusion.
4. Residents' Livelihoods Before and After the Political Upheaval of 2011-2012
- Security and Stability Concerns
- a. Sources of income.
 - b. The implications of the current upheaval on the living conditions of Mahwa Aser residents.
 - c. Purchasing/selling behavior of land and property.
5. Service Delivery and Ecological Concerns
- a. Living conditions in Mahwa Aser.
 - b. Housing conditions.
 - c. Environmental problems.

The following discussion and analysis is organized around these themes and sub-themes as they relate to the key research questions explored in this dissertation.

Government Practices

As noted above, analysts have suggested Mahwa Aser was first established in the mid-1980s (El-Shorbagi, 2008) when poor individuals and households moved to the area. Respondents, however, indicated that poor people began to occupy Mahwa Aser a bit earlier than that, most likely in 1982. The government property on which the community is now located was vacant so a few families, mostly Akhdam, took advantage of the available land and built some shacks on it. When other Akhdam and poor people learned the government did not take any action against these families, the number moving to Mahwa Aser increased accordingly. The Yemeni government turned a blind eye to the settlement for about ten years because the land was not included in any public development plans. By the late 1990s, however, the government decided it required the land to develop a government compound, including buildings for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, and a National Public Library. The government imposed restrictions on building in the area at that time, including limitations on service provision and prohibition of new construction.

Resident's Views Concerning Official Actions Regarding Mahwa Aser

According to the literature, the government's decision to classify Mahwa Aser as a slum pocket required it to schedule the neighborhood for future resettlement (Madbouly, 2009; Sims et al., 2009; El-Shorbagi, 2007). Government officials interviewed for this study, however, claimed that their stance toward Mahwa Aser, fell into two categories: partial upgrading with basic service provision to the outer parts of the community and prevention of any additional service provision to the inner section of Mahwa Aser to halt additional growth. Nevertheless, Mahwa Aser was subject to

different practices by individual government and military officials ranging from negligence to forced eviction.

Official actions concerning Mahwa Aser can be grouped usefully into three categories: relocation, provision of basic services, and control of further expansion. According to the residents interviewed, a number of efforts aimed at evicting at least some residents had indeed occurred during the community's life. All respondents agreed that multiple incidents of evacuation had occurred, but no interviewees provided the exact number or date of these episodes or who, precisely, was responsible for them. They most likely occurred between early 1990 and late 2000, based on interviewees' memories. Respondents concurred that all eviction incidents were accompanied by violent clashes between policemen and residents. Here are the reflections of several interviewees in response to this question:

That was the incident where we fought with the police for 24 hours. Al-Khawlani's son was killed in this incident and Al-Amrani's son was killed in a latter incident (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

Policemen! Yes, policemen, the Municipal officials. When they used to come, residents confronted them...they demolished some houses but they did not get into here (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

They came many times to evacuate us. Usually, they brought bulldozers. Sometimes they wore uniforms and sometimes they wore casual dresses...they

brought the bulldozers and demolished the houses. Yes, they demolished them on top of people (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Interestingly, interviewees reported that these multiple eviction incidents were not organized, authorized, or officially implemented by the government. Instead, residents indicated that high-ranking government and military officials executed these attempts in efforts to advance their personal interests. Respondents differed in their views concerning who issued the eviction orders. Respondent 8 and 12, for example, said that generals in the army and the former Minister of Ministry of Home were responsible for attacking Mahwa Aser residents on two occasions in attempts to force them to relocate.

I believe it was the General of the First Armored Squad. He seized and sold all these mountains in Sana'a. ... He and the former Home Minister wanted the land ... they were interested in the land. They sent the police without official sanction. Afterwards, President Saleh stopped them. He ordered them not to attack or harm us. He, at the same time, asked Mahwa Aser residents not to use any more land on the mountain where the military camp was located. We followed the President's order but these two officials agitated corrupt police against us. A war occurred between us. Many people from both sides were injured. It was a big fight (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

It was the General of the First Armored Squad and the Minister of Homeland Security who were interested in the land. Police Academy officials as well were interested in Mahwa Aser land. They bothered the residents without the knowledge of the President or anybody else. They came and threatened the

residents. Some asked for money. If you gave them money, they would leave you alone. If not, they would destroy your house on you ... they (I mean, not the government, but the corrupted police officials) wanted money or the land for themselves. They wanted to include it among already seized properties, which they stole from the State and people (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

Other residents reported that Sana'a Municipality and the Ministry of Public Works and Highways were responsible for the blackmail and relocation/home destruction threats. These individuals (interviewees 8 and 12) argued these officials' aim was to limit the growth of Mahwa Aser beyond its existing confines. Some other respondents suggested that the interest of corrupt policemen and officials in collecting money from residents was the primary goal of these episodes:

They wanted to evict us from this neighborhood for the sake of some government officials, including the former Minister of Home and the General of the First Armored Squad. They wanted the land. ... I told you these two guys were interested in the land and then the Police Academy officials. That was without the awareness of the President ... some individuals wanted the land, not the State! If the State wanted the land, it would compensate us just like the residents of Mahwa Bab Al-Yaman. The State gave them houses in Hezyaz instead of their lost homes. The State would not take our homes just like that (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

The General of the First Armored Squad and the former Minister of Homeland Security wanted the land ... they sent their guys to evict the residents without official orders (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

The government did, however, officially seek to limit the settlement's expansion, according to respondents 9 and 10. These interviewees indicated that policemen came to those who were intending to expand their homes or build an additional story on an already existing structure to tell them not to do so.

Yes, there were many problems. Policemen were coming to whoever intended to build an extra story on top of his house. Officials removed the extra construction. Many people were killed in such incidents: Al-Amrani's son, who was a pilot, and another police officer were some of the victims (Interviewee 9, August 25, 2011).

Policemen were attacking us if we ever had tried to build an extra story. They warned us first; then they destroyed the extra stories. This is the police. Yes, the police of the Ministry of Public Works (Interviewee 10, September 02, 2011).

The Municipal police came and requested Al-Amrani to stop the construction of the second floor of his house but Al-Amrani did not listen. They did not want him to add the additional floor over his home (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

Some respondents shared incidents at Mahwa Aser about kickback concerns and illegal efforts to collect (extort) money from residents.

Corrupt police came here to collect money, especially if somebody added an additional story on his house. As long as they received money, 5,000 or 6,000YR, they left the person. People bribe them (Interviewee 10, September 02, 2011).

They came and threatened the residents: either to give them money or they would destroy their houses (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

The second action by government was partial delivery of services. According to government officials, the Yemeni government adopted two actions to curtail the community's growth: partial upgrading with basic service delivery in the outer part of Mahwa Aser and prevention of service delivery to the inner part of the neighborhood (the section closest to the government compound). At the same time, the State prohibited any additional construction by the residents either in the inner or the outer parts of Mahwa Aser with an eye to future evacuation, as discussed in the following section. Service delivery to the settlement was limited to basic water, sewerage, and power supply (further discussion regarding this issue is provided in Chapter 6).

According to my respondents, the State had sought to prevent them from adding any new construction or extending existing structures since more than a decade ago. The government applied growth control mechanisms to limit any further growth for Mahwa Aser outside the determined ring for the neighborhood. The government aimed to prepare the residents for future eviction and relocation when the opportunity arose. The government had sought to limit the growth of the neighborhood, but had never formally sought to evacuate the community's residents forcibly. Law enforcement, nonetheless, was weak and episodic. This led to violent clashes between the police and residents when

authorities did seek to enforce the rules. Several residents commented on these periodic events in interviews, which sometimes involved extreme violence:

When the police ordered Al-Amrani's son to stop the construction of an addition to his house, he did not respond to the call. The police forced him to stop and fired at him and us. ... They killed Al-Khawlani's son, Mohammed Zaid Al-Khawlani. Then they did not come for some time. But, Police Academy came back once again. In a similar incident, they killed Al-Amrani's son. Since then they stopped coming to the area (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

They came here many times ... the Municipality officers came to the area and destroyed people's homes ... once, they came to Al-Bahri, and they requested him to stop the construction. He had many fights with them. ... They swore at him and beat him up. Sometimes they beat him up and other times they put his house on fire. Finally, he was beaten to death (Interviewee 6, August 15, 2011).

The first time they came, the Municipality, they ordered Al-Khawlani's son to stop construction, but he stood in their way and tried to stop them. He asked them not to demolish his house. He appeared to reach a settlement with the police, but suddenly they shot him. He fell down dead on the floor. I think he shot them as well. I was young at that time. ... The second incident happened at the entrance of the neighborhood. Up there! Al-Amrani's son expanded his house and the yard a little bit. The Municipality police questioned him, why he did that? He tried to

defend himself because when he got there, his house was already demolished. He tried to protect himself, but the police shot him (Interviewee 2, August 05, 2011).

The killing incidents happened between the police and the residents, at the other end [of the development]. It was in the inner part. ... They requested the residents not to add new construction. They warned us not to violate the rules. People never listened, Al-Amrani, Al-Otomi, Al-Khawlani, and many others (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

Resident's Views Concerning Government Relocation Plans

According to all interviewees, government officials long ago promised Mahwa Aser residents that it would relocate and build new houses for them. Nonetheless, none of those agreements had been fulfilled at the time of this writing. Based on the feedback of two officials in the government, since the late 1990s and the government kept planning to move Mahwa Aser residents to another location, but a lack of funding impeded the plan. The nation was and is still looking for interested donors to adopt this project. If the government succeeds in securing funding, Mahwa Aser residents will be relocated. The responses capture citizens' perspectives on the government's relocation plans.

The President, may God save him, told the government officials, "If you want to evict these people from Ka'at Almotamarat of Mahwa Aser, find them a proper land and build houses for them." If that happens, I'll be ready to get out within 24 hours. That was when Al-Attas was the Prime Minister. ... The President visited us. When he saw the area, he told them: How could you take these people out of their land? They are poor and living in poor houses. Where would you put them?

They are citizens of this country and this is their land. ... Once you compensate them with other good houses, they will immediately leave (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

They came to evict all the residents. They talked about a compensation plan. Nonetheless they stopped talking about the relocation and assistance plans after the killing incidents occurred (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

They keep promising us, without any real steps for implementing these plans. Sometimes, they say they will move us to Al-Hasaba. At other times, they have said they will take us to Sawa'an. I don't know where we will end up! (Interviewee 9, August 25, 2011).

Yes, sometimes they tell us they will build houses for us in Madhbah and sometimes close to the Airport and so on, but none of these plans has happened (Interviewee 10, September 02, 2011).

My interviewees' comments indicate the government's long-term interest in relocating Mahwa Aser residents once it identifies donor(s) to support the relocation project. Their responses also seem to suggest a willingness to move out of Mahwa Aser if the nation can provide them better homes and a more habitable neighborhood.

Resident's Relocation Interest

Nonetheless, when I asked residents about their interest in leaving Mahwa Aser, provided the government offered good solutions for relocation and fair compensation,

their responses varied. Some respondents agreed such as a positive idea while other residents disagreed it constituted a good turn, as discussed in the following sections. Most of my interviewees lacked interest in moving out from Mahwa Aser. A few of them indicated they were not willing to relocate unless forced to do so. Respondents shared their primary reasons for a lack of interest in relocation, including place attachment and sense of security.

I will not accept any compensation. This is my home and my grave will be here.

... I invested all my wealth and life in this land. This wasn't easy. Even if they give me fifty million, I will not leave my home. ... I swear even if they compensate me with gold not only with money, I will not leave my home. ...

When a person lives in one place, spends his life there and develops memories, he gets used to it. It becomes home and hard to be replaced (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

We prefer to stay here. We have everything here. ... Who wants to move out can do, but I will not move out. ... We'd rather stay here even if they compensate us.

There is nothing like home. Nothing replaces it (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

Honestly, if they compensate me, I will not accept it. I will not accept even a four-floor villa. I'd rather live in my scraps. ... I like my place, but if the State forces me to leave, then I cannot do anything. ... If the choice were mine, I would choose my scraps (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

A number of the interviewees preferred to remain in Mahwa Aser, and demanded in situ improvements instead of relocation.

If they improve the neighborhood, I'd rather stay here. The most important thing is to allow us build extra rooms so my family can live comfortably at my house. I would love them to pave the streets and offer adequate services (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

I'd rather stay. We need to see some improvement in streets, sewerage, water, electricity, and everything. Everything! (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011)

I prefer to improve my living here in my area and in my home. I love to see my area covered with adequate services, you know! (Interviewee 7, August 20, 2011)

A sense of security linked to the known and a companion fear of being subject to forced eviction or displacement were key reasons these individuals offered for wishing to continue to live in Mahwa Aser. Interviewee 8 shared his earlier experience of forced eviction and displacement with me.

I'm tired. My best lifetime, my youth time, was wasted on being evacuated from one place to another. It's been like 23 years living here. Even if they offer me fifty million, I will tell them I don't want it. Although 50 million would offer me a 10-floor building outside of Mahwa Aser, this home is more precious to me than this money. I spent my lifetime here. My children and friends are here (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

A number of interviewees were interested in moving to another location, but only under certain conditions. Some desired fair compensation while others sought proximity to the city center and a clear and compelling State need for their land.

If fair compensation is offered then why not move out, but if no compensation is offered, unless they kill me, I will not leave my home.. ... I have no objections to move out if they offer me a better life than the one I have here (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

If the government offers fair compensation, then this is a different story. If they tell me this is the key to your new house and this is a means of transportation for you, then what else can I ask for? If the government comes and offers this, I will immediately accept the offer, but if they move me away from Sana'a, I swear, even if they offer me a huge palace, I will not move (Interviewee 7, August 20, 2011).

A number of interviewees indicated they would move if their new location were located in or within range of the city, has adequate services and infrastructure, and offered a better quality of life.

I would love to have good access to electricity, water, sewerage, and schools. ... I prefer to have a quiet place. I mean everything that a good neighborhood offers (Interviewee 4, August 23, 2011).

If the place will be better (organized and has bathrooms and kitchen) then why not! We hate our living style here. I mean we want to live a better life. ... If the

government will re-arrange our living for the better, I have no objections. ... I don't mind if the new location is far from the city as long as it is clean and has water and electricity supply (Interviewee 9, August 25, 2011).

Respondents 8 and 1 indicated they would refuse to move out of Mahwa Aser even with compensation. Nonetheless, they indicated they might comply with the government request if the State strongly required their property.

I will not accept any compensation unless the State urgently needs the land. We, my children and I, are owned by the State (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

If the government insists on evacuating us from our homes, then we have no other option. It is the government's power and judgment. I cannot impose any prior condition on the type of compensation I would like to have. But, I'm dreaming of a better life. ... However, if the choice is mine, I will ask for a better house, better furniture, better sewerage, better electricity, and wider streets. ... If there is something better, why not to take it (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

Interviewee responses indicated that relocation could be an option if the responsible agency offered reasonable compensation and viable alternative accommodations to the residents. Regardless of their stance regarding relocation, residents preferred upgrading, if it could be made an option. All interviewees were in favor of improving their quality of life and the quality of their neighborhood because Mahwa Aser offered them easy access to services, jobs, and shopping areas. Some also cited lifetime investments and family and place ties as reasons to resist relocation, should it ever occur.

Aid Issues

Mahwa Aser, a preferred destination for poor immigrants to Sana's, especially Akhdams, suffers from inadequate government support. According to resident interviewees in the main research phase, Mahwa Aser has never received enough attention from the State, NGOs, or INGOs. Four of the 12 individuals with whom I spoke claimed that Mahwa Aser residents were not receiving any type of aid or assistance either from local authorities or from local or international organizations.

I didn't receive aid from any international organization or government agency. ... Honestly, none of the organizations offered any aid; not direct or indirect. They don't come here (Interviewee 2, August 05, 2011).

Nothing! No aid! No organizations! No organization made any effort. People say UNICEF offered some aid but personally we have not seen anything (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

Eight of the 12 interviewees claimed that they were receiving at least some aid. For instance, four respondents asserted that Mahwa Aser was receiving some sort of assistance, either from state or non-state agencies. Two interviewees indicated that the area only received aid from the government; the same number of respondents claimed that only NGOs and INGOs offered assistance to Mahwa Aser residents.

The interviews raised several issues concerning the aid that Mahwa Aser residents received from different agencies. The responses also shed light on the degree of intervention by state or non-state actors in Mahwa Aser. The following section addresses these concerns. It highlights how state and non-state actors were involved in Mahwa

Aser, what challenges they faced, and what concerns residents perceived to be significant.

Type(s) and Sources of Assistance

As noted, Mahwa Aser respondents offered differing perceptions concerning whether they and their neighbors received assistance. The interviewees who claimed that residents received some sort of aid were inconsistent in identifying its source. Some of them asserted that only the government provided support while others argued assistance came from government, NGOs, and INGOs. A third group believed that support came only from NGOs and INGOs. Nonetheless all interviewees agreed that aid was unevenly distributed, sometimes stolen, and rarely sustained. Each group's views are profiled next.

Two of 12 respondents indicated that government assistance was the only aid Mahwa Aser residents received, but it did not reach the needy or it was only provided on religious occasions, such as Ramadan and feasts.

None of the NGOs or CBOs helped us. The only source for food and clothes was the government but only during Ramadan ...the buses came and distributed blankets and food. I have never gotten any of the stuff ... only when you (*pointing to the proxy interviewer*) were working with that organization (I don't recall its name), did we receive aid. You were the only person who brought beans to us in Ramadan. Since then I have not received any food (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

In 1989, 1993 and this year, the President, may God save him and guarantee him a long life, helped us. He is different! His party used to give us aid but since the

new representative of the President's party took charge, we have not received anything. The former representative was quite good. He distributed wheat to us. The new representative is bad. He took all donated food for Mahwa Aser and sold it on the market. Then he took the money. He sold the first batch of aid here in Sana'a and then he sold the second batch in his town. I understand there were almost 70 packages of aid materials. He received them and sold all of it. I swear we have not received anything since two years (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011). Respondents 5 and 9 claimed that Mahwa Aser only received limited attention from local and international non-governmental organizations.

Only some international organizations offered aid to the neighborhood but community leaders took it all (Interviewee 5, August 10, 2011).

CARE offered assistance, clothes, and food. We studied computer skills and went to health awareness sessions with CARE's support (Interviewee 9, August 25, 2011).

Four of 12 resident interviewees indicated that both state and non-state agencies offered help to Mahwa Aser.

A Sudanese organization, I think it was called Al-Tabsheer or something like that, opened a health clinic for Mahwa Aser residents. It was a charitable organization. During Ramadan it offered three or four kilograms of sugar and rice to those who were registered and on the organization's aid list. ... Al-Saleh Charitable Organization, owned by President Saleh, also offered aid to us, but these who have no fear from God took it all. They did not give us anything. ... A long time

ago, CARE also offered some aid. It offered clothes, blankets, and milk (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

UNICEF opened a kindergarten in the area. They funded the project for two years. They paid the rent and provided all other necessary equipment for its operation, including teachers. We agreed with the Local Council, of course, that was around 1995. We agreed with the Local Council on supporting the project once UNICEF's sponsorship ended. The Local Council and Sana'a Municipality promised to undertake the project once UNICEF left the project, but we could not reach them afterwards. We submitted all the required documents but the government never fulfilled its promises ... during the two years of UNICEF's sponsorship, we tried to attain other funding, we contacted Rada Barnet and CARE, but no one helped us. The Millennium Organization supported us with a health clinic for three years but again the Local Council did not fulfill its promises to sustain it. Now, we have no clinic in the area (Interviewee 6, August 15, 2011).

CARE helped us with food, rice, sugar, and water tanks. Lately, it has supplied the area with eight or 10 water tanks. One person was in charge of filling the tanks up. ... A 20-liter bottle is sold now for 50YR. They used to sell it for 20YR and then 25YR. Today, they raised the price up to 60YR. ... The government only gives us wheat. We get aid only during Ramadan (Interviewee 10, September 02, 2011).

CARE provided water tanks, but there was no financial support for the tanks afterwards. The organization offered furniture only to those whose homes burned in the fire, which occurred in the upper part of Mahwa Aser. Thank God our homes did not burn. The National Union for Supporting the Poorest Groups also distributed some aid during Ramadan. ... Al-Saleh Charitable Organization provided some help to children for schools ... when CARE was run by the Sudanese director, it offered sheep to sacrifice in Eid Al-Adha³⁸ and school uniforms to some children, but not for all, only for the poorest children. Now, they have stopped doing so. I have never heard that they distributed any blankets. ... During Ramadan, the government and other NGOs have distributed food, wheat, sugar, and cooking oil, but not every Ramadan, only during some, and not all residents got it (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

Residents' observations suggested that the assistance that they received was limited to food, clothing, and some other basic accommodations and services. Although interviewee responses varied, they provided insights into who offered what goods and services to Mahwa Aser residents. They showed that residents of the neighborhood perceived the role of state and non-state agencies differently. The following discussion further elaborates the obstacles aid agencies faced while working in the informal community, at least as these were perceived by interviewees.

Aid Distribution

In terms of distributing aid to Mahwa Aser residents, my interviewees articulated that government and interested NGOs and INGOs were engaged with the community in two ways.

³⁸ See the definition of terms list.

Direct interaction with the residents. In this approach, which on some occasions, happened only with one particular group, such as Akhdam, donors interacted with the residents directly. Nevertheless, not all residents were assisted in this case, according to the interviewees. According to some respondents, donors usually came to Mahwa Aser with an attitude that Akhdam were the only poor group that needed assistance, given the fact that the group is the lowest social caste and poorest minority in Yemen. Respondents claimed certain groups (i.e., *Muhamasheen*³⁹, “the Arabic designation for marginalized groups locally linked to Akhdam,” Akhdam, or those individuals or households that had access or connection to community leaders) received the bulk of outside assistance, although most residents from non-Akhdam groups in Mahwa Aser were also very poor.

When they distributed aid in Ramadan, not all people got it. One house got a share and ten others did not (Interviewee 10, September 02, 2011).

Sometimes, we, community leaders, contact those who are interested in offering aid to Mahwa Aser, but some of them prefer to distribute their aid to people directly. Only then troubles occurred. I stopped offering my personal help since the donors kept refusing it. Unless aid comes from the State (e.g. Al-Saleh Charitable Organization), I avoid offering my help ... usually in Ramadan, people distribute *Zakat*⁴⁰ to poor residents whom they already know. They don't bring it to us. If they don't trust us then it is up to them. For me, if they bring it, I distribute it the way they wish and with their supervision. Otherwise, I accompany them when they distribute the aid (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

³⁹ See the definition of terms list.

⁴⁰ See the definition of terms list.

Al-Saleh Organization distributed aid to all residents in the feasts, Eid Al-Adha and Eid Al-Fitr⁴¹, and in Ramadan. It distributed meat and other stuff. ... Al-Eslah Party gave aid to people who attend Mosques and pray (regardless of their political affiliation or social background) or to party members or individuals who were known by party leaders (Interviewee 6, August 15, 2011).

Indirect interaction. In this approach, aid distribution usually happened via community leaders, public figures, or the National Union for Helping the Poorest Groups (NUHPG). Some interviewees indicated that aid from donors went directly to community leaders or to the NUHPG. In this case, aid agencies asked community leaders to develop a list of needy families and individuals, so donors or help-organizations could identify who needed aid and how much assistance should be allocated. Many respondents expressed concern because they believed that community leaders or NUHPG officials had seized all or a substantial share of the offered aid and distributed the remainder to personally favored groups.

Community leaders and members of the Akhdam association seized the aid. We have never seen it or known about it (Interviewee 5, August 10, 2011).

He, the community leader, received the aid (wheat, sugar, and cooking oil; a full package for each household) from the President. But, since two years now, we've never received any assistance (Interviewee 8, August 25, 2011).

⁴¹ See the definition of terms list.

The aid, which we get, community leaders steal it, either in the White's or Black's association, community leaders are thieves (Interviewee 10, September 02, 2011).

I swear, and we are now in the holy month of Ramadan, the current community leader distributed the aid to everybody but he did not list our name. Neither he nor the former community leader gave us anything. I swear we have not received even a grain of rice, sugar, or anything. ... Neighbors helped us but he never did. My children, this boy and this girl, went to him to register our names. They went to him. He told them after Ramadan's Eid, Eid Al-Fitr, he would register us because registration had already closed. ... He never included our names afterwards (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

The comments of these respondents indicate that interested local and international agencies sought to help Mahwa Aser residents via two different strategies: direct or indirect interaction with them. According to the interviewees, only a few residents benefitted from the aid offered directly. The second or indirect approach, proved no more successful than its counterpart overall with aid reportedly ending up in the hands of community leaders and not the needy poor. Neither approach, according to the eight interviewees who commented, proved practicable. Needy people never received the full benefit of the offered support in either case. The respondents indicated that this failure had multiple causes: an absence of community involvement, a lack of coordination among donor agencies, community leaders, and Mahwa Aser residents, weak or corrupted monitoring systems, personal biases of community leaders against some

residents, lack of awareness of donor agencies of the social and cultural structure of Mahwa Aser, and lack of awareness among Mahwa Aser residents of the aid on offer.

Targeted Groups for Aid

As highlighted above, according to several interviewees NGOs and INGOs were interested in assisting only one group in Mahwa Aser: the Muhamasheen or Akhdam.

I hear that sometimes, Muhamasheen are the only recipients of aid. They receive flour, sugar, and rice. They receive some other services, such as water supply. I think this is what they receive (Interviewee 2, August 05, 2011).

None of the organizations come to us. They go to these (I don't want to say Akhdam because I will offend them as it is also prohibited in our religion; God created us equal) Blacks. An organization named RIT used to offer aid only to them. We don't receive any aid. Yes, organizations come to the Blacks, but they don't come to us (the Whites) (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

Yes, we didn't get any aid. They said it is only for Blacks, not for Whites. Aid was dedicated to Blacks only (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

According to respondents, the classification that NGOs and INGOs adopted in distributing their aid divided the Mahwa Aser community into two groups: Muhamasheen, who are mainly Akhdam, and poor from other social castes.

Reasons for Lack of Interest Among the NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs toward Mahwa Aser and Relative Scarcity of Support for its Residents

Residents interviewed highlighted some of the problems that led to donor lack of interest in offering aid to Mahwa Aser residents.

In the past, trucks came and stopped at the top of the hill, there, over there. They distributed blankets and milk. Akhdam were fighting over the food and blankets then these people (the employees of the organizations) never came back (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

CARE offered clothes and blankets. They were coming in a car and stopped on the mountain. People were fighting over the aid. Once they received the blankets, they sold them to other people in front of CARE's officers. Anything they took they sold it in front of them until the officials believed we were not in need. These residents only wanted money. Since then, CARE has never come back (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Al-Saleh Organization used to come and distribute blankets, but people were fighting over them. Organizations as well as people who offered help to Mahwa Aser ran away because of the resident's aggressive behavior. Charitable organizations and NGOs closed their doors because when they came to distribute aid, people were never organized. As community leaders, we organize them but some youth gangs came and caused problems. ... As a result, these organizations ran away and have never come back. ... They came to offer help to people but

what did they get in return? Only troubles! If they came through us, the community leaders, we could have helped them and organized the process in a much better way (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

According to these respondents, the NGOs and INGOs interested in helping Mahwa Aser were very few, and included CARE, UNICEF, Millennium Organization, Al-Saleh Charitable Organization, and the Al-Saleh Party. The outcome of their efforts, however, in these individuals' view, illustrated the challenges in delivering aid to the most needy in Mahwa Aser. Chapter 6 provides additional insight into the reasons for relatively tepid donor interest in improving residents' quality of life in Mahwa Aser.

Social and Cultural Concerns

Interviewees provided information concerning how different social castes coexisted and interacted in Mahwa Aser and how the cultural structure of the community accommodated these diverse groups in a relatively small autonomous community situated within Sana'a city.

Reasons for Living in Mahwa Aser

Interviewees revealed that people ended up living in Mahwa Aser for different social, cultural, and economic reasons. Some residents lived in the community as a result of family, friends, or kinship ties. Some other interviewees indicated they lived in the neighborhood for economic reasons, such as their relative poverty and the high cost of land and houses in the city. Residents reported other reasons for their residency in the community, including a search for a safe neighborhood, escape from an earlier displacement experience, fear of losing easy access to jobs and other services in the city

unless located close in, as in Mahwa Aser, and a rumor that claimed the settlement would officially become a planned residential neighborhood for the poor.

Four of the 12 residents interviewed mentioned that they learned about Mahwa Aser through their family members or friends. They were also motivated to live in the community because of relationships with such individuals already living in the neighborhood. In some cases, these family members or friends helped interviewees obtain property in the neighborhood through what is called the *Bast-yad*⁴²—claiming the land illegally without official deed—and *Rafah-yad*⁴³—selling the occupied land or construction without official title—processes. For example, Interviewee 1’s son-in-law encouraged her to settle in Mahwa Aser:

My son-in-law showed me a piece of land, this land. There was a guy who was a land trader here ... yes, real estate dealer. I bought this land. I sold my furniture and everything I had just to buy this piece of land. We built the rooms and have lived here since (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

The first time we moved here was in 1982 or 1985. Since then we lived here ... the presence of friends and kin lured me to live in Mahwa Aser (Interviewee 6, August 15, 2011).

Friends first encouraged interviewee 4 to live in Mahwa Aser. The respondent’s friends were among the first residents of the settlement. They did *Bast-yad* on the State land and invited Interviewee 4 to take advantage of “free” property.

⁴² See the definition of terms list.

⁴³ See the definition of terms list.

There were some friends whom we knew living here, in Mahwa Aser. They told us come and do *Bast-yad*, on any piece of land here instead of staying there (there means that place where we also occupied another piece of land which was owned by an individual) (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Similarly, interviewee 11 invited his family and kin to live close to him in Mahwa Aser.

My kin are living close to me. I'm passionate to invite my family, such as my nephews and kin to live close by. If any one of them has no house, I create a space for him here and let him build a room (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

People also ended up living in the informal community for cultural reasons. For example, interviewee 3 indicated that she was attracted to Mahwa Aser because of the already settled residents with the same cultural background.

Many people who share the same beliefs and cultural practices have settled here. So, we felt this place was safe for us. We then decided to live here (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

Also, interviewee 4 indicated that she ended up living in the neighborhood because residents of the community are simple and it is easy to live with them:

Mahwa Aser is called "Mahwa"⁴⁴ because it gathers people from different villages and cities, such as Haraz, Al-Mahweet, Bani Sa'ad, Raymah, Aden, and from everywhere. Residents are simple, friendly, and help you for no cost (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

The economic factor seemed to be the main incentive for many of the residents interviewed who had settled in Mahwa Aser. Families and individuals who have little or

⁴⁴ Mahwa is an Arabic term literally means contains or container. It describes a space/place that includes variety of things/objects.

no income had been challenged by the high price/value of land and housing in Yemen and Sana's City. They were also challenged by illiteracy, poverty, and marginality. Ten of 12 interviewees indicated that the main reason for their decision to reside in the informal community was economic hardship.

Our life is hard. It was difficult to go and buy land or rent a place. We lived here and felt safe. ... We did *Bast-yad* on the land (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

I swear to God I prefer to live in Mahwa Aser because housing is cheap here compared to our little income. ... We could not afford to live outside, build a house, or buy land, and so on (Interviewee 7, August 20, 2011).

Respondents also suggested other reasons, which had drawn them to live in Mahwa Aser, such as easy access to public transportation, jobs and public services, affordability of housing, safety and improved conditions from their prior dwellings, and as the result of having been forcibly evicted from another place. Interviewee 8 had suffered from two previous incidents of forced eviction, one episode when he was a child and his family was forced to relocate and another occurrence when he was in his 50s, although the second incident arose because of a lack of water in the area where he lived. He came to Sana'a seeking a safe and good place in which to live. He, too, had heard that President Al-Hamdi planned to donate the land to poor people and low-income households, as a residential neighborhood for them.

Yes, we ended up in Mahwa Aser because the imam burned my native city in Hashed in 1922. My family home was burned. ... It remains abandoned. We escaped to my grandma's home city. My grandmother took us and ran. ... We

lived in Hajah for 52 years, 52 years! Then we moved from Hajah to here because of scarcity of water. ... I bought the land with *Rafah-yad* from a former owner. I did not do *Bast-yad*. ... I was told that the President Al-Hamdi gave his orders to plan Mahwa Aser as a residential area for poor people (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

Interviewee 4 moved to the community from her village searching for a better life, as she explained:

I left my village because there was no drinking water, or electricity, nothing, no roads, nothing at all, there. That is why I moved to Sana'a. We lived in different places: Safia of Bab Alгаа, Bab Al-Balaga, the Mahwa that was close to the power company, the land that was close to Al-Kibsi house. Then when we heard about the free land in Mahwa Aser, we moved here and did *Bast-yad* on this land (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Among other participants, Interviewees 4 and 11 shared the same point-of-view about the neighborhood's easy access to services and transportation.

Mahwa Aser is a very comfortable place to me. It is close to shopping areas. If you walk a little bit, you'll find yourself close to hospitals and markets. It is close to all services and transportation (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Of course, being in the city is much better, but Mahwa Aser is the best because we are close to everything in the city. I chose it because of my work. I'm here living among and between my children. I do not have enough money to afford

living outside of the area. We have easy access to transportation, to the city, to restaurants, and to hospitals (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

Social Structure and Cultural Characteristics of Mahwa Aser

The neighborhood includes an interesting mix of people from different tribes and cultural and social backgrounds. The community has two principal social caste groups:

Residents with tribal roots, the so-called Gab'ail. This is, the third category in Yemen's traditional social structure, as explained in Chapter 3. Interviewees indicated that the Gab'ail in Mahwa Aser came from different villages, in particular Haraz, Raymah, Al-Mahweet, Hajah, and Shara'ab. They are usually of light skin color and run their own businesses. They do not consider low-paid jobs, like street sweepers because, culturally, it is a shame on any Gabili (Tribesman) to work in such occupations. Many aid workers perceived them as possessing sufficient income, which often made them ineligible for support from NGOs or INGOs. The Gab'ail occupy one part of Mahwa Aser alongside a few Akhdam families.

Akhdam. They comprise a major portion of the population of Mahwa Aser. As discussed in Chapter 3, these individuals occupy the lowest caste group in Yemeni society. They come from African backgrounds although some Akhdam interviewees claimed that they came from tribal backgrounds. The majority of Akhdam in the neighborhood occupied low-paid jobs, such as street sweepers and trash pickers.

Interaction and Social Coexistence

Based on interviewee responses, Gab'ail and Akhdam have generally preserved the cultural and traditional boundaries between them, but they peacefully coexist in Mahwa Aser. Some interviewees, however, revealed some discriminatory personal

attitudes toward Akhdam. Interviewee 4, for example, was fine about having neighbors regardless of their social or cultural background, but she became reluctant when it came to considering inter-marriage among different groups.

My neighbor is my brother, but I have other neighbors from Shara'ab and Haraz. We exchange visits and support each other in happiness or grief occasions. ... It is impossible to give my niece to someone from Raymah who is Khadem⁴⁵. Maybe this sounds offensive, but there are some red lines we should not cross. ... I will not accept it to me or to my daughter ... there are social norms, which we have to respect and comply with. ... I can eat, drink, and sit with them but when it comes to marriage issues, no! ... We don't accept to give our kids to these Blacks who are shabby on the streets. I have never interacted with them but this is their behavior. They eat on streets and live there. ... They are nasty. They are like sheep. ... They drop their trash and dirt right at the school wall. ... Their cultural practices differ from ours. They are distinct from us. Even if a guy is educated, he goes back to his family roots (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Self-perception and Societal Inclusion/Exclusion

Interviewee comments suggest that outsiders keep their distance from Mahwa Aser residents and look down on them. The residents, especially children in schools, are subject to bullying and peer pressure. In interviews, inhabitants articulated their resentment of outsiders' behavior. They expressed their desire to have fair and equal treatment. Interviewee 11 indicated that outsiders routinely avoided any interaction with Mahwa Aser residents and condemned their behavior. Such outsiders called them

⁴⁵ Singular form of Akhdam; see the definition of terms list.

Khadem, the singular form of Akhdam, which particularly hurt the feelings of members of the community who were not members of that group, she said.

They used to avoid us. They looked at us from a distance. ... They condemned our behavior. ... I wish they stopped using the term Khadem. Who they think themselves to judge us? They said: Khadem! Who's Khadem? They said: Blacks! They call us Muhamasheen and Akhdam (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

We wish the government paid more attention to Muhamasheen, the group of Muhamasheen. They should stop calling us Akhdam. The government should ban this word. We are human like them. We are educated, thank God. We are educated; some of us hold high school diplomas and others hold university degrees. There are doctors among us. That means we are like them. It means they have to forget about the Khadem term. It means they should view us as regular people. Outsiders, yes, outsiders! Skin color shouldn't represent people. Only respect and gratitude should be the criteria for evaluating them (Interviewee 9, August 25, 2011).

