# Poverty and inequality in urban Sudan. Policies, institutions and governance

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# Poverty and inequality in urban Sudan: Policies, institutions and governance

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# Poverty and inequality in urban Sudan

## Policies, institutions and governance

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADRA | Adventist Development and Relief Agency |
| AU | African Union |
| CARE | Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere |
| CBOs | Community-Based Organizations |
| CM | Community Meetings |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| CPA | Comprehensive Peace Agreement |
| DFID | Department For International Development |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FAR | Fellowship for African Relief |
| FIG | International Federation of Surveyors |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNI | Gross National Income |
| GUSW | General Union of Sudanese Women |
| HABITAT | United Nations Centre for Human Settlement |
| HAC | Humanitarian Aid Commission |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| HIPC | Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative |
| IDMC | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre |
| IDPs | Internally Displaced Persons |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| IIED | International Institute for Environment and Development |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INGOs | International Non Governmental Organizations |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| LJAM | Locality of Jebel Awlia |
| LK | Locality of Khartoum |
| LUR-S | Locality of Umbadda Records Siriha |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MEDEA | Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro Arab-Cooperation |
| MMR | Maternal Mortality Rate |
| MOI | Ministry of Irrigation |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NIF | National Islamic Front |
| NGOs | Non Governmental Organizations |
| PCs | Popular Committees |
| PDF | Popular Defense Forces |
| PIPs | Policies, Institutions and Processes |
| PPA | Participatory Poverty Analysis |
| PRSPs | Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers |
| SAPs | Structural Adjustment Programmes |
| SDA | Sudanese Development Association |
| SGB | Sudan Gezira Board |
| SL | Sustainable Livelihoods |
| SLGP | Support to Local Governance project Sudan |
| SP | Sudanese Pounds |

| | |
|---|---|
| SPLM/SPLA | The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army |
| SRC | Sudanese Red Crescent |
| SWCs | State Water Corporations |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNCHS | United Nations Centre for Human Settlements |
| UNC-LDC | United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries |
| UNMIS | United Nations Mission in Sudan |
| UNOCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| UNOHCHR | United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| WB | World Bank |
| WDR | World Development Report |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WID | Women in Development |
| WLUML | Women Living Under Muslim Laws |
| WOTAP | Women Training and Promotion Association |

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# 1

# Urbanization and poverty: The African context

Poverty remains an enormous challenge confronting policymakers in Africa. This chapter provides an overview of the current situation in Africa and the response to it as narratives have emerged in the development discourse. Factors leading to the rapid growth of the urban population in Africa and the way it impacts on cities' abilities to meet the growing demand for employment, housing and urban services are highlighted. The second part of this chapter gives an introduction to the study area, namely Sudan, and presents some characteristics of the country. The last part outlines the objectives and methodologies of the study.

## The challenge of poverty in Africa

Africa's predicament, and particularly its failure to curb severe and prevalent poverty, is seen as one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century. Africa stands out as the exception among all the regions of the world that are making progress in building their capacity to meet their people's basic material needs. Statistics and reliable projections reveal that millions of Africans live below the poverty line (UN 2005a). For some parts of Africa, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of those defined as poor (those who, according to the UN Millennium Project [2005a], are living on less than $1 a day) has risen from 227 million in 1990 to 313 million in 2001 (Chen & Ravallion 2004, cited in UN 2005a: 14). For the very poor in Sub-Saharan Africa, the average income is only $270 a year, a mere $0.71 cents a day (World Bank 2004, cited in UN 2005a: 18).

The majority of the population in most African countries has to find a way of surviving in the context of exceedingly challenging constraints. Although the scale and specificity of these constraints vary considerably from one country to another, as do the livelihood outcomes of the populations, there are some important common challenges shared across the continent. These include, *inter alia*, environmental degradation, war and conflict, the AIDS pandemic, malaria and other killer diseases, the challenges of democracy, good governance and globalization, and the colonial legacy.

Africa is characterized by diverse ecosystems that provide a wealth of goods and services for human consumption and also support vast biodiversity. Such systems, however, are increasingly facing global climate change and continued environmental degradation. In this context, the environmental degradation of arable land and water is resulting in the loss of livelihoods and exacerbating the poverty situation since many communities, due to a lack of resources, are not able to cope without seriously depleting

environmental resources (see Chapter 10). Traditional methods of conservation are no longer feasible and there is a total absence of institutions that encourage the sustainable use and management of natural resources. In such circumstances, poverty increases resource depletion and environmental degradation as well as making countries more vulnerable to cultural disruption, social instability and conflict (Salih 2001).

Armed conflict prevails in several African countries with all the consequences it generates. A common outcome of these conflicts is the loss of livelihoods. War and conflict have led to a disruption of livelihood activities, displacement and death, as well as to the destruction of physical and social infrastructure. In addition, the effects of conflict have often spilled across national boundaries into neighbouring countries. In some, the state has collapsed completely and state resources are being channelled into warfare. These factors have prepared the ground for on-going food shortages and severe poverty, especially where conflict has run parallel to natural disasters such as prolonged drought, as is the case in Sudan. Conflicts in most of Africa have been the result of weak democratic institutions and the proliferation of armed groups. And some African countries have been successful in rebuilding their countries after appalling conflicts, such as those in Rwanda and Mozambique (DFID 2006: 21).

In Africa today, millions of people die every year of preventable diseases. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other killer diseases, as well as a lack of safe drinking water reveals people's vulnerability. The effects are multiple, frequently interrelated, and often highly determined by context (UN 2005a: 77). An overall deterioration in health can lead to the impoverishment of individuals and communities, as well as to an erosion of the capacity of socio-economic systems through the loss of human resources and the threat of total economic breakdown. There are, however, variations between different regions and the countries within them: Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS and TB in the world while North Africa has the lowest rates among African regions (UN 2005a). Some countries have made progress in reducing new HIV infections, for example Uganda which has reduced HIV prevalence from 18% in 1992 to 6.4% in 2005 (DFID 2006b: 2). In Ethiopia too, HIV infection rates in urban areas have dropped from 2.5 new cases per 100 adults in 1990-92 to below two new cases since 1995 (DFID 2006a: 2).

When institutions that deal with the above-mentioned challenges are ineffective, weak or disrupted, people's vulnerability to crisis, stress and shocks increases dramatically. In addition, much of the structural change needed to lift the poor out of poverty is beyond the ability of African states themselves (Salih 2001). The importance of politics and governance stems from their capacity to establish the legal and political framework not only for designing poverty-reduction policies but also to strengthen the capacity of the poor to overcome social and economic exclusion. Since independence, there have been profound failings in terms of governance and politics in numerous African states (Salih 2001). Many of the economic and social policies pursued by Africa's rulers have impoverished their people, widened inequality and increased exclusion, and human-rights atrocities have been carried out against countless individuals and groups. However, while many of these African countries are still struggling to advance their governance system, there are others that have already made considerable improvements in governance in recent years. For example, Botswana, Ghana and Tanzania have made marked progress in strengthening their public institutions (DFID 2006: 22). Almost half of the African countries (26) have signed up to the African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), while three countries –

Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda – have completed their reviews (DFID 2006: 4). Political reform has been placed on the development agendas of an increasing number of African countries and it has emerged as a key catchword across the region that no government can afford to ignore under the increasing pressure of civil society (Hamdok & Kifle 2000: 123).

Africa has long suffered hostile terms of trade, volatile commodity prices, limited access to financial resources, a lack of internal capacity and appropriate policy frameworks to compete on the global market. Some of the policies implemented during the colonial era have had lingering effects that are still manifest, ranging from the exploitation of labour, unjust taxation and unfair terms of trade to the creation of artificial states and the siphoning off of the continent's natural resources. Most African countries have been integrated into global finance and trade arrangements as exporters of raw materials and importers of industrial products. Although such outside intervention has always been present, its pace seems to have picked up in recent decades. The challenges of contemporary globalization are many, with economic, social, political, environmental and cultural ramifications that are impacting on the ways people utilize and combine their resources to pursue their livelihoods.

The livelihoods of people in rural and urban areas are increasingly being shaped by decisions made internationally as well as at national and regional levels of government. For poor households in a small village in Africa, the challenge is not only in dealing with livelihood constraints within their immediate village, surrounding villages, their country or even the continent, but across the globe. In urban areas, cities are being remoulded as global networks and structured around new principles of technological space. Global mobility has increased and old community norms are being changed or abandoned, resulting in the weakening of community and inter-household trust and collaboration, the breakdown of households and 'the erosion of communal solidarity' (de Haan & Zoomers 2003: 3).

Tackling the challenges of poverty in Africa is a long-term project that requires sustained effort and planning among African countries themselves and between them and the international community. The Millennium Development Goals form an important development framework that was adopted by 189 countries at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000 where an agenda was set to halve the number of people living on less than $1 a day by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals have highlighted the importance of countries' efforts to improve policies, domestic resource mobilization, governance and accountability (HDR 2003: 76). Though many African countries have made significant progress on these fronts, this improvement may not be sufficient to halve poverty in the specified period. Evidence from the United Nations (UN 2005b: 1) indicates that most African countries will not achieve this objective by the target year and that, based on present trends, the situation is likely to worsen. The key challenges are related not only to conditions within the countries themselves but also to external forces as well. Several countries still owe billions of dollars to foreign lenders and steady, long-term economic planning will not be viable for some of the poorest countries unless it is coupled with 'more systematic, sustained debt relief' (HDR 2003: vi). Although many African countries have made significant progress in their fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, the battle cannot be won unless essential drugs are made available and accessible to the poor in a sustainable manner (*Ibid*.). Some countries have not been able to make visible progress due to

geographic isolation, an unfavourable environment or other obstacles that necessitate steady additional external support to overcome poverty (*Ibid*.).

African leadership is vital in the fight against poverty. The revitalized Commission of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have provided a viable framework in which to address the challenges of poverty reduction in Africa.

*The challenge of urban poverty*

Although the majority of Africans still live in rural areas, Africa currently has the world's fastest urbanization rate. Natural population growth has contributed to large cities but the main factor driving urbanization has been rural-urban migration (World Bank 2001a) that is being fuelled by a lack of job opportunities and services, such as health care and education, in the rural areas.

The rate of urban growth in Africa is averaging almost 5% a year. Africa's urban population is thought to have doubled from under 90 million in 1980 to nearly 150 million in 2000. It is estimated that by 2025 more than half of Africa's population will be living in urban areas, almost the size of the continent's entire population today (World Bank 2001, 2002a). Such phenomenal urbanization is taking place in a context of severe constraints. Urban poverty has, therefore, become one of the greatest challenges facing African countries, and one that might surpass rural poverty. Haddad *et al.* (1999: 190), for instance, argue that 'for the majority of countries, not only has the absolute number of the urban poor and undernourished increased in the last 15-20 years but they have done so at a rate that outpaces corresponding changes in rural areas.'

Increased urbanization poses challenges for city management, urban development and the provision of services. The concurrent challenges of rapid urbanization are the escalating demands for resources, shelter and employment and the urban authorities in Africa are hard pressed to provide opportunities, infrastructure, services and housing. Cities have limited resources to cope with such pressures and often 'fail to create the jobs necessary for growth' (UN 2005: 72).

While urban migration has increased opportunities for the private sector to develop, both formally and informally, this is not yet being reflected in the quality of life of urban migrants. Growing evidence shows that urban labour markets and the informal sector are not capable of absorbing the increased urban populations (World Bank 2001b: 17, Amis 1995: 151). Low wages characterize jobs in urban areas and relegate workers to a life of deprivation. Many workers can barely make ends meet, despite working long hours. A study of African poverty at the millennium noted that the 'urban working poor have earnings below the poverty line' and that there has been a secular decline, mainly in urban wages, in the formal sector in most African countries. The study also demonstrated that it is highly likely that informal wages will move in the same direction and that 'the function of this sector as an employer of last resort makes it intrinsically likely to generate low earnings, in the face of labour forces growing far more rapidly than formal-sector employment' (World Bank 2001b: 17).

African urban poverty is clearly manifested in the large number of poor people living in slums and slum-like conditions in cities across the continent. They lack access to secure shelter, basic services and to the political system. The UN Millennium Project (2005: 26) indicates that, except for North Africa, the slum population increased in every region between 1990 and 2001. In Sub-Saharan Africa more than 70% of the urban population is now estimated to be living in slums.

Research suggests that, to deal with urban poverty effectively, a thorough understanding of the factors that limit the capacity and power of the poor and constrain their efforts to develop appropriate strategies, is important (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 1, Farrington *et al.* 2002: 9). By understanding the nature of urban poverty and recognizing its multiple dimensions, appropriate policy responses – with approaches suitable to the specific physical and human environment and which will lead to a sustainable reduction in poverty – can be reached.

Rapid urbanization in Africa took place in a context of reduced access to the labour market and a decreased role by the state in service provision. There is a need to understand the way such factors impact on different segments of the population in order to devise meaningful targets for addressing poverty in urban areas.

*Factors that shaped responses to poverty*

Transforming poverty into prosperity and replacing exclusion with inclusion requires the crafting of effective methods and techniques. The history of development and action geared towards mitigating or reducing poverty has been characterized by the evolution of various theories and ideas, or the succession of (more or less) effective interventions. Each has a different understanding of what constitutes poverty as well as particular views about instruments of intervention. Each has its own perspective and models regarding the role of the market, the state and civil society in the process of poverty alleviation or reduction. Conventionally designed and delivered social policy in Africa has always been influenced by external processes that influenced the nature and structure of the indigenous African state itself. As a result, African countries have followed western concepts but with little consideration of the local reality. This has resulted in a failure to meet current social needs. Overall, it has been argued that concepts of development embodied in the main development paradigms have not helped to reduce poverty in Africa. It is widely believed that after decades of experimenting with development paradigms (concepts, categories, language and policies advocated), that these paradigms have not provided the solutions and instead have perhaps even become an integral part of the problem (Escobar 1995).[1]

At independence, African countries gained the freedom to plan their own policies. However, modernization became the dominant development paradigm and guided development in the newly independent states. This paradigm assumes that the causes of underdevelopment in the Third World and within different societies are internal and that there is a linear process through which developing countries increasingly become industrialized. The development of poor countries was seen from the beginning as a function of the abundant provisions of capital to cater for infrastructure, industrialization and the general modernization of society (Escobar 1995: 40). Within this perception, poverty is viewed as an effect rather than a cause of underdevelopment, and it was around this central premise that the rhetoric and practices of development were fashioned. Poverty became of less concern to social policy, and poverty reduction or social development has basically become a by-product of this reform (Storey *et al.* 2005: 32). It started to become clear that economic growth did not transcend to the poor or translate into poverty reduction and in the 1970s there was an increase in models of development based on the dependency theory, which was seen as a possible way of

[1] Some critiques have gone further to view development as a process of colonization. Escobar (1995), for example, argues that development policies provided by the West to 'assist' poor countries are actually self-reinforcing mechanisms of control that can be equated with the colonialism of the past.

explaining the persistent poverty of poor countries. The dependency theory relates global inequality to problems of distribution and politics, and emphasizes the interdependency of the world's societies. The advantage of this theory is its emphasis on social indicators more than economic indicators, and its premise that the market alone is an inadequate mechanism for distribution.

Although the modernization and dependency paradigms have encapsulated different points of views, both have called for state-led development to drive the developmental agenda of a country. They positioned the means for achieving development through a 'top-down' approach where development strategies are basically state strategies and often at variance with the real needs of the people (Wanyama 2005: 2). Development policies and programmes in the majority of African countries have been largely informed by the modernization theory. However, due to the poor results of application of such development strategies, a different version of the modernization theory is currently arguing for market-led development following the rise of neo-liberalism (*Ibid*.). Governments of poor countries have no choice but to follow policies that are not necessarily the right ones for their economies or their peoples but are acceptable to the markets.

A number of indigenous plans for the continent have been put forward through the OMEGA Plan, the Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP) and the latest New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The common concern among these initiatives is increased development, combating poverty and corruption, and ending Africa's conflicts. Over the decades, however, such initiatives, as well as efforts by the AU, have met with little success owing to the reduced capacity of governments to develop long-term policies and redefine the way these countries are incorporated in the global economy.

In summary, western development interventions that were applied to reduce poverty have not provided the solutions but instead have perhaps become an integral part of the problem. Several indigenous initiatives have emerged but reduced government capacities continue to constrain their materializations.

*Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)*

The role of structural adjustment and associated policies deserves specific attention. Their impact has been seen as contributing to increased poverty in Africa (for example, Mkandawire 2002, UNCTAD 2001). In the wake of the oil-price shocks in the 1970s, several African countries faced severe economic crisis. High public spending, a rapid drop in primary commodity prices and a tight squeeze on global lending all led to the rapid escalation of foreign debts, forcing the majority of African countries to implement structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) during the 1980s. These programmes entailed the opening up of their economies to capital flows and trade, and decreasing the state's role in the economy. However, poverty has worsened as many African countries fell into serious debt. Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa worsened considerably and debt ballooned in a way that made it difficult for countries even to service their debts. Some African countries experienced negative growth rates and a reversal in development. Mkandawire (2002: 4) notes that economic growth in the adjustment years was 2.1% below that in the period between 1966 and 1980.

A common consequence of SAPs has been the decreased capacity of governments to deliver social services, marked by decreased spending on health, education, housing, employment and social security, as well as increased poverty and unemployment

(Morales-Gómez 1993). The poorest sectors of the population have experienced a sharp fall in their per capita income compared to the population as a whole. For example, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 2001: 53) revealed that between 1980 and 1995 the poorest 20% of the Sub-Saharan African population suffered twice the decline in average per capita income as the population as a whole.

Urban populations were affected more if they were part of a more monetized economy and more reliant on urban services and waged labour (Amis 1995: 146, 2002: 12). Reductions in expenditure packages through a downsizing of the labour force created what is known in the literature as the 'new poor' (as opposed to the 'chronic poor'). At the same time, research suggests that the assumption that mainly urban populations were hard hit by SAPs might not be very accurate. In some countries, rural populations were affected negatively too as a result of escalating costs of agricultural inputs, the lifting of agricultural subsidies and the state's withdrawal from the market (Tacoli 1998b: 151). Although the burden of SAP has drastically affected the middle and popular classes, it has disproportionately affected poor women (Escobar 1995: 176) because of their limited access to resources such as education, employment, credit and technology.

Criticism was eventually voiced against structural adjustment, which conditioned market liberalization reforms. It has been argued that the adjustment experiences of the 1980s led to reduced social capacities among the people, an alteration in the authority of the state, decreased social and physical investment and increased income inequality. These, in turn, led to increased numbers of conflicts and have impacted negatively on the long-term development prospects of the countries affected (Stewart 1994, cited in Mkandawire 2002: 4). However, the relative failure of structural adjustment policies in most of Africa has renewed international concerns over the importance of the content of socio-economic policies and the way they are implemented. New issues such as governance, ownership and participation are increasingly forming the main elements of development programmes: poverty is increasingly being seen as a policy issue that falls within the political realm.

In summary, while structural adjustment and its associated policies have contributed to increased poverty in Africa, they have created the space to promote and protect state legitimacy, democracy and human rights as part of the poverty-reduction agenda.

*Social movements for democracy*

A process of re-democratization started to gain ground in Africa following the intensification of economic crises and poverty on the continent. Social movements have played a significant role in formulating and shaping social policy and making demands on the state based on social rights. The 1980s witnessed a renaissance of protests and resistance by a range of social movements against oppressive regimes across the continent. The goal of several of these social protests was democratization, with their agendas often including the struggle for power resources as well as for cultural identity. The language of rights was used across the spectrum of social movements to make social demands, articulate needs and secure commitments from the government. Concepts such as 'participation' started to emerge and were framed within the equitable distribution of resource. These movements mobilized actors around social networks and the collective articulation of problems, and placed more weight on the ordinary people's agency. Cornwall & Gaventa (2001) suggest that such orientation has provided an alternative identification of 'the poor' as individuals with agency and rights. It has also

contributed to raising people's expectations of an enhancement in their living conditions.

The effect and influence of these movements was not confined to the boundaries of their originating countries but were disseminated around the world. Globalization has opened up the possibility of linking people around the world and offering a new global consciousness 'as local communities and marginalized groups around the world strive to create their own self-identity' (Mandon 2000: 4). An important issue remains, however, regarding circumstances and the extent to which social movements are able to make effective claims on the state and have a real impact on poverty.

*Emerging poverty issues and the World Development Report 1990*

An apparent shift in poverty thinking and policy direction was introduced with the publication of the 1990 World Development Report (WDR 90). The report emphasized the importance of poverty reduction in development and attempted to put forward strategies to attain these goals through growth. The policy agenda in the 1990 report was agreed by the wider donor community and resulted in a broad 'convergence of donor policies, rhetoric and operational approaches in the direction of the WDR 90 agenda' (Brock *et al.* 2001: 15). The term 'Washington Consensus' came into existence to describe the apparent agreement among economists and the donor community with the 1990 World Development Report's policy agenda.

The WDR 90 conceptualizes poverty as low income and low attainment in health and education. Poverty was seen to result from bad economic management by developing countries' governments, corruption, inefficient institutions and policy environments that do not favour broad-based economic growth. The report stressed the potential role and significance of governance and institutions in poverty reduction. A new emphasis was placed on issues of governance, holistic sector-wide programmes and coordinated donor actions. Investment in social services and safety nets were included to enhance benefits and offset negative outcomes for the poor (Storey *et al*. 2005: 33). Poverty reduction became a function of resource transfer; a certain amount of money could lift a certain number of the poor out of poverty.

Later on, the WDR 90 came under increased criticism. It has been argued that although the report marked a shift in the focus of the World Bank (to poverty reduction), it did not make any paradigm shift from the Bank's previous approach. Development continued to be seen as an outcome of macro-economic growth for poverty reduction. However, reality indicates that economic growth and poverty may be contradictory, as certain types of growth could increase inequality and economic growth could generate poverty rather than reduce it. Escobar (1995: 22) has argued that:

> Massive poverty in the modem sense appeared only when the spread of the market economy broke down community ties and deprived millions of people from access to land, water and other resources. With the consolidation of capitalism, systemic pauperization became inevitable.

WDR 90 presented comprehensive estimates of level, distribution and trends in poverty for different regions and countries of the world. They have been taken for granted, used extensively in a wide range of policy analyses and evaluation, and employed to explain and evaluate the conditions of the world, to allocate resource, to determine priorities, and to set policies and programmes for poverty reduction. Poverty as defined by the Bank's estimates has provided the base for the Millennium Development Goals (Reddy & Pogge 2005: 3). Reddy & Pogge (2005: 3) have argued that, on the one hand, the World Bank's approach may have driven it to play down the magni-

tude of global poverty and assume, without sufficient evidence, that global poverty has sharply declined in recent years. On the other hand, previous experience and the implications of SAPs were neglected in the report, and the Bank policies continue to steer poor countries towards the same mix of free market macro-economic policies.

WDR 90 has influenced the policymaking process of many other actors in development across the globe and consequently influences poverty and the well-being of people in most African countries.

*The role of NGOs and CSOs in poverty reduction*

As poverty increased and government-run social programmes were reduced or vanished, governments, development agencies and donors turned to civil-society organizations (CSOs) to fill the gap. CSOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were given a greater role in service provisioning because they were seen to have the capacity to reach the poor and disenfranchised and because they are flexible, cost-effective, more participatory and less bureaucratic (Cornwall & Gaventa 2001: 13).

Such a perception was to an extent a result of what is known as the 'New Policy Agenda' in development thinking and aid transfers. The agenda promoted different means and actors – such as the private sector and NGOs – as mechanisms to attain economic growth and efficient service delivery. There was increased emphasis on the participation of CSOs in the formulation of policy to such an extent that they were seen as substitutes for the state in social-service delivery, while the state role began to subside. The main role for the state was seen in the provision of a conducive environment for the private provision of social services and a reduction in public expenditure on social services (Edwards & Hulme 1998: 6). However, the reduced role of the state in social development has not served the cause of poverty reduction. In all the recent successes in poverty alleviation, it has been the state that has played the major role and not NGOs (Mkandawire 2002: 9).

There are also essential concerns regarding NGO levels of poverty research. Edward & Hulme (1998: 9-10) indicated that although some NGOs operate on a large scale, their long-term comparative advantage in reaching the poorest is doubtful. An example given is that the largest NGOs in Bangladesh (including the Grameen Bank) are only able to 'reach less than 20% of landless households in the country'. And as almost all service-delivery NGOs rely on funding from external donors and resources re-channelled from governments, a question might arise about the extent to which NGOs are still able to hold on to their mission and goals with their increased responsiveness to external concerns (Edward & Hulme 1998: 10-14).

Over the past two decades there has been a newly established emphasis on poverty reduction within international development. The resource flow from bilateral and some multilateral agencies is increasingly linked to the poverty-reduction agenda as set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with its target of halving the number of people living on less than $1 per day by 2015. Although this goal is a noble cause, such emphasis is believed to limit the autonomy of NGOs and 'depoliticize the range of strategies' open to them to promote development (Mitlin *et al.* 2006: 25). NGOs' basic orientation towards poverty reduction configures their relationships to the social organizations that they work with by coming closer to production and credit groups and away from representative social movements. The types of activities that NGOs undertake have also become directed by the demand to seek poverty-reduction results rather than redistributive outcomes (*Ibid.*).

African governments have come under increased pressure to delegate social policy to non-government bodies. As CSOs and NGOs have assumed a greater role in social policy, the result has been 'an unintended convergence between the agenda of some of these networks interested in democracy and equality through "strengthening of civil society" and the agenda of neo-liberal institutions interested in reining in the state to facilitate the "free flow" of capital and other transnationalized resources' (Mkandawire 2002: 9). This issue has had far-reaching effects on the current role of non governmental bodies in donor or government-funded development projects and programmes in African countries.

Though there is wide recognition that NGOs play a significant role in empowering the urban poor through socio-economic development programmes or projects, Edward & Hulme (1998: 12) have questioned many of the accepted wisdoms about the role of NGOs in this regard. Citing Fowler (1994: 28), they argue that there are doubts about whether NGOs in Africa can influence political reform. Firstly, many African governments have become skilful in restraining such a prospect through the regulation and disintegration of the NGO 'movement'. Secondly, some NGOs have failed to develop effective strategies to promote democratization by sidelining politics to avoid standing against government while at the same time claiming to empower the poor. It has been argued that a different approach is needed to put pressure on systems, procedures, attitudes and behaviour within NGOs and to re-orientate them in the poor's favour. For NGOs to be effective, their relationship with funding agencies from contractor to partner needs to be changed. In addition, 'very careful management of expansion of NGOs is necessary to stop a face-off in quality' (Edward & Hulme 1998: 11).

However, there may also be a need for close cooperation between the state and non-state providers including NGOs and the coordination of roles and functions 'so as to share the burden of risk' (Amis 1999: 41). This might require strong political decisions and changes in policies to place people at the centre of decision-making.

Despite the important role that CSOs and NGOs played in the struggle for democratic change in Africa in the past, their current role is less clear within the present neo-liberal environment. NGOs and CSOs have no real choice in defining their own agendas and are increasingly finding themselves driven away from grassroots activism and closer to social-service provision. This raises a question about how CSOs and NGOs can serve and represent the interests of the poor and disenfranchised on a political level, given their increased dependence on funding sources that have their own agenda.

*Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)*

In 1999 the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced a new anti-poverty framework, or what has come to be known as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). PRSPs are assumed to ensure debt relief through the provision of concessional loans from international financial institutions under the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). To trigger such loans, poor countries are asked to prepare a PRSP highlighting poverty-reduction goals and their strategy for achieving these goals in a certain timeframe. Funds are released depending on the progress that countries make in the direction of the identified goals.

The main objective of the PRSPs is to achieve a strategy that will be 'locally generated and owned' (Klugman 2002). The preparation of PRSPs involves a wide participatory dialogue of all sectors in society and discussions about policy at both micro and macro levels. Emphasis is placed on the capacity of governments to design,

formulate and put into practice policies for poverty reduction, and on involving CSOs in this process.

Concerns have been raised regarding the extent to which PRSPs can be truly home-grown and nationally relevant strategies considering the tight control and conditions imposed by donors. A country's PRSP should draw on inputs from all sections of society and is expected to identify, in a participatory manner, the poverty-reduction outcome a country wishes to accomplish and the main public actions – policy and institutional reforms, programmes and projects – that are needed to achieve the specified goals. However, at the micro level across poor countries the issue of local ownership has become more of a slogan than reality. When preparing their PRSPs, countries tend to be influenced significantly by what would be acceptable to donors, even if it does not match reality. For the donor agencies (e.g. the World Bank and IMF), country ownership of a PRSP is conditioned by the commitment of a country to implement a strategy and process that the Bank and Fund approve. In practice, therefore, no actual consideration is given to the country's national socio-economic, historical or geographic peculiarities since it is the donors that set the terms. These issues were highlighted by an IMF/World Bank review of the PRSP experience:

> Some ... NGOs argue that PRSPs incorporate structural adjustment policies that ... have consistently failed, ... [and] this reflects the pressures on governments to conform to the policy expectations of the Bank and Fund ... Governments write into the PRSPs what they already know the donors want to hear ... [and] this will be the case as long as the Bank and the Fund must endorse the strategy as a condition for concessional assistance. (IMF/World Bank 2002: 4-5 quoted in UNCTAD 2002: 12)

The broad framework within which various key stakeholders such as government and civil society can discuss poverty reduction is the new liberal free market 'growth', which centres, among other things, on policies of privatization of the economy and the liberalization of trade. Despite its claims and the goal set, the current PRSP process is similar to SAPs in its overall emphasis on market-based pro-poor growth at the cost of the social and economic development of the more vulnerable groups within the implementing countries (UNCTAD 2002: 11-12). This is obvious in the retention of policies from the SAP era, such as user fees and the privatization of public utilities and commercial services, as well as the lack of consideration given to the social and economic impact on the poor, such as loss of access to basic health care and education services, and this at a time when poverty in Africa is continuing to increase partly as a consequence of decreased public spending.

In essence, PRSPs have become just another imposed instrument and conditionality for accessing aid from international financial institutions.

*The current situation and the challenge of globalization*

Globalization has intensified linkages between countries and reduced the line between what is 'local' and what is 'international'. What takes place within one country is increasingly linked to events in another and therefore necessitates a different way of understanding local issues. De Haan & Zoomers (2003: 9) argue that '… globalisation is no longer a process of internationalisation, but rather the characteristic of a system spanning the globe, meaning that each particular entity has to be understood within the framework of the world as a whole'.

The growing concentration of economic, political, cultural and military power is dramatically determining the present and future of countries. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall set the pace for new and powerful challenges to

the livelihoods of poor people around the globe. The United States (US) has become the world's ideological reference and the only global superpower. A wide range of national public-policy decisions by African countries are being endorsed by the US and a number of governments from the industrialized world, as well as by international financial institutions. Although African economies have always been global, some authors suggest that the intensity of the phenomenon has increased during the last two decades with a trend towards globalizing governance at both national and local levels. 'Much policy making has been intended to deliberately increase Africa's participation in the global economy' (Mkandawire 2005: 11). National governments are becoming powerless in the face of global governance and economic integration and neo-liberal deregulation (*Ibid*.). African states are being presented with the challenge of upholding internal political and social measures that ensure social cohesion and development while dealing with the pressures of globalization. Globalization has led to the undermining of their democratic governance and the erosion of national sovereignty and created states that are less committed to local interests (Mkandawire 2002: 6).

In terms of form, globalization has been primarily a neo-liberal political project since the 1980s. Anti-poverty strategies are dominated by what has come to be known as the Post-Washington Consensus paradigm. Overall, the Post-Washington Consensus contains all the main elements of the first generation of economic reforms, with no fundamental shift to overcome the limitations of the neo-liberal policy agenda. The paradigm holds the assumption that liberalization and fast and close integration into the global economy form the basis of rapid and sustained growth (UNCTAD 2002: 6-7).

The impact of globalization on poor people varies considerably, both between countries and within them, according to their initial circumstances and on the policies that governments are able to pursue. Some authors have argued for analytical connections between processes of globalization and social exclusion. According to de Haan (2000: 340), with globalization 'the diversity in prosperity and welfare between and within countries has increased. It is still an inherent part of the development process that some groups are included and others are excluded'.

Against this backdrop, poverty reduction becomes a central challenge in today's global economy and society requiring specific actions to help address these challenges. National African governments are seen to be playing a major role in implementing policies to counteract the negative impact of globalization. 'The role of government in these circumstances is to help manage the process of change to maximize economic opportunities for all, and to equip people, through education and active labour market policies, to take advantage of these opportunities' (DFID 2000: 18).

In summary globalization poses huge challenges for the livelihoods of the poor everywhere. However, the biggest challenge is the extent to which African countries are able to empower themselves to change the corporate-driven globalization process into more people-centred processes that support sustainable poverty reduction and equity.

*Conclusion on poverty in Africa*

In most African countries, the largest section of the population has to find ways of surviving in the context of exceedingly challenging constraints. These include environmental degradation, war and conflict, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and other killer diseases, the challenges of democracy, good governance and the forces of globalization. These challenges have worked together to generate extreme poverty throughout the continent. Critical reviews of development paradigms applied in Africa show that

development efforts have not lived up to their stated goals. Most of the social policies applied equated development with economic growth. Structural adjustment policies in the past and now PRSPs have steered African countries towards the same mix of free-market macro-economics. For the majority of the poor who are excluded from development, their position of extreme poverty is not altered by higher levels of economic growth. The allocation of resources has always been a political decision that is shaped by the interests of national and international policymakers. With the powerful forces of globalization in command, it is becoming crucial for African states to re-shape their economic systems and address the importance of sustainable poverty reduction.

## Poverty in Sudan

Although Sudan is endowed with rich natural resources, the country has been unsuccessful in using these in an efficient and equitable manner. Sudan's Gross National Income per capita in 2001 was estimated at $340, which is the median value for Sub-Saharan Africa (DFID 2005: 4). Comparing Sudan to other African countries, it seems to fall among the medium-level countries in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI).[2] According to the Human Development Report (2006), Sudan's per capita GDP (PPP $) was 1,949 in 2004, while it was 1,140 for Kenya and 9,945 for Botswana. Life expectancy at birth in Sudan was 56.5 years of age, while it was 47.5 for Kenya, 34.9 for Botswana and 70 in Egypt. Between 2001 and 2003, malnutrition afflicted 27% of Sudan's population compared to 31% in Kenya and 3% in Egypt.

Looking back 40 years or so, the living conditions of larger numbers of people were much better than today (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 12-13, Abusin 2003: 1). During this period, larger numbers of people were affected by poverty regardless of their mode of living and although data on poverty trends and magnitudes is lacking or at best scanty,[3] preliminary studies show that the Sudanese economy has deteriorated steadily since the 1970s. This is reflected in the decline of per capita income from $500 in the 1970s to $430 in 1980 to around $290 in 1998 (Abusin 2003: 1, Eltigani 1995: 1). Between 1986 and 1996, the proportion of the population below the poverty line increased from 52.9% to 84.6% in urban areas and from 83.1% to 93.9% in rural areas (Kossaifi 1998: 24). It is worth noting that even in periods when the country was experiencing economic growth; poverty continued to escalate. For example, between 1991 and 1997 the economy had an average annual growth rate of 8% in real terms but poverty increased from 71% to 91% between 1990 and 1996 (Kossaifi 1998: 14). In recent years Sudan has experienced rapid economic growth but the effects of this growth on poverty have unfortunately not yet been documented.

Poverty in Sudan is largely a result of structural factors that impact on the modes of ownership, production and distribution of productive assets, each with their own dynamics. Huge social, economic and political inequality exists between regions (and between groups within those regions). Such dynamics are determined by the choice of application of certain development policies. The declining forces of production in the country's agricultural, industrial and service sectors have been a direct result of poor policy choices that left large segments of the population in dire poverty (El-Batthani *et*

[2] The HDI is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living.

[3] Figures on poverty in Sudan should be treated with some caution as they may only cover some parts of the country due to the lingering conditions of war and insecurity in many regions.

*al.* 1998). Poverty conditions have been aggravated by the civil war, environmental deterioration and the low development of human capital (Eltigani 1995, Abusin 2003, El-Batthani *et al.* 1998).

Until recently, poverty was synonymous with rural conditions but the rapid urbanization of the country has given birth to a large class of urban poor. During the past few years, there have been high levels of rural-urban migration. Urban growth has been a direct result of government policies that tend to neglect the rural economy. As will be discussed in the next chapter, government policies have not only failed to improve rural problems, they have even undermined the peasant economic production system and the survival of natural resources for the majority of the Sudanese people (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 20). The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS 2006: 9) estimated the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country to be more than five million in April 2006,[4] making Sudan the country with the largest number of IDPs. Greater Khartoum alone is home to around two million displaced persons, while Darfur has around 1.8 million. The remaining 1.2 million IDPs are distributed over other urban centres around the country. Women and children constitute the majority of the displaced.

Poor urban people face far more constraints in pursuing and maintaining their livelihoods than the non-poor as the majority of them lack the necessary training and education to compete for jobs in the formal sector. The informal sector thus becomes the major provider of urban jobs with self-employment becoming increasingly the major alternative to most of the poor. The informal sector often provides low wages and high job insecurity in casual work or micro-scale self-employment (SLGP 2004: 3-5). Poorer people and IDPs in Khartoum settle illegally on government land in informal squatter settlements. These settlements are continuing to grow, often on the outskirts of the city or in unsafe and hazardous zones. The informal land and housing market is exploitative and has a negative impact on their livelihoods as will be discussed in Chapter 8. Furthermore, the state policies – such as reductions in social-service spending, increases in tariffs and privatization – have a far-reaching impact on their livelihood strategies. The provision of social services in poor areas is usually left to residents to handle (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 36). In addition, inhabitants in these areas of the city have to pay much higher costs for essential services like water than those in the main city (Abusin 2005: 35). The idea of privatizing and making a profit from such fundamental services as water clearly points to the processes of disadvantage in operation. Local urban policy and its underlying assumptions about the poor have contributed significantly to undermining the livelihoods of the urban poor through harsh regulations in the informal sector, the increasing scarcity of land for housing and the regular demolition of informal shelters (Salih 1990: 124). Many of the urban policies have discriminated against women in regarding access to employment, housing and basic services (El-Batthani 1998: 16). In addition, there are common limitations at local levels of government that are manifest in scarce resources, poor planning capacity and the weakness of institutions (Abusin 2004).

The absence of practical and effective action to assist the efforts of the poor people living in cities leaves them with little option than to devise their livelihood strategies.

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[4] Most figures on IDPs in Sudan are estimates and projections since it is not possible to monitor the exact number of IDPs as most are not living in camps and there are no systematic mechanisms to monitor population movements in the country.

*Research problem*

Poverty in Sudan was for decades viewed as largely a rural problem. However as the population has become more urban, rising deprivation in urban areas now presents a real challenge. The shift in institutions and ideologies has had a stark effect on poverty in the country as a whole and in the capital city in particular. As urban populations are more integrated into the cash and wage economies and are more dependent on food and other social-sector subsidies, changes to these have left them with few opportunities. This research investigates the options available to poor households to pursue their livelihoods and escape poverty.

*Research objectives*

The objectives of the research are to:

- contribute to the understanding of urban livelihood systems in Khartoum within the wider context of socio-economic and political processes in Sudan;
- examine and understand the underlying determinants of people's vulnerability and the constraints that influence their decision to take a certain route; and
- identify more clearly who is excluded, and the ways and means by which the processes leading to these outcomes are created and sustained (how and why certain groups are and remain excluded).

The methodology employed in this research is the sustainable livelihoods approach using participatory data collection and analysis.

*Organization of the study*

The thesis is organized into eleven chapters including this one. Chapter 2 presents background information on Sudan, outlining the country's people, its history, government and political situation, while Chapter 3 provides details of the capital city, Khartoum, its historical development, population, administration, land issues, infrastructure and employment.

Chapter 4 outlines key poverty concepts and the main approaches that are considered relevant, with Chapter 5 going on to explore the specific nature of urban livelihoods and the context-specific vulnerabilities of the urban poor. In doing so, it highlights the interrelationships between urban and rural livelihoods in order to understand the particular constraints that the urban poor face in maintaining their livelihoods.

Discussions in Chapter 6 review the sustainable livelihoods approach and highlight the points that make it relevant for the study. Towards the end of the chapter a framework for the analysis of poverty in Khartoum is formulated. Chapter 7 provides a brief comparative perspective of the study areas and analyzes the way different institutions shape the poor's opportunities to make meaningful choices. The chapter also sets the stage for the detailed analyses in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 8 provides an in-depth overview of the basic characteristics of the sample households and the availability and quality of their capitals as well as the type of livelihood activities they are able to pursue. Chapter 9 identifies the reasons that prevent poorer households from accessing important resources, hence determining the type of livelihood strategies they can pursue. Chapter 10 examines the historical pathways of 40 different households to understand how they navigated their way through various institutional environments. It highlights major shocks and crises and the way people have coped with them, as well as the limitations of their coping strategies. Finally, Chapter 11 draws some overall conclusions from the study and demonstrates that poverty is

embedded in social relations as well as in broader historical and political-economic processes at different levels.

# 2

# Sudan: The national context

This chapter provides some background context to livelihoods in Sudan, focusing on the impact of various historical, legal and political factors on the current situation of the population. The discussion looks into the policies and factors that have determined people's livelihoods through periods of significant transformation in economies and the political environment. Historically, the unequal distribution of national wealth and the monopolization of power have contributed to the outbreak and intensification of civil wars and poverty in Sudan. Land issues have always been an important element in both poverty and conflict. However, the process through which different regimes, including the present one, have tried to address the land issue has contributed further to the marginalization of a large section of the population. In addition, governments have been trying to meet the conditions of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) advocated by the international financial institutions since the 1970s. The combination of these factors has impacted on the ability of individuals to maintain an adequate livelihood.

## Geography, population and development policies

Sudan is the largest country in Africa and is located in the northeast part of the continent. It covers a total surface area of 2.5 million km², of which 42% is suitable for cattle ranging and grazing, 33% is desert, 18% is covered in forest and 7% is agricultural (IFAD 2002: 1-2). Its main topographical features are the desert in the north and the Nile, which is the longest river in the world. The country is bordered by Egypt and Libya to the north, Chad and the Central Africa Republic to the west, Zaire to the southwest, Uganda and Kenya to the south, and Ethiopia and Eritrea to the east.

Sudan's total population was estimated at 32 million in 2001, with a population growth rate of 2.6% a year (UNDAF 2002: 9). The population is mostly young; 16% are under five years of age, and 45% are under the age of 15. Such a large proportion of young people implies a high rate of dependency and thus an overloaded social-services sector (UNDAF 2002: 9). Sudan's population density varies considerably across the country: 33% are urban-based and 67% live in the rural areas. Since 1975, the urban population has grown by 75% and is predicted to grow by a further 50% by the year 2015. The capital city, Khartoum, has the largest population with 3.5 million in 1993 and 5.4 million in 2003 (UN-SUDAN 2003: 3).

Although Sudan is an oil exporter, agriculture remains the most important sector, comprising 42% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1999 and employing some 66% of the population. The major agricultural exports are cotton and gum Arabic, while sorghum (*dura*) and wheat are grown for domestic consumption. The

production of sesame seed and peanuts is mainly for domestic consumption but exports of these two crops are increasing.

Sudan has experienced a severe economic and financial crisis since the mid-1970s. Per capita income has fallen from $430 in 1980 to $300 in 1990. The country's foreign debt has risen from $308 million in 1970 to around $12 billion (including principal, interest and arrears) by the end of the 1980s. The country experienced higher inflation in 1988-1989 than at any other time and in December 1988 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that the rate of inflation was 80%, which was double the average rate of 1987-1988. Towards the end of 1989, inflation reached 100% (Eltigani 1995: 1).

Throughout the 1970s the government adopted an export-led, agro-industrial strategy that endeavoured to restructure the export sector by producing food, sugar, textiles and meat for export and to support import substitution. The assumption was that by developing Sudan's huge unexploited agricultural resources, the country would be able to provide food security for the Middle East through a combination of Arab and Western funds. The essence of these plans was the expansion of large-scale agricultural projects – a strategy that led to a massive inflow of capital, primarily from oil-rich Arab countries. Public and private-sector resources were also geared towards the expansion of modern agricultural and industrial sectors. In all of this, the traditional sector, which provided employment and income for 70% of the population, was completely ignored (Eltigani 1995: 3). Instead of reforming land-tenure laws and providing credit and other technical inputs to enhance productivity and improve the living standards of the rural population, the development of a modern agricultural sector meant the decline of the traditional sector (*Ibid*.). As a result, the rural population, which had relied on the traditional sector for their main source of income, was pushed onto poor marginal lands and their livelihoods became vulnerable to environmental hazards (Eltigani 1995: 4). In addition, the government's disregard of conservation measures as well as consecutive periods of drought further aggravated the vulnerability of traditional producers. Many of the displaced rural population migrated to the urban centres to join the growing informal sector, while others remained in their own areas and became agricultural labourers. Consequently, poverty and regional disparities started to escalate sharply and by 1985 Sudan was not able to feed its own traditional producers, let alone have any prospect of feeding the Arab World (Shazali 2003: 44).

By the end of the 1970s, stringent IMF/World Bank conditions were being applied to fund payments to Sudan from Arab countries and structural adjustment programmes became an important feature of the government's economic policies. The essential conditions of the stabilization packages in the 1980s included, among a plethora of conditions, liberalization, privatization, anti-inflationary policies and an adjustment and reduction of the exchange rate. Increased taxation and decreased access to social services have burdened the majority of the Sudanese and particularly the urban population and urban workers started to experience declining wages as a result of cuts in public spending. It has been argued that the government failed to put into effect the type of policies that should have gone along with liberalization policies in the 1980s. The results have been that the financial deficit skyrocketed, the national currency was further devaluated, and high inflation prevailed. It was estimated that the government budget deficit shot up from SP 9 billion (Sudanese pounds) in 1989 to SP 68 billion in 1993, while basic food prices rose by some 2,280% in the same period (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 26).

Between 1992 and 1998, government expenditure was slashed by more than 50% relative to GDP, leading to significant cuts in social services and infrastructure

development (World Bank 2003a: xxx). These measures reflected negatively on the well-being of the Sudanese people, particularly on those who were already poor. However, at the same time, liberalization policies created a conducive environment for local business and foreign investors in Sudan (Shazali 2003: 49). The liberalization policies pursued from the 1980s onwards were favourable to the redistribution of national wealth and national income, aiding those pursuing non-productive activities while frustrating the efforts of workers and low-salaried job employees. El-Batthani *et al.* (1998: 26-27) noted that before 1989 there were only 730 registered companies. However, from 1989 (when the present government came to power) to 1993 the number of companies in operation rose to 4,230. This massive expansion of the commercial sector was coupled with a contraction of the industrial sector, as it was functioning at only 12% of its capacity (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 27). There was a large growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises and a concomitant increase in the 'urban entrepreneur' class. At the same time, two contradictory processes were generated and the comparatively strong and older urban middle class that existed before lost ground and political influence, while a new group emerged comprising traders and businessmen (*Ibid*.) with strong links to the political and military establishment. A huge gap between these classes was thus created and it threatened to tear apart the Sudanese social fabric and damage the existing harmony between the various social groups and classes.

Since the mid-1990s, Sudan's economy has witnessed a significant improvement. From 1997 onwards, growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has averaged over 6% annually, indicating firstly an expansion in the oil sector, agriculture and, industry. Inflation was brought down from over 100% in 1996 to single digit levels by 2000. This has been accomplished by cutting public expenditure to around 11% of GDP (1999-2001). Compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, this is considered to be 'very low' (DFID 2005: 6). In an effort to restore macro-economic stability, the government introduced harsh market reforms in February 2003, which put an end to many of its interventions in the economy. These measures included eliminating fixed exchange rates for the Sudanese pound, removing all subsidies on fuel and basic food items, and privatizing state enterprises. Privatization has resulted in additional lay-offs and pay cuts for workers in privatized enterprises. Ordinary people – particularly those eking out a living in micro-scale self-employment – have seen a further deterioration in their standard of living. Their limited incomes have insured that they can hardly access essential services such as water, electricity, education, transportation, health, sanitation and housing.

## Urban service delivery

Economic and financial volatility have caused significant changes in the resources allocated to urban services. Social expenditure – especially on education and health – has declined considerably over the years, while user fees have been introduced. Within total public expenditure, urban services accounted for around 1.5% of GDP, 'much lower than many other African countries' (DFID 2005: 6). Access to and adequate provision of education, health utilities, safe water and other services for many Sudanese people is, however, very limited. The government's decentralization strategy that began in 1992 has seen the handing over of service delivery in such key areas as education, health, sanitation, local roads and agriculture to local communities but they lack adequate resources and the administrative capacity to undertake such tasks (Abusin

2003: 29). In addition, many international donor agencies, churches and NGOs have been involved in service delivery with varying coverage and capacities. There are also regional variations in access to different services. For instance, the majority of people in Blue Nile, North Kordofan, West Darfur, Red Sea and Western Kordofan are 'unable to access electricity, safe drinking water and public health facilities' (Abusin 2003: 19).

*Health*

Although health services have expanded rapidly over the past two decades, there has been a serious decline in the use of these services. Cost recovery for health care was introduced in 1992. Until then all public facilities used to offer free health care. Since the introduction of user fees, the private sector has grown significantly, particularly in the state of Khartoum. The Health Insurance System was introduced in 1994 based on a contribution of 10% from salaries and covers employees in the public and private sectors. In the absence of government support to health services, access to health care is now unaffordable for most Sudanese, particularly women (Abusin 2003: 35). For example, a consultation with a doctor in a government hospital for a common illness such as a cold can reduce the monthly income of a worker by about 7% (El Naayal 2002: 4). The *Zakat* and Welfare Funds were expected to help the poor cope with the cost but the procedures for applying for these funds are lengthy and their benefit is minimal (UNDAF 2002: 20; see also Chapter 8).

*Education*

In 1994 the responsibility for primary education was allocated to the states and localities even though the majority had no adequate resources and were unable to cover the costs. The decentralization of education in Sudan has occurred in a context of severe deficiencies in educational access, and quality. To counter reductions in financial spending by the federal government, user fees were introduced, together with contributions from local councils. Although some poor states have been allocated financial support from the national budget, this has been used for higher and secondary education instead of primary education. For example, 43.5% of total spending on education is allocated to higher education (UNDAF 2002: 25). It has been indicated that although expenditure on basic education has increased in absolute terms in recent years, it has decreased in real terms. This is explained by the general reduction in social-services expenditure that has accompanied economic liberalization policies (UNDAF 2002: 20). Adjustment policies have impacted negatively on school enrolment rates in Sudan, with primary-school enrolment dropping from 72% in 1990 to 52% in 1998 (El Naayal 2002: 4).

Overall, the imposition of user fees for primary education has been associated with lower levels of school enrolment (Abusin 2003: 6) with the result being that only better-off households are able to send their children to primary school. Although the government announced an ambitious programme in 1990 to eradicate illiteracy within five years, the rate of illiteracy has remained high. According to Human Development Report (2006, based primarily on information for northern Sudan), adult (15 years and older) illiteracy stood at about 40% in 2004. This figure is worse among females and in different regions in the south and west of the country (Abusin 2003: 19). Compared to other regions, children in northern Sudan enjoy better education than their counterparts in other regions. The status of education in southern Sudan, and other regions affected by war is worse. In these regions there are few schools, a poor curriculum, a dire shortage of teachers with little or no training and there is no education system in place.

Even as NGOs undertake emergency relief, education is often left out of their emergency response. The community therefore has to become the main provider of education by building schools, finding teachers and paying for their children's education if they can.

*Drinking water*

Drinking water supply in rural and urban areas was the responsibility of the National Rural and Urban Water corporations until 1994. The central government provided full funding for both corporations, while the Ministries of Works and Health managed the sanitation utilities. The implantation of the federal system in 1994 led to major institutional changes, including the establishment of the National Water Corporation (NWC), a federal body to oversee nationwide policies. These changes also involved the establishment of State Water Corporations (SWCs) in all 26 states. Overall responsibility for the planning and implementation of state water projects as well as the maintenance of water sources has been assigned to 'self-supporting parastatal water development companies' (UNDAF 2002: 21).

It is estimated that about 69% of people could access safe drinking water in Sudan in 2002. Disaggregating this figure along the urban-rural divide reveals disparities in access to safe water, with coverage of 78% in urban areas and 64% in rural areas (FAO 2005: Para. 7). The displacement of people due to crises in rural areas increased the demand for potable water resources in the cities. Reduced expenditure in the social sector has negatively affected the quantity and quality of water reservoirs (*haffirs*), wells and dams (Abusin 2003: 31).

## Governance and institutional structures

Since Sudan gained political independence in 1956, the country has endured instability at the hands of a series of military regimes and multiparty sectarian governments. The political leadership of national governments has failed to create a formula through which various segments of Sudanese society are able to enjoy fair political representation and an equal share of the national wealth. Many groups were left with one choice: to fight for their rights. The countryside thus gradually became a battlefield and a scene of brutal conflicts (Shazali 2003: 57).

The basic problem for various Sudanese governments has been the centralization of power. Attempts have been made over the years to hand over some centralized functions to lower level administrators. Post-colonial governments in Sudan abolished the Native Administration system and introduced new forms of regional and local governance, which have remained highly centralized. In 1971, for example, the People's Local Government Act was passed, effectively cancelling the 1951 system of local government. The act was meant to build a system of integrated modern governance at local level but it did not last long as the 1972 Regional Self-government Act (Addis Ababa Accord) was applied to the southern region. Although this temporarily ended the war between the north and the south, it produced parallel structures for legislative bodies, ministries and civil-service administration (UN 2004: 7). By issuing the two acts, native administrators were stripped of their former authority and were denied participation in the new people's councils. In addition, judicial, administrative and taxation functions were taken over by specialized officials. The principle of the *tribal* homeland was also

abolished and all unregistered government land was considered the common property of the state.

The main consequences of these policies were the removal of customary usufruct rights of traditional producers, administrative chaos and widespread insecurity across rural Sudan. Rural people continue to resolve their disputes by customary and traditional means and consider the modern court system to be foreign and irrelevant. People have also refused to cooperate with administrative officers regarding tax collection, with the result that the government has had to abandon this effort in many regions (Shazali 2003: 61). It has been argued that the decentralization efforts of the 1970s did not achieve any of the intended goals but instead dismantled several bases of law and order that governed the rural areas and continue to stifle development efforts at a national level. In addition, the powers and authority that were devolved to local administrators were insignificant: they were largely delegated inferior tasks, while the central authorities maintained tight control over the major sources of power that directly affect people's lives (Al-Assam 1983: 176).

The Regional Government Act for northern Sudan was issued in 1980, thus creating two different systems of administration in the country: one for the south (regional self-government) and one for the north (regional government). The last military coup in 1989 put the National Salvation Revolution regime in power, and executive authority was placed in the hands of a 15-member Revolutionary Command Council of National Salvation. Since then the National Islamic Front (NIF) has exercised strong control over state organs and institutions. The Salvation government attempted to restore some form of native administration to support modern local governance and issued the Native Administration and the Local Government Acts in 1991 and 1994 respectively.

The Fourth Constitutional Decree, issued in 1991, divided the country into nine states with more than 60 provinces to replace district and area councils. The nine states were further divided into 26 states in 1994. The structure of the state apparatus was expanded greatly,[5] leading to an increase in public spending and fuelling inflationary pressures. Nonetheless, the relationship between the different levels of the government grew more complex as a result of regional and local political arrangements. There was no coordination between the various municipalities except between those that share a common political leadership. In addition, corruption became a serious problem, which raises concerns regarding governance and money management (UN 2004: 15).

States are empowered to appoint a governor (*Wali*) as the head of each state; however, these[6] appointments depend largely on the person's political loyalty and commitment to the government programme, and citizens have no say regarding such appointments. The 2003 Local Government Act merged some localities into single local governments. Beneath the localities are voluntary efforts by the Popular Committees that denote the monitoring of local government services. The localities are allocated the responsibilities of service delivery of education and public health, environmental protection, neighbourhood policing and keeping order and tax collection in addition to some other tasks. As the localities lack financial resources, tough measures are put in place to collect taxes, dues and levies. In some rural areas, adjacent localities often

[5] That is 97 federal ministerial positions, 41 at federal minister titles, 26 state minister titles, and 30 persons appointed at the level of state minister. In addition, there were appointees to the executive positions in the Council of Ministers for each of the 26 states. With each state allocated 5-6 ministers, this brings the total to between 130 and 156 persons.

[6] Until early 2008 there had been no female *Wali*.

competed over common sources of potential returns, frequently turning into ethnic clashes that destroyed the harmonious relationships between groups with disastrous consequences to the community as a whole (Shazali 2003: 61).

Localities rely almost exclusively on centralized planning and financing from the national government. As a result, local governments have little say in the development process and have often been unable to maintain projects after they have been constructed (see Chapter 7). They also suffer an imbalance between the authority and tasks assigned following the 2003 Local Government Act and available resources. Most of the localities' resources are allocated to meeting salaries and wages in the first place and any remaining funds are assigned to development (Salih 2004: 6). This leads to burdensome taxes as well as poor service delivery. The locality is the tier of government that people come into contact with on a regular basis, for example, when they legalize their land for shelter, license their business; pay their property taxes or their water bill or when they send their children to school. However, one of the current stalemates in the system of local government relates to a lack of community participation (Abusin 2004: 6, Salih 2004: 16).

Despite such a gloomy background, the past three years have, however, witnessed the birth of some hope. The rally for democratization in Sudan was given a boost by the atrocities in Darfur. The signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/ SPLA) has injected new hope for a future based on principles of equity and social justice. In addition, civil society is increasingly emerging as a force that cannot be ignored and applying pressure for a better performance while the media is demanding transparency across all sectors of society.

## Historical development of land ownership

There seems to be a confusing mixture of overlapping land laws in Sudan. Modern legal systems have co-existed with legally adopted customary land laws and the colonial regime instituted legal and tenure dualism by enforcing 'settler interests and adopting minimalist approaches to land tenure and management by indigenous people' (Adams & Turner 2005: 1). Independent governments have dealt with tenure dualism by restricting it through policies of nationalization and the conversion of freehold to leasehold. 'The cumulative effect of these legal reforms has been that not only has political power been concentrated further in the central government, but control of the very land on which people live and depend has been transferred to those with access to that power' (Johnson 2001: 2).

During pre-colonial Sudan's successive indigenous Islamic kingdoms, land tenure was based on communal ownership, with the right to control land allocation vested in *tribal* chiefs. Land was given by Sultans (kings) to tribal chiefs to ensure their loyalty and support. To prove their ownerships, tribal chiefs were issued with a seal bearing *Wathiga*, which delineated their authority to manage land that falls within the territory of their tribe, known as *dar* or homelands. The *wathiga* also indicated the boundaries of the land being granted. The power and authority of the tribal chiefs over livelihood means of their communities was therefore boosted (Shazali & Ahmed 1999: 4). However, the authority of tribal chiefs tended to be highly variable, with land often being used by the Sultans (kings) to settle scores with tribal chiefs through withdrawing the right to land from one chief and giving it to another. In addition, the grant of *dar* land was never

permanent and could be affected by changes in the monarchy, in tribal power centres or in tribal structures (Shazali 2003: 4).

The first Titles to Land Ordinance in Sudan were issued in 1899, and stipulated that almost the all the land in Sudan was government property. The Land Settlement and Registration Act 1925 that followed continued to state that ownership must be proven by registration. In effect, the government is the discretionary owner of all land of Sudan. There have been several programmes of registration ever since and the process has still not been completed. The 1925 Act gave legal support to standard colonial legal principles and remains effective to this day (McAuslan 2006: 12). By law, only riverine land that was 'always farmed' was considered the private property of the cultivators. 'Unsettled' and 'uncultivated' rain lands of central, eastern and western Sudan and all lands in southern Sudan were categorized as government-owned lands. Government-owned land was divided into two categories; land subject to 'no right', and land subject to 'usufruct rights' of tribes. The category of land subject to no right was used by the government when it wanted to appropriate land for both public and private agricultural production schemes (Shazali & Ahmed 1999: 5). Leases and usufructs were primarily granted to 'northern Sudanese and foreign investors from other countries in the region'. Such power has been exercised extensively in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States (McAuslan 2006: 12).

The 1970 Land Act was issued at the dawn of the socialist military government and customary land was abolished and land was nationalized. The role of traditional leaders in local land management was also replaced by People's Councils. Since land occupied by local communities thus belongs to the state, traditional land rights are in no way a form of land ownership. In many rural communities, people have retained their allegiance to the native authorities and disregard any decisions on land made by government representatives. This has often created tensions between state representatives or new land owners and those who traditionally have authority over decisions pertaining to land. Although the native administration made a comeback in the 1980s and 1990s, this time government representatives were mostly made up of corrupt and centrally appointed personnel (Rahhal & Abdel Salam 2002: 4).

The Law of Criminal Trespass was issued in 1974 to strengthen the rights of leaseholders to their lands, further limiting the right of access by nomads and smallholding farmers. The 1990 Civil Transactions Act continued to state that all unregistered land was the property of the state and the state retained full right to allocate leases regardless of who was actually living on the land. The Act was amended to rule out the recognition of customary land rights in courts throughout county. The result has been the removal of vast areas of forests, swamps, villages and individually owned land previously owned under customary tenure by huge mechanized farms. These laws have had an unduly negative impact on the urban poor and internally displaced persons. In particular, the provision of Decree 941 of the 1990 Land Act which states that 'the government "shall immediately destroy" temporary housing that has been built on land not owned by the people inhabiting it' (Curtis Doebbler 1999: 6-7 cited in Global IDP/NRC 2005: 191).

While these laws have compromised the livelihoods of the poor, women, the landless and traditional producers, they have on the other hand catered for the interests of commercial farmers and state development schemes (D. Johnson 2001: 2). The confiscation of land took place with the intention of transforming large areas for commercial farming. This has allowed 'wealthy and powerful individuals, usually with connection to government' to gain control over large areas of land (Rahhal & Abdel Salam 2002: 2). It has been argued that subsistence farmers have experienced a steady process of

marginalization due to the rapid horizontal expansion of commercial farming. By the end of the 1970s, around 1.6 million hectares (4 million acres) had been turned into commercial farms, with the landholdings of each farm averaging 400 hectares (1,000 acres). In 1982, this number had shot up to 2.5 million hectares (6 million acres). However, the land used for traditional farming remained constant throughout this time at 3.6 million hectares (9 million acres) despite the fact that the population who depended on land for their livelihoods increased (Stephenson & DuFrane 2002: 174). The expansion of commercial farms was blamed for such problems as the reduction in area under forest cover and the reduction of land available for subsistence farming.

Traditional farmers were displaced from the land they had once depended on as a major source of their livelihood. As mechanized farms started to concentrate on cash crops for export, subsistence farmers became more reliant on purchased food and became vulnerable to food inflation as well as job availability (Stephenson & DuFrane 2002: 174). As a result and due to the scarcity of opportunity for livelihood diversification beyond this sector, some farmers were relegated to land areas which are prone to climate related risk. Others become landless labourers or move to urban areas in search of informal-sector jobs there (Eltigani 1995: 4).

Clearing large areas of land for commercial farming has also resulted in the further reduction of access for the poor to fodder, fuel wood and other forest products. For pastoralists, the result has been a clearing out of large areas of pastureland and the blocking off of their traditional corridors and access to watering points during the dry season (Stephenson & DuFrane 2002, Eltigani 1995, Shazali & Ahmed 1999). Recently, the demarcation of large tracts of land for oil exploitation has also resulted in the further forced removal of populations around the oilfields (Global IDP/NRC 2005: 22-23).

Most conflicts in Sudan are subsumed into a broader dichotomy of ethnicity and dispute over access to land resource. Conflicts over the jurisdiction of land and competition over land issue often arise between traditional producers with different tenurial rights under different systems of land tenure. In most areas, livestock owned by pastoralists far exceeded the carrying capacities of the marginal land that the pastoralists occupy. In addition, a lack or deterioration of existing water sources has negatively impacted on the capacity of the grazing areas to support herds without encroaching on the cultivated area. This has often led to conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. On the other hand, there have also been conflicts amongst pastoralists as a result of competition for a dwindling 'stock' of grazing land as agriculture has expanded (Shazali & Ahmed 1999: 8-15). The increasing availability of modern weapons has increased the intensity and violence of these disputes. In recent years, the escalating civil strife that the country has witnessed, particularly across the ethnic divide, has reconfigured herder/farmer conflict in new and more brutal ways, with the Darfur crisis being a good example.

In summary, the land-tenure regimes currently found in Sudan are a product of historical and socio-political forces whose effects vary between different regions and localities. Overall, the land law did not provide a solid platform for full tenure security for a large section of the population. The outcome has been increased conflict and social dislocation resulting from insecurity and the loss of land, rural employment, crops and lifestyle.

*Women's land rights*

The development of land tenure has been a complex process involving traditional leaders, the modern political and legal system as well as Islamic law. Women have very limited access to land under statutory, customary tenure systems and Islamic law. Customary rules have excluded women from access to land and impact negatively on their ability to make a living particularly in the rural areas. In recent years, with the increased commercialization of land and problems of land scarcity, local leaders have experienced increased pressure to protect the tribal system and have imposed greater constraints on women's access to land. In several communities around the country, the position of women with regard to customary land rights is inferior to that of men. Quite often 'women cannot own land in their own right, or engage in land transactions, or inherit land' (Rahhal & Abdel Salam 2002: 4). Furthermore, based on Islamic inheritance laws, women face a wide-ranging denial of access to land (Rahhal & Abdel Salam 2002: 8).

The introduction of land registration and the privatization of land after independence represented a setback for women, leaving them in a state of even greater insecurity and with poorer prospects of accessing land. Modern legal reforms that attempt to formalize customary tenure systems have contributed to the erosion of women's customary rights. Rahhal & Abdel Salam (2002: 4) note that 'even in the relatively few cases where women have customary rights to land, women have extreme difficulty in having their rights recognized in the registration process'. They further note that the current system 'has been used to selectively preserve practices that ensure the loss of these rights'. For most women in Sudan access to land is via a system of explicit ownership through men: as husbands and fathers (Rahhal & Abdel Salam 2002: 3). In urban areas for example, while a male government employee is entitled to land allocation in the cities, his female colleague is not, as her allocation is given to her husband. At the same time, a family's secure land rights do not necessarily translate into secure rights for a woman within that family. Not only does the husband retain full rights over any urban land owned by the family but on divorce a woman is not entitled to any of her marital home's fixed property including land (Rahhal & Abdel Salam 2002: 12).

In summary, the security of women's land rights depends on whether these rights are legally and socially recognizable and enforceable. Within these contexts, women have extreme difficulty in having their rights recognized compared to men.

## Ethnicity and class

Ethnicity has often played a crucial role in Sudan as identity axes for different groups and their mobilization. This has been complicated by the imposition of class distinctions both between and within various ethnic communities (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 14). Sudan has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. It is believed that there are around 600 ethnic groups in the country who speak more than 400 languages and dialects (UNOCHA 2006: 1). This highly complex social mosaic has evolved over two-and-half centuries and through a process of assimilation and amalgamation of the diverse cultural influxes that came with the hordes of Arab, Turkish, Egyptian and British invaders. In this process, some ethnic groups have undergone significant changes, disappeared or become indistinguishable from the dominant group, and the different political regimes have (re)defined the characteristics of the ethnic scene. The current regime, for example, has re-emphasized ethnicity and

used identity as a powerful symbol of meaning and worth. This was an important factor leading to the flare up and rapid escalation of latent ethnic tensions in different regions of the country (Deng 1995).

Most Sudanese are not Arab by racial origin; although northern and central Sudan were occupied by Arabs who entered the country through the north and eastern borders in the 13th century (Barbour 1961: 75-76). Arabs inhabited many of the most fertile lands along the Nile and mixed with the original occupants, the Nubians, imposing their language, religion and culture on them. Today, Arab culture – and the Islamic faith and the way of life that accompanies it – has been adopted by most northern Sudanese. Arabic is the main language for administrative, educational and general purposes, even among those whose mother tongue is not Arabic. Although other parts of the country have adopted a hybrid mix of Arab and indigenous culture, the influence of Arabic culture remains very strong in those areas.

Consecutive governments have, through different means, worked to deepen ethnic asymmetries vis-à-vis money and power. For example, during the Condominium era tribal leaders were appointed to the colonial administration as native administrators, thereby strengthening their traditional authority.

Traditional ethnic group leaders have always enjoyed significant power and authority within their particular communities. The official education policy during the colonial regime, for instance, encouraged the education of tribal leaders' sons in a bid to strengthen some ethnic groups and individuals within these groups (Salih 2003: 100). Many of today's elite and political leaders are the descendants of these tribal leaders.

History shows that several linguistic groups in Sudan were absorbed by accommodation and others by force. Many small groups were absorbed by larger groups, and new groups also formed. However, an important and commonly accepted characteristic of the ethnic scene in Sudan is that it always has subordinate and dominant patterns between the various ethnic groups. The history of the country has featured conflict between two types of ethnic movements: one led by the dominant groups in power, or the movements of exclusion; and the other by subordinate groups, or the movements of struggle. The movements of exclusion have historically been led by Arab groups, who used force of one type or another to establish their superiority and domination. Colonialism set up a good support base for the movements of exclusion.

British colonialism enforced the economic and political power of Sudanese Arabs, while non-Arab (African) ethnic nationalities and communities were excluded from political power and positions of potential affluence. However, even after independence some of the national governments used similar methods to enforce and even legalize ethnic stratification in society. Deng (1995: 35) argues that:

> Arabization and Islamization progressed in the North, whose racially stratified society deemed the Arab people and culture superior. The Arabs in the North were propped up by military conquest, supported by material wealth, and elevated in status by the universal image of Islam and Arab civilization. In contrast, the African Negro was considered inferior, an active or potential slave, the downtrodden of the earth.

The subordinate groups have sometimes adopted the culture and traditions of the dominant ethnic groups to survive in an environment characterized by exclusive politics, or due to the coercive power of the state. Many non-Muslims (and non-Arabs) in the North have converted to Islam because this enables them to live as 'more respectable members of the community' (Deng 1995: 35).

Many of the conflicts and wars waged in Sudan over the past 50 years have been described in terms of ethnic conflict. The most volatile conflicts are those currently being waged in southern Sudan, Darfur and eastern Sudan. Present-day ethnic conflicts have a scope and intensity that did not previously exist.

There is a clear class structure in Sudan, although it is not as developed as in industrial societies. Class structure is defined in terms of economic differentiation in the ownership of economic resources, which produces differences in earnings and incomes (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 14). These differences are more obvious in urban areas than in the rural areas. According to the World Bank (2003a: 31, citing data from the labour survey in the 1990s), inequality in the formal wage sector in Sudan is on the increase. The study indicates that the top 10% of government employees earned 51.6% of all incomes in 1990 and 64.3% in 1996, while the low- and middle-income groups have become poorer (World Bank 2003a: 31).

In summary, historical social and economic exclusion of the majority of the population and a lack of access to opportunities under both colonial and post-colonial regimes has always operated along ethnic and class lines. Some groups have, therefore, remained at the bottom of society, locked into poverty or experiencing extreme difficulty in breaking out of it.

## Gender

Sudanese culture in general and Muslim culture in particular are still basically patriarchal and traditional and have strong gender identities. Across all ethnic groups and classes, men and women are expected to follow their roles as outlined by their culture and designated to their particular gender group. As would be expected, women have almost always been disadvantaged compared to men. The magnitude of gender discrimination in Sudan can be seen in the following statistics. In 2001 the adult literacy rate in southern Sudan in areas beyond government control was estimated to be as low as 10% for women compared to 30% for men in the same area. Estimates for the rest of the country indicate a literacy rate of 42% for women compared to 60% for men. Women constitute only 26% of the total workforce in Sudan (Census 1993), and the percentage of women in top management positions is only 3.3%. Women hold 44% of technical and professional jobs in the public sector, but 87% of the economically active women in Sudan work in the traditional agro-pastoralist sector where their work is undervalued (Abusin 2003: 35).

Generally the government pays only lip service to supporting women's causes. Its actions in this regard do not challenge the fundamentals of discrimination and exclusion. On the contrary, the government opposes any serious attempts at changing the status quo. Historically, gender biases against women were institutionalized as part of the social, economic and political structure but some progress did take place in the 1960s when women obtained several important political and civil rights including 'equality before the law, equality in job opportunities, the right to vote, the right to equal pay, the right to maternity leave, the right of ownership and the right to hold public office' (WLUML 1997: 1). The position of women has, however, regressed again in the hands of the consecutive authoritarian governments that came to power after this. By 1983, there were many signs of regression as the hard-line Islamic discourse prevailed, resulting in a reversal of all previously recognized women's and human rights. Since 1989 and under the current regime, large numbers of women have been

dismissed from the civil service and institutions of civil society on the grounds of 'public interest'. Many professional women in the judiciary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been laid off or forced to take early retirement. Such discriminatory policies have continued as privatization policies deepened, with women being retrenched on the grounds of economic austerity (WLUML 1997: 7). Women in the private sector have no or very little access to paid maternity leave, and experience discrimination and dismissal related to pregnancy and motherhood. This occurs even though Sudan is party to an international agreement against the dismissal of female workers on such grounds (WLUML 1997: 6). In addition, the current conflicts have increased the plight of large numbers of Sudanese women, whether they remain in the war zones or migrate to safer zones. By losing many of the supporting structures they used to enjoy, these women have become extremely vulnerable to all forms of abuse and violence.

Women are currently under-represented in most elected and non-elected bodies in Sudan. Their role in political life and decision-making is very weak; for example, women hold only three (0.9%) of the 340 National Assembly seats. In the absence of formal political rights, women have obviously been restricted in exercising political influence and fulfilling their civic aspirations. Women also lack any viable form of political entity that could represent or facilitate their progress towards increased female representation in political life (SLGP 2004a: 2). In spite of acknowledging the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on women's rights, policies need to be put into practice that will address and reverse the entrenched patterns of exclusion and economic inequality for women and encourage political reform and gender rights. Discrimination against women continues unabated. It is generated by a number of interlocking structural factors and is shaping women's access to different resources.

## Conclusion

Although Sudan is rich in natural resources and has had five decades of political independence, successive governments have not been able to utilize these resources in an equitable manner. An important feature that characterizes governance in Sudan is the centralization of power, which allows control over the economy and political system. In addition, governance is characterizes by a lack of coordination, an absence of the rule of law and a lack of participation of stakeholders in matters that concern their own livelihoods.

Ill-conceived development policies that neglect rural development, erratic macro-economic polices and poor management of resources have set the Sudanese economy in a downward spiral. The scarcity and pressure on productive land involves sensitive ethnic, intra-ethnic and class issues and land-tenure systems have not been successful in facilitating equitable land distribution between the different groups.

Ethnicity has always played a crucial role in Sudan as identity axes for different groups and their mobilization. This has been further complicated by the imposition of class distinctions both between and among ethnic communities. The interplay of ethnicity, class and gender is contributing to the social and economic exclusion of large sections of the population and resultant poverty and conflict.

# 3

# Greater Khartoum

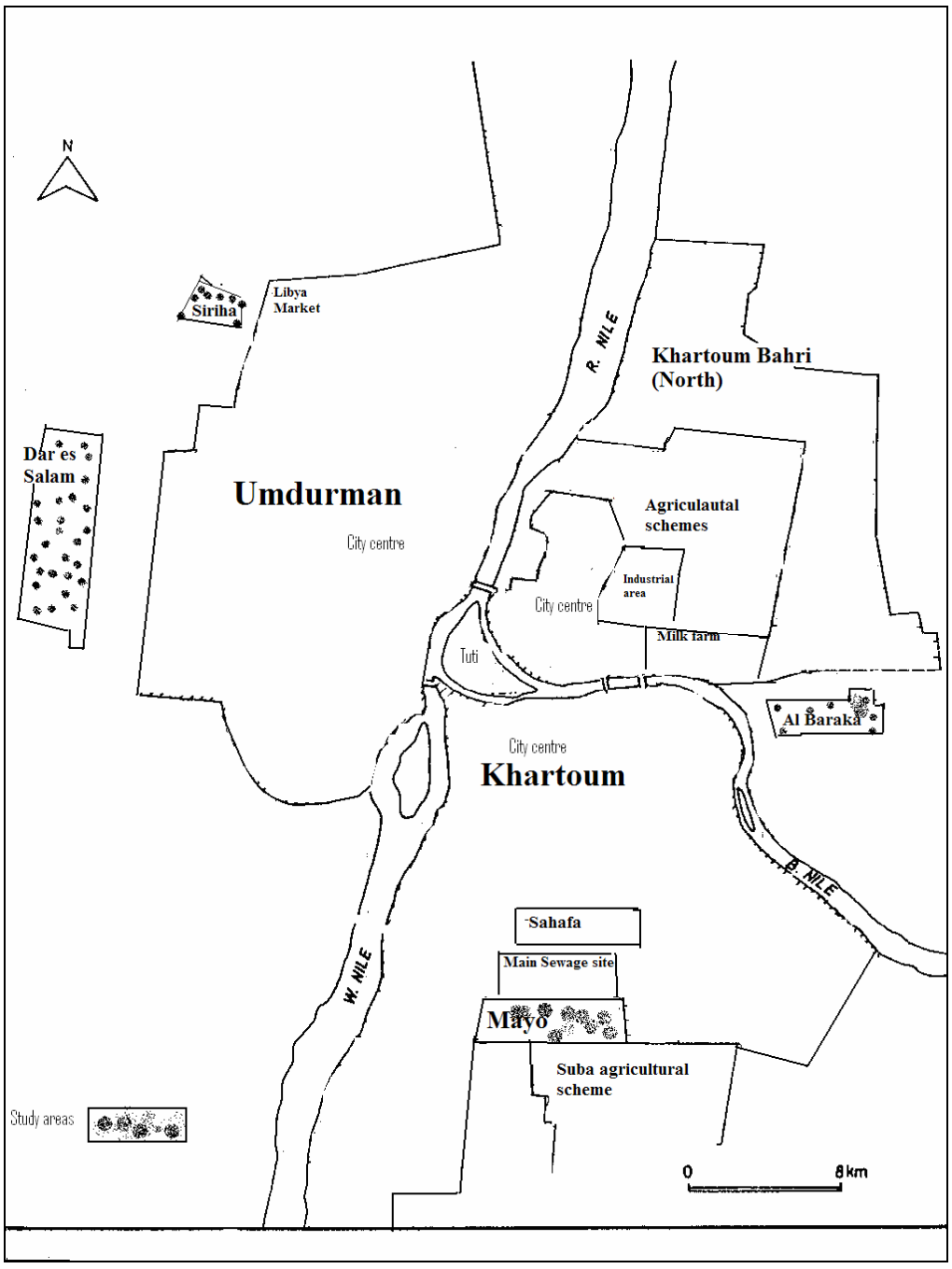
Greater Khartoum is the largest city in Sudan, the country's main industrial and commercial centre and a melting pot for most ethnic groups. Over the past three decades, the city has expanded to incorporate the older suburbs and satellite towns and several villages as well as extensive agricultural land. Migration has played a significant role in the growth of the State of Khartoum. And recently there has been an explosive population growth as a result of civil strife and the collapse of the peasant farming economy. This growth has placed huge strains on the city's traditional infrastructure and service delivery system. Along with the process of urbanization, poverty is becoming more apparent in the city. This chapter examines these issues and highlights the local context for an analysis of urban poverty.

## Demographic and geographical information

Greater Khartoum is the centre of the national administration, with large bureaucracies in the public sector and expanding private-sector offices, trade and commerce and small-scale industries and services. Greater Khartoum covers a total area of 2.5 million km², between 5º26′ and 15º45′ N and longitudes 32º25′ and 32º40′ E, at an altitude of 405.6 m above sea level. It falls in the arid region of Central Sudan and its topography consists of a semi-delta area that is characterized by a combination of sandy textured fertile and muddy soil. The terrain is mostly flat or gently sloping, broken by isolated rocky hills and low-lying sand dunes. This flat landscape is also dissected by the floors and terraces of the Nile valleys and the dry beds of seasonal rivers (*wadis*), (see Map 1). With its relatively higher gradient, the Blue Nile has more elevated terraces than the White Nile. Tuti Island lies in the middle of Greater Khartoum and was formed from depositional silt, clay and sand. The Niles are the major hydrological system, with several local drainage systems of *wadis* (dry riverbeds) or the seasonal *khor* which normally flows for short periods several times a year. These systems are more common on the western side of the Nile than to the east (El Tayeb 2003: 4). *Khor* and *wadi* have little value as resources in their own right and their main value lies in sustaining the shallow aquifer system. The climate is characterized by a short rainy season from July to September, a short winter from January to March and a long summer season.

Greater Khartoum is made up of three towns: Khartoum, Khartoum North (Bahri) and Omdurman. The three lie in a triangle and are divided by the White and Blue Niles. The city of Khartoum is the capital city of Sudan, situated just south of the confluence of the Blue Nile and the White Nile. The city was founded in 1821 as an Egyptian army

*Map 3.1* Greater Khartoum




Source: Adapted from the Ministry of Housing, 2007

camp and then developed as a trade centre. It is the main administrative and religious centre of Sudan and its second largest city. The city of Omdurman, situated on the western banks of the Nile, is the national centre of commerce and the largest city in Sudan. Between 1885 and 1898 (Mahdist era) Omdurman became the capital and the major economic and political centre but from 1898 to 1956, the British and Egyptian (Condominium) rule re- instated Khartoum as the capital and the main trade and cultural

centre (El Tayeb 2003: 2). On the other side of the Nile, Khartoum North (Bahri) grew up as an important industrial and railway centre. The building of the Blue Nile Bridge in 1909 and the White Nile Bridge in 1928 linked the three cities to form Greater Khartoum. It has grown bigger since then and, in addition to the three main cities, it has incorporated several other rural centres in what is known administratively as the State of Khartoum.

Greater Khartoum is usually referred to as 'Khartoum' and administratively it falls within the State of Khartoum. According to a 2003 law, the State of Khartoum is divided into seven localities: Khartoum, Khartoum Bahri, Omdurman, Jebel Awlia, Sharag el Neal, Karrarrie and Umm Bada. A commissioner heads each of the localities and the city of Khartoum is the capital of all the localities and is headed by the governor (*Wali*) and a cabinet.

## Population and urbanization

Greater Khartoum represents a melting pot for the country's ethnic groups and has a decidedly cosmopolitan flavour. The majority of the inhabitants have come from other parts of the country, bringing with them a mixture of dialects of Arabic and other languages, as well as their traditional foods and customs. The main ethnic groups are the Al Abdallab, Jumuaiyia and Batahin, all of which are Arabized ethnic groups. According to the 1993 population census, Khartoum State had a population of 3,512,000 that was estimated to reach 5,352,000 in 2003 (UN-SUDAN 2003: 3). A more recent estimate by the European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro Arab-Cooperation (MEDEA, May 2004) indicates that Greater Khartoum has a population of around 6-7 million people. Greater Khartoum has an annual growth rate of about 4%, compared to the national average of about 2.6% per year (World Bank 2003a: 34). Although Greater Khartoum's population has increased steadily since the colonial era, most of its growth has occurred in the last two decades. Comparing data from population censuses and estimates for 2002, El Tayeb (2003: 1) indicates that between 1955 and 1993 the population of Khartoum increased sevenfold and was predicted to increase twelve-fold by 2002, compared to 1955.

Migration has played a very significant role in Khartoum's urban agglomeration. Historically the city was a haven attracting rural dwellers looking for a stake in industrialization, employment, better education, health services and modern life. However, in recent decades population growth has been a result of an increased influx of people pushed out of their home areas by civil strife, the collapse of the peasant farming economy and successive waves of drought and desertification (Abusin 2005: 1). In addition, between the early 1970s and the late 1990s, thousands of refugees from other African nations (especially Chad, Ethiopia and Uganda) took refuge in Khartoum. The vast majority of the immigrants were relocating from agro-pastoral rural zones and lacked the necessary skills for the urban context, for example having low rates of literacy. In addition, socio-cultural considerations played a significant role in restricting and hindering their integration into the urban economy (Abusin 2005: 6).

As the population of Khartoum increases, the boundaries are extending too. The same number of people now requires far more land than they used to in 1956. The population density of Khartoum has dropped by more than 50% from 14,815 people/km$^2$ in 1955 to 6,013 people/km$^2$ in 1998 (El Tayeb 2003: 4). The city has expanded horizontally, and to a lesser extent, vertically. The vertical expansion is more

apparent in the new neighbourhoods and marked by the arrival of apartment buildings for the affluent and upwardly mobile. Office buildings, shopping malls and commercial parks are cropping up on what once were tracts of farmland, green space and forests.

The horizontal expansion was set into motion in 1956 but has been accentuated particularly over the last 30 years. Between 1955 and 1998 the area covered by the three cities has expanded 48 times. For example, between 1970 and 1980 the average annual rate of area increase hit 66.1% compared to 5.2% between 1955 and 1970. However, the three cities demonstrate different patterns of expansion with the city of Khartoum now covering 43% of the total area of Greater Khartoum (El Tayeb 2003: 2-3).

Older parts of the city including the central city and the adjacent densely settled area have also grown. Concomitantly, classic slums are forming spontaneously on the edge of the urban spatial explosion on less-desirable land without proper urban planning or the conveniences of modern life. These areas are less stable and are prone to change as they are replaced with commercial up-market developments (Abusin 2004). The spatial expansion of the city took place through annexing adjacent townships and rural areas to the three cities. Many once-rural areas have been absorbed into the thriving city and now demonstrate the typical signs of urban zones (infrastructure mode of architecture etc.); others have kept their basic rural features while benefiting from the new connections to the city. There are also hybrid urban rural zones that may not fit the traditional classifications of urban or rural space. However, the extension of (some) urban infrastructure onto these zones has provided the population with the opportunity to benefit from services in the main city. The recent intensification of the urban land market, especially in some of the outer-ring suburban neighbourhoods, has had far-reaching implications for the poor in these zones who have once more been pushed further out onto more marginal land. The city government also faces increased challenges in providing for these new areas because the current size and scope of the city is far beyond what was planned in the past and the demand for municipal services and infrastructure development has far outpaced the government's provision of them. A major problem in the expansion process in Greater Khartoum is the arrival of unplanned settlements with inadequate services and infrastructure as well as problematic sanitation (Abusin 2003: 36-37). An important challenge for developments is how to address these issues and make poor zones more inhabitable.