Moreover, children of Mahwa Aser residents were discriminated against by their classmates as a result of their cultural background and skin color. They became subject to bullying and peer pressure once they attended public schools. Interviewees 4 and 11 shared the stories of their children with me.

My niece often gets upset because her classmates keep bullying her. I tell her to ignore them and focus on her studies but it is difficult to convince a kid to ignore cruel behavior (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Children at school are bullying our kids. ... We ask them to tolerate such bad behavior from their classmates. We cannot go and fight them. They look down on us. They curse us and say that we are from Al-Mahwa. They look down on us but we overcome that issue and tolerate their behavior. ... Sometimes, we go to the schools and request that they behave. The schools do ask them to behave but teachers cannot force them to do so (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

This analysis supports existing theories concerning the causes for formation of informal settlements in developing countries (Ben Nefissa, 2009; Ploeger and Groetelaers, 2006; Tsenkova et al., 2008; Al Sayyad, 2004; Sietchiping, 2004; Huchzermeyer, 2002; Fekade, 2000). The analysis also provides examples and information concerning the interaction and communication among the diverse groups residing in Mahwa Aser. On one hand, residents' observations strongly suggested the integrity of the neighborhood as a community while, on the other hand, their comments signaled some divergence among community residents, especially concerning inter-marriage. In this, some settlement inhabitants exhibited the same norms so obvious in how the broader society has treated them. Interviewee's comments affirmed that Mahwa Aser residents are excluded from the larger urban society because of discrimination arising from their skin color, social caste, social behavior, and cultural practices.

Residents Livelihoods before and after the Political Upheaval, 2011-2012; Security and Stability Concerns

Throughout its existence, Mahwa Aser has served as an important destination for many poor and low-income households regardless of their social or cultural backgrounds.

It remains the preferred destination for Akhdam. The interviews revealed that most residents either held low-paying jobs or had no income at all.

Sources of Income

Securing an income, whether before or after Yemen's political upheaval, was a daily and difficult proposition for Mahwa Aser residents. Although some interview questions sought to explore the special effects of the current crisis on the lives of the poor in Mahwa Aser, interviewees were eager to share more general information about their sources of livelihood. Respondents reported they have three key sources of livelihood.

Short-term work with public or private agencies. Some residents in Mahwa Aser work for public or private organizations, but their work status remains persistently unstable. Many of them had spent several years working at organizations and then lost their posts without notice or fair compensation. Residents of the community interviewed reported feeling generally exploited. Interviewee 1, for example, had worked as a trainer for blind girls in a community-based organization for 11 years at very low pay. She worked for the organization without a written contract and, when injured, was simply laid off without compensation.

I worked for the Motherhood and Childhood Community-Based Organization for eleven years. I taught girls with special needs how to learn handicraft skills. I worked hard to teach these girls for little money. ... One day, I fell down. My leg and hand were broken. The head of the organization then laid me off. I worked for her without written contract. ... She did not give me any compensation. ... I demanded my rights for a long time, without any result. It has been perhaps 15 or 20 years since this all occurred (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

Begging on streets. Residents who faced financial hardships or had no jobs, usually Akhdam, beg on Sana'a's streets to obtain money to survive and support their families.

Poor Akhdam beg on the street to feed their families. They have no source of income (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Running small businesses (i.e., small shops). Some residents in Mahwa Aser operate very small businesses such as stores selling used electronic items or canned food. Other residents have developed other means of earning income. Interviewee 3, for example, applied for a loan from the Development Unit for Small Business. She bought livestock, raised them, and sold their products. However, this group of people is subject to exploitation by lending agencies. The interviewee shared her difficult experience with unscrupulous businessmen:

I took this livestock from the Development Unit for Small Business. ... I raised and sold them. ... The Unit offered me a loan and I paid it back. Then I applied for another loan for 70,000YR from CAC Bank. They claimed my entire salary, which I received from the Social Services for two years. I received nothing from my salary. They took more than what they gave me, but there was no other option.

I had to do it or lose everything (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

The Implications of the Recent Political Upheaval for the Living Conditions of Mahwa Aser Residents

In general, residents of Mahwa Aser continue to confront various economic problems, including high levels of unemployment and deep poverty. Most respondents indicated they were barely making ends meet when interviewed. However, inhabitants'

living conditions have only worsened since the political upheaval took place in Yemen beginning in February 2011. Respondents claimed that the upheaval negatively affected their lives in different ways. For many, the protracted crisis blocked their access to go to work and they lost their jobs accordingly. All residents shared their experience of trying to cope with escalating prices for commodities; others talked about the suspension or termination of service supply projects, which were in progress before the upheaval began, in particular sewerage and drinking water initiatives. Interviewees recounted very difficult hardships:

The current crisis affected young employees working for private companies. These companies shut their doors and people lost their jobs. ... Now, I'm working on filling out many applications just to send these kids to the army. This was the only way to help them secure some income (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

Many people lost their jobs. It's heartbreaking. They went to the tents of the demonstrators just to get food in the morning and at night. They didn't feel ashamed going there and bringing food to their families. ... This crisis was to the advantage of those who didn't want to work. They went and brought food and then sat here doing nothing. These who had dignity never went to the demonstrator's areas. They remained in their homes with only God to help them. They searched for other jobs but they could not find any. ... The current upheaval raised prices ten times and unemployment as much as well. We don't know what to do. We rely on ourselves and those who have sympathy for us come and help. God never left us (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

We don't have sewerage installed in the area. They started the project before the current political conflict and when the trouble began it was terminated. They said the contractor suspended work on the project because the price of diesel fuel had made it impossible to continue construction. He was not getting the money owed him anyway. We are affected so badly by this crisis (Interviewee 7, August 20, 2011).

Of course, the current crisis affected the area. These who were working on installing the sewerage system simply left because of the upheaval ... they were afraid that if something serious were to happen they might get killed. That's why they left. ... The project was suspended. As for water provision, they installed pipes to houses but they stopped that too. They bought water tanks, which you could see on the street, at the entrance of the neighborhood. The government had been filling the tanks with water before the crisis, but Bani Jaheer, a family from Mahwa Aser and the current sponsor of the water tanks, has now monopolized the community's water supply. Now, they sell a bottle, which I used to buy for 20YR, for 40YR (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Purchasing/Selling Behavior of Land and Property

According to my resident/respondents, Akhdam and other poor neighborhood residents from different backgrounds began to occupy the State land on Azubairy Street, which later came to be called Mahwa Aser, in the early 1980s. Respondents claimed that the poor were racing to take advantage of the available free land. It was *first come, first served*; whoever came first had the right to claim the land, which is locally called *Bast-*

yad. The word literally means ‘placing one’s hand’ on a parcel of land or ‘putting your hand down; it is yours’ for free and without official title. Once the occupier becomes interested in selling the land or the construction on the land, he sells it but without official deed. This process is locally called *Rafah-yad*. *Rafah-yad*; the term literally means *lifting one’s hand up’ from the land*. It may occur verbally or nonverbally (unofficial written agreement) where the buyer pays money for the value of the construction. In return, the buyer receives unofficial deed or title. The title cannot be officially registered, which means that the buyer has no legal rights to the land. The occupier sells only the construction on the land not the land itself. This process is locally called *Zanka-wa-Marboa’a*⁴⁶, which literally means selling the aluminum sheets *Zanka* and the walls built out of wood or cement blocks are *Marboa’a*. Respondents freely shared their experiences with property-related processes in Mahwa Aser:

I did *Bast-yad* over the land, which I liked. Then I rented a tractor to flatten the land but I was stupid enough not to take more land. ... We did *Bast-yad* on this piece of land only, which you see (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

I did not do *Bast-yad*. I bought this land from someone whose name is Radfan. He was from Aden. He sold it to me for 70,000YR. He did *Bast-yad* on the land but I bought the structure, which was a small tent made of aluminum sheets, *Zanka-wa-Marboa’a*. I built the stone then. I own the *Zanka* but the land is State property.

This means *Rafah-yad*. I gave him 70,000YR and he released his hand from the land. Once I put my hand on the land, I built it (Interviewee 8, August 23, 2011).

⁴⁶ Also, see the definition list of terms.

I bought the land from someone with *Rafah-yad*. He sold it to me as a *Zanka-wa-Marboa'a*. Then I built it myself. All people did the same here (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

The interviews revealed the land purchasing and selling behavior and norms in the community, which was basically built on the basis of three sorts of claims: *Bast-yad*, *Rafah-yad*, and *Zanka-wa-marboa'a*. Sales and purchases occurred daily among Mahwa Aser residents and by outsiders interested in residing in the community. This process occurred informally. Although selling and purchasing activities were (and are) commonplace in Mahwa Aser, residents have no legal rights to the land, which is owned by the national government.

Service Delivery and Ecological Concerns

According to COHRE (2009) and UN-Habitat (2009), houses in informal settlements are constructed of diverse cheap or waste materials with limited or no access to proper infrastructure, such as sanitation and drinking water. They are built without official permission and in violation of construction standards and land use or zoning regulations. Mahwa Aser certainly meets this definition. I sought to explore the living conditions in the neighborhood to provide better insight into the quality of life and the roles of state and non-state actors in the community.

Living Conditions in Mahwa Aser

According to respondents and in accord with my own perceptions following my personal visits to the community, the neighborhood lacks many basic services, including clean drinking water and sewerage. It is hard to determine how much of the community enjoys at least some public services, but all respondents agreed that there were too few in

the neighborhood. When services were available, residents varied in their perceptions of who provided them. For example, concerning sewerage and drinking water supply, Interviewee 11 indicated that Kuwaiti government funded the community's sanitary system project while Interviewee 12 believed that a German organization had financed the project. Interviewees 7 and 8 claimed the State had provided the services to the area.

I know that the sewerage project was funded by Kuwait (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

They said a German organization has provided the project for us (Interviewee 12, September 09, 2011).

You shouldn't think that we got the services by ourselves. It is the State that got them for us. It provided water ... sewerage was already here. It was almost done, except for this street. We do have great services (Interviewee 8, September 23, 2011).

Interviewee 5, however, indicated that services were only provided once community leaders approached public leaders and demanded their support.

We have, as you know, a representative for our neighborhood, Bander Al-Alimi. Honestly, he did great efforts; swear to God! Sewerage was installed back then. Then it was disconnected. It was impossible to have it back to our homes but now it is back again (Interviewee 5, August 10, 2011).

Regardless of who delivered the service, Mahwa Aser remained partially covered with the needed services or infrastructure. According to officials interviewed, the

government divided the community into two areas; one section, “inner part”, was included within the government compound and service delivery was not allowed there. The second section, “outer part”, was outside of the public area, but still attached to it. Government officials allowed “temporary” service delivery for that section. National plans had long slated both areas, for major public buildings, implying future eviction and resettlement of current residents. Service delivery was “temporary,” therefore, until the government could garner sufficient funds to sponsor a resettlement project. Respondents who had access to services, such as electricity, were frustrated because of the long hours, sometimes days, of power outages, especially during the upheaval. Also, many were unsatisfied with the quality of the provided services and the risk, to which they were routinely exposed as a result of makeshift electricity connections undertaken by some residents.

The living conditions here are very bad...Even at the level of electricity, we have a random network. Most of the time, it causes fires. ... Wires get mixed up and short circuits happen, causing fires. The power is also very weak (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

Electricity supply is as you see ... we got connected to the electricity by the State, as some residents did. ... We pay for the service but other people who steal it don't pay anything. They are randomly hooked up to the electricity source; they have no meters (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

Water supply has also been an issue. Respondents were disappointed because the government did not provide clean water to the neighborhood. They complained about the

amount of money they had to spend to secure drinking water. Interviewees 1 and 3, for example, shared their experiences of buying water from private suppliers.

We don't have water pipelines or sewer system installed to our homes. We buy water from private providers who bring it to us by trucks. ... We buy it from trucks. It is not affordable. ... I swear to God I filled up two big tanks a few days ago for 3,000YR. Now, they are empty. Since the beginning of Ramadan they are empty. I have no money to buy more water now. If I get some money I can refill the tanks. Now, I cannot do it. I only buy one gallon (20 liters) when the truck passes by or I get some water from my neighbors (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

We don't have water supply to our homes. Only by truck do we bring water to our homes. We buy it like that. It is very expensive and now during the war it is more expensive. One tank costs 5,000YR (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

Other basic services, including schools, do not exist in Mahwa Aser. Children have to make trips outside of the neighborhood to attend school.

We don't have schools in our neighborhood. Our children need to make trips to other schools in the adjacent neighborhoods (Interviewee 7, August 20, 2011).

Interviewee 1 complained about the lack of education facilities and of their affordability.

We do not have schools in the neighborhood. ... Our children go to Salaheddin School, Adhban School, or Baghdad School. ... We do not have kindergarten in our neighborhood as well. ... Our kids are having difficulties accessing schools. Schools demand too much money. ... First we need to pay the registration fees

then teachers ask the kids to pay for school supplies, such as chalks and markers. They force our children to pay for chalk, sharpeners, and for cleaning the school ... in many cases, my granddaughter goes to school crying and having tears in her eyes. Sometimes I borrow money to help my grandchild (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

When asked about health services, residents said the neighborhood used to have health centers but they had closed, either for lack of financial support or as a result of the shifting interests of the provider.

Health centers! I believe we do not have one here now. We used to have one clinic but it was closed suddenly. I do not know why! (Interviewee 7, August 20, 2011)

They opened a small clinic here to treat the poor of Mahwa Aser, I mean they were charging us small fee ... it used to be here then it was moved to your neighborhood then to Madbah. It was a Sudanese Association...they opened the clinic specifically for poor residents of Mahwa Aser, but since it moved to Madbah, we cannot afford to go there (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

We used to have a health clinic here. Nobody funded it and now it is closed (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

Mahwa Aser residents, according to Interviewee 3, cannot afford to access public health services, such as hospitals, outside of the neighborhood.

We suffer! We suffer a lot, especially when someone gets sick in the family. We cannot get things done easily. ... We pay too much money from our own pockets (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

Despite the absence of adequate infrastructure and services, their provision in the neighborhood, unless obtained illegally, is not free. Fees are imposed on residents by mediators, such as community leaders. Interviewee 1 indicated that she had to pay money to be connected to sewerage services.

I swear to God, we were charged. We paid money. We paid it to, Ahmed Saleh ... we were told that he was the leader of the entire neighborhood. I paid to this guy for the pipes because I asked them to install a pipe to my home. We've already paid for it. It is done. ... Ahmed Saleh didn't do anything. I paid money to him and I bought the pipes myself; otherwise, they would not extend the service to my home ... It has already been paid and it is already done. May God compensate us ... It's already done! They stole our money to chew Gat. I have no idea what they did with our money (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

Housing Conditions

Interviewees argued that cheap and poor quality construction materials made their houses in Mahwa Aser unhealthy. Most interviewees indicated that they built their homes with diverse inexpensive or waste materials because they were affordable and available to them. This allowed them to provide shelter for their families.

We hired a builder, a neighbor who lived nearby. He did the work in two days; then we built this room and then the other room. ... The construction was random. Look, wood like this. Discards and scraps were brought from a construction-site.

We hired someone to build the shell, the frame and the ceiling. My sons did the finishing. They put mud on the surface and here we go (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

We first built a straw hut and lived there. It was simple. We built it by wood residues...we hired a builder, a builder who builds straw and wooden nests. ... We used mud and waste of construction materials. We go and search for any demolished or newly built building. We collect the waste and build our homes. ... We build them by aluminum sheets and mud or aluminum sheets and wood; then we are ready to go (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Some interviewees talked about the poor living conditions in which they live in Mahwa Aser. Others noted the inappropriate (cramped) size of their homes, while still others complained about the disproportionate number of occupants for the number of rooms.

We live a tragic life. Six to seven people live in one room. The State and NGOs know about the poor living conditions in which we live but nobody cares (Interviewee 6, August 15, 2011).

We need, at least, to build one extra room. We are all living in two rooms and they are not enough for my family, my Mom, and me (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

Environmental Problems

Almost all respondents complained about the complications they face in the rainy seasons. Rain blocks their access to their homes. It blocks the access of cars to the area, especially in case of emergency. In addition, the heavy rains damage houses, which makes living conditions in them still more risky and difficult.

Rain gets into our house, not from outside because our house level is higher than the street level, but from the roof itself. The roof is leaking and we collect the water in bowls and so on. We collect the water in the front yard to the next day...once rainy seasons come, we cannot walk on the street. Sometimes, we get blocked at our homes for days (Interviewee 1, August 03, 2011).

They promised to pave the alleys but they didn't. We live in a misery when rain comes, no pavement, no channels for rainwater, no sewerage, nothing. ... We badly suffer, especially during the time of emergency. If we have a patient, we cannot move him out, an ambulance cannot get in (Interviewee 3, August 05, 2011).

Rain is our biggest concern. The problem is that the level of our home is lower than the level of the street. Mayor of Sana'a Municipality promised to supply sewerage and water to the area but it has not happened. The level of my house is lower. What can I do? I filled the ground floor up with soil. Every time I do the same, filling it up, filling it up. My neighbor's situation is worse than me. His house becomes like a basement. ... We suffer from drainage; no proper channels

... rain gets into our homes from streets and sometimes from roofs (Interviewee 11, September 08, 2011).

Respondents indicated that the absence of an adequate drainage system contaminated the inside and outside environments of their homes.

There is no drainage system at our homes. Some people get the used water out of their kitchens out to streets, but for bathrooms we dig a hole (two or one and a half meter) in the ground. When it gets filled, we rent a truck to clean it. We pay 5,000 or 6,000YR or whatever (Interviewee 4, August 08, 2011).

5.2. Conclusion

Interviews with residents provided a good description of service delivery, living conditions, and the quality of life in Mahwa Aser. They provided insight into the difficulties that neighborhood residents encounter on a daily basis. The poor living conditions can be attributed to illegal occupancy of the land. The government did little to improve the quality of life in the community, especially since the property was ultimately planned for another use. The perspective of government officials concerning Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a is described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Perspectives of Yemeni Government Officials Concerning Mahwa Aser and Informal Settlements in Sana'a

6.1. Introduction to Chapters 6, 7, and 8

To comprehend the broader warp and woof of Mahwa Aser's story and informal settlements in Sana'a in general, I conducted interviews with a number of state and non-state actors, including government officials in Sana'a and directors of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in and outside of Yemen. I undertook these conversations in two stages as noted in Chapter 4, a preliminary research period and a major research phase. The interviews resulted in new insights into the factors influencing informal community dynamics in Yemen. The main foci for study in both stages of my inquiry included three key issues, which I adopted as a framework for organizing my analysis in chapters 6,7, and 8:

- Government policy and intervention in informal settlements (analysis and assessment);
- Engagement and partnership among the key players and stakeholders in Mahwa Aser; and
- Community residents' involvement and participation in government policies and programs.

Interviews addressed issues arising in these domains and I predicated the bulk of my analysis on them.

As I have argued Chapter 2, effective government intervention, coordinated non-state actor engagement, and community involvement are needed to attain an effective

governance approach in Yemen's informal settlements. Although these three core concerns are interrelated, they nonetheless remain distinctive and each factor has a prominent role to play.

I will address each of these concerns in the following section then I will discuss the responses of the interviewees from the Yemeni government in the preliminary and main research phases.

Government Policy and Intervention in Informal Settlements

Yemen's poor, who have little chance to access the formal housing sector as a result of land speculation, high prices, and poor public land management, predominantly live in informal settlements (Madbouly, 2008). Informal housing may have obvious advantages for the urban poor, such as easy access to land and cheap shelter. However, it has a structural negative impact on this group in the medium-and long-term. Durand-Lasserve (2006) has suggested that labeling settlements as *informal* sets an expectation for non-recognition of these communities and their residents so that their occupants are exposed to various forms of government action, including forced eviction and prevention or limitation of public services. Once occupied land becomes valuable, governments often actively discourage the provision of basic services and infrastructure (Sims, 2010; Fernandes, 2008), as a strategy to slow or prevent future community growth. This step is aimed at curtailing further settlement growth so as to provide a firm foundation for population resettlement, should such become possible and be deemed necessary.

Government responses to tenure insecurity in informal settlements vary, influenced by local socio-cultural and political context, the types of informal settlements (i.e., size, population, and environmental conditions), governments' political orientations,

and demands from civil society advocacy groups in general and from concerned communities in particular. In general, national and local government response have undergone a significant transformation from non-recognition of informal communities in the 1960s, to repression in the 1970s and 1980s, to tolerance in the 1990s (Durand-Lasserre, 2006), to slum upgrading, and lastly to enabling strategies in the late 1990s and 2000s (Arimah, 2010). This progression of strategies suggests that state and non-state actor intervention in informal settlements occurs through several means. One approach is to maintain existing services and, at the same time, provide added support to improve residents' living status. Stakeholders who embrace this approach strive to improve long-term investment in informal communities and their environs and to develop options to ensure the permanent residency of their residents. This stance may involve an enabling, empowering or upgrading improvement program.

A second methodology to assist settlement populations is to deliver temporary services and infrastructure to a targeted community. In this case, intervention is planned for the short-term and as an emergency action until relocation can occur. Government seeks to provide partial upgrading of a selected area while expending as little as feasible since the final result will be relocation/removal of its residents.

A third strategy is to remove the population as a first-order priority, either voluntarily or involuntarily. This approach is known as resettlement when eviction is voluntary and forced eviction when it is not. The type of intervention selected in this case is a product of an array of factors, including the value of the land and the presence of any hazards that create unsafe living conditions.

Shifting from informal settlement relocation or upgrading projects to land ownership programs has proven difficult. Furthermore, it is very often not equitable and may lead to further social exclusion and segregation, especially when the program is not implemented incrementally, not accompanied by appropriate actions at various levels (social, finance, and credit, etc.), and not backed by community action at city and settlement levels. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 will examine Yemeni government planning and intervention processes and policies concerning informal settlements, with special attention to the forms and extent of public intervention in Mahwa Aser. It will also discuss the challenges that confront Yemen's government as it seeks to improve life for the nation's informal settlement residents.

Engagement and Partnership Among the Key Players and Different Stakeholders

Because delivery of services to urban areas, including informal settlements, often exceeds the capabilities of one actor to provide them, as Otiso (2003) has argued, partnership among the four actors— local, national, and international organizations, and targeted communities—is critical to improving the quality of life of the poor. State and non-state actors play an important role in identifying the key concerns confronting the state in informal settlements and thus in attaining desired changes for informal community residents. All actors involved, therefore, need to forge strong partnerships while working to ensure that all participants enjoy the capacity to play their roles. And, as Amoli (2011) has discussed, government efforts to provide services to informal settlements may not yield favorable results without active participation of residents of the concerned communities and partnerships with other stakeholders. This implies that without such cooperation, addressing and responding to the problems that challenge

informal settlements sustainably may become more problematic. Involving informal settlement residents and other stakeholders as partners in development projects that target their communities is key to improving informal settlement living conditions (Wust et al., 2002).

As an example of non-state actor engagement in informal settlements and partnerships with government, Cities Alliance, along with other international partners—World Bank and the UN-Habitat initiative of Cities Without Slums—has brought increased attention to tenure security, as part of its efforts to help governments in developing countries improve their current policies for informal settlements. These initiatives encourage local authorities to work on creating clear policies concerning tenure security and informal housing.

In the Arab States, poor land management and poorly functioning housing markets have greatly contributed to the rapid growth of informal settlements (Madbouly, 2008). In consequence, international aid and development agencies as well as bilateral donor organizations and international finance institutions have increasingly accorded special attention to tenure security and tenure policies for informal settlements. The resulting international community efforts have mainly focused on defining and implementing tenure regularization policies with three principal features, according to Madbouly (2008) and World Bank (2005).

Decentralization and service delivery. These initiatives have sought to develop policy guidance and build local government management capacity, strengthening municipal financing of basic service delivery to urban areas, expanding the base and scope of public-private partnerships, and financing needed infrastructure and urban services to

respond to population growth. However, several analysts have argued that decentralization cannot improve service delivery unless end user engagement is increased, local responsiveness enabled, and accountability is encouraged (Bell, 2011; MacLean, 2011; DIFD, 2010; Joshi, 2008; Batley and Larbi, 2004). Other research has questioned decentralization's capacity to ensure service delivery improvement, in light of the challenges posed by fragile local government, including weak capacity, limited resources, and frequent lack of political will (Skoufias et al., 2011; DIFD, 2008; Robinson, 2007; Bourguignon and Sundberg, 2006).

Strengthening the local economy. This strategy is designed to assist cities to respond to competitiveness pressures by:

- Encouraging the participatory formulation of a City Development Strategy (CDS);
- Assisting in improving strategic, physical, and investment planning capacity;
- Reforming administrative procedures; and
- Creating an attractive local business environment.

These efforts are being carried out in Yemen and in Lebanon. In Yemen, the World Bank approved a \$23 million credit to the country in 2003 for a Port Cities Development Program (PCDP). The program targeted the main coastal cities—Aden, Al-Hodaidah, and Mukalla—over a period of twelve years and in three phases at a total cost \$96 million. The program is aimed at supporting local government capacity building, strategic and physical planning, and small-scale infrastructure improvements. It also seeks to establish a participatory development process in the targeted cities. Cities Alliance helps to formulate City Development Strategy (CDS)

for each city, to rank order and implement specific policy reforms and create an enabling environment for private sector engagement.

Efforts designed to improve the efficiency of housing and land market. These initiatives provide assistance to national and local governments to formulate housing policies and programs intended to provide adequate shelter for all, based on clear property rights, improved access to mortgage financing, rationalized housing subsidies, and provision of infrastructure for residential land development. Moreover, international organizations provide policy guidance for developing efficient urban land markets by enhancing land and property registration, reducing transaction costs and regulatory obstacles to accessing and developing land and putting in place a more transparent and efficient public land management system. Finally, policy guidance may provide effective emergency assistance. This strategy seeks to develop a rapid and responsive intervention mechanism in post-conflict and natural disaster situations to enable cities to rebuild destroyed economic and social infrastructure assets, and resume a path of growth and poverty reduction.

Community Involvement and Participation in Government Policies and Programs

Community participation in the planning process, in particular in projects that are offered to or planned for informal settlements, is significant. This approach is adopted by aid and international development organizations to ensure that community priorities are well-addressed, resources are well-allocated, time and effort are well-invested, needs of the affected communities are fulfilled, expectations of residents are satisfied, and planned services and projects are sustained (Sutton, n.d.; World Bank, 2010 a; 2010b; Kamete, 2006). Donors and international aid agencies strongly encourage and support citizen

participation, especially after the rise of the new urban governance model in the 1990s. The new governance approach calls on local governments to come closer to their people, so that the views and voices of minorities and the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making and their needs are reflected in government policies and actions (Rahman, 2008).

This wave has become stronger in the developing countries, especially in the last decade, when donors and aid agencies have asked support recipients to embrace increased community participation. In general, international funders demand the full involvement of informal settlement residents in planned projects, including upgrading and enabling programs from the receivers of their aid. They argue that increasing population engagement in informal community policies and projects will help to ensure the relevance and success of those efforts. Community participation is a positive factor in any effort to scale up upgrading initiatives for informal settlements but they become more acceptable to slum residents when internal community capacity is used to the greatest extent, as Racelis-Holinsteiner (1986) has demonstrated.

The three core concerns discussed in this section—government policy and intervention in informal settlements, engagement and partnership among the key players and different stakeholders, and community involvement and participation in government policies and programs—emerged from the interviews and shed light on the existing governance model and future plans of the Yemeni government for Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a. They also reveal the degree of involvement of all stakeholders in the community. These three core concerns served as a framework for organizing my analysis in chapters 6, 7, and 8, which include the perspectives of

government officials and the views of NGO, INGO, and IGO representatives in and outside of Yemen. The following discussion addresses the perspectives of the Yemeni officials to explore these concerns further.

6.2. Perspectives of Yemeni Government Officials

This chapter addresses the views of local and national government officials concerning informal settlements in Sana'a. It discusses the Yemeni government's current actions and future plans concerning Mahwa Aser and informal areas in Sana'a. It also explores the approaches the nation's government has adopted to obtain better engagement of the targeted communities, and national and international organizations in projects and plans pertaining to informal communities, including Mahwa Aser. My interviews with government officials in Sana'a were limited to individuals who are or have been involved in work in informal settlements in Sana'a. I recruited five Yemeni government officials (one or two individuals from each agency; see Tables 3 and 8) in each phase. I designed two different sets of semi-structured interview questions (Appendices I and II) for the two research stages to obtain necessary responses to the study's research questions. I derived the major research phase questions I employed by revising the interview questions in the preliminary research. I revised the questions based on the outcomes of the initial interviews and to reflect findings I had derived from the documents, reports, and studies I had collected to that time. The following discusses these views in the preliminary research phase.

6.2.1. Preliminary Research Phase

Three major themes and eight sub-themes emerged in this portion of my interviews.

1. Policy: Intervention/Current Actions/Future Plans
 - a. Perceptions of local and national officials concerning Mahwa Aser and informal settlements in Sana'a.
 - b. Yemeni government intervention and responses to informal settlements in Sana'a, to Mahwa Aser in particular, and the challenges arising from targeted communities or from the international and Yemeni organizations involved.
 - c. The contribution of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs to government policies on informal settlements.
2. Involvement: Engagement/Needs/Approaches/Sustainability
 - a. Methods for learning about the needs of informal settlement residents.
 - b. Service and project delivery to informal settlement residents.
 - c. Adopted mechanisms for sustaining offered projects and services.
3. Collaboration: Partnerships/Approaches/Funding
 - a. Community involvement and collaboration between different local and international key players in government proposals and plans relevant to the informal communities.

The following section addresses these themes and subthemes from the perspectives of a number of government officials who participated in this stage of this dissertation.

Policy

Because very little academic research has examined Yemeni national and local policies on informal settlements, interviews with government representatives explored past and current efforts by the nation's authorities in Mahwa Aser and the contribution of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs toward either revising current legislation or establishing a fixed policy framework for informal settlements. These interviews offered insights into government capacity in the face of the rapid growth of informal settlements and the specific roles of different stakeholders in Mahwa Aser and in informal settlements in Sana'a. They helped me to assess the key components of current policies—laws, to be more precise—and the challenges that the government faced in implementing them. They also provided a better understanding of the official government perspective toward informal communities. .

Perceptions of Local and National Officials Concerning Mahwa Aser and Informal Settlements in Sana'a

The government's view concerning informal settlements is very important to understand in order to comprehend the Yemeni response to informal settlements. The literature has reported a number of viewpoints that states have adopted, including for example, informal settlements as *illegal* products (Sitchiping, 2005; Ballard, 2004), as *blighted* areas (Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006), or as *threats* to the way the broader society constructs its values. The problem is further complicated by the apathy and even antipathy of various government agencies who may view the invasion of urban areas by *the masses* and the development of squatter settlements as a social *evil* that has to be *eradicated* (Nawagamuwa and Viking, 2003).

So it is that the complex relationship between the state and affected societies, determines the type of public policies developed and implemented regarding informal settlements (Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006). It is also well to keep in mind that residents of informal settlements are generally illegally squatting on land that is not their own (the case in Mahwa Aser), so the State has the legal right to claim its property or otherwise to dispose of it, as it might elect. Huchzermeyer and Karam (2006) have identified three possible types of public actions toward informal settlements.

An oppositional reaction. In this case, official response is hostile, repressive, and exploitative. Governments adopt the negative interpretations of informal settlements among the dominant classes and they therefore react to advance the preferences of those groups. Governments may also rigidly follow a *market-first* approach imposed by lending institutions (i.e., World Bank). In these cases, officials may find themselves serving socially elite interests instead of responding to the demands of poor residents in informal settlements.

Negligence or tolerance. States may not offer any response to informal communities, arising from negligence, tolerance, or ignorance of informal settlements. This sort of official action may occur for several reasons, including that the ruling party considers these settlements an asset for political support, the existence of informal settlements does not pose any threat to the principle of private property, and informal community residents are recognized as a supporting anchor for the local economy and social system.

Involvement and facilitation. States may opt to co-operate with residents of informal settlements to integrate their residents into the larger mainstream of urban

society. With this approach, the state does not limit its role to providing housing for such citizens, but rather expands it to include facilitating ongoing citizen participation in public decision-making at all levels.

Apparently, officials' views on informal settlements matter; they are the significant lenses by which officials determine whether legally even to identify informal settlements on official maps. On the one hand, for example, a respondent from GALSUP denied the existence of informal settlements in Sana'a altogether.

Informal settlements do not exist in Yemen. They may be found in more urbanized countries than Yemen, such as Jordan and Egypt (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

On the other hand, an interviewee from MPWH viewed the occupation of state-owned land as a violation of law and so saw the resulting communities as themselves illegal.

Informal settlements (like their name) are not official settlements, under the definition of the local planning authorities. They are created by needy people who constructed their houses on government-owned lands without permission of the relevant authorities. This violates the law (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

Concerning Mahwa Aser, all my interviewees from the major Yemeni government officials viewed the neighborhood as illegal and its residents as trespassing on state land.

Whether officials accept or deny the presence of informal settlements in Sana'a, these communities remain a challenge to the Yemeni government. Nevertheless like many other governments in the developing world and other Arab States, Sana'a authorities have ignored Mahwa Aser and other informal communities, until they have become an imperative reality with which to deal, or until the occupied land has become

profitable for development. Exactly what action is taken varies from case to case, but in most instances it becomes compulsory that the government provide basic services so as to assure at least a minimal level of living to such residents. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways: by offering some basic services with upgrading as an option or by offering temporary assistance to residents for a short period until further action (i.e., eviction or resettlement) can occur. Interviewees from MPWH and Maeen Directorate explained the options to me this way:

As I mentioned before, informal settlements are not officially encouraged, but when these communities are created it becomes imperative that the government respond to the basic needs of the residents. It is unavoidable to respond to the fundamental requirements of the residents because they are citizens of this country. The Ministry tries to improve the status of these settlements and upgrade them up to the level where they become a reasonable place for living (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

Despite their informality, we sometimes need to intervene immediately to rescue residents; for example, Mahwa Aser is a very blighted area and residents there are affected by chronic diseases; we had to provide some basic services to the settlement so matters would not become even worse. This is a temporary solution until we secure other alternatives to relocate the residents (Interviewee 5, January 10, 2010).

Public intervention, however, may occur for other reasons besides preventing difficult illness or even death among residents. Governments may provide support to

avoid international criticism or to satisfy donors. Yemen's largest cities have received international aid and the informal settlements located in these urban areas have therefore received at least some attention from the Yemeni government. More generally, public officials often believe they must manage informal settlements as best they can as part of broader efforts to secure national economic growth. Local authorities, in fact, work on improving climate investment in the country; managing the growth of informal settlements is part of the government efforts. Here is how one interviewee from GALSUP saw the matter:

We are more concerned about informal settlements in the major cities, especially Sana'a Municipality and Aden Governorate. These are the face of Yemen. They are directly linked to investment projects proposed by donors or by the government. In general, we try to be proactive and prepare plans for cities in order to avoid further growth or creation of informal settlements (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Governments may provide aid also to gain residents' political support in elections, according to one interviewee. He indicated that government officials must become more responsive to the demands of the poor for service delivery to win the vetoes of these citizens during Local Council elections:

When a campaign for Local Council election begins, candidates do their best to respond to the needs of Mahwa Aser residents. Of course, they need their votes to win the election but once the election ends, residents struggle to have access to those elected officials or to make them fulfill their basic needs (Interviewee 5, January 10, 2010).

Such treatment generates hostile feelings against local and national officials among the residents of informal settlements (as discussed in Chapter 5). They often believe that they have been used, exploited, or manipulated to fulfill the personal interests of government officials, which in return causes a loss of trust between Mahwa Aser residents and those figures. Besides the social and cultural backgrounds of residents, mistrust, as emphasized by Fernandes (2008) and Potsiou and Ioannidis (2006), makes residents less responsive to government calls and efforts to improve their living conditions. Once the informal settlement inhabitants become reluctant to heed government and international organization initiatives, their interest in learning is lost and much ground for understanding and teamwork with those officials is also lost. These conditions widen the already significant gap between residents and the government. Taken together, these dynamics constitute an additional burden for fragile governments (a self-imposed burden perhaps, but a heavy responsibility nevertheless) (Fernandes, 2008; Potsiou and Ioannidis, 2006) as well as on the aid institutions.

Yemeni Government Intervention and Responses to Informal Settlements in Sana'a, to Mahwa Aser in Particular, and to the Challenges Posed by Targeted Communities

Despite the fact that rapid growth of informal residential areas is taking place in the center and fringes of Sana'a (Al-Waraqi, 2009; World Bank, 2008; El-Shorbagi, 2007), the government has not established a legal framework or specific policy to deal with that challenge, according to the feedback of all interviewees. Their view is supported by a number of researchers (Madbouly, 2009; Sims et al., 2009; El-Shorbagi, 2008; 2007).

Yemeni government interventions in Mahwa Aser are not framed by clear policies or strategies. Existing regulations for informal settlements are embedded in the nation's housing policy, which itself is not well developed. The MPWH is still negotiating with aid institutions to develop a housing policy for Yemen. Several interviewees, including government officials from the MPWH and Maeen Directorate, explained that the nation has no fixed policies or legal framework concerning informal settlements. At the same time, no specific government agency is responsible for dealing with them.

The work on informal settlements is fully supported by the government as part of the overall development agenda of the constitution of the Republic. The central Government includes resettlement/removal programs in its annual budgets through housing programs (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

No specific government agency is responsible for initiating policies for informal settlements. ... Actually the World Bank offered its help because of the lack of intervention in those settlements. They remain an unaddressed issue in Yemen (Interviewee 2, January 04, 2010).

I cannot recall any particular policies about informal settlements anywhere in Yemen. We deal with them case by case. The only written regulations are found in the housing policy (Interviewee 5, January 10, 2010).

To fill the gap in the housing market, now occupied by informal settlements, i.e., affordable dwellings for the very poor, the Yemeni government has developed a multi-level housing strategy. That policy is meant to help high, middle, and low-income groups.

However, this approach has not addressed the needs of the poor successfully as they are simply financially unable to gain access to formal housing. Unless the government offers a relocation plan with fair compensation, this population will continue to build their homes on undeveloped state properties.

We developed affordable housing projects for low-income groups. Actually, we have already initiated some projects, such as Al-Saleh Residential Town, in a number of cities, including Sana'a...the project might not be accessible by the very poor, however, because the price of each housing unit exceeds their financial capability (Interviewee 2, January 04, 2010).

Yemen's market supply of formal housing cannot meet the growing demands of the needy for affordable shelter, so those individuals search for cheaper alternatives. They occupy state land and address their housing needs informally. Once the existence of informal housing becomes an unavoidable reality, local authorities embrace one of three approaches, according to respondents. The first method is to offer long-term improvements through full in-situ or upgrading programs, as explained by Sana'a Municipality and MPWH officials

Our upgrading projects for informal settlements in Sana'a were successful. People may look at them differently, but based on the limited budget of the country and the challenges it faces, these efforts should be recognized. We provided services. We paved roads. We improved the existing situation and upgraded the neighborhood so people could have better living conditions (Interviewee 4, January 03, 2010).

We work on providing services and basic infrastructure, improving the living condition of these areas, integrating marginalized groups into the mainstream urban society, and supporting poverty alleviation programs, which are offered by NGOs and CBOs (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

The second approach government officials have pursued is partial upgrading. Here the government seeks an urgent, yet inexpensive intervention to help informal settlement residents, such as those in Mahwa Aser. The government limits service delivery to the area to discourage further expansion as a preparatory step to relocation of residents. Such preventative procedures have been adopted in a number of Arab States, such as Syria (Fernandes, 2008) and Egypt (Sims, 2010) in addition to Yemen. However, once the opportunity arises, local authorities remove the residents from the area (usually with compensation or relocation plans). Interviewees from MPWH, Sana'a Municipality, and GALSUP, explained how this approach has worked in Yemen:

Once these informal settlements proliferate, the government (in collaboration with local authorities) becomes obliged to provide basic services to the residents, such as roads and health facilities ... through its development programs, the World Bank addressed its concerns in terms of providing basic services to these areas in the proposed programs for Sana'a in 2010-2012 (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

Among those locations that have serious problems, we only have one big location left (Mahwa Aser). This is the only neighborhood, where we still have large numbers from marginalized groups without adequate services. It is huge and it is

dense. It is also located on one of the more significant properties in Sana'a where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, the National Library, and the Supreme Court are located. ... Some basic services are provided, but for a temporary time, until we can find appropriate alternatives for relocating this community (Interviewee 4, January 03, 2010).

We try to limit the spread of informal settlements through several means including prevention of future growth, construction of public housing for low-income populations, relocation of affected families and individuals, enforcing planning and construction laws, etc. (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

The third approach to the overall challenge of informal settlements is relocation, either voluntary or involuntary. Interviewees suggested that whether moves were voluntary or not, the government compensates the affected families and individuals. Evictions can occur for different reasons, including safety concerns or alternative development plans. Most Sana'a residents who were relocated have been moved to the Sa'awan project, which has proved to be one of the successful resettlement projects, according to respondents. The project was initiated to absorb the families moved from a number of informal settlements. Government officials from GALSUP and Sana'a Municipality respectively, shared their views regarding this issue:

We identified an area in Sa'awan and built houses for the evicted residents. We moved people there and removed all informal houses, where residents used to live. ... Concerning informal settlements, Mahwa Khamsawarbaeen was removed recently; Mahwa Adhban was cleared because of multiple incidents of fire; and

part of Mahwa Aser—the vicinity of the presidential compound and the parliament—was cleared due to fires ... we suffer from the rapid growth of informal settlements nearby military camps, open areas, and state land; some informal areas were cleared while others were upgraded (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

So that was such an improvement for the areas because these were located in central areas in Sana'a, such as Mahwa Bab Al-Yaman (across from the Sana'a-Taiz bus station), Mahwa Khamsawarbaeen (across the bridge, which we just finished, from the Presidential Compound, and Al-Saleh Mosque), and informal areas that were located in the flood channel (close to the national airport). All areas were cleared and residents were relocated to Sa'awan. ... I believe we were able to resolve the problems of blighted areas, which we were suffering for decades. For, example, we resolved the problem of one area in Alwehdah Directorate where we cleared about 185 families. We also removed about 504 families from Mahwa Bab Al-Yaman to Sa'awan. ... We had long negotiations with residents; we offered incentives, including money. Many refused to move at the beginning just to get more compensation. ... We removed in one day about 496 families from 6:00 a.m. that day until the next day at 6:00 a.m. ... None of the residents was injured and none of them resisted, because the state was offering better alternatives (Interviewee 4, January 03, 2010).

Regarding the challenges of working in Mahwa Aser and other informal areas in Sana'a, including the difficulties created by the residents or by government politics,

policies and processes, respondents addressed a number of concerns that faced government officials working on informal settlements in Sana'a. The following sections lay out these major matters, as perceived by my interviewees.

Proliferation of informal settlements. The dynamic growth of informal communities constitutes an enormous challenge to the limited capabilities of Yemeni government agencies, as discussed in Chapter 3 through the lenses of the UN-HABITAT (2012) and the World Bank (2010a). The interviewee from GALSUP shared his agency's official view concerning that issue and explained why such growth was occurring:

Last Ramadan, we were surprised when street sweepers squatted on the land attached to the fence of our authority. All of a sudden, we found more than 50 families living here. They lived without water or electricity or any other services. ... It needs only one person to squat on any available plot of land then other fellows follow. They continue growing until it becomes hard to deal with them. They grow unbelievably. Sana'a Municipality carried out all the expenses (more than twenty million Yemeni Ryal) to resettle them in Sa'awan ... the accomplished work goes very slowly because of the huge number of informal settlements in Yemen and because of the lack of awareness among citizens about the importance of respecting planning regulations and construction standards (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Insufficient resources or funding. An acute shortage of funding is one of the main constraints that the Yemeni government continues to confront. The country relies heavily on the support of donors and international aid agencies, and is forced to direct its few available national resources to the most pressing problems, such as water shortages. More

bluntly put, informal settlements do not rank high on the country's list of priorities. The interviewee from the MPWH attributed that fact to scarcity of funding and then he shared the consequences of lack of resources on the work of his ministry.

Our work is limited because it is regulated by annual budget allocations. The insufficient budget hampers project implementation. ... Due to the nation's limited budget, we can only provide the most required services to keep the sector functioning ... the most important is funding. ... Even if we have very ambitious plans to eliminate/reduce informal settlements, they could not be implemented due to the shortage of resources (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

Weak law enforcement. Interviewees from the MPWH argue that law enforcement is routinely weak, leaving government professionals unable to impose planning regulations. Among others, UN-Habitat (2012), Dabbas and Burns (2011), World Bank (2010a), Al-Waraqi (2009), Madbouly (2009), Sims et al. (2009), Spruit (2008), and El-Shorbagi (2007) have offered the same perspective. They have argued that working with a fragile state often complicates land development and regulation. MPWH respondents shared their perspectives in this regard as follows:

Absence of any clear mechanism for enforcing planning regulations makes it easy for low-income people to seize public and private lands illegally, mostly the lands on the border of cities. They squat on them and build their houses in violation of construction standards and safety requirements. These settlements often lack infrastructure and social services, which are otherwise available in the center of cities. They become hotbeds of environmental pollution and social corruption (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

All of these informal settlements are located on State lands. Wherever there are military camps, you find informal settlements that evolve around them. They claim the land and build their houses in the absence of State control; then it becomes difficult to remove or to negotiate with them. ... The State is weak and is unable to enforce planning regulations or to keep track of the many newly established settlements (Interviewee 2, January 04, 2010).

Lack of coordination. A lack of coordination among governmental agencies often causes duplication, overlap, and delay of services and project delivery to informal areas (Ahsan and Quamruzzaman, 2009; Osborne and McLaughlin, 2002). It also becomes problematic to address the priorities and needs of the poor appropriately. The MPWH and GALSUP interviewees laid out some of the difficulties of this sort that they have encountered at their agencies.

Unsuccessful projects were usually in situ projects where we tried to fix the status quo of a neighborhood, basically, because of lack of coordination with other agencies. For instance, we were doing studies on Madinat Al-Lail but we were surprised that the Social Fund for Development was already working there and had installed a water and sewerage system. That was before we determined the candidate houses for demolition and which streets could be widened. There was no coordination between our agency and SFD. We contacted SFD's officials. We informed them that when they planned such projects for informal settlements, they should inform us first; so we could avoid duplication of our efforts and theirs and make the land available to them ... absence of coordination between our agency and other governmental and nongovernmental agencies and organizations

is one of the biggest concerns and challenges. ... We usually allocate state lands for public goods and services, such as providing land to the Ministry of Education to establish a school. But often, public agencies disregard our proposals and leave the properties undeveloped, a situation that inspires poor people to do *Bast-yad* on the available land (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

We had done more than 20 studies for one particular area. Then we found out that other agencies were doing the same type of work. There is no coordination at all among different government agencies (Interviewee 2, January 04, 2010).

Philips (2011) has argued the patronage system in Yemen has manipulated the poor and corrupted the nation's political structure. As explained by Huchzermeyer and Karam (2006), government elites tolerate the presence of informal settlements for political gain (votes) and then, when elected, disregard the communities. The GALSUP respondent commented on this scenario:

During election times for the local council, we are asked not to intervene in people's business so nominees can gain a higher number of voters. Consequently, people go and squat on state land, flood channels, empty properties, etc. Officials disregard the squatting behavior at the beginning and then they call for urgent actions to treat the problem later on (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Residents mistrust towards government officials. Informal settlement residents have come to distrust government officials over time (Fernandes 2008; Potsiou and Ioannidis, 2006). As a result, the residents have become reluctant to heed any efforts or calls by official figures. As one MPWH interviewee recalled:

When you visit these locations you can never get any information. Unless residents are convinced and unless a community leader or a member from the community introduces you, you will not be able to gain accurate information. They don't trust us. They will not deal with us. They will not even return our greeting (Interviewee 2, January 04, 2010).

The already developed perceptions of officials concerning informal settlement residents make attaining communication and understanding between the residents and government officials even more difficult (Fjeldstad et al., 2005; Nabutola, 2005). Prevailing social views of the residents of informal settlements, especially Akhdams, represent a key challenge facing the Yemeni government. Seif (2005) has argued that this group suffers from extreme forms of caste-like discrimination. She has also explained how these views and practices are deeply entrenched at all levels of Yemeni society, including among government officials. As one GALSUP official said, government officials and most in the general population believe that residents of informal settlements are uncivilized people and they survive only in chaotic environments so they can never be organized or become civilized:

The problem is that residents of informal settlements are not used to living in good homes. Once we moved them to Sa'awan, they went back to the street. This is a problem, which we suffer from. ... If the area is occupied by street cleaners then we remove all houses and move the residents to Sa'awan, but if the area was occupied by other citizens too, then we temporarily improve the roads network or surround the area with a ring road or a belt to prevent any further expansion. We mark the location as an informal area until the appropriate time for intervention

comes ... living conditions in Akhdam areas are unbearable for anyone. This affects the surrounding areas. If you noticed when they moved to what is called Mahwa Aser, the price of the land in the surrounding area fell dramatically, because people were afraid (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Lack of professional capacity. A lack of professional capacity often leads to land mismanagement and thus to more growth of informal areas (UN-Habitat, 2012). The interviewee from Maeen Directorate articulated his view regarding this concern as follows:

We do not have enough planners to deal with the numerous demands of the poor or with the rapid growth of informal areas. We request the help of experts and consultants from other countries. This imposes huge cost on us, given the fact that we deal with a very limited budget (Interviewee 5, January 10, 2010).

Problems to legally access the land. It is always a fine line for government officials to chart a course between the poor's rights to access affordable land and the State's legal right to protect its property as well as public health and safety, which creates a perpetual tension between the rights of the poor and the responsibilities of the State, as reflected in the interviewee responses. For example, the GALSUP respondent voiced this tension this way:

Clashes with residents, of course, happen. CBOs, NGOs and human rights organizations advocate for resident's rights, but at the end of the day these residents are illegally occupying land that is not theirs; it belongs to the public. The State finds itself in a position where it cannot do anything. It costs the State

an enormous amount of money to relocate or compensate the residents

(Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Conflicting interests. Once such an incident happens, it usually imposes delays on projects or remove them altogether from the government agenda. The research participant from Sana'a Municipality shared his agency's experience with the Local Council concerning funding a location to expand the Sa'awan resettlement project.

We are now in the process of preparing a location, which is an expansion of the former location (Sa'awan project). There is some conflict over the land. Local Council people want the property for building a mosque and we need the land for relocating more residents from informal settlements. ... We hope to convince these officials and the residents of Mahwa Aser to further proceed with second phase of Sa'awan project (Interviewee 4, January 03, 2010).

The Contribution of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs to Government Policies Concerning Informal Settlements

Non-state actors—NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs—have played significant roles in creating a legal framework for informal settlements that align with international standards and policies. To some extent, these organizations have assisted the Yemeni government by providing funding, experts, or best practices and examples from around the world, according to the World Bank (2010a), Madbouly (2009), and Sims et al. (2009). One MPWH interviewee offered several observations and concerns about international organization interventions in Yemeni policy on informal settlements.

The overall policy is decided at the center, this is a national strategy. For example, the resettlement program is decided jointly by all stakeholders headed by the

Ministry of Central Planning and International Cooperation (the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs/Minister of Planning and International Cooperation) (MOPIC) ... International agencies, like the World Bank, and some friendly international funds (Arab Fund For Social Development, Islamic Bank for Development, and Qatar Fund) support Yemen in this regard. The program is tailor-made to suit the circumstances of the regions as applicable. ... They all support Yemen in development projects and the MPWH is an implementing agency in support with MOPIC. ... Yemen often receives loans and grants from brotherly and friendly countries for improving housing plans and projects (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

Involvement

As argued above, the Yemeni government intervenes in informal areas in three different ways: partial upgrading, full upgrading, or resettlement programs. In general, community engagement is very important in terms of identifying the needs and the type of intervention selected in Yemen, as highlighted in the literature (World Bank, 2006; Sivam, 2003; Rakodi, 2001; Fekade, 2000). Community contribution is important in terms of sustainability and productivity (Rahman, 2008; Nabutola, 2007; Kamete, 2006) because people develop a sense of ownership once they receive services they have identified as significant. A number of respondents assured me that the Yemeni government considered community views in projects and plans for informal settlements. They emphasized that residents' feedback is significant in terms of helping the government rank order the type and degree of intervention among different informal settlements. This section discusses the adopted mechanisms for learning about the needs

of these communities, the types of services and projects they receive, and the mechanisms the government has adopted for sustaining these projects.

Methods for Learning About the Needs of Informal Settlement Residents

The new model of urban governance requires that local and national authorities make efforts to learn about the population's needs, especially the poor, and help them identify their priorities (Rahman, 2008; Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Chambers, 1997; 1995). Arnstein (1969) advocates that plans should be made by people and for the people, who will be most affected by them to ensure their longevity and sustainability. People will only support the provided services if they develop a sense of ownership concerning them. That legitimacy can be inspired by providing the services and projects that interest people and, in the case of informal settlements, by encouraging residents to take part in decision-making processes and to work on shared projects. Interviewees discussed a number of approaches they had employed to learn about residents' needs.

Conducting studies and surveys. This mechanism has been one important tool for identifying resident's needs and priorities in the work of MPWH, as indicated by an interviewee from that agency.

Based upon the requests of local authorities in different governorates, MPWH gets involved in conducting studies to address issues of informal settlements or the needs of their residents. According to the preparedness of the relevant authorities in the governorate, specific community needs, and the availability of funds, MPWH allocates appropriate properties to implement housing plans. Necessary studies and information are gathered, including community views on the plans, in MPWH's branch offices (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

In Taiz, for example, we did a number of studies and we classified the settlements based on a number of criteria, such as needs for intervention, needs for improvement, and needs for upgrading. Some locations need urgent intervention; some others need medium intervention; some of them are in need of partial intervention; some locations lack any hope of a decent life (no electricity, no water, no sewerage, no health clinic, etc.); while others have about fifty percent of these services ... also, we classified residents based on their social caste, gender, and income. So, based on this analysis and categorization we prioritize our intervention in each location (Interviewee 2, January 04, 2010).

Arranging meetings with community leaders, community-based organizations (CBOs), and NGOs. This is another mechanism by which government agencies may learn about the needs of informal community residents. A GALSUP interviewee explained the important role of CBOs and NGOs in advancing the work of his agency.

It is through community leaders, CBOs and NGOs that we sit with the residents and we visit the relevant locations. We have a special team for women to learn about their future needs and the problems they face. Also, we coordinate our work with the Local Council in the governorate through the governor or via the general secretary of the Local Council or local authorities in the targeted area. We coordinate our work with them and learn about their future needs; there is a special team called the social team, that is responsible for conducting studies about population and economic growth rates, future needs, existing services, and needed services. The team is also responsible for identifying a community's needs

for the next 20 years. Based on that we prepare our plan and submit it to the Cabinet, which allocates funding for each ministry that will be responsible for project implementation (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Service and Project Delivery to Informal Settlement Residents

The government's capacity to respond to informal settlement needs is mediated by the State's financial wherewithal and other concerns as well as resident's priorities. Interviewees indicated that surveys and meetings allowed the government to develop an appropriate intervention and allocate funds to it. These instruments help the government to determine the type and degree of intervention for different individual informal settlements. Comments on this concern from interviewees follow.

An interviewee from MPWH:

In fact, the development of a program for any neighborhood is decided through a number of factors, including total population, conditions of houses, and availability of infrastructure services. Not to forget, the major components to support the rehabilitation/upgrading of a project: finance requirements and government preparedness (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

A GALSUP interviewee:

Up to now, we have developed a number of projects for informal settlements, such as the Al-Saleh Project for low-income groups. ... That effort will help to limit the growth of informal areas. ... This is a recent direction for the State. As a government agency, we are responsible for the planning side. Then we submit our plans and recommendations to the relevant agencies. They are the responsible agencies for implementation (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

An interviewee from the Technical Affairs of Sana'a Municipality had this to say concerning government support of informal settlement residents:

We moved them to new houses and we offered the necessary support so they could live with dignity and enjoy a good quality of life. We gave them free houses and basic furniture, which is not worth mentioning, but we support them by moving them from environmentally deteriorated areas to new, healthy, and clean neighborhoods. ... Once the relocation process is done, Al-Saleh Corporation offers social services and activities to residents, such as educational activities, short courses, educating women and girls, sewing workshops, and things like that. We also prepare a piece of property in the same location for a social complex for the area. And, of course, many of the NGOs that work in such locations become very active in them for political gain, for particular purposes, for declaring certain statements when the opportunity arises, etc. (Interviewee 4, January 03, 2010).

Adopted Mechanisms for Sustaining Offered Projects and Services

Community participation, either in upgrading or resettlement programs, seems to be significant in sustaining offered projects or services, as discussed in an earlier section. Government officials from GALSUP indicated that sustainability should be assured through government, local authorities, and beneficiaries (targeted communities).

Our agency ensures the longevity of a project via its success. We feel the project is sustained once the beneficiaries gain the benefit of it ... at the end we are a planning agency not an implementing agency. Only implementation agencies,

such as the Housing Sector in the MPWH, are responsible for sustaining the projects and dealing with communities (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Collaboration

Collaboration between and among different key players—state and non-state actors alike—in informal settlements is also important to ensure successful project delivery to informal settlements. Many scholars including Perez-Ludena (2009), Nabutola (2007), Ahmed and Ali (2004), and Stone (1993; 1989) have emphasized the role of non-state actors, including residents, in improving governance practices to advance the living conditions of the urban poor. Since the new model of governance aims at reducing poverty and developing equal roles for all beneficiaries, there should be some forms of legitimate interaction among all stakeholders involved to define, shape, and implement policy agendas, according to DiGaetano and Klemanski (1999). Interviewees from GALSUP, MPWH, and Sana'a Municipality addressed the forms of collaboration and partnership among relevant local authorities, Mahwa Aser groups, and local and international organizations. They illustrated the approaches, which their agencies adopted to engage non-state stakeholders, including the residents and non-governmental organizations, in the planning and implementation processes.

Community Involvement and Collaboration between Different Local and International Key Players in Government Proposals and Plans Relevant to the Informal Communities

Yemeni national and local authorities have experimented with different approaches to get informal community populations involved in offered projects and services. Interviewees suggested that they have employed three basic strategies to involve residents in public programs undertaken on their behalf: by offering funding, by offering

construction materials, or by soliciting their active involvement in the work. Also, community feedback is significant in assisting the government to identify appropriate means for intervention in informal settlements, as indicated by a MPWH interviewee.

The Ministry undertook a few housing projects under the housing plans and strong community participation took place when the government sought to provide infrastructure to proposed relocation areas. Communities built their individual houses. The Sawad Sa'awan project (phase I and phase II) in Sana'a and Gholeil housing projects (phase I and phase II) in Hodaidah are good examples. Public demand and community involvement helped the government identify the type of intervention (upgrading or rehabilitation) suitable for several informal settlements (Suneina, Al-Khafgi, and Harat Al-Dakik in Sana'a) (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

Besides community participation, collaboration, and partnership between state and non-state actors is critical for establishing sustainable and successful projects for informal settlements. For instance, the involvement of the World Bank and GTZ in many informal settlements in Cairo has assisted the weak local authorities there and improved their performance in helping the poor (Hamilton et al., 2012). My interviews showed that local and national authorities have been involved in collaborations and partnerships with NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs; Respondents' observations revealed that consistent coordination among and between national and local authorities leads to better results in informal settlements (interviewees 1 and 3).

Collaboration with NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs. A GALSUP official explained the forms of collaboration between his agency and other national and international

organizations in his interview with me. He indicated that certain forms of coordination exist between his agency and other governmental and international organizations. Notably, this same individual also contended in the same interview that an almost complete lack of coordination characterized relationships between his agency and other government entities.

There is always collaboration and coordination between GALSUP and international organizations, such as GTZ and UNESCO. Also, there is coordination between GALSUP and other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Tourism, and Ministry of Environment. There is complete coordination between our agency and other agencies. ... We have a department that was created solely to address informal settlements and to find appropriate solutions for them. We did some special studies on informal settlements in Sana'a, Aden, and other areas. This was a collaborative work with Jordanian professionals for two months, which resulted in some solutions for informal settlements in Yemen. ... Funding usually comes either from governmental agencies or SFD or through other organizations and agencies, such as GTZ. It is usually not government funding only. It is mutual funding with others. ... We do not have a planning authority for cities but we have Local Councils and their implementation offices in all governorates. Local Council officials are elected, but officials in the implementation offices are appointed and they work closely with ministries in Sana'a Municipality to bring projects in informal settlements to completion. The Yemeni government provides part of the

funding, but whatever remains to address the total need is covered through donors' support (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

Collaboration among local and national authorities. Interviewees from MPWH and GALSUP highlighted some key factors influencing collaboration dynamics with other local authorities.

Yes, Madinat Al-Ommal in Hodaidah Governorate, constructed through the support of the local community, Madinat Al-Sakhaniya in Sana'a (Bani Heshaiha Zone), and the Hadda Housing project in Sana'a are very good examples of public-private partnership projects, which are undertaken by the Yemeni society to avoid informal settlements (Interviewee 1, February 02, 2010).

Of course, local community is represented by Local Councils and when we issue the master plan, the first step we usually do is visiting the governor in the governorate or the chair of the Local Council or local authority. We meet them and discuss the plan with them. We hear their perspectives and opinions; then we initiate workshops where we invite professional and implementation offices in the local authority to hear their future perspectives and the type of services they demand...our relation with them is formed for a long-term, from the beginning to the end of the project (Interviewee 3, February 13, 2010).

The outcome of the interviews in this research phase answered some of the research inquiries. At the same time, it opened new venues for exploring more the research problem. I moved to another research phase, thus, to gain better understanding

about Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a. A new set of themes and subthemes emerged from this effort, as discussed in the next section.

6.2.2. Major Research Phase

Two major themes and five sub-themes emerged in interviews conducted during the major research phase.

1. Policy: Current Framework/Intervention/Assessment/Future Plan
 - a. Official view on the existence of informal settlements in Sana'a and Mahwa Aser in its current location.
 - b. Responses and intervention of local authorities in informal settlements in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser in particular.
 - c. Government and other external actor intervention in setting up and implementing a policy framework for informal settlements.
2. Involvement: Service Provision/Challenges
 - a. Types of services offered to Mahwa Aser and other informal areas in Sana'a.
 - b. Current challenges facing the government in assisting Mahwa Aser and informal settlements in Sana'a.

The following discussion addresses these themes and subthemes with further details from the perspectives of the interviewees from the relevant government agencies.

Policy

As a follow-up analysis for the policy theme in the preliminary research phase, interview questions in the main research stage revisited the current governance approach to informal settlements in Sana'a as well as plans for informal communities in the City in

general and concerning Mahwa Aser in particular. The second round of interviews offered richer data and more supportive details on the policy issues arising from informal settlements in Yemen.

Official Views on Informal Settlements in Sana'a and Mahwa Aser in its Current Location

As discussed above, informal settlements are marked as such on official maps when they are acknowledged at all. This ambiguous standing arises from their illegal status (Durand-Lasserve, 2006). The first phase of interviews suggested that officials' views concerning informal settlements affected the actions they undertook concerning them; a finding also reported by Huchzermeyer and Karam (2006). Their perceptions also determined the services they were willing to provide residents of such areas (Sims, 2010; Fernandes, 2008). My second phase respondents from Ma'een Directorate and Sana'a Municipality provided more insight into these concerns.

We cannot offer more services to Mahwa Aser because it is occupying part of the government compound. People illegally occupied the land. They did not buy it. ... This is an informal occupation and was undertaken against the Master Plan. ... Paving roads is very difficult, especially within these narrow alleys. The area is illegal anyway and against the Master Plan so any effort for infrastructure is like wasting your money for no reason or investment for the future (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

We can describe Mahwa Aser as a blighted and black spot. Among many other black spots in the capital, Mahwa Aser is the worst. It is an unsuitable place for

living in all respects, as perceived by our agency. It needs an urgent intervention to secure other alternatives for residents, such as providing alternative housing outside the area or an official effort to improve or develop the area until it becomes a suitable environment in which to live (Interviewee 19, May 10, 2012).

Responses and Intervention of Local Authorities in Informal Settlements in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser in Particular

The official view, as the outcome of the first research stage revealed, determines the type of action local authorities in Sana'a Municipality might adopt. Feedback from the respondents in the main research phase from Maeen Directorate, Sana'a Municipality, and GALSUP shed more light on the responses of Sana'a's local authorities to Mahwa Aser as well as to other informal settlements in Sana'a. According to the interviewees, government responses vary from partial upgrading to eviction and resettlement, which supports the results from the preliminary research phase. These actions were undertaken for legal, safety, health, or development reasons.

Concerning Mahwa Aser, and as noted above, relocation is the government's long-term plan. In terms of service delivery, all provided services are temporary until arrangements for resettlement can occur. As suggested above, these official preventative procedures usually are taken to control the growth of informal areas and to prepare the targeted populations for future evacuation, as also highlighted in the Cairo (Sims, 2010) and Syrian cases (Fernandes, 2008). Interviewees observed that Yemeni local authorities are following the same process.

Since Mahwa Aser was established in violation of the Master Plan, eviction and resettlements will occur. Earlier we moved one group from Mahwa Aser to the

Sa'awan project. The Sa'awan project was built as a good model for a healthy neighborhood with solid residential units and wide streets. ... When and where we will remove the remaining population is hard to determine. It is difficult to evacuate them now. There is a plan to build a new project in Sa'awan within five years for them, but because of the current upheaval in the country it has been very hard to proceed with the plan. It requires huge amounts of money for constructing units, providing the necessary infrastructure, etc., which exceeds the capability of the State now ... it is a future plan but without a timeframe or framework. They will not be removed until we secure alternatives. ... We are concerned about not having other locations to resettle them if we choose to remove them from the area now (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

The removal plan exists and the provision of sewerage in the current settlement is only for protecting people's lives because having no sewer service might lead to the spread of fatal diseases, such as cholera, ... so that was a temporary solution; even the electricity was provided to them is temporary. ... These expenses are carried by the State itself. This is so, even though some say the State ignores these marginalized groups and has never taken care of them. ... I believe if the upheaval had not happened, the work of relocating these residents would have been achieved within two years (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

Mahwa Aser is included in our removal plan because it impedes rainwater drainage (the flow of rain) in an important area of the city. Its presence in that

particular location hinders installing the needed channels, streets, and services for our project (Al-Sailah Flood Protection Project). ... The role of our agency is to secure safe channels for rain. The management unit of our project made the required studies for rain drainage in the eastern part of the city, which includes Mahwa Aser. Our mission can be summarized as finding safe channels for the rainwater in the area, including Mahwa Aser; so the ultimate goal is to move Mawa Aser residents to allow smooth flow of rain (Interviewee 19, May 10, 2012).

For other informal settlements in Sana'a, there is no fixed policy. Eviction orders are usually accompanied by a resettlement plan and compensation.

The government has no projects or future plans to face these problems, which grow quite rapidly. There is no clear policy for these settlements; the absence of State controls inspires their rapid spread and increases the risks for their residents and the entire society. ... There is no programmed policy for dealing with informal settlements for the long-term. When actions are taken to move or relocate settlements, they occur for specific reasons; for instance, the government has proposed a project in a particular place, which requires the relocation of residents. The government compensates the residents and supplies the new location with basic infrastructure (Interviewee 19, May 10, 2012).

Our future plans are to secure safe channels for floodwaters and to compensate the affected population with money or alternative housing according to the market value at that time. This is for the unlicensed houses, but for the licensed houses

we will compensate them for the value of the construction and land. ... The most notable informal settlement is Mahwa Khamsawarbaeen, in which more than 300 informal houses were built in the flood channel. We relocate these settlements from such areas if they hinder rainwater drainage (Interviewee 19, May 10, 2012).

My interviewees attributed the absence of a clear long-term policy to a number of factors, such as lack of available information concerning informal settlements, absence of urban indicators, inefficient planning policies, lack of coordination among different government agencies, rapid growth accompanied by slow planning procedures, and too little community participation in planning choices. In fact, all of these issues represent part of the fragile state or poor governance of urban areas. A number of scholars, including Rahman, (2008), Sivam (2003), Rakodi (2001), Fekade (2000), and Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) have encouraged governments to look for new governance models to better manage informal areas. A GALSUP official shared his views on this issue with me:

Local government has no statistics or urban indicators. It does not have housing strategies or plans to accommodate low-income households. ... Local government agencies represented by the GALSUP are seeking to produce community neighborhood plans to control the growth of these settlements; so they do not grow beyond certain boundaries. The government ensures that water, electricity, and telephone networks are provided to informal communities. Many streets are paved, but a continued lack of funding and unorganized local authorities make it difficult to improve the lives of the residents... unless decentralization takes place based on good governance and political will, the

obstacles and problems related to urban planning will remain complicated. In my view, the government needs to adopt the recommendations of the (Habitat II) 1996 conference in Istanbul on Human Settlements, which recognized the importance of adequate shelters, in achieving sustainable urban development (Interviewee 22, May 09, 2012).

Government and External Actor Intervention in Creating and Shaping a Policy Framework for Informal Settlements

As noted just above, several interviewees in the two stages of this research emphasized that the Yemeni government has no clear policy concerning informal settlements. The only applicable legislation is included within the nation's general housing policy framework. However, intervention by international and regional funding and aid agencies has encouraged the nation's government to pay more attention to these settlements and to help the poor through upgrading or resettlement programs. Examples of such institutions and their initiatives include the World Bank and Cities Alliance efforts to assist informal settlements in Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Al-Hodaidah, and Mukalla. Interviewee 19 explained how the funding of one aid international organization pushed Sana'a Municipality to think about safe relocation alternatives while removing the residents of an informal settlement from the flood pathway.

The role of our agency is to provide alternative housing; an example is Mahwa Khamsarbaeen. We moved all of that informal community's residents to a new residential area specifically built for that purpose, according to the required terms and conditions of the funding agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). They required steps to ensure the new construction,

which were developed in a way that supported the Flood Protection Project in that area. This same general plan and process had actually occurred too when we compensated residents with new houses in Sa'awan or with money equal to the value of each residential unit from which they were relocated (Interviewee 19, May 10, 2012).

An interviewee from GALSUP explained part of the efforts, which international organizations undertook for helping the Arab States, including Yemen, to improve government responses toward the growth of informal settlements via exchanging experiences and sharing successful stories.

Local authorities and GALSUP in collaboration with Local Councils intervene in informal settlements to implement adopted action plans. International agencies, such as the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat), Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI), and the World Bank have organized several regional Arab conferences, seminars and workshops in Yemen, Cairo, and Istanbul to exchange experiences between the Arab States and discuss urban development problems confronting the region. Yemeni government representatives participated in these meetings. (Interviewee 22, May 09, 2012).

Involvement

The preliminary research stage described the importance of non-state actors' roles in improving government policies and practices in informal settlements in Sana'a by providing funding, exchanging expertise and experiences, sharing proposals and engaging in program implementation. Respondents' feedback in the major research phase

emphasized that significant role, but it also demonstrated that the involvement of those actors in Mahwa Aser is presently limited.

Type of Services Offered to Mahwa Aser and Informal Areas in Sana'a

The types of services an informal settlement receives can play an important role in determining the degree of improvement the community can attain. Respondents reported that Mahwa Aser received some assistance from CBOs and NGOs. However, these organizations offered very basic commodities, such as food and clothing. Some organizations aimed at raising the awareness of the informal community's residents about their rights as Yemeni citizens and some others aimed at integrating them into the larger society. As one interviewee from the Maeen Directorate noted:

There is coordination with CBOs and I think some organizations have already worked with the residents of Mahwa Aser. ... Concerning the local organizations, all that they care about is that little food supply, which they offer for this community. ... I imagine all these organizations are doing the same, worrying about their small assistance effort. They offer this little food aid but never care about education or other things ... because many aid organizations have left the area in the first week of the upheaval, we adopted another strategy. We encouraged establishing local organizations from the same area and from the same segment of the population. They raise the awareness of communities and organize them when aid is distributed. They take charge of distributing the aid so the interaction becomes between members of the same population (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

Local government officials I interviewed were generally unhappy about the intervention of NGOs and INGOs in Mahwa Aser. They did not appreciate the involvement of a number of INGOs and NGOs because they believed that these organizations were hindering the government's plans and making allegations concerning human rights issues for no good or defensible reason. In addition, they believed these organizations were exploiting the poor and taking advantage of their misery to serve their interests and for personal or organizational gain. Interviewees, from Maeen Directorate and Sana'a Municipality respectively, suggested:

There is no obvious interest by international organizations or NGOs that can be mentioned in regards of informal settlements, except for passing criticism in the media about the living and hygiene conditions of these areas or about the status of residents during the evacuation process. ... When a removal of unlicensed houses in the flood channel happens, these organizations intervene and cause trouble from a humanitarian perspective without being conscious of the great risk on residents' lives (if these settlements remain there). In other words, their work is to raise problems and file complaints without acknowledging the risk for keeping these houses and without offering practical solutions (Interviewee 19, May 10, 2012).