## Poverty in Khartoum

Very few studies have examined poverty in Khartoum, Most of the studies that have been undertaken were intended to provide baseline information data on the situation of residents in poor urban settlements and identify their specific needs (IRC & WID 2001, PDS 2000, Abusin 2002, UN-SUDAN 2003). Two studies have emerged as being a very useful contribution to understanding poverty in Khartoum: Abusin (2005) and El-Batthani *et al*. (1998). They both investigated the rapid growth of concentrated areas of poverty and the deterioration of social conditions since the 1970s and showed that the 'extremely poor' in Greater Khartoum are concentrated in the notorious slums or *Ashwaees* as well as in those neighbourhoods that recently graduated from *Ashwaees* to formal settlements (Abusin 2004, 2005, El-Batthani *et al.* 1998). They argue that while 'extreme poverty' is concentrated in those areas, 'poverty' is indeed widespread in every community in the city, and the poor are very diverse and heterogeneous.

Both studies see poverty in Khartoum not only through the spatial cleavages between people within different residential areas but essentially as a product of political marginalization and exclusion of the urban population (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 7, Abusin 2005: 1-2). They have linked poverty directly to the processes by which resources are allocated and these processes have afforded some access to the formal sector (land and activities), while confining others to the informal. For both authors, the basic characteristics that accompany being poor in Khartoum are identified as follows: having a low-paid job or being unemployed, a lack of tenure security, bad housing conditions, limited and poor-quality water and food, and limited access to education and health facilities.

Using participatory methods, El-Batthani *et al.* (1998) identified the combined effect of underlying-structural causes of urban poverty and extreme poverty to be historical underdevelopment, imbalances and crisis; growing inequalities and differentiation; and prolonged conflict and war. Their analysis comes basically from a neo-Marxist perspective, meaning that the direct causes of poverty in Khartoum are believed to be created by the de-coupling between industry and urban growth, and proletarianization without the transformation of the peasantry. However, in the context of Sudan's structural adjustment, civil strife, a shrinking urban labour market and a constant flow of migration and displacement are added to the 'traditional' process. All of these factors are seen to have resulted in four distinct categories of urban poor with different experience and strategies. These include first of all the **'**traditional urban poor' who are found among unemployed, informal-sector workers and unskilled labourers; to which are added less traditional categories such as 'displaced persons' who took refuge in Khartoum from the mid-1980s onwards; 'new urban poor' or those former government officials who, due to economic liberalization and adjustment policies, were pushed into poverty. The last new category comprises poor urban women, particularly those heading households (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 22-23). The basic criteria that differentiate these categories from each other are their survival strategies and, more particularly, the way they manage their economic and social resources, which have been affected by government policies The main argument is that all these categories were not able 'to manage during time of crisis, conflict and transition from state-led to market-oriented economy' (*Ibid.*).

Amid extreme restriction of freedom of expression, the study provides a courageous account of the way government policies have contributed to poverty creation by promoting certain production and distribution patterns. However, the study has at least two drawbacks. The first relates to the grouping of the urban poor into four distinct categories. Although these categories are broad enough to include a significant proportion of the urban poor, they exclude some groups who became poor or extremely poor during the same period, such as all the small-business owners and some larger business owners, who became poor as a result of the disintegration of the industrial sector. The second drawback is that the study concentrates on poverty as a discrete phenomenon but did not cater for its continuous dimensions. Such a perspective focuses more on a person's position and inherent vulnerability and how this leads to material deprivation.

On the other hand, Abusin (2005) looked at the declining government role in urban poor communities and the expansion of the role of non-state providers in Khartoum. He argues that poor governance and the state's inability to provide public goods, such as infrastructure and basic services, have undermined people's livelihood strategies, thus

exacerbating negative demographic and socio-economic outcomes. This has been made worse because poverty has led to the erosion of familial and traditional networks of support among the poor. He further points out that NGO interventions have contributed significantly to the survival of the urban poor. Abusin (2005: 3-46), compares poverty across sub-groups and time, highlighting factors such as whether people have access to state or NGO-subsidized services, the costs of goods within their community, their membership in marginalized groups as determined by relations of power at different levels and their status within their household with regard to power and responsibility, as crucial determinants of poverty or well-being. His notion of poverty is, therefore, more likely to include all those who are actually poor. Such analysis is believed to have succeeded in generating a more dynamic understanding of poverty in the city.

This present study will conceptualize poverty as a complex and multi-dimensional phenomena which results from pervasive processes, attitudes and institutionalized power structures that lead to the exclusion of some groups. It will be argued that breaking this cycle depends on the poor themselves, according to their various identities. Given their personal, social and environmental constraints, empowerment becomes an important tool in enabling the poor to overcome their exclusion.

## The economy of Khartoum

The sectors contributing to Khartoum's economic growth are agriculture, large-, medium- and small-scale industries and services that include trade and commerce, transport, telecommunications, management and consultancy services, education, etc. Government policies have often been tainted with urban bias, i.e. the placement and availability in urban areas of public services including infrastructure (transport, electricity, water and sanitation, communications and others), military bases and services which build human capital, manufacturing industries and urban-based activities. For example, Greater Khartoum's share in the total national economy in 1990 was as follows: '73% of industries; 75% of the industrial labour force; 67% of electrical power from the national grid; 85% of commercial enterprises; 80% of banking services; 85% of industrial bank loans; 71% of real-estate bank loans; 65% of currency exchanges; 70% of tax payers; 81% of the taxes collected; 70% of hospitals and health centres; 65% of doctors; and 80% of nurses' (Ahmed 1997: 6 , quoted in El Tayeb 2003: 5-6).

With the discovery of oil and its eventual exploitation in 1999, Sudan entered the world of oil-exporting countries. Oil exports started to bring some positive and useful linkages to Khartoum's economy; as is clearly seen in the improvement in the area's infrastructure, particularly roads. Oil-related investment inflows into Sudan have increased significantly since 1996, primarily due to developments in the oil industry, while direct investments increased in 1998 with the start of the oil pipeline. A greater share of these investments is concentrated in the urban areas, with the State of Khartoum having the strongest growth of all the other states (World Bank 2003: 60-61). Recently, Khartoum has begun to manifest the typical signs of a boom, such as real-estate development and traffic jams, which were not seen in the past (World Bank 2003: 20).

*Agriculture*

In the State of Khartoum, agriculture has continued to be one of the main activities for people living in rural localities. It is also practised around the three main cities, on the Nile terraces and islands. There is a large amount of land in and around the State of Khartoum where food can be or is being grown. It has been suggested that 97.8% of the State is suitable for cultivation; although the urban and peri-urban agricultural zones have been contracting considerably and experiencing significant land-use change (El Tayeb 2003: 6). This is basically because of population growth, the expansion of city boundaries; housing demands outprice farms and the expansion of commercial lands that are putting increased pressure on agricultural lands. Most agriculture now relies on intensive rotation due to limited land (UN-SUDAN 2003: 7).

Agriculture in the State of Khartoum is characterized by large commercial estate farms, small-scale farming irrigated by pumps and poorly managed smallholders occupying more marginal areas of inherently lower productivity. Agricultural schemes produce staple food crops; vegetables and fruit and some traditional cash crops. Lack of access to land and water has made small-scale enterprises less than viable and increased competition for scarce water resource is leading to a reduction in the water supply for small-scale irrigated subsistence crops. Large irrigated agricultural schemes account for the lion's share of water withdrawals an because of poor rainfall and low domestic water supplies, the growing season is usually brief and crops frequently fail (SLGP 2005: 98). The increasing pressure on water resources may jeopardize the sustainability of the environment as a result of the depletion of groundwater reserves, salinization and water-logging.

Small farmers' agricultural activities are being hindered by the limited size of land holdings, low rates of productivity and an inability to improve incomes. Access and control over land for agriculture in the State of Khartoum are regulated through several different systems and arrangements that can be formal or informal, statutory or customary, and restrictive or open. The majority of smallholder farmers' access to land is mediated by rent, sharecropping (m*usharaka*), inheritance and purchasing (Abusin, 2004: 56). The first two – rent and sharecropping – lack the long-term security that comes with secure access to land. This makes it difficult for farmers to invest in improvements that only produce returns over many years. In addition, the competing uses of land have become a source of continuous conflict amongst the various land users. These include conflicts among farmers; between farmers and animal herders and pastoralists, and between farmers and fishermen in some areas of the state. In addition, scarce water resources have provided another source of conflict such as those taking place in Abu-Delaig and El-Esaialat (SLGP 2005: 98). The present and future of smallholder farmers as well as farm workers are irreversibly bound up with these problems being resolved.

Farm workers and their working conditions are largely determined by the production system at work. Farm workers generate low individual earnings from farm work and they are thus unable to keep pace with inflation, and it is impossible to afford the basic necessities of housing, food, health care and education for their children. One important reason for the decline in wages is the large surplus of labour in the farming sector. Although there are no statistics available on the conditions of farm workers, preliminary studies (PDS 2000, Abusin 2002) have shown that farm workers in Khartoum are among the extreme poor there. Commercial farm workers are mostly drawn from the IDPs and a large proportion of them are women (UN-SUDAN 2003: 5, PDS 2000: 27).

Agricultural livestock production includes beef, sheep, dairy and poultry farming. Khartoum has the largest concentration of large-scale companies with a national distribution system for its poultry products. Being a labour-intensive industry, livestock production provides jobs for a significant number of people, has benefits for the poor as it provides a way of diversifying their livelihoods and is a source of locally produced food for people living nearby. Within the city's poor neighbourhoods, goats are the main livestock reared and utilize city and household waste. However, raising animals within the city has some externalities which require addressing such as environmental contamination. The major problems facing livestock rearing are a lack of pastures, water and medical facilities, the high taxes imposed by the locality and the sector's weak purchasing power (Abusin 2005: 54, SLGP 2005: 99).

*Manufacturing industries*

The greatest concentration of manufacturing and service industries in Sudan is to be fund in the Khartoum area. This is partly due to the advantages offered by roads, the Nile port and Khartoum's international airport on the one hand and the weak infra-structure of the rest of the country on the other. Several industrial sites were set up in the Khartoum area including an oil refinery and units processing cement, tyres, food and other more durable consumer goods. Overall, Khartoum contributes 73% of industries and 75% of industrial employment in Sudan (El Tayeb 2003: 5). However, the share of industry in the country's GDP as a whole was estimated at only 18.5% in 2002. The concentration of manufacturing industries in Khartoum, coupled with the consistent decline in traditional agriculture, has given rise to rapid rural migration towards the few places that offer industrial employment. However, 'the industrial establishments could not match the increasing number of job seekers who are mostly unskilled wage earners' (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 17).

Many industries have been in decline since the late 1970s. The industrial sector has suffered a great deal due to lack of power and spare parts and bad infrastructure. However, the hardest blow the sector has received has been regarding national and global policy issues. As both public and private manufacturing industry depend for their full operation on the importation of essential raw materials, spare parts and machinery, the drastic devaluation of the currency has raised production costs dramatically. Even industries that were able to source some of their inputs locally have found that these are now extremely expensive. Industries such as edible oil that use local materials are experiencing increasing difficulties in competing on the export market and consumer purchasing power is declining considerably. On the other hand, industries that are geared towards the demands of the affluent sections of the population (i.e. air coolers, fridges, car assemblies etc.) are better equipped to face competition (Shazali 2003: 42).

The imposition of excessive taxes on local industry has escalated their costs of production and impacted on the ability of local industry to compete with imports. The specific case of some locally produced materials such as iron nuts,[7] and grinding-stone for flourmill can are examples. Custom duties on a locally produced flourmill grinding-stone were Ls18,000 ($7.20), but custom duties on imported ones cost only Ls 5,000 ($2). A locally produced iron nut requires a payment of Ls800 ($0.32) in duties, while

[7] A piece of metal, screwed on the end of a bolt as a fastening, used in numerous small industries. It has a particular importance for poor households as it is used to attach and fix roofs, doors, windows etc.

that on an imported one costs Ls443 ($0.18) (El Naayal 2002: 4). Many imports were able to avoid legal obligations by fraudulent corruption in the Customs service or other illegal means with the resultant manipulation of the market by those selling imports below the cost of locally produced goods (Shazali 2003: 42).

As a consequence, average capacity utilization indicates a marked deterioration. A World Bank study (2003a: 20) noted that 'around 85 percent of all factories in Khartoum's main industrial area (Khartoum North) were operating below full capacity in 1998'. Many firms had to close down, while others have reduced their working day.

The manufacturing industry has not been accorded the prominence it deserves, at the policy or facilitation level and therefore has had little impact on the economy or the employment situation in Khartoum.

*Employment*

About 81% of the working population of the State of Khartoum are employed in the economic and service sector (UN-SUDAN 2003: 7). The percentage of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (excluding the nomadic and IDP population) was 9.3% while for males it was 20.9% (UN-SUDAN 2003: 8). An increasing number of women are now employed in the formal sector but formal wage employment in both the public and private sectors has offered relatively limited opportunities for women. Women are found mainly in the lower echelons of the formal sector. In addition they face discriminatory laws and practices in the labour force that hinder their participation and work-related benefits (Abusin 2004: 21, El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 16). The formal sector remains an important sector for employment and it provides a large share of Khartoum's formal employment. However, civil servants' earnings are very low (World Bank 2003a: 34, Fergany 1998: 11). The civil service is organized into scales and grades. Each grade is assigned a salary scale, with incremental steps leading from a minimum salary to the maximum possible in that grade. The current salary structure is based on 17 grades, with the highest being G1 and the lowest permanent grade position being G14. Based on the pay scales that were in effect in March 2002, public employees at a G1 grade receive a basic salary and allowances equivalent to $61 per month. The lowest permanent grade position of G14 receives an equivalent amount of $25 (World Bank 2003a: 76). Real wages and salaries continued to fall significantly during the 1990s and beyond, compared to previous decades. The real value of the pensions of large numbers of public-sector employees who are retired or have been laid off has eroded significantly over the same period (World Bank 2003a: 34). The continuous escalation of the cost of living since the early 1970s was documented by Fergany (1998: 11) who observed that:

> […] starting at the beginning of the 1970s, the cost of living in Greater Khartoum, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to 10 multiples in 1983, to 100 times in 1989, to 1,000 times in 1993, to a staggering 5,000 times in 1995, and to an astounding 11,263 times by 1996. Thus, the purchasing power of the national currency was reduced, exponentially, to almost one twelve thousandth of its value over a quarter century. In other words, twelve thousand Sudanese Pounds would be needed in 1996 to exercise the same command over commodities in the domestic economy as one Pound did in the early 1970s! Over the same quarter century, the exchange rate of the Sudan Pound against the US dollar plummeted by more than 5,000 times.

More than three decades of inflation have eroded the minimum wage to its lowest level ever. While real wages have continuously declined, health, energy and educational costs have skyrocketed. Urban workers have had to deal with a phenomenal escalating cost of living alongside declining incomes and no family in Khartoum was able to

survive on the income derived from wages in the formal sector alone. For example, three decades ago, a university graduate joining the civil service made over $100 per month at a time when the purchasing power of the local currency was significantly higher. However, by 2002 this had shrunk to the equivalent of $31. Such an amount is not enough even to pay a typical monthly electricity bill for an average urban family home (World Bank 2003a: 34). Under the macro-economic stabilization programmes applied, unemployment also rose rapidly. A wave of public-sector retrenchments took place in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s bringing about a downturn in urban jobs. Some of the recent trends that have accompanied labour-market developments in Khartoum include a decline in rewarding jobs for low-skilled workers notably in manufacturing and in the public sector as well as an increase in open unemployment and part-time and contract employees.

Informal-sector growth in Khartoum has been seen as a logical consequence of the country's current economic downturn. Information on the size and employment structure in the informal sector is hard to obtain, but estimates suggest that the sector accounts for around 45% of the urban labour force. Khartoum alone, hosts more than half of the urban informal sector in Sudan (El-Batthani *et al.* 1998: 66).

Work in the informal sector usually involves high job insecurity, often in micro-scale self-employment or casual activities. Due to insufficient income, workers are often involved in multiple activities and jobs.

Sudan's massive urbanization took place in a context of declining employment opportunities in the formal sector and agriculture jobs and at a time when no industrial jobs emerged to fill the gap. In addition, the cost of living for families in Khartoum is continuing to rise substantially, tightening conditions for workers whose incomes on average are only a fraction of what they require for living costs.

## Provision of urban services

The explosive sprawl Khartoum is experiencing is placing huge strains on the city's traditional infrastructure and service delivery system. Several actors are involved in the provision of urban services. An increasing number of non-state providers across the different sectors have emerged in response to the inability of government services to effectively meet the population's needs. On the other hand, there are also private providers who are emerging as a response to the ability of households to pay for better services especially in education and health. Non-state actors includes a wide range of NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), religious organizations, private companies, small-scale informal providers and individual service providers. NGOs and the private sector are the predominant non-state providers, especially in primary-school education health and water supplies to poor neighbourhoods (Abusin 2004). In poor neighbourhoods, communities are taking a lead role in service provision but access to services varies considerably between localities as well as among different neighbourhoods in the state. Most poor neighbourhoods and informal settlements lack access to public services or have access to services of lower quality (Abusin 2004, SLGP 2005). User fees are normally required and these vary between different providers. A key problem with service provision in Khartoum is that the poor are the least likely to benefit from any public services because of the cost imposed by different providers, placing their service beyond the reach of many (Abusin 2003: 51-54).

*Roads and transport*

The three main cities that form Greater Khartoum are connected by tarmac roads. Khartoum is also connected to all the country's major cities by paved highways running between Khartoum, Port Sudan, Atbara, Dongola, Medani and Gedarif. River navigation and air carriers also extend from Khartoum to Joba in the south and Wadi Halfa in the north. A railway network also connects Khartoum with various cities. Types of typical transportation in Khartoum include buses and mini buses, taxis and *rakshat* (rickshaws).

The most visible aspect of the road network within Khartoum is that it is inadequate. Obviously, the city's unprecedented and explosive growth has created great challenges for the authorities to keep up with. As the population has grown, the city's roads have become choked with vehicles of all kinds causing huge pressure on the system and increasing numbers of bottlenecks. The major roads have not been built to the planned width and have many bottleneck points and constraints due to the large number of intersections with major and minor roads. The quality of roads between and within the different areas in the state varies considerably. Within Greater Khartoum, the state of the roads that lead to poor neighbourhoods is appalling. Some roads in poor neighbourhoods are inaccessible except on foot. Some of the rural localities lie far away from the centre of the city, such as *Sharga Al neel.* The lack of adequate roads and transport services isolate these localities from each other and from the city where most services exist (SLGP 2005: 123).

*Water supply*

The main water sources for the State of Khartoum are underground water sources, the White Nile and the Blue Nile. The level of public water and sewerage coverage by the citywide networks is low. Around 40% of the population of the State of Khartoum lack any formal, household-based public provision of drinking water (Abusin 2003: 34). There are huge variations in terms of access between rural and urban localities within the State and among neighbourhoods within Khartoum. There is also variation in the quality of the water supplied for domestic consumption (World Bank 2003a: 136) and, in addition, there are important aviations in terms of the cost of water for different classes. 'The displaced and poor communities in peri-urban Khartoum pay as much as 40% of their income for poor quality and small quantities of water, while those who are better off often have plentiful supplies of cheap water' (UNDAF 2002: 19).

Poor neighbourhoods and rural localities have little or no access to safe water. For most of them, water sources are typically small-scale and serve a few hundred people and their livestock. These sources consist of unprotected shallow wells or groundwater that is pumped from wells drilled into aquifers. Some water systems consist of a water source, some type of tank for storage, and a system of pipes for distribution. Others have only the source where people collect water directly. The sources can be located anywhere from 0.5 to 5 km away from the people's dwellings. Many surface sources and shallow-water aquifers fail to provide sufficient water for farms and communities. Irrigation requires large volumes of good-quality water that cannot be provided by groundwater. Some sources dry up at the end of the dry season forcing people, particularly those with livestock, to move to other places outside their localities in search of water (SLGP 2005: 67). Frequent problems with the system affect the users and it would appear that there is a deplorable failure of hand pumps due to inadequate provisions for maintenance. Although community management has become the leading

concept for implementing water-supply projects in most rural localities and poor neighbourhoods, such a concept faces several problems in sustaining services in the long term. Several communities cannot maintain their systems alone and require some form of external assistance. In addition, he cost-sharing arrangements of some water programme (based on community contribution) have not worked satisfactorily due to the poverty of the local people (SLGP 2005: 68).

*Primary education*

A large number of schools operate in the State of Khartoum compared to other states. However, not all the communities or individuals have equal access to them. In recent years, the State of Khartoum has grown both in terms of the numbers of schools and the number of pupils enrolled. The state has 1,528 primary schools and 106,500 pupils were enrolled in the 2000/2001 academic year. Girls represented 47.6% out of this number and the literacy rate for those over 15 years of age was 74.9% (UN-SUDAN 2003: 8). In other states, gender disparity in primary education is much higher, for example it was 39.4 for girls and 49.8 for boys in Blue Nile State (Abusin 2003: 19). Enrolment rates within the State of Khartoum and between the State of Khartoum and other states display considerable variation. The State of Khartoum has the highest enrolment rate for primary education compared to other states. For example 87% of all children aged between 6 and 13 in the State of Khartoum were enrolled in school in 2003. This rate is extremely high compared to only 8% in B. El Ghazal State (UNC-LDC 2003: 28). Although there is insufficient data on enrolment rates for children in poor neighbourhoods or for internally displaced children, it was believed that the vast majority of school-aged children of IDPs are not enrolled in school. A recent study shows that 48% of school-aged children in Khartoum camps were not enrolled in primary school in 2006 (IDMC 2006: 124).

The central government only finances teachers' salaries and educational administrators. Abusin (2003: 42) indicates that 90% of the expenditures of a locality in the State of Khartoum are allocated to teachers' salaries. The budget allocated to education by the government is extremely low and it is the parents who usually pick up the slack. All of a school's on-site costs (building construction, maintenance, furniture, textbooks and supplies) are covered by parental contributions in the form of school fees or other contributions. This is a significant factor in restricting poor children's access to primary education.

Most public schools, particularly in poor neighbourhoods, lack water, sufficient numbers of toilets and desks, and recreational facilities. Many students sit on the ground unless they bring their own chairs (World Bank 2003a: 130) and teachers are badly paid, often under-qualified or/and over burdened with a much larger number of students than they should be catering for. In some rural localities, schools are located a long way from where pupils actually live, thus discouraging households from sending their children to school, particularly girls. Many schools in these communities are over-crowded, have inadequate facilities, inadequate classrooms in terms of size and capacity, and have dilapidated buildings, forcing pupils to have their lessons under trees in some cases. In addition, they have problems adequately staffing classrooms with qualified teachers (SLGP 2005: 1).

Undue emphasis is placed on market mechanisms relying on across-the-board ser-fees for primary education. The major problem that poorer people face relates to the affordability of education as well as its quality.

*Health*

The State of Khartoum has the largest share of public health facilities and staff with far more medical specialists and technicians than any other state (WHO 2004: 29). There is a network of hospitals, health centres and dispensaries, thousands of staff and extensive training centres. Khartoum State has 35 general practitioners per 100,000 people, which is high compared with South Kurdofan State that has only 1.7 general practitioners per 100,000 people (World Bank 2003a: 118).

However, such facilities have had only a modest impact on the health of the vast majority of Khartoum's poorer population. Abusin (2004: 36-38) has noted the adequate availability of health facilities including mother-and-child centres in the city's poor neighbourhoods but a large section of the population, particularly women, has limited or no access to these services at all due to the costs involved. As a result, women get sick and die needlessly from treatable diseases and pregnancy-related problems. For example, although the overall Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in Sudan is high even by standards in other African countries (UNDAF 2002: 19), there are apparent variations between urban and rural areas and between different states. The World Bank (2003a: 142) indicates that Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) for Sudan, in 1999 was estimated at 514 cases per 100,000 births for rural areas and 496 for urban. However, among squatter settlements in Khartoum, the MMR was as high as 850 cases per 100,000 births (UNDAF 2002: 19). No study has been done specifically on poor neighbourhoods but the inaccessibility of health and antenatal care is expected to impact negatively on the health of women in these areas.

Many of the poor remain prone to preventable diseases such as malaria. Despite the existence of effective intervention measures, malaria is still endemic and the major health problem in the State of Khartoum. Between 1998 and 2001 Khartoum suffered an annual mean malaria incidence of more than 700,000 cases (WHO 2004: 29). Malaria causes significant morbidity and mortality, and represents the leading cause of absenteeism in schools and the work place leading to a considerable drain on the city population and particularly those living on its fringes.

Until recently, the national prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS was relatively low but there are now signs of a significant rise in HIV infection rates in Khartoum (UNAIDS 2006: 59). In the absence of a massive prevention programme, treatment and care, it is expected that the spread of HIV will continue. The poor have a much greater chance of contracting the disease compared to the non-poor. For example, the Ministry of Health Sudan (2005, cited in UNAIDS 2006: 59) reveals that HIV prevalence among displaced pregnant women seeking antenatal care in Khartoum in 2004 was 1.6% compared to under 0.3% for other pregnant women in the city.

## Conclusion

Greater Khartoum is the largest and most affluent city in Sudan. Its population has increased steadily since the colonial era, with most growth having occurred in the last two decades. Its population growth has been a result of an influx of people pushed out of their homes by civil strife, the collapse of the peasant farming economy and successive waves of drought and desertification. As in other cities affected by the crisis, the poor gravitated toward areas where there was some wealth. This massive urban migration has contributed to escalating unemployment rates and has fuelled poverty and congestion, and placed a huge strain on the city's traditional infrastructure and service-

delivery system. The massive relocation to Khartoum took place in a context of declining employment opportunities in the formal sector and agriculture but where no industrial jobs were emerging to fill the gap. In addition, the cost of living for families in Khartoum is continuing to rise substantially, tightening conditions for workers whose incomes on average are only a fraction of the recognized cost of living. There are also problems relating to the poor provision of water, health and education services and an unequal access to those services especially for the poor and women.

There appears to be a disjuncture between urbanization and envisaged socio-economic policies. It is true that the current size and scope of the city is far beyond what was planned in the past and that the demand for municipal services and infrastructure development has far outpaced government plans to provide them. However, in comparison with other states, Khartoum has the highest concentration of many essential services that are perquisites for developing human capital, such as health and education. The people of Khartoum are presumed to have the highest chances of benefiting from those facilities but it would seem that the city's poor have not been able to benefit from the available facilities, and in some cases have lower access to them than people in Sudan's poorer states.

The following chapters discuss emerging themes and trends that are critical to understanding and responding to poverty. A study framework will be identified and used to guide the analysis of poverty in Khartoum.

# 4

# Understanding poverty: A review of conceptual issues

Poverty is a phenomenon that is hard to pin down. The reason for understanding poverty has always impacted on the way it is defined. In addition, poverty is often viewed differently from different disciplines and perspectives and within different contexts. A quote that summarizes some of the dilemma notes the following:

> If we ask academics why poor people are poor ... different disciplines will answer ... in their own unique ways; each with certain kinds of data, certain methods, and certain habits of thinking ... in most substantive areas [of the social sciences] there is what to outsiders seems like an amazing lack of reciprocal knowledge. (Abbott 2001: 142, quoted in Hulme & Toye 2005: 1)

A variation on the way poverty is understood is in turn closely related to disagreements about its causes, and the weight that should be given to the different factors. Essentially, this is reflected in the wide variations and methods that are used to tackle poverty. It is clearly difficult to define a single understanding of poverty. However, it is possible and useful to establish some of the basic features that are believed to be more relevant to this study. It is on the basis of this proposition that the following section delineates the main concepts that will be discussed and used in this study of poverty in Sudan. The chapter reviews basic approaches to understanding poverty, namely vulnerability, social exclusion and empowerment, and points out the theoretical underpinnings of these concepts and their relevance to addressing the issue of poverty. It argues that employing these perspectives provides a closer picture of the reality of the poor and their expectations in life.

## Which poverty indicators

Poverty is usually linked to a 'lack' or 'deficiency' of essential resources that are necessary for human survival and improvement (Wratten 1995: 12). Robert Chambers (1995: 179) argues that poverty in development discourse is commonly used in two distinct ways: a widely employed usage is to 'refer to the whole spectrum of deprivation and ill-being', while in the second usage, poverty 'has a narrow technical definition for purposes of measurement and comparison'. Traditionally poverty is defined as material deprivation, as living on a low income or without sufficient means to purchase common goods. Some economists prefer to look at consumption because it is less volatile than income (Chambers 1995: 179).

Many comparative and trend data on poverty are cast in terms of private income/consumption, with the $1 per day PPP standard used as a rough poverty line.

Poverty lines (i.e. the World Bank's $1 a day per capita global poverty line) are often used to represent the level of income or consumption necessary to meet minimum requirements. At present these only include estimates to meet food, clothing, shelter and basic education and health needs. Poverty line definitions are widely used despite their significant and documented limitations. It has been argued that drawing poverty lines at a specific point in time to define poverty offer no indication as to those people who are vulnerable to or at risk of becoming poor. For example, Satterthwaite (2004: 37) notes that households with incomes near the poverty line experience frequent fluctuations in income and, over time, individuals and households can move in and out of poverty, but this dynamic is not captured by poverty lines.

One of the limitations of using monetary measures is associated with its failure to capture non-marketed and non-priced goods, like social services and other aspects that are important to human well-being such as the natural environment and community resources and social relations. This is significant, particularly in the urban context, where poverty tends to be associated with the inability of individuals or households to pay for non-food items (Satterthwaite 2004: 12). For example, sanitation and garbage collection can become major items in household expenditure. Rent for housing or the cost of land and public transport are a few of the items that eat up significant parts of the urban poor's income. Furthermore, Farrington *et al.* (2002: 19) note that poverty lines do not reflect the urban population's dependency on cash income. As almost all their resources have to be changed into cash so as to be utilized for consumption, the urban poor may be portrayed as less poor in terms of earnings.

The conceptual distinction between deprivation in income and non-income aspects is of considerable relevance to understanding poverty. Sen (1999: 14) considered income as a means to achieve other objectives but not an end in itself. A lack of income is not the only deprivation that people may experience and even people who have adequate command over commodities may suffer far more severe deprivation in several other aspects of life, than those set and measured as 'basic needs'. For Sen, an individual's poverty should be linked to what they are capable of doing and being. He emphasizes freedom as a base for individual capability and affirms that income and wealth are 'not desirable for their own sake', instead, they are basically a means to achieve 'more freedom to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value' (*Ibid*.).

In this sense, a lack of rights and freedoms can both be a cause and a consequence of poverty. UN definitions of poverty delineate relationships between economic and political deprivation and the violation of human rights. They accentuate the issue of being able to make choices and pursue them as a key aspect in understanding people's well-being and as a matter of human rights:

> […] poverty may be defined as a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights (UN-HRC 2006: 31).

Such a perspective suggests that poverty considerations go beyond sufficient income or the constraint on economic resources to constraints on the ability of the poor to fully exercise their social, cultural and political rights. The language of rights also emphasizes the holistic nature of rights, that all rights are indivisible and inter-dependent.

It is argued that when people have the freedom of choice and action, they will be able to influence the course of their lives and decisions that affect them (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 36-37, Kabeer 1999a: 2). The main issue is that individuals differ in their ability to access and convert resources into the achievement they aspire for. De Haan &

Zoomers (2005: 33-34) argue that the ability of individuals to achieve their goals depends on their positions in the web of power relations that they are impeded by. This web of relations is defined by gender, class and ethnicity. In other words, individuals' social identity, in the sense of the way they are positioned in the social structures of power becomes a critical aspect in their ability to access and convert resources to the desired goals. Since societies are made up of diverse social groups, the ability of individuals that belong to marginalized groups to access resources can significantly be eroded, leaving them more vulnerable to poverty than others. Therefore, the perspective of social exclusion becomes of great relevance to understanding poverty because it enables the understanding of questions such as who is being denied rights and opportunities, by whom and through what mechanisms. The concept of 'vulnerability' is seen as an important link to this discussion, highlighting not only the relativity of poverty but also shedding light on the numerous ways in which people 'are made vulnerable by other people' (Stephens 1996: 12).

Overcoming exclusion is seen basically as being in the hands of the poor themselves and a function of their awareness. Again, individuals and groups actions to break the cycle of exclusion are either enabled or constrained by the structures of power in their contexts. This includes wider political and economic structures, norms, discourses and the political and legal framework within which people pursue their own livelihoods. Here the discourse of empowerment is relevant. Empowerment involves the transformation of power relations so that the poor and disempowered can attain or enhance control and choice. Empowerment is about enabling the poor to build their inner strength and self-worth to act (Kabeer 1999a, Rowlands 1997). Therefore, it requires above all the recognition and utilization of the power of the disempowered. This is what Rowlands (1997: 14) calls 'power within'.

To sum up, the conceptual distinction between deprivation in income and non-income aspects is of great relevance. Poverty is seen to result from the complex, multi-dimensional and pervasive processes, attitudes, and institutionalized power structures that result in the exclusion of some groups. Breaking this cycle depends on the poor themselves, according to their various identities. However, this may not be possible due to personal, social and/or environmental constraints. Therefore, empowerment becomes an important tool to enable the poor to overcome their exclusion.

## Ways of understanding poverty

There are a number of ways to understand a person's well-being, ranging from completely objective to completely subjective. Poverty is seen objectively when it is defined and measured by quantitatively measurable indicators of well-being and is seen subjectively when it is defined by the poor themselves (Hulme *et al.* 2001: 8). The objective measures involve normative judgments such as what causes poverty and how it can be tackled. Often understanding the realities of the poor and what should be done to help them overcome poverty are built from a distance, and constructed in a way that is more convenient to the viewer (Chambers 1995: 179). Hulme *et al.* (2001: 8), argue that perception imposed from above can lead to 'disempowering poor people and removing their right to create and own knowledge'. Participatory Poverty Assessments have shown that people's perceptions of their poverty do not necessarily conform to the one-size-fits-all set of models. They show that there is often a huge gulf of differences between how poverty is understood and interpreted by outsiders and how the poor

themselves perceive it (Chambers 1995: 173). Therefore, the use of participatory methods has generated an area of poverty knowledge that is based on the realities and life experiences of the poor, their priorities, expectations and aspirations.

Norton *et al.* (2001: 6-7) argue that participatory methods are of critical importance to the poor since they are often illiterate and because their poverty limits their access to decision-making and their opinions are hardly ever been sought by government officials. The methods of the poor's participation in decision-making and policy processes range from a simple form of top-down consultation to being partners in the determination of policies that affect the people's lives. The concept of participation goes beyond enabling the poor to analyze their own situations to enabling them also to take action. Gaventa (2002: 6) argues that the participatory process should lead to challenging or changing the underlying social and power relations in a society.

Participation is, therefore, basically about providing the enabling environment that allows people to pursue their goals. The use of participatory methods has generated an area of poverty knowledge that is built on the realities and life experiences of the poor, their priorities, expectations and aspirations including participation in social life and inclusion in decision-making processes.

Poverty may be chronic (long-term) or transitory/temporary (short-term). The main characteristic of chronic poverty is its extended duration. While people move into and out of poverty over time (the transient poor), the chronic poor experience constant deprivation (Hulme *et al.* 2001). External shocks such as policy changes and natural disasters, for example, can leave a household in poverty. Whether such new structures of poverty will be temporary or persist in being chronic depends on various factors. These can include; individual's initial assets, community support and social policies. Chronic poverty may be severe, multi-dimensional in nature and more serious than transient poverty. Its causes are likely to be linked to a more complex set of interrelated causal aspects but they can also be linked to inter-generational poverty. On the other hand, temporary poverty might result from a one-time decline in living standards - such as seasonal variations in food security - that a household can gradually overcome, and this might happen regularly over time. Distinguishing between chronic and transient poverty matters since the first is a more serious situation and its perpetuating factors are likely to be different, and policy responses will also be different. Nevertheless, examining factors associated with transitional poverty may help understand the mechanisms and processes by which certain individuals and groups become and remain chronically poor, thus explaining the variation in the degree to which different groups faced with common problems will manage to craft a solution.

*Vulnerability*

The term 'vulnerability' carries a myriad of meanings which have evolved over the years. In most usages, the 'vulnerability' concept can be used interchangeably with the concept of 'poverty'. Conventionally, vulnerability has been viewed as a dynamic concept, while poverty had being looked at as a static phenomenon (Moser 1998: 3). However, the increasing recognition of poverty as a dynamic phenomenon too has altered the conventional distinction between the two. Despite the close association between the two, the terms "vulnerability and 'poverty' do not refer to the same thing (Prowse 2003: 7, Wratten 1995: 17). Wratten (*Ibid.*), for example, argues that 'vulnerability is not synonymous with poverty, but means defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risk, shocks and stress'. Prowse (2003: 3, quoting Lok-Dessallien 1998: 5)

indicates that a simple differentiation between poverty and vulnerability is encompassed in the fact that 'not all members of a particular vulnerable group are invariably poor'.

Although the notion of 'vulnerability to poverty' has remained quite elusive, poverty can be seen as the prospect that an individual or a household are likely to suffer as a result of shocks that intensify vulnerability. For Chambers, vulnerability can be one of the symptoms of poverty and poverty is marked not only by a lack of physical necessities, assets and income, but essentially by physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness. At the same time, vulnerability and poverty work together to create a vicious circle in which the two reinforce each other. An increase in vulnerability affects poor people because they have greater exposure to other risks, such as health problems, death, loss of employment, etc, without the ability to respond to them. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 53) highlight the mutually-reinforcing nature of poverty and vulnerability. They argue that economically marginalized people such as urban squatters or those who live in marginal environments, for example, isolated, flood-prone urban locations, are more likely to be of marginal significance to those who hold economic and political power. Consequently, their political and economic marginalization leads to three, often mutually reinforcing, causes of vulnerability. Firstly, the activities of the poor can perpetuate their vulnerability when their working, living and social environments severely limit their livelihood options to those unrewarding and insecure livelihood activities and resources. Secondly, the marginal position of the poor is often associated with low priority for government interventions intended to deal with hazard mitigation. Thirdly, vulnerability can lead to the blockage, erosion or devaluation of local knowledge when marginalized people lose trust in their own methods of self-protection. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 53) argue that a loss of necessary inputs (raw materials or labour costs) can also limit the use of local knowledge. Vulnerability can, therefore, be both a cause and a symptom of poverty. This in turn suggests that the prospect of a lower level of well-being is associated with greater vulnerability.

Vulnerability has frequently been seen to have two sides: an external side of shocks and stress; and an internal one which denotes the ability to adequately respond to and recover from external stresses. The external side of vulnerability is diverse in nature and can range from macro-economic shock, unemployment to ecological, social and political problems, natural disaster, health hazards or personal insecurity. These, in turn, may be either long- or short-term in nature. Amis (1995: 151) considered the exposure of the urban population to market conditions as a main cause of their vulnerability. In the same vein, Wratten (1995: 23) notes that, in the urban context, unemployment is a major cause of vulnerability and that 'even a few days without work can represent a serious financial blow'. Poor people are the most prone to suffering the consequences of economic shocks that diminish their ability to escape long- or short-term poverty by depleting their human and physical assets. Vulnerability in the urban areas can be as much the consequence of a lack of rights that exposes people to a wide range of risks. Meikle (2002: 15-23) has seen much of the vulnerabilities of the urban poor and relates it to their questionable legal status as well as to the poor's physical and social environments. In fact, urbanization and its attendant fragmentation and polarization are seen to exacerbate the vulnerability of urban residents disproportionately, but particularly that of the poor, with slum residents incurring higher risks from natural hazards (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 70-71).

Vulnerability in any of its forms is a function not only of external factors but essentially the ability of individuals to protect themselves or recover having been exposed to

stresses and shocks by outside forces (Chambers 1995: 189). Therefore, it is important to go beyond shocks and risks to dig deep into the socio-economic and political structures and processes that restrict people's ability to respond to such factors. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 11) have looked at vulnerability as it relates to the dynamics of vulnerable people themselves, arguing that vulnerability is 'the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard'. They linked vulnerability to a combination of factors that determine the extent to which an individual's life and livelihood are exposed to risk by a certain event in nature or in society.

The root causes of vulnerability and its reproduction over time in a particular society reflect the exercise and distribution of power. It has been shown that the inability of large segments of a society to gain access to essential resources, which leaves them in dare poverty (i.e. to the extent of starving) often points to factors beyond the poor themselves (Smith 2003: 5, Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 149). In particular, the power of the state and the form of control applied are very significant (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 53). This power may work along the line of inherent vulnerabilities such as belonging to a particular class, gender or ethnicity, or factors such as disability or region of residence (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 68-69).

By looking at some of the causes of the famines that have hit communities in Africa, evidence suggests that the vulnerability of the people affected has been more a direct result of inequity in resource access and of the plotting of politics than of natural hazards. For example, during one of the major famines that hit western Sudan in 1984, Oxfam studied the conditions that preceded the famine and provided the following account for the underlying condition: 'The people who died did not do so because the rains failed in 1984. Despite hard work and calculation, they died because they could not grow enough food and were too poor to buy what they needed' (Cater 1986: 1; Oxfam publicity booklet, quoted in Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 147). The reasons that were put forward as an explanation for the situation of 'not enough food' and 'too poor to buy', include 'drought, unsuitable technologies for providing water for humans and livestock, population pressure and a fragile ecosystem, deforestation and a fuel crisis, chronic uncertainties over land tenure, lack of credit, and monopolistic power of merchants in rural areas' (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 147). All of these reflect structures of domination which may include relations among individuals but point clearly to relations between individual citizens and the state. The vulnerability of the people was principally rooted in social processes and the core reasons were ultimately quite remote from the disaster itself. As Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 147) argue, the famine situation did not hit suddenly due to the occurrence of natural hazards, but rather the situation would have exploded anyway and without the occurrence of unfavourable weather conditions. Hence, vulnerability and deprivation in any form are intrinsically linked to the imbalance of power relations in a specific society that restricts people's capacity to make full use of the resources available to them.

In the context of Sudan, Chapters 2 and 3 have painted a fairly coherent picture of the way power relations operated historically to undermine the livelihood of the people and make them vulnerable to the harsh effect of shocks. First of all, there are the problematic colonial boundaries the country inherited, and the complex challenge of achieving national unity despite the historical divisions between ethnic groups. Secondly, it has been argued, the state policies of agriculture, land use and rural development were designed to create and exacerbate the vulnerability of both the rural

and urban population. The detrimental outcome of such policies is the disintegration of traditional agriculture that took place without creating alternatives to absorb labour either on the new modernized farms or in urban industry. This has led to rural out-migration, as well as to an increase in the marginal population in Khartoum and other cities. Such policies have led to a contraction of formal employment and a significant reduction in urban wages and large increases in irregular employment in urban areas. The emerging trend is that a large number of the population have become less able to deal with trends and shocks, and thus endure their long -term and harsh consequences. Given these circumstances that surround poverty in Sudan, the concept of vulnerability is seen to be more relevant to the understanding of the dynamics leading to and perpetuating poverty.

To sum up, vulnerability is seen not simply as a matter of exposure to shocks and hazard but essentially as people's capacity to deal with them successfully. The discussion highlights the intrinsic relationship between poverty and vulnerability, arguing that vulnerability can be both a cause and a result of poverty. This in turn suggests that the prospect of a lower well-being is associated with greater vulnerability. In addition, it has been argued that vulnerability and deprivation in any form are linked to the imbalance of power relations in a specific society and this affects people's capacity to make full use of the resources available to them. The concept of vulnerability is proposed as a basic component in the debate about poverty in Sudan.