We regret that some international organizations that expressed an interest in offering help to Mahwa Aser have adopted unclear stands. They did not rely on offering help to the needy people but they began advocating for resident's rights, etc. We were advocating for them at the same time. In particular, there was a

British organization that has one of its employees, he is British, who committed to collect funding from embassies to support this community, but he did not do anything. We learned afterwards that he offered a small supply of medicines to a clinic and then he disappeared. We have not seen any significant work from these organizations, except for ambiguous activities that made residents suspicious of their efforts. In fact, residents came and filed complaints against them (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

Current Challenges Facing Government Efforts in Mahwa Aser and Other Informal Settlements in Sana'a

Besides the challenges raised in the preliminary research phase, respondents in the major research stage shared additional concerns that obviously affected their work in Mahwa Aser and/or on other informal settlements. Respondents claimed that working in the informal community was quite challenging and problematic. For example, interviewees reported that Akhdam or marginalized groups always demanded special attention and additional services; their social and personal behavior was also often problematic; they were reluctant and resistant to comply or assist with any efforts undertaken by the government; and they were aggressive and unorganized. A number of scholars have attributed such behaviors to different causes, such as a reaction to political mistrust and repeated exploitation (Fernandes, 2008; Potsiou and Ioannidis, 2006), and social and cultural reasons, in particular, social exclusion (Habitat International Coalition, 2006; Seif, 2005). My interviewees discussed their view of these challenges in serving the majority of Mahwa Aser residents:

Social and cultural behavior concerns. A Maeen Directorate official shared some of his views of these challenges with me.

Of course, many problems exist within Mahwa Aser, especially at the service level. The group that called themselves marginalized is always trying to get special services different from others. ... Their social background affects their way of thinking so they don't care about educating themselves. They only care about how to collect money. All family members work, from the child to the elderly. They work in different fields, including begging and street cleaning. The capacity for integrating them into the educational process is very weak. Their interest in education is small. (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

Their living conditions would never be improved because they spent their earnings on consumables and luxury commodities. This is a common culture among Akhdam. ... They didn't care about their personal hygiene. They did not even try to improve their social status. It is the skin color and mindset problems, which they suffer from. They believed they were less than others. In addition, their educational level was very low. They neglected their personal appearance. They never cared about the hygiene of their houses. They lacked ambition...most often they believed that education was not valued as far as money. It is very difficult to change their behavior while they live together. Only when we disperse them can we begin to address this set of problems. Yes, disperse them and integrate them into the society, improve their income, and monitor their daily

personal hygiene so that we can lift them up (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

The Directorate is continually confronted by informal community resistance to allowing their children to attend public schools. They demand special schools for their children only, which is beyond the limited budget of the Directorate.

However, we built one school for them, right behind this building. The Revenue of Local Administration funds it. The Administration provided teachers, books, and furniture. We facilitated everything, but the residents did not do their part. Students never continued their education. ... Some parents force their child to get out and go to beg on the streets; ... it all about the cultural level and mindset of those we are trying to assist (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

We suffer from the presence of NGOs in these areas a lot. I mean, organizations go there then they come back to us to complain. ... Aid agencies go there by themselves. Once they get there, random gatherings often evolve around the workers and sometimes aid distributors get beaten up. ... Everyone wants to get the aid and take others share so the residents fight among themselves to obtain it. They fight and curse each other, which makes aid organizations run from the area and never come back; ... it begins with a random gathering then often becomes a direct assault on the workers (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

Instability concerns. During the recent upheaval security concerns were some of the biggest challenges because the relative chaos resulted in a significant deterioration of living conditions in Mahwa Aser and Sana'a's other informal settlements. It hindered the government's efforts to improve the living conditions of the poor in informal settlements. It also caused a significant delay in proposed projects for Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a by a number of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs. Instability in the country caused a reduction in other aid as well, which Yemen received from outside agencies and donors. These factors worsened the living environment in these communities dramatically. The nation's upheaval also resulted in a significant loss of jobs. Many Mahwa Aser residents were laid off during the unrest and so, lost their livelihood source. Interviewees from Maeen Directorate and Sana'a Municipality indicated that the special conditions in the country at that time led to more violations of State lands and laws by the general population, including the poor in informal communities.

During the crisis, many residents in Mahwa Aser and in informal settlements lost their jobs, which worsened the living conditions of these groups (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

The upheaval only amplified the problem of under and unemployment. Police agencies were busy with the security issues in the city. Requests and applications for a permit for new construction were suspended, which opened opportunities for a new expansion of unlicensed construction and more *Bast-yad* on State lands.

Also, the wide spread phenomenon of residents' owning weapons has empowered them in their dealings with the State. So the State became unable to prevent

violations of State land without provoking potentially violent incidents
(Interviewee 19, May 10, 2012).

Mistrust and lack of transparency This was an issue as well. Mahwa Aser residents do not trust government officials, a fact that makes it more difficult than it otherwise might be to discuss government plans with residents. Since government officials have exploited and manipulated residents of the neighborhood in the past. As a result, the residents have lost their trust in the government and become more reluctant to engage with any efforts to help them. Interviewees reported this and some scholars have noted it in the literature as well (Fernandes, 2008; Potsiou and Ioannidis, 2006). Interviewees from Maeen Directorate, for example, explained the difficulties faced by the residents of Mahwa Aser.

Residents are convinced to move to another location. We had a meeting with them. They are just waiting for the new houses. They already have an idea; we sat with and talked with them but we are still facing the mistrust problem. Also, discussing uncertain plans with them may cause many unexpected problems with the residents by establishing what later turn out to be unrealistic or unrealized expectations (Interviewee 18, September 11, 2011).

6.3. Conclusion

The perspectives of government officials provided in this chapter provided a portrait of how Yemeni local and national authorities handled the presence of Mahwa Aser in its current location as well as the more general issue of informal settlements in Sana'a. Interviewee responses outlined the range of actions Yemeni governments have taken to regulate and assist informal settlement populations. Officials also shared the

strategies they have employed to solicit the active involvement of other stakeholders—NGOs, INGOs, IGOs, and targeted communities—in planned projects and policies for these communities. Officials sketched a number of challenges endemic to settlement residents, to government capacities and to the nation’s governance crisis that shaped what they were able to do to address Mahwa Aser’s needs. Chapters 7 and 8, to which I turn next, will highlight the specific roles of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in informal settlements in Sana’a and Mahwa Aser in particular.

CHAPTER 7

Perspectives of Non-governmental Organizations, International Non-governmental Organizations, and International Governmental Organizations in Yemen Regarding Mahwa Aser and Informal Settlements in Sana'a

One of the main foci of this dissertation was to explore the specific roles of different stakeholders in governance in Mahwa Aser and in informal settlements in Sana'a. This part of the analysis sheds more light on the particular roles played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and international governmental organizations (IGOs) in helping the population of informal settlements in Sana'a, especially the residents of Mahwa Aser. Seven respondents (6 staffers in the preliminary phase and one individual in the major research phase; Tables 4 and 7) from NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Sana'a reflected their organization's stance, perspective, and involvement in informal settlements in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser.

This chapter examines three key issues that I explained in Chapter 6: government intervention in informal settlements, engagement and partnership among the key stakeholders in Mahwa Aser, and community residents' involvement in government policies and programs. The following discusses these concerns in the preliminary research phase.

7.1. Preliminary Research Phase

As I analyzed the responses of the interviewees in this group, three major themes and several sub-themes emerged:

Themes

1. Intervention: Types/Approaches/Empowerment/Challenges
 - a. Types of assistance and aid project organizations offered to Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements.
 - b. Characteristics of the approaches these organizations have adopted to learn about the needs of the residents and to craft ways to respond to those requirements.
 - c. Strategies to encourage community involvement and ways to make the voice of informal residents heard by public officials.
 - d. Challenges these organizations have encountered to assist informal community residents in Sana'a, including those in Mahwa Aser.
2. Collaboration with Government and Other Organizations: Types/Strengths/Setbacks
 - a. Forms of collaboration.
 - b. Advantages and/or disadvantages of different forms of collaboration.
 - c. Differences and similarities between organizations concerning the types of services that are offered to informal settlements.
3. Policy: Contribution/Assessment
 - a. The roles these organizations play in the formulation of government policy concerning informal settlements.

The following discussion and analysis is organized around these themes and sub-themes as they relate to the key research questions explored in this dissertation and to the three principal areas addressed in Chapter 6.

Intervention

The role that NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs play in informal settlement is quite substantial in terms of service delivery and poverty alleviation programming (UN-Habitat, 2012). But, the multiple actors, which include state and non-state actors, need to work closely within a clear framework to ensure successful, yet sustainable, delivery of services to informal settlements, as Amoli (2011), Otiso (2003), and Wust et al. (2002) argued. Widianingsih (2005) has also emphasized that governments need to acknowledge the roles of local and international organizations as well as those of the affected communities in informal settlements. Pierre (2011) has explained that ignoring the contributions of any of these actors might result in a failure of project delivery to informal settlements; it might also result in a waste of resources.

Government respondents in the preliminary and major research phases acknowledged the role of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in informal settlements in Sana'a, as discussed in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, some government respondents, such as interviewees 2, 18, and 20, criticized the involvement of these organizations in informal communities. These respondents accused the organizations either of exploiting the residents for the advantage of their agencies or of advocating for the human rights of the residents without real understanding of the government's ongoing efforts and challenges.

Respondents in this group—NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs inside and outside of Yemen—shed more light on the particular roles of their organizations in Mahwa Aser and in informal settlements in Sana'a. According to these interviewees, the greatest part of their organizations' work focuses on the urban and rural poor countrywide. They focus on particular concerns, including poverty alleviation, service and infrastructure provision,

community empowerment, water shortages, good governance, and gender. The shared aim of these organizations is to assist poor communities regardless of their legal or illegal status. The interviews revealed that until recently the agendas of these organizations had not identified informal settlements as a specific challenge. Therefore and for a long time, informal settlements were included in the broader agendas of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen (e.g., via provision of basic services and infrastructure, training and workshops, and food and clothes supply), but had not been singled out for intensive efforts or special projects. Some respondents shared their views on that particular issue, as follows.

We are working with them under the big umbrella of the civil society. We are not targeting these specific groups. We are working with government in terms of engaging civil society to demand their rights, to participate in planning and everything. When it comes to district plans, governorate plan, national plans, we try to engage those people with us to be part of the entire process because their rights can be articulated very clearly ... we do not look at informal communities as a separate entity. If we do, then this is not sustainable. It can never be sustainable unless we look at them as part of the entire society. Yes, they need more attention but we have to look at the civil society as a whole because when we talk to government, we cannot say we want this or we do not want this. We want only the engagement of marginalized groups. We will not have a stand then. We want the entire civil society to be engaged with the government in decision-making and then among the civil society we can always enhance the role of the

marginalized groups (indirectly work with them). ... We are, again, not focusing on marginalized groups per se (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

We are here targeting the marginalized community, the poor communities in general. So, as a country, as a national capital, our aim is to end poverty. This is the big vision and our mission is to be a significant partner on ending poverty countrywide (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

We have not done that much on informal settlements so far ... we haven't done much per se, directly (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Although many IGOs, INGOs, and NGOs had not included informal settlements in Yemen on their agendas directly until recently, interviewees nonetheless argued their organizations were playing a key role in informal settlements in Sana'a in general and in Mahwa Aser in particular. A discussion of their efforts follows next.

Types of Assistance and Project Aid Organizations Offered to Mahwa Aser and Other Informal Settlements

According to my interviewees, the types of assistance that informal settlements in Sana'a receive depend largely on the main mission of the assistance organization in Yemen. For example, the main mission of Oxfam Yemen is to advocate for the rights of the poor and to support good governance and gender equity. The work of the organization includes marginalized populations whose residents mostly live in informal settlements, but these communities are not Oxfam's main focus. Oxfam Yemen helps the residents of informal settlements indirectly through education programs (i.e., teaching the residents

how to demand their rights and training CBOs to reflect the voice of marginalized groups in the government). According to the Oxfam officers I interviewed, this approach was designed in the past to assist informal settlement residents. They claimed that once community members were aware of their rights, the government could be forced to provide a decent life for the poor.

We support the civil society and community so these marginalized groups can have NGOs to represent them and to demand for their rights. ... We help to strengthen the community by providing them with support, organizing them to demand their rights, and training. It includes advocacy and lobbying. This took two year or three years work ... we train people to do their assessment for themselves or we train the civil society organizations to do the needed assessment. What community do they want? What are the needs of the community? What are they suffering from? What are their priorities? ... The type of work we have taken comes with a long change because we felt that's the most sustainable. If I'm going to provide it to you, the water supply, the health center, the education center, whatever you need for tomorrow, who will come to provide it for you? You will wait for somebody to provide it to you but we work with them to organize them, to mobilize them, to demand for their rights, and that is the main target: sustainability for the services they get (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

We worked with marginalized groups in capacity building and raising awareness in many areas. We worked with the civil society organizations networks countrywide (Interviewee 9, February 14, 2010).

Besides raising awareness and advocating for rights of the poor, Oxfam Yemen provides some basic services to informal settlement areas, such as education and health care centers, as articulated by one of Oxfam's officer's in Yemen:

Because they are illegal in the settlement and they don't have any kind of official paper or documents, we are providing them with basic services water, electricity, education, health care center, all basic services...we tried in the plan to ensure, at least, that the government provides some kind of services nearby their settlements (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

Other organizations, such as the World Bank and Social Fund for Development are involved in Sana'a's informal communities and in Mahwah Aser in different ways. They support informal communities directly and indirectly; directly through installing basic services and infrastructure, such as water, schools, sanitation, sewer lines, and paving works; indirectly through supporting government projects, improving government performance, offering small grants to residents, and supporting CBOs and NGOs in informal settlements.

Each organization whose representatives I interviewed was involved in different programs, such as partial upgrading, full upgrading, in situ improvements and resettlement. Officers from the SFD and the World Bank office in Yemen shared their organization's experience in these programs:

The Social Fund for Development improves the hygiene and ecological situation in informal settlements; we executed some projects there (sewage systems, water supply, schools, paving alleys, squares, entrances, etc.) Our intervention benefits the residents of those settlements; it improves their living conditions, housing and environment ... we work on raising the awareness of students and teachers to accommodate the students of the poor population, Akhdam (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

We are working only on the right of way; in areas like water, sanitation, sewer lines, and paving works; this kind of work ... basic services for the areas. We don't touch any buildings because that will trigger what we call *resettlement* and this is very complex (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Although the World Bank's involvement in Yemen is relatively recent, it is undertaking a number of projects to help the nation's residents and to assist the Yemeni government. The Integrated Urban Development Projects (IUDP), Port Cities Development Projects (PCDP), and Flood Protection Projects (FPP) were among the main initiatives included in the World Bank's agenda for Yemen's informal settlements. Most of the World Bank's current efforts, however, are targeting Taiz. Government officials acknowledged the World Bank's efforts in my interviews. The World Bank officers I interviewed (interviewee 6 and 7)—provided more information about the Bank's role in informal settlements in Yemen:

Now, we have a project under preparation. To this particular extent, what we call an *Integrated Urban Development Project* ... it actually will be implemented in

Taiz. Three informal settlements will be upgraded in Taiz. These are the first such projects the World Bank will finance in the country ... This is for about two million USD, I think, it will provide support to a number of communities who are actually living in informal settlements. We are trying to give them some kind of loans; it's not supposed to be repaid so they can make a living (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Actually, we are only concerned with the ones in Taiz where we built the houses ... we have one project in Taiz, which is the *Protection of Taiz City* from floods; so in the flood where there was this settlement of marginalized group and every time the flood comes, these are destroyed. So, the government decided to build houses in Taiz (in an area called Al-Berarah). ... Of course, it could not accommodate all the people but the project was more concerned about those who really live in the way of the floods (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

Sana'a was also included in different World Bank programs, such as those addressing water shortages and disaster management. In the 2000s, the World Bank sought to upgrade a number of informal settlements in the city, including, at least initially, the Mahwa Aser neighborhood. Nonetheless, the World Bank dropped the upgrading projects for Sana'a's informal settlements in 2008 for a number of reasons, including conflicts among and a lack of readiness of, relevant government agencies.⁴⁷ The project that aimed, at one point, to upgrade a number of informal settlements in Sana'a was reexamined and the funds were converted to support the upgrading program for informal settlements in Taiz. World Bank respondents (interviewees 6 and 7)

⁴⁷ More discussion about this issue is provided throughout this chapter.

explained the shift in the organization's agenda by citing a lack of coordination and conflicts among relevant local authorities:

Madinat Al-Lail and Mahwa Aser, for example, were part of the project I told you about, which we are preparing now. When we take a settlement, we take the whole area. We cannot take one part of it and leave the other. It will be difficult. You don't have an excuse to do that. ... The areas were selected, three areas out of five areas were selected; some interventions were already there by other projects. They were already started by organizations such as the Social Fund for Development or others. They already started ... since there're already people working on that, it's not wise also to double the efforts. To do the same as others are doing. ... These areas were part of the new Integrated Urban Project but they were dropped with one more settlement in Sana'a. Sana'a was included with five and Taiz with three but the Sana'a informal settlements were dropped from the project. Maybe there will be another separate project for Sana'a. Maybe! But, I don't know but I hope that they can be picked up by other projects (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Sana'a was dropped. I think local authorities—Technical Affairs at Sana'a Municipality—were not ready to pick up the World Bank's initiatives so the fund was allocated to a different city, I think Taiz (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

In terms of its indirect involvement, the World Bank offers small grants to the poor, including marginalized communities as well as to the NGOs that work with those settlements, as the respondents of the World Bank office in Yemen observed:

We have the Small Grants Program (SGP) and we try to include in the applications some of those marginalized groups and NGOs. So, we actually funded, previously, NGOs from Aden and Taiz, Al-Hodaidah and Sana'a ... for other settlements in, for example, Sana'a or other governorates we announce the Small Grants Program. They have the choice to apply and get some funding and, in fact, there is a union in Sana'a that's responsible for this marginalized group network ... we started working with the marginalized group in Taiz extensively and we have funded more than one NGO in Taiz governorate. ... The World Bank has been instrumental in those marginalized groups getting more funding from other donors also. ... I don't think we offer anything else on those settlements but in those settlements when they were built, there was a recreation center, a small clinic to be supported by the government and the community. They have to work also to make sure they have members in the recreation center but we don't really provide anything else. I don't think so. ... I think they built these houses and resettled people and I think that was the contribution of the Bank because we cannot go and do everything (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

CARE International Yemen respondents suggested that CARE provides basic services that aim to improve the living conditions of the poor in informal settlements. CARE Yemen was involved in Mahwa Aser in different ways. The respondent explained that his organization had adopted a different approach in helping that settlement's

residents. While providing some of the basic services (e.g. water, sanitation, and health care), CARE Yemen worked in two directions simultaneously: building the capacity of the existing organizations in the settlement and building the capacity of the community itself. The INGO has sought to help the community to generate income by establishing projects designed for that purpose:

We have set up a project in Mahwa Aser (Algoba Alkhhdhra) but after three years of working with them, almost four years, when we left them, everything collapsed. We set up literacy classes up there; we worked with the city. We established an NGO there and provided capacity building to them, provided them with income generation projects. We provided a lot of things, such as training. They were part of the whole set-up, from the design to the proposal until we get to the evaluation stage but when we left them, things collapsed, education stopped and literacy classes stopped. The only thing that is still running, the income generation project, because they get money out of it, which is the water trucks. The agreement was that the profit should be divided. Half of the profit goes to the organization to run its activity and to expand and the second half should be paid as salary for the literacy teachers, but they preferred after we left them to use all profit for them. Leaving nothing for the organization; and this is where we have this unsuccessful project. ... We've done everything on that so, from capacity building for the existing organizations there, to literacy activity (as the majority of them are illiterate), to water (if the water is an issue), to sanitation (if it's an issue), hygienic activity (if it's an issue as well). We tried to address the needs evident in the communities (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Characteristics of the Approaches these Organizations have Adopted to Learn About the Needs of the Residents and to Craft Efforts to Respond to those Requirements

A number of scholars and international organizations, such as Amoli (2011), Pierre (2011), COHRE (2006), and UN-Habitat (2006) have emphasized community participation as an effective approach for successful delivery of projects and services to informal settlements. However, local and international organizations need to learn about the needs of the end users (the residents) in order to choose appropriate interventions. Government official's responses in the previous section addressed a number of ways these individuals have sought to learn about community needs: including surveys, studies, and meetings with targeted communities. NGO, INGO, and IGO interviewees in Yemen articulated very similar mechanisms for learning about community needs. They indicated that contact occurs directly with communities or through community leaders. Based on survey results, meetings and workshops, resident's needs are articulated and integrated into these entities' plans. The organizations design interventions according to identified priorities and available funds and resources, that is, they react to perceived needs as resources permit.

Officers of CARE International Yemen and SFD respectively, argued that community surveys were useful ways to become aware of neighborhood needs:

There are two ways of learning about the community's needs; one is by conducting surveys. That has to be done twice, once during the design stage and a second time during the start-up phase of a project, to incorporate what might have changed because when we submit the proposal, it might take one year to get it approved. So, it might need some changes. We have to conduct the baseline

survey to ensure the results we obtained at the beginning are still appropriate. The second way of learning is through evaluation. When we evaluate projects, we always include community surveys as a part of those efforts and we learn from them concerning what we still need to address and how we might best do so. Was our effort good? Was it not good? There might be need for modifications, a need to change directions or a need to involve additional stakeholders or address allied problems, or all of these things (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

We learn about their needs through requests by community groups and through conducting surveys (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

Interviewees 7 and 10) also suggested that community consultations were a key part of their organizations' strategies to assist Mahwa Aser residents.

Yes, especially in the informal settlements, there are a lot of community consultations. Usually they hire a consultant, social consultant, to go to the communities, meet with them and try to understand what their needs are and also try to help them organize themselves into groups in the area (i.e., four, five groups elect a leader). Then this leader will speak on their behalf. Consultants will go to these places and have workshops with them, discuss with them, and try to explain to them the design of the area. This is what we are going to do and what do you think. ... We are doing this in informal settlements; a lot of community consultation. Yes, they have a very long wish list. We cannot accommodate all of them, but at least we do some of them. We tell them. Look! We cannot do all of this. We do only this and this, so that. We're also trying to get feedback from

them. What they want, especially from the women. So, what do they want? What are their actual problems? ... I assure you that you cannot understand this unless you go and meet with the people, and you do proper consultations with them (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

We visit the communities. We explain the idea of the project to the beneficiaries, to the community leaders, and sometimes not just to the community leaders, and then we explain and then we get their perspective on what we want to do. We always say, 'We will visit you on this certain day.' To the leaders, for sure, the contact people in that community. We say, 'we will visit you and please can you organize a meeting of representative so for all ages and groups in your community?' We do this so we can start to get the views of everyone. We often tell them that the purpose of our meeting to provide them with the latest information that we just got from donors, and interested agencies. Then we start to map with them their needs and priorities and then we start to develop a complete proposal. ... We increase their ownership by proceeding in this way (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

The World Bank's respondent (interviewee 6) suggested that designing community surveys and consultations were among the initial steps the World Bank always takes to identify where a project's budget should be spent:

We do a survey before that and we pick our project after we have the survey. We have to do a study first and go to this, and we have this social study for all of these settlements and based on that, for example, in Taiz we have 22 settlements

so how did we pick the three? The one we think is the worst and has the most needy. We look first at the number of people living there. This is, this is one, I think, of the criteria and then the conditions, ... how large is the area, for example? Is it small? Is it big? So, there are a number of criteria that social scientists will specify. For example, in Taiz and Sana'a, we hired consultants to do the community consultation. So, she did this in Taiz and she did it in Sana'a and based on her study, a few areas were selected; these became the Bank's highest priority according to different criteria. ... This is one of the means, to conduct this kind of social study. ... Based on that we know what kind of intervention you want to intervene. Before that we cannot do anything. After that then you have this consultation. When you have a consultant who does the study then you will be able to proceed...based on what they design, based on what people give for the design. ... Consultation comes after that (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

According to the staffer I interviewed, CARE International Yemen employs similar techniques for learning about community needs, including surveys, case studies, and stories shared by residents:

In the survey, it's open for everything and then we ask for prioritizing because you always have limited funds, limited resource, you can't address everything but then the community itself tries to prioritize what should be addressed first. Also, case studies, we use case studies, stories, something like that from people talking about what have been changed? What is their experience on that? What do they think about the future? (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010)

A respondent from the World Bank further shared her organization's experience in Yemen. She said consultation with the government and civil society organizations was significant to the World Bank to identify the priorities of the government as well as those of targeted communities.

We do a lot of meetings, consultations. We have the three-year program the Country Assistance Strategy. What do we do? We have consultations. We invite not just government's representatives, but also civil society folks. We want to know what the civil society thinks about this program (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

Strategies to Encourage Community Involvement and Ways to Make the Voice of Informal Residents Heard by Public Officials

As discussed earlier in this chapter, some organization representatives I interviewed argued that educating the residents of poor communities about their rights and assisting them in demanding those can definitely make a difference in the lives of the poor. Some organizations have a direct focus on affected communities, but other aid agents are seeking to strengthen the roles of NGOs to serve those populations. Either by strengthening the voice of communities or the voice of NGOs, the hope of these agencies is that residents of informal settlements will ultimately gain the benefits of the interventions undertaken. Those interviewed from Oxfam Yemen, CARE International Yemen, and SFD for this study articulated their efforts in engaging communities in their plans.

We tried to work with them, organizing them and the main thing we tried again is to strengthen the voice of the poor not only by establishing NGOs or

strengthening their work but also by developing a network among those NGOs.

... If these people do realize that if they come together, they can demand their rights and they can make pressure on government; ultimately, they can get it (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

Our principle is that we are always working in a participatory approach. For example, this pre-proposal, which we are going to start working on in March, the community is participating from the design of the proposal before we submit it to the CDA (Country Director Assistant) and they will be part of the whole implementation. So, this is our approach, work with the partner from the first step.

... Normally, our project is involving the community from the first step.

(Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010)

Our main principle is to get the beneficiaries involved in all stages of project execution (raising awareness of beneficiaries and developing a sense of ownership for the project, which contributes to maintaining it) (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

Challenges these Organizations have Encountered while Assisting Informal Community Residents Including those in Mahwa Aser

Although the intervention of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in informal settlements in Yemen began only recently, most probably in the late 2000s, working in informal settlements is not easy, according to the responses of the interviewees. Those seeking to assist encounter many challenges that impede their efforts. The interviewees identified a

number of specific challenges that they encountered as they sought to provide support and assistance to informal communities. These concerns have also been articulated by other international organizations, including UN-Habitat (2012), UNDP (2010), and the World Bank (2010a; 2010b), and by several researchers, including Dabbas and Burns (2011), Madbouly (2009), Sims et al. (2009), and El-Shorbagi (2008; 2007). These issues include, but are not limited to, corruption, an insufficient land registration system, tax evasion, underdeveloped cities, security, instability, conflict of interest, limited funding, lack of donor interest, dearth of professional capacity, and insufficient administrative and managerial systems.

Some interviewees indicated that absence of planning regulations and lack of public leadership has complicated the overall development of housing in the city.

You can say the whole city is informal. ... You don't find any place where you can say it is formal. It is very difficult, especially when you start with the plot size. We don't have any plot size here. There is nothing, even in the new areas. For example, if you have a new area and then the planners will follow with what exists on the ground. This is the problem and that's why we have many informal settlements or may be the whole city as informal one. I don't know how you will write your thesis on that. It is very difficult (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

You don't find a neighborhood plan until the people or they built their houses and then, and then they will release it for the public. ... We are financing number of master plans but never been implemented. ... They spent about one million USD to do that. It didn't even gain approval by the General Authority for Survey. They

didn't even introduce it or approve it ... same thing for Hodaidah and the same thing for Mukalla, and the same thing for Aden and Taiz. It will never end. ...

You see people don't want to implement the master plan; sometimes they say we don't have the resources; we don't have this; we don't have that. It is very sad actually. ... Efforts and money have been wasted without any use of that ... our colleagues, for example, in the Bank they don't know about that, most of them. They think once we do that master plan, everything will be okay. That is small part of the whole problem; I should say, to do the master plan, the most important issue is how to implement that master plan (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Some other interviewees emphasized that limited professional capacity, scarcity of resources, and lack of transparency challenged their efforts in Yemen:

The major issue in the country is the capacity. We say capacity, but underneath the capacity are other issues. ... Actually, there is a problem of capacity in the country. Implementation capacity is very weak. ... Projects usually close in four years, but before this happens, we can say, we have not attained our aims, so most of the projects need an extension for one year two years, some of the projects gain four years of extension because of slow implementation and inadequately prepared and resourced personnel. ... Most importantly, they don't want transparency (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

It is not easy; people sometimes, even those who work for the government they say, yes, we know; this is good for us. But, they don't know the implications; they don't know what kind of resources they need to benefit from this work...they

don't know. And, they feel that yes we do the study and we do this action plan and so on; and it will go and implement ITSELF. This will never happen.

EVERYTHING needs resources. You have to calculate for that and to be well prepared for that. Management is an issue. Corruption and many other things are beneath that (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Inadequate and lengthy official procedures were also among the difficulties, which aid organizations faced in Yemen.

This is something that the government has to do and knowing the low environmental capacity in the country, this is not easy to do. In addition to the processes, for example, contracts, documents and payments take long time. ... They are not processes. Two things, we have the capacity from one side and then we have the processes because implementation of the project is not relying on that single entity. That single entity has also to get approvals for multiple layers ... usually people don't like to get their power away. So each one wants to control the process (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Lack of follow-up programs, lack of law enforcement, and cultural characteristics have also challenged aid agencies once they have closed projects. These factors together led to the degradation of the Taiz resettlement project in Al-Berarah into a slum area, as one World Bank officer suggested.

So they were removed and they were happy in this new place. It was very nicely prepared, ... but still you see here in Yemen because of the lack of follow-up and lack of law enforcement people still building new shacks around this village. ... They started to recreate slums around them. So, it is becoming now a slum; the

liability is on us as well because we never know what will happen to those people. ... So we are trying with the local people in Taiz to resolve these problems, but it is difficult. It is not an easy task to resolve the problem. We had nice houses there and then newcomers came and settled around the areas, same as the old way, which they were doing. Some of them are not coming from outside, but from the same family. ... So they build behind the house, for their children and things like that. So it's becoming not as it was when the project started as a very nice place. ... We cannot do anything about it. So, it's impossible to do anything about. Maybe it comes to training issues, or social issues. It's more social issues, even if we educate them because they have limited resources. This is natural, as they want to expand, and they don't have money to do so. So, this is the easiest way to do it is to do that. What can we do? They cannot afford what they need; they cannot do anything; they cannot buy land somewhere else; they just cannot. This is something that is going to happen but it is not really anticipated at the beginning. That will happen. It was never anticipated (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Some interviewees introduced corruption, tax evasion, and poverty as the biggest challenges in the country.

In Yemen, the major challenges were corruption and poverty (Interviewee 9, February 14, 2010).

Yemen is a very poor country and there are many challenges there, but fighting poverty is the main one ... the challenges here are in fighting poverty and fighting

corruption; the country needs a lot of development in terms of infrastructure. We have many things that the World Bank is trying to help the government to address, including fighting Gat.⁴⁸ There is also a lot of tax evasion and the land registration system is a mess. These are some of the key challenges (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

Our aim, our mission, our strategic goals are very broad, very big; what we do every year just contributes a little bit. We are a very small team; we are only working in five governorates and we will not end the poverty anyhow! But, we try to contribute (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

The continuous instability in Yemen in recent years has added to the difficulties confronting aid and development agencies, as some interviewees suggested:

The challenges, which we face, are widespread poverty countrywide, increasing rate of population growth, and tribal wars and armed conflicts (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

A loss of interest among the populations of targeted communities has discouraged aid agencies from offering additional support and assistance to their residents, according one Oxfam officer. That staff member linked this growing disinclination, or even alienation, to the complexity of the issues these communities confront:

We are working with a marginalized group. We are working with other civil society entities as well. The voice in the beginning was active and responsive and

⁴⁸ See the definition of terms list.

engaging but the issues have since become more complex and difficult. So, gradually, residents have lost interest (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

Residents look for the short-term outcomes. They need money and help immediately in their view. But, they are impatient with longer-term goals because those will require long-term of struggle, demands, and advocacy (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

The Same Oxfam staffer also indicated that many residents lacked self-confidence and were threatened by government (authority) figures. As a result they were reluctant to raise their voices or to demand their rights.

Some officials threatened the poor. People are afraid. Yes, they are afraid and again they are afraid because of lack of confidence. ... People became, some of them became vulnerable and easy to be manipulated by different figures or different groups with more social or political power they have to demand many things but again these people are very weak and very easy to manipulate because of their lack of education (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

In some cases, conflict has arisen within Mahwa Aser and other Sana'a informal communities concerning offered services. CARE's officer indicated that conflicts within the populations of these settlements have caused significant project delays:

The conflict will arise every time. This is from my experience. When we set out to address a certain need we may not reach everyone. Then the conflict arises from those who've not been part of that benefit asking for their own benefit. Then you have to address this type of conflict; you have to sit with them; you have to

discuss these conflicts with people; you have to be transparent with them because your intervention has to address the most needy people and not necessarily the majority. Sometimes, we don't reach everyone. ... We have tried a lot of mechanisms to mitigate these conflicts either through meetings or discussions and we have sought to be as transparent about our aims as we can be. We announce all of our activities to the community, so people become aware of them. We work on involving community leaders and involving educated members from the community. Mostly, we focus on raising awareness about the project in general. We care not just about personal benefits, but also about the benefits to the community of our efforts. We have seen conflicts in which the community split into two parts as a result of project activities with one group seeking to punish the other group by preventing it from gaining project benefits. These situations always cause significant delays in project activity. We spend huge amounts of time trying to resolve such problems; we conduct a lot of meetings and design implementation presentations because we want to get everyone's voice in the project (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Development and aid agencies face funding challenges of their own. Due to resource limitations, they have to rank order their work priorities, as several interviewees observed:

We worked with them in 2005 or 2004, 2005, and 2006 on this. Really, we realize there is a change. They are coming back to us asking for help and assistance but because we have limited resources in Oxfam, we cannot offer them all the aid

they may need. With finite resources, we have to prioritize the work of Oxfam (Interviewee 8, February 10, 2010).

One of the main problems we are facing is funding. We cannot perform any activity without financial support (Interviewee 9, February 14, 2010).

We seek to support the Ministry of Social Affairs as it tackles many challenges, but we know that the Ministry is facing a lot of challenges, such as an inadequate budget and often-poorly trained personnel and crafted laws, (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Well, achieving that target is very difficult. It is not an easy goal, but we are trying because the amount that we are providing to the country is not really very salient. Yemen is a big country of about twenty-two million people and our support is about one hundred and fifty million on average, but if you divide that sum by the total population you can see it is very small, seven dollars per capita; this is nothing. You cannot do much (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Because of the system that we work within, the Yemeni government system, normally any community that has concerns should go to the Ministry of Planning and submit its requests. We give people direct aid through small grants to NGOs. It is very small (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

Some organizations are donor-driven and build their services according to the funds they receive from external sources. Their efforts, therefore, comply with donor-driven conditions. The terms of the donors cause these organizations to develop projects that accord with a donors' interest. CARE is an example of this sort of aid organization, as shared an interviewee from its staff

CARE is a donor-driven organization. It does not have its own source of funding so it can have its own work plan and it can achieve its goals and activities. When you plan to reach this point, you allocate the fund, you allocate the budget, but because we are dependent on donors, we can't guarantee we will get this amount every year, to get the end impact we are looking for. That is why we have difficult challenges always to complete with what we have planned for these particular communities. We try to be in and stay in the community until we feel that we reach the point where the community now is able to manage the offered projects; until they become capable of achieving their own goals, which match our plans. ... We try to respond if to donors whose interests fit our own strategic directions (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Generally speaking, Yemen suffers from a lack of interest among donor agencies. Security concerns have made countries and IGOs providing aid less willing to invest funds in Yemen. Several interviewees argued that ongoing instability and conflict has significantly decreased opportunities for the Yemeni government to attract donors:

Yemen nowadays is actually facing multiple challenges; apart from the poverty, there is the war in the North, the unrest in the South, and declining oil prices are all major concerns. These together are really placing downward pressure on the

country's financial capacity for development and leading to security issues as well, ... so it's difficult now to attract not only international friends and contractors to come to Yemen. Even this is not an easy task for the government. These issues have created an enormous burden on the shoulders of the government of Yemen (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

The first challenge I see is donor interest. Donors' interest in Yemen is very small. That's where we struggle to get funds; you have ambitious plans; we have ambitious strategic directions; we have ambitious vision and mission, but when you try to translate them into real activities, we try very hard to get funding and to get donors interested in our aims. Then we struggle because we already built our bases, and now we have to struggle through just to make things move. Nonetheless, we cannot move. We have already built our first base and we want to continue; this is the first struggle. We are struggling with donors' lack of interest and, when they do evidence interest, in the quickly changing character of their interests (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

The third challenge we are facing in Yemen is the security situation, which is preventing a lot of donors and international staff to come to the country and to have easy access to visit its communities. When you do gain support, it becomes hard to maintain it (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Collaboration with Government and Other Organizations

The involvement of local and international organizations in informal settlements in Sana'a is new, as addressed in the literature. It remains quite limited in Mahwa Aser, as revealed by the interview responses of government figures in the first and the main research phase. Nonetheless, aid organizations are seeking to provide assistance to the Yemeni government in different ways. Their interventions included, but were not limited to, improving government professional capacities in different sectors as well as providing resources, offering consultations, and being involved in the design and implementation of proposed projects and programs. One interviewee suggested that there are a number of government figures supporting the significant roles of these aid organizations in informal settlements in Sana'a (interviewees 1, 4, and 18 were less supportive, while interviewees 3, 14, and 15 were much more so).