*Social exclusion*

Initially, the 'social exclusion' discourse mostly took place in developed countries, emerging in response to the increasing social divides that resulted from new labour-market conditions and the inadequacy of social-welfare provisions to meet the varying needs of diverse populations. An important conceptualization of social exclusion has come from the French Republican tradition, with its emphasis on solidarity that views social exclusion 'as a rupture of the social fabric, and attributed to a failure of the state' (A. de Haan 2001: 23-24). Increasingly, the concept has gained popularity and been extended to refer to the state of people who are excluded from mainstream society not only because of income poverty (Hulme *et al.* 2001: 27).

Social exclusion is seen as a multi-dimensional and dynamic process and refers to a combination of inter-related factors concerning 'social relations and organizational barriers that block the attainment of livelihoods, human development and equal citizenship' (Beal & Piron 2005: 9). This definition points clearly to the fact that social exclusion is as much about a lack of access to material resources as it is about the denial of the rights of equal citizenship. What also needs to be added here is that the process of exclusion, or inclusion, is not static. Castells (1997) argues that exclusion is a dynamic process shifting over time and space, depending on several factors and affecting different groups of people in different ways. Thus "who is excluded and included may vary over time, depending on education, demographic characteristics, social prejudices, business practices, and public policies' (Castells 1997: 73). On the other hand, Beal & Piron (2005: 8-9) see social exclusion as covering both the static condition and the dynamic process of exclusion. As a condition or outcome, social exclusion highlights the nature of individuals' or a group's social relationships with others; and the forms of marginalization based on ethnicity gender age etc. As a multi-dimensional and dynamic process, social exclusion refers to a combination of inter-related factors that restrict the

achievement of livelihoods, 'human development and equal citizenship' (Beal & Piron 2005: 9).

De Haan & Zoomers (2005: 33) argue that social exclusion reflects the way in which different institutions enable or constrain the access of different people to different types of resources. They contend that the concept essentially goes beyond resource-allocation mechanisms to power relations, culture, social identity and the distributional implications for the poor and least powerful members of society. Focusing on the ways in which individuals gain memberships to different groups signifies first and foremost the importance of 'ascribed identities' principally race, ethnicity and gender or sexual orientation in demarcating those deemed to be eligible for inclusion or exclusion (Kabeer 2000: 5-6). The socially excluded represents individuals who belong to social groups whose ethnicity, culture and identity enjoy the least amount of recognition, influence and power in a society.

It is not only individuals and groups that suffer exclusion but also entire countries or regions can be excluded (de Haan 2000: 340). Beall (2002a: 48-49) also noted that some urban neighbourhoods or areas are left out by the overall policy structure, with the consequence of exclusion for significant section of their population from economic and social opportunities. Beall argues that within cities, social exclusion is intimately bound up with local governance being inclusive or exclusive (Beall 2002a: 45).

The concept of 'social exclusion' has a conceptual relevance with the known notions of poverty, since there is indeed a close link between economic stratification and the phenomenon of exclusion within a society. When wider features of poverty are recognized, these usually include social exclusion as a lack of participation in the life of one's community. While acknowledging that there is no universally agreed upon definition for poverty, the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development defined poverty as:

> ... lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life. (UN 1995: 57)

The above definition clearly establishes the fundamental dynamics between poverty and exclusion. When poverty is defined as encompassing a wider set of conditions, it becomes a central component of social exclusion. The socially excluded are more likely to be denied access to income, assets and services that are afforded to others in their society. Hence, the processes of exclusion result in multiple deprivations. People can become excluded from material, social, political and cultural resources. Kabeer (2000: 9) argues that various forms of social exclusion and marginalization can result when institutions grant some actors authority over others in deciding on principles of resource allocation and exchange within a specific context. Kabeer (*Ibid.*) argues that:

> Disadvantage results in social exclusion when the various institutional mechanisms through which resource are allocated and value assigned operate in such a way as to systematically deny particular groups of people the resources and recognition which would allow them to participate fully in the life of that society.

Each type of disadvantage gives rise to different kinds of disadvantaged groups. Fraser (1997, cited in Kabeer 2000: 4), suggested that a conceptual spectrum extends from primarily economic types of disadvantage or injustice at one end to primarily cultural types at the other. At the economic end of the spectrum, injustice concerns the exploitation (i.e. of labour), marginalization (exclusion from means of acquiring livelihood or

relegated into less-rewarding employment) and deprivation (the denial of an adequate standard of living). The 'cultural' end is composed of injustice generated from social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. Kabeer argues that the line that separates economic and cultural disadvantage is more of heuristic than real, since the two are closely inter-related and sometimes inseparable. Between primarily economic and primarily cultural forms of exclusion, there are also hybrid forms of injustice that are 'bound up with cultural-valuational disadvantage'.

Social exclusion can result in poverty when citizenship rights come to be systematically not realized for some individuals and groups. For Kabeer (2006a), citizenship acts as an allocative function within the boundaries of the nation state, by governing access to resources, bestowing legitimacy and support for an unjust economic and social hierarchy within a society. This suggests the importance of citizenships rights, particularly the economic and social rights for the historically disadvantaged groups. In the context of the south, social exclusion has its historical roots in the ambiguity of nation-building, politics and political engineering in the advent of modernity. Kabeer (2006a: 91-96) argues that the history of nation in the south reflects the denial of 'respect, rights, dignity and even humanity by some groups to others'.

Individuals can be excluded but not necessarily poor. Social exclusion can take place between groups that are not considerably different from one another economically (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 34). In the same vein, Kabeer (2005: 3) notes that social exclusion involves a social process in which a horizontal model of equality can be created and reinforced. Such an inequality not only transcends class boundaries but also accentuate disparities within the same social class. It becomes a matter of individual biography as social identity becomes 'the central axis of groups' exclusion'. The analysis of both poverty and social exclusion is therefore interlinked with institutional analysis that is concerned with the twofold processes of granting or denying access to essential resources.

The social-exclusion perspective starts from a general idea of the importance of inclusion in society. Kabeer (2005a: 6) emphasizes the importance of having the choice of inclusion, and in withdrawing from group memberships according to own will. In the same line, A. de Haan (2001: 29) argues that inclusion should reflect the choice of actors. In other words, inclusion might not be the choice of some people, while others can be included against their will. Exclusion should, therefore, be perceived in terms of 'exclusion from rights or entitlements: what counts is people's access and less whether they decide to use that access' (*Ibid*.). As such, social inclusion becomes tied up with individual choice on the one hand and on the other by the structures that define, interpret and implement rights as well as the political processes that define the channels through which people can access resources and claim their rights.

Being denied the opportunity to participate fully in the life of their community prevents the excluded from realizing their potential. It is thus imperative to enable the poor to take an active role in decisions that affect their lives as well as challenging deep-seated attitudes and prejudices that prevent them from realizing their human rights and fundamental freedoms. These aspects will be discussed in the following sections.

To sum up, processes of social exclusion are at the heart of poverty. The concept of social exclusion is multi-dimensional and encompasses the processes and social relations that underlie deprivation. The concept of social exclusion is seen to enable understanding relations of power and control. This underlies the process by which some groups in society are marginalized and impoverished. Exclusion often occurs to certain

groups in a population, in general those with marginal significance to those who hold economic and political power. Excluded individuals usually have certain social traits that locate them outside the circuits of dominant social and political power. Social exclusion generates and increases people's vulnerability. Those groups with less-favoured traits such as class, ethnicity, religion or gender who are denied the opportunities available to others to enhance their livelihoods may become less able to respond to shocks and trends.

*Power and relations*

In its broader sense, power refers to the command over the resources by which actors become able to achieve their goals (Kabeer 1999a: 2). Conceptualizing power is the capacity to mobilize resources requires qualifying resources and their utility. Resources include a combination of conventional material assets such as land, livestock or equipment, as well as a wide range of human and social capital that can be accessed and used to define goals (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 33, Kabeer 1999a: 3). De Haan & Zoomers (2005: 33) highlight the importance of understanding relationships between resources. They argue that resources are interrelated and, to be able to mobilize one type of resources, it is necessary to make use of other types too. The utility of resources has been eloquently explained by Bebbington (1999: 2022, quoted in de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 32) as follows:

> A person's assets, such as land, are not merely means with which he or she makes a living: they also give meaning to that person's world. Assets are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the capability to be and to act. Assets should not be understood only as things that allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation: they are also the basis of agents' power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources.

The possession of resources is just a means of gaining power and control over one's own destiny rather than an end in itself. The extent to which actors are able to mobilize resources depends on their specific social context and includes a wide rage of legal, political, economic and cultural institutions. Relations at these levels have the most important impact on poverty (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 33). Resources have therefore often been explained as having two forms: authoritative resources that stem from the control of the activities of actors, and allocative resources that derive from the control of material things. Drawing on Giddens (1979), Kabeer (1999a: 3) argued that allocative resource 'tend to be embedded within the distribution of authoritative resources, or the ability to define priorities and enforce claims'. Hence the two forms of resources are not independent of one another but tend to be mutually reinforcing.

In any social system, resources are unequally divided among different actors. Power is exercised through differentiated actors. De Haan (2005a: 6) argues that there are always variations in personal capacities and motivation among different actors. Actors usually belong to varying positions along traits such as class, status, gender and cultural or religious marginality. Differences in power between them affect the opportunities and outcomes of their livelihoods in numerous interactions. Taking as example the power of the state versus citizens; the state has the power to interfere in traditional systems and thus contribute to people's vulnerability. In their quest to monopolize power, states can undertake systematic persecution, ethnic cleansing or use civil wars to eliminate the political power of the people (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 95). Wratten (1995: 24) notes that compared to the rural poor, the urban poor as a group are more prone to encountering

different forms of suppressive power from the state agents and the police due to their informal activities or tenure arrangements. Although power may appear more connected to state institutions, it is reproduced and maintained in several familial settings of everyday life. Belief systems and cultural practices play an important role in legitimizing and reinforcing material structures (Foucault 1978: 139). Some actors are also endowed with legitimacy and authority in their respective institutional contexts merely for being in such social position in society. For example, men in their superior power position in the household hierarchy, head of firms or chiefs of tribes etc.

Power is always renegotiated and can characterize the competition and conflict of interest among different actors and between different activities within any particular context. For example, de Haan (2005a: 6) argues that power in the household is essentially linked to competition and conflict in the sense of a division of interests, goals, values, beliefs and preferences of different members. Conflict does not imply powerlessness of either party in the conflict. Kabeer (1999a: 42) notes that conflicts and acts of violence against women in households can take place not only because women have far less access to and control of power and resources but because women have 'greater voice within the household'. Therefore, the notion of power also implies the prospect that individuals with less power also exercise power and have some degree of control. De Haan & Zoomers (2005: 36-37) have emphasized the importance of power not only as top-down but also as ordinary power operating at the less apparent end of those been controlled or dominated.

The notion of power implies that as power and control can operate through coercion and conflict, it can also operate through consent and active involvement (Foucault 1978: 138, Kabeer 1999a: 7). This type of debate has often highlighted the central analogous between power and language/knowledge processes (Foucault 1978, Escobar 1995[1]). Foucault's (1978: 138-39)[2] notion of disciplinary power is useful here as it draws attention to the mechanisms of control that operate through complicity. Foucault highlights the way different oppressive ideologies may be institutionalized through the regulation of the body, actions and thoughts/discourses (i.e. in prison). For Foucault, the domination is most dangerous and controlling when it is 'normalized' through self-regulation and self-discipline. There, without being forced to, individuals become actively involved in the reproduction of the culture of their oppression by their own thoughts, words and deeds. Women are seen to be more vulnerable to the effect of disciplinary power. As Kabeer (2005: 14) argues:

> Gender often operates through the unquestioned acceptance of power. Thus women who, for example, internalize their lesser claim on household resources, or accept violence at the hands of their husbands, do so because to behave otherwise is considered outside the realm of possibility.

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[1] Particularly in relation to development activities and the role of development practitioners in shaping applications and outcomes of development programmes.

[2] 'What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A "political anatomy", which was also a "mechanics of power", was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, "docile" bodies.'

The danger of the disciplinary power rests in the fact that it makes social rules appear consensual and non-negotiable although they are merely manifestations of asymmetry of power.

In summary, resources are the means for gaining power and control over destinies and include material, social and human resources. The terms on which people gain access to resources are always linked to issues of power distribution within a society. The concept of social exclusion draws attention to the outcome of the power imbalance within society and the way it influences the livelihood of people. Power is created and maintained through state institutions, ideologies or society's values, beliefs and attitudes as well as individual consciousness. Ideology does a far more effective job of sustaining an unequal power structure.

*Institutions*

The previous discussion on power has highlighted the integral importance of institutions at all levels in the distribution of resources and in determining livelihood outcomes. Various institutions are involved in the processes of allocation and distribution of resources among different people. These include 'economic, social, and political structures, as well as legal definitions and enforcement of rights, and the ideological order' (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 52). These institutions allocate material and symbolic resources. A well-quoted definition of institution is drawn from North (1990: 3) and reads as follows:

> Institutions are the rules of the game of a society, or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction. They are composed of formal rules (statute law, common law, regulations), informal constraints (conventions, norms of behaviour and self-imposed modes of conduct), and the enforcement characteristics of both.

According to the definitions above, there are numerous institutions that determine people's access to resources at various levels: at the individual, household, group, community, local government and national government level. In addition, several institutions that operate at the global level now determine people's access to resources at any given local levels (de Haan 2000: 353-57). These institutions range from markets, multinational corporations and international financial institutions to world trade organizations.

Institutions can be divided into two broad categories: formal and informal. Formal institutions (or formal power resources) control social behaviour with established precedents consisting of statute law, common law and regulations, and thus relating directly to the state. Traditionally, state institutions have the sole capacity to define policies that determine access to and control of resources and consequently the viability of livelihood options. Power inequalities are part of the dynamics of the relationships between the bureaucratic authority versus people or citizens. Such inequalities are spelled out in the state-society power-sharing over public-sector management and resource allocation. The state's interest and/or capacity to defend the poor's interests and rights through the legislation and execution of policy change and the enforcement of positive actions through its judicial system are critical for their survival. It has been claimed that the poor are rarely well served by state institutions. Kabeer (2000: 28) argues that although the state could effectively become an apparatus for evading the negative impact of the market and customary social relations, in reality the state has actively served to reinforce problems of poverty, exclusion and social injustice. For example, in the urban areas, government regulation and, more particularly, the intensity

of entry, is often seen to have a great impact on the vulnerability of the poor (Amis 1999: 2, Satterthwaite 2004: 35). Land use policy and attitudes towards the informal sector are often served to jeopardize people's ability to survive (Amis 1999: 41). The enforcement of these regulations takes place through harassment and penalties for many informal enterprises or the eviction and resettlement of poor land users (Satterthwaite 2004: 35). Several urban government institutions therefore actively serve to create or exacerbate poverty.

Informal institutions usually indicate the habitual ways in which a society runs its everyday affairs and consists of standards of behaviour, conventions and self-imposed modes of behaviour (Kabeer 2003: 14). However, there is always dynamic interaction between formal and informal institutions. Traditional norms develop gradually and become deeply entrenched in behaviour patterns and they not only govern the way the traditional authorities function but also influence the actions of state institutions such as the law. As Kabeer (2000: 6-10) argues, informal rules can serve as a gateway to formal rules, especially when viewed from the angle of gender and the way it structures principles of resource distribution in a society. Women in many societies become socially excluded from basic sources of wealth, social status, power and well-being such as land, labour market and property through the dominant legal systems. In this regard, property and land laws informed by gender serve to compromise a woman's ability to maintain her livelihood and survive difficult situations.

To summarize, it has been argued that, firstly, social exclusion underlies poverty and vulnerability and, secondly exclusion is embedded in power structures. This section has sought to identify the power structures, institutions and actors who maintain and encourage processes of exclusion. It is clear that institutions regulating patterns of inclusion and exclusion range from the household to the local state, the national state and international levels. People always pursue their livelihoods within a complex matrix of formal and informal laws, regulations, norms and customs that determine the accessibility of resources. These constraints influence their decisions about which routes to take.

*Agency and empowerment*

The extent to which excluded people are able to combat their exclusion is basically a function of their own power. For Foucault (1978: 139), the notion of power involves relationships that influence people's actions. Though it may not necessarily involve force or violence, such relationships include making people do what they would not have done otherwise: power in this sense involves constraining or altering people' agency. However, while de Haan & Zoomers (2005: 37) agree with Foucault that 'individuals are both subjected to power mechanisms and are, at the same time, its creators', they criticize Foucault's conception of power for being too deterministic in 'see[ing] less room for actors to induce change'. Their exposition of power calls for movement away from the conventional conceptualization of power as the ability to apply power over people, structures and resources to power that is mostly exercised in the form of actions and behaviours of both the powerful and the powerless.

Such forms of power have been detailed in Rowlands's (1997: 13-14) conception of power as involving a relationship between structures and agency of challenge. Rowlands draws attention to the importance of understanding power in its multi-dimensional forms, as 'power *over'*, 'power *to'*, 'power *with'* and 'power *within'*. These perspectives of power are not separate entities but instead could be seen to lie along a

continuum from ‘power over’ to ‘power within’. At one end, ‘power over’ represents the limiting force that strives for total control and domination. At the other end, ‘power within’ or ‘internal power’ is generated by trust in oneself and relates to individual consciousness/understanding and self-esteem and hence the ability to deal with and combat the power over or unjust situations. Here Rowlands draws out the central parallels that exist between power that restricts people’s capacity to achieve certain goals and the capability that people have and are able to exercise to change negative situation. This implies that, even at the other end of power where people are subjected to ‘power over’, they are not completely passive victims and may become involved in active individual or collective resistance. This highlights the issue of the capability of agency, and people’s power to intervene to effect change.

Individual (or collective) agency hinges upon the ability to define goals and put them into effect (Kabeer 1999: 437). Such ability is bound up by three interrelated and inseparable elements: resources, agency and achievements. Agency is exercised when social actors interact, negotiate and resist power leading to the reinforcement or transformation of existing situations. For Kabeer (1999: 438), agency can take the form of ‘decision-making’ and/or ‘bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance’. Achievement refers to the extent to which a person or group is able to achieve their desired outcome while resources refer to material as well as human and social resources and access (Kabeer 1999: 437).

Poverty and disempowerment are intrinsically linked because the inability to meet essential life needs and the consequence of relying on powerful others eliminate people’s capacity to make meaningful choices. Kabeer (1999: 437) defines empowerment as ‘the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them’. This understanding highlights empowerment both in terms of fundamental change and also in the sense of the power ‘to do’, ‘to be able’ and of being in control of one’s own situations. It also indicates that powerful people who are endowed with the ability to exercise a great degree of choice and autonomy are not empowered since they have not been disempowered in the first place.

Individual agency is exercised within the structural constraints of institutions and various practices but these constraints always impose limits on what people can achieve. De Haan & Quarles van Ufford (2001: 4) argue that while people in poverty may remain full agents, their agency should not mean that they are a ‘free agent who can become whatever they choose’. Their agency is restricted by fewer resources and strategic capacities, and is influenced by cultural beliefs and norms. Empowerment therefore becomes the central agenda in supporting the poor’s struggle to exercise effective choices. In addition, power cannot ensue to the poor without challenging the rules that foster their exclusion be it within the household or in the community at large.

De Haan & Quarles van Ufford (2001: 4) and Kabeer (1999: 438) argue that to transform agency into effective action, the poor need the backing of the institutional context or the mechanisms of formal and informal rules including laws, regulations, norms and customs that determine people’s access to resources as well as their ability to employ the asset effectively to attain what they aspire to. These matters raise questions about the way the poor become aware of their rights and how they can engage and make effective demands on the state, and the extent institutions can be responsive and accountable to them. Rights are seen to be essential to increasing the boundaries of what individuals can achieve. It is argued that there is an intrinsic relationship between

empowerment and rights. Rights are important in the lives of the poor and the absence of some (economic and social rights) undermines the security of livelihood and their ability to exercise agency in their own lives and the lives of their community. At the same time, a lack or minimum levels of agency (including minimum political and civil rights) restrict the poor's capacity to influence decision-making processes that in turn impact negatively on the outcome of their livelihoods (Kabeer 2002: 31). Therefore, nominal rights granted by institutions are not enough for empowerment if they are not linked to building capacities among the disadvantaged to enable them to exercise those rights.

Empowerment cannot be done by an external party but has to come from within. Rowlands (1997: 16), points out that: 'true power cannot be bestowed: it comes from within. Any notion of empowerment being "given" by one group to [an]other hides an attempt to keep control'. The role that individuals are able to play in decision-making and the resultant expansion of choice and action both in their personal life and in broader social interactions are seen as defining aspects of empowerment. However, the poor often lack the information and political power necessary for meaningful participation in political decision-making processes.

For Rowlands (1997: 14), the main route to empowerment lies in mobilizing the participation and knowledge of marginalized people, particularly women. 'Empowerment is more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions.' Empowerment requires supporting the 'power within' of disempowered groups, facilitating the building of their inner strength and self-worth. This indicates that empowerment is intrinsically tied to the possession of knowledge and skills that enable the autonomy of action. Kabeer (2006a: 99) expands this issue further by arguing that individual knowledge of rights and political options as well as the belief in one's rights are essential elements for the poor and challenge the rules that determine access to resources. However, an individual's efforts may remain fragile which will necessitate collective action. Rowlands (1997: 15) argues that 'empowerment is a process; that it involves some degree of personal development, but that this is not sufficient; and that it involves moving from insight to action'. It highlights that while individual consciousness/understanding (power within) is a prerequisite to effecting change at an individual level, it is also important for group or collective action (power with) that can organize, challenge or change the rules that determine the control, use and transformation of resources for the good of the whole.

Empowerment and rights can be seen as mutually reinforcing. As discussed earlier, empowerment operates in two broad realms: the first concerns the agent's capacities, and the second involves the institutional constraints including effective rights or 'institutionally recognized opportunities'. These two concerns may operate in tandem. Imbalances of power can cause institutions to grant only nominal rights that could not be exercised or made use of. On the other hand, agents may be aware of their rights and have the capacity to exercise them, but they may also not have these rights.

To sum up, different forms of power can take place simultaneously. The fundamental shift and transformation of power for the poor start with the poor themselves. The extent to which actors are able to effect change is determined by factors within themselves (agency) as well as societal factors. Individual consciousness/understanding (power within), is a prerequisite to effecting change not only at an individual level but also at a group or collective level. The poor cannot successfully change the rules without power

enshrined in formal institutions. In this context, it is useful to distinguish empowerment, in the sense of actors' capacities from rights.

*Empowerment and rights*

As mentioned earlier, empowerment concerns both the ways in which the poor exercise power to change and influence institutions that affect their livelihoods, as well as issues of governance and institutional transformation. Rights are central to both. UNDP (2003: 1) states that the difference between the language of 'right' and that of 'need' is huge and so are the implications for addressing poverty within each. 'A right is something to which one is entitled solely by virtue of being a person. It is that which enables an individual to live with dignity' (*Ibid*.).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and subsequent instruments, recognize that everyone, as a member of society, 'has economic, social and cultural rights, such as rights to the highest attainable standard of health and education, as well as civil and political rights such as rights to life and liberty' (DFID 2000: 9). While this perspective integrates concerns with the fulfilment of human rights, its central emphasis remains on the instrumentality of expanding people's choices, by enhancing their capacities to utilize those enhanced capacities. Explicit in this assumption is the idea that poverty should not be seen as an issue of available economic resources but rather it should be considered an issue of political commitment and legitimacy. DFID (2000a: 7) specifies principles that uphold rights to include the observance of the following: inclusive rights, the right to participation and the fulfilment of obligation. These principles point to the state as a duty bearer. The concept of citizenship offers the theoretical linkage between the state and citizen and implies multi-dimensional rights associated with participation in the political sphere, social inclusion and the security of livelihoods. Claiming and realizing rights is a political process where citizens' ability to mobilize and influence depends on state institutions. The state has an obligation to strengthen the processes of citizen participation as well as the institutions and policies that protect and promote the realization of citizen's rights (Gaventa 2002: 2).

Participation, both social and political, is recognized as a human right in itself and as fundamental to the realization of other rights. UNOHCHR (2002: 48) highlights the fact that the effective participation of the poor should start from the right to information that enables them to participate actively in their community's affairs as well as overcoming other capability failures. Political participation has often been geared towards raising citizens' awareness to enable them to hold elected representatives more accountable. The goal of participation goes beyond the need to hold others accountable, to enable people to articulate their needs and organize to achieve their goals (Cornwall & Gaventa 2001: 32-33). This stresses the importance of inclusive participation as the basis for 'active citizenship' and frames citizens as 'makers and shapers rather than as 'users and choosers' (Gaventa 2002: 6).

In a study that explores what inclusive citizenship means to excluded people, the notion of citizenship came to be conceptualized as involving multi-dimensional rights. These are expressed within four common and broad values that have emerged in diverse contexts (Kabeer 2005: 3). These include 'justice', 'recognition', 'self-determination' and 'solidarity'. 'Justice' is seen as involving fairness and equality 'when it is fair for people to be treated the same and when it is fair that they should be treated differently'. In 'recognition', the emphasis is on the recognition of the potential inherent in each human being, and the recognition and respect of their differences (Kabeer 2005: 4).

'Self-determination' refers to individuals' 'ability to exercise some degree of control over their lives' (*Ibid.*: 5). 'Solidarity' is the 'the capacity to identify with others and to act in unity with them in their claims for justice and recognition' (Kabeer 2005: 7). These common values could be seen to reflect both a horizontal as well as a vertical view of citizenship which accords as much significance to relations between citizens and the states as to the informal recognition of rights or the 'societal understanding' of who belongs and who does not.

Kabeer (2005a: 22) argues that people's 'sense of citizenship lies in the terms on which they participate in this collective life and the forms of agency they are able to exercise'. Where people are only able to participate on highly unequal terms or are denied access altogether, citizenship relates to their attempts to challenge these exclusionary processes and bring about change. This concept implies that citizenship is realized through the agency of citizens themselves according to their various identities. However, while emphasis is placed on the role citizens play in contesting and claiming their rights, there are nonetheless challenges for the active role of citizens. Kabeer (2006a: 100) argues that the practice of citizenship should not always be expected to lead to an automatic challenge in people's exclusion, particularly where exclusion is deeply entrenched. Different forms of exclusion that occur as a result of membership to a particular group may preclude individuals from accessing and exercising their rights on equal footing and consequently lead to horizontal inequality and poverty. O'Neil & Piron (2003: 19) argue that even in the context of legal equality, some forms of discrimination are hard to overcome due to the historical inequalities that produce socio-economic and political disadvantages and constrain access to rights.

In addition, limited access to resources and the inability to secure an adequate livelihood may impact negatively on agency by decreasing people's ability to act individually and collectively. For Kabeer (2006a: 98), this issue underscores the indivisibility of basic needs and basic rights:

> Where people lack the means to meet their daily survival needs, they will only achieve security of livelihoods by binding themselves into highly asymmetrical relationships, receiving a variety of resources essential for their basic needs in return for a variety of resources, which reinforce their patron's dominant status: political or factional support, muscle power in conflict, aid in emergencies, guaranteed supply of labour in peak periods and so on.

The challenge is to enable them to mobilize and develop a sense of citizenship and the ability to act; especially when they have internalized a sense of powerlessness that constrains them from challenging the way that social group has been positioned in society. While citizenship rights are individual rights, defining them can only be carried out collectively. It is only when individuals have organized collectively to articulate and define their own interests collectively as a group struggling 'from below' that they become able to challenge their exclusion and redefine 'the boundaries of citizenship' (Kabeer 2006a: 100). At the same time, the state's respect for citizenship rights and the promotion of the principles of equality is central in these processes.

To sum up, when the poor have rights, they have legitimate claims against individual, group, social, cultural or economic institutions, and the state. Both the formal and informal recognition of rights are important in the lives of the poor. The state has an obligation to protect, support and secure the attainment of the human rights of all their citizens. The concept of 'citizenship' can be useful since it underpins the multi-dimensional rights that are associated with participation in the political sphere, social inclusion and the security of livelihoods. Rights are indivisible and restriction in one

right may impact on the attainment of other human rights. An important challenge is to enable excluded people to mobilize and develop a sense of citizenship and ability to act.

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed discussion of the main issues considered to be closely associated with poverty in any context. To start with, poverty is a dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon that is much broader than income deprivation alone. Poverty results not only from a lack of material resources but essentially from constraints on people's capacities and choices, thereby increasing their vulnerability. The study conceptualizes poverty in terms of vulnerability or the inability of people to respond adequately to shocks and hazards. A variety of economic, social and environmental concerns are the root causes in making an individual or group vulnerable or at greater risk to a variety of social ills. The notion of vulnerability goes beyond mere exposure to shocks and hazard to underlie people's capacity to deal successfully with these shocks and hazards. There is an intrinsic and reinforcing relationship between poverty and vulnerability, and vulnerability can be both a cause and a symptom of poverty. This suggests that the prospect of lower well-being is associated with greater vulnerability. Vulnerability and subsequent deprivation in any form are linked to the imbalance of power relations in a specific society, and involve people's capacity to make full use of the resources available to them. Social exclusion generates and increases people's vulnerability.

The concept of social exclusion is seen to enable an understanding of relations of power and control. It underlies the process by which some groups in society are marginalized and impoverished. Exclusion often occurs to certain group of population, generally those with marginal significance to those who hold economic and political power. The excluded individuals usually have certain social traits that locate them outside the circuits of dominant social and political power. Those disadvantaged groups with less-favoured traits concerning class, ethnicity, religion and gender and who are denied the opportunities available to others to enhance their livelihoods may become less able to respond to shocks and trends.

The social-exclusion perspective puts centre stage questions about who the excluded are. What are they excluded from exactly? And who are the formal and informal 'custodians' of membership and inclusion? The terms on which people gain access to resources are always linked to issues of power distribution within a society. People are excluded by institutions and behaviour that reproduce and enforce prevailing social attitudes and values, particularly those of the powerful actors in society. Vulnerability and deprivation in any form are thus intrinsically linked to the imbalance of power relations in a specific society that restricts people's capacity to make full use of the resources available to them.

The social exclusion of the poor and their lack of power in relation to the powerful in society clearly indicate the need to create new mechanisms to enable them to regain power and control over their destinies. It has been argued that the fundamental shift and transformation of power for the poor starts with the poor themselves. The extent to which they are able to combat social exclusion is determined by factors within themselves (agency) as well as societal factors. The poor's consciousness/understanding (power within) is seen as a prerequisite to effecting change not only at an individual level but also at a group or collective level. This study is anchored in the premise that

questions of empowerment need to be located within the individual actors' social, cultural and historical context. The poor cannot successfully change the rules without power enshrined in formal institutions. In this context, it is also useful to distinguish empowerment in the sense of actors' capacities from rights. Rights can empower the poor and marginalized groups to combat social exclusion on an empowered footing. Rights and empowerment approaches can therefore be mutually supportive.

It is in this sense that the concepts of vulnerability and social exclusion will be used to construct a more comprehensive understanding of the factors underlying relative disadvantage, disparities and the well-being of the poor in Sudan. The next chapter looks at the specific factors relating to urban poverty to inform the study framework that will incorporate the principles that have been highlighted in these two chapters.

# 5

# Dimensions of urban poverty

Unregulated globalization, climate change and rapid urbanization in Africa have introduced new forms of vulnerability for the urban poor who are experiencing deepening and cumulative patterns of social exclusion. Coquery-Vidrovitch (1991: 2) points to the need to understand the historical roots of urbanization in Africa including 'the integration of the household into new networks of capitalist production; the invention of a new web of concepts and practice on land and land laws, on housing and rental'. Many urban centres served as major points for regional and international socio-economic activities before the colonial era. For Coquery-Vidrovitch (1991: 21), precapitalist African urbanization had a 'restricted development fitted well with the demographic conditions and modes of production and long distance economic relations of mostly rural and trading societies'. She argues that urbanization in Africa occurred in phases depending on the changing terms on which Africa were integrated into the world economy, including policy imposition by international bodies.

This chapter identifies the specific vulnerabilities of the urban poor, which are imposed by various factors. It starts by looking at the interrelationships between urban and rural livelihoods and the context-specific vulnerabilities of the urban poor to understand the particular constraints the urban poor face in maintaining their livelihoods. It also considers policies that can be geared towards alleviating poverty.

## Urban-rural interrelationships: Implications for livelihoods

Several studies have concentrated on understanding what characterizes 'urban' or 'rural' poverty as well as the interrelationships between the two categories, for example Satterthwaite & Tacoli (2002: 67). These studies provide evidence that urban and rural areas are interlinked and that the boundaries between them are fluid. They suggest that these boundaries should be seen as a continuum rather than a sharp dichotomy (Satterthwaite 2000: 19). De Haan (2005a: 7) argues that an increasing number of households from both urban and rural areas rely on a combination of livelihood activities and resources. For rural populations, the need to access markets, services and employment opportunities in urban centres forms a critical corner of their livelihood activities. Amis (1995: 153) argues that 'livelihoods tend to be at their most complex nature in urban areas, with households drawing on a wide variety of activities to capture income and other resources'. Urban households may combine a range of activities and occupations to build a diverse portfolio of activities and derive a part of their livelihood from wage labour and a part from farming undertaken by absent household members in the rural areas in conjunction with a variety of other activities. Rural assets provide economic

and social support and serve as a safety net for poor households in the city. In addition, the rural base represents a refuge for urban workers if they lose their jobs (A. de Haan 2000: 7). While these processes are relevant to people, the intensity of such interactions is driven by poverty (Tostensen 2004: 2) and its returns are of crucial importance to the poor (Owuor 2006: 193-212). As it has numerous benefits, such an interrelationship may impact negatively on the sustainability of livelihoods at both ends of the spectrum. Cities use the most fertile and productive land, consume natural resources such as water and minerals, and pollute the environment. Similarly, the use of agricultural chemicals in the rural areas can pollute the urban environment by, for example, contaminating sources of drinking water (Tostensen 2004: 2). There are thus strong connections between the two spheres. Wratten (1995: 20) has questioned the use of the term 'urban poverty' as a separate category from 'rural poverty', and suggested that such a division could conceal the real underlying causes of poverty. The determinants of urban and rural poverty are linked and have to be addressed jointly. It does not matter what geographical context people operate from because their efforts always revolve around securing their basic livelihood requirements, accessing resources and fulfilling their various aspirations in life. It follows that their livelihood activities are equally affected by macro- and micro-level changes and social constraints to assets and opportunities (i.e. class, gender and ethnicity). The livelihood activities pursued by the people in each context matter more. Therefore, Amis (1995: 148) suggested that 'the question to ask is not where do individuals live but how do they survive and where do they get their incomes from'.

Notwithstanding the connectivity of rural-urban spectrums, the livelihood options open to rural, peri-urban and urban populations differ depending on the nature of the local context and the opportunities it offers for generating a livelihood (Satterthwaite 2000: 1). Geographical context often imposes a particular combination of resources and activities that enable people to pursue their livelihood in that context (Satterthwaite & Tacoli 2002: 66).

In summary, urban and rural areas are linked through various processes and relationships. Such interactions enable households to diversify their livelihood options but can also present a source of vulnerability. The livelihood activities pursued by the population in each context matter most. The urban context requires specific sets of livelihood resources for survival.

## The particular vulnerability of the urban poor

Satterthwaite (2000: 1) argues that where people 'live and work influences whether or not [they] face deprivation and the nature of that deprivation'. Thus, the urban poor often face particular vulnerabilities that are different to those faced by the rural poor. Many studies have examined the factors that are specific and crucial for the urban context by looking at the type of livelihood resources (or combinations of 'capitals') that are required to pursue these livelihoods (Amis 1995, Rakodi 2002, Satterthwaite & Tacoli 2002, Satterthwaite 2000). This is either by comparing urban and rural contexts or by examining urban livelihoods in a more relative way. The results indicate that urban populations have fewer survival options than rural population. The vulnerability of the poor in the city is seen to be exacerbated by their dependence on cash incomes and their direct exposure to the harsh effects of the market (Amis 1995: 153-154). This is particularly important in the light of the commercialization of housing and urban

services, the lack of tenure security, increased personal insecurity, the inaccessibility of urban services and a lack of effective community support mechanisms. The main dimension identified is the issue of the labour market, for example the insecurity of employment and/or casual labour (Amis 1995: 153, Rakodi 2002: 289-290). These factors are interlinked and deprivation in one gives rise to other form of deprivation. The importance of each is highlighted separately below.

*Urban employment and income-generating activities*

The majority of the urban poor are engaged in wage labour and the public sector remains an important source for employment. However, people usually engage in multiple activities rather than relying on one source of income. Paid employment is not necessarily the main source of income. Self-provisioning activities such as petty-commodity production for petty sale and household production for consumption and service activities are some of the important alternatives if there is no incomes coming directly from a salary or if wages are too low. The combination of various activities plays a critical role in the survival of the household. The more complex the livelihood activities, the more likely they are to reduce vulnerability (Farrington *et al.* 2002: 26).

As the world is becoming increasingly urban, there is growing evidence that labour markets are becoming one of the main determinants of wealth and poverty. As discussed in Chapter One, mass migration from rural to urban areas has taken place in various African countries, fuelled by adverse conditions in the rural areas. People have migrated to escape unfavourable conditions in their place of origin and to look for income through the employment and market opportunities that cities offer. This migration has also been fuelled by urban centres' requirements for human resources particularly in the semi-skilled and unskilled groups that rural areas have in abundance,. Historically, this relationship has marked a transition from the traditional sector to the modern sector or a move from being a food producer to becoming reliant on wages for subsistence. On the other hand, population dynamics in the form of rural to urban migration have led to increasing numbers of urban job seekers. This is manifest in the long-term unemployment or precariousness of job as well as the growing competition for low-paid work due to a growing number of new entrants in the labour market. The majority of new entrants in the urban labour force seem to be creating their own employment or working for small-scale, family-owned enterprises.

Urban poverty is seen to relate directly to the urban labour market with its various institutional arrangements of regulations rather than urbanization itself. The ability of households to avoid poverty depends critically on factors related to wage labour. Amis (1995: 147) argues that urban populations who have no source of income or employment are 'the poorest and hardest hit by poverty'. This highlights the importance of labour market in determining incidences of urban poverty or of employment as a route out of poverty. A. de Haan (2001: 33) has highlighted the connection between employment and other forms of deprivation. Referring to Paugam's (1995) research on social exclusion in France, the author argues that a loss of employment in poor neighbourhoods of France brought with it not only a loss of income but also 'social and psychological forms of deprivation, such as marital problems and loss of 'social capital'. The boundaries between employment and social exclusion are becoming ill-defined and the relationship between unemployment and poverty is an even more complex matter.

Opportunities in the labour market are essentially dependent on skills and education, nutrition and health, which in turn are dependent on health care and safe environmental

conditions (Farrington *et al.* 2002: 20, Amis 1995: 151). This relationship points to the inter-dependence of employment and the provision of and access to services. The marked reduction in these services impacts negatively on workers. Globalization and global policies have had a negative effect on the employments and options available to the urban poor to survive (Farrington *et al.* 2002: 31). With neo-liberal policies, which dominate in the process of economic globalization, the labour market has been fundamentally transformed. These policies have forced African governments to orient their economies towards greater international integration at the expense of social services and long-term development priorities. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) had a disproportionate impact on the urban poor and particularly those who relied primarily upon wage employment. Such policies led to a reduction in employment creation and in real wages while no alternative jobs were created. No proper safety nets absorbed the huge number of persons who were affected. This led to the emergence of new categories of poor people, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, even before the introduction of SAPs, a deterioration in workers' conditions was being observed in many African countries. Amis (1995: 146) argues that not withstanding the impact of SAPs on employment, there are clear indications that urban wages within Africa were declining from the 1970s onwards and before SAPs. For Amis (1995: 146), this decline had to do with the socio-political changes that took place after independence. In several African countries a 'privileged urban workforce', whose interests contradicted with the rest of the labour force, was created in the formal sector. However, this resulted in further decline in the conditions and wages of formal workers.

The urban poor lack decent productive employment that would allow them to translate their human capital into political agency. The ILO (2005: 23) describes 'decent and productive employment' as the type of 'work that not only provides a sufficient level of income but also ensures social security, well working conditions and a voice at work'. These goals are intrinsically linked to issues of promotion and protection of the fundamental rights at work and may touch upon the labour market's regulatory framework, issues of freedom of association, the progressive elimination of child labour, forced labour and discrimination at work Overall, it means that the urban poor, whether operating in the formal or the informal sector of the economy, do not have access to productive employment. The prevalence of low-wage jobs in urban areas suggests that having a job does not guarantee an escape from poverty if it does not lead to improving livelihoods. Several studies have indicated that the working conditions of the urban poor are characterized by pervasive discrimination, low wages, precarious working conditions and job insecurity (A. de Haan 2000: 7). Informal-sector workers are affected by a lack of the subsidies that formal-sector workers may have access to. They also experience inadequate training and skills as well as insufficient capital to invest. The lack of urban services (electricity, telecommunications, water and sanitation) also impacts negatively on the efficiency and productivity of informal-sector activities which are often home-based). People working in the informal economy generally lack labour rights. They are vulnerable to unexpected job loss as well as to employment-related disease and accidents. Seasonality and the uncertainty of employment hits the poor who work as day labourers especially hard when the demand for labour decreases.

The mere availability of employment opportunities does not guarantee that employment will be equally distributed between populations with different identities (Amis 1995: 151, A. de Haan 2000: 7). Characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, castes or age frequently determine the segments of the labour market that an individual can access.

Women are often the 'disadvantaged group' within the urban economy (Amis 1995: 152). Although more women have been drawn into the labour market in the last few decades, their involvement remains in casual and low-paid jobs as a result of the traditional cultural barriers to education, health and the labour market, and the competing demands for their labour in the domestic sphere. In addition, as labour recruitment operates through informal networks, the weakness of such a network in urban areas may restrict people's access to employment.

In summary, wages and employment are important livelihood sources for the urban poor but there are several structural constraints to them, and to realizing their potentials.

*Housing*

Housing is commonly identified both as a basic need and as the most important productive asset for the urban poor. Moser (1998: 32) equated the role of housing in the livelihoods of the urban poor to that of land for the rural poor. The importance of housing comes from the fact that it helps keep people out of poverty by providing basic needs for shelter and/or access to income-generating opportunities through home-based production or leasing, or as collateral for credit (Moser 1998: 24). This is particularly important as most of the urban poor have no access to formal-sector employment that can provide insurance. Housing becomes a critically important asset at times of shock and stress when a house can be rented or utilized as a base for a household enterprise or other activities (Amis 1999: 37). It is within this understanding that it is assumed that the urban poor, with their tangible assets such as housing, are more likely to survive and do well compared to those who lack them.

However, the location of a residence itself is a major determinant as to whether a house can be used as a productive asset or become a source of vulnerability instead. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 28) suggest that the vulnerability of urban household to shocks is closely linked to the quality and location of their housing. Several studies have shown that a large number of the urban population do not have adequate housing, with many living in flimsy housing in crowded areas, or in hazardous low-lying areas that are flood-prone zones. These factors add to their vulnerability by undermining their health conditions and leaving them less able to deal with the physiological effects of hunger and cold (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 180). At the same time, many of these houses are easily destroyed or rendered uninhabitable by the slightest weather condition. The poor then have to deal with the effects of losing their homes and property.

Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 70-71) raises the issue of option and accessibility that forces some to reside in the least-secure zones and houses. They argue that inhabitants of these hazardous areas

> … would not choose to live there if they had any alternative, nor do they deliberately neglect the maintenance of their overcrowded and deteriorated tenements. For them it is the best-of-the-worst of a number of disaster-prone scenarios such as having nowhere to live, having no way of earning a living and having nothing to eat.

The structure of urban land ownership and rent often play critical role. The poor lack the means that would enable them to obtain land through formal channels, or by purchasing or renting accommodation on legally developed land. The informal sector then becomes the only possible channel through which they can access land. Informality thus occurs due to the failure of the formal state and market systems to formally provide land for the majority of the urban poor. The outcome is that informal tenure arrangements characterize the living arrangements of the majority, where they become vulnerable to

eviction and a set of other problems (Mitlin 2003: 182). Additionally, a lack or unaffordable building materials plays an important role in the resilience and quality of the housing in which the poor reside (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 71).

Many of the informal settlements have been established in the peri-urban zones. The use and occupation of peri-urban land often takes place with no formal planning and this often brings additional vulnerability to the inhabitants. The poor living in the rural urban interface may face greater health risk. Certain types of informal activities can create severe pollution problems and might find good ground in peri-urban areas where regulations to control pollution are less tough. Furthermore, people in the rural urban interface are vulnerable to the forces of urban land markets which can disrupt their agricultural production and their livelihoods (Satterthwaite & Tacoli 2002: 66). Satterthwaite (2000: 12) argues that an important challenge to the rural-urban interface is the question of dealing with these changes in a way that promotes sustainability and the well-being of inhabitants. Tacoli (1998a: 5) argues that development plans often fail to understand the dynamics of change which influence cities. These changes are related to change in land use, i.e. from agricultural to residential or industrial land uses. The assumption held by development planners is that there is a sharp dichotomy of discrete spheres between what is rural and what is urban. She further notes that urban development plans are usually concerned with urban nodes and pay little attention to agricultural or rural development, while development plans for rural areas are confined rural areas and pay no attention to urban centres. Such misunderstanding usually results in the splitting up of policies along spatial and sectoral lines.

Nevertheless, informal housing comes at a high cost and is neither legally recognized nor serviced by the city authorities. People in the informal settlements are forced to pay very high prices for services. And they may also be vulnerable to a range of health conditions due to the unsanitary environment. The ability of the poor to participate in political decision-making is significantly hampered by their tenure arrangement that they may be excluded from the right to register and vote (Meikle 2002: 43). Most importantly, their legal status often puts them in positions of harassment and confrontation with the police and bureaucracy. Municipality responses to informal tenure vary between passing tough regulations to excluding informal settlements from infrastructure extension plans. UN-HABITAT (2004: 3) experience shows that:

> The city authorities view most people living in slums as illegal. Because of this, cities do not plan for or manage slums, and the people living in them are overlooked and excluded. They receive none of the benefits of more affluent citizens, such as access to municipal water, roads, sanitation and sewage. This attitude to slum dwellers and approaches that disregard them, perpetuate the levels and scale of poverty, which impacts on the cities as a whole.

Such attitudes impact on other aspects of people's livelihoods and feeds directly into poverty. The way such regulation is implemented has a big impact on the vulnerability of the poor (Amis 1999: 36).

There is a growing need to reform land policy so that the poor and excluded can benefit and contribute to growth (Kabeer 2006: 15). For the urban poor, tenure insecurity impacts on households' social and economic, as well as, on a member's ability to maintain a living, accumulate and have self-insurance in the face of shocks and trends (Moser 1998: 11). There is a wide range of tenure arrangements that provide varying degrees of security and entry costs. However, the poor are only able to obtain those characterized by low degrees of insecurity. Land issues need to be understood in the unequal, historically inherited pattern of land ownership in Africa. Mafeje (2003: 10)

notes that the notions that delineate African land tenure systems are basically driven from the European legal system that bestows authority as well as exclusive control on holders. However in much of Africa, land can be owned communally so there is a need to distinguish between 'repository and use-rights'. Collective rights to land are narrowly defined to indicate 'free for all' on communal ground. However, this understanding has set the stage for different interpretations and practices. Landholding groups exercise strong control over collective land rights and litigation over such rights is common and leads to conflict and violence. Mafeje (*Ibid*.) notes that there is a basic misconception of customary land rights in Africa. For Africans themselves, land rights were driven from complex community relations including memberships of given groups, use rights and labour relations. Ownership of land usually indicated as 'the soil and its possible manifestations such as crops and vegetation', rather than the soil itself. Security of tenure today takes place when the right to access and use are underwritten by a known set of rules. According to this understanding, much of the land poor people work and occupy in urban and peri-urban of Africa is not legally recognized. A further complication is that many African countries have inherited a system of highly unequal land distribution and several countries have land tenure systems that discriminate against women (Mafeje 2003: 21).

The removal of tenure insecurity and other constraints to people's ability to utilize their housing effectively is considered 'the single most important critical poverty reduction intervention' (Moser 1998: 11). Some African countries have assigned legal status to customary tenure as well as to the institutions administering them. However, land reform[3] has been moving at a much slower pace and the largest obstacle to regularizing land ownership relates to the inability of local governments to properly rectify land title. Deininger (2004: iv) maintains that when land institutions are effective, the rights of the poor are protected and their access are improved:

> Well functioning property rights and land institutions underpin economic development and help reduce corruption and social conflict. Efficient land administration that is accessible to ordinary people and recognises the complexity of land rights on the ground is crucial. The legal recognition of informal land rights is a powerful tool for social inclusion. Land markets must help the poor gain access to land. Land use planning needs to be democratic in order to mediate effectively between competing interests amongst land users.

These points are also highlighted by Kabeer who argues that 'even where there may not be enough land to benefit all sections of the poor, land reform can have the effect of damping down the monopoly bargaining power of large landlords'. However, since the process of land reform is often uneasy and has a long-term nature, some measures can already be undertaken to strengthen the land rights of the urban poor. This can take the form of recognizing poor people's rights to land they legitimately occupy and providing secure leases or transferring ownership to the occupants where the land is owned by the government or providing longer-term tenancy arrangements. Kabeer, (2006: 16) argues that implementing a 'community-based approach' can enable the representation of excluded groups in government and redistribution schemes.

To conclude this section, housing is a key asset for the urban poor but it can also become a key source of vulnerability. Ownership of or secure access to housing is

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[3] 'Land reform' refers to various approaches that in general stress 'actions' such as land registration, land settlement or resettlement programmes on public holdings, the consolidation of fragmented holdings, tenancy enhancement and land taxation. It might also include the redistribution of private-property rights to land.

central to ensuring access to other resources such as education and health, as well as political rights such as registering to vote. Overlapping land rights and the plurality of property systems and institutions create conditions for increased vulnerability. In its true sense, empowerment should lead to self-determined change and here tenure security is relevant. Removing barriers to the access of the urban poor to safe and secure housing to make effective use of the land they occupy is a key area in empowerment.

*Urban services*

Access to basic services is vital to improving the quality of life of the poor as well as ensuring the sustainability of their livelihoods. Urban services influence areas such as access to work, living conditions and access to income-generating opportunities. Education provides people with the skills and knowledge they need, while health care and economic infrastructure (water, transport and electricity) allow them to 'use their skills and knowledge productively' (Moser 1996: 7). The accessibility of affordable water frees time and resources for other needs such as food, while the accessibility and affordability of transport can enhance access to livelihood opportunities and income-generating activities.

The access, quality and affordability of services to the urban poor are dependent on several actors and operate through a complex web of urban governance. Those actors include formal (the state) and informal service providers (NGOs and the private sector). Informal practices may be interlinked to other formal activities and institutions in the public, private or community sectors. Meikle (2002: 42) argues that the urban poor are linked to the structures of governance basically 'through their dependence on, or exclusion from, delivery of infrastructure and services by urban institutions'. Accordingly, these institutions can affect either positive or negative change in the livelihoods their urban poor.

In the past, local governments were the main source of service provision, particularly regarding social services. However currently there are deep concerns about the role of local government in directly providing services to poor residents. With the application of the neo-liberal policies adopted by most African countries, these countries have embarked on the privatization of service provision. Previously these sectors had enjoyed major government subsidies, both in operation and maintenance. Kabeer (2005a: 18) argues that neo-liberal policies have spurred a number of shifts in service provision that have transferred the responsibility for service provision from the state to different private-sector providers 'including various non-profit civil society organizations'. The result has been that the accessibility of these services to the poor has been greatly diminished while informal service provision has becomes the basic source of service for the majority of the urban poor. Reduced access to services has compromised the livelihoods of the poor in several ways. Amis (2001: 1) notes that a lack of basic services leaves the urban poor with little or no option but to struggle with more expensive solutions or to live without them.

The provision of services and the implementation of frames for stakeholder participation require resources. Devas (1999: 5) has questioned the ability and means of local governments to effectively reach poor communities. Local government's ability to extend services to poor communities is constrained by different and interrelated factors including a lack of resources, a lack of capacity to implement policies, corruption and variance between government representatives. Funds are dependent on 'central-local financial and political processes' and the issue of provision may simply be just beyond

the capacity of local authority. Devas (1999: 5) and Amis (1999: 12) stress the importance of strong municipal finances in reaching the poor and argues that this is dependent on the ability to access steady local tax revenue and have efficient financial management.

In many urban areas, public services might be available but informal settlements are usually excluded from service provision. Experience has shown that for many countries, there is what is termed as 'divided cities' and differential access to basic service provision (Meikle 2002: 43). Accordingly, the poor receive only marginal or no services from the municipal authorities. The municipality might contribute to the elimination of informal arrangements that are used to provide services to residents of such areas. Inadequate regulation has been one of the most significant issues in the way service is delivered to or denied for poor communities. In this regard, local governments might be constrained by political conflicts with higher tiers of government or face legal barriers in addressing the needs of the poor (Devas 2004: 16). Therefore, devolution of political power and economic resources to local governments and the communities is very critical to their efficient delivery. However, the exclusion of the poor can also be enforced through grassroots organizations. For example, some community-based projects rely on local leaders and contractors to manage services in their communities. Although this might be a practical way of managing delivery locally, it can impose and reinforce the exclusion of the urban poor. Local leaders and well-connected members of the community end up harvesting assets or leadership opportunities and expanding their land holdings and enhancing their political relations (Devas 2004: 8). This implies the poor's need for empowerment to ensure greater participation in decision-making processes and an enhanced capacity to claim their rights at the local level. It also entails the transformation of service delivery to respond to the needs, interests and rights of all citizens. Enhancing access to services depends on improved governance. Rakodi (2007: 349) states that accountability at the local level can ensure 'the adequacy of environmental infrastructure and services and their availability to the poor'. In most of Africa, the involvement of NGOs in service delivery has been a direct outcome of the lack of resources to support universal coverage (Edward & Hulme 1998: 6). Their expansion has come as a response to the neo-liberal policies which saw in the NGOs the ideal channel for service provision to replace that of the state (see also Chapter 1). Such policies have changed the service-delivery landscape dramatically over the past few years and modified the state-citizen relationship. With NGOs' increasing role in service delivery compared to a subsiding one for the sate, there are concerns that NGOs are altering the 'social contract' between the state and its citizens (Edward & Hulme 1998: 15).

To conclude, the vulnerability of the urban poor is often amplified by a lack of access to urban services. State provision is important for the urban poor but it is subject to local and national political processes. The state machinery is often not neutral and is likely to replicate wider social powers so that socially excluded groups are also the least likely to gain access to social services offered by the state. Urban services in poor areas are mostly undertaken by NGOs, albeit largely funded by external sources. NGOs are increasingly been criticized for being ineffective in reaching the poor. To turn the tide against all the injustices that were inflicted upon the urban poor in relation to service delivery, there should be more responsive institutions either formal or informal.

*Personal insecurity*

A lack of security has implications for livelihood activities, trust and the sense of well-being in communities and individuals. Acioly (2002: 1) argues that cities are becoming 'more spatially and socially divided'. Such trends are being driven by increased inequality and producing urban environments characterized by severe forms of poverty, violence and insecurity. Urban inequality is more visible in the spatial and social separation of rich and poor. It is a common phenomenon that in almost all African cities, huge poor communities live in shanty-towns on one side of the city while the more spacious and well-provided-for communities on the other. The mixture of 'segregation, inequality and proximity' leads to social friction where violence and insecurity worries the well-off, and forces them behind high-walled and gated communities. However, poor communities suffer an even higher cost. The lack of personal security due to high levels of crime and violence also pervades poor people's lives and impacts on the way they pursue their livelihoods. It is essential that the government's role should be maintaining the rule of law and providing security for all.

## Civil society or grassroots organizations

There are several forms of social networks of mutual benefit and solidarity for persons with common interests in urban areas. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 15) consider kinship networks and larger collectivities as a vital constituent in well-being and one which can afford the 'basis for action when vulnerability is made a reality'. These networks are thought to influence poverty in general although the ways such they are perceived vary considerably. Recently, poverty debates have come up with the idea of 'Civil Society Organizations' as an essential component in understanding the relationship of trust and social capital available to the urban poor. Although the concept of 'Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) is loaded with vagueness, it is not the intention here to probe into the debate of what constitutes CSOs. The main issue to be considered here is the capacity of grassroots organizations to freely organize and empower the poor and to address their situation fundamentally. Therefore, the section will look into the factors that have shaped the dynamic nature of the grassroots in poor communities by exploring the interaction between them and the state.

Among the poor, community networks can be based on kinship, ethnicity, culture, religion or workplace affinities. In several poor urban communities, social networks have been formed in response to de-industrialization, increased unemployment and struggles for modest living spaces in segregated cities. These goals have often been associated with pressing for citizenship rights, health and education, and sometimes accompanied increased rates of political and ethnic violence. The networks can provide access to information about jobs, facilitate access to employment and press for an improvement in services in poor communities. Their roles can go beyond effecting change in the country as a whole. For example, Mitlin (2001: 154-155) notes that some religious organizations have played a significant role in the struggle for political independence. In addition, some traditional organizations have been able to provide communal infrastructure and services in African cities but there is relatively little evidence to show that these conclusions can be generalized. Mitlin (2001: 163) argues that although some grassroots organizations are able to press for improvements in service provision and effect some changes in their neighbourhoods, they have not yet been able to fundamentally address the situation of the urban poor because all their

actions have remained controlled by the state. The interface between the state and CSOs is central in addressing group interests.

For grassroots organizations to exercise their civil rights, there needs to be a political environment that respects the fundamental freedoms of its people as citizens. This is also the goal of many grassroots organizations in urban areas. The relationship between the state and CSOs has a certain history in Africa which is relevant to their role today. Mamdani (1996: 15) highlights the need for understanding such a relationship and the power applied by the state to achieve control. Historically, this relationship has been shaped by different modes of state control, although the state attempts to subdue grassroots organizations by bringing them under its control. This does not necessarily imply complete control for either. The bifurcation of power during colonial rule in Africa has had a far-reaching impact on causing disjunction between the state and society in post-colonial Africa. Mamdani (1996: 18) argues that colonial power established two systems of power under one authority: direct rule was applied in urban areas, with indirect rule in rural areas. In urban areas, direct rule was devised to exclude Africans from 'civil freedoms guaranteed to citizens in civil society'. The nature of this rule set the stage for different forms of CSOs in urban areas. Although there was little or no space for civil society activism then, throughout African cities there was an extraordinary level of popular mobilizations and the formation of various popular organizations around the struggles for basic rights. The nationalist leadership was able to unite these groups and ignite their ambitions in the promise that, through independence, all their aspirations would be achieved. At the dawn of independence, the post-colonial or 'developmental' state of the 1960s and 1970s allowed some role to popular discourse and practice and sought popular consent (Neocosmos 2002: 43). But having political power in its hands, the nationalist leadership was unwilling to hand over the same rights to others. The popular groups that enabled the nationalist leadership to come to power lost their ground and purpose to the extent that they were seen as blocking the new state. Many popular organizations were banned, constrained or incorporated into state structures (Mamdani 1996: 15).

In the contemporary period, relations between the state and many sectors of civil society are characterized more by hostility than by cooperation or partnership (Neocosmos 2002: 48). Such hostile relationships are fuelled by the hegemony of dictatorship in many African countries and the decline in urban resources. The drive of the state and the international financial institutions towards deepening privatization and the commercialization of urban services during the 1980s led to serious changes in the patterns of state-grassroots organizations. It laid the basis for the emergence of a new form of urban consciousness that questions the principle of state control. Many groups started to organize at community or neighbourhood level, struggling against privatization, service cutbacks and evictions in the main urban areas.

As the flow of support from the west became the major condition for state reproduction, there was little concern for popular consent. The state's relationship with its citizens has been confined to mainly 'administrative and coercive relations' (Neocosmos 2002: 44). Clear forms of coercion are therefore employed by the state against these organizations' activities. Grassroots organizations in urban areas are less able to effect positive chance in the lives of the poor and are increasingly less able to demand rights and social entitlements (Mitlin 2001: 158). They lack the capacity to 'reduce the symptoms of urban poverty (such as exclusion from access to basic services) as well as to address some of the more structural causes that result in a lack of empowerment and

powerlessness' (Mitlin 2001: 152-157). Their activities remain very much restricted due to government control over access to land and urban services. Local leaders may experience pressure from external sources as well as encountering problems in running the organizations. In many situations, the strategy adopted by CSOs is to toe the line with state officials and politicians in order to secure better offers from the sate to the urban poor. Politicians and state officials usually expect an array of personal and political profits in exchange for the services they offer (Mitlin 2001: 161). Under such circumstances, grassroots organizations tend to become part of the state or become apolitical in character.

Overall, grassroots organizations can conceal ambiguities and conflicts inherent in society. The problem of leadership of grassroots organizations is a key area. To an important degree, CSOs role is seen as being circumscribed by their leadership who have power over access to community resources or else control the organizations and thus create new patterns of exclusion and exploitation (Mitlin 2001: 156). In many poor neighbourhoods, the poor cannot actively participate in organizations that are assumed to represent them (Mitlin 2001: 157). Grassroots organization are, therefore, mostly not in a position to represent the interests of the urban poor, and their existence do not necessarily promote social integration or help in reducing the vulnerability of excluded populations living in large cities.

In summary, it is apparent that dissatisfaction with the social and economic effects of modernization and globalization has encouraged the emergence and informed the goals of many grassroots organizations. In Africa, due to the unfavourable political environment, these organizations are less able to represent the interests of the urban poor and dense networks of civic involvement are not a sign or a source of definite support.

## Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to identify the specific vulnerabilities of the urban poor by looking at the interrelationships between urban and rural livelihoods and the context-specific issues of particular importance to the urban poor. Urban and rural areas appear to be interlinked through various processes and relationships. Such interactions enable households to diversify their livelihood options but at the same time can present a source of vulnerability in both contexts. The urban context requires specific sets of livelihood resources for survival. Overall, the vulnerability of the urban poor is closely linked to their dependence on a cash income and their livelihoods, the type of livelihood activities they undertake and their exposure to the harsh effects of the market. This is particularly important in light of the commercialization of housing and urban services, constraints on land use and the lack of effective networks of support.

Wages and employment are important livelihood sources for the urban poor. However, there are several constraints on them that prevent the poor from realizing their potentials. Housing and tenure security are also sources of vulnerability. Ownership of or secure access to housing is central to ensuring access to other resources such as income-generating activities, education and health, as well as political rights such as registering to vote. Overlapping land rights and the plurality of property systems and institutions create conditions for reduced access to these resources. Furthermore, access to urban services is subject to local and national political processes. The withdrawal of the state from service provision and the handing-over of them to various non-state providers have affected people's access to these services. Informal provision is inade-

quate or expensive or both. A lack of security has various implications for livelihood activities, trust and well-being among communities and individuals.

The extent to which grassroots organizations, as a particular kind of social network, are able to penetrate and mobilize urban communities is dependant on various political actors with different vested interests, goals and ideals. Problems of plurality, polarization and conflicts of interest are all part of the existence of various social networks. These organizations are therefore less able to represent the interests of the urban poor.

These conclusions imply that understanding the vulnerability of the urban poor requires a flexible and dynamic approach that focuses on resources that matter to people most and the constraints they face in accessing them. Chapter 6 will look at the livelihood approach as a suitable framework for enabling such understanding.

# 6

# The sustainable livelihoods approach as an analytical framework

## Introduction

The previous chapters have provided a basic understanding of poverty that will guide the current study. Some cross-cutting themes run through the discussion and should inform the analytical framework. To start with, poverty is conceptualized as a dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon that goes beyond sufficient income or constraints on economic resources to constraints on the ability of the poor to make effective choices and act upon them. The concept of 'vulnerability' is seen as an important link to this discussion. The notion of vulnerability includes not only exposure to shocks and hazard but essentially people's capacity to deal successfully with these shocks and hazard. Vulnerability therefore denotes both the relativity of poverty as well as the numerous ways in which people 'are made vulnerable by other people' (Stephens 1996: 12) (see Chapter 4).

In the urban context, the vulnerability of the urban poor is seen as being accentuated by their dependence on cash incomes and the commercialization of physical infrastructure. The main sources of vulnerability include the labour market, the overlapping rights and plurality of systems and institutions in relation to housing, an overall lack of access to urban services, and ineffective local social networks (see Chapter 5).

Power constrains or imposes limits on what people can achieve. Since societies are made up of diverse social groups, the ability of individuals that belong to marginalized groups to access resources can be significantly eroded, leaving them more vulnerable to poverty than others. Hence, an individual's ability to achieve their goals depends on their position in the web of power relations. The perspective of social exclusion is relevant to understanding poverty because it brings to centre stage questions such as who the excluded qre, what exactly they are excluded from and who the formal and informal 'custodians' of membership and inclusion are (see Chapter 5).

Chapter 5 argued that the social exclusion of the poor and their lack of power in relation to the more powerful actors in society clearly indicate the need to create new mechanisms to enable them to regain power and control over their destiny. It is believed that, in its true sense, empowerment should lead to self-determined change. Therefore, the fundamental shift and transformation of power for the poor starts with the poor themselves. But that change should made possible by transforming the environment within which poor people operate and enable them to build and mobilize their own resources. The study is anchored on the premise that questions of empowerment require being located within the individual actor's social and cultural world. The poor cannot successfully change the rule that limits their efforts without power being enshrined in formal institutions. In this context, it is useful to distinguish empowerment, in the sense

of actors' capacities from rights. Right can empower the poor and marginalized groups to combat social exclusion on an empowered footing.

Conceptualizing poverty in the manner stated in the opening of this chapter provides the guiding principles informing this study as well as the causes and manifestations of poverty in the context of urban Sudan, in particular in Khartoum, the capital city. The tool with which such understanding will be translated into practical steps should encompass the main elements of poverty discussed earlier in a holistic manner along with its causal contexts. For this, the sustainable livelihoods (SL) framework is seen as a suitable tool since it adopts a distinctive way to analyze poverty as well as ways of intervening to improve the conditions of the poor. Users of the SL approach have indicated that it has enabled them to better understand some of the pressing issues in the lives of the poor, as well as the constraints, and trends in livelihoods. The approach has also helped understand differences between the various categories of the poor, and the significance of issues that were previously viewed as only technical (such as access to transport and information).

While the sustainable livelihoods approach is one tool for examining the main and common aspects surrounding poverty, it is not the only approach, and other issues which are not explicitly covered by the SL framework but impact on poverty will be incorporated in the adapted framework. These include power relationships (related to gender, class and ethnicity), history culture (values, beliefs, tradition, identity, notions of status) and rights. The suggested SL will also reflect the specific characteristics of urban situations taking on board the key contextual factors that are specific to urban areas, and treat them as mutually interrelated in the provision of the final outcome of poverty. The following discussion aims to provide an overview of the sustainable livelihoods approach and highlight the points that make it relevant for this study.

## Sustainable livelihoods framework

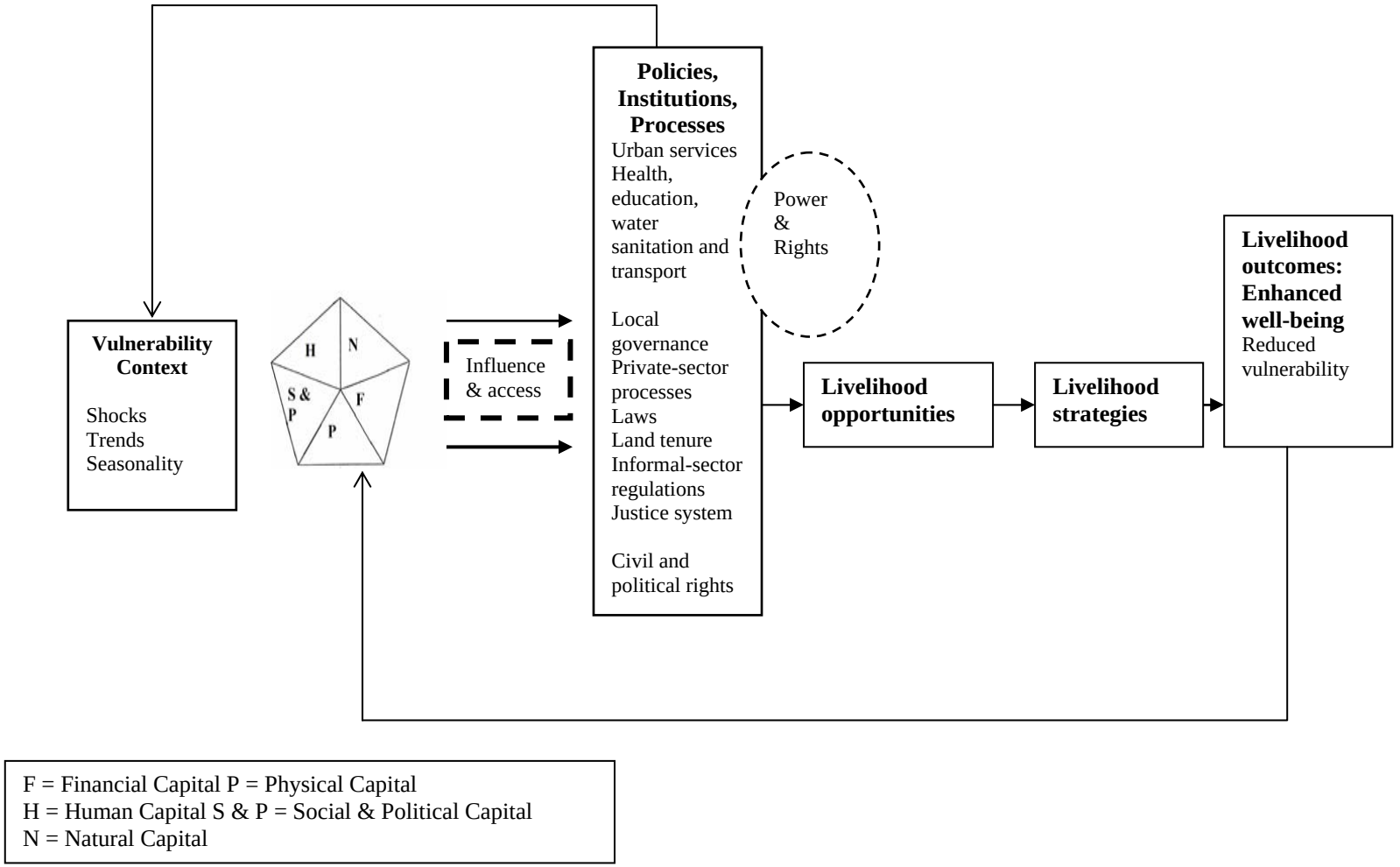
The SL framework represents a configuration of opportunities and assets available to poor people, as well as the sources of their vulnerability. It also includes the important dimension of the formal and informal institutions, processes and policies that constrain the efforts of the poor. The issues are illustrated in the form of five core principles that guide the analyses (Figure 6.1). These include the capital assets of households, the vulnerability context of households, the livelihood strategies, the policy institutions and processes and the livelihood outcomes. There are, however, slight variations between frameworks that are applied in rural or urban contexts. Overall, SL frameworks encompass the means, activities, entitlements and assets through which people maintain a living:

> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. (DFID 1999: 1.1)

Assets may be natural/biological (e.g. land, water, common-property resources) human (e.g. knowledge, creation by skills), social and political (such as community, family, social networks, participation, empowerment) or physical (e.g. infrastructure, markets, clinics, schools).

The SL framework starts with an understanding of these assets in order to reveal opportunities as well as constraints. The focus on assets does not imply that the SL framework place more attention on the well-off in society. Instead it reflects a recogni-

*Figure 6.1* Sustainable livelihoods: The analytical framework



tion of everyone's intrinsic potential, and other material or non-material assets such as health, labour, knowledge and skills, an affiliation to social networks, access to physical resources, or the capacity to influence key institutions.

The sustainability of livelihoods depends on the possible ways poor people mobilize their asset portfolios (or opportunity) on a long-term basis. Sustainability of livelihood implies the ability to recover from stresses and shocks and to maintain and/or enhance a living now or in the future. The concept of sustainability of livelihood is explained by DFID as:

> A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base. (DFID 1999: 1.1)

The framework also recognizes that the livelihood activities of the poor are dynamic and context-specific. Accordingly, it seeks to identify the vulnerability of the poor that results from unexpected shocks, long-term trends and seasonal stress (i.e. cyclical fluctuations in prices, production, health and employment). These factors make up the vulnerability context and directly influence people's asset status and the options available to them in pursuit of successful livelihood outcomes.

The next section will elaborate on the basic components of the SL framework with some reference to urban areas.

*Livelihood capitals (assets)*

At the centre of the SL framework are the assets that people draw on to pursue their livelihood. Livelihood assets or capital include a broad range of tangible and intangible resources, both material and social that individuals, households and communities can mobilize to maintain their livelihood or deal with shocks and trends. It was Chambers (1995, quoted in Farrington *et al.* 2002: 18) who suggested distinguishing between tangible and intangible assets. Tangible assets refer to physical assets such as stores, jewellery and food, which are usually owned by people who hold them. Intangible assets such as social claims or legal frameworks offer the opportunity to access resources over which people have no direct control. There are significant variations between urban and rural environments in terms of capital assets. For example while natural resources in urban areas have less importance, financial and physical assets are more important (Farrington *et al.* 2002: 4). Overall, capitals determine the capacity of people to pursue their different livelihood strategies. However, the distribution of livelihood assets in a given society is always unequal as factors such as class, gender and age may significantly affect people's access to livelihood assets. Hence, de Haan & Zoomers (2005: 32) view asset - whether tangible or intangible - as bases of power and a means of changing the rules that govern control over and the use of resources.

In the SL framework asset is classified in five major groups: human capital (or livelihood capabilities), social capital (claims and access), financial capital, natural capital, and physical capital. There is significant overlap between the different capitals. For example, social capital can determine people's access to a wide range of other assets. This conceptual overlap between access and control over assets is a common source of confusion. In general, for individuals and communities to pursue their different livelihood goals, they need a combination of different forms of capital.

*Human capital* (capabilities) comprises individual skills and education as well as good health i.e. physical abilities that enable people to work or maintain their livelihood. These are also determined by living conditions, sanitation, nutrition, primary health care etc. At a household level, human capital refers to the total and the quality of

the labour available. Human capital is crucial for making use of the other four types of livelihood assets.

*Financial assets* include savings, credit, remittances and pensions. Financial capital endows people with different livelihood options. In the context of today's highly monetized urban economy, survival depends chiefly on financial resources. Wages or income from the sale of labour are usually the most essential assets for the urban poor and to which they attach high priority.

*Physical capital* comprises the urban services available to people including health, water, sanitation and energy. In urban areas, housing is one of the most important assets for the urban poor since it provides not only shelter but can also serve as collateral and as an income-generating asset (Moser 1998: 24, Amis 1999: 37). Infrastructure and services have an interrelated influence on areas such as access to work, living conditions and access to income-generating opportunities. Access, quality and the affordability of these services to the urban poor are dependent on several actors and operate through a complex web of vertical and horizontal urban governance. These actors include formal (the state) and informal service providers (NGOs and the private sector).

*Natural capital* is defined as land, common-property resources and open access to natural resources that are utilized by people to generate a means of survival (Carney 1998: 7). Natural capitals are naturally occurring assets and are important to those who derive all or part of their livelihoods from resource-based activities (farming, fishing, gathering in forests, mineral extraction, etc.). They are mostly to be found in rural areas but their importance to urban livelihoods cannot be denied. Within the urban context a wide range of resources are included, for example, intangible public goods such as trees, land and water for household use and sanitation. The benefits of these stocks can be direct and/or indirect, and are intimately connected with property and user rights.

With respect to *social capital*, it is important to note that individuals and households can access resources by participating in social networks that are based on mutual reciprocity, trust and obligations within the community and beyond. Social networks and trusts are not ends in themselves, but are geared to provide new opportunities and enable members to achieve their individual and community objectives. The literature on social capital is controversial and contains agreements and disagreements on the extent to which social capital can provide support to the poor. Overall, most authors agree that social capital is an aspect of social structure that represents an asset for particular groups and individuals and which can be utilized to gain advantages and benefits (Putnam 2000: 319, de Haan & Zoomers 2003: 6, Baumann & Sinha 2001: 1). Social capital plays an important role in providing access to and control of many of the other capitals for various individuals (de Haan & Zoomers 2003: 6). A shared cultural identity and strong intra-group communication help people to access local resources. In addition, networks of solidarity can lead to civic engagement and political action. Moving up the scale, effective networks with state or civil-society actors may facilitate access to urban services.

In the urban context, Amis (2002: 10) observed a close relationship between chronic poverty and weak social capital. He argues that the capacity of some areas or some groups to respond to change in their external environment may diminish due to 'shortage of networks, [and] weak networks/patronage into the labour market'. Hence social capital is an important asset, one that can reduce vulnerability and enhance opportunities.

The urban poor seem less able to draw on social capital. Some authors argue that networks of support in urban areas are less effective due to social and economic heterogeneity. Such heterogeneity is assumed to contribute to reducing community and inter-household mechanisms of trust and collaboration (Wratten 1995: 24, Meikle 2002: 41). Furthermore, Amis (2002: 10) notes that the development of social capital in poor urban communities involves a closure of networks, which serves to develop norms of trustworthiness but also keeps some people out. He notes that the structure of small group social interactions in poor urban communities often encompasses insider/resident versus outsider/newcomers. Residential exclusion within cities contributes greatly to weakening social capital. In many cities there are exclusion territories, areas of concentration of poverty and unprepared peripheries that host the poor. For Rabinow (2003: 356), social fragmentation can result from the exclusion of these areas with the consequence of disintegrating communities. He argues that the organization of space creates a barrier to inter-personal and inter-group communication which enables the development, sharing and exploitation of resources. Therefore, the spatially isolated urban poor may lose the potential to utilize the social networks of a larger society. However, this does not assume the existence of close relationships generating access to resources. As DeFilippis (2001: 797) argues, the problem is not that poor communities are bereft of trust, norms and relationships but it is more that these relationships are not able to generate capital.

Nevertheless, the extent to which the poor can count on their stock of trust, norms, and reciprocity networks in times of increased vulnerability is also open to question. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 120) argue that as communities face crisis situations or become poorer; their stock of social capital tends to erode, making them even more vulnerable to crisis situations. Citing Deng (1999), Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 120), noted that although informal networks of support systems among the Dinka ethnic groups (of southern Sudan) were well developed, they could not stand the pressure of consecutive crises (war, drought, enslavement, displacement) that culminated in famine. These networks of support failed to the extent that local people refer to the famine crisis as ‘famine of breaking relationships’ (*cok dakrua*). The same is being seen with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. When a crisis hits, individuals in the community battle for control over the diminishing stock of resources, grabbing what they can to survive while excluding other groups. There should, therefore, be less emphasis on the supporting role of social networks during an extensive livelihood system collapse in complex emergencies.

Social capital exists as a horizontal linkage within and between households, extended family and/or among members of an ethnic group of similar status as well as communities. They also encompass a vertical linkage between political elites and ordinary citizens or what some commentators have called ‘political capital’ (see Pasteur & Shankland 2002, Baumann & Sinha 2001: 1, Rakodi 2002: 11). The ‘vertical’ dimension of social capital, as opposed to the ‘horizontal’, concerns power, representation and access to key decision-makers (Rakodi 1999: 318). People’s political capital determines how they access other assets. Citing Booth & Richard (1998: 79), Rakodi (2002: 11) argues that political capital acts as ‘a gatekeeper asset, permitting or preventing the accumulation of other assets’. Political capital is tied to individuals in their interactions with more powerful others at different levels in the public and private spheres. As discussed in Chapter 4, these relationships may allow or constrain the pursuit of different livelihood strategies. Power relations are seen as inherent in social norms and

networks that influence relations between civil society and the state or relations that can endow poor people with political capital (Rowlands 1997: 13).

Prominent social capital theorist Putnam has conceptualized social capital as win-win relationships based on trust, norms and values and built on mutual interest. He argues that 'Where trust and social networks flourish, individuals, firms, neighbourhoods and even nations prosper' (Putnam 2000: 319). However, critiques of such notions argue that this is not necessarily always the case. For example, strong social ties may also lead to immoral or unproductive actions that can be harmful to society (Durlauf & Fafchamps 2004: 5). Most importantly, de Haan & Zoomers (2003: 5) argues that same relationships that bring about benefits to individuals or group can be used to exclude and delineate separate spheres and hence become a source of vulnerability for others. For de Haan & Zoomers (2003: 6), social capital is a relational resource in the sense that it exists not as a possession but in individuals' relations with other individuals and entities. As a relational practice, it can create a dynamic of conflict and inequalities as well as harmony and support. Individuals, as mentioned earlier, endeavour to maintain livelihoods within a realm of power and there are differences of power between different individuals and groups, or within society. Actors with their conflicting interests can use social capital to achieve their objectives and, as such, social capital can lead to different outcomes due to an individual's actions. The more powerful can employ social capital to influence different institutions that mediate access to resources in order to pursue their personal interests at the expense of others. Human characteristics such as age, gender and class may determine access and type of social capital at birth. As such, social capital can be understood as both a *resource* embedded in social relations as well as an *access*. Use of such a resource resides within actors (*Ibid*.). Any analysis of social capital is, therefore, linked with an analysis of the structure of social relations that shape interactions between different individuals, groups and entities with different powers. This particularly points to the role of institutions and policies in this process.

To conclude this section, social capital denotes both vertical and horizontal relationships, as well as the political and social environment that influences social structure and norms. Social capital is not located within the actors themselves but is to be found in the relationships and personal interactions between and among social actors. An understanding of social capital should, therefore, take into account conflicting interests between social and collective identities and their impact on the way livelihoods are organized.

*Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs)*

The social and institutional context in which individuals and households maintain their livelihoods is referred to as Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs) and occupies a central position in the SL framework. PIPs operate at all levels, from the household to the global, and in all spheres, from the private to the most public. They are the main determinants of access to a wide range of capitals that people draw on in pursuit of their livelihood. The institutions, structures and organizations of concern to the SL framework refer to public institutions such as political, legislative, governmental as well as private institutions such as NGOs, commercial institutions and CSOs. Institutions also include norms, routines, conventions, beliefs, age and gender. Processes cover policies, laws, social norms, rules of the game, and incentives. Processes – whether formal or informal – determine the relationship between organizations and individuals. Essentially, PIPs govern access to public and private resources and determine the extent to

which people can use, substitute or trade between different types of livelihood assets. PIPs directly feed back to the vulnerability context by governing ecological or economical trends, alleviating or exacerbating effects of shocks or reducing the damaging effects of seasonality etc. They thus determine the outcome of livelihood strategies by determining the choices and the viability of people's livelihoods (Farrington *et al.* 2002: 2).

In the urban context, institutions of public-sector agencies, such as social services, play a significant role in exacerbating or alleviating the vulnerability of the urban poor. In addition, certain regulations determine the poor's options and feed into their multiple vulnerabilities, with the main ones relating to a lack of clear legal status of tenure and undertaking unregistered activities in the informal sector, which the majority of the urban poor are involved in. These issues influence the poor's livelihoods in general and also impact on their rights to register and vote, and restrict their access to urban and financial services (Farrington *et al.* 2002: 12-13) (see Chapter 5).

PIPs represent the sources of power and control in on-going processes of negotiation over livelihood access. Within the SL framework, people experiencing deprivation in any form are not seen as homogenous and passive victims who are subjected to the wider social processes but as active agents responding to change. While the poor spare no effort in challenging the odd situation, their ability to maintain a sustainable livelihood on their own initiative is severely restricted or diminished by factors beyond their control. Therefore, empowerment is seen as an essential concern for PIPs, a concern that enables the poor to have better access to assets and the strategic possibilities for employing these assets to influence the structures and processes (Carney *et al.* 1999: 9). In this respect, people's lack of effective rights in relation to the more powerful others constrain their ability to make meaningful choices.

To sum up, PIPs are central in determining access to various types of capital and they are relevant in both the public and private sphere. Policies, institutions and processes influence the outcome of livelihood strategies – the ways people combine and use assets to meet their objectives. Therefore, they are the source of power and control in on- going processes of negotiation over livelihood access. Incorporating the issue of rights allows better understanding of the way PIPs work for or constrain people's livelihoods.

*Vulnerability context*

The SL framework indicates that people's livelihoods and the overall availability of assets are primarily affected by trends, shocks and seasonality. Vulnerability refers to the situation and the factors causing poverty as well as the ability of individuals and households to cope and respond adequately in the light of these vulnerabilities. The vulnerability context represents a key dimension of livelihoods. Vulnerability in the framework refers to the exogenous forces in the forms of trends, shocks and seasonality. Trends can take place at different levels i.e. household, local, national or international, and can take the form of population trends, resource trends, economic or governance trends, technology trends, etc. Shocks can include human shocks, natural shocks, economic shocks, conflict, or crop/livestock health shocks. Seasonality relates to prices, production, health, and employment opportunities. Trends and seasonality are not necessarily always harmful but may manifest a positive change such as new technologies trends, a more stable climate or good economic trends (Pasteur & Shankland 2002: 7). These forces lie beyond the immediate control of the poor and influence the asset base, livelihood strategies and the outcome of these strategies. Forces are dynamic and

include social, economic, political, legal, environmental and political factors (Soussan *et al.* 2003: 2).

In the urban context, the vulnerability of the poor is closely related to their reliance on a monetized economy to meet their basic needs and their increased dependency on the informal sector, as well as insecurity of tenure and a lack of or limited access to urban services (Beall & Fox 2007: 6-7, Farrington *et al.* 2002: 4). A lack of residential options, except in hazardous zones, exposes the urban poor to environmental risks. In addition, as the poor tend to congregate in unofficial squatter slums without property or other rights, they are subject to periodic bulldozing. Cities are also characterized by heterogeneity and social fragmentation, with all the consequences of distress and desperation that can lead to violence and crime (Beall & Fox 2007: 7). And urban residents around the world, irrespective of their status or wealth, are becoming more vulnerable to the effects of violence and acts of terrorism.

Many factors within the vulnerability context are linked to PIPs, particularly those deep-rooted 'structures of constraint' that preclude individuals from exploiting opportunities. Pasteur & Shankland (2002: 7) have expanded their SL framework to include impediments to realizing unexploited opportunities. Opportunities embrace the prospect of a positive outcome from resources that have not yet been exploited, or rights that have not yet been realized such as social entitlements granted by law (like education) but people do not access them. Understanding this matter entails examining issues such as the costs of education, intra-household power relations and the need for child labour, prevalent cultural values, etc. It is imperative to recognize the importance of issues such as class, gender or race in forming significant parts of the vulnerability context.

The vulnerability context is dynamic and always changing. Understanding vulnerability in terms of multiple, overlapping factors affecting poor individuals and households is an important step. Soussan *et al.* (2003: 2) argue that for the poor it is not only one factor but often multiple vulnerabilities that compound each other and impair individuals' or households' responses to a specific event. Hence when dealing with factors within the vulnerability context, it is important to be aware of how various types of vulnerabilities influence each other.

To sum up, the vulnerability context represents the external environment in which people live and influence their assets and strategies. However, individual biography and life events are also leading causes of individuals' vulnerability. The vulnerability of the poor gains its meaning and value through existing policies, institutions and processes. It is necessary to understand livelihood strategies in order to understand the sources of vulnerability as the starting point in a livelihoods analysis.

*Livelihood strategies*

Livelihood strategies denote the activities that individuals, households and groups carry out to make their livelihoods. In this discussion, reference will be made to household livelihood strategies. Beall & Kanji (1999: 2) have pointed to the usefulness of understanding household-level strategies in order to reveal the dynamics of labour and income allocation as they relate to larger economic, social and political processes. Household livelihood portfolios draw on multiple and complex types of resources and activities, and the specific combination of assets and activities followed is commonly known as the household's 'livelihood strategy'. They can be long-term or short-term strategies.

Livelihood strategies can be seen as a broad rubric concept that denotes intentional and unintentional actions, with different reasons causing households and individuals to undertake certain activities at any specific time. Households may opt to diversify their strategies to cope with sudden shocks or to reduce risk *ex ante* by engaging in certain activities. De Haan (2000: 347-348) distinguishes between 'coping strategies' that occur as a response to shock and 'adaptive strategies' that are longer-term decisions and take the form of a 'normal livelihood strategy'. The focus on coping strategies and adaptation helps explain how people compile their efforts and resources in normal times and during time of stress. Coping strategies embrace a series of adaptive strategies not merely carved out to protect basic needs but also to achieve various ends higher up the hierarchy. Referring to Maslow's (1970) 'basic needs' model, Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 113) argue that the hierarchy of 'human needs' starts with the most important and basic needs for survival and moves up to the 'higher order' needs of love and belonging and self-esteem. Occupying the top of the pyramid is 'self-actualization', where individuals are able to fulfill their potential and are capable of being what they want. These needs have a positive relationship with each other.

The motives behind the carrying-out of certain livelihood strategies are dynamic, and compel or prompt households to diversify activities and resources to meet their different needs at different times. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 114) note that there is a close link between the type of stressful event and the specific reactions of people, which are commonly guided by their previous experiences in dealing with similar events. Ellis (2000: 41) suggests a differentiation between two types of livelihood strategies in rural areas. These are natural resource-based activities such as collection and gathering, cultivation, livestock-keeping, weaving etc., and non-natural resource-based activities such as trade, services, remittances, etc. Blaikie *et al.* (2003: 117) note that both production and income diversification are employed as coping strategies in urban areas. Strategies may also involve drawing on a wide range of social-support networks including rights and obligations within the household, the extended family and the community to assist in the current situation. Amis (1995: 147) notes that livelihood strategies in the urban areas are crucially linked to income and employment activities and argues that, for the urban poor. coping strategies often involve participation in multiple economic activities, usually in both the formal and informal sectors, which may eventually become permanent. Beall & Kanji (1999: 7) view the arrangement of reproductive tasks like domestic chores and child-rearing as forming a very important part of household livelihood strategies because they allow participation in paid work as well as activities that lead to the development of social capital.

Livelihood strategies are dynamic and may be intentional or unintentional (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 38-39, Ellis 2000: 10). Ellis (2000: 10) phrased it as follows:

> The construction of a livelihood … has to be seen as an ongoing process, in which it cannot be assumed that the elements will remain the same from one season, or from one year to the next. Assets can be built up, eroded, or instantaneously destroyed … Available activities fluctuate seasonally, and across years, especially in relation to larger economic trends in the national economy and beyond.

Households combine their assets and activities to suit their own situation (e.g. geographical local context, age, life-cycle stage, educational level, tasks) and in response to changing circumstances. Livelihoods strategies are informed by the compounded and different goals of the individual members within the household. De Haan & Zoomers (2005: 38-39) have questioned, however, the viability of using the term 'strategy' to imply intentional behaviour as they argue that the term 'strategy'

entails ‘deliberate or conscious’ actions. And this deliberate or conscious action is not always there even though ‘people constantly weigh different objectives, opportunities and limitations in response to external and internal circumstances that change over time’ (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 38-39).

The sustainable livelihoods approach suggests that a successful strategy will lead to an improvement and consolidation of poor people’s access to resources, which should result in an improvement in their livelihoods, decrease their vulnerability to shocks and stresses and lead to a more sustainable use of natural resources (Farrington, *et al.* 2002: 1, Rakodi 2002: 16). Several coping strategies may minimize the effect of the crisis for the poor temporarily but boost their vulnerability in the long term (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 117). Coping strategies can involve attempting to earn extra income when hardship hits through illegal or quasi-legal activities such as undertaking informal-sector activities, waste recycling or burglary. Other strategies can compromise the long-term sustainability of the livelihood system, contributing to the decline of soil fertility and the de-vegetation of the landscape. In the same vein Farrington *et al.* (2002: 16) note that, in the urban context, some of the temporary mainstay strategies employed by the urban poor to minimize costs such as ‘withdrawing children from school and marrying off daughters early’, just contribute to marginalizing the whole household as well as placing an increased burden on the women. In addition, A. de Haan (2000: 4-6) points out that although migration has increasingly become an important coping strategy, as well as means of improving livelihood, it has not radically helped to improve living conditions. Since multi-local livelihoods are distinctly age and gender-differentiated, the absence of particular household members may disadvantage others. Migrants often live in exploitative conditions that are associated with the deteriorating living environment of temporary accommodation, a loss of voting rights and restrictions that prevent them from influencing existing policies. Migration also has direct environmental consequences that can be serious, with declining vegetation and natural resources near clusters of migrants (A. de Haan 2000: 15).

The reasons why many of the strategies that the poor follow do not necessarily correlate with improved well-being or the sustainability of the environment have to do with issues of choice, structure and agency.

Coping strategies can be seen as ‘the manner in which people act within the limits of existing resources’ (Blaikie *et al.* 2003: 113). The literature proposes two broad reasons to the dynamics related to pursuing specific strategy types. These are the available assets as well as the opportunity to utilize them effectively. In this respect, de Haan (2000: 352) gives the issue of ‘access’ a wide berth, particularly with respect to its role in transforming assets into viable livelihood options. For de Haan, livelihood strategies are determined by access to one or a combination of the ‘stock of assets’ and opportunities that allow households to transform these into goals. Access thus concerns capital as well as opportunity, which brings the discussion back to the earlier one about the way policies institutions and processes work (or do not work) for the poor. This adds the dimension of power relationships to issue of livelihood strategies.

To sum up, livelihood strategies are the responses by individuals and households to changing internal and external circumstances. They are also influenced by the various choices, preferences and goals of different household’s members. Households pursue their livelihood strategies within the limits of their context and employ their institutional relations.

*Livelihood outcomes*

A livelihood outcome is the product of a livelihood strategy and feeds back into the vulnerability context and asset base. Livelihood assets are transformed by policies, institutions and processes that determine the extent to which an enabling environment for livelihoods is in place including the freedom that people have to transform their assets into their desired livelihood outcome. Factors within the vulnerability context, (trends, shocks and seasonality) impact directly on people's asset status and the options open to them to pursue their preferred livelihood outcome. Livelihood outcomes can lead to security and insecurity cycles of livelihood. A livelihood outcome is successful if it reduces vulnerability, improves income levels, enhances well-being, improves food security and allows a sustainable utilization of natural resources (Rakodi 2002: 16, Chambers & Conway 1991: 2) but it is not successful if asset bases are depleted because vulnerability then increases. Outcomes are judged against people's motives and priorities but the types of livelihood outcome that people seek often differ from the actual outcome they achieve.

## Relevance of the sustainable livelihoods approach to this study

The sustainable livelihoods approach focuses on assets, opportunity, household strategies and the sustainability of livelihood systems, a focus that provides a practical tool for understanding the way people go about their livelihoods and a means for supporting their efforts. One of the potential strengths of SL is its holistic nature. A holistic approach to the poor's livelihoods takes on board people's perceptions, priorities and aspirations. It concerns do not stop with the livelihood outcome but goes beyond to understand the assets that the poor draw on in pursuing their livelihoods (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 32). The approach also has the ability to link micro-macro levels from the local to the global in an analytical and systematic manner (Hulme *et al.* 2001: 25). It can thus depict the dynamic interactions of power relations within the micro-level of the household, network and community and the global influence.

Being people-centred, the livelihood approach offers a more successful approach to development, including participation and empowerment. It starts by focusing on people, their assets and activities and on what matters most to them. It takes people's strengths as a starting point and recognizes their active role in dealing with changes and exploring opportunities (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 33). At the heart of the approach are the assets on which households or individuals draw to build their livelihoods. While people in poverty may not have cash or other savings, they do have other assets, including their health, labour, talent, knowledge and skills, social networks and the natural resources they have access to. Through an understanding of these assets, the SL approach seeks to reveal opportunities that people are able to pursue, and the constraints that they can identify themselves. It focuses on people's aspirations and their capacity to take advantage of these opportunities. The SL approach's goal, therefore, is to enable people to achieve what they aspire to by supporting their strengths and assets. Its response is built upon the poor's own perceptions and priorities rather than experts' points of views. It has the potential to respond to people's needs in a realistic way.

An important advantage of the SL approach is its dynamic nature that allows an understanding of important factors such as the way in which household livelihoods change over time and why some households are persistently poor while others manage to escape poverty (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 32-33). A core element is vulnerability

and the approach provides a tool to identify vulnerable households and understand the reasons behind variations in vulnerability between households that have the same level of assets over time. This is done through the disaggregation of poor households on the basis of their diverse characteristics as well as their most pressing needs. Relevant to this is the recognition of the variations in the contributions of men and women in the household.

The sustainable livelihoods approach is considered suitable for understanding factors that enable or constrain people's livelihoods and tackles them, in their interrelationships, in a dynamic and holistic manner.

## Considering the livelihood approach for better policy interventions

The previous sections have described the main features of the sustainable livelihoods approach and its suitability for understanding factors that enable or constrain people's livelihoods in a dynamic and holistic manner. Nevertheless, the literature also reveals broad shortcomings in the approach that require substitutions or additions by other approaches.

Firstly, it has been argued that while the SL framework offers an understanding of the factors that influence sustainable livelihoods at a given context, it does not explicitly address issues of politics and power relations that underpin policies and processes. De Haan & Zoomers (2005) and Baumann (2000) argue that the conceptualization of power relations within the SL is incomplete, and there is a need to include a tool by which power relations are brought to the foreground. In particular, the livelihoods approach 'should include an analysis of the dynamic of power relations (or the wielding and yielding process) as part of its institutional analysis' (de Haan & Zoomers 2005: 37). Rights are one of many aspects of the exercise of power within the policies, institutions and processes that influence people's livelihood strategies and their outcomes. However, the way PIPs influence rights is also not clear (Marzetti 2003: 3). Also, the SL approach pays little attention to gendered intra-household issues of power and hierarchy. The household – whether in an urban or rural context – is a place where members cooperate and compete for resources. Different household activities are influenced by power relationships but research has established that inequalities of power and conflicts of interest within a household have a significant influence on the livelihood outcome (e.g. Kabeer 2000). A lack of clarity about power issues impinges our understanding of how access is negotiated, attained or denied.

One recommended way out is the incorporation of political capital into the asset pentagon. Political capital would cover the opportunity and ability to use power to enhance livelihood options. This allows an analysis of the operation of power and politics in the livelihoods of people. By its very nature, social capital embraces critical elements of power and political relationship. Hence it was argued that much of the operation of this capital relates directly to 'policies, institutions and processes' (Marzetti 2003: 3). Baumann (2000: 6) argues that incorporating political capital into the SL framework is important as it involves 'rights' that give rise to claims and assets that enable people to pursue their different livelihood options.

The emphasis on rights provides an additional analytical tool for understanding the weakness or strength of people's positions. As discussed in Chapter 4, the poor often have constraints on realizing and claiming their rights and people's access to effective rights can be analyzed through the way they are enabled (or constrained) from influ-

encing political processes that determine decision-making and access, or the way they are able to draw on political capital (Farrington *et al.* 2002: 25). The PIPs analysis can help in understanding the complex power relations surrounding the issue of rights that matter most to the poor. Pasteur & Shankland (2002: 5-9) have suggested approaching the interface between rights and livelihoods as they relate to people's aspirations and vulnerabilities, and influence their assets. People's aspirations are related to the weight and importance they attach to rights and citizenship. Vulnerability can be examined from the angle of lack of rights (such as labour rights or land rights) on the livelihood of the poor. Rights can be seen as assets and rights to resources. This entails examining the way rights influence assets, by identifying the main assets that are influenced by rights i.e. physical assets such as housing, economic assets like employment opportunities. These concerns can be linked to the way societal structures and processes set up, support or deny the legitimacy of certain of the poor's claims.

The second criticism has been the rigidity of the asset boxes in the SL framework. It has been argued that grouping people's livelihoods into financial capital; human capital, physical capital, natural capital and social capital is rather artificial and that the conceptualization of the assets themselves and what they should include is lacking. In urban areas this grouping does not reflect the specific nature of the interrelationships between assets, an example of this being the way 'natural capital' is conceptualized to reflect only those natural resources. Conceptualization of natural capitals in urban areas should also incorporate 'services derived such as air quality, waste assimilation, protection from floods and fire' (Mukherjee *et al.* 2002: 99).

The categorization of capitals does not explain relationships between them – i.e. if gaining more of one particular asset can substitute for another – and their dynamics over a lifetime. Empirical studies have shown that some of the resources that people draw on to secure their livelihoods will not fall exactly into these categories (see for example, de Haan & Zoomers 2005, Baumann & Sinha 2001). As de Haan & Zoomers (2005: 33) demonstrate, social capital may define access to natural resources and physical assets. Such a trend can also apply to different combinations and the substitution of other assets. Emphasis should therefore be placed on the flexible combinations of, and trade-offs between, various assets. It is also imperative to understand the dynamic and historical context within which various livelihood assets are combined in pursuit of different livelihood strategies. De Haan & Zoomers (2005: 41) propose using livelihood trajectories as a tool and methodology to understanding the way power is constituted and reproduced in daily life and the way it impacts on the livelihoods of people in the course of their lives. For them, this understanding can be made by examining the livelihood strategy portfolios that different households or groups pursue and the historical pathways they have taken. A livelihood pathway demonstrates a series of strategic and unintentional patterns of behaviour that have emerged over time. Life histories can demonstrate and explain factors behind long- and short-term changes.

To summarize, the sustainable livelihoods framework provides the most suitable tool to understand the livelihoods of the poor but there are two broad concerns. First there is the need to emphasize the flexible combinations of, and trade-offs between, various assets. It is also imperative to articulate a dynamic and historical context – the way various livelihood assets are combined in pursuit of different livelihood strategies. Second it is necessary to make power relations more implicit by incorporating political capital as a vertical dimension of social capital. In this regard rights can become a useful

entry points to address how power imbalances limit or exclude some people from the assets necessary to pursue a sustainable livelihood.

## Encompassing definitions of the urban household within the context of the sustainable livelihoods approach

This discussion aims at operationalizing the concept of the 'household' within the sustainable livelihoods framework. The concept of 'household' is commonly used as an analytical category that covers a wide range of residential forms, groupings of people and functions. The context within which a household operates (i.e. rural or urban) is also seen as an important criterion for understanding livelihood strategies (Beall & Kanji 1999: 2). Research has often employed the term urban 'household' loosely to refer to a collection of kin that share a common residence following the western nuclear model. Critics have pointed to the importance of the developmental cycle of the household over time that results in various forms of domestic unit (Beall & Kanji (1999: 2, Rakodi 2002: 7). The perception of extended family households as an arrangement that caters for and accommodates the sick and the unemployed is seen unrealistic because the process of household consolidation is a lengthy and dynamic process that constantly changes as people act and react to their surroundings. For instance, membership of a household may not determine mutual obligations and rights to the extent that a household can become 'fluid in size, composition and location' with members operating from multiple spaces (Beall & Kanji 1999: 3). The rural-urban linkages are significant dimensions to look at to understand household mechanisms. Non-resident family members who work elsewhere and send remittances and in-kind contributions provide important support to the household's livelihood. Urban households can receive support from rural family members in the form of foodstuffs, and others, as well as through looking after children, the old, and sick family members to free up other members for paid work. Despite the importance of such contributions, it is different from that of members in the household available to make 'day-to-day resource allocation decisions, accessing services, negotiating social relationships or participating in community level activities' (Beall & Kanji 1999: 3). De Haan (2005a: 5) also argues that in rural and urban contexts, individual household members are increasingly pursuing their own individualistic ways and goals. This has implications for the traditional assumption of a nuclear or extended family, as well as traditional patterns of labour division.

The process of decision-making within the household is regarded as a key area for understanding the dynamics of poverty (de Haan 2005a: 3). Several cultural, chronological and spatial dimensions of social difference influence intra-household decision-making and resource allocation. The intra-household allocation of resources and household decision-making processes are often seen and analyzed from different perspectives. The unitary models which were dominant assumed that a household behaves as if it is a single unity, with a single utility function. Such models have been widely criticized on the grounds that the household is an arena of different voices, gendered interests, unequal resource allocation, and probably conflict. Work carried out by Folbre (1984: 304) on poverty in the Philippines found considerable differentiation in the poverty status of different members within a single household dependent on factors such as gender, age and health status. She concluded that individual bargaining power played a significant role in their share of the household's total income. She also recognized that

relative bargaining power may change and lead to a changing distribution of goods and leisure within the household.

The drawbacks of the underlying assumptions of unitary models have led to the emergence of a number of alternative approaches that focus on the individuality of household members and the variations in their preferences and goals (Chant 2007: 32). Citing Alderman *et al.* (1995), Kabeer (2003: 4) argues that theoretical developments have provided the bargaining models of household decision-making as an alternative basis for theorizing about the household. The bargaining models of household decision-making recognize the conflicting views concerning the desired outcome within the household as well as the possibility of cooperation.

The 'cooperative-conflict' model is one version of this approach and recognizes that individuals within a household have different interests, preferences and access to goods and services. The realization of their various and probably conflicting goals is determined by their relative bargaining power (Chant 2007: 32). According to the perspective, a cooperative outcome would be more beneficial to all parties than non-cooperation. However, different members have conflicting interests in the choice of cooperative arrangements. Outcomes usually signify variations in the degree of 'bargaining power' applied by each household member. Multiple circumstances govern the strength of bargaining powers in that they are determined by 'fallback positions' or a member's ability to survive outside the household. Old models have conceptualized bargaining power as a function of economic resources (i.e. wage, inheritance etc.) that individual members could fall back on in cases when cooperation fails (Kabeer 2003: 4-5). However, recent models have incorporated issues of norms and attitudes of perceived interest response and contribution. They also incorporate the non-individual specific or extra-environmental parameters 'such as the cultural acceptability of outside work for women and laws relating to child support' (Kabeer 2003: 4). The 'breakdown position' for women is seen as worse than that for men due to their reproductive roles and their reduced access to education and employment opportunities (Sen 1990a: 237). However, 'neo-classical household economics are seen to lack the ability to fully examine intra-household relationships, particularly those related to power positions, asymmetric gender relations, inequalities and 'social-embeddedness' of the household within wider social relationships' (Kabeer 2003: 5). Understanding household units requires firstly looking beyond the household at the distinctive patterns of behaviour that characterize the way of life and relations of a society

To sum up, households are made up of different actors with different and possibly conflicting needs and goals, and different abilities to pursue and achieve these goals. It is necessary, therefore, to understand a household's units from the angle of the geographical context, as well as the rules, norms and practices that govern social institutions and reinforce certain patterns of decision-making.

## The sustainable livelihoods approach as an analytical framework for this study

The discussion in this chapter has suggested adopting the sustainable livelihoods approach in this study of the causes and manifestation of poverty in urban Sudan, in particular in Khartoum. It has been argued that the sustainable livelihoods approach is a flexible and dynamic approach that focuses on aspects that matter to people most in a holistic manner and provides a tool for understanding the constraints on achieving them.

The approach also takes into account the interrelationships between different forms of vulnerability among the poor and the systems of support available to them to deal with them successfully.

While the sustainable livelihoods approach is one tool for examining the main and common aspects surrounding poverty, it is not the only approach and it has to be adapted to suit local circumstances and overcome some perceived shortcomings. Therefore, while the SL approach's main elements will guide the study, other issues that are not covered explicitly by the SL framework but impact on poverty will be incorporated in the adapted framework. It has been argued that the presence of assets is not enough for households to build sustainable livelihoods but what is critical is accessibility to these assets, which is largely determined by power and politics. These factors are made explicit within the suggested study framework and it also reflects on the specific characteristics of urban situations taking on board the key contextual factors that are specific to urban areas, treating them as interrelated in the provision of the final outcome of poverty.

Defining the term 'household' is seen as an important entry point for the study. Households are complex units of analysis which are formed of members with different interests and goals. Intra-household resource allocation and decision-making are influenced by multiple factors including norms, values, beliefs and relations beyond the household. Hence there is a need to consider how these factors in turn influence the access of different members to different sources and types of capital.

*Research problem*

The previous chapters have provided a broad sketch of the constraints within which the urban poor in Sudan pursue their livelihoods. Shifting policy directions have impacted negatively on people's private and public endowments (their human and physical capital including their access to urban public services). There are indications that some groups have been marginalized (because they are more affected by the above-mentioned changes) while other groups have benefited from intricate networks of kinship and political affiliations. The aim of this study is to understand why some households have been able to escape poverty whilst others remain trapped in poverty or have experienced further decline. This focus entails looking at the way people conduct their livelihood strategies within the constraining effects of the social and natural environment.

*Research questions*

The main reason for applying the SL approach in Sudan was to investigate the following questions:

1. Who are the poor and who are the better-off? What capital do they have and how do they construct their livelihoods?
2. What are the key institutions and processes, including rights, that are concerned with providing, and/or denying access?
3. What have been the major changes for people in different periods, and what effect has this had on their livelihood strategies and what factors have shaped these processes?

*Type of data needed to answer these questions*

Based on these questions, information was collected on the following:

- Assets available to households and individuals within the household: access to and control over main livelihood resources, ways of using these assets and men's and women's priorities.
- The way rights influence access to assets, the main assets that are influenced by rights, i.e. physical assets such as housing, economic assets like employment opportunities.
- The operation of power and politics in the livelihood of the poor: the link between institutions and power/exclusion; the mechanisms that restrict or grant people's access to various resources, the social traits of the excluded individuals, people's ability to have a role in decision-making, the weight and importance that people attach to rights and citizenship, people's aspirations, and the way they have been able to engage and make effective demands on the state, kinds of collective actions.
- The rules, regulations and prevailing social attitudes and values, particularly those of powerful actors in society that sabotage an individual's livelihood strategies. Reconstruction of the experiences of events and changes that have taken and the ways of responding to them, sources of support that households depend on in times of need.

*Data collection methods*

Field research was undertaken between May and 13 July 2005 in four neighbourhoods in Khartoum. Earlier field research in 2004 provided the basis for a broader understanding of issues to be further investigated. Some of the case studies from the previous three years and up to July 2007 were also followed up. The selection criteria for communities aimed at monitoring the diversity and dynamic of livelihood activities and possibly comparing patterns. The first step in the field research involved the selection of communities where there were variations in livelihood means and culture. There were eight poor neighbourhoods in and around Greater Khartoum and the study selected four of them.

A visual assessment was made of the eight poor neighbourhoods before selecting the four. A visit was paid to each neighbourhood to note the quality of housing, market-based activities, the availability of health and education facilities, the appearance of the children on the street and the quality of their clothes, population density, service coverage, exposure to calamities, dominant housing pattern, etc. Although this might seem a cursory appraisal, given the lack of other means to identify which neighbourhood is poorer than others, this form of substantiation seemed necessary. On the basis of this information, four eligible neighbourhoods were selected which represented the 'poorest', 'better-off' and those 'in between' among the eight poor neighbourhoods. The four neighbourhoods selected were Al-Baraka (previously Kartoon Kassala), Mayo, Dar es Salam and Siriha because they represented an interesting diversity in terms of comparative well-being and ethnic make-up. Siriha neighbourhood was selected as it showed considerable socio-economic progress compared to the other three areas despite being the most recently established. Finding it would shed light on how households and communities have managed to improve their well-being. Mayo was selected because it was the city's poorest neighbourhood despite being one of the oldest. The other two neighbourhoods seemed to fall in the middle between the Siriha and Mayo in terms of well-being. Al Baraka neighbourhood is the oldest neighbourhood among the four, yet the general conditions appeared to be lower than in Dar es Salam. It was hoped that these variations would depict the diverse constraints each community was facing.

The four neighbourhoods are distributed over the three cities of Greater Khartoum on the outskirts of: Khartoum, Khartoum Bahri and Umdurman (see Map 3.1).

*The selection of the sample households*

Seventy households were selected in each neighbourhood using a stratified sampling technique. Instead of selecting from the neighbourhood as a whole, the selection opted to use geographical divisions (blocks) for each neighbourhood. Abusin (2003: Appendix B) found that using stratified sampling based on geographical location was the most suitable technique for Participatory Poverty Assessments in such areas because of the danger of excluding some households when using a list of inhabitants as a basis for selection. Most importantly, those neighbourhoods are increasingly expanding and newcomers are usually not known to the formal authorities.

Selecting blocks therefore allowed the inclusion of newcomers as well as the poorest who live in 'illegal' temporary shacks. The geographical division of each neighbourhood was as follows: Mayo was divided into 16 blocks, Al Braka 11, Dar es Salam 12 blocks and Siriha 12 blocks. Around a quarter of the blocks from each neighbourhood were selected at random (see Table 6.1). The study then opted to explore the full continuum of well-being levels in the block. Community meetings were held with members of the selected blocks and neighbourhood residents with good community knowledge. These meetings involved diverse groups of the population (men, women, youth, different ethnic groups, power groups). Participants defined what they believed to be the categories of poverty in the community and proposed the terminologies, definitions and meanings of words that express poverty and well-being in their community. These meetings classified households into four broad levels of well-being: those who are 'always poor' (*tabaneen*) and usually need assistance to cope, the 'sometimes poor' or (*nus nus*), the 'medium' (*wasat*); and the last were the 'non-poor' (*murtaheen*). This classification relied mainly on the type and stability of employment and the duration of poverty. Other factors that people saw as placing households apart from the rest included ownership of a dwelling, affiliation to a powerful network, and having access to electricity (grid or power generator) for lighting.

*Table 6.1* Selection of households according to well-being category

| Neigh-bourhood | Popula-tion 2004 (x1000) | Estim. popula-tion per block (x1000) | No. of blocks | No. of selected blocks | No. of selected h'holds from each block | No. of selected non-poor house-holds in each block | No. of selected sometimes poor h'holds in each block | No. of selected 'medium' house-holds in each block | No. of selected always poor house-holds in each block |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mayo | 517 | 32 | 16 | 4 | 16,16, 19,19 | 2,2,3,3 | 5,5,5,5, | 2,2,3,3 | 7,7,8,8 |
| Dar es Salam | 480 | 40 | 12 | 3 | 22,23, 25 | 3,3,4 | 6,7,7 | 3,3,4 | 10,10, 10 |
| Al Baraka | 343 | 3 | 11 | 3 | 22,23, 25 | 3,3,4 | 6,7,7 | 3,3,4 | 10,10, 10 |
| Siriha | 8 | 0.7 | 12 | 3 | 22,23, 25 | 3,3,4 | 6,7,7 | 3,3,4 | 10,10, 10 |

Seventy households, distributed along the line of wealth ranking identified by the community, were randomly selected from each neighbourhood (see Table 6.1). Given that the goal of the study was to understand qualitatively the nature and dynamics of poverty, it was necessary to insert a measure to ensure that respondents represented predominantly the poor, and included some of the poorest of the poor. The division was as follows: 30 households from the 'always poor'; 20 from the 'sometimes poor'; 10 households from the 'medium'; and 10 households from the 'non poor'.

The methods used for data collection and analysis were participatory, in line with the framework that seeks to understand the opinions of members of the community, and especially poorer men and women, in matters concerning their daily reality and their ideas about ways of addressing these issues. The Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) drew from the lessons learnt from the first PPA and aimed to complement the poverty trends observed in the preliminary study. Various participatory techniques were used including household survey, community survey, focus group discussions and interviews. The interviews and meetings were semi-structured with open-ended questions and topics for discussion prepared in advance. Question were added or omitted as appropriate. Interviews and meetings with local men and women, children and leaders were held in the neighbourhoods selected. The knowledge of individuals whose socio-economic status provided them with a better ability to give a vivid account of poverty was sought through livelihood analysis or life histories, even if these people were no longer residing in the neighbourhood. In-depth life history interviews that provided a retrospective view of trajectories of change were conducted with 40 households representing all the social classes in the four localities. The life history interviews were geared at generating information regarding determinants of certain routes in individuals' lives and the availability or absence of options. Interviews also included those who were considered to be 'non-poor' in order to highlight the main features that differentiate them from the poor and, most importantly, to understand why they were not falling into severe and/or long-term poverty. Officials and leaders of large organizations at district and provincial levels were also interviewed. Secondary data were collected at different levels, notably local statistics and provincial strategy documents. Both qualitative and quantitative data were generated. The collective perceptions and estimates obtained from participants' life experiences formed the basis for analysis. On-site analysis was made by participants through visual diagrams, maps matrices, calendars etc. The analysis did not attempt to aggregate findings from the study areas to the larger population.

The next part of the study presents the empirical analysis and is divided into four chapters. Chapter 7 provides a brief comparative perspective of the study areas and then identifies some of the major policies, institutions and processes operating in the areas, and analyzes the way they shape the poor's opportunities to make meaningful choice. Chapter 8 highlights livelihood diversity and the different kinds of activities that households undertake. It examines how this mix of activities varies according to a household's resources and in response to external shocks and stresses. Chapter 9 examines access to resources by households in the different well-being categories and in Chapter 10 life paths provide a retrospective view of trajectories of change and generate information regarding determinants of certain routes in individuals' lives and the availability or absence of options. The last chapter summarizes the study's findings and provides some concluding remarks and policy notes.

# 7

# Poverty profiles of the four neighbourhoods

## Introduction

The number of people living in informal settlements around Khartoum has grown rapidly since the early 1970s. This can be seen in the increasing number of informal settlements, as well as their size. There are various reasons why people came to these new neighbourhoods but war and environmental crises were two of the most important driving factors. The deterioration of security in rural areas has led to increased armed robberies of cattle and property and this has been a significant push factor that forced people to take refuge away from their original homes. In addition, mechanized farming has forced former producers to move to the city in search of paid jobs. The peak of the mass exodus of rural populations took place mostly during the mid-1980s. Even for people from the city, costly and restrictive bureaucracies have contributed to the exclusion of the poor from formal (legal) housing or land ownership, forcing them into the city peripheries. Others were forced to relocate to certain neighbourhoods for municipal planning reasons. The very existence of these neighbourhoods reflects the difficulties many face in securing affordable housing to such an extent that they have been spatially excluded from living among those who are able to pay more.

The selected study neighbourhoods – Mayo, Siriha, Dar es Salam and Al Baraka – share common characteristics but are also intrinsically unequal and different. The four neighbourhoods are located over a wide and complex geographical area. Being on the outskirts of Greater Khartoum, they were not officially included in the city's structure and there has been no provision of basic urban services including water, electricity, sewers or paved roads. Some of these neighbourhoods have become partially formalized but there are also variations in terms of the size of formalized space in each neighbourhood. There is a clear line of stratification between these neighbourhoods and the main city, with these neighbourhoods being inhabited by low-income people mainly working in the informal sector. Some of them lack titles or deeds to their plots since land is seized through 'invasion'. Houses of the neighbourhoods are made mainly of mud and thatch. The majority have used flimsy scrounged materials such as plastic sheets, cardboard or scrap metal and the cheapest construction materials for roofing. Such structures are easily swept away by floods or destroyed by storms. The majority of houses consist of one to two rooms that are occupied by as many as 19 household members. Ironically even lower quality housing has started to emerge in the marginal peripheries of these neighbourhoods on the relatively less-valuable land.

The following sections provide a brief comparative perspective of the study areas and identify some of the major policies, institutions and processes that operate in these areas. They analyze the way these, in turn, shape the opportunities the poor have to make meaningful choices, including localities (*Mahalyat*), popular committees, regulations on small-scale and micro-enterprises, *Zakat*: (Social Development Fund) land tenure system, NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), traditional headmen, ethnicity and gender.

## Characteristics of the neighbourhoods

*Mayo*

Mayo is the largest and most diverse neighbourhood of the four in the study. It is located near Khartoum's southern border (see Map 3.1) about 22 km from the centre of the city. Administratively, Mayo belongs to Jebel Awlia locality and is divided into 16 blocks. Each block has a popular committee made up of six appointed members to liaise between their block and the locality. Until 1970 the area used to be a savannah-like forest with small trees, vegetation and shrubs that functioned as a protective shield for the city from strong sand storms. Trees were removed by the government to make space to relocate informal settlers who used to live in the central areas of the city. The neighbourhood has neither agricultural resources nor water resources. To the west of Mayo, about 5 km away, is Yarmouk, the industrial area for military equipment. To the south-east, there are new plans for a future industrial area for the State of Khartoum. About 0.5 km from the northern edge of the neighbourhood is Khartoum's main sewage site where waste from septic tanks is disposed of and flows untreated. Mayo's location poses enormous health hazards for its population who come into direct contact with fecal waste. Houses in Mayo are built using mud bricks or mud with wooden poles, bamboo and grass for roofing, and they are sealed with treated animal dung for protection to prevent erosion by the rain. Housing conditions get worse during rainy season because the houses are made of bricks, cement and grass.

According to the Locality Reports (LJAM 2004), Mayo's population was estimated at 517,000 persons in 2004. There are around 22,000 houses and shacks, giving an average of 23.5 persons per house/shack. However, the average number of household members within the sample point to far less than the average. This difference is attributed to the methods undertaken by the locality, which considered the number of people to a single doweling of an average of 250 sq m. Such space can house up to six different households, as the study revealed. Mayo is the most crowded neighbourhood of the four selected. It is also the fastest-growing neighbourhood, with a population that is believed to have doubled since the mid-1990s (LJAM 2004). The inhabitants of Mayo are mainly Africanized ethnic groups and include the Nuba ethnic group (23%), the Fur (22%); then West-African ethnic groups (21%), groups from southern Sudan (20%) and other small Arabized and non-Arabized groups (circa 14%) (LJAM 2004: 7).

People started to live in Mayo in 1972 and although Mayo is the second oldest neighbourhood compared to Dar es Salam and Siriha, its urban services and tenure insecurity are by far the worst among all the areas. The majority of 'early comers' were relocating from other sites where they had seen their houses demolished by the municipality. They were promised legal rights of land but such promises did not materialize for many until 1992. A long process preceded granting people legal access to land and included collecting fees from inhabitants for registering land. Demolition and eviction

are commonplace and some people have been through demolition as many as eight times. Those who opposed demolition and went on demonstrations were jailed. They were whipped and humiliated in front of everyone and campaigning for land rights even cost some people their lives. Therefore, a lack of tenure security and the fear of demolition represent the most stressful and traumatic events for many inhabitants of Mayo. According to locality records (LJAM 2004: 9), 61% of Mayo's population has legal rights to the land they occupy, while the rest are squatting, renting or staying with relatives. The locality estimated that 20% of the populations are squatters and 19% are renting. Plots sizes range between 200 to 300 sq m. Security of tenure is lowest in Mayo compared to the other three neighbourhoods. The government approved the allocation of land for those who were residing in the area for a particular length of time and many of Mayo's residents have put their scarce resource into land that they are not sure they will be allowed to stay on tomorrow or not.

Different types of livelihood activities are practised but there are clear variations between the involvement of men and women. Very few of the men or women work in government or white-collar jobs. The main activity for men is casual work: agricultural work, housing construction and concrete work, blacksmithing, welding, metal work, carpentry, mechanics and electrical work. Large numbers of women from the Mayo sample are active in different income-generating activities, including local vending/petty trade, home industry, agricultural work and as domestic workers in the main city. Child labour is more apparent in Mayo than in the other neighbourhoods. Small children from the age of six onwards are undertaking laborious work and work long hours selling merchandise on the streets or working as loaders, domestic workers or shoe polishers. Although most of the ethnic groups do not approve of prostitution, it is practised by young girls from the age of nine onwards in Mayo itself and beyond.

For Mayo's men and women, transport costs represent an important barrier to working out side the neighbourhood, reducing any profits on income from casual or permanent jobs. The city's tarmac roads do not reach beyond the neighbourhood's northern border. Some of the internal roads are made of gravel or earth and the quality of all of them is very poor. Transport for passengers and freight by both non-motorized and motorized means becomes extremely difficult during rainy season.

The neighbourhood's main source of water is from boreholes provided by the locality but there are some hand pumps and open wells. According to the locality, water from boreholes is connected to around 50% of houses while the other 50% have to buy water for everyday purposes. Even for those who are lucky enough to have a private tap on their premises, the water supplied is not suitable for drinking. Of the sampled households, none has access to safe drinking water and to add to the problem, the water pressure is low and people have to wait for hours to get what they need. Some of the network connections do not function properly. The main source of drinking water in Mayo is water vendors, if people can afford it. The cost of water ranges between SP 300 and SP 2,500 (Sudanese Pounds) per day if there is no dust or rain but this can double if the weather conditions are bad.

Mayo is the worst-off among all neighbourhoods in terms of public health. A leper settlement was set up in the middle of Mayo with 31 households and 200 members. They mix with the healthy in their daily lives without using protection. The presence of the municipality's main sewage system just half a km from the neighbourhood is a serious health hazard. Stagnant water from poor drainage and streams blocked with uncollected refuse are breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other pests that are carriers

of disease. The community meetings (CM-M-1) revealed that the residents of Mayo neighbourhood regularly suffer from malaria, diarrhoea and various infections. Limited health-care options and the high costs involved mean that people are less likely to seek preventive care that could help them better manage their illnesses. The costs of consultation and treatment are often beyond the ability of the majority to pay. There are three clinics provided by NGOs and these represent a somewhat more affordable option compared to private and government clinics, charging between SP 2,000 to SP 3,000 ($0.80-$1.20) per person per visit. The neighbourhood has two hospitals but the facilities are poor and not even glucose is available for dehydrated children in emergencies. The neighbourhood has no access to grid electricity although some better-off households have power generators to light houses and to earn extra income. Crop residues, firewood and dung are used as the main fuel for cooking. Coal is also sometimes used for cooking but its use is limited due to its cost.

*Al Baraka (Cartoon Kassala)*

The neighbourhood of Al Baraka is in the southeastern part of Khartoum North (Bahri) (see Map 3.1). The neighbourhood is divided into 11 residential blocks and, according to the locality records (WB-16S, 2004), there are around 34,270 persons living in 5,200 houses, which averages 6.5 people per house. The sample data show that households have an average of 7.7 persons. Its administration falls under the Eastern Nile Locality. Al Baraka is bounded to the west by Silate (a government agricultural scheme) and to the northeast by the Khartoum North industrial area. Due to its location, Al Baraka is prone to fumes and the effects of toxic waste from the industrial area. The whole area used to be squatter settlements and houses then were made of cardboard boxes; which is where it got its name Cartoon Kassala from. Recently the name was changed into Al Baraka (or the blessing). Now the area is classified as a third-class neighbourhood according to the Ministry of Housing. Part of the neighbourhood is still a squatter settlement, and residents are not sure whether they will be able to secure legal rights to the land they occupy or not.

People started to inhabit Al Baraka in 1971 which makes it the oldest of the four neighbourhoods. At this time the government removed the informal settlers by force from the industrial area of Bahri and relocated them to Al Baraka. The pioneer residents of Al Baraka were mainly factory workers in the industrial area who had moved together at least twice before they landed in Al Baraka in 1971. Other residents whose informal houses were demolished by municipal planners have also come to reside in Al Baraka. The neighbourhood has grown larger as people have continued to come from the main city as well as different parts of the country. Inhabitants who chose to settle in the neighbourhood of their own will preferred it to the city since land in the neighbourhood is attractive to the better-off and so there is no competition for it.

According to the Eastern Nile locality (WB-16S 2004: 12), 74% of AL Baraka's population has a secure tenure status. The locality estimated that only 12% are squatters and 14% are renting. Plot sizes range between 200 and 300 sq m but some households have much smaller or larger plots. Land ownership represents a constant source of insecurity for many and while some inhabitants have been provided with formal tenure status, for others the situation remains unclear. As in Mayo, those who have no legal status have been threatened with demolition several times, with bulldozers set to completely demolish their homes. Some families have seen their homes destroyed as many as five times.

The neighbourhood is inhabited by various ethnic groups. While Africanized groups predominate, there are relatively more Arabized groups here as compared to Mayo. According to the locality records (WB-16S 2004: 4), the largest groups are the southern ethnic groups (a mixture of Dinka, Shuluk, Baria, Tabsusa, Lokoyo, Jure, Balanda, and Madi) which account for 35% of the population. Ethnic groups from Dar Fur (the Fur, Zagawa, Bgarra, and Hawsa) represent 15% of the population, ethnic groups from the Nuba Mountains represent 14% of the population and other Arabized and non-Arabized groups make up 36% of the population.

The majority of the population are unskilled workers in the informal sector. The Silate agricultural project is an important centre for casual work for both men and women with around 25% of the adult population working on the scheme on a seasonal basis. A predominant proportion of the work associated with ploughing and sowing is conducted by men, while the women work in vegetable harvesting. Men also work in the industrial area as unskilled labourers as well as on the poultry farms in the neighbourhood. They also work in building sales or in government offices. Some men and women work in the formal sector as messengers, cleaners, drivers and guards Women work as food vendors selling tea, coffee and food on the street or in nearby factories and markets. Some also work as domestic workers in Bahri city.

According to the Community Meetings (CM-B2), education was confined to NGO-run schools until 1993 but the government currently has ten primary schools and two high schools. The area also has 14 private primary schools. In addition, there are three adult education centres and two Koranic preschools (*Khalawa*). The teachers mainly come from the neighbourhood.

Until 2004 none of Al Baraka's population was connected to a private tap water. Currently, water is supplied on behalf of the municipal government by the Company for National Industry, a private body. At the time of the study, 62% of households were connected through this network but the rest were unable to afford the connection fee of SP 390,000 ($156) per household (WB-16S, 2004: 51). There is a fixed monthly fee of SP 10,000 ($4) for consumption. The Popular Committee in each block undertakes the administration of water matters in the neighbourhood but the company is in charge of carrying out all maintenance work. However, the neighbourhood can go for days without water due to the frequent problems in the main system. According to the community meetings (CM-B2), the most reliable system for water supply is water vendors' carts that come to the houses. Water vendors represent the most important source of water even for those who are connected.