The respondents in this group provided further insights about this collaboration aspect from the perspectives of the directors and officers of those organizations, whether located within or outside of Yemen. The collaboration theme particularly addressed three key components—forms of collaboration, advantages and disadvantages of such cooperation, and similarities and differences between the offered service and work by different NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in informal settlements in Sana'a, and especially in Mahwa Aser.

Forms of Collaboration

To some extent, collaboration and partnership does occur among NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs and local authorities in Sana'a, according to interviewees in this group. Sometimes, these collaborations strengthened the work and the mission of local or international

organizations and sometimes it undermined such efforts. The outcome appeared to depend on the degree of coordination with other actors and their connections to local communities. The engagement could be linked to exchange of expertise or knowledge. Some international organization representatives, including these from the World Bank and CARE International Yemen, said local partners were very important for implementing their organization's initiatives. They argued that local partners facilitated and supported their work and projects in informal settlements. Interviewee responses highlighted two types of collaboration: cooperation with other NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs, and partnership with local authorities. Interviewees detailed those efforts.

Collaboration with other NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs. A number of respondents argued that local partners and organizations were key to their work and how they have served targeted communities.

We work with many civil organizations until they form a big network. Our work is implemented through them because they are in immediate contact with the poor. They submit their project proposals and the way of implementing them to us (Interviewee 9, February 14, 2010).

Most of our work is through local partners and through local organizations; these organizations are either national organizations, like the Yemen Women's Union (YWU) and SOUL or community-based organizations, like the Women's Association. ... We either work with already existing community-based organizations or support the community to establish one. ... So, we work with these associations to build their capacity, support them in terms of training and

equipment and even sometimes help obtain space for them. We also installed an income generation project so the association could earn revenues from the grant we provided. This allowed the association to run its activities and support its communities. ... This is how we work with the local organizations; part of what we provide is models of good practice to these associations. So we help these groups to step out and then to start claiming their communities' rights; first of all, to run their organization professionally and to support the communities; second, to be one of the means for the community to claim their rights and this is the second strategic direction. The third strategic direction is working with the most marginalized groups (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

For some of the projects, the local partners do the implementation, not us. ... We just provide support at the policy level, good practice while they are implementing the project. They are not only local organizations, but also national organizations. Their geographic zone is the whole country but they are based in Sana'a (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

We usually get a third party involved in financing contracts so they become responsible for operation and maintenance (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

We have combined projects like we have projects with the Dutch, Japanese, GTZ so there are some kind of partnership...also, our funding supported the Akhdam union; we helped to establish it; the union now has an office in Sana'a; we are

working with them closely. We do it through the Small Grants Program, through furniture donation and through providing them with documents (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

Collaboration with local authorities. Almost all interviewees associated with aid organizations said they sought to forge some form of partnership with local and national authorities:

Yeah, we are working on this with the Ministry of Education. It is our main local partner. We have an agreement signed. We are working on agriculture. We have an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture. We have worked with the Ministry of Social Affairs; we have also an agreement with them because we are working with civil society groups. We are working with Local Councils at the governorate and district level. So that's also formalized (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

The Fund coordinated its projects with local authorities, such as the Technical Affairs Sector in the Ministry of Public Works and Highways and Local Cooperation for Water when executing sewage or water systems to ensure sustainability in operation and maintenance (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

I have personally worked with local authorities. ... We brought to the same table the local council with the governor and the NGOs; NGOs means we had researchers, we had media, we had NGOs, we had academia, youth, and they all sat together with the local government to actually develop a program and implement activities within each governorate (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

Interviewees from the World Bank addressed two types of involvement when dealing with other CBOs, NGOs, and INGOs in informal settlements in Yemen. The first, which I have dubbed the *direct approach*, involves supporting CBOs by offering funding, vocational training, and other services and diversifying partnerships with other donors. The second type, which I call the *indirect strategy*, seeks to work through the Yemeni government. Once the World Bank approves a project, the nation's government becomes its owner; the government hires CBOs and NGOs as consultants, and contractors and sub-contractors.

What the World Bank does is really working with the government of Yemen and the World Bank actually is here at the request of Yemeni government so it works closely with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. We work directly with the MOPIC, but also work with other ministries once they have signed the contract, the project documents, when they signed them, we work with them to follow-up. We don't just give the project and that is it. No, we have teams in the World Bank here and in Washington that follows up with implementation and to make sure that things are working. ... The World Bank program, the Country Assessment Strategy (CAS), which is a three-year program for Yemen, is actually a reflection of the priorities of the Yemeni government agenda in its Five-Year Plan and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). ... Like I said, the project goes to the government so it is the government that does all of these and the World Bank oversees that implementation, sees that everything is being done properly and according to the project documents. ... These projects have what they call Task Team Leaders; each one is responsible for his or her project and they

maintain a relationship with the government to see that everything is implemented in the proper way. ... I want to clarify that once the World Bank signs the projects with the government, they fall under government ownership. So, the government really takes the project from the World Bank and it's responsible for it from day one to its end and according to the government plan (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

The government usually implements projects and we provide as much support as we can. But, in the end, responsibility for project completion actually lies on the government's shoulders. ... We are here, as I said, trying to provide as much support as we can, but that's not our work because we don't implement day-by-day work. This is something that the government has to do. ... We have this committee headed by the MOPIC with the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance called the CPPR Committee. The main aim of this committee is to solve the problems that face implementation. CPPR means Country Portfolio Performance Review. ... We are closer to the clients here, so we are in constant contact with what we call the Project Management Unit (PMU) or the Project Implementation Unit (PIM). These are the agencies that implement projects. ... We are in constant contact with them; trying to help them with wherever possible but in the end they are supposed to implement the project, like the Public Works projects, the Social Services; they are doing very well, but others are very slow (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Advantages and/or Disadvantages of such Collaborations

Collaboration with other local or international partners has pros and cons. According to my respondents, not all collaborations served the missions of their organizations. Some advance their work in informal settlements, but adversely affect progress on other relevant projects. The following sections introduce some of these advantages and disadvantages.

Some respondents shared how their partnerships with local and international partners helped to advance their organizational aims.

The association is still running the activities. It has literacy classes running; the same with Mahwa Khamsawarbaeen who almost moved to Sa'awan and, Bani Hushaish, they are one of the most successful communities, was also from Akhdam but they are running very well, their income generation, their water supply, their electricity supply system—all that is run by the association we have established there, called Al-E'etezaz Association. ... The same with local partners, local organizations having sustainable activity in a certain area, they really collaborate and support our aims (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

It's usually very encouraging. They were providing support, all the time. It is important to work with local communities. Actually, the Project Management Unit or the Implementing Agency, whatever you call them, they are supposed to coordinate with the local authorities when they implement projects. Get in constant contact with them. So they are not only responsible for reporting to them or they are only very important to the Planning Ministry, but also they are

working in that environment, so they have to get all people involved in the process. This is what they are doing and we are trying to do the same thing on our part (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Other respondents said the involvement of local and international partners, to some extent, impeded their work. Respondents attributed this difficulty to different factors, including bad management structure and conflicts of interest. For example, a CARE International Yemen officer attributed the failure of one of that INGOs' projects in Mahwa Aser to inappropriate management by the local organization selected to handle it:

It's the nature of the internal structure of the organization and the conflict they have. Such conflict hindered our project in Mahwa Aser for quite a bit. We are targeting them now to see how we can help them again by introducing another organization, such as Al-Sada (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Differences and Similarities Between Organizations Concerning the Services Offered to Informal Settlements

Although the main focus of the operating NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Sana'a is not informal settlements per se (as discussed in previous sections), their efforts to assist the residents of such neighborhoods are not all alike. Respondents shared the similarities and the differences between their organization's work and the initiatives of other aid agencies and international development organizations. Nonetheless, whatever their specific differences in tactics or end products, all of these entities efforts revolved around one primary goal, ending poverty.

NGOs as I understand, they implement projects. They get money from somewhere and they implement projects. That's my understanding of the NGOs. They don't finance. We finance! We are financiers. This is the difference. ... NGOs are like an implementing agency for the World Bank. They're getting money from different organizations. We are financiers. We don't implement projects. We are not supposed to do it; sometimes, we cross the line because of the difficulties here in the country but we are trying not to do that. It's not our mandate to implement projects. They are their projects. They are mandated to implement projects (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

There is something called Donor Coordination or Harmonization, whereby the donor agencies try to see who does what so their work is coordinated so that it is not focused on one area or taking on too many areas. So, there is donor coordination among them (Interviewee 7, February 08, 2010).

We target the poor, in general. The differences between our organization and other organizations could be in the implementation, the end result and the adopted mechanisms at our organization because we are not only offering funding but also technical assistance (Interviewee 9, February 14, 2010).

We are similar to many organizations in targeting women; we are similar to other organizations like Oxfam, but Oxfam is focusing on policy levels, while we are working at the grassroots level. ... Our aim also is to support and lift up the

community. So, we looked at all shortages, all needs while other organizations, which are working with shanties, like what we call AID, Humanitarian Aid Organization, a Sudanese organization. They are providing certain things. For example, Humanitarian Aid Organization is working with the same settlements where we are working. We are covering, for example, the water issue; we are investigating the literacy issue. We are exploring the capacity of the communities and organizations within them and have institutionalized our efforts while others, for example, just focus on health. That is the difference in what we are doing now. We focus on everything surrounding the community except, for example, health. Humanitarian Aid is working on those issues. The same with Millennium; it works with the same communities where we are working. They are focusing on only one element, such as health or education, while we always try to be comprehensive, as much as we can (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

The SFD is distinguished by developing special programs that target ending poverty (educating girls program, integrated intervention programs, micro-finance program, labor-intensive work program, empowerment for development program). The Fund offers a model financial system, strong management transparency and clear strategies for implementing different projects (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

Policy

Madbouly (2009) has argued that the World Bank, along with Cities Alliance, assisted a number of Arab States, including Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia, to restructure their administrative and managerial systems regarding informal settlements.

The role(s) these Organizations Play in the Formulation of Government Policy Concerning Informal Settlements

The interviewees addressed the official views of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs concerning Yemeni government policies addressing informal settlements. Their comments also demonstrated the forms of contribution and the degree of intervention of local and international organizations in Yemeni government policies and plans:

I don't know really if they have any government policy on informal settlements. I have no idea whether they have one or not. ... I think this is really a setback, a substantial setback, because immigration from rural areas to cities is dramatically increasing ... informal settlements are an issue everywhere. It is an issue everywhere, ... unless there is a clear policy to deal with this, I think, cities will face a lot of problems, especially in Yemen where you have water problems, as in Sana'a. ... People are still coming to cities like Sana'a and Taiz to find jobs and this will continue unless the government intervenes. So some people may say, if we improve one informal settlement, you will encourage others to occupy other lands and create additional informal settlements. So this is what some people say. We say, OK! We need to do something for them. They say, no! I think whether you do it or not, people will come and settle. This is not suitable. If there is no

other way where they can go? They will find a piece of empty land and they will settle. We cannot find boundaries (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

About policies, the Municipality of Sana'a, with funding from the World Bank, has done studies to improve informal settlements and there is a project to raise the living conditions there ... from our discussion with the professionals at the Municipality of Sana'a about their plans for informal settlements, we think the plans are good, especially if they were subject to a thorough analysis by international experts (Interviewee 11, February 14, 2010).

Government never tried to improve these settlements. They are deprived from any sort of decent living environment. ... We work with local authorities within the framework of preparing plans and advocating their integration into domestic policy and plans (Interviewee 9, February 14, 2010).

The World Bank will upgrade three informal settlements and is trying to help the government, if possible, to do that by itself in the future. We started a pilot project in Taiz and then we're trying with that to work on it. ... Most of the informal settlements are in Sana'a and in the major cities like Taiz and Hodaidah. Fifty to sixty percent of the people live in informal settlements. So they will require substantial investments because it costs a lot of money to upgrade informal settlements. It costs a lot of money, not less, may be, than 50 thousand USD per acre (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

Public works projects used to do this kind of upgrading, but under a different rationale because the objective of public works projects is to create jobs and to provide basic infrastructure services. ... So while doing that, they're actually upgrading these areas because they go where you will find needs for paving in these informal settlements. They have been doing this for some time, but under a different name. It has nothing to do with informal settlements. And, I think they are doing a good job in that. Improving the living condition of people and, at the same time, creating jobs for the people living in that area because, mostly, this is unskilled labor. That's what they are targeting. This is what actually we are doing under the public works projects (Interviewee 6, February 07, 2010).

This was a result of our efforts to push the local authorities to move the residents of Mahwa Aser, the part that was located in Adhban area and caught fire twice and burned totally, to Sa'awan. Now, they are in Sa'awan. ... The government already decided for Mahwa Khamsawarbaeen because they have Al-Sailah Project. Then they have to move, but for Mahwa Aser Adhban, they were out of that thing, and we said, these people were in need, because they weren't having a shelter. ... The government provided them with tents, then it was built for the second time. We have put a huge amount of money for the electricity system, safe electricity, but it was set on fire, once again. ... We said the investment we made has just gone with something like that; they are living with less than dignity in a bad area. So it was Al-Kohlani, the governor of Sana'a Municipality at that time, who accepted our request adding them to the movement of other areas because

they were having plans for evacuations to move Mahwa Bab Al-Yaman and Mahwa Khamsawarbaeen for political reasons. They want to get rid of them from the very important area in which they are now located (the center of the historic Old Sana'a) (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Working with local authorities helps in a way. First, if we are working at the national level that effort can influence the policies that the government might apply; it may also enable initiatives to spread that experience nation-wide. This is one thing and it helps us. If the project is implemented nation-wide, that means we have reached the point that the correct bodies will have assumed responsibility for it because as an NGO, international NGO, we are here as a guest in the country. So our role is limited and also time is limited. We are not here forever! So our role is just to support for a certain period of time and then the government body and the local authority and its partners have to take that responsibility for the future (Interviewee 10, February 07, 2010).

Directors of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen shared their personal and organizational perspectives concerning informal settlement issues in that nation in this chapter. These concerns included government policies and practices and the challenges they have confronted as they have sought to assist informal settlement residents. The chapter also described their specific views concerning Mahwa Aser and their organizational efforts there (if any). Interviewee responses outlined the key roles that each organization assumed in helping the residents of Mahwa Aser and other Sana'a informal communities. The individuals I interviewed described the degree of involvement

of their organizations in government programs, policies, and plans. They also defined the contributions of their institutions toward improving the overall performance of local and national authorities in assisting informal community residents.

7.2. Conclusion

This chapter explored a number of other key issues, such as similarities and differences between organizations concerning the types of services offered to informal settlements, including Mahwa Aser. The discussion helped also to identify the overlapping activities among these organizations in Yemen's informal settlements. Taken as a whole, this chapter has defined the still emergent role of international development organizations in Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a. The next chapter (8) will examine the key roles of INGOs and IGOs located outside of Yemen concerning Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a.

CHAPTER 8

Perspectives of International Non-governmental Organizations and International Governmental Organizations outside of Yemen (U.S. and Egypt) Regarding Mahwa Aser and Informal Settlements in Sana'a

This chapter examines the particular roles played by international non-governmental organization (INGOs) and international organizations (IGOs) outside of Yemen in helping the populations of informal settlements in Sana'a generally and Mahwa Aser, especially. Five respondents (2 officers interviewed during the preliminary phase and 3 officers interviewed during the main research phase; Tables 5 and 7) from INGOs and IGOs in the U.S. and Egypt reflected the organizational views of their organization's officials and their involvement in informal settlement governance in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser.

The analysis in this chapter revolved around the three key issues, which I explained in Chapter 6: government intervention in informal settlements, engagement and partnership among the key stakeholders in Mahwa Aser, and community residents' involvement in government policies and programs. It addressed the particular views of interviewees from the relevant organizations in the U.S. and Egypt. The next discussion addresses the views of these officials in the preliminary research phase.

8.1. Preliminary Research Phase

As I analyzed the responses of the interviewees in this group, three major themes and several sub-themes emerged. It is worth mentioning that some themes have been similar, carrying across groups of actors.

Themes

1. Intervention: Types/Approaches/Community Engagement/Challenges
 - a. Types of intervention in informal settlements and approaches for implementing proposed projects for these areas.
 - b. Adopted strategies for identifying and ranking the needs of informal settlements.
 - c. Adopted approaches for responding to the needs of informal settlement residents.
 - d. Degree of community engagement in proposed projects by aid and development agencies.
 - e. Challenges that faced these organization's efforts concerning informal settlements in Yemen.
2. Policy: Perspectives/Contribution
 - a. Concerns regarding the Yemeni government's lack of policies and strategies concerning informal settlements in Sana'a.
 - b. Contribution of these organizations toward improving government policies or developing a new legal framework for informal settlements in Sana'a.
3. Collaboration: Forms/ Differences/Similarities
 - a. Forms of collaboration with other national and international organizations and with government agencies.
 - b. Differences and similarities between organizations concerning the types of services offered to informal settlements.

The next section addresses these themes and subthemes from the three key areas (addressed in Chapter 6) and from the perspectives of INGOs and IGOs officers, who participated in this stage of this study, in the U.S. and Egypt.

Intervention

International organization involvement in informal settlements encourages local and national authorities to adopt best practices, which are suggested by those institutions. Their engagement in informal settlements also often leads to a noticeable improvement in the living conditions of the residents. This theme explores these organizations particular role in informal settlements in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser. This section offers interviewee insights into the contributions of international organizations in informal settlements in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser, the approaches they have adopted to determine the needs of residents, how they have responded to the demands of governments as well as to the needs of communities, and how communities become involved in the projects of these organizations. Interviews highlighted the challenges that these organizations daily face in addressing informal settlement needs in Yemen.

Types of Intervention in Informal Settlements and Approaches for Implementing Proposed Projects

Since poverty alleviation is the main mission of the World Bank, most of its subsidized projects in Yemen supported that aim, as the officers of the World Bank I interviewed (interviewees 12 and 13) indicated. The World Bank's experience with informal settlements in Yemen is relatively new. Most of the World Bank involvement in Yemen in the last 20 years was focused on water shortages and flood disaster. Just recently, the World Bank realized that the unprecedented growth of informal settlements

in Yemen, especially in the nation's main cities, is affecting the sustainability of urban centers countrywide. The World Bank, therefore, began to include informal settlements in its agenda for Yemen through a number of projects that have targeted the country's largest cities. Examples included the Integrated Urban Development Projects (IUDP) in Sana'a and Taiz and Port Cities Development Project (PCDP) in Aden, Al-Hodaidah, and Mukalla.

We are sending two projects up to the Bank Board for approval. One is the Port Cities Development Project (second phase) and another is the Integrated Urban Development Project, which is largely focused on upgrading informal settlements in Taiz. ... These are both to be approved by the World Bank's Board on the 25th of May. So, altogether, the Bank will be addressing three informal settlements in Taiz, and one in Al-Hodaidah (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Most of the World Bank's projects that target informal settlements in Yemen are viewed as pilot projects, according to respondents 12 and 13.

You must remember that whatever money comes in through a donor-funded project is like a drop in the ocean ... every project is like a pilot because you are trying something new in this area. ... This is the first time we are intervening in upgrading. We've never really done any investments with the lessons learned globally on how to intervene in informal settlements in Yemen; ... these are plans. These are ideas that the World Bank has, but we need to see if they work, how they work, and then learn a bit from implementing these before we scale them up to other neighborhoods or other cities (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

We just started so we can't say much about these projects, the one in Al-Hodaidah and the one in Taiz. ... So we don't have any achievements yet (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

Most of the World Bank's work targeting informal settlements revolves around upgrading initiatives (e.g., provision of basic infrastructure and services). The respondents attributed the small scale of these efforts to two concerns: first, to avoid gentrification in the targeted areas, and second, to be able to assess the projects since this is the first time the World Bank has been involved in informal settlements in Yemen.

We are providing services within the existing space. So we don't want to move anyone, ... only basic upgrading because we also know if we do too much upgrading, gentrification will occur. Rich people will move in and the poor will be forced to relocate. So we want to keep the area. To keep people there and to encourage them to invest in their own houses because if they see there is water and there are roads and their property's value rises as a result, they will be more willing to invest in their own homes. We don't want to make improvements that will cause richer individuals to move in and displace the poor. So we do only basic upgrades and give the opportunity to them, the beneficiaries themselves, to do additional upgrading (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

These projects provide paving for the roads, water supply, sanitation, school buildings, and trash dumpsters. You know, anything that the community needs because the difference between upgrading and a water project or a single sector intervention is this, you know, for people's lives to improve, for poverty

alleviation to take place, improvement has to occur across, in parallel, across a variety of sectors (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Adopted Strategies for Identifying and Ranking the Needs of Informal Settlements and the Yemeni Government

Both government officials and the directors of NGOs and INGOs in Yemen suggested in interviews with me that learning about residents' needs is important in identifying community's priorities. They thus adopted a number of mechanisms to learn about the community's needs, such as surveys, community meetings, and consultations with community leaders. Similarly, the World Bank Headquarters staff in Washington D.C. remained in close contact with Yemeni national and local authorities and the targeted communities, via government reps and leaders of CBOs, in order to allocate the appropriate funding for the most needed improvement in informal settlements in the country. My respondents reported that the World Bank followed certain processes to identify the needs of informal settlements residents. The World Bank's first step in its community needs process is to assess the local context of the country. During this phase, the World Bank estimates the number and size of informal settlements by conducting studies and surveys:

We've also done a fair number of studies and considerable analytic work to understand the nature of informal settlements, the nature of the issues with the housing sector, the issue with land management, issues with centralized government in Yemen, and how it influences development in cities. On this point, it is interesting that the properties of a governorate are not transferred to the governor's name. They stay in the name of the national government and this fact

raises all sorts of issues for decentralization efforts, including how to share money, revenues, and expenditures. So we have done a lot of analytic work to understand better what efficient decentralization should look like in Yemen. So there is analytic work on the housing side, on informal settlements, and on the relative competitiveness studies of various cities so as to guide where the government should focus to stimulate economic growth (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

We're trying to come up with ways to integrate these population groups with these spaces into the larger societies. ... The way we do it is that they tell us what they want and how we should provide it and where we should provide it and that's how we do it so that's again much more sustainable and more for maintenance. ... So we're trying to see, you know, what are the issues? Why are they there? Who lives there? (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010)

The second stage is the selection of a city or a neighborhood, during which the World Bank identifies needy communities. The selection is built on articulated criteria. Respondent 12 described how cities are selected for World Bank support. That selection could be built on political motives (as was the case for Taiz), economic stimulation (as in Aden), or potential for tourism investment (as in Mukalla). The selection could be developed based on other factors as well, including degree of preparedness of a city and a society or the need for urgent intervention.

Taiz actually is one of those cities where we want to launch a successful project. We started in Taiz. The allocation of IDA money that goes to Yemen is very

small. Many sector projects go through the business plan in the Bank in the Country Assistance Strategy. ... Why Taiz was selected is probably an interesting story. Most of our urban work has been focused in Taiz. There were floods in Taiz and water shortages and there has been a lot of focus to reduce the risk of flooding in the city because each time floods occurred, a great deal of property was destroyed, business and income was lost, houses damaged. So, we've done a series of projects in Taiz, which are Flood Protection Projects. ... We are engaged in Aden because it's your commercial center. ... Mukalla has natural assets related to tourism; apart from Sana'a, Mukalla is the next place the government of Yemen could focus on developing tourism to replace declining oil revenues (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Nonetheless, Sana'a seemed like a different case, as explained by respondents.

Sana'a is a little more complex to be engaged in because there are a lot of donors active in Sana'a and the World Bank needs to figure out whether we want to engage in Sana'a and how! ... We don't have lending envelopes for Sana'a because the money, as I told you, 150 million dollars every three years, I think is the allocation for Yemen, doesn't provide much to do a major project. We have yet to develop a deep dialogue and relationship with Sana'a. We know Sana'a is the biggest city in the country, but we also know that a high rate of growth is occurring in five cities altogether across Yemen. They are going to be the home of about ten to 12 million people and you will find the data and the analysis when you read this report. So we engaged in big cities. I mean we don't have a lending

engagement yet in Sana'a. We're doing some studies, which could lead to a lending envelope for Sana'a (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Maybe because it is the Municipality of Sana'a, it has a different structure than the other governorates so that could be something or perhaps it's just the magnitude of Sana'a, the capital has two million people ... and why because initially it was part of the project then it had to be excluded because, you know, it wasn't ready (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

However, the criteria for city or neighborhood selection are negotiable based on the donors and Yemeni government mutual interest and agreement, as articulated by interviewee 12:

The idea is that if 60 to 70 percent of the population in these four to five cities is living in informal settlements, this is a huge number of people compared to the money available for assistance from donors. We have developed a rule of thumb to determine how the funds available will be dispersed. Our hope is to develop subproject proposals along with the local governments because what Al-Hodaidah needs to do is maybe very different from what Mukalla needs to do; it is maybe very different from what Taiz needs to do and from what Sana'a needs to do. So the important thing for the national level agencies is to allow the flexibility to make changes to the rules of the game as to how things will be done at the local level; this means a change in mindset at the national level (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

After selecting a city for support, the World Bank's next step is evaluation. In this stage, World Bank staff identify the number and the condition of informal settlements and then evaluate priorities for assistance based on specific criteria, including density, poverty level, community organization, client readiness, community input, and government interest before allocating funds, as explained by interviewee 13.

We're trying to identify why are they there and how do they form? Who lives there? What kinds of population groups? ... How big they are yes, but also, community organization as well because we felt there were some organizations ready to work with us and others were not (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

I think it is always the government that has to ask for our help. We cannot do something that we want to do but the government should ask. ... It's a long negotiation process and it takes a long time but it has to come from the government. ... It depends also very much on the situation on the ground and how prepared the client (national or local government) is to work with us (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

Adopted Approaches for Responding to the Needs of Informal Settlement Residents

After selecting a city and/or a neighborhood, the World Bank begins a follow-up process to respond to the requests of local and national authorities and to the needs of targeted communities. The World Bank organizes meetings with all stakeholders and beneficiaries to identify appropriate approaches for intervening. Throughout these steps, the World Bank seeks to ensure the longevity of the provided projects and services and to promote community participation and contributions, which increases residents' sense of

ownership of offered projects and services so that people continue maintaining them once the World Bank leaves. The respondents addressed the World Bank approach to responding to the needs of informal settlement residents. Interviewee 13, for example, emphasized that deciding the project to be provided is a community choice.

So, at this time there are a lot of consultations happening with all the stakeholders just to figure out exactly how this market should be redesigned. Should it be knocked down? Should it be built-up, because everything has implications? When you do something in a city and you want it to be used by residents, it has to respond to their needs. ... It has to start right from the very beginning. We always try and put in base consultative mechanisms, if possible. The Bank participates in these consultations, obtains the views of the people, and sets the terms of reference. ... For example, with the Aden market, we found there is one agency responsible for collecting grants and another office responsible for maintenance, but the accounting systems are all mixed up across units. So we will try under this project in these markets to demonstrate how this needs to change, so these things can be better maintained once they are built (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

In Taiz in the Integrated Urban Development Project; the World Bank undertook lots of consultations from the very beginning as such questions as, which community shall we choose? What does the community's population want? The final selection of Bank-funded programs is actually decided by communities. Some communities say, you know, they want water. Others say, oh, we want our roads. So it is decided by communities (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

Degree of Community Engagement in Proposed Projects by Aid and Development Agencies

The World Bank values community involvement in design and implementation of its projects. It employed different tools to invite informal settlement residents in Yemen to be part of its proposed projects. Among other strategies, the World Bank sought to encourage community engagement by responding to settlement articulated needs and welcoming financial contributions, even if only symbolic in size. The World Bank hopes that once residents develop a sense of ownership, they will become more attentive to projects and sustain them, when sponsoring institutions leave.

There has been a realization that unless people are involved in what you provide for them, the chances that you will design something that they don't need, they don't want or which is inappropriate are very high and then something is not used, not only do you not get any benefit out of it but, basically, it dies out because of lack of maintenance after that. ... We ensure longevity through integrating the community. The communities, I mean, the beneficiaries themselves, need to realize the value of the investment, but also how to maintain it. So that is what we call sustainability. ... As I said, it combines the hard way of the infrastructure with the soft, which are the people. So you do this together and I think that is a new approach (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

We try to ensure longevity through making sure that the intervention is wanted; people want it; they desire it; they demand it; they are willing to pay for it. ... One of the tools we use there has to be community contribution because if there is

community contribution, even if it's two dollars or one dollar, it demonstrates that people are willing to pay. It demonstrates that people are willing to pay for certain things provided you give them the things they want. Don't give them the things you think they should need; and this is a big problem because most people in government, planners and engineers have been trained to think a certain way and to see a certain way. ... The project is implemented with the communities, as I mentioned, there will be lots of engagement. There will be community groups. ... They will have groups regarding hygiene, regarding gender, regarding how to sustain this community participation. So, there are different groups that we have and they are part of the project from the very beginning, from design as well as in the implementation because we feel if they are not part of the project from the beginning then it will not be sustainable and it will not have the needed effect. ... That people really feel this is their project; they need to participate. They got what they want. They take ownership and then it is easier for them to take over the project once it officially ends (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

The residents already do something themselves and the World Bank is helping them but we also provide some water, sanitation, some roads. So again it is sort of integrated way where the physical infrastructure and the social community engagement is working hand in hand. Because we feel, if we don't do it that way, then we build some roads, we give water and sanitation but people may not find this useful (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

They all very engaged. They know what's happening; they know what they need; they are ready to participate. So communities are always engaged. There's no way; they are the owners of what we do. ... It's very important for World Bank staff to show their face in these community meetings because it builds that sense of a trust. The trust is the most important. The trust is the most important and when there is this direct sense of trust and even civil servants who are there, they can push these communities. ... This is how we try to ensure longevity; you know, participation, demand responsiveness, often through community contributions, community committee elections so there is constant interaction; and then a project I implemented normally by project units that are set up and the project unit will have a social development officer and so on and so forth. So these are the mechanisms (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

The common perception about informal settlements is that they are deprived communities whose residents have no sense of responsibility toward the place in which they live. Also, the popular view is that residents of such settlements lack an understanding of the importance of personal hygiene (based on respondents' statements during interviews in the first and second research phases with the government officials and leaders of national and international organizations). A number of government interviewees, and a number of directors of NGOs and INGOs in Yemen, articulated the setbacks created, in their view, by the social and cultural behaviors of informal settlement residents, especially Akhdam. These interviewees argued that changing the personal behavior of poor community residents has become a necessity to ensure the longevity of aid-provided services. As a group, these respondents suggested that settlement inhabitants

needed to develop a sense of ownership of their communities as well as an interest in their sustainability. These interviewees indicated that informal settlement residents, such as those in the Al-Berarah project in Taiz, were not ready to take responsibility for the community the World Bank provided them. The World Bank, according to these interviewees, had to take responsibility for not only providing services and aid to informal settlement communities, but also educating the residents concerning how to maintain the provided services and how to change their daily behavior and take care of their personal hygiene, as interviewee 12 also suggested.

So having community committees sort of establishes where there is a lot of communication and why they need to maintain the water and sanitation investment; so how you make sure the metal is not broken. If there is a broken pipe or something is not working, how they could repair this or to whom to report it if it is not working. The same is true with the streetlight—they maintain this. To change the behavior of people is a challenge. For example, on a hygienic level, they don't know how to use the new water and sanitation in a way that helps them to become healthier. So there is a lot of stuff going on, like I said, in communication. We put communication messages on water jacks, food, mats and T-shirts by which we are sort of trying to say OK, people need to be aware of the way to use water and use the sanitation facilities so that it helps them to become less sick. ... They also need to maintain it because the project only has a certain life span of about 5 to 6 years and after that the communities need to maintain these investments themselves. So that is also a way of trying to change their

behavior and make them aware that they need to value this as a contribution, which they should maintain (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

The World Bank considered informal settlement residents' views as long as the funding available was sufficient to address them. That means only the most needed projects to the community were provided.

Yes, communities have been involved in Yemen in these upgrading proposals. The community provides the final agreement on whether to undertake certain roads or schools in a project and then the procurement of contractors will occur and project work can start. ... We have budget constraints. We tell them these are our budget constraints. This is the money we have. Do you want the school or the clinic? If you want both, then you want to have one road less. So we negotiate with the community then (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Challenges that Faced the Efforts of these Organizations Concerning Informal Settlements in Yemen

Working with informal settlements in Yemen has never been an easy mission for the government or for local and international non-governmental organizations, according to the respondents in this group. The main challenges include lack of professional capacity in government, under-shaped and unimplemented planning policies, unclear land ownership and registration systems, and working with marginalized groups. International and donor institutions outside of Yemen, such as the World Bank, also face similar challenges that impede the progress of their work in informal settlements in Yemen, according to the World Bank respondents. Interviewees 12 and 13, for example, suggested that their organizations have dealt with the following challenges confronting

Mahwa Aser and other informal communities: rapid population growth, shortages of water, bad security situation, little interest among donors in Yemen, poorly functioning land market, and lack of experience and capacity building, especially among planners.

I think Yemen faces particular challenges by of way of growth because of its water shortages, which are the worst in the Middle East region and the security situation that has made it very difficult for growth, which is affected by international trade. ... The biggest thing is the land market. It doesn't work. The second biggest thing is that the planners do not understand how to design something formally with a plot size that can be bought by people who are poor. ... They don't know how to design a plot. ... I think these are big challenges facing Yemen (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

I mean the project is there but it's not yet. It's the money is not there. It's been signed. The government has signed both projects but the money is not there. It is not there. The money has not been found yet. ... We are still at the beginning and we are all learning. ... At the moment, I cannot say, you know, if this is a good approach, you know, or if it's not a good approach. You know, in Yemen, things are different and are changing (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

Policy

The lack of a clear policy on informal settlements in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser makes any intervention likely to be less beneficial, and less effective than it otherwise might be. The earlier discussions in Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrated the role of international organizations in helping the Yemeni government improve its current plans

and form new policies on informal settlements. This section addresses the contributions that international organizations are making to Yemeni policies regarding informal settlements (as perceived by the officers of those international organizations).