There are three clinics in the neighbourhood. One belongs to the Sudan Council of Churches, one to the Committee for Muslims of Africa and the third to the government. They charge less for their services than private clinics. There is a government hospital about 7 km form the centre of Al Baraka. The area has no paved or asphalt roads connecting it with the city and no public bus operates within or between Al Baraka and the main city. All the present services are run by private companies at extortionate rates with fare ranging between SP 500 and SP 1000 ($0.20 and $0.40) for a one-way ticket for transport within the neighbourhood itself. Travel to the main city increases three- to tenfold, which is the equivalent of two working days for a woman on the Silate project. The community meetings (CM-B2) indicated that people mostly rely on donkey carts or walk within the area. Transport, including donkey carts, is available on the main road.

The neighbourhood has no access to grid electricity but some of the better-off households have power generators to light their houses- and earn extra income. Crop residues,

firewood and dung are used as the main fuels for cooking. Coal is also used for cooking sometimes but its use is limited since it is expensive. There is a significant connection between poverty and the use of energy in the neighbourhood. A famous proverb to indicate the poverty of others is ‘those whose houses don’t light fire’, which signifies a lack of what to cook and that they are unable to rent a bulb, buy kerosene or candles due to the costs of obtaining and using them.

*Dar es Salam*

Dar es Salam was established fairly recently compared to the previous two neighbourhoods. It is located on the western edge of the city of Umdurman (see Map 3.1) and lies on the southern border of the fourth study area, Siriha. On its southern and eastern borders it is surrounded by desert. The Libya Market and Mowelih livestock markets are located about 7 and 6 km respectively from Dar es Salam and provide employment opportunities for large numbers of the population on both a permanent and long-term basis. There are no agricultural projects or factories in the vicinity of the neighbourhood and among the three neighbourhoods it is the least popular due to its remoteness (around 17 km from the centre of Umdurman) from job sources and the main city. The area also has fewer restrictions on land acquisition and the price of land is much lower than in other neighbourhoods. Nevertheless in terms of general conditions (streets, buildings facilities), the neighbourhood looks much better than Mayo or Al Baraka.

People started to reside in the neighbourhood informally during the early 1980s; however the neighbourhood was not planned until 1991. The first settlers were groups from northern Kurdofan who had came from the drought-affected zones in the western part of the country. Other residents came from various southern and western states and as was the case of Mayo and Al Baraka, many residents were displaced from other unplanned neighbourhoods or came from Khartoum’s planned neighbourhoods. According to the locality report, the population is estimated at 480,000 people in 2004 (MDR-D 2004: 1). The number of houses is 60,000 houses, which gives an average of 8 persons per house. The proportion of those who own the land they occupy is much higher than in Al Baraka and Mayo. And 69% of the sample had legal rights to the premises they occupied. Houses are made of similar materials to in Mayo and Al Baraka and the majority of the houses have one or two rooms.

Unlike Al Baraka, there is an obvious variation between groups who came early (during the early 1980s) to the neighbourhood and those who came afterwards. The groups that came earlier were able to establish their houses in strategic locations and closer to the main roads where there is transport. They were also able to secure plots for their relatives, in addition to their own. These were later on either used by those relatives or rented or sold for newcomers. The majority of the sample households have no or only low levels of education and they lack adequate skills. Many inhabitants either have a small business or work as casual labourers in Suqe Libya (a big market on the southern edge of the city). People from Dar es Salam also work in various locations in the main city and in particular Umdurman and Khartoum North. Due to its proximity to Siriha area, some inhabitants of Dar es Salam work between the two areas. Some also work in the neighbourhood in petty trade, vending home industry, cart transport, construction, blacksmithing, welding, metal works, carpentry, etc. Women work mainly as domestic workers and petty traders. Unlike those in Al Baraka, the people in this neighbourhood have fewer options in terms of earning their livelihood.

There are 17 government primary schools for boys and girls but in these schools classes can have up to 130 students and the Catholic Church has 14 primary and secondary schools in the neighbourhood. There are six clinics only for first-aid services during the day but medicine costs are much higher in these clinics than in the main city. But since going to other centres involves transport costs, people have no other option but to use the medical facilities available locally. According to the community meeting (CM-D3), medical treatment is only seriously considered in emergency situations. There is no hospital in the neighbourhood or emergency medical services at night.

The main source of water supply in Dar El-Salam is the hand pumps. There are 175 hand pumps in total that were installed by UNICEF, ADRA and MSF Holland but currently a large number of them are out of order. Besides pumps there are four boreholes linked to elevated tanks. All the neighbourhood households have to purchase water from donkey carts because the poor quality of the piped water is considered an important source of health problems. Like the previous neighbourhoods described, Dar es Salam has no access to grid electricity. Some better-off households have power generators that they use to light their houses- and earn extra income. Crop residues, firewood and dung are used as the main fuels for cooking although coal is also sometimes used.

*Umbadda Siriha*

Siriha is around 7 km from Dar es Salam and just within the western border of the city of Umdurman. Compared to the other three neighbourhoods, it is the closest to the main city. Administratively, it belongs to Umbadda locality and is joined to it directly to its western and northern sides. As in the case of the other neighbourhoods, each block has an appointed Popular Committee but the Popular Committees in Siriha are formed from appointed traditional headmen of the ethnic groups within the neighbourhood. The Libya Market, one of the biggest retail markets in the country is around 1 km from Siriha. In addition, the Mowelih Market, one of the largest livestock markets is only a few km away. The two markets provide employment opportunities for large numbers of the population of Siriha.

Siriha is the most recently established neighbourhood out of the four selected for this study. People started to reside in the neighbourhood after 1984 and came here for similar reasons that other people went to the other neighbourhoods. According to the locality's records (MSUR-S 2004: 4), the total population is estimated at about 8,200 persons. The number of houses is 1,374 which gives an average of 6.9 persons per house. The main ethnic group in the neighbourhood is the Nuba (40%), followed by the Baggara (Kurdofan) at 25%, and a mixture of various northern ethnic groups (35%), The Shanabela ethnic group represents the neighbourhood's most affluent and powerful ethnic group.

The neighbourhood is in a fast-developing area in terms of urban services and the general conditions of the houses and inhabitants compared to the other three neighbourhoods. All the roads connecting the neighbourhood to the main city are paved and even some of the internal roads are also paved. Land in the area is much sought after due to the area's location and proximity to the city. Land prices are therefore rising fast and there are clear pressures to replace residential premises with more commercially lucrative buildings. More high-rise buildings are appearing in the zone adjacent to the main city, displacing the poorer people into areas where land is less valuable. The main occupation of the men is casual labour in which 38% are engaged (MSUR-S 2004: 7).

The women are more concentrated in vending and petty trade than in any other type of job. Working in the formal sector is not popular for men or women in the neighbourhood although they work in the nearby markets or the cities of Umdurman and Bahri. Transport to the city is not regular but is much better than in the other three neighbourhoods and not as expensive. Child labour seems to be low or non-existent in this area.

Khartoum Water Corporation provides water for the neighbourhood in the form of private direct-in-the-house taps and is responsible for the general maintenance of the network. A monthly water fee of SP 13,000 ($5) applies. Despite this rate, the majority of households in the neighbourhood have access to piped supplies but the majority still have to buy drinking water from vendors because the water pressure is very low. Siriha is in a relatively good position compared to the other neighbourhoods in terms of the availability of water as well as in terms of the prices charged by water vendors.

About 10% of the neighbourhood has access to grid electricity (MSUR-S 2004: 11), mainly the houses adjacent to the established neighbourhood of Umdurman. Although the electricity network is technically within reach of the majority, the poorer households were not able to have connections to tapped electric lines, poles or connections. This is mainly due to the cost involved in the process and which totals about SP 3,300,000 ($1,320). Unauthorized power connections run as high as 20% of those connected. According to the community meetings (CM-S4), kinships can make it possible to extned power lines to relatives, friends or those who can pay a specific amount of money for the convenience. Connecting to the main grid provide a source of power and authority for those connected. Those who are already connected to the grid suffer poor quality service and frequent blackouts. A few households have power generators that they use to rent out lines for neighbours. There are six schools in the neighbourhood: three for boys and three for girls. Children have to go to secondary school in other areas in the main city. There are four adult education centres, and the mosques are very active in adult education and in Koranic teachings in this neighbourhood than in the others. The neighbourhood has no hospitals but does have four health centres that charge a fee of SP 5,000 ($2) per visit. In addition, patients pay for medicines and examinations. Siriha represents the most developed neighbourhood among the four in terms of overall conditions, living standards, roads, hygiene and telecommunication facilities (telephones, post office).

## Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs)

This section outlines the social and institutional context that people in the four neighbourhoods construct and adopt in their livelihoods. It covers a wide range of issues related to participation, power, authority, governance, laws, policies, social relations (gender and ethnicity), institutions (laws, land tenure arrangements) and organizations (NGOs, government agencies). As Chapter 6 indicated, PIPs govern access to public and private resources and determine the extent to which people can use, substitute or trade different types of livelihood assets. Essentially PIPs represent the source of power and control in on-going processes of negotiation over livelihood access. PIPs directly feed back to the vulnerability context by governing ecological or economic trends, alleviating or exacerbating the effects of shocks or reducing the damaging effects of seasonality. They thus determine the outcome of livelihood strategies by determining the choices and viability of people's livelihoods. The discussion below examines the extent to which people's livelihoods are shaped by them.

*Localities (Mahalyat)*

The localities are the first level of local government in the neighbourhood and the main formal body in charge of local governance. Each locality encompasses organizational structures that represent all the state ministries at the locality level. The State of Khartoum, within which the four neighbourhoods fall, has seven localities. The study areas are in three of the seven localities: Al Baraka – the Eastern Nile Locality; Mayo – Jebel Awlia Locality; Dar es Salam and Siriha – Umbadda locality. The states (*Wilaya*) and localities' main responsibilities include the provision of basic education, health services and water supplies. The localities are responsible for primary and preschool education, while the states are in charge of providing secondary-school education, and the provision and distribution of textbooks to all pupils. Localities are responsible for the management and provision of primary health care and environmental sanitation, including garbage collection and sewerage management. Health care at hospitals, dental care, and the building of small water schemes and their maintenance are the responsibility of the states. Major functions performed by localities include street paving and maintenance, street lighting, street cleaning, garbage collection, regulatory functions (such as health and sanitation inspections in restaurants and monitoring zoning violations), revenue-generating projects, land development and town planning. In all the services provided, power remains concentrated in the hands of different state agencies that provide guidelines for the type, quality, extent and scope of the different services to be delivered (Maggate 2003: 24). Furthermore, some of the pressing issues in the locality might be ignored because they do not fall under their scope.

According to the 2003 Local Governance Act, the locality includes the local authority's agencies that have autonomy or discretion over local decision-making, local service delivery and the local allocation of resources (A.M. Salih, 2004: 6). The administration of the locality consists of a hierarchy of officials and workers headed by the Municipal Commissioner and twenty to thirty locality council members. The 2003 Local Governance Act indicates that a locality elects a legislative council, which in turn elects the executive body. The Legislative Council was denoted the legislation of local policy and supervising executive branch via an Executive Officer. The Act states that the members of the legislative council should be elected to represent different actors in society. Civil servants and technocrats, who may not be residents of the locality themselves, could be seconded from various government agencies to the locality. However, legislative councils were dissolved with no further elections (Abusin 2004: 5). An important point to note here is that while the states have devolved some power to local non elected localities, these localities have in fact been kept under central government control by various means. Maggate, (2003) notes that localities do not work towards common goals that cut across locality boundaries but that their work tends to be fragmented and restricted by budgets and regulations at higher levels. Each locality is subject to the jurisdiction of a higher tier of government, namely the State of Khartoum. The State of Khartoum is the main power broker at the sub-national level. In that, a locality is strictly controlled by the central government and maintains strong liaison with agencies at state level. These in turn delegate minimal authority and resources to local governments to coordinate services in their communities. The State Governor or (*Wali*) has the mandate to appoint local government staff as well as the chief executive and the senior civil servants who carry out the work in the locality. The State of Khartoum defines basic services, sets the guideline policies, provides some of the resources, facilitates local planning, provides technical assistance and training for

frontline personnel, and supervises and evaluates programme delivery in the short and long term. In addition, Article 19/3 provides that the State's government has the right to suspend enforcement of any local order issued by the localities, or introduce amendments to it (SLGP 2003: 17). The current law allows for minimum participation of local communities and places most of the power in the hands of the commissioner and the locality's senior staff below the authority of the state governor. The recent study of SLGP, Baseline Survey Report (2004) pointed out that the Local Administration Act 2003 'allows more central decision-making including the day-to-day management issues'. In the same vein, Hamid (2002: 4) argues that the country's administrative system is 'characterized by delegation of authority (*tafweedh*) and not devolution of power (*takhweel*)'. Those two systems of local governance are largely restrictive for the locality's autonomy and for citizens' participation.

Localities were not able to build effective participation with the community they serve, and this is the important reason for ordinary people's feelings of apathy, alienation and cynicism about government. Many of the federal and state services have been mandated without any consideration of local needs, priorities or interests. The focus group discussions in all neighbourhoods (FGD-M8, FGD-M5 CM-M-1, CM-B2, FGD-B6, CM-D3, and CM-S4) indicated that they were never consulted in any matter concerning their neighbourhoods. They indicated their mistrust in the locality and their fear of actions that the locality may carry out and that might lead to the destruction of their livelihoods or homes. The impact of these acts was serious and expressed in a range of ways in community meetings in Mayo and Al Baraka (CM-M-1, CM-B2). In Mayo a focus-group meeting with women (WFGD-M9) pointed out that despite their continuous complaints to the locality regarding the hazards the whole community face due to the presence of the main sewage site next to their neighbourhood, no action had been taken. Citizens and in particular marginalized groups are excluded or remained poorly integrated in the functioning of interest groups. To a large extent, local governance falls under the shadow of traditional politics, tainted by local patronage and dominated by local elites. The only means for citizens' participation in decision-making of the locality is through the Popular Committees and the headmen. In all the neighbourhoods, members of the Popular Committees and traditional headmen are selected from among the most influential people in the community. However, even those bodies have been marginalized from the locality's decision-making process and this has eroded trust in their capacity to accomplish anything for their communities.

The representation of women and different ethno-linguistic communities in the locality's administrative positions remains low and is confined to lower-level functions. The 2003 Local Governance Act states that at least 10% of the executive seats should be allocated to women but female participation in these positions remains very low across Khartoum's localities and particularly in the three localities studied (Abusin 2004: 75). This has also been affected by the long tradition of gender inequality and patriarchal values which place huge barriers on women's participation.

The grip of the central government's control has remained tight on local government resources and the localities have very meagre resource bases on which to draw. The 2003 Local Government Act (Article 26) outlines thirteen major funding sources of the localities.[1] These include real estate tax, sales tax and business profit tax, land and river transport fees, 60% of the animal and agricultural product tax, crafts and industry

[1] SLGP: UNDP & Ministry of Finance, Economy and Manpower (Sudan) 2003.

production tax, a percentage of state projects within the locality, health and business licenses, the rental of commercials shops in markets, house proceeds, cultivable land tax, herds tax, donations and credits, and fees on services provided by the locality. These venues are supposed to adequately finance the different locality's programmes. However, SLGP (2003: 10) demonstrates that many of these sources of funding, particularly those with high revenues, no longer exist. The reasons cited for this include the encroachment on these resources by state and federal agencies, which has led to an imbalance between the expected expenditure and the budget available to local governments. To generate additional funds, localities have assumed the collection of revenue from numerous taxes, fees and charges, which has resulted in a squeeze on people's already-overstrained budgets. Informal workers have experienced real difficulties in carrying out their livelihood activities under such harsh circumstances. On the other hand, a lack of or limited funds impacts on the availability and quality of essential services for citizens. This is also evident in the stagnation and deterioration of basic amenities at the grassroots level. All areas are suffering from an almost total lack of government support for local-level services. However, there are important differences between the neighbourhoods in terms of services provided by the three localities and the way they perceive and are attempting to solve local problems. Mayo is worse off than its counterparts followed by Al Baraka, while Siriha enjoys all the services.

To sum up, the term locality includes the local authority's agencies which have some autonomy over: local decision-making, local service delivery and the local allocation of resources. Locality is highly controlled by central government and maintains strong liaison with agencies at state level. At the local level, localities have not been able to build effective participation with the communities they serve. The only means of citizen participation in decision-making in the locality is the Popular Committees (PCs) of their block. The majority of citizens, therefore, and poorer people in particular have remained excluded from the functioning of their locality. And due to a shortage of resources, the localities have been unable to undertake their responsibilities and impose taxes, fees and charges and this has resulted in a squeeze on people's already-overstretched budgets.

*Popular Committees (PCs): 'Lijan Shaabia'*

On the bottom rung of formal local government are the Popular Committees (PCs). They were established by the Popular Defense Act of October 1989 but their role was revised in the 1994 Popular Committee Act, the 1998 Local Governance Act and lately in the 2003 Local Governance Act. Basically, these acts have appointed PCs as the formal bodies that represent their local administration and have reshaped their authorities according to state needs. While the PCs give the impression that the people in the neighbourhood are democratic and independent, this is not the case. According to the law and rhetoric, PCs members must be elected by their neighbourhood constituents, and undertake responsibilities designated by the locality's executive councils (Maggate 2003: 30-31). In fact PC members are still essentially hand-picked by the local authorities on the basis of their supportiveness. PCs are made up of adult males and none of the PCs in the four areas has a female member.

The role of PCs includes conveying government information to neighbourhood residents, passing demands upwards and mediating disputes between ethnic groups and within families. However, the Popular Committees play a far more powerful role in the livelihoods of the poor than this. Historically, the network of Popular Committees was created by the current government to provide a means of controlling residential areas

where demonstrations played a political role in toppling past governments. They were also created to propagate new political ideologies and to solicit popular support (Maggate 2003: 30). Therefore for a long time the PCs were used as a powerful means of infiltrating the communities armed with a wide range of authority that enabled them to undertake anti-constitutional activities ranging from searching and arresting people through to approving or forbidding private parties (HRW 1996: 129-135).

Although they were not paid a salary, they received sugar and other food staples at subsidized prices from government allocations that they could sell to people in their blocks at prices below the market price, and still earn some revenue. To receive their rations, households had to sign up for the PC and this way the PCs were given another control tool (HRW 1996: 265.). During the 1990s when the Sudanese government was experiencing intense economic hardship, one of the measures taken was the phasing-out and subsequent abolition of food subsidies. This measure led to a decreased authority of the Popular Committees for a while. However, they managed to regain power from the different roles and leadership they assumed in community life. According to community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4), PCs have full political, economic and cultural control over the neighbourhood, deciding on the eligibility of residents in their block to land, *Zakat* or social funding for the poor. They can support or reject job applications or requests for assistance with education and medical fees, and bank loans for small business. They can influence residential security, essential services and personal security, with members of Popular Committees enjoying automatic memberships in other committees in their neighbourhoods. For example, some NGOs when setting up a local committee to manage a certain issue in the area (such as micro credit or water) will select various members of the Popular Committee. An example is the micro-credit project for the elderly in Al Baraka that was provided by the Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) and Water Management Committees in Dar es Salam, Mayo and Al Baraka.

Overall, people felt that the PCs were relevant to their lives but that they were not to be trusted. In different community (i.e. CM-M-1, CM-B2) meetings, people tended to remain silent when in the presence of PC members. People avoid talking about governance issues or publicly criticizing the way PC members had handled their matters. However in face-to-face interviews, people expressed their mistrust, fear and suspicion of the PCs and poorer people, in particular, indicated that they were not supported by their PCs when they needed their advice or recommendation. Poor people who occupy land informally are more vulnerable to pressure and exploitation by PC members because the role of popular committees gains additional importance because they represent the residents in negotiations with the government. For example, the PC participates in negotiations and the acceptance or rejections of actions intended by the government concerning the rejuvenation of the area through demolition and resident relocations. Focus-group discussions (FGD-B10, WFGD-M9, and FGD-D6) indicated that PCs' opinions often did not represent a community's views since they usually approve whatever action the government intends to take against the residents. At the same time, they are in fact just tools used by the state to portray a democratic image for repressive purposes. While enjoying different measures of control over the neighbourhood, these committees have the lesser ability to press demands upon the local authorities (Maggate 2003: 18) They are more of a nominal organization with no power to protect the interests of their own members against government actions such as contesting government demolitions plans and actions even when some of the PC members themselves are

among the victims. The actual role and effect of these committees differ from one neighbourhood to another and from one block to another. It seems that most of them are ambiguous in their relationship to the community's interests and could intrude, conspire, spy or otherwise become a vital support to people in their block. The positive side of PC actions is never evident for poorer people.

The PCs are organizations that inhabitants regularly encounter whether they like it or not. Most inhabitants know at least a few or all of their PC members and interact occasionally with them in ways that involve some sociability. But at the same time, people are usually cautious in dealing with them and try not to express themselves freely in front of them, particularly at public meetings.

In summary, while PCs are assumed to represent people and facilitate their day-to-day affairs, the opposite may be true and PCs can become a major negative power that constrains the access of the poor to various livelihood resources.

*Regulations on small-scale and micro enterprises*

Activities of small-scale and micro enterprises in the neighbourhoods represent the main source of livelihoods for the majority. There are two main sides: planned markets and licensed work places or unplanned markets and unlicensed work places. The planned markets and licensed work places are approved by the local authority while the others lack the necessary permission to operate or operate illegally. Activities range from vending, blacksmithing, pottery, carpentry, the mechanical engineering of cars and bicycles, tailoring, to mending shoes, beds and household utensils. The environment within which these livelihood activities take place is characterized by abundant over-regulation, which continues to inflict losses on entrepreneurial activities.

There are several legal and administrative frames that the locality administers on behalf of the state and impact on these activities and the benefits that people can draw from them. The most important are the 1996 Society Security Act or (Public Order Act), the Public Health Act, and the 2001 Act of Violations (SLGP 2004: 2-10). The Public Order Act regulates small business, vending and vending sites through licensing, penalizing alcohol production and its consumption and controls public appearances and imposes a proper Islamic dress code, particularly for women. In addition, it also controls a vender's behaviour inside cafes and restaurants and prohibits the sale of tea, food and drink outside designated areas. Public Order Forces were set up as a law-enforcement body mandated with enforcing the above-mentioned issues. Public Order Courts were also set up to provide immediate justice for violations of the Public Order Law. However, while public-order courts were suspended in 2000 and public-order cases were heard in criminal courts, the Public Order Forces have remained in place. The Public Order Act constitutes a major source of vulnerability for women. The Act has its historical roots in Sharia law when the current regime introduced a rigid gender policy that entailed 'cleansing' the public space of women and imposing strict controls on women's freedom of movement. While these policies are no longer enforced as rigidly as they used to be, the issue of women working outside the home is still a contested terrain. The women's focus-group discussions (FGD-B15, FGD-D11, FGD-S7, WFGD-M9) indicated that such a law had profoundly affected their choice of livelihood activities by imposing a whole set of constraints on their activities. In addition, the inability to comply with it had often put them in direct and constant confrontation with the law. Several women indicated that their businesses had been closed at certain points for allegedly operating in 'indecent clothes' or 'not behaving well' and for making,

selling or consuming alcohol. The interpretation of what is ‘decent dress’ and ‘proper behaviour’ are left to the judgment of public-order officers. The door is, therefore, wide open for corruption and harassments.

The second law is the Public Health Act, a federal instrument that enforces health and safety regulations applied to food and beverage vendors, whether mobile or operating from a fixed location (SLGP 2004 2-10). The Act states that any person vending food must have a vending license in compliance with this Act. The Act allows the locality to levy fines on vendors of food or beverages. Licences cost food vendors SP 51,000 ($20). Vendors are also expected to provide proof of residency and are also required to provide a certificate that proves they are free of contagious diseases. This cost also around SP 55,000 ($22) on top of which a monthly garbage collection fee of SP 3,000 to SP 5,000 is applied. The Ministry of Health takes 60% of the revenue while the locality receives 40%. Fines range between SP 5,000 and SP 10,000 and so the registration procedure becomes expensive, cumbersome and time-consuming. Taxes and rates imposed by the local authority for an already-established business are a critical hurdle. Rates are not governed by people's total turnover each year but are not built upon realistic estimates of the actual profits that people make. According to community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3, and CM-S4), these fines and taxes seem to envisage large enterprises since most of the small business in that neighbourhood can hardly break even. Community meetings indicated that they were unable to comply with the high cost of regulating their business and that they find themselves often devoid of registrations, licences and certificates. To avoid bankruptcy due to the regulations and fees imposed, better off entrepreneurs have no choice but to bribe the tax or health inspector in order to forgo their business registration. These meetings indicated that an important feature that differentiates between poorer households and better-off ones is the ability of the later to pay bribe officials.

The third law is the 2001 Act of Violations which gives the Violation Department of the Ministry of Finance the right to exercise its licensing powers under Articles 9 and 10, including imposing fines. It gives the heads of respective departments the authority to decide and impose appropriate fines on offenders. Non-payment or failure to pay the full amount leads to processing the case through the court system. Depending on the violation(s) cited, the court may impose an additional fine, confiscate merchandise or impose a jail sentence, or all the three. What complicates matters more is that paying for such a licence requires proof of residency. According to respondents who were squatting, the provision of such a certificate can become complex and depends on the relationship between the person applying for the licence and his/her block’s Popular Committee. Many vendors and entrepreneurs thus operate without a license.

In summary, the informal sector in which many of the poor find employment is governed by excessively burdensome rules of taxation, licensing, certification, registration and numerous other administrative procedures. These government-made barriers prevent the poor from accessing assets and opportunities and from achieving sustainable livelihoods.

*Zakat (Social development fund)*

*Zakat* is the only government-run safety net for the poor in the city and in the country as a whole and operates at a state level in Khartoum (Abusin 2003: 8). It is a religious tax that is supposed to be collected from the well-off (generally 2.5% of a Muslim’s yearly income) and distributed to the poor and needy. *Zakat* funds are collected by the

government, but administered outside its normal budget. The *Zakat* Act, which was enacted in 1984, brought the fund under the taxation department. In 1986 the *Zakat* Chamber (*Diwan El Zakat*) came into being and has been accorded independence from all tax-collection agencies and is not accountable to any executive body. The supervision of the chamber is allocated to a board of trustees appointed by the President and headed by the Minister of Welfare and Development. The Zakat Chamber becomes the main institution authorized by law to receive *Zakat* and donations. The chamber was also given the responsibility of disbursing these proceeds to the poor (World Bank 2003a: 73) and it is supposed to distribute all the money collected within a year of its collection.

*Zakat* is believed to relieve poverty and play the role of social-security plans for those who need it most. According to the law, *Zakat* funds are distributed to the following categories: the Indigent (*Fuqara*) and Paupers (*Masakin*), Road Farers,[2] the Insolvent, for the Sake of God,[3] Persons of Inclined Hearts[4] and On Bonds,[5] *Zakat* Collectors and last Construction, Operations, Maintenance and Collection costs of *Zakat*. Eligibility for *Zakat* is therefore broad and open to various interpretations of who is eligible and who is not. For example, even state ministers are eligible for monthly *Zakat*. Overall, the amount allocated to the poor amounts to less than 50% of the total budget of the *Zakat* Chamber. El Naayal (2002: 10) indicates that in 1997 only 43% of the Chamber's budget was distributed to the poor. According to respondents, *Zakat* operates on the basis of social and political capital with poorer individuals and households consequently having least access to it (see Chapter 9). The provision of *Zakat* is administered by the Popular Committees or through local committees made up of community leaders. The *Zakat* Chamber presumes trust, integrity and fairness in including or excluding persons on the grounds of eligibility. Hence, El-Batthani, (2000: 1) contends that there is a lot of rooms for 'manipulation and appropriation by powerful, rent-seeking, prebendal groups whose interests run counter to those of the poor'. This point was further confirmed by respondents who indicated that despite their extreme need of cash, medicine, food etc,, their application for *Zakat* was turned down even though some who were better-off than them had been awarded money. Some better-off households have received more *Zakat* than poorer households so the role of *Zakat* in reducing or mitigating the effect of shocks and stress for poorer households is minimal. Furthermore, the bureaucratic procedures accompanying it are long and waiting periods can be lengthy. For the majority of the poorer households in crisis, such as those with a critical illness, *Zakat* never *materializes*, for others it came too late. And in the rare cases that the poor received *Zakat*, it was ineffective because the amount allocated was too little and did not allow them to overcome the crisis they were facing.

*Zakat* has, in principle, to be paid voluntarily by the faithful every year but an Act was passed in 1990 which made the payment of *Zakat* compulsory for people and corporate bodies. The state exerts political pressure on people to pay *Zakat*. Community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) indicated that most transactions ranging from obtaining or renewing a small-business licence to arranging a small bank loan cannot take place without proof of *Zakat* payment in advance.. The poor themselves have to pay *Zakat* regardless of whether they can afford, even though they were

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2 Travellers who have no relatives in the city.
3 To satisfy God.
4 Propagation of the faith and to those who are expected to convert to Islam.
5 Slaves.

supposed to receive it in the first place. In an ideal situation, *Zakat* was to be the only tax on Muslims, yet the *Zakat* system of taxation has been imposed, in addition to the already-operating secular tax system. Considering the poverty conditions in the study areas, it can be presumed that incidences of *Zakat* were not being imposed according to the dictates of Islamic equity, since the majority of the inhabitants there are extremely poor. However they are still bearing the burden of *Zakat* taxes and people who are themselves eligible to receive *Zakat* are actually paying it for the better-off in society.

In summary, while the introduction of *Zakat* as a safety net is supposed to relieve poverty, the opposite is happening and poor sections of the population are bearing the burden of paying *Zakat* to the wealthier.

*Land tenure system*

Plots of land in Khartoum are classified in five categories; first, second, third, fourth and fifth classes. First-class plots are the largest and have services. They are allocated to the Sudanese elite and are not accessible for the lower classes. Second-class plots are allocated to middle-income groups, the land is smaller than first-class plots but modern and permanent building materials are also used. Third- and fourth-class areas usually use poor, traditional building materials and are provided with minimum services. Fifth-class areas are located on the peripheries of the city and do not have service provision. There was less competition for the fourth- and fifth-class plots, however, rapid population growth in the city has led to growing demand for land and has increased housing costs which, in turn, has impacted on the outward movement of people from the main city to the fifth-class areas, such as the four neighbourhoods in this study. This has also been compounded by the influx of poor rural people who have arrived in the city escaping crises in their areas. The division of land into classes was inherited from colonial time when planning and housing were used as tools to separate the European community from the nationals, and it now serves the purpose of separating the well-off from the poor.

People who settled in these neighbourhoods a long time ago indicated that the areas had started as squatter settlements and been developed outside state regulatory frameworks. A large percentage of inhabitants continue to occupy and hold land outside the official systems and are likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Quite often occupants do not have proper rights such as property titles or a lease. One of the most-raised issues at the community meetings was the land issue and people indicated that a lack of secure land tenure and legal protection is one of the most important causes of vulnerability (see Chapter 9).

Structures of powers surrounding land rights are complex but the state has the responsibility of drawing up land policies and enacting land regulations. Almost all government branches pass legislation and offer a general framework in relation to land use but central government has always been involved in the implementation of actions concerning land use and its management. The localities have the right to plan and determine which areas should be developed, to expropriate land or initiate expropriation, or they can act as land developer or landlord. However, the powers of the localities remain very limited.

The 1970 Land Administration Law and its 1975 amendment delineate land rights and the registration of use rights for the state. The law states that use and ownership of land require that land be demarcated and owned by the state. Land is owned by govern-

ment land distribution, land purchase or donation.[6] The law did not allow for private ownership but instead it is rented (*Hikir*) from the state for thirty to fifty years (Taha 2001: 17). With planning, inhabitants of the fifth-class areas (the neighbourhoods) are allowed to obtain legal title to the residential plots in the area they occupy or somewhere else provided that they have been living continuously in the area for at least five to seven years, have the necessary documents and can pay the total land price in one instalment. Focus-group discussions (FGD-M8, FGD-M5 and FGD-B10) pointed out that despite many inhabitants have lived in those neighbourhoods for a long time but are still unable to obtain the legal rights to the plots they occupy. The situation is particularly acute in Mayo and Al Baraka due to a lack of savings, high taxes and bureaucratic procedures. Despite the fact that the price set for land in those neighbourhoods is below the market price, it is still beyond the reach of many poorer households that cannot pay the full amount in a single cash instalment (see Chapter 9).

No allowance has been made for easy payment plans or loans for those who are unable to raise the full amount up front. As the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) and interviews show, those who *were* able to pay the full amount initially might not be able to continue paying the annual tax of SP 25,000 ($10) and the garbage-collection fees of SP 36,000 ($14.40). These taxes might even deter people from opting for a legal title to land. Furthermore, the bureaucratic process of legalizing land ownership is too slow to keep up with growing demand. Documents required for the process, such as a citizenship certificate, a marriage certificate and a birth certificate, have never been issued to people who were born in remote rural areas, or those who were born into poor families in the city. Community meetings in all neighbourhoods (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) indicated that obtaining these documents is difficult, costly and time-consuming. The procedure also requires providing two witnesses, usually PC members, to verify the information provided. In such situations, there is plenty of opportunity for those in positions of power to exercise pressure and exploit those in critical need of their support. Therefore, while access to securing land rights in these neighbourhoods is possible for those with political and financial capital, poorer people's access is extremely restricted.

The state has the right to buy ownership rights to land should development plans call for this. Therefore even those who have legal rights to their land are not immune to the possibility of demolition. While demolition and forced evictions are a violation of a deeply entrenched human right[7] – the right to adequate housing – forced removals take place in accordance with the law and are carried out in the name of 'urban renewal'. In addition, inhabitants who have no legal rights to land are not entitled to compensation for the replacement cost of houses and property lost in the process of demolition. This is also outlined by the 1990 Amendment to the Civil Transactions Act that prohibits appeal against land actions undertaken by the state (Rahhal & Abdel Salam 2002: 11).

The community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3, and CM-S4) stated that demolitions and relocations of people from informal settlements have been executed with excessive force, resulting in misery, deaths and a loss of property. The new locations offered to the people affected usually lacked the basic facilities from water and health to education and transport. At those new sites, people lose their rights to many 'other essentials' including the right to work and civil rights (Rahhal & Abdel

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6 For further details on land tenure in Sudan, see Chapter 2.

7 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is now considered as part of customary international law and is applicable to all states.

Salam 2002: 11). Tenure security has been a source of continuous confrontation between the state and residents who have demanded rights or opposed demolition in the four neighbourhoods. Confrontational actions related to land has taken place throughout the history of these neighbourhoods, with memorable ones in Al Baraka in 2001 and in 1998 in Mayo and in Al Dar es Salam in 1995. Riots in those neighbourhoods have always constituted a significant internal political challenge for the government and tough measures are often taken against those involved in such actions. However, these actions force the state to make compromises, particularly if news of them is broadcast internationally.

According to the localities' records, the market value of land in Mayo, Dar es Salam and Al Baraka is almost similar at around SP 1200/m² ($0.48) for those eligible to plots according to government criteria and who are registered on the waiting list. However in Siriha neighbourhood, proximity to the main city as well as the recent provision of some services, roads and transport have resulted in an increased market value of land. This has added an increased burden to poorer households and left them more vulnerable to market pressure than those in the other three neighbourhoods studied. Part of the land adjacent to the city has been sold by the public authorities to private investors. According to the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4), even those who resided in the neighbourhood long ago but could not provide sufficient evidence to their rights to the land become vulnerable to forced eviction or demolition. In addition, those who have settled on land whose value has increased over time are also exposed to market pressures. Poorer households are retreating from prime locations in favour of investors and those who are able to pay more. While this is the case, the economic crisis has impacted significantly on the ability of the state to solve land tenure issues and the authorization of urban services. A lack of service was clearly manifested during the 1988 floods when thousands of the poor became homeless.

Seasonal rains and flooding destroy houses and deprive people of the resources and assets that a house might provide. The majority of houses are made from poor materials that cannot withstand rain or protect inhabitants from environmental hazards. According to one respondent, the rainy season burdens them with several problems including leaking roofs, cracked walls and flooded pit latrine (see Chapters 9 and 10). Even moderate rain can cause severe destruction to property and life, particularly for those who live in shacks which are usually built from cheap materials that have been loosely nailed together. After moderate rainfall, many of these shacks are simply swept downstream. In all four study neighbourhoods, and particularly in Mayo and Siriha, the natural flow of the rainwater is obstructed due to the way the houses have been built very close to each other.

In summary, Sudan's land tenure systems and local government policies do not facilitate efficient land use but reinforce prevailing inequalities of wealth and unequal opportunities. The poorer population can thus only access the informal land market, which comes with a great degree of vulnerability.

*Development NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)*

Development NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) cover a wide range of institutions, some of which are independent of the national government. Some of the national NGOs have a direct affiliation to the government and are used as a means of promoting state policies. Others have practices that can be closely identified with a certain political party. However, under the 1999 Act they are all classified as NGOs.

The laws and regulations that affect the NGO sector are numerous, sometimes even unclear and contradictory. NGO activities are regulated by the 1999 Act of Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), which incorporated the former Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and the Commission of Voluntary Agencies. The new Act required that all NGOs reapply for a registration licence, disclose their name and address and explain their goals and *raison d'être*. Each project by NGOs must be approved in advance by the HAC, as must all foreign funding. The HAC also supervises NGO and CBO activities in Sudan.

The Act specifies that NGO activities should pertain to agricultural, relief, medical, missionary, educational, cultural, vocational, social welfare and other developmental activities. Although these categories seem to cover all the kinds of voluntary activities, the state however retains the right to include or exclude any activity it sees fit. For example, missionary activities, although permitted by the Act, were restricted at a later stage (Al Nagar 2006: 69). An important feature of the Act is that it prohibits the registration of any NGO if its sole or principal objects involve or include political concerns. The government retains the discretionary powers to accept or reject the registration of any organization if their activities are believed to be tainted with political concerns. While some NGOs were allowed to continue their work or start new activities after the Act was passed, many were denied access to work in the country or in a specific region or city on these grounds. Immediately after the Act came into law, the government started to create its own Islamic NGOs which have penetrated not only the urban areas but even small remote rural villages (Al Nagar 2006: 70). These organizations were thought to work more efficiently outside government than within it. In addition, as NGOs, they could perhaps appeal for voluntary support from the public more effectively than could a government programme, particularly as citizens may have a cynical perspective of government motives. These Islamic NGOs have received strong backing from the state, particularly when the Al-Tamkin and Al-Takaful policies were issued during the early 1990s (Salih 2002: 6). Al-Tamkin is geared towards enhancing the capacity of Muslims in non-Muslim regions such as southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains, while Al-Takaful or the Islamic Solidarity Fund is used to finance the activities of Islamic NGOs. The application of these two policies has granted Islamic NGOs unlimited support and massive opportunities for expansion in activities and scope. On the other hand, the role of secular organizations, particularly local ones, has started to subside.

Since then, several national and international Islamic NGOs have started operating in Sudan implementing various projects themselves or providing funds for other national NGOs to implement them. In Khartoum's poor neighbourhoods, these NGOs have taken part in relief operations and charitable activities like providing drinking water, setting up clinics and hospitals, improving sanitation, and providing and supervising mother and child healthcare. These activities almost always go hand in hand with the establishment of religious educational institutions.

The signing of the peace agreement in November 2004 between the government and the SPLA/SPLM[8] has led to an increase in the number of NGOs working in different development fields. In addition, the signing of the peace agreement initiated a prompt international response to meet the emergency needs for food and other humanitarian aid in the South as well as supporting good governance and the rule of the law. The number

[8] Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

of NGOs working in Sudan has continued to rise due to the explosive situation in Dar Fur. Many international NGOs started with strong support from foreign donors and INGO activities have been concentrated mostly in the relief and rehabilitation in western and southern regions. In Khartoum State, relief aid covers all IDPs camps and, to a lesser extent, reaches out to poor neighbourhoods in and around the city. However, since most residents in the four neighbourhoods have experienced several forms of crisis during their stay (i.e. flood, demolition, outbreak of disease, etc.), relief aid has been of critical support and, without it, many might have not been able to make it.

The four neighbourhoods have known NGOs since they were first established. Different types of NGOs exist and include International NGOs (INGOs), community-based and grassroots organizations, neighbourhood clubs, and religious and ethnical associations. The discussion below highlights the role of the main NGOs in the area.

*International NGOs*

Since local governments often find themselves strapped for resources, international NGOs have stepped into the breach to provide services for residents. Their number has increased over the past two decades and their earlier position as humanitarian providers in the 1980s has changed to one of service provider. Currently they are involved in implementing development programmes at neighbourhood level and piloting innovative development interventions for poverty reduction. Women's focus-group discussions (WFGD-M9, FGD-B15 and FGD-D11) value and remember those NGOs that enabled them to read and write and access credits. NGO programmes are run either directly or through local agencies with activities covering service provision, education, community development, culture, environmental protection, community safety, human rights and the creation of a gender-equal society and, to a lesser extent, humanitarian -relief activities. Most INGOs in the four neighbourhoods have a service orientation and their activities include, firstly, the provision of water and, secondly, health and education. The main INGOs in the field of water supply and managements are the Red Crescent, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), *Al-dawa Al-Islamiya* (DAWA, Islamic *Dawa* organization), the Organization of Muslims of Africa, UNICEF, the French Cooperation and MSF Holland. These INGOs have supported the establishment of hand-pumps in Mayo, Dar es Salam and Al Baraka. MSF Holland has also provided the training of community-based water management committees (CWMC) at block levels in Mayo and Dar es Salam. The Red Crescent has supported the training of community people in water management as well as training trainers in Dar es Salam.

INGOs have been at the forefront of the provision of health care too in the four neighbourhoods. Some have long been involved in the preventive and curative services, in particular the prevention and control of malaria, TB, HIV Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), and support for health facilities. The National Health Strategy encourages international organizations to provide their health services through the Ministry's institutions in order to regulate their work. These NGOs mostly work in partnership with the Ministry of Health and sometimes parallel to it. The most important INGOs working in the area of health in the four neighbourhoods include MSF Holland, *Al-dawa Al-Islamiya* (DAWA, Islamic Dawa organization) and the Organization of Muslims of Africa. Some have provided health centres, with feeding and vaccination services such as those provided by DAWA. Others have provided support for existing health facilities in Mayo, Al Baraka and Dar es Salam, such as Islamic Relief. In addition, NGOs such as Fellowship for African Relief (FAR), the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief

Everywhere (CARE) and MSF have provided support for the construction of pit latrines in Mayo, Al Baraka and Dar es Salam.

Community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) indicated that during the difficult time of forced evictions and demolition, FAR, backed by an initiative from *Enfants du Monde, Droits de l'Homme* and the UN provided important support to the neighbourhood community by raising the matter of forced eviction with the government and appealing to the Ministry of Planning. In the field of governance, CARE Sudan and CARE UK are undertaking a project aimed at strengthening local PCs in Al Baraka.