Concerns Regarding the Yemeni Government's Lack of Policies and Strategies

Concerning Informal Settlements in Sana'a

The lack of adequate policies along with the absence of a clear government strategy concerning informal settlements has made the initiatives of the World Bank in this area more challenging. Besides the planning policies, land ownership system, and government capacities, respondents of the World Bank raised several additional concerns that they perceived have hindered the work of the World Bank in informal settlements in Yemen, including a lack of reliable statistics about informal settlements, in particular the number and make-up of the population who live there and government organizational structure and functionality. Respondents argued that the relatively unorganized government evidenced overlapping duties and responsibilities assigned by different agencies. Also, the government's unclear vision and poorly defined objectives toward informal settlements make it difficult for international aid organizations to develop strategies to assist the nation in providing aid to those communities. Furthermore, a continuing lack of coordination among the key players—government sector, private sector, including banks and the construction industry—has become one of the World Bank's main concerns in implementing its agenda to assist informal settlements in Yemen:

There is no specific policy. ... The government's Ministry of Public Works now wants to do a housing policy and so the study we are doing is meant to also feed

into that housing policy but we are doing the study because we do not know. I mean, there are so many informal settlements. Nobody knows who owns the land and nobody knows who lives there. So there are studies here and there but it's not a clear vision or strategy. We are trying to help out to find a little bit more clarity but at the moment, I think, it is very difficult (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

So if the Ministry of Public Works is really serious about improving the lives of the poor, they have to change the way they look at standards. They have to allow their ministry to award a contract for a road, which is only two meters wide which is the width of this room, but they can't because the public sector civil servant who works in that ministry cannot sign off the contract. If he does, he may lose his job! Actually, he is violating the rules of the game and those are the rules of the game that need to be changed. ... The important thing is for the national level agencies to allow the flexibility to make changes to the rules of the game concerning how things will be done at the local level and this means a change in mindset at the national level (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

The World Bank periodically develops a basic plan (Three-Year Plan) for Yemen, which is a part of its larger agenda (Country Assistance Strategy) for the nation. The World Bank responds to the needs of Yemen according to that agenda. Unless there is an emergency, the World Bank does not respond to any the requests outside of the proposed strategy because it is built on the World Bank's vision, donor interests, and the Yemeni government's requests.

So a small request that comes from there sparks off a whole lot of work on our side to figure out how to respond in an appropriate way. At the same time, we try to link this with the larger strategy that we have at the country level in Yemen because we have a basic plan for every three years we develop for a country. It's called the Country Assistance Strategy. The Country Assistance Strategy lists the key issues at play, how the World Bank is going to address some of those issues through projects or studies, and so on, and so forth. So it is not much of a negotiation. It is a lot of knowledge exchange. It is a lot of relationship building. It is staying engaged between missions (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

These are the sort of things when you do an in-depth analysis of a country, to determine where it is in its development? How is the financial sector working right now? What's happening with land markets? What is the most appropriate intervention? It takes a lot of in-depth work. So I know that in Yemen we have been asked to help them in housing. Now, the government of Yemen is developing housing the bad way. The housing units they are considering will be very expensive. I do not know if they will be transparently done. Who knows what will happen, but this is a large contract. However, it will not make a dent in the housing demand because the bulk of the housing demand is being met by the private sector whether by residents of the informal settlements that are building their own, or by small contractors who are doing a little bit for the people of the bottom on land for which people have not paid, maybe, public land that has been squatted. ... My sense is that the government does not know what to do with

informal settlements and this upgrading may demonstrate a solution. What they will never be able to do is to make all these informal settlements neat and clean with a graded street pattern. They have to accept that because they can't afford it. Nobody can afford it. ... They have asked us to help with building a housing policy. I know it is going to take us time to assemble it but if they even could do a good analysis, it will be a good start (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

We have a group in the World Bank, the Public Sector Management Family, and they are preparing a project to deal with exactly these revenue and expenditure issues at the Federal level and with a few key ministries to computerize the system to improve budgeting practices. Building the capacity to do this takes time. It takes hardware and software and a lot of political will. If there is no will to really change then, there is not much that we can do. However, until these underlying fundamental things change, you cannot build anything and go away. It will not last. It will not last (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Contribution of these Organizations Toward Improving Government Policies or Developing a new Legal Framework for Informal Settlements in Sana'a

The World Bank policy on informal settlements is more of an upgrading and in situ development effort. The policy is trying to encourage different in-situ development options and to avoid eviction and resettlement actions against residents. The World Bank provides some basic infrastructure and services, such as paving roads, improved street lighting, health centers, and schools. It encourages the Yemeni government to adopt an in-place upgrading policy, but if resettlement is unavoidable, the World Bank has a

separate policy that seeks a smooth and secure process of resettlement at all stages, as explained by interviewee 12.

I worked on the Implementation Completion Report. They maybe call it Urban Development Projects. It may have a component that is focused on something that is not upgrading, but Site In Services. Site In Services is a very different technical option. There we say, we are going to develop these sites. This is the size of the plot. This is the road and then these will be allotted and people will slowly build their houses. ... Site In Services, however, seems like an inappropriate solution for low and no-income families because they cannot afford to live in such areas. ... We have never been able to get it done for the targeted group that we want to assist in Yemen's informal communities. It is okay for the middle class that can then leverage this land to get bank loans and build over time, but that also means that the financial sector and the mortgage lending industry should be working in that country. ... In addition, not every successful model is replicable. Every country is a different case with a special context and component. This was a challenge to the World Bank to rethink its policy toward informal settlements (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Collaboration

Respondents from government agencies and from NGOs and INGOs in Yemen suggested that the particular role of service delivery of aid organizations in informal settlements in Sana'a was significant. Just as my interviewees discussed the pros and cons of this type of collaboration, UNDP (2010) has offered a model that seeks to ensure more balanced relationships among the key players, including local government and non-

state actors (private sector and civil society). Respondents shed light on the type of partnerships and form of collaborations the World Bank practices with key players and stakeholders. They also shared the differences and similarities between the World Bank's work and that of other organizations in informal settlements in Yemen.

Forms of Collaboration with Other National and International Organizations and with Government Agencies

The interviewees discussed how the World Bank's work is organized with local partners and the extent to which those partnerships helped advance the World Bank's mission as well as government plans and programs.

This one is the Ministry of Public Works. Yes! It is the main counterpart. Then there are NGOs and community organizations, but they are very specific to the local context. ... There is contact with the governor also. ... So it is the governor, the Ministry at the central level, and then the governorate level. I'm not sure to what extent the local council is involved, but I guess they were meeting also because they help to schedule the meetings and workshops. There are many people invited, including private providers, beneficiaries, and everybody (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

It is a project of the government so the World Bank only facilitates the setting up of the effort but we work with what we call a Project Implementation Unit or a Project Management Unit, which is a government staff. So by working with them, we are building their capacity on how to do this after the project. They are meant to go back to the Ministry of Public Works. The World Bank provides funding but

the project is executed by the government. The government project is staffed by government people who could hire other consultants. ... There is some capacity building here (Interviewee 13, May 18, 2010).

Normally because the World Bank is an international governmental institution we work with the Yemeni government and the money is spent by the government of Yemen. If they need to coordinate with sub-national governments, it is their job. ... My direct contact is with the project head and with the Minister to tell him what we're doing; what we want; ... we're making sure this project is implemented with the project unit. ... It is quite complex so and that's why we are happy. As a World Bank, we work across sectors at the country level and we have this dialogue in the urban sector and in the rural sector. The more we talk to one another here, the more we make people there talk to one another (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Differences and Similarities Between Organizations Concerning the Types of Services Offered to Informal Settlements

The key difference between the World Bank's work and that of other international organizations working in informal settlements is its way of spending money and who manages the funds, according to interviewee 12:

I think one of the biggest differences between how other donors work and what the World Bank does is just how to spend money is spent. In the case of the World Bank when we provide the money, we don't spend it. The decision on spending it is done by the Yemenis. Then we monitor. We're spending the money

to get the result we promised we would get. ... So we develop something called the Procurement Plan. How will we procure the consultants, the bricks and mortar civil works contracts, or the table and computers for which this money has been provided? There has to be a method to it and we have a way. We have procurement guidelines in the World Bank that have to apply. ... So there are different procurement rules so all the application of these rules is something that's done by the Yemenis (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Now in the case of other donors, DFID, for example, which is a British agency, hires its own consultants. It may have a three million dollar program in Al-Hodaidah, but the money will be spent by the staff that are paid by DFID. In the case of the World Banks' projects, money is spent by a staff member paid by the Yemeni government. That's the key difference and that has an impact on many things. ... So the results that have achieved by World Bank's projects are results achieved or not achieved by the Yemenis. Results achieved by other donors are results achieved by the donors with their funds that they manage. The key difference is who manages the funds (Interviewee 12, May 20, 2010).

Analysis outcome of this research stage provided specific answers on the research questions. It also led to more inquiries about the particular roles of INGOs and IGOs outside of Yemen in the governance of informal settlements in Sana'a. A follow-up research stage, thus, was designed to gain deeper insights about the involvement of international organizations in Mahwa Aser and other informal communities in Sana'a. A new set of themes and subthemes emerged from the analysis of this stage. To some

extent, the results of the analysis of this research phase differed from the results of the first research phase, but they shared many similarities, as addressed in the next section.

8.2. Major Research Phase

Three major themes and seven sub-themes emerged in interviews conducted during this research phase and from the three key areas that were discussed in Chapter 6.

Themes

1. Involvement: Intervention/Community Engagement/ Approaches/Challenges
 - a. Forms and scale of intervention in informal settlements.
 - b. Adopted approaches for identifying residents' needs and strategies to respond to those needs; community engagement.
 - c. Challenges that INGOs and IGOs encountered while working in Yemen's informal settlements.
2. Policy: Concerns/Assessment/Contribution
 - a. Organizational views concerning Yemeni government policies on informal settlements.
 - b. Contribution of these organizations toward improving current policies or developing a new legal framework for informal settlements in Sana'a.
3. Partnership and Collaboration: Forms/Advantages/Disadvantages
 - a. Forms of partnership and collaboration.
 - b. Advantages and disadvantages of each type of partnership.

The next analysis is organized based on these themes and sub-themes. It is also organized according to the concept of the three key areas highlighted in Chapter 6.

Involvement

Government officials interviewed during both the preliminary and major research phases suggested that INGOs and IGOs outside of Yemen have been important in government efforts to improve the lives of the poor in the nation's informal settlements. Their assistance has ranged from identifying the key problems at stake to refining strategies and facilitating a more effective policy framework. Interviewee responses in the major research phase further articulated the specific roles of international organizations in Mahwa Aser and in informal settlements in Sana'a.

Forms and Scale of Intervention in Informal Settlements

International organization activity in informal settlements in the Arab region is relatively new (Madbouly, 2009), particularly in Yemen. For example, UN-Habitat, which has a long-standing history and well-established record in assisting governments with informal settlement issues in many developing countries, is planning to become involved in Yemen for the first time once political stability has once again been attained.

The UN-HABITAT Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)—Cairo Office—was established only a few months ago and is currently covering Egypt, Libya, and the occupied Palestinian Territories in its portfolio. During the course of next year, ROAS will be responsible for all 22 Arab states according to the League of Arab States definition, including Yemen. . . . Unfortunately, UN-HABITAT has not worked in the field of informal areas in Sana'a, Yemen. However, once the political situation becomes more stable, ROAS is planning to establish linkages to key stakeholders in the urban sector in Yemen and identify possible areas for future collaboration (Interviewee 20, July 07, 2012).

The intervention of the World Bank in informal settlements in Yemen is recent as well. The rapid sprawl of informal settlements in the main cities in the nation gained the attention of World Bank officials and in response, the World Bank has shifted part of its agenda towards not only improving the living conditions of settlement residents, but also towards increasing relevant government capacities to address the concern. The World Bank officials recently expanded their target area to address a number of informal settlements in the Yemen's main cities, including Sana'a.

As noted earlier in this chapter, Mahwa Aser was an early candidate for a World Bank upgrading project, but was dropped from the agenda due to concerns about conflict of interest and readiness and capacities of the relevant government agencies to collaborate

Mahwa Aser—Akhdam area—we visited the area and decided it should be included in the World Bank agenda; it is one of the informal areas. ... I went there more than once; I know there was a group from the World Bank that went there also; just a quick visit, it was considered a potential area for upgrading but then there was some conflict with government officials. It was on the candidate list in the work to become one of the areas for an upgrading project but that never happened (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

It was a development project under the Ministry of Public Works. We were asked, as part of that, to do an inventory assessment of informal areas in Sana'a but, earlier in 2007, I was asked by the World Bank Cities Alliance to lead the City Development Strategy (CDS) for Sana'a. That was with Municipality of Sana'a—

Amanat Al-A'asmah; so that was from 2006 to 2007. ... In 2008 to 2009, we were supposed to prepare site identification project design and a preliminary project design, for a World Bank Urban Upgrading Project in Sana'a but the World Bank and Amanat Al-A'asmah, the Technical Office, had never agreed on everything. So it was dropped. The potential clients, the Technical Office in Amanat Al-A'asmah, decided not to pursue it and I will tell the reason. The reason was very common conflict between Amanat Al-A'asmah concerning who was going to get the project. So it was impossible for them to come to an agreement (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

The work meant for Mahwa Aser, which was not realized, included provision of basic services and infrastructure, including a water system, road network, electricity, and garbage collection.

For Mahwa Aser, the project basically included improvement of basic services, infrastructure, water network, road network, electricity, and garbage collection. If I'm not mistaken, in one of the communities we were also thinking about providing social services to look at how we could improve vocational training and this kind of aspect, from a social perspective (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Adopted Approaches for Identifying Residents' Needs and Strategies to Respond to those Needs; Community Engagement

Among other international organizations, the World Bank encouraged community participation and inclusion of all residents. The respondents in the first research phase shared some of the mechanisms, which IGOs and INGOs in Yemen adopted to identify the needs of affected communities in Sana'a. Interviewees in that stage shared similar

mechanisms, but at the same time identified additional approaches for learning about the needs of residents and again emphasized the role of community in identifying those needs and priorities. According to the responses of the directors of INGOs and IGOs inside and outside of Yemen, when an international organization is considering whether to intervene in an informal settlement, it develops an assessment and then grades it according to its relative degree of need. Upon mutual agreement with local authorities, the work begins. After identifying the areas for assistance, intervening entities seek to discern the needs of the community from its residents' point-of-view. This is a significant stage because all actors—state and non-state—need to agree on the type and degree of intervention before commencing the work. Conducting surveys and studies, arranging meetings with targeted communities and community leaders, visiting the location and walking around and doing mapping verification are among the approaches that international organizations employ to respond to the demands of informal settlement residents.

We usually do what we call participatory appraisal. ... This is just the preliminary to get various insights to agree on a project and the first thing you want to do is to get the agreement as you go and do a series of assessments and project design; we did that in Taiz and held many meetings with community groups etc. and with women but we never got to that stage in Sana'a because the project didn't go anywhere. ... We call for meetings with both community and community leaders. It was very easy in Taiz because there was this existing project of the World Bank, which has people from Taiz in it. So it was very easy to make connections. And, to check on it, we go ourselves and ask around. We ask around and you end up being invited to a place, women go to one place and men go to another place,

and you discuss, but also you walk around a lot. You have to walk around. You have to do mapping verification but anyway that then goes to the actual design of intervention and the base map and everything went out to contract, which was contracted to an Indian firm (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

It was a study for the whole area of Sana'a trying to identify the informal areas according to different criteria and we have different typologies etc. ... You go through a process. The process is based on terms of reference, which the World Bank writes. Actually, we wrote it. Then it's called Assessment Project Identification. Once you're done with that, you write a report and that is it. If there's a latter phase, they may call you back as an oversight consultant who will look at the work of the consultant firm to do the detailed design (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

As we were engaging in urban issues in Yemen, one of the big aspects we should look at it, at least from an urban poverty perspective, it a poverty study, which was done, I think, in 2005 and 2006. It basically highlights the conditions in informal settlements and that is how the World Bank looked at it (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Community members were invited to participate in the projects design from the beginning to the end and they were kept informed. When respondent 21 was asked about community participation, she argued that consulting the community was a must.

Yes, because when we did the Taiz project, we actually had the communities in. We had consultations with the communities in the design of the intervention and in the project so there has been a lot of work that had been done with the community. We were trying to identify what is important by gender because I had to look at them where we had separate women's and men's meetings over Gat⁴⁹ sessions, where they basically identified their priorities. So, yes projects were designed actually in close consultation with people (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Challenges that INGOs and IGOs Encountered while Working in Yemen's Informal Settlements

INGOs and IGOs challenges working in informal settlements in Yemen included, but were not limited to, inaccurate information and census data, difficulties in accessing government documents, lack of maps and information, difficulties in verifying the level of services, conflicts over land ownership, land speculation, conflicts of interest among different government agencies, limited financial support, difficulties in identifying community priorities, and sensitivity about the Akhdam population and the challenges represented by their widespread stigmatization.

Mahwa Aser, you know, that area is interesting. There were different opinions. One opinion was it should be relocated, a project like, you know, the World Bank project in the 1980s, in Sa'awan. So one idea was to make another area like that where the Akhdams could go and you could use the settlement area for something else. But, I actually thought it was OK and there was some extra land around so you could add some services and stuff. The housing was not all bad in Mahwa

⁴⁹ See the definition of terms list.

Aser (Harat Al-Lakama). I thought it would be a good example for upgrading but, you know, how it is in Yemen. There is sensitivity about Akhdams and the project never came out either way; ... it is funny. In Taiz, the World Bank did a resettlement project. The Akhdam were very interesting. They did the resettlement project with nice houses and everything then they were discovered very quickly. More Akhdam came and built shacks in the same area. They're very mobile. It's a difficult issue (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

There were a few areas selected for upgrading: Al-Khafgi, Madinat AL-Lail, Harat Al-Lakama (Mahwa Aser) and I can't remember two or three others. One was in the north, toward the airport; I think Harat Al-Dakik. ... One of the problems was that we were unable to verify the level of services. This was not always so easy and at the end we have to do it ourselves. So it turned out, for example, they weren't well defined. Madinat Al-Lail turns out that the Social Fund had already done the roads and water in part of the area and not another part. That was very confusing. ... You have to know the level of service in order to define a project. So it doesn't do too much good to say that you need a road paved if it has already been paved. The good thing about Al-Khafgi is that it had almost nothing. Al-Khafgi was a very good area ... it was easy to identify. The people were definitely poor ... and it was deprived of almost everything and there was also an opportunity because there was empty land around. Originally, it was supposed to be a hospital. It was on State land. When a settlement is on state land, it becomes much easier because then you can say, OK, we are going to put a

school here and this there. You don't have to worry (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Harat Al-Dakik was interesting, very interesting, but problematic because there were land disputes and what we thought might be a State land turned out to be individuals properties. People thought it was their land. There was a big fight over it. So we couldn't even tell whether there would be any land to use, because if you are doing upgrading, usually you find out that there is a need for schools and need for other things like that (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

I think the biggest challenge, at that time, was trying to identify priorities. I mean, you intervene and when you give the people choices to identify their priorities, you also want to, actually, prioritize what you want to do. Each one of these choices involved different aspect when you got to the point where you have to identify community priorities. That was extremely challenging (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Look! Basically, in Yemen, it is sometimes impossible to tell what is formal and what is informal since in very few cases in the 1990s and in the last 20 years has anything been built with a permit. So it is always informal; ... it creates a very confusing situation and it becomes very difficult to fix because of the land speculation. Everybody wants to get their hands on land. What we found, in many cases, for example, was sort of above Harat Al-Dakik area, people were building

little houses and getting someone else to live in them. Rent them for almost nothing just to claim the land all over Sana'a. ... You couldn't even tell which ones were serious. Had they built houses because they needed them or had they constructed houses to speculate on land or claim government property?

(Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012)

There are NO maps so you have to use Google Earth. Luckily, in Google Earth the coverage is quite good. So I had to use Google Earth in Taiz. Actually, we used satellite images, which we got from one of the consultants who was doing something else there. It involved Al-Hodaidah and Taiz; ... in Taiz, we were able to develop a pretty good map. Especially, in Taiz and Al-Hodaidah, they already had master plans prepared by a consultant (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Sana'a was much more difficult. We have never been able to get the detailed results of the 2004 census. It is obvious the Central Statistical Office. Even though we had a letter from the Deputy Prime Minister that would not make it available to us at the detailed level that we wanted. You can just sort of imagine why ... information is kept there because it is perceived that you can make money from it; ... so that's one of the challenges. Well, how do you assess informal areas in their needs if you don't know the population? So what we had to do is, say OK! In this area we, for one reason or another, know pretty much the density, the residential density so then you develop a rough estimate (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Conflicting interest, lack of interest, inability to respond to the World Bank's requests, and unpreparedness of the relevant government agencies caused, at one time, an exclusion of Sana'a from the World Bank's program that sought to upgrade a number of informal settlements in the main cities in Yemen, as explained by the respondents.

The Sana'a city project had two components. One component was the expansion of the existing landfill and the other component was to finance three informal settlements in Sana'a, Harat Al-Lakama was included. ... Well, basically, because in the project preparation time, Sana'a Municipality did not, actually, show a lot of interest. They actually decided not to pursue that. Plus, the project timeframe and timeline for the Sana'a component wasn't even ready at that time. ... Amanat Al-A'asmah was unable to respond to the requests from the World Bank for a decision (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

The recent political upheaval was an unexpected challenge. Civil war and instability in the country caused the World Bank to suspend, delay, or shut down its activities in Yemen.

You know because of all the conflict that happened in Yemen, the World Bank is re-engaging, but I know that informal settlement is going to be one of the areas that we are going to engage in. I'm not really sure about the profile of Sana'a, but, definitely, I think they are planning to revisit projects. In some areas, definitely, we will start because before the conflict, the disaster management project got approved. Aden's studies were finished and the project was beginning implementation. Hopefully, as we will re-engage in the next few months, the Taiz

project will start so we will be working in other cities, like Al-Hodaidah and, hopefully, they'll look at Sana'a too (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Because of the upheaval, you know, the projects were suspended for some time. Actually, they were suspended for quite a few months in Yemen. ... We had the Board of Directors over here; they were very uncomfortable about the engagement at the point where all that civil war was happening. So they actually suspended all the engagement there; ... that has affected processing the projects in Yemen because it pushed back their implementation very crucially for a year and a half (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Policy

According to respondents' interviews during the preliminary and main research phases, the Yemeni government has no particular policies on informal settlements. The government relies on a general housing policy, which is inefficient by itself, or on immediate actions once informal settlements interfere with the specific plans or projects. The recent intervention and involvement of international organizations in informal settlements assists the local and national authorities in different ways, such as capacity building, learning about the best practices from different countries, forging new policy frameworks, and providing funding.

Organizational Views Concerning Yemeni Government Policies on Informal Settlements

International organizations are concerned about issues linked to informal settlements and planning and housing policies in Yemen, as shared by respondents in this group. The official view on informal settlements has often led to ignoring their presence

on maps, and in practice. Overall, interviewee comments suggested that Yemen has never been addressed as a separate problem in national urban policies.

The UN-HABITAT has got previous experience of working in Yemen, particularly in the field of Urban Indicators; ... the issue of informal areas is not widely acknowledged in Yemen and more attention should be paid in this regard (Interviewee 20, July 07, 2012).

There was no fixed policy. It was an exception in Taiz. There was a Master Plan there that had been done in 2005 by Luis Berger and they expand the housing policy on that but it wasn't very elaborate and it did not really address the issue of informal settlements (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

The housing sector and many other people at the Ministry of Public Works think that the solution is to put everybody in public housing. That is a big thing there. It was part of Ali Adbullah Saleh's last project, the National Project for Housing. So, he was doing public housing in Aden, in Taiz. I think in Sana'a and Al-Hodaidah as well; ... there were some people who thought that should be done and so they started this public housing project but nothing ever happened. The public housing project was not specifically in informal areas (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Especially in Sana'a, more than any Yemeni town, there is no land management on the part of the government. The government if it has land, it's going to use it

for prestige projects or for business purposes. Prestige projects may be like a big mosque, may be a presidential palace, or may be, like in the south of Sana'a, there's going to be a big amusement park. Some money is coming from Kuwait and some money is from Abu Dhabi. That's what they are interested in. And, they wouldn't even protect the land they have. All right! All land in Yemen unless it is a State land is farmland. There are a lot of areas that are fenced to protect them from trespassers. They don't let people squat there. There's no land management, no public land management policy. The Authority for Land Survey and Urban Planning does not anything. I mean, depending on the individuals in the office though ... land in Yemen, especially in urban areas, is one of the ways to make money, as a private investor or as somebody who is working in the government. It is a very difficult environment in which to try to reach someone to talk about the need for integrated planning, participatory planning, land management, public land management, etcetera. These are concepts that been used throughout the world, but are very difficult to find evidence of their influence in Yemen (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Well, they don't have a policy on informal settlements. That is a big problem in Yemen; ... the point was like why don't they build a policy, at least, a national strategy that can actually address some of these issues because without any framework how do people intervene. So that was the big thing in Yemen. There are no organizing principles. So everyone may intervene and do whatever they want in a very fragmented system. They need to develop guidelines on which to

intervene that include certain protocols. National authorities do not have any guiding principles for your work in these areas, or for their own (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

One World Bank respondent (interviewee 12) explained that the World Bank discussed these issues with local authorities. She suggested that the problem is mainly linked to the interest of donors and funding agencies.

They were quite supportive. They don't have any issue about that. I think the big question for the Yemeni government is that the business has no financing and it is linked to donors and funding activities. So that was pretty much the problem they had that they don't have any financing for such projects. And, also, they don't expect the donors to come in and finance these projects. ... For example, the Arab Fund was not very interested; that sort of thing (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Contribution of these Organizations Toward Improving Current Policies or Developing a New Legal Framework for Informal Settlements in Sana'a

Respondents suggested a number of ways in which their organizations had intervened in policy formulation to assist the Yemeni government to manage the dynamic growth of informal settlements more effectively. According to respondents of this group, their organizations offered some help to the Yemeni government in terms of sharing best practices and experiences from other countries, duplicating successful projects that could be implemented in Yemen, offering recommendations concerning policy improvement at the end of each project, and offering funding and capacity building.

Since the issue of informal areas is not widely acknowledged in Yemen, more attention should be paid in this regard. The UN-HABITAT will target the national

policy level as well as local level interventions based on its wide experience in slum upgrading in various countries globally. ... UN-HABITAT's formal stance concerning informal settlements in Yemen is based on the mandate and global approach to informal areas. This information can be drawn from the UN-HABITAT website (Interviewee 20, July 07, 2012).

Well, the thing is that the World Bank provides the best experiences from the rest of the world but, definitely, all of it has to be done by the Yemeni government because they have to see what works the best for Yemeni context, you know. But, the Bank, of course, provides guidance along the way and shares the best practices that happen in the rest of the world ... and, of course, the financing of it. That's a big aspect ... and it is not just funding. It has to come with building capacities for those entities that are managing such type of work in Yemen (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Unfortunately, I am not aware of any legislation related to informal areas. However, the World Bank should be able to provide insights here, especially with its focus on Taiz. A project was conducted there that assisted the local authorities in upgrading water channels, which were occupied by low-income groups. Apparently, this project was successfully implemented and lessons learnt could be drawn also for the national level (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Well, the World Bank always makes recommendations for policies. That's one of their jobs. As a matter of fact, they do this thing called a policy note. The policy notes are exactly that and it's usually based on some preliminary work or study. So, I'm sure there were policy notes prepared by the World Bank, but not for the whole country. I think it was in each case in Taiz, Sana'a, and Al-Hodaidah. You know, I think, we used to write about it for national upgrading policies. Basically, I see there is no reason for that in a situation like Yemen where really everything is informal (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Partnership and Collaboration

Partnership and collaboration between state and non-state actors, which is emphasized by international donors and international aid agencies, is a key factor for successful efforts and for reaching desirable changes in informal settlements. Equal opportunities for contribution and involvement in a multidimensional approach among all stakeholders are fundamental for improving the living conditions of the poor in informal settlements (Wust et al., 2002). Respondents in the preliminary and major phases emphasized the collaboration roles among all stakeholders. They addressed the advantages and disadvantages of such collaboration. Respondents of this group further articulated these roles and shared the advantages and disadvantages of such collaborations as follows.

Forms of Partnership and Collaboration

According to my respondents, their organizations closely worked with local and national agencies. They also established various forms of collaboration with other NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in Yemen that have the same interest.

I have been supporting the GTZ project on Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen as an Urban Planner. We worked closely with GALSUP—the General Authority for Land Surveying and Urban Planning as well as GOPHCY—the General Organization for Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen. We also worked with the Ministry of Highways and Public Works as well as the Social Fund for Development (Interviewee 20, July 07, 2012).

Yes, we work with residents, also with local authorities. You know, when we are looking into informal settlements, it is not just the governor and the governorate, but you also have many entities there. You have the water entity and the electricity entity. You have to work with various ministries. So it is a community plus government agencies had planning intervention in these areas. ... Yes, we work with an NGO in Taiz that had worked with these communities and other government organizations, even not that many government organizations were interested in this topic when I was working there. So I was pretty shocked. Maybe now, they know more about the issue of informal settlements but at that point in time there weren't. Also, there weren't that many people working on informal settlements (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Type of Partnership

The preliminary research phase explained how some partnerships advanced the work of an organization in informal settlements, while some others hindered it. Respondents in the major research phase shared their personal and organizational perspectives on that issue.

- Some respondents argued that collaboration yields advantages by facilitating work between different agencies and in avoiding overlapping duties and responsibilities.

Yeah, that was quite easy in Yemen. We worked with the Social Fund and we also got to work with the National Water Authority. It is a government agency. We do a lot with different government agencies, but if you need or if you hear of something just go to the relevant donor and ask him what's going on. Usually communication between donors and here is pretty good. ... KFW, a German banking group, is financing some of the wastewater in Sana'a. You have to go to them because it will affect what you say about some of the areas in the upgrading news. So, you have to go to the water authority, National Water Authority. Also you have to go see the German KFW. At this end, I think there was another intervention that we have to find out about, but, mostly, I think we're using the Yemeni Social Fund for Development (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

Well, you need special leadership. Another thing you need is a very strong spine for the local councilors. So they actually were very supportive of this project and the opening. When we wanted to see people in informal settlements, they actually set up a special committee for this project. That's the only way we could get things done and bring needed parties together (Interviewee 21, June 02, 2012).

- Some other respondents indicated that disadvantages were reflected in the lengthy official procedures and lack of professional staff to get the work done appropriately and on time.

The contacts with local authorities were excellent, especially in Taiz. It was less with our clients in Sana'a, Amanat Al-A'smah. OK! You could do much better than that. They have these commissions in each area so the idea was to use them in project design but it never got to that stage (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

So if you're looking to local authorities, you have to look at their capacities and they have never done such work. That was the question. So the biggest challenge was how to organize yourself, the governorate, and how do you actually make sure that you are able to coordinate with each other. You know, you don't want to build a road and then have a utility to come and pick it up again to put in an electricity network or to put a water network. So that kind of coordination challenge and explaining it to local authorities was quite a bit of an experience.

There is no coordination mechanism in Yemen (Interviewee 22, May 15, 2012).

8.3. Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter further defined the particular role of INGOs and IGOs located outside of Yemen, but intervening in informal settlements in Sana'a. Directors of these organizations collectively shared the official views of their organizations concerning the informal settlements issue in Yemen. Their interview responses articulated the key roles their institutions had undertaken in assisting the populations of informal settlements in Yemen and Sana'a and in improving the performance of local and national authorities in assisting those residents. It articulated also the difficulties these organizations have faced in working with the targeted communities and in the very weak governance system in Yemen. Similarly, this chapter

addressed the role of international development organizations and aid organizations outside of Yemen concerning Mahwa Aser and informal settlements in Sana'a.

CHAPTER 9

Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion

I designed this research project to explore the “governance story” of informal settlements in Sana’a, using one such community, Mahwa Aser, as an exemplar, through the perspectives of multiple stakeholders involved in these neighborhoods— residents, government officials, and directors of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and international governmental organizations (IGOs) inside and outside of Yemen. This chapter provides a summary of the study’s major findings, recommendations to government and international organizations, and suggestions for future research.

9.1. Summary of the Study

Madbouly (2009), Sims et al. (2009), and El-Shorbagi (2008; 2007) have argued that informal settlements are a relatively new phenomenon in Yemen, but they have grown rapidly. A dearth of government capacities and resources coupled with the lack of an adequate land ownership policy and declining interest of international donors in Yemen has made crafting an appropriate governance response to this massive growth extremely difficult to achieve. Meanwhile, little academic research has focused on informal settlements in Yemen, particularly regarding the different roles of the multiple stakeholders involved in governance in such communities.

The central purpose of this dissertation was to provide a capsule analytic portrait of the dynamics and challenges of governance of informal settlements in Sana’a via the perspectives and activities of multiple stakeholders, including, importantly, one exemplar

community's residents. It has provided a picture of Yemeni government capacities, policies, and practices related to informal settlements in Sana'a and the governance roles of non-governmental and international organizations seeking to provide services in the community as well.

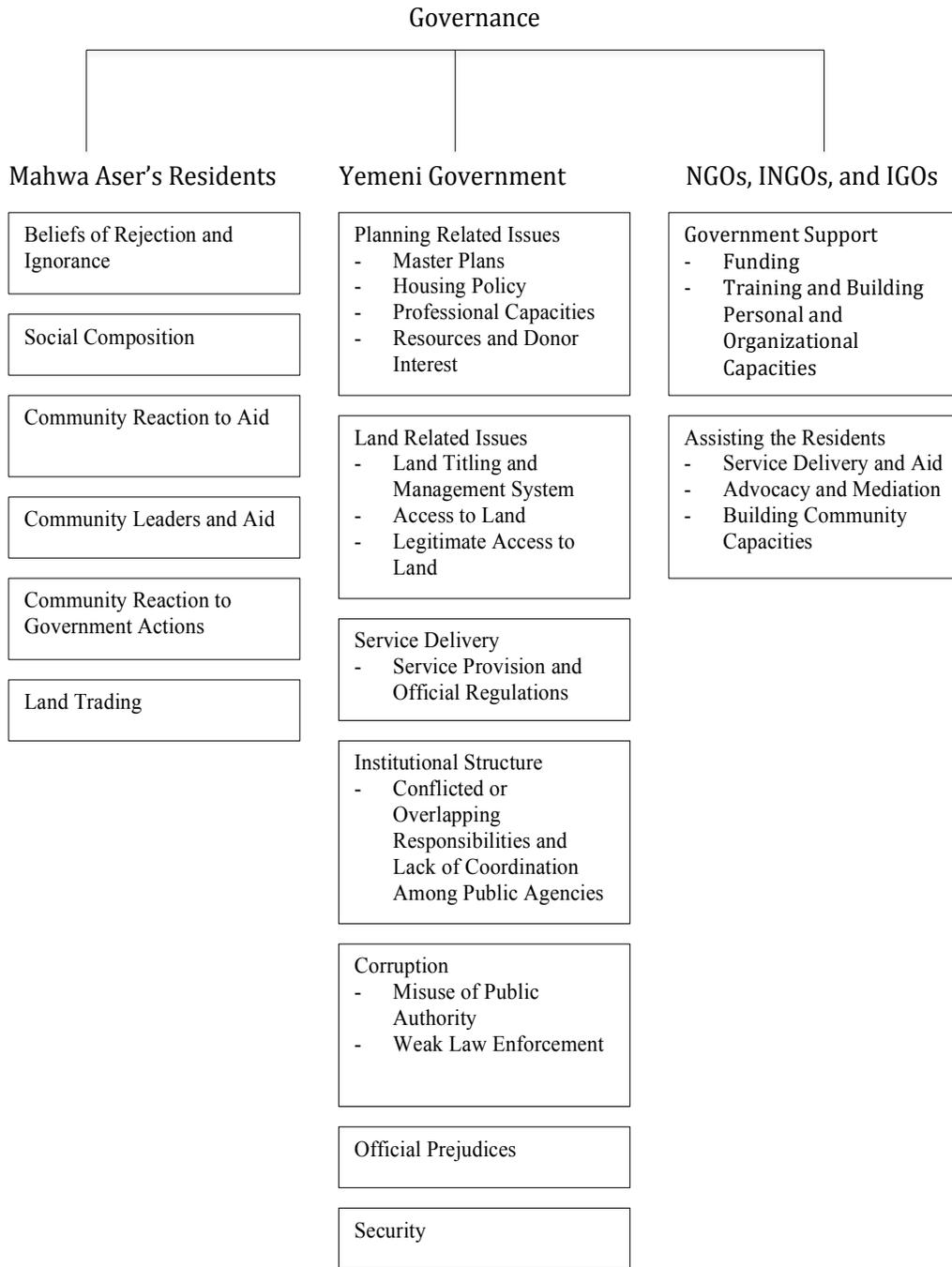
This qualitative analytical study involved three different groups—the residents of Mahwa Aser, officials of the Yemeni government, and leaders of international governmental and non-governmental development organizations and donor agencies—to begin to comprehend better the story of informal settlement governance in Sana'a. I conducted two research phases: a preliminary research phase and a later major research phase, of interviews with relevant community and organizational respondents in Yemen, the U.S., and Egypt. I based the analysis for this study in strong measure on personal interviews with those key stakeholders. I also examined government and international organization reports and documents to gain insight into the governance challenges linked to the creation and continued growth of informal communities in Sana'a. I identified a number of factors that have led to worsening living conditions in these settlements.

The reviewed literature along with the outcome of the analysis of the interviews with Mahwa Aser residents, Yemeni officials, and the leaders of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs in and outside of Yemen led to my findings and recommendations. The next section explains those major findings, which are also summarized in chart 1.

9.2. Summary of Key Findings

Chart 1 outlines key categories of findings by major interview/stakeholder group. I follow that presentation with a brief overview of specific issues linked to each domain and primary stakeholder group.

Chart 1. Summary of Key Research Findings by Stakeholder Group



9.2.1. Mahwa Aser Residents

Beliefs of Rejection and Ignorance

Residents of Mahwa Aser, in particular the Akhdam interviewed for this study, believed government officials and mainstream society discriminated against them because of their skin color and social background. Their beliefs have made it still more challenging for those seeking to assist them. On the one hand, their self-perception has set back government and international organization efforts to assist the community as it often results in distrust and resistance to all sorts of interventions. On the other hand, this perspective has often prevented residents from seeking to go beyond their inherited social boundaries and the geographic confines of the Mahwa Aser neighborhood. Settlement residents believed the government and national and international organizations had long ignored them just because they were Akhdam. However, ironically, Mahwa Aser non-Akhdam residents believed that this group received the bulk of the aid available from government and nongovernmental organizations. They perceived they were deprived and discriminated against because they were poor non-Akhdam living in Mahwa Aser. These groups' sense of rejection appears to be growing and has been especially evident during religious occasions and feasts even though they have lived peaceably with Akhdam in Mahwa Aser for decades. To the extent conflict is emerging it appears to be the unintentional result of aid organizations to target the "most poor" for assistance.

Social Composition

Mahwa Aser contains residents from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds (including Akhdam, tribesmen, and Somalis). Some parts of the community include chiefly Akhdam while other areas of the settlement have fewer members of this group. I

found it interesting that Akhdam and non-Akhdam lived together, have for so long shared the space, exchanged visits, and participated jointly in different social and cultural events. Akhdam and non-Akhdam shared similar perspectives concerning government and social rejection of them, but non-Akhdam uniformly perceived that aid and government organizations had paid unjustly more attention to Akhdam than to them. Although these groups have long coexisted in Mahwa Aser, I saw little evidence of marriage across their boundaries, which might, were it to occur on a meaningful scale, signal a diminution of long-standing social boundaries among them.

Community Reaction to Aid

Residents of the community I interviewed, whether Akhdam or not, uniformly perceived that the aid given to them was not fairly distributed. Non-Akhdam residents claimed that only Akhdam and those connected to that group's community leaders received support. Meanwhile, I heard many stories from non-Akhdam about Akhdam attacking aid distributors and fighting over the resources they provided. Some residents who received aid sold it soon after obtaining it. These behaviors and internal community conflicts prompted several aid agencies to discontinue distributing food and clothing to the entire community.

Community Leaders and Aid

Respondents argued that their community leaders poorly represented them with government and other "outside" groups; they routinely kept assistance provided for all for themselves. These individuals claimed that these leaders either distributed the aid according to their personal interest or sold it for profit. That is, all interviewees suggested that instead of being community advocates, these leaders exploited them. This type of

behavior resulted in a loss of trust in community leaders and deprived the neighborhood of further support from aid agencies that became convinced as a result that their efforts were not reaching their intended beneficiaries. They therefore ended that aid.

Community Reaction to Government Actions

Curiously, several residents I interviewed and whom I encountered on visits either denied outright that the government offered services to Mahwa Aser, argued that these were insufficient when pressed, or suggested that even when support was offered, it was of poor quality. Most residents were willing to relocate if compensated by the government to do so. This predilection was joined by uniform affection for the nation's previous long-term leader, President Saleh. Residents praised the former President and argued he had protected them against the arbitrary actions of military generals, who desired parts of the property on which the settlement is located for their own gain.

Land Trading

The land occupied by residents of Mahwa Aser is traded among residents and shanty "owners" are compensated when such occurs. It is common for settlement inhabitants to "sell" and "buy" properties in the community. Although the residents all know the land on which they live belongs to the State, they nonetheless act as if they enjoyed personal ownership of their properties and even issue unofficial deeds to buyers. These agreements, however, are not legally sanctioned and need not be honored by the government should it elect to relocate residents or seek to upgrade properties in the settlement in the future.

9.2.2. Yemeni Government

Planning Related issues

Master Plans

A key problem for planning in Sana'a is that the city lacks a comprehensive plan or vision for its future growth. A weak public institutional structure, a chronic shortage of adequate funding to support appropriate professional staffing and support, and overlapping jurisdictional responsibilities and decision-making among the government units involved have prevented the development of efficient and effective public planning processes and implementation. Moreover, a lack of professional capacity resulted in little Yemeni governmental involvement in the preparation of the master plans that foreign consultants developed for Sana'a. The American planning firm, Louis Berger and Kamsax International, Inc., generated the First Master Plan for the city in the late 1970s. Twenty years after, the Yemeni national government invited a Cuban team to create a new master plan for the city. That firm sought to team with the Yemeni Ministry of Construction, Housing, and Urban Planning to create the City's Second Master Plan in 1998, but the effort ended up simply revising the Berger and Kamsax plan.

Although the First Master Plan offered strong recommendations, particularly regarding development of a housing policy which, had they been adopted would have helped the government meet the current crisis in Sana'a City, these suggestions were never implemented. My interviewees suggested that language barriers proved a large impediment to efforts to implement the First Master plan. Moreover, neither the American firm nor the government took into account tribal customs or law for managing and resolving disputes over land in their effort, nor did they consider the implications of

tribal structures and social caste in their proposed land-use strategies. One key lesson of the first plan effort is that it is critical for the government to communicate its plans broadly and with cultural sensitivity if it is to expect its proposals to have a reasonable chance of implementation. In addition, its own officials must be able to work easily with those it hires to provide assistance; this proved extremely difficult with the first planning effort since few government officials spoke English and the consultants did not speak Arabic. The American team brought an advanced planning package to Yemen, which was not ready administratively, politically, economically, or socially to take advantage of it.

A major conflict arose among the relevant public agencies, including the General Authority for Land Surveying and Urban Planning (GALSUP), the Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH), and Municipality of Sana'a (Amanat Al-A'asmah) during the development of the Second Master Plan for Sana'a, which resulted in its suspension for a protracted period (1998-present). Each agency thought that it should receive credit for creating the template and should therefore receive disproportionate funding for its efforts. Bureaucratic conflict, poor inter-agency coordination, and no clear assignment of public responsibility were primary causes for this Plan's lack of success. Meanwhile, with no overall plan to guide its choices, the Municipality of Sana'a is dealing with the rapid growth of informal settlements within its boundaries by preparing detailed neighborhood plans as the need arises. Thus, such public planning as has occurred has been reactive, rather than pro-active. On the one hand, this process has at least permitted the city to respond to the short-term challenges posed by informal settlements. On the other hand, however, the lack of a comprehensive plan has encouraged land speculation in areas for which specific plans have been developed.

Housing Policy

The government has not developed a clear housing policy for Sana'a to date. All that is currently available is a short descriptive handbook that suggests that if Sana'a City is not developing adequate housing policy in the near future, it will face serious challenges from the rapid development of informal housing. The Ministry of Public Works and Highways has sought the assistance of the World Bank to develop a stronger housing policy for the city and to manage the challenge of informal settlements. Meanwhile, however, many residential areas have been developed informally in different parts of Sana'a. The government's inability to develop a clear guiding policy for urban growth coupled with a frequent lack of accurate population data and maps led to unorganized responses by local and national authorities. Since neither the local nor national governments ever developed an overarching strategy, these officials responded to informal settlement concerns in Sana'a on a case-by-case basis after a problem or an interest arose. Since each government response was more or less unique, government actions in reaction to settlement growth varied from upgrading to eviction and resettlement. In some cases, including that of Mahwa Aser, the governments elected to impose measures aimed at preventing additional growth by limiting services to likely new settlement areas. To the extent that the Yemeni government had a vision for the Mahwa Aser location, it was that the community's residents would have to be resettled at some point. But exactly when such might occur was never clear since the regime never had the resources to ensure that result or to realize its own plans for the property on which the informal community had grown.

Meanwhile, no single agency oversaw the neighborhood and specific actions occurred on an ad hoc basis. For example, the government assisted several residents to relocate out of concern for their safety during floods. Moreover, it was not clear which public entity was responsible for such infrastructure as was available to parts of the community. In any case, it went unmaintained for long periods.

Professional Capacities

The existing staff of government agencies was either inadequately trained, unskilled, or too few in number (or all of these factors at once) to keep pace with the community's rapid population growth or to devise effective urban planning policies to manage that growth. Despite some government-led and internationally financed capacity building efforts, Yemen's lack of professionals and planners led to poor planning strategies and housing policies, little or no land management, and inappropriate responses to Sana'a City's growth-related challenges.

Resources and Donor's Interest

One key factor that has hindered the government's efforts to address informal community growth effectively has been a chronic shortage of funds to support such efforts. The Yemeni government heavily depends on the support of donors and funding agencies, while that interest in turn rests on the level of perceived government performance and political and social stability in the country. However, the Yemeni government is afflicted by multiple problems. Corruption is widespread in government agencies. Stability is also hardly strong in the nation with a just-concluded armed conflict emblematic of long-standing divisions in the country. These factors have indeed led to reductions in aid provided to the Yemeni government, in particular during the upheaval.

More, as the fiscal capacity of the national government to provide assistance has declined, the Sana'a municipal government, too, has allocated reduced resources to its informal settlements because it possesses very weak revenue generation capacity of its own and depends strongly on central government transfers and subsidies to provide the services it offers. The national regime in turn relies on international aid for a strong share of its revenues and these have declined markedly. In short, the nation's recent conflict did little but diminish support for Sana'a's informal settlements.

Land Related Issues

Land Titling and Management System

There is no clear land registration system in Sana'a. Sharia Law and civil legislation or customary law remains the dominant tool for titling and claiming land ownership. Many landlords prefer not to go to government agencies to register their lands because of the stiff fees and lengthy process associated with doing so. This creates a fuzzy situation, especially in defining property and ownership rights, once a conflict concerning land arises. Deficiency of recording deeds and consequent difficulties in proof of rights have noticeably contributed to insecurity of property tenure in Sana'a and complicated the community's land titling system. Moreover, a lack of adequate dispute settlement arrangements has also played a significant role in ownership insecurity. No single agency is responsible for land administration. Instead, multiple national and local authorities are in charge— General Authority for Land Surveying and Urban Planning, Ministry of Public Works and Highways, Ministry of Finance, and Local Councils. This maze of jurisdictional claims compounds the difficulty created by a lack of clear strategies to deal with land-related issues in Sana'a. Moreover, there is no inventory of

State lands and no coordinated attempt to protect them. Encroachment on state-owned land has become a common practice, not only among residents of informal settlements, but also, and more often, by land speculators.

Access to Land

The nature of land markets in Yemen, and in particular in Sana'a, ongoing disputes concerning ownership, lack of clear land records, and rampant investor speculation have made access to land more problematic, not only for the State, business owners, and investors, but also for the poor who are forced by these conditions to bargain to fulfill their basic needs. The State struggles to gain access to vacant land, which is claimed as private property. This situation makes it more costly and therefore more difficult for the government to ensure infrastructural services (water and sewer and electricity). Meanwhile, this difficulty in accessing land severely hinders the ability of the poor to gain entrée to housing markets, which in large part explains why squatting on State land illegally has become a common behavior for this population.

Legitimate Access to Land

The analysis presented in this dissertation suggested that the State and the residents of Mahwa Aser each have rightful claims to the property on which the settlement is located. From a legal perspective, the State enjoys a legitimate right to regain its property seized by the community's residents. Even though it originally ignored the illegal occupation of its land as Mahwa Aser and other communities developed in Sana'a, the government retains ownership of these properties. As might be expected, local and national authorities strongly press this perspective. Nonetheless, the residents of Mahwa Aser, highlighted throughout this analysis as an example, have acquired some

right to the land by virtue of inhabiting and using it for three decades. Humanitarian and international agencies advocate this perspective. They argue that the poor deserve adequate access to shelter and since the State has allowed this situation for so long, residents should be accorded rights to the land. Community residents also offer this view. They believe that the property became theirs when they occupied it. They also believe that they should not be forced to relocate without fair compensation. In short, who enjoys the right to the land on which Mahwa Aser and similar sister communities in Sana'a are situated remains a matter of vigorous debate. Each party (State and residents) can offer reasonable arguments for its position.

Service Delivery

Service Provision and Official Regulations

Although some respondents claimed they have never received any service or aid from the government or any other entity, the analysis offered here has suggested that multiple parties have been involved in some sort of service delivery to this community and other informal communities in Sana'a for decades. Yemeni local or national authorities have provided some services to Mahwa Aser while international and regional organizations and donors, such as the World Bank, GTZ, and the Gulf countries delivered others to its residents and to other informal settlements in Sana'a. Interestingly, however, interviewees reported that such services as exist in the settlement are unevenly distributed between the "outer" and "inner" parts of the community. This situation has resulted directly from the government's effort to contain the settlement's growth by delivering basic services to the newly developing portions of the community (outer part) while refusing them to the already densely settled areas, the attached portions of the community

to the government compound, (inner parts). Meanwhile, in another turn with distributional implications, some international organizations have targeted Akhdam for services while not providing aid to other groups. Likewise, national political parties, including the Al-Eslah Party, have distributed their aid only to selected groups within Mahwa Aser as well. Finally, many services were not offered on a sustained basis. Four reasons for why this situation has occurred clarify this challenge:

- Inability of the service provider to sustain the offered services either for lack of funding or due to completion of a contract.
- Government was supposed to maintain the offered projects if a mutual agreement among the government, service provider, and residents could be negotiated. However, the government did not comply with its commitment once the service provider left the project, either for lack of funding, as a result of corruption, or alternative priorities.
- The original service provider moved out of a community and transferred its efforts to another poor community. This scenario occurred in Mahwa Aser when CARE stopped supporting a health center in the community.
- Community members were not trained adequately to assume responsibility for service provision once a provider removed its staff from a project.

Institutional Structure

Conflicted or Overlapping Responsibilities and Lack of Coordination Among Public Agencies

The nation's planning framework remains undeveloped and uncoordinated because of the poor management and conflict of responsibilities between and amongst

government agencies. Local governments that are supposed to be in charge of preparing planning studies as well as public construction and environmental plans before submitting them to national public agencies for approval are often unable to fulfill their commitments so most of the review work at the national level is accomplished by the General Authority for Land Surveying and Urban Planning. On some occasions, two or three official agencies were simultaneously seeking to develop the same project for the same area, so the resources involved were wasted. The government had not addressed this organizational difficulty as of this writing.

Corruption

Misuse of Public Authority

The small number of eviction incidents that have occurred in Mahwa Aser during its 30-year life appear to have occurred on the basis of the personal interest of a corrupt official or officials. In one case, military generals abused their power by using police under their control to try to force residents from several properties. Land grabs have become a common practice, especially among military generals and other high-ranking government officials. Police efforts to prohibit additional construction most often occurred not on the basis of official orders, but as instances of individual grudges or misuse of authority in discriminatory ways. These actions occurred for different reasons, including personal interest in receiving kickbacks. These police actions were not ordered or sanctioned by the government. Nonetheless, police threats to force residents to move and to demand kickbacks to prevent such action weakened or undermined the credibility and legitimacy of State agencies when they lawfully sought to enforce policies or regulations.

Weak Law Enforcement

The State has issued a number of regulations to inhibit further expansion of Mahwa Aser and other Sana'a informal communities, but it has never possessed capacity and will to enforce these requirements adequately. And, such attempts as have occurred were met with hostility from residents because of recurring instances of police corruption.

Official Prejudices

Effective governance needs sustained political will, as addressed in the literature, but this requires consistent efforts to overcome personal and official biases. Nonetheless, Yemeni culture continues to support discrimination targeted against certain groups in the society. The nation's leaders, often under international pressure to do so, have recognized that all Yemeni citizens should be fairly accommodated in policy and before the law. Government officials and directors of the NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs offered two different perspectives on Mahwa Aser residents in interviews:

- Public officials argued that residents of Mahwa Aser couldn't be expected to take care of themselves because of their social characteristics and cultural backgrounds. In effect, these interviewees suggested that they are not clean and they do not know how to behave; no matter how much effort you expend to improve their living conditions, they will remain the same.
- International officials and NGOs contended meanwhile that residents of Mahwa Aser are Yemeni citizens and they need support; their level of hygiene and social behavior can be improved; they should be integrated into mainstream society.

Whatever their personal beliefs, government officials have sought to mediate between these conflicting views, especially during elections in order to gain the support of as many groups as possible. Nevertheless, given the continuing prevalence of social prejudice against the groups residing in Mahwa Aser, it has been difficult for government officials to ignore that animosity and remain in office.

Security

I have argued that Yemen is confronted (if not beset) by many serious challenges, including political conflicts, social instability, and widespread population insecurity. In this environment, informal settlements have not been a top priority (or even on the list of primary tasks) of official authorities. NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs have likewise had more pressing concerns to address than the status of informal communities. These have included providing the government and nation with aid with water shortages, poverty reduction, and disaster management. These ongoing challenges have weakened State capacity and depleted limited governmental financial resources. They also consumed donor resources, which, by implication constituted an opportunity cost and further weakened the State's capacity to deal with informal settlements.

9.2.3. NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs

Government Support

Funding

Yemen has received funds from different international development organizations and donor agencies, including the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank. These entities have allocated funds to education, health, and agriculture development projects. Until recently, these international institutions have provided no money to address the

issue of informal settlements. In the last decade however, these organizations did direct some funding to community upgrading programs. These initiatives took the guise of pilot projects in a number of informal settlements in Yemen's major cities. To date, these efforts have not involved the vast majority of informal communities in Sana'a and have not kept pace with their rapid growth. Nevertheless, it also appears that international organization involvement may have prompted the government to pay more attention to conditions in Mahwa Aser and other Sana'a informal communities than otherwise might have been the case.

Training and Building Personnel and Organizational Capacities

Various NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs have sought to assist the Yemeni government and to do so not only on short-term projects, but also to help to position the nation for long-term development. They were involved in offering services and in pressuring the government to improve its governance. The aim of international development agencies and donors was not only to provide funding, but also to improve the government's performance and capacities, to fight corruption and to encourage adoption of a new model of governance. Development organizations offered training to government officials through different projects to improve their skills and proficiency. At the same time, these entities monitored government performance, which helped them decide what priority to accord Yemen as they developed their own goals. The relatively poor performance of the government coupled with continuing social instability in the 1990s and 2000-2010 period, led to a sharp reduction in international support for the nation.

Assisting the Residents

Service Delivery and Aid

An array of international governmental and non-governmental organizations have delivered at least some services to Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a, including clean water and sewerage systems. They have also provided health centers and training workshops, but most of the services offered were not sustained when these organizations left and thus, as in the case of Mahwa Aser particularly, did not receive the potential full benefit of them. In addition, and in general, service delivery and aid, was not well coordinated among relevant government agencies. Therefore, most efforts either did not reach the entire targeted community or broke down because of a lack of community capacity or interest to maintain them.

Advocacy and Mediation

Beyond the service delivery role that international governmental and non-governmental organizations undertook in informal settlements, they advocated for resident's rights and voice in public decision-making. Their role as mediators helped the government learn about informal community needs and served the residents by ensuring their interests were heard by government officials.

Building Community Capacities

One of the criticisms of Mahwa Aser residents offered by several interviewees was that these individuals lacked appropriate hygiene and proper cultural and social behavior. To address this concern, several organizations, including CARE, Oxfam, and Maeen Directorate, introduced appropriate training and educational programs to the neighborhood's inhabitants, particularly to the community's Akhdam population. That

group received special attention due to the nation's long history of discriminatory behavior against them. The few programs offered, however, were not successful because of lack of maintenance of the projects; interest among the community; awareness; and incentives.

9.3. Recommendations to Government Officials

A persistent lack of clear policies concerning informal settlements, a continuing dearth of resources and professional capacities to deal with their rapid growth, and inadequate information on their population composition and needs have contributed to Yemen's difficulties in addressing the growth of these communities effectively and equitably. Local and national authorities need first and soon to improve their planning practices by improving their professional skills and capacities, identifying core community problems and performance indicators, and developing approaches to address them. As far as policies are concerned, it is important for the Yemeni government to develop a clear and consistent approach to the nation's housing needs and to its informal settlements. In particular, the public sector must define a strategy to deal with rapid informal community development. In so doing, the government will need to find ways to improve living conditions in existing informal neighborhoods and to guide new development in ways to prevent a continued pattern of property occupation without adequate services or tenure. One approach that holds promise is for the State to declare selected areas as pilot development zones for guiding informal development. Overall, the government needs to apply upgrading mechanisms to selected mature informal areas, create a more responsive system to address development pressures in high risk areas, adopt more adequate planning tools and increase its staff's professional capacities,

improve inter-sectoral service provision, and create an efficient information system that allows continuous monitoring and effective assessment of such efforts as it does undertake.

Concerning interventions of various sorts in informal settlements, the Yemeni government should first identify the cultural dimensions and social characteristics of the communities it is targeting before considering any specific programs for them. Put differently, and as I remarked in the introduction, the government will need to work far more self-consciously with informal settlement residents to establish shared goals and clear expectations as it develops strategies to assist these communities. Finally, in regard to collaboration issues, the Yemeni government needs to develop a more effective approach to work with NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs to engage them more effectively in efforts to improve informal settlement governance. As an initial priority, improving the capabilities and overall performance of the government is critical if the nation is to confront its current and future urban development challenges successfully.

9.4. Recommendations to NGOs, INGOs and IGOs

International governmental and non-governmental organizations need to pay more attention to informal settlements in Yemen. A more holistic approach to citizen needs must be developed in concert with the Yemeni government and informal community residents. These organizations should work to encourage local and national authorities to develop reliable policies and coherent programs within a transparent governance framework to improve the living conditions of the poor in informal settlements. In terms of collaboration, these entities need to coordinate their work amongst and between themselves to avoid duplicative and overlapping efforts. In terms of advocacy, they need

to improve their performance in ensuring opportunities for the poor to be heard by public decision-makers.

9.5. Suggestions for Future Research

This study qualitatively and empirically examined governance processes as they related especially to informal settlements in Sana'a, Yemen. I sought to analyze key groups involved in informal community governance and have argued it is critical for the nation to expand the scope of what the literature has labeled *good governance* efforts to manage its informal settlements. I believe this study demonstrates that further research on governance and informal settlements is needed. Mahwa Aser and other informal settlements in Sana'a and in Yemen should be investigated in similar future work, especially in light of growing concerns about the number and size and needs of these communities in Yemen and the continuing general instability in the country and region.

Moreover, this study could be repeated using a similar population—informal settlement residents, government officials, and leaders of international governmental and non-governmental organizations—to develop additional insights into both the causes of rapid informal settlement growth in Yemen and mechanisms that might be employed by relevant stakeholders to address their rapid growth. Considering the new challenges that face the State and the shifting agendas of international development organizations and donor agencies regarding Yemen, I believe it would be very interesting to explore the implications of such challenges for the development of informal settlements in Sana'a. Will the post-revolution time positively or negatively affect the lives of the poor, especially those living in informal settlements? Will donor agencies pay more or less attention to informal settlements in Sana'a once security conditions in the country

stabilize? What will the new social composition of Yemeni society be after the revolution of February 2011 and how will those changes affect informal settlements? Are we going to witness improvement in the planning profession in Yemen? Will the government shift successfully to a new and more professional governance model?

Overall, I believe this study suggests multiple possibilities for future researchers to interview residents of informal settlements in other cities in Yemen and to explore the question of informal settlements and governance in Yemen and beyond in the Arabic world more fully. I also hope this study will positively influence national and local authority planning practices in Yemen as well as in other Arab States, which are confronting similar challenges.

9.6. Conclusion

I undertook this dissertation to explore the broader question of Yemeni government capacity in the face of the rapid growth of informal settlements and to investigate the specific roles of different stakeholders in informal settlements in governance in Sana'a and in Mahwa Aser especially. Through a qualitative analytical study and interviews with residents of the targeted community, relevant government agencies, and international organization officials, this inquiry has provided a portrait of Yemeni government capacities, policies, and practices related to Sana'a's informal communities and the active governance roles of non-governmental and international organizations seeking to provide services in the community as well.

The study identified a number of key factors that have led to declining living conditions in Yemen's informal settlements generally and its informal communities in Sana'a in particular. Overall, the Yemeni government and its partners need to work far

more self-consciously with the residents of the nation's informal settlements to establish shared goals and clear expectations to develop more effective responses to these communities' specific challenges, and to develop reliable policies and coherent programs within a transparent governance framework.

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APPENDIX I

Interview Questions for the Preliminary Research Phase

Informal Settlements in Sana'a City Current Policies, Future Schemes, and Community and NGO Involvement

Researcher Name

Wafa M. S. Al-Daily- PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech, USA

Proposed Interview Subjects for Research Study

Numbers: 1-2 Official figures from each agency/organization

Gender: Males + Females

About the Project

This Ph.D. research project is an attempt to assess the implications of government policies and schemes on informal settlement residents and to evaluate the role of international organizations, NGOs, and CBOs in improving the living conditions of poor people who are living in marginalized urban areas.

The interviews will examine current and planned policies about informal settlements in Sana'a City in Yemen by city building professionals, government authorities, and non-profit and charitable organizations. First, I would like to explore the current government policies and future schemes about informal settlements at both the local and national levels. In addition to what is provided in official documents, I would like to learn about the projects and programs that individuals working on this topic and in informal settlements, can share first-hand, including Yemeni government officials, city planners, international organizations, and/or NGOs.

Second, I would like to document the presence and role of community, community-based organizations (CBOs), international organizations, and non-profit organizations (NGOs) in the lives of informal settlement residents. Because so many non-government organizations exist that implicitly or explicitly claim to do work in informal settlements, I would like to examine the degree of involvement between community, community-based, and local organizations, international organizations, and NGOs, with each other and with government programs. Third, if possible, I would like to explore different forms of collaboration, if they exist, between government and informal settlement communities, CBOs, international organizations, and NGOs.

I hope that this project will contribute toward the improvement of current and future policies of the Yemeni Government, which may, in turn, improve the lives of informal settlement residents.

Participating in this study

I'm interested in interviewing you because you are either one of the government or international organization or NGO officials who have made significant contribution to

policies and programs relevant to improving the situation of informal settlements in Sana'a City. I am grateful for the time you are devoting for the interviews, and will be sure to provide you with the results of the study if you are interested.

For this interview, I would like to ask you a series of questions that will help me define Yemeni government current policies and future schemes. I would also like to know more about the degree of involvement of community, community based/local organizations, international organizations, and NGOs with government policies/schemes and how your agency/organization defines the needs of informal settlement dwellers, as well as future visions for improving the living conditions of informal settlement residents and the political climate between government, society, and NGOs. Your answers will remain confidential and no information will be disclosed to a third party. At any time during our conversation, you can feel free to let me know if don't want to answer a question, or ask me about why I'm asking a question.

Do you have any questions for me, about the study, about me, etc., before we begin?

I. Possible interview questions for NGOs:

1. Can you please introduce yourself and tell me how you came to work with [organization]?
2. What is your current position with [organization] and for what activities and projects are you responsible?
3. Would you please give me a brief introduction to the mission and goals of [organization]?
4. In what ways has [organization] achieved these goals? What are the challenges that remain?
5. How does your organization try to ensure the longevity of those projects that have been successful? Can you provide some examples?
6. In what ways is your work similar to or different than the work of other NGOs?

7. What type of work does your NGO undertake in informal settlements? What type of projects have you done/ are you doing in informal settlement? Where and when?
8. What is your assessment of the accomplished work in those areas?
9. Can you provide an example of a project that distinguishes your work in informal settlements from the work of other [local, national, international] NGOs?
10. In addition to what you just described: What specific services or support does your NGO offer for informal settlement residents?
11. With respect to the projects you described, can you indicate the level and form of community involvement, if any?
12. How does your organization try to learn about the needs of the residents of informal settlements?

13. Does your work focus on serving particular neighborhoods? If yes, how and what neighborhoods? Why these neighborhoods (and not [fill in other neighborhoods])?
14. Are there examples/projects that you would like to share that illustrate the role of community involvement in your work?

15. Does your NGO work with community based/local organizations? Can you provide specific examples? In what ways have these relationships helped advance the mission of your NGO? Have there been problems working with community organizations?
16. Do you work with or have contact with local authorities? Can you provide examples? In what ways is this contact beneficial to your goals? Detrimental?

17. What is your assessment of Sana'a city government policies on informal settlements? Of Yemeni national government policies?
18. Can you specify what the official view of your NGO is on proposed projects/government schemes on informal settlements? Off the record, what are your opinions?

19. By way of closing, are there other specific examples or successful stories you would like to share with me that we haven't yet discussed?
20. Is there anything else you would like to add?
21. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your time!

II. Possible interview questions for Government Agencies and Local Planning Authorities:

1. Can you please introduce yourself and describe what your current position is with [agency]?
2. For what activities and projects are you responsible?
3. Would you please give me a brief introduction to the history, mission, and goals of [organization/agency]? (Follow up: Did the initiative to establish this agency/organization come from the national Yemeni government, city authorities, international organizations, or other groups? Specify when, which ones, how funding works, and what current relationships with these organizations are.)
4. In what ways has [agency] achieved these goals? What are the challenges that remain?
5. Would you please describe the current policies [agency] holds with respect to so-called 'slums' in Sana'a City? [Follow up: check on such policies as: federal development, local and regional planning, sustainability and environmental planning, housing and community development]
6. Would you please list and explain what specific classifications your agency uses to define and/or delimit these settlements? Why are these terms used? What are their specific histories?
7. In what ways is your agency's agenda on these settlements similar to/different than those pursued by the [national Yemeni government/local governments/local planning authorities]?
8. Would you be able to provide specific examples of projects your agency has undertaken with respect to informal settlements in Sana'a City? Where and when?
9. What is your assessment of the accomplished work in those areas?
10. What are the main principles for your assessment?
11. How does your agency try to ensure the longevity of those projects?
12. What projects do you feel have been successful? Not as successful? Can you provide some examples?
13. How are/were these projects funded?
14. Is your work in informal settlements in any way supported by [Yemen Government? International organizations? NGOs? Community organizations? Local governments? City planning authorities?] (For each, ask for a listing of the name of these organizations, the specific projects, the type of support, and in how outside groups contribute to projects.)

15. How does your agency try to learn about the needs of the residents of informal settlements?
16. What specific services or support does your agency offer for residents of informal settlements?
17. Does your work focus on serving particular neighborhoods? If yes, how and what neighborhoods? Why these neighborhoods (and not other neighborhoods)?
18. With respect to the projects you described, can you indicate the level and form of community involvement, if any?
19. Are there examples/projects that you would like to share that illustrate the role of community involvement in your work?

20. Does your agency work with community based/local organizations? Can you provide specific examples? In what ways have these relationships helped advance the mission of your agency? Have there been problems working with community organizations?
21. Do you think community involvement and community based/local organizations involvements can induce any changes on your future plans/policies on informal settlements? If yes, please illustrate how?
22. What type of cooperation do you have with international organizations?
23. What is the degree of international organizations involvement in your work/policies on informal settlements?
24. How such involvement affects your projects/policies on informal settlements?

25. By way of closing, are there specific cases or successful stories you want to share with me that we haven't yet discussed?
26. Is there anything else you want to share with me?
27. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your time!

Informal Settlements in Sana'a City Current Policies, Future Schemes, and Community, International Organization and NGO Involvement

Researcher Name

Wafa M. S. Al-Daily- PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech, USA

Proposed Interview Subjects for Research Study

Numbers: 1-2 Official figures from each agency/organization

Gender: Males + Females

About the Project

This Ph.D. research project is an attempt to assess the implications of government policies and schemes on informal settlement residents and to evaluate the role of international organizations, NGOs, and CBOs in improving the living conditions of poor people who are living in marginalized urban areas.

The interviews will examine current and planned policies about informal settlements in Sana'a City in Yemen by city building professionals, government authorities, international organizations, and non-profit and charitable organizations. First, I would like to explore the current government policies and future schemes about informal settlements at both the local and national levels. In addition to what is provided in official documents, I would like to learn about the projects and programs that individuals working on this topic and in informal settlements, can share first-hand, including Yemeni government officials, city planners, international organizations, and/or NGOs.

Second, I would like to document the presence and role of community, community-based organizations (CBOs), international organizations, and non-profit organizations (NGOs) in the lives of informal settlement residents. Because so many international and non-government organizations exist that implicitly or explicitly claim to do work in informal settlements in Yemen, I would like to examine the degree of involvement between community, community-based, and local organizations, international organizations, and NGOs, with each other and with government programs. Third, if possible, I would like to explore different forms of collaboration, if they exist, between government and informal settlement communities, CBOs, international organizations, and NGOs.

Part of the interviews have already taken place from February the 4th to February the 15th with international organizations in Yemen and I'm interested in expanding the horizon of my research questions to the directors/officials of those international organizations in Washington DC and New York City in the USA.

I hope that this project will contribute toward the improvement of current and future policies of the Yemeni Government, which may, in turn, improve the lives of informal settlement residents.

Participating in this study

I'm interested in interviewing you because you are one of the international organization officials who have made significant contribution to policies and programs relevant to improving the situation of informal settlements in Sana'a City in Yemen. I am grateful for the time you are devoting for the interviews, and will be sure to provide you with the results of the study if you are interested.

For this interview, I would like to ask you a series of questions that will help me define Yemeni government current policies and future schemes. I would also like to know more about the degree of involvement of community, community based/local organizations, international organizations, and NGOs with government policies/schemes and how your agency/organization defines the needs of informal settlement dwellers, as well as future visions for improving the living conditions of informal settlement residents and the political climate between government, society, international organizations, and NGOs. Your answers will remain confidential and no information will be disclosed to a third party. At any time during our conversation, you can feel free to let me know if don't want to answer a question, or ask me about why I'm asking a question.

Do you have any questions for me, about the study, about me, etc., before we begin?

I. Possible interview questions for International Organizations:

22. Can you please introduce yourself to me, please include your current position with the organization and for what activities and projects are you responsible?
23. Would you please give me a brief introduction to the mission and goals of your organization?
24. Would you please give me a brief introduction to the goals, and objectives, including the programs, and projects of your organization on Yemen?
25. In what ways has your organization achieved these goals, and objectives? What are the challenges that remain?
26. How does your organization try to ensure the longevity of the projects and programs that have been successful? Can you provide some examples?
27. In what ways is your work similar to or different than the work of other international organizations work in Yemen?

28. What type of work does your organization undertake in informal settlements in Yemen and what specific services or support does your organization offer for informal settlement residents?

29. If existed, can you name of the projects or programs have you done/are you doing in informal settlement? Where and when?
30. Is there a project that distinguishes your work in informal settlements from the work of other [local, national, international] NGOs? If so, please tell me about it?
31. What is your assessment of the accomplished work in informal settlements?

32. With respect to the projects you described, can you indicate the level and form of community involvement, if any can you please provide me with an example/project that illustrates the role of community involvement in your work?
33. How does your organization try to learn about the needs of the residents of informal settlements?

34. Does your organization work with community based/local organizations? If yes, in what ways have these relationships helped advance the mission of your organization? Have there been problems working with community organizations?
35. Do you work with or have contact with local authorities? Can you provide examples? In what ways is this contact beneficial to your goals? Detrimental?

36. If you are familiar with Yemeni national government/Sana'a city municipality policies on informal settlements, then what is your assessment of those policies? And, what is the official view of your organization on proposed projects/government schemes on informal settlements? Off the record, what are your opinions?
37. By way of closing, is there anything else you would like to add or other successful stories or examples you would like to share?
38. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX II

Interview Questions for the Major Research Phase

Informal Settlements and Force Evictions in Sana'a City, in Yemen

Researcher's Name

Wafa M. S. Al-Daily- PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech, USA

Proposed Location

Mahwa Aser: Mahwa Aser (Haret Al-Lakama) is an informal settlement located at the intersection of two major roads: Azubairy-Aser Road and the 60th Road in Maeen District in Sana'a City.

Proposed Interview Subjects

Numbers: 10-15 residents from the Mahwa Aser neighborhood

Age: 35-70 years old

Gender: Males + Females

Participating in this Interview

For this interview, I would like to ask you a series of questions that will help me understand your community better. Using your own words, I would also like you to tell me about the needs of your neighborhood, as well as ideas you have for its future. Your identity will remain confidential. At any time during our conversation, you can feel free to let me know if you do not want to answer a question, or ask me about why I am asking a question.

Do you have any questions for me, about the study, about me, etc., before we begin?

Interview Questions: Mahwa Aser Residents

1. Could you introduce yourself please (name, age, work and date/place of birth)?
2. How long have you lived here?
3. Why do you live in Mahwa Aser?
4. What does it feel like living here? That is, it would be helpful to me if you could describe for me what daily life is like in Mahwa Aser?
5. Who lives close by you (i.e., strangers, family members, acquaintances, kin and friends)? How does their presence affect how you perceive your life in Mahwa Aser?
6. What services are available to you in your community (i.e., health care, schools, daycare, social services, public services)? Who provides them?
7. Please tell me about any assistance, if it exists, which is offered to Mahwa Aser residents?
8. Could you name any of the organizations that provide this assistance to Mahwa Aser residents and discuss the types of support they offer?

9. Please describe any assistance that you have received from such organizations, either directly or indirectly?
10. If possible, could you tell me how the current political unrest is influencing the situation?
11. Have you witnessed any government attempts to remove or relocate current or past residents of Mahwa Aser? If yes, how many such incidents have you witnessed? When did they occur?
12. Did any residents of Mahwa Aser resist the evacuation attempt(s)? If so, who protested? Were any violent in character by the protestors or by the government?
13. As you understand what happened, why did protest group(s) resist government order(s) to relocate?
14. Do you have any idea, who organized the protest group(s)? How large a group would you say they represented compared to the overall population of the community?
15. How would you describe your experience(s)—either as a witness or as a participant—of those eviction attempts? Could you talk to me about it/them?
16. How did/do you feel about the government’s action(s) to evict Mahwa Aser residents? Why?
17. To your knowledge, have community residents received government support of any kind during any of the government’s attempts to relocate the community’s residents? If so, what sort of assistance did they receive?
18. Again, to your knowledge, did any other organizations (i.e. nongovernmental organizations (NGO’s), international nongovernmental organizations (INGO’s), international governmental organizations (IGO’s) provide aid? If so, what type(s) of support did they offer?
19. Do you have any additional comments regarding the government’s past efforts/current plans to relocate residents of Mahwa Aser you would like to share?
20. Do you have any additional comments regarding the quality of life in Mahwa Aser you would like to share?
21. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank You for your Participation!

Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions in Sana'a City, Yemen

Researcher's Name

Wafa M. S. Al-Daily- PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech, USA

Proposed Interview Subjects

Numbers: 1-2 Official figures from each government agency

Gender: Males + Females

Participating in this Interview

I am interested in interviewing you because you and your agency have made significant contributions to policies and programs relevant to informal settlements in Sana'a, including the Mahwa Aser neighborhood. I am grateful for the time you are devoting for this interview, and will be sure to provide you with the results of the study if you are interested.

Do you have any questions for me, about the study, about me, etc., before we begin?

Interview Questions: Government Officials in Sana'a, Yemen

28. Please give me a brief introduction to the history, mission, and goals of your agency?
29. Would you describe your current position and official activities and responsibilities please?
30. Would you please describe your agency's (the government's) policies toward 'informal settlements' in Sana'a, including Mahwa Aser?
31. Have you ever been involved in any work related to Mahwa Aser? If yes, could you share with me how and when you were involved with the community, as well as the role you played in that work?
32. If possible, could you share more with me about your experience(s) in Mahwa Aser and with Mahwa Aser residents? How would you describe the community and those who live there?
33. How does your agency view the presence of Mahwa Aser in this particular location?
34. What is/was your agency's role in the removal or relocation plans for Mahwa Aser residents? When did that (those) effort(s) occur? Can you be more specific and tell me what procedures your agency followed when it sought to relocate Mahwa Aser residents?
35. Did your agency offer alternative living locations and quarters or compensation to the residents of Mahwa Aser whose relocation was sought?
36. In what ways, if any, does your organization help Mahwa Aser community residents, (regardless of their residence location) as they go about their daily lives?
37. What is your agency's future plan concerning Mahwa Aser current location and its residents?

38. How would you characterize the perspective and efforts of interested international and nongovernmental organizations concerning informal settlements in Yemen generally and Mahwa Aser in particular?
39. Could you describe for me the degree of international organizations and national and international nongovernmental organizations participation or involvement in your work/policies specifically concerning informal settlements, and Mahwa Aser in particular?
40. How, if at all, does such involvement affect your projects/policies concerning informal settlements?
41. Is there anything else you want to add concerning any of the topics we have discussed or related issues of which you think I should be aware?
42. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank You for your Participation!

Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions in Sana'a City, Yemen

Researcher's Name

Wafa M. S. Al-Daily- PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech, USA

Proposed Interview Subjects

Numbers: 1-2 Official figures from each international government organization (IGO), international nongovernmental organization (INGO) and nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Yemen

Gender: Males + Females

Participating in this Interview

I am interested in interviewing you because you and your organization are among those entities that have made significant contributions to policies and programs relevant to improving the situation of informal settlements in Sana'a, Yemen. I am grateful for the time you are devoting to this interview, and will be sure to provide you with the results of the study if you are interested.

Do you have any questions for me, about the study, about me, etc., before we begin?

Interview Questions: IGOs, INGOs and NGOs Directors/Officials in Yemen

39. Can you please introduce yourself—name, position and years of working at your current organization, in particular your present position?
40. What type of work, if any, has your organization undertaken in Sana'a's informal settlements, in particular Mahwa Aser? What specific services or support does your institution offer to that community's residents?
41. How does your organization learn about the needs of informal settlement residents?
42. What type(s) of assistance did/does your organization offer to Mahwa Aser residents, if any, in times of crisis, such as during attempts of forced eviction or relocation?
43. What sorts of projects have you individually been involved with to assist Mahwa Aser residents and when? How would you characterize their aims and results?
44. What are your organization's future programs/plans to assist residents of informal settlements in Sana'a, in particular individuals living in Mahwa Aser?
45. Could you describe the character and extent of your organization's relationships with Yemeni local authorities (i.e., Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Public Works and Highways, Authority of Survey, State Property and Urban Planning, and Sana'a Municipality) concerning informal settlements in the city?
46. What are your organization's views concerning national and Sana'a city government policies on informal settlements? What do those mean, as you understand them, for Mahwa Aser's residents? Should any changes be considered in those policies?
47. Could you describe any role(s) your organization has played in improving and/or changing government policies towards informal settlements, in particular concerning Mahwa Aser?

48. Is there anything else regarding your organization's role in informal settlements in Sana'a you want to add or share with me?
49. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank You for your Participation!

Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions in Sana'a City, Yemen

Researcher's Name

Wafa M. S. Al-Daily- PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech, USA

Proposed Interview Subjects

Numbers: 1-2 Official figures from each international organization (IGO) and international nongovernmental organization (INGO) in the USA

Gender: Males + Females

Participating in this Interview:

I am interested in interviewing you because your organization has made notable contributions to policies and programs relevant to improving the situation of informal settlements in Sana'a, Yemen. I am grateful for the time you are devoting to this interview, and will be sure to provide you with the results of the study if you are interested.

Do you have any questions for me, about the study, about me, etc., before we begin?

Interview Questions: IGO/INGO Officials in the USA

1. Would you please provide a brief introduction to the mission and goals of your organization and describe the activities and projects for which you are responsible concerning informal settlements?
2. What type(s) of work does your organization undertake in informal settlements in Yemen, in particular in Sana'a?
3. Can you describe any projects or programs that your organization has undertaken/is undertaking in informal settlements in Sana'a? Where and when?
4. What specific services or programs, if any, does your organization offer to residents of informal settlements in Sana'a, in particular to those of Mahwa Aser?
5. Does your organization have future plans to be involved in informal settlements in Sana'a, in particular Mahwa Aser? If so, when do you envision your organization undertaking those and why? What activities is your organization likely to pursue?
6. How does your organization learn of the needs of informal settlement residents?
7. Does your organization work with other international and nongovernmental organizations in Yemen? If yes, in what ways have these relationships helped advance the mission of your organization concerning informal settlements? Or perhaps detracted from your aims?
8. If you are familiar with the Yemeni national government/Sana'a Municipality policies on informal settlements, what are your organization's perceptions of the character and implications of those government policies?
9. What types of collaboration, if any, exist between your organization and the Yemeni government concerning informal settlements? Could you elaborate?

10. Has your organization played any specific role(s) in seeking to change Yemeni government policies toward informal settlements?
11. What is your organization's formal stance concerning informal settlements in Sana'a and Yemen?
12. Is there anything else regarding your organization's role in informal settlements in Sana'a you want to add or share with me?
13. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank You for your Participation!

APPENDIX III

Consent Forms and Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Approval Letters for the Preliminary and Major Research Phases

CONSENT FORM

Informal Settlements in Sana'a City: Current Policies, Future Schemes, and Community and NGO Involvement

Investigator Information

Wafa Mohsen Saleh Al-Daily, Ph.D. Candidate
Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech University USA
Contact: Tel: 734 644 045 (Yemen); (540)922-3385 (USA)
E-Mail: waldaily@vt.edu

I am asking you take part in my Ph.D. research study that I'm undertaking at Virginia Tech in the USA that will examine existing policies and future proposals for informal settlements in Sana'a City, Yemen. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to participate in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, the possible risks and benefits, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear or at any time during the study. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to sign the bottom of this form. This process is called "informed consent." I will provide a copy of this form for your records regardless of your decision.

Purpose of the Research

I am conducting a series of interviews with urban planning, government, international organizations, and NGO professionals as part of my Ph.D. research that will examine the history and development of informal settlements in Sana'a City in Yemen. In these interviews, I would like to learn more about the government's current policies and future schemes with respect to informal settlements. I would also like to learn about the projects and programs of which the Yemeni government has done or is planning to do for improving the lives of informal settlement residents.

In addition, I would like to explore what the role of community and community-based organizations (CBOs), international organizations, and non-government organizations (NGOs) are in working with residents in informal settlements. I would also like to understand what networks and relationships such organizations have, as well as the degree of involvement with, government organizations and schemes. If possible, I would like to learn about the different forms of collaboration, if they exist, between government and informal settlement communities, CBOs, international organizations, and NGOs.

I hope that this project will contribute toward the improvement of the current/future policies and schemes of Yemeni Government with respect to informal settlements, which may, in turn, improve the lives of informal settlements residents.

The interview includes a set of open-ended interview questions that will help me learn more about your agency, its goals, and its activities working within informal settlements in Sana'a City. The interview may last between an hour to an hour and thirty minutes.

Your answers will only be used for the purpose of this study and they will remain confidential. No information will be disclosed to a third party. The information you provide will be used during the term of this research and interview notes and/or tapes will be destroyed two years after the publication of the dissertation. If you would like a copy of the dissertation or articles in which materials you share are used, please let me know.

Unless you decide otherwise, I will not use your real name, but use a pseudonym. I would, however, like to indicate with what organization you work with in this study. Because your organization is a publicly identifiable one, however, I cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. At any time, please let me know if some of your comments must be taken "off the record", that is, not to be taken within the context of the organization with whom you work.

At any time during our conversation, you can feel free to let me know if you don't want to answer a question, or ask me about why I'm asking a question.

You are free to choose whether or not to participate in this research study. There will be no penalty if you opt not to participate. The benefits of your participation may be a better understanding of organizational support structures, collaboration, and politics with respect to informal settlements. In the event you decide to discontinue your participation in the study, please notify Wafa Al-Daily at 734644045 of your decision so that your participation can be terminated in an orderly fashion.

Subject's Statement

"I have read and understand this consent form and I am voluntarily participating in this research study. I give my permission to the researcher to use the information I provide for her Ph.D. and subsequent scholarly publications. I have had all of my questions answered. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent. I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws."

Printed name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Thank you again for participating in this study! Questions about this research or its conduct, research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject may be directed to:

Wafa Mohsen Saleh Al-Daily
Phone: + (967) 734 644 045 (Yemen)
phone: +-1-(540)922-3385 (USA)
waldaily@vt.edu

Dr. Karen E. Till
Associate Professor, Urban Affairs and Planning
212 Architecture Annex (0113)
Virginia Tech University
Blacksburg, VA 24060 USA
phone: +-1-(540) 231-1109
ktill@vt.edu

Dr. David M. Moore
Associate Vice President for Research Compliance
Virginia Tech IRB Chair
phone: +-1- (540) 231-4991
moored@vt.edu

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

**Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

Title of Project: Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions in Sana'a City, Yemen
Investigator(s): Wafa Al-Daily, Doctoral Candidate; Max Stephenson, Jr., Faculty Advisor;
and Kathleen Parrott, Faculty Co-Advisor

Purpose of this Interview

I am asking you to take part in my Ph.D. research study that I am undertaking at Virginia Tech in the USA that will examine the phenomenon of Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions in Sana'a City, Yemen.

I am conducting a series of interviews with urban planning, government and international and nongovernmental organization professionals as part of my Ph.D. research that will examine the history and development of informal settlements in Sana'a, Yemen—with a particular focus on the Mahwa Aser community. In these interviews, I would like to learn more about the government's current policies and future plans with respect to informal settlements in Sana'a. In particular, I would like to focus on the past and current involvement of government and other national and international organizations in the Mahwa Aser neighborhood and its residents. I would also like to learn about the projects and programs, which local authorities and national and international organizations have done or are planning to do to improve the lives of residents of this particular neighborhood and other informal settlements in Sana'a. Data collected for this research will be used to complete a doctoral dissertation.

As a key figure in either government or nongovernmental, national or international organizations, you are being asked to participate in this interview. Overall for this study, interviews will be conducted with representatives of approximately four government agencies in Yemen and ten national and international nongovernmental and international organizations in Yemen and in the USA. Your interview will require approximately 60-75 minutes.

Procedures

You are being asked to conduct a personal interview with Wafa Al-Daily—a doctoral student in Virginia Tech's PhD program: Planning, Governance and Globalization. The interview will be digitally recorded. Transcripts of your interview will be created and used only for fact checking and for quotations in Ms. Wafa Al-Daily's dissertation and any associated research papers. Interview files and transcripts will be kept in a secured location for a period of three years. Ms. Wafa Al-Daily will strive to offer findings in a way that secures the confidentiality of your responses: that is, that will not reveal your individual identity or link specific observations to you.

Your participation is voluntary and will, as noted above, involve one approximately 60-75 minute interview. If you have any questions regarding the procedures or the contents of this consent form, please do not hesitate to ask either or both of us. Our contact information is listed below.

Risks

We believe the risk of harm to you from your participation in this study is minimal. In any case, risks associated with this study are no greater than those you encounter in your daily life.

Benefits

We cannot guarantee a personal benefit to you for your participation, but we are grateful for your consideration and hope that you may find this a worthwhile opportunity to reflect on your experiences as an officer or planner or participant in any policy or project related to informal settlements in Sana'a, in particular, the Mahwa Aser neighborhood. If you are interested in the results of this research, Ms. Wafa Al-Daily will be happy to provide you with a copy of her final dissertation. Our contact information is provided below.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

We are seeking your written consent to allow the researcher to include your statements in the scholarship that will result from this effort. Tapes and transcripts will be accessible only to the interviewer (who will also transcribe your remarks) and her faculty advisors. You will have the option of sharing information "on the record" or "off the record" throughout your conversation with Ms. Wafa Al-Daily. She will honor your specific requests for confidentiality or "off the record responses" when you ask her to do so. She will also be using a coding scheme or pseudonyms in an attempt to protect the confidentiality of your responses. However, we cannot guarantee that using pseudonyms/codes will provide complete anonymity, given the nature of the research.

It is possible the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research at Virginia Tech. The Board's contact information appears below.

Compensation

We are unable to provide compensation for your participation.

Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from this research at any time. You are also free NOT to answer any questions that you choose during the course of your proposed interview.

Your Responsibilities and Permission

I, _____, voluntarily agree to participate in this research that explores: 1) government policy on informal settlements in Sana'a city in Yemen, in particular those policies that affect the lives of Mahwa Aser residents; 2) how residents of Mahwa Aser respond to the government policy; and 3) the role of national and international non-governmental and international organizations in government policy and in informal settlements, with a special focus on the Mahwa Aser neighborhood. I am 18-years-old or older.

I have read and understand the purposes of this research and the contents of this Informed Consent form. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, or questions regarding my rights, I may contact:

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Max O. Stephenson, Jr.
Virginia Tech Professor
540-231-7340
mstephen@vt.edu

Investigator:

Wafa Al-Daily
Doctoral Candidate
540-922-3385 (USA)
734 644 045 (Yemen)
waldaily@vt.edu

IMPORTANT:

If I should have any questions about the protection of human research participants regarding this study, you may contact Dr. David Moore, Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, telephone: (540) 231-4991; email: moored@vt.edu; address: Research Compliance Office, 1880 Pratt Drive, Suite 2006 (0497), Blacksburg, VA 24061, USA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION!

3/3

VERBAL CONSENT FORM
For Ph.D. Research Project:
Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions in Sana'a City, Yemen

Purpose of this Interview:

I would like to ask you to participate in a doctoral research project I am undertaking at Virginia Tech in the USA that proposes to examine informal settlements and the residents' 'lived experiences' of forced eviction and relocation. The project examines how residents of informal settlements resist forced eviction and forced relocation, and what rationales both affected communities and government authorities offer for undertaking such actions.

I am focusing on the Mahwa Aser neighborhood in Sana'a, Yemen and I am interested in interviewing you because I learned that you are one of the adult residents of that neighborhood. I also learned that you are knowledgeable about your community's circumstances and history.

The purpose of this verbal consent form, which I will read to you, is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. At any time, feel free to ask me questions about the purpose of the research, the possible risks and benefits of being involved in it, and anything else about the study or what I say that may not be clear to you. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study, and tell me yes or no. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form in case you wish to contact me later with any questions.

Purpose of this Research

I am conducting this research to learn more about the lives of residents in informal settlements, in particular residents in Mahwa Aser. I would like to learn about Mahwa Aser as a community; how its residents live; what they value; how they came to the settlement and what sorts of support and services are available to them. I would also like to explore the residents' lived experiences as well as their reasons for resisting government attempts at forced eviction/relocation on multiple occasions. Finally, I would like to understand better residents' attitudes towards government policies affecting Mahwa Aser as well those policies themselves. Only by understanding people's experiences and stories can scholars begin to analyze and understand how forced eviction and forced relocation have had an impact on communities and people's lives.

The reason I am speaking to you and other senior residents is that I believe that not enough research has focused on people's individual experiences and life stories. Through your support and the help of other resident experts, I hope this project will make the voices of residents living in the Mahwa Aser neighborhood in Sana'a more available to researchers, community groups, government authorities, and international organizations.

I am grateful for the time you are devoting to this interview. I will be sure to provide you with the results of the study if you are interested.

Research Process

If you are interested in participating in my study, you will take part in a one-session interview, which includes a series of questions that will help me define your community and its needs, and understand your personal experience through your own words. The session will take about 60-75 minutes. At any time during our conversation, please feel free to let me know if you don't want to answer a question, or ask me about why I am asking a question.

Confidentiality

If you agree to participate, I would like to record your answers with a tape recorder, so I can listen carefully to you today, and be sure that I have your answers available when I write up any notes later on. Once I have made transcripts of the tapes and three years after I complete my dissertation, they will be destroyed. If you prefer not to have your answers taped, just let me know.

Your answers will only be used for the purposes of this study and they will remain confidential. No personal information will be disclosed to a third party. Either you will make up a pretend name or I will make up one for you, and I will use this name during my research so no one can identify you in the future. I will keep any information about your name or place of residence separate from your answers, and this information will be destroyed after the research project is completed. I plan to use your answers, without ever stating your real name, in the form of research articles, lectures for classrooms and conferences, and policy and planning reports.

Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to choose whether or not to participate in this research study. You are also free NOT to answer any questions that you choose during the course of your proposed interview. There are no known risks to participate and there will be no penalty if you chose not to participate. In the event you decide to discontinue your participation in the study, please notify me of your decision so that your participation can be terminated in an orderly fashion. My contact information appears below.

Subject's Verbal Consent

If you would like to participate, I would like you to let me know in your own words what you understand the study to be and that you are voluntarily participating in the study.
[wait for participant to state this]

Please also let me know in your own words that you have given me permission to use the information from our session for the purposes of this research and that any questions you have been answered.
[wait for participant to state this]

Finally, will you verify that you have received a copy of this verbal consent form and acknowledge that in giving me consent you maintain all of your rights, and that your rights according to international, national, state, or local laws are not jeopardized.

Thank you again for participating in this study! Questions about this research or its conduct, research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject may be directed to:

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Max O. Stephenson, Jr.
Virginia Tech Professor
540-231-7340
mstephen@vt.edu

Investigator:
Wafa Al-Daily
Doctoral Candidate
540-922-3385 (USA)
734 644 045 (Yemen)
waldaily@vt.edu

IMPORTANT:

If I should have any questions about the protection of human research participants regarding this study, you may contact Dr. David Moore, Chair Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, telephone: (540) 231-4991; email: moored@vt.edu; address: Research Compliance Office, 1880 Pratt Drive, Suite 2006 (0497), Blacksburg, VA 24061, USA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 24, 2010

TO: Karen Till, Wafa Mohsen Saleh Al-Daily

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires June 13, 2011)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Informal Settlements in Sana'a City: Current Policies, Future Schemes, and Community and NGO Involvement

IRB NUMBER: 09-1081

As of March 23, 2010, the Virginia Tech IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore, approved the amendment request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm> (please review before the commencement of your research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved as: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies)**

Protocol Approval Date: **2/4/2010**

Protocol Expiration Date: **2/3/2011**

Continuing Review Due Date*: **1/20/2011**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

*Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

cc: File



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
 540/231-4991 Fax 540/231-0959
 e-mail moored@vt.edu
 www.irb.vt.edu

FWA00000572(expires 1/20/2010)
 IRB # is IRB00000667

DATE: November 9, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Karen Till
 Wafa Mohsen Saleh Al-Daily

Approval date: 11/9/2009
 Continuing Review Due Date: 10/25/2010
 Expiration Date: 11/8/2010

FROM: David M. Moore 

SUBJECT: **IRB Full IRB Approval:** "Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions In Yemen" ,
 IRB # 09-748

The above referenced protocol was submitted for full review and approval by the IRB at the November 9, 2009 meeting. The board had voted approval of this proposal contingent upon receipt of responses to questions raised during its deliberation. Following receipt and review of your responses, I, as Chair of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, have, at the direction of the IRB, granted approval for this study for a period of 12 months, effective November 9, 2009.

Approval of your research by the IRB provides the appropriate review as required by federal and state laws regarding human subject research. As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.
3. Report promptly to the IRB of the study's closing (i.e., data collecting and data analysis complete at Virginia Tech). If the study is to continue past the expiration date (listed above), investigators must submit a request for continuing review prior to the continuing review due date (listed above). It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain re-approval from the IRB before the study's expiration date.
4. If re-approval is not obtained (unless the study has been reported to the IRB as closed) prior to the expiration date, all activities involving human subjects and data analysis must cease immediately, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

Important:

If you are conducting **federally funded non-exempt research**, please send the applicable OSP/grant proposal to the IRB office, once available. OSP funds may not be released until the IRB has compared and found consistent the proposal and related IRB application.

cc: File

Invent the Future

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE UNIVERSITY AND STATE UNIVERSITY
 An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 27, 2011

TO: Kathleen R. Parrott, Wafa Mohsen Saleh Al-Daily

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Informal Settlements and Forced Evictions In Yemen

IRB NUMBER: 09-748

Effective July 27, 2011, the Virginia Tech IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore, approved the amendment request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm> (please review before the commencement of your research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved as: **Full Board Review**

Protocol Approval Date: **11/9/2010** (protocol's initial approval date: **11/9/2009**)

Protocol Expiration Date: **11/8/2011**

Continuing Review Due Date*: **9/26/2011**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

*Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

cc: File



MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 27, 2011

TO: Max O. Stephenson, Wafa Mohsen Saleh Al-Daily, Kathleen R. Parrott

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Informal Settlements in Sana'a City: Current Policies, Future Schemes, and Community and NGO Involvement

IRB NUMBER: 09-1081

Effective July 27, 2011, the Virginia Tech IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore, approved the amendment request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm> (please review before the commencement of your research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved as: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6, 7**
Protocol Approval Date: **2/4/2011 (protocol's initial approval date: 2/4/2010)**
Protocol Expiration Date: **2/3/2012**
Continuing Review Due Date*: **1/20/2012**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

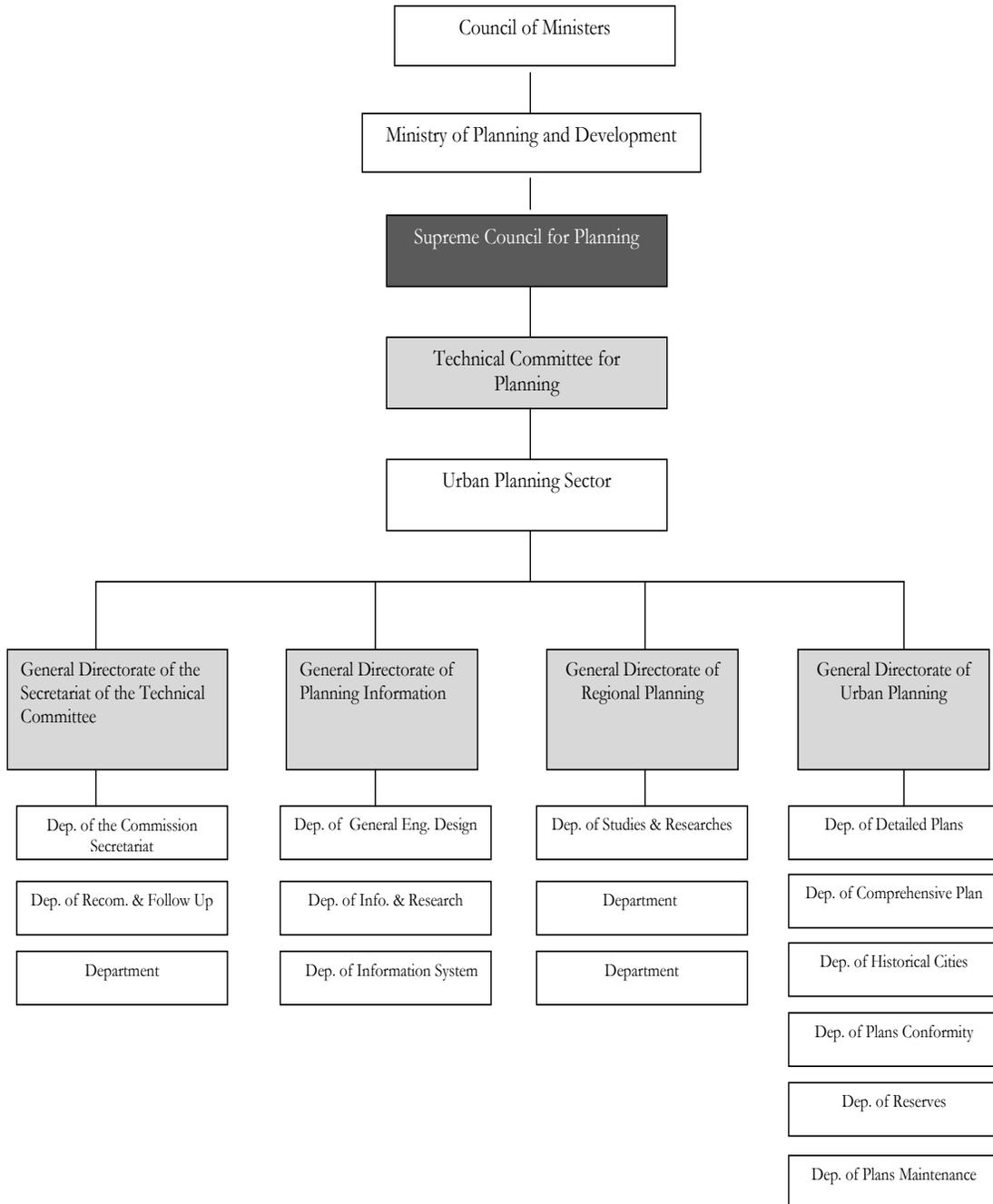
*Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

cc: File

APPENDIX IV

Organizational Structure of Urban Planning in Yemen



Source: Al-Waraqj, (2009).

APPENDIX V

Informal Settlements in Sana'a

No.	Area Name	Area Size m ²	Density Family/Acre (Low)	Density Family/Acre (High)	No. of Families (Low)	No. of Families (High)	Estimated Population (Low)	Estimated Population (High)	Rate of population Growth
1	Attan	70,916	20	25	142	177	979	1,223	Above the natural average of population growth
2	Faj Attan	136,348	30	53	409	477	2,822	3,293	Rapidly filled up the space
3	Bayt Meayd	208,856	70	80	1,462	1,671	10,088	11,529	Slightly above the natural average of population growth
4	Al-Khafgi	809,214	70	80	5,665	6,474	39,085	44,659	Rapidly filled up the space
5	Dar Silm	910,955	55	45	3,188	4,099	22,000	28,255	Above the natural average of population growth
6	Hezyaz	1,566,043	18	25	2,818	3,915	19,450	27,014	Above the natural average of population growth
7	Ga'a Al-Gadhi	4,000,000	2	24	800	960	5,520	5,624	Low but higher than the natural population growth
8	Madinat Al-Moghtarebeen	2,820,915	15	22	4,231	6,206	29,197	42,822	Above the natural average of population growth
9	Extension of Al-Sawad Village	796,297	22	25	1,752	1,991	12,088	13,736	Low but higher than the natural population growth
10	Extension of Bayt Baous Village	63,709	35	40	223	225	1,539	1,758	Above the natural average of population growth
11	Extension of Bayt Zabatan Village	356,324	13	13	453	641	3,195	4,426	Low but higher than the natural population growth
12	Extension of Sana'a Village	671,072	4	6	258	203	1,852	2,778	Low but higher than the natural population

13	Extension of Hada'a Village	1,394,203	12	14	1,673	1,952	11,544	13,458	growth Above the natural average of population growth
14	Extension of Ashash Village	106,534	20	25	215	266	1,470	1,858	Above the natural average of population growth
15	Alsobaha	311,563	10	12	312	374	2,150	2,580	Low but higher than the natural population growth
16	Aser	166,268	14	18	288	299	1,605	2,065	Low but higher than the natural population growth
17	Mahwa Aser (Harat Al-Lakama)	32,770	100	110	328	361	2,261	2,487	Stable with a natural population growth
18	Harat Al-Senayna	868,283	12	15	1,042	1,302	7,189	8,987	Above the natural average of population growth
19	Jabal Madhbah	306,720	18	21	552	644	3,810	4,444	Above the natural average of population growth
20	Harat Al-Dakeik	317,809	35	45	1,112	1,430	7,675	9,868	Rapidly filled up the space and above the natural population growth
21	Night City (Madinat Al-Lail)	161,267	75	85	1,210	1,371	8,346	9,458	Rapidly filled up the space and above the natural population growth
22	Shamlan	32,214	35	45	113	145	778	1,000	Above the natural average of population growth
23	Souq Shamlan	1,118	90	120	10	13	69	93	Not clear
24	Saelat Shehara	105,350	35	40	369	421	2,544	2,908	Rapidly filled up the space
25	Gewar Al-Madina Al-Lybevia	123,619	30	35	371	433	2,559	2,985	Above the natural average of population growth
26	Hood Janoob Sana'a	1,326,293	1	12	133	159	915	1,098	Low but slightly

Continued. Informal Settlements in Sana'a

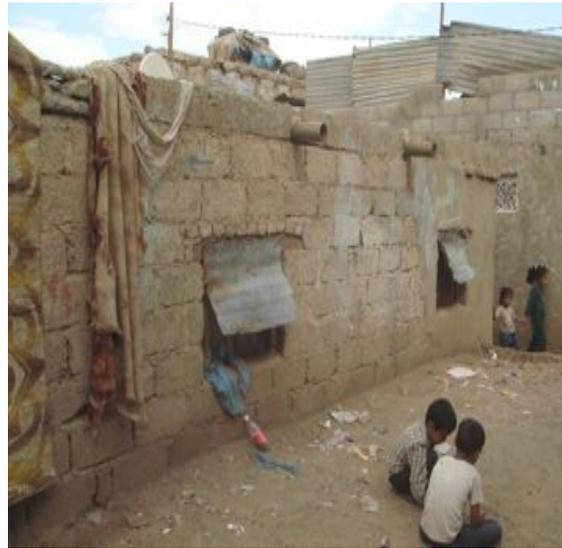
No.	Area Name	Area Size m ²	Density Family/Acre (Low)	Density Family/Acre (High)	No. of Families (Low)	No. of Families (High)	Estimated Population (Low)	Estimated Population (High)	Rate of population Growth
27	Hood Dhahban Janoob Sana'a	6,706,667	15	17	1,006	1,140	6,941	7,867	Low but above the natural population growth
28	Mantekat Jader	1,790,275	15	18	2,685	3,223	18,529	22,235	Above the natural average of population growth
29	Wadi Ahmed	1,401,970	25	30	3,505	4,206	24,184	29,021	Above the natural average of population growth
30	Herna Al-Matar	1,725,577	25	26	3,969	4,487	27,385	30,957	Above the natural average of population growth
31	Bani Al-Hareth	5,002,631	4	6	2,001	3,002	13,807	20,711	Low but above the natural population growth
32	Al-Hetaresh	629,085	9	12	566	755	3,907	5,209	Low but above the natural population growth
33	Khashm Albakrah	773,275	6	8	464	619	3,201	4,269	Low but above the natural population growth
34	Sa'awan	1,161,759	14	18	1,627	2,091	11,223	14,429	Above the natural average of population growth
35	Saelat Sheratoon	109,415	45	55	492	602	3,397	4,152	Rapidly filled up the space
	Total	36,965,317			59,110	72,418	313,306	390,285	
	As a Percentage form the Total Population						16.5%	20.5%	

Source: El-Shorbagi, (2008).

APPENDIX VI

Mahwa Aser (Harat Al-Lakama)

District	Maeen
Start of development	1985
Estimated population	328 households, 2261 individuals (low estimates)
Origin of residents	Other areas in Sana'a city, other governorates
Prevalent occupation	Workers 'mainly Akhdam', casual laborers, street vendors, public sector employees, marginal jobs
Land ownership	Squatters on state land
Planning status	Post-planned
Type of dwellings	Mainly small one-floor family houses w. roofs built w. non-permanent material, some shacks
Water provision	Water tanker
Sanitation	Cesspits and septic tanks
Electricity	Rigged from public network
Streets	Unpaved
Education services	Public & private basic school
Health services	Public health center, private poly clinic, other services in nearby areas
Remarks	The SFD is interested in upgrading the area but no action has been taken yet.



Source: El-Shorbagi, (2008).

Credit of the Photos: Al-Daily, Belgies and Jamila, (August, 2012)

Entrance of the neighborhood



Entrances of two houses: Poor condition



Photos explain how walls are built and how roofs are covered

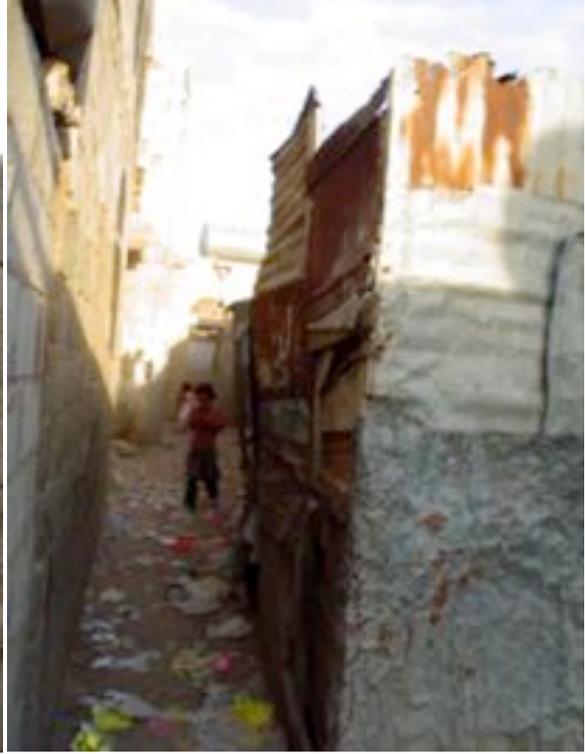


Poor construction materials



Unpaved and narrow alleys
Very narrow alleys between houses. Entrances of some houses open on those narrow alleys





Entrances to homes





Unhealthy living conditions from inside