Many INGOs have capacity-building projects that help residents and equip them with practical skills. These projects usually see the transfer of skills as a tool that ultimately leads the neighbourhood community to becoming able to address their own problems at some later stage. They usually involve income generation, vocational training and education, the management of small projects, water resource management in the area etc. The main INGOs in this field include the UN – with the Local Development Committee (LDC), and FAR in Dar es Salam who supported income generation and adult education projects. World University Services (WUS) and the Sudan Open Learning Organization (SOLO) are active in the field of literacy in Dar es Salam, Mayo and Al Baraka. Oxfam and Accord have joint activities in community development in Dar es Salam. In Mayo, OXFAM supported women's income-generating activities. Goal is also active in Mayo with their eight adult education centres. In Siriha, Friends of the Children Society (AMAL) provide educational programmes to rehabilitate drop-outs and street children. Urban Upgrading and Poverty Alleviation Project (UPAP) was a significant project funded by UNDP and implemented by UN-HABITAT in Mayo, Dar es Salam and Al Baraka. According to respondents, the project provided micro-credit or revolving funds for people who were not able to access the conventional, formal financial system. The -credit was used in various business activities such as small income-generating activities, basic services provision (community water supply, educational facilities, electricity supply, health centres, etc.). The project came to an end in 2002 but the impact of this project is still being felt in many of the area's socio-economic development features.

*National NGOs*

Within the four neighbourhoods, a trend to be noticed is that over the past two decades a vibrant national NGO community has emerged that is having a profound impact on local development. They have been promoting change through different means from managing water resources to disseminating information on health and other matters. Some are supported by larger national or international NGOs, while others are supported by members themselves. According to the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4), the most active ones in the neighbourhoods are the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) that has provided health centres and feeding and vaccination services in all the four neighbourhoods. The SCC also provides adult education facilities in the four areas. In Al Baraka, CARE Sudan supported by CARE UK is undertaking a project to strengthen the local PCs. *Sawa-Sawa* (Always Together) is a grassroots organization in Dar es Salam supported by the Red Crescent and is undertaking water management and training for local people in water management. The organization for community development provides trade-related capacity-building of small businesses for people in Dar es Salam. However, within the sample households,

the poorer individuals and households did not benefit much from these resources (see Chapter 9).

In Al Baraka, the Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) has implemented a micro lending project funded by Help Age International. The project provides micro credit to the elderly to enable them to set up their own micro enterprises for income generation. The Murabaha[9] (hire-purchase) method of finance was applied for loans with a maximum period of 18 months, repayable in two-weekly instalments with a grace period of 1-2 months. According to respondents, those who received the credits were able to use them for developing their businesses or starting new businesses.

Women's associations exist in all the neighbourhoods. The Sudanese Development Association (SDA) works in all four areas helping women to organize CBOs for savings and credit (registered as cooperatives or NGOs, depending on their choice). Women's focus groups (FGD-D11, FGD-S7, FGD-B15) indicated that members were assisted in maximizing their potential not only by organizing themselves but also by upgrading their existing skills to better manage their business and community initiatives and establish effective links with local government and other actors (see Chapter 10). They were also provided with micro credits and the training necessary to manage their finances. The Association of Women Vendors of Food and Tea in Abu Zeid Market is a trade union representing self-employed women in Abu Zeid Market who, through collective action, are trying to regulate their working conditions so as to eliminate different forms of exploitation. The association has the advisory support of the Sudanese Development Association (SDA) and members come mainly from Dar es Salam and Siriha, but women from Al Baraka and other parts of the city are also involved. According to the participants, women who have joined the organization have found their lives changed in a very positive way (Chapter 9).

Branches of the General Union of Sudanese Women (GUSW) who are affiliated to the National Congress Party (the government party) exist in all neighbourhoods. It offers adult education training and in some blocks has income-generating activities too. Its main concern is to mobilize women to support state activities. The *Shaheed* organization (Martyr of the War) has outreach in all neighbourhoods, and particularly in Siriha. It provides material support for the families of those who died in the civil war in the south while fighting on the government side. In Dar es Salam and Mayo, Women Training and Promotion Association (WOTAP) provides income-generating activities and adult education using the government curriculum. Most importantly, the organization's small micro-lending programme has provided critical support to those who needed the cash most. Community meetings in Dar es Salam (CM-D3) and the women's focus group in Mayo (WFGD-M9) both considered WOTAP as an NGO that is close to people and their problems.

Regional, ethnic and neighbourhood groups and associations are forming spontaneously to carry out local activities and generate and allocate resources that the state (or municipality) is unable to provide. They include women's groups, sports clubs, youth associations, and religious or educational associations. They are established on people's own initiatives and characterized by self-help projects where local people are involved in the implementation of a project by contributing cash, tools, materials and labour. They are intended to provide the various needs of specific target groups and these can include skills training, challenging bad attitudes, building up confidence and solidarity

[9] Loan in kind where the lender procures and sells goods to the borrower on a cost plus mark-up basis.

at both group and community levels, the strengthening of networking between groups from the similar region or ethnic group, and the building of shelters. Some of them represent the neighbourhood and beyond, while others represent specific target groups within the neighbourhood. These groups have usually large outreach among their communities. In particular those that were established according to ethnic background such as the Association of Nuba Mountain Women Living in Khartoum, the Association of Masaleet in Al Baraka and the Association of Fur in Siriha. According to respondents, these would be very important groups if they had the financial and political capital but since they usually lack this, their effect is minimal. Furthermore, poorer individuals are less likely to be involved or benefit from them (see Chapter 9).

Muslim and Christian religious groups are a common type of association in the four neighbourhoods. The Christian and Muslims groups occupy an important space in the lives of their respective communities as a source of solace. Members of a group usually come together in their neighbourhood once or twice a week, read sacred scriptures and pray together.

In all four neighbourhoods, credit and saving schemes are a common form of women's organization that addresses the immediate and direct needs of members as well as several indirect, longer-term needs. Respondents have indicated that their involvement in these schemes were dependent on their financial capital and ability to save. For this reason, the majority of the poor were not able to be part of them (see Chapter 9).

*The role and shortcomings of NGOs*

NGOs play a major role in community development in the areas. Their main advantage is their ability to create trust and a good relationship with people, although their outreach to poorer people is less apparent. An important constraint in the work of all NGOs is the government control over their activities and citizens' involvement. In particular for neighbourhood groups, the state defines what they could engage in without transgressing into politics and challenging the absolute authority of the state. Except for those NGOs that are supported by the state, such as Islamic NGOs, the General Union for Sudanese Women (GUSW) or state-approved organizations such as the Sudanese Society for the Eradication of Harmful Traditional Practices that have the freedom to do what they please.

INGOs are the main providers of essential services such as water, health and education facilities. The majority of people of the neighbourhoods have come to know these organizations and their activities. However, INGOs' work does not always run smoothly in those areas and there are problems related to constraints with legal and political frameworks, mistrust and low levels of collaboration between the government and INGOs, particularly those that mix an advocacy role with service delivery. This, in a way, impacts on the ability of INGOs to assume a more coherent role in the community by incorporating vital issues such as empowerment or the violation of human and women's rights. The mistrust exists on both sides. Municipal officials openly criticize INGOs and see their services as mere political propaganda and their activities as *ad hoc* support characterized by mistrust, suspicion and paternalism. INGOs workers, on the other hand, blame the state for its lack of presence, its neglect of the poor and for discriminating against some groups.

Secular national NGO operations are hampered by inadequate legal and political frameworks and the lack of constructive cooperation between them and the government.

Many suffer limited capacities and resources and work against all the odds to meet the needs of those to whom the government shows little commitment in providing assistance. This in turn frustrates their efforts and reduces the scope of their activities to a very small section of the population. For example, WOTAP has been successful in providing micro finance but the scope of its activities has been localized due to limited resources.

Credit provision is often limited and only given to a small group. For example, the Sudan Red Crescent's (SRC) micro-lending project could only give a maximum loan of SP 125,000, which is barely enough to start a small business. Establishing and running local NGOs were also cited among the important hurdles faced. Many of the projects by national NGOs have a very short life span, fading away as quickly as they surface. Funding is one central problem that most national NGOs face. Some embark on mobilizing local resources, with mixed results; others attempt to develop sources of earned income, while others have downsized or closed down altogether. For example, some of the medical centres provided by the SCC in Mayo are closing down because of a lack of funding. Feeding and maternity care in Al Baraka, as well as adult education in classes in Dar es Salam are all closing down. Information on national NGOs and their activities is scant and unreliable. Many people in the same neighbourhood are not aware of the work these organizations are conducting in their own neighbourhood.

The level of community involvement in national or international projects varies considerably. Some NGOs have encouraged participation and facilitated the building of local capacity of communities to take decisions after the NGO leaves. Examples of those are FAR, MSF and ADRA that all involved neighbourhoods in decisions regarding the placement of facilities as well as the management of water supply and sanitation projects. Local people were also given access to training and technology and have joint responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the facilities. WOTAP, on the other hand, has been successful in setting up a solid foundation not only for micro finance, but also in the social mobilization of communities.

Nonetheless, community participation has become more rhetoric than reality for some other NGOs. Examples are the SCC, the Islamic Dawa and the GUSW where people were not part of the implementation, design, monitoring or evaluation of any project. On the contrary, in their activities there appears to be discrimination against secular forces and religious minorities. Islamic Dawa tends to establish *Khalwas* (Islamic schools) which teach only Arabic and the Koran for Muslims and non-Muslims. Food donations are sometimes used as a tool of religious pressure or conversion. Women's involvement in development projects in the neighbourhoods tends to be low except in their own organizations. While this is sometimes attributed to the already-overburdened status of women due to their traditional activities, most NGOs do not put place a framework that caters for women's specific time constraints. For example, women might not be able to take part in meetings or activities that are held in the evenings. And they might not be welling to travel a long distance or incur costs to attend a meeting. Being virtually absent from most meetings, women stand little chance of influencing decisions and even less of being elected or selected as members of different committees. For the majority of regional, ethnic and neighbourhood groups and associations, participation is at a minimal level for the community as a whole since neighbourhoods are divided along ethnic lines. Most importantly, these groups usually lack financial and political capital and so their impact tends to be minimal.

In summary, NGOs provide significant and wide-ranging services and activities covering many of the neighbourhoods. Among their most impressive activities are the creation of livelihood opportunities and increasing poor people's access to information and credit. However, in their different forms, NGOs are not able to address fundamental issues related to power and entitlements to resources due to their mandated role or to overall governance and resource constraints. In addition, NGOs are not always inclusive in their targeting and service delivery, and vulnerable groups are less likely to be involved and reap any benefits from participating.

*Traditional headmen*

Each ethnic group usually has a headman called a sultan, chief or *Umda*, depending on the ethnic group. Those from southern Sudan have sultans as headmen, while chiefs and *Umad* are usually the headmen of groups from the northern and western parts of the country. Headmen are either elected by their groups for these leadership positions or inherit it from their fathers. According to the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4), older and wiser men sometimes qualify for headmen positions when the other two categories are not there. Some are also appointed by the government, particularly in the case of the *Umad*. Sultans seem to command more prestige in their communities than the others and within most southern ethnic groups, loyalty to the group is highly valued. Responsibility is generally considered to fall on the group in its entirety rather than on any particular individual. The role and position of headmen in the lives of their communities seem to have undergone huge changes. According to the respondents, they used to enjoy a special position in their communities as 'wise men' who provided spiritual direction and managed relations with other ethnic groups and governments and took important decision concerning the community life in general. However, they have started to lose some of this privilege with the independence that city life gives its young working members. In addition, the headmen are increasingly becoming preoccupied with their own survival, often to the detriment of the group they are meant to protect, lead and guide. At the same time, a part of their job has been taken over by the different government agencies in the city and their apparent role is now mostly confined to providing religious guidance and mediating in local domestic disputes within and between their group and other ethnic groups and mobilizing their communities to rally behind the state.

The government saw the headmen as agents who could play an important role in keeping law and so traditional headmen have gained official backing for their role in the community's affairs. They have been assigned the role of government advisors on matters concerning their respective communities and delegated administrative and judicial functions within their own ethnic group. Within Mayo, Al Baraka and Dar es Salam, the headmen and popular committees are separate entities although they often play a parallel role. However, the case is different in Siriha. Traditional neighbourhood headmen were assigned membership of the PCs in their respective blocks. Ostensibly headmen in all neighbourhoods become a mechanism for political mobilization, help in organizing their community and monitor their activities. According to respondents, Headmen are active in mobilizing their community for government parades and other activities but most importantly, they provide sufficient means of control to help the state penetrate deep into a community's life. In return, they receive irregular support in cash or in kind from the central authorities. On rare occasions, some of their communities also receive support – through the headmen – in the form of sugar, sorghum, oil and/or

blankets. Communities can also benefit from their network or relations with higher authorities but this depends on the level of government satisfaction with their performance and with their record in keeping law and order within their ethnic group. This particular matter has restored the lost power and authority of the headmen; but has also had an insidious effect on the community's solidarity and created a rift between traditional headmen and their communities. Respondents have indicated that disputes with headmen often arise regarding recommendations about receiving free medicine or waiving school fees, regarding their share of free groceries, which are supposedly allocated to the whole group by the government on occasion. An important but unspoken point of disagreement relates to the headmen's cooperation with the government regarding the political activities of members of the community. In the name of law and order within their groups, headmen are expected to supply the authorities with information on any 'illegal' political gatherings or activities that members of their group have or are attempting to organize. Such a dubious relationship with the state puts the headmen in a difficult position with their constituencies. Though most seem to be better off than the rest of their communities, they lack personal security as they fear being murdered by their own community members. According to the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4), a number of the brutal conflicts, which have left many injured or dead, destroyed properties and taxed the security of the neighbourhoods, have been fuelled by such suspicion. These conflicts are particularly bad in Mayo and headmen are reacting to their fears by quickly reporting any suspicious behaviour by their members to the authorities. And the vicious circle continues. According to the headmen, if they do not perform their role as specified by the state, they, together with their people, will be excluded from access to resources be it land, education, donations of sorghum and sugar or help with medicines or even keeping the prestigious positions as headmen. There is always a lack of trust between the headmen, their people and the authorities. The people know their headmen and go to them when they need access to the city's social and political structure. But there is little trust in the relationship. It is also important to note that not all the headmen have the same degree of power and authority and for some the 'headmanship' is a mere title that does not carry any power or authority. According to some respondents, powerful headmen are able to connect isolated individuals to neighbourhood or extra-neighbourhood resources. And by the same token they are also able to exclude or isolate.

In summary, different ethnic communities have lost their earlier traditional support mechanisms to modern market relations, providing a fertile recruiting ground for the state in their attempts to wrestle power from different ethnic groups using the traditional headmen. Some individuals have become vulnerable to changes in their own livelihood opportunities as essential resources are mediated through patronage networks that link them to their headmen.

*Ethnicity*

Residents of the four neighbourhoods represent a large number of the ethnic groups in Sudan.[10] Within the sample alone, 57 ethnic groups were represented. Many of the larger ethnic groups have their various sub-ethnic groups and affiliation and there are also a small number of people from neighbouring countries such as Chad, Nigeria and the Central African Republic. However, for the purpose of this study ethnic communi-

[10] According to UNOCHA (2006), Sudan has 600 ethnic groups that speak over 400 languages and dialects.

ties will be grouped into three broad ethnic groups based on cultural and racial differences. The percentages are as follows in the sample: Arabized communities (36%); Africanized communities (64%) and non-Sudanese ethnic groups (9%). Some further categorizations are sometimes used on a regional basis. Accordingly the sample households, 54% of the households were from western Sudan, 22% were from southern Sudan, 15% were from northern Sudan and 9% from foreign countries.

According to the locality records, Africanized ethnic groups from western and southern Sudan are represented disproportionately among the four neighbourhoods, which also corresponds with the sample households in this study. These groups were scattered in separate or marked areas within neighbourhoods. People from the same ethnic group tend to stick together and there are clear lines of demarcation in residential areas within the neighbourhoods along ethnic lines as well as another demarcation on a regional base. For example, groups from Bahr al Gazal in southern Sudan live in the northern part of Mayo, and within that area; the Dinka ethnic group has its own marked space and so forth. Each ethnic community is internally structured by its own values and culture, has its own language, and perceives itself as being different even when there are clear similarities between them.

Complex political changes have taken place in the country since the time of colonization. These have influenced the social status of the ethnic groups by structuring the hierarchy and inequality in power and social status among the diverse groups, and by providing access to and control over economic and political resources, especially over land and internal rule to some groups while marginalizing others (see Chapter 2). Although there have been changes over time, the structured hierarchy in the groups remains and has played an important role in determining access to and control over economic, political, and cultural resources, and the status and interaction between different groups. During the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4), people associated accessibility of resources with informal groups with a certain-ethnic membership. There are also varying levels of disparity among the different ethnic groups as some are considered superior to others within the same groups. This depends mainly on their descent, for example the descendants of rulers and kings will always have a better position and more power in the community than the ordinary people. The influential people in the four communities are mostly members of the high-ranked groups who supply the headmen of their communities. Most development projects work through these local elites.

The size of a certain ethnic group can determines its position in the community and whether it will be able to share resources with others, control resources, exclude or be excluded from using resources. However, small ethnic minorities have their own strategies that enable them to survive among the giants. For example, small ethnic minority communities, particularly the non Sudanese groups such as the Fallata, Hawsa and Ambararu, have, for generations, struck alliances with bigger groups from western Sudan and relied on them for protection and access to resources. Conflicts between ethnic groups are more apparent than other forms of relations and can be triggers by numerous factors. Within the four neighbourhoods, these include perceived and actual discrimination, competition for water, land, spots in markets or street for vending and they can all take an ethnic line. Conflicts occur more in Mayo and least in Siriha. Sometimes, small groups mobilize around their grievance along ethnic lines and attack groups they believe are oppressing them. Long-standing rivalries occasionally erupt into bloody conflicts, which can change the power balance for some groups. The local

authorities have often handled ethnic tension and conflicts by strengthening one group against another, which contributes to marginalizing some groups and exacerbating the conflict.

The community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) stated that language problems are one of the central issues affecting them. The majority of Africanized groups are not well versed in Arabic, which is spoken by those with power and influence. The majority speak their own languages and a large number of them do not understand Arabic or cannot communicate in it, placing them at a considerable disadvantage. Respondents have indicated that they could not understand what is being talked about on the radio or what was written in publications or posters in Arabic. They could not negotiate their pay or terms of employment with their employers or complain about mistreatment. As the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) pointed out, language is crucial for those who stand in front of a judge in a law court (which is very common) and cannot speak enough Arabic to defend themselves.

Membership of a certain ethnic group does not impose a rigid code of conduct but an ethnic group provides its members with an identity, a sense of security and a broad framework for the resolution of conflicts. When it comes to everyday behaviour, most ethnic groups are becoming more pragmatic and adaptive. Occasionally people may even adopt different ethnic identities in different situations or contexts but ethnicity, as well as regional identity provides the basis of everyday interaction between people as well as a means to access political and economic resources.

To sum up, the different neighbourhoods have a varied heterogeneous mass of religions and cultural beliefs but the opportunities the different groups can enjoy is not uniform and the heterogeneity of access to resources on the basis of ethnicity is well recognized. The implications of this are that marginalized groups may not be able to utilize local links and resources or may become the victims of conflict.

*Gender*

Gender differences and gender relations are expressed in a range of ways and greatly influence women's livelihood opportunities. They are basically defined by practices and ideologies, in interaction with other structures of social relations such as class and ethnic origin. Various cultural norms as well as the state provide the basis for such a role by defining and imposing women's and men's social obligations and their expected behaviour. Sudanese society is highly patriarchal with its legal structure governing marriage and divorce as well as many cultural inhibitions that confine women to certain jobs and obligations.

According to the women's focus-groups discussions (FGD-D11, FGD-B15 and WFGD-M9), although there are few differences in the perceived roles of men and women among different ethnic groups, women's roles were seen as being in the household, solving family problems and providing for basic needs such as food and water. Women from different ethnic groups indicated that there had been a massive change in their perceived and expected roles. Women from the Arabized group indicated that traditional attitudes to gender differences are still prevalent, in presuming that women's work should be mainly domestic. However, when livelihood strategies call for the deployment of more household members into the labour market, they have no problem in breaking the gender barriers. And in some instances, women have to undertake responsibilities including taking up activities that have traditionally been considered male domains.

## Conclusions

This chapter has introduced the four neighbourhoods and their main characteristics. Living conditions are extremely poor and the inhabitants have to deal with low-quality housing and dire environmental conditions. A dramatic increase in the size of the four neighbourhoods has taken place without proper land use planning and increased urban services, causing a surge in illegal settlements. Registering land involves high costs, which are required to be paid in one instalment. In addition, it also involves complex and bureaucratic procedures. The only option available to the poor is informal land and housing but for many such housing can be prone to demolition without compensation. Residents in these neighbourhoods lack the means to participate in any decisions that affect their lives and the informal or illegal status of the poor limits their rights to influence formal political processes.

Access to productive assets, i.e. land, labour, water and capital, is mediated by a complex matrix of formal and informal institutions that work to create opportunities and/or constraints for access to resources in numerous ways such as through public policies, regulations and political structures.

Gender and ethnicity are important determinants of the way populations are included or excluded from societal resources, power and opportunities. Gender differences and gender relations are expressed in a whole range of ways by practices and ideologies, and in interaction with other structures of social relations such as class and ethnicity. Overall, these socially constructed norms denote an unequal division of labour, power, responsibilities and rights between men and women. And the legal status of women in Sudan in particular remains exceptionally discriminatory. Different ethnic groups with their rich cultures mix and mingle in seemingly countless combinations across the neighbourhoods and ethnicity results in an extremely heterogeneous and complex mixture of population, with extreme disparities in social status. These provide the basis of everyday interactions between people as well as a means for accessing political and economic resources.

By virtue of their marginalization and exclusion, the poor are not represented in decision-making bodies and if they are included, it is just to legitimize the decision and policy process rather than to genuinely state their opinion or enable them to have some control over their lives. The cosmetic participation of the community is done by the appointed PCs and the supporting traditional powers of the headmen in the communities.

The locality is the main formal institutions that people come into contact with through their PCs but the localities have not been able to fill the role of the community institution responsible for programme design and service delivery. There are two important features that characterize a locality's governance in the areas: centralization and penetration. Centralization has allowed control over the economy and the political system while penetration has enabled control down as far as the neighbourhood level through the PCs. The locality's staff and leadership from the lowest level right to the top are controlled by the central authorities. Operating within a very restricted budget and with limited human resources, and being accountable only to their hierarchical superiors, the localities are not in a position to respond to the local needs or to tap into local traditions of cooperation and participation.

Compared to the rest of the city, the classic form of governance that prevailed in the city has undergone significant transformations within the neighbourhoods. There is a move from the increased role of the state in the city towards systems of ethnicity with

traditional leaders running the everyday affairs of the neighbourhoods. These traditional authorities also have a formal nature in that they are assigned by formal state institutions and are given a special mandate in some critical domains. However, they are deprived of any autonomy through policies of state corporatism. Traditional headmen in the community uphold and maintain the status quo because they are aware that they will lose their power and authority unless they adapt their institution to accommodate the broader political context. PCs too are created by the state as a mechanism of cooption and controlled inclusion so there is no space for popular participation. By playing the role of community-initiated institutions that manage communal resources and represent local people in locality decision-making, people in the neighbourhoods have been harmed further. The power and authority of these two key societal actors have helped institutionalize rigid hierarchical patterns of political participation, excluding large segments of the population from economic and political power.

Several NGOs are working in the areas but the potentially constructive influence of these networks has been hard to realize under the strict control of the state and the weakness of these organizations. Some CBOs have been successful in penetrating and mobilizing the community but they were not successful in making demands on the state or influencing state actions.

Livelihood activities are governed by regulatory constraints, such as fines and taxes on small businesses as well as cumbersome procedures to legalize activities. Those are provided by the Public Order Act and the 2001 Act of Violations and have concentrated mostly on the treatment of the negative manifestations of informal activities rather than their root causes. The application of these acts effectively deprives the poor of their hard-earned income and savings, and every possible source of livelihood. In such times, the existence of an efficient and reliable public social safety net to protect households from a loss of assets, unemployment and poverty can be crucial to their survival. However, the only government-run safety net, *Zakat*, is not able to play such a role.

The next chapter looks at the characteristics of the people living in the four neighbourhoods, how they pursue their livelihood strategies and how these contextual constraints impact on the strategies they are able to undertake.

# 8

# Household capital and livelihood activities

## Introduction

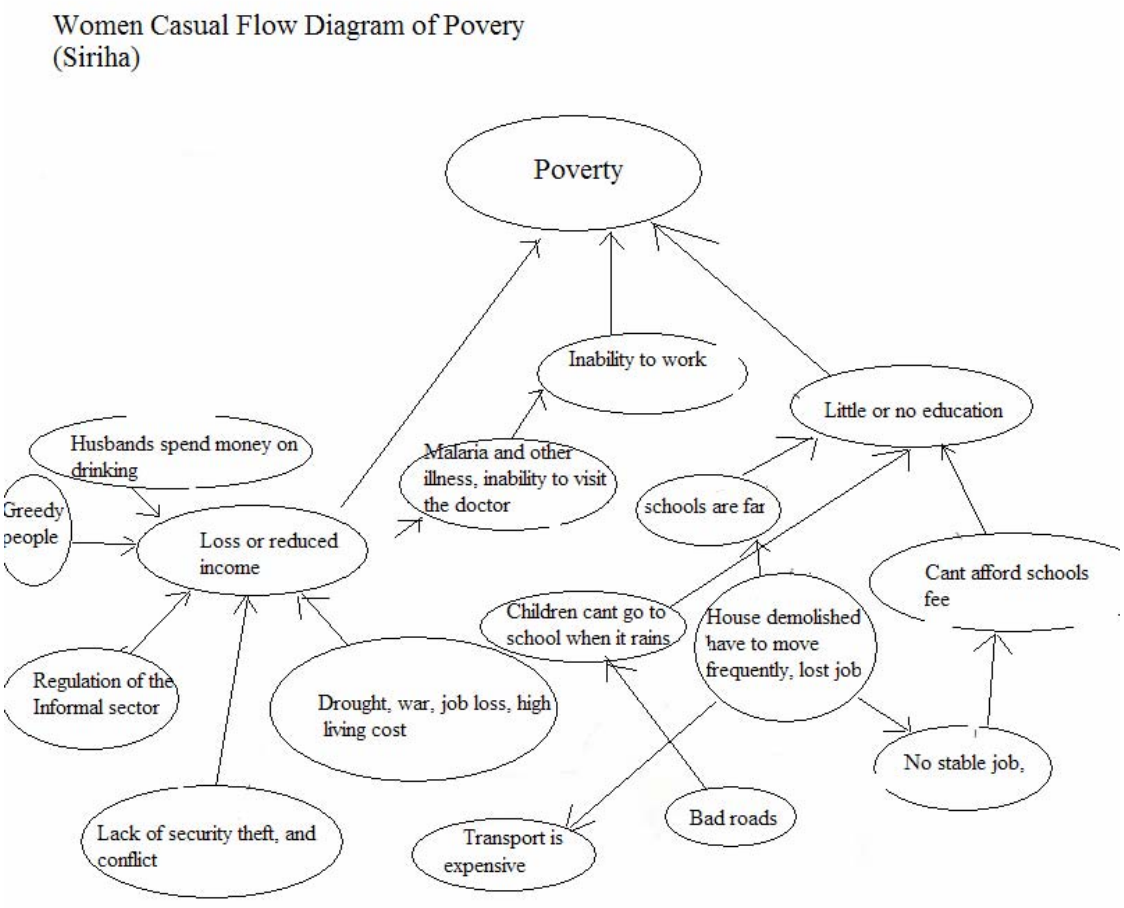
According to the sustainable livelihoods framework, outlined in Chapter 6, people's livelihoods draw on the resources that they can access and the activities they undertake. A key characteristic of the livelihoods framework is that certain types of capital are required to enable people to pursue the strategy of their choice. The types of capital discussed here include human, physical, social and political, financial and natural capital. The discussion has so far focused on the availability of these capitals and their role in the different kinds of activities that people undertake. There has been a conceptual difficulty in separating financial capital from the activities that it generates; therefore, this capital is linked to livelihood activities. This chapter examines the factors that differentiate people in terms of their ability (or inability) to pursue certain livelihood strategies rather than others. To understand these factors, it is important to start from the perceptions of poor people themselves on their different situations of well-beings and their varying abilities to pursue livelihood strategies. Perceptions of well-being were generated through participatory exercises that explored the full continuum of levels of well-being within each neighbourhood, as discussed in Chapter 7. Four categories of well-being in the community were identified: the 'Always Poor' (AP), the 'Sometimes Poor' (SP), the 'Medium Poor' (MP), and the 'Non-Poor' (NP). The discussion will follow this line of classification to highlight the way the mix of activities varies according to the social, economic, institutional, governance and environmental contexts in which people operate as their activities become a mere response to these factors. In addition, the discussion has disaggregated people's activities according to intra-household composition in terms of age and gender, placing more focus on age and gender and its members. It argues that dependence on child and female labour is essentially a sign of increased vulnerability, as these two groups usually have less ability to access relatively profitable jobs than adult men.

## Perceptions of poverty

To capture the diversity between people within each of the four neighbourhoods, considerable parts of the community meetings were focused on establishing community-based criteria that highlight the socio-economic differences between people within each neighbourhood. People's perceptions of the causes of poverty were influenced by their different livelihood backgrounds. They also differed by gender and ethnicity and

according to their current situations. Poverty was perceived as caused by factors that are beyond people's own control such as job retrenchment, ill health, floods, war, drought, criminality, price increases, informal-sector regulations, limited access to education and greedy people in the society (see Figure 8.1). In this conceptual framework, these factors refer to the vulnerability context. Low wages are seen by some men as the most important reason for being poor. As a young man put it 'no matter how hard you work, and how many hours you put into work, the wage you receive will never allow you to be any thing but very poor'. People who came from the rural areas thought that a lack of alternatives such as livestock, land or natural resources in the urban context increased their poverty to a level higher than what it used to be in the rural areas. People from war zones saw the lack of security as the main cause of poverty while people from the city viewed their poverty as being a result of retrenchment, rising prices and fewer employment opportunities.

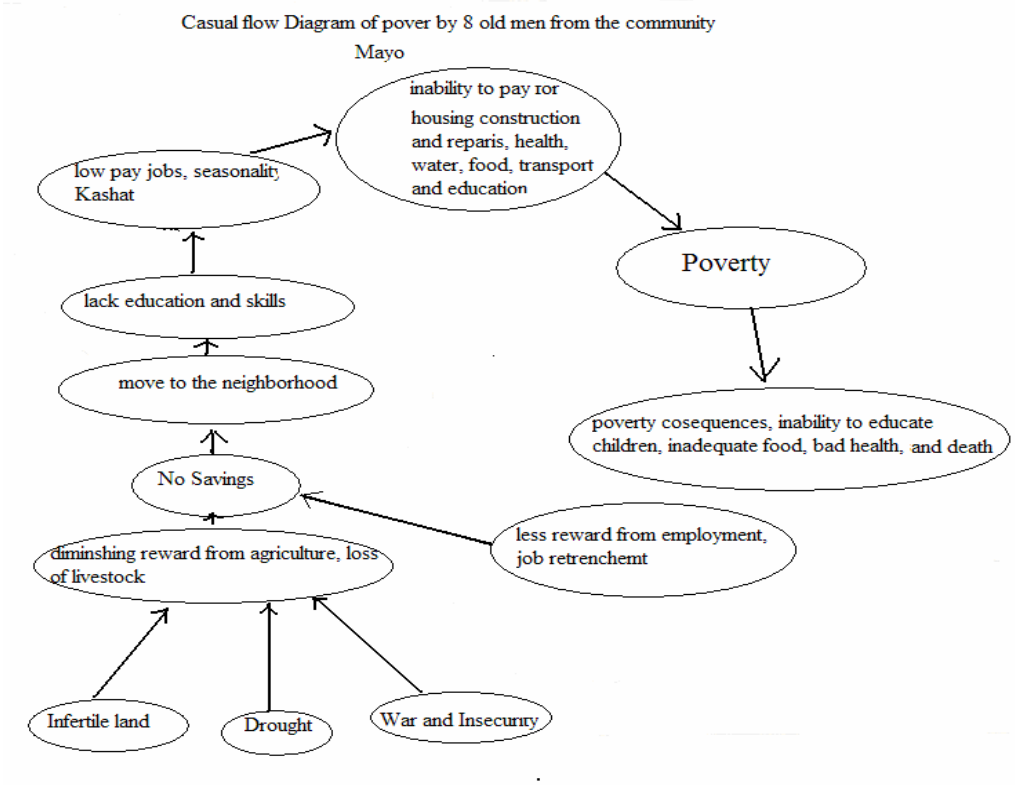
**Figure 8.1**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Women saw divorce and family disintegration as a major cause of poverty. They also perceived the way some husbands used money to support their drinking habits or having a second or third wife as another cause (see Figures 8.1 & 8.2).

**Figure 8.2**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Both men and women believed that their poverty was perpetuated because they had large numbers of dependants or because of the break-up of families, which reduced the number of earners. They also believed that migration and the subsequent changes in family structures placed additional burdens on women, especially those who provided for several dependants. Perceptions of poverty were not confined to material poverty. Health, family or neighbourhood relations and the ability to maintain a basic level of social engagement always came high on people's lists of priorities. Women attached high importance to these relations in the provision of support with day-to-day chores and during times of crisis.

When people compare their situations now and in the past, they almost always believe that their situation is much worse now than it used to be 25 years ago or so. They also saw that social relations were becoming much weaker because these relations have currently become very costly to maintain.

> Twenty five years ago I did not need such an amount of money to go out, to socialize with friends and get out a lot more than I do now … just little things like not going out every Friday … and catching up with friends, like that is non-existent now. (Hussein, a 61-year-old male from Al Baraka. Quote 2-B)

There was general agreement among both men and women that the situation of women is worse now than in the past. Despite the intensive productive roles that women are assuming now, their contributions are not materializing into increased well-being for themselves or their households.

People's hopes for the future did not fit with the way they are prioritizing them now. For instance, although they attached high importance to educating their children now and in the future, in reality, children's education is often placed among the least important items in household priorities. People also compared the accessibility of children's education now and 25 years ago and felt that in the past:

> … children did not cost the family so much in education or health, but now paying the cost of primary education for one child can leave a family at the verge of starvation, not to mention if a child gets sick. (Daniel, a 56-year-old male from Mayo. Quote 6-M)

Many parents would rather not have their children working but with the ever-increasing cost of living they have no other alternative.

Feelings of insecurity haunt virtually everyone and a major fear is becoming further impoverished. This fear holds with it several strings of issues related to their current state of vulnerability and the expected intensification of inability to respond to adversity. People fear the loss of livelihood, falling sick, dispossession of land or shelter, violence and theft and having to confront administrative and legal systems due to informal-sector activities. The poorest fear rain because it destroys shelters, brings mosquitoes and disease, and lessens the demand for work. People from better-off households fear theft, break-ins or being followed and mugged. Elderly men are more concerned about walking alone outside their homes after dark being mugged and personal injury as a result of crime because they are physically weaker and they see the potential for harm as greater.

## Categories of poverty

There was a common view that opportunities were not distributed equally and that those who have a solid capital base such as a house or a strong network of support are able to utilize them to cope with changing circumstances. When it comes to evaluating their own conditions, most people tend to think of their condition as 'Medium Poor' in comparison with other people in the community. Although some individuals are apparently living in a worse situation than the rest of the community, judging from their tenure arrangements and general household conditions, they saw themselves as 'not doing so badly'. They also gave examples of those worse off than themselves. The principle issues that were seen to differentiate them and the poor are that they have their labour and they do not beg. Other issues included having something to eat that day; being able to repay their debts, not steeling money and not being afraid of the police because they are not involved in informal-sector activities. People also compared themselves to those who are better-off. A typical statement would be '... they did less physical work, yet they are more comfortable than us, and most of them are corrupt and cheats'. Those who saw themselves as been extremely poor were either mostly dependent upon others because of their poor health, their age or their physical disabilities. Old

people and people with contagious diseases saw themselves as the poorest in the community.

> The only poor person is the old person who, when people see him walking down the road they would say: 'oh you're still alive' instead of 'good morning' or 'how are you'. You are too old and need help in doing everything, people avoid even greeting you in fear that you would ask for assistance. (Peter, a 72-year-old male from Mayo. Quote 1-M)

For both men and women who came from the main city, their relocation to the neighbourhood was seen as an indication of their poverty and they often labelled themselves as *tabaneen* (Always Poor) regardless of how they were perceived by the community. Contrary to how members from poorer households view themselves, better-off households tend to water down their relative wealth and their presumed comfort. They often talked about how hard (physically) they work, their negative contacts with the outside world and their inability to be part of local or national networks of information and power.

These discussions have highlighted the way people in the community perceived differences and inequalities among them and the various levels of well-being that exist. Participants defined what they believe as shared socio-economic characteristics between different inhabitants or poverty categories. They have used these well-understood criteria to classify which households are poorer than others and which households are better off, taking into account the length of their poverty experience. These shared characteristics were based in the first place on the way people make their livelihoods and the security or vulnerability of their efforts.

The most important determinant in classifying a household into a certain category was the stability of their job such as regular workers, contract workers or casual workers. In this way, it could be said that the basic focus of such criteria is on their livelihood strategy. Other variables used to enhance such classification include housing and tenure security, household headship, external support (from family, government or NGO), physical conditions and old age, and having access to electricity (grid or power generator) for lighting. The participants identified four categories each with distinctive characteristics. They proposed the terminologies, definition and meaning of words that express poverty and well-being in the community. Two broad categories of well-being were initially identified: 'The Poor' and the 'Non-Poor'. By enumerating the shared characteristics of 'The Poor' category, further categories emerged: the 'Always Poor' and the 'Sometimes Poor'. Similarly, after detailing the shared characteristics of the 'Non-Poor', it emerged that the 'Non-Poor' is composed of the 'Non-Poor' (*murtaheen*) and the 'Medium Poor'.

*The 'Always Poor' (tabaneen)*

The term *tabaneen* literally means those who became physically worn out due to their long-term and unsuccessful efforts to maintain or improve their well-being. Although *tabaneen* refers to being physically active it also applies to those who cannot work. The *tabaneen* (Always Poor) us composed mainly of workers whose remuneration is extremely low, seasonal workers and workers with unstable jobs, those who work in the informal sector, those who are unable to work (i.e. with health problems, the elderly and disabled), women household heads with young children, households with few adult males, and those who just came from crisis zones such as Dar Fur and could not find jobs. The *tabaneen* always lacks more than one important measure of security beside that of their work. They lack tenure security and/or live in run-down houses and they do

not have *dahar* (strong networks of support). The *tabaneen* usually do not have adequate clothes, their houses are always dark at night and they cannot afford to buy clean drinking water.

*The 'Sometimes Poor' (nus-nus)*

The 'Sometimes Poor' are the most diverse and versatile households, with features of both the 'Medium Poor' as well as the 'Always Poor' households. Though they are able to maintain an adequate livelihood at certain times, they are less able to sustain this over a longer period. This is mostly due to factors related to the nature of their livelihood activities or tenure arrangement. The 'Sometimes Poor' category is composed of households whose main income earners are casual workers or are self-employed in the informal sector. These households become poorer due to seasonality or when their main income earners are imprisoned or merchandises are confiscated.

The 'Sometimes Poor' may have measures of security that are lacking among the 'Always Poor', such as tenure security or having, more income earners per households. For example, a casual labourer who was the main income earner but has no tenure security was classified as 'Always Poor'. However a casual labourer, who was also the main income earner, with a legal title to the land she occupies was classified as 'Sometimes Poor'. Another example is a widow working in the informal sector and with grown-up sons was classified as 'Sometimes Poor', while a widow in the informal sector with young dependents is classified as 'Always Poor'.

*The 'Medium Poor' (wasat)*

People in the 'Medium Poor' category share several characteristics with the 'Non-Poor' or *murtaheen*, but they have certain elements of vulnerability that are not observed among the Non-Poor households.

These households depend for their livelihoods on formal employees (but in less profitable jobs compared to the Non-Poor*)*, the self-employed in the formal or informal sector and pensioners who are found in both the formal and the informal sector. Businesses of the 'Medium Poor' households in the informal sector are less vulnerable and more established compared to the 'Always Poor' and the 'Sometimes Poor'. The 'Medium Poor' households in the informal sector always have some form of fall-back situation if their business is raided by the local authority. They are also able to avoid all or most of the local authorities' measures such as confiscations of merchandise, forced removal, the demolition of structures, and arrest, fines and imprisonment through their strong network of support. These households are usually headed by males, they enjoy security of tenure and their houses are strong and can withstand bad weather conditions. Like the 'Non-Poor', their houses always have lighting at night and they always buy clean drinking water.

*The 'Non-Poor' (murtaheen)*

The term *murtaheen* literally means those who do not work physically too hard and get rest whenever they need it. The *murtaheen* category is composed of households where the main income earner is in either stable employment with a long-term contract or self-employed in a regulated business. They have well-constructed brick houses and can hire people in to work in their business. These households are always headed by males; have a strong *dahar* (network of support), have access to electricity (grid or power generator)

for lighting, have electronics, the women do not have to work and they always buy clean drinking water.

In summary, people's classifications of households into different categories of well-being basically reflect social differentiation and inequalities between people within their respective communities.

## Livelihood capitals

*Demographic characteristics: The 'Always Poor'*

Average household size in this category varies between 7.0 in Siriha and 8.8 persons in Mayo. Overall, Mayo neighbourhood has the largest households across all the well-being categories, while Siriha neighbourhood has the smallest household size, followed by Dar es Salam. Large household size is often due to the large number of children. Another important contributor to this is the old-age security hypothesis that prevails among most ethnic groups and is based on the assumption that children provide some form of insurance against risk when their parents are old. In the absence of any extra-familial support or private or state institutions, dependence on one's children for financial assistance and/or personal care become critical for the sick and the elderly. Large household size is also attributed to the tradition of polygamy which is practised by both Muslims and Christians and among most ethnic groups. The 'Always Poor' households form the majority of households with polygamous arrangements, with Fur husbands having two to three wives and Dinka men between two and seven wives. The dependency ratio is the highest among the 'Always Poor' and households in this category are mainly made up of members under the age of sixteen (see Chart 8:1). This age group represents the largest group in Al Baraka where 62% of the people in the 'Always Poor' category are under sixteen years of age. It follows then that the 'Always Poor' in Al Baraka has the smallest number of adult members in the 16 to 64 age group and also the largest number of children below the age of six. In general, across the 'Always Poor' households in the four neighbourhoods, the proportion of children in the under-sixteen group is much higher than other age groups.

'Always Poor' households are less likely to co-reside with elderly members compared to the other categories in the same neighbourhood. The 'Always Poor' from the bigger ethnic groups usually account for large household size. For example, the average household size for the Fur ethnic group in Al Baraka is 9.6 and for the Shuluk in Mayo it is 9.2. Ethnic groups of Arab origin, like the Jumwamaa, appear to have relatively smaller households with an average size of 6.2 among the Jumwamaa and 5.7 among the Danagla. The ratio of male to female is the lowest for the 'Always Poor' in all neighbourhoods and particularly in Al Baraka where the male/female ratio is 45% and the highest in Siriha is 49%. Among the 'Always Poor' households there are apparent shifts away from the male-headed structure of the household, either due to increased economic pressure or for reasons related to war. Around 50% of the 'Always Poor' households in Mayo and Al Baraka are headed by females. In Siriha and Dar es Salam this stands at 37% and 27% respectively. In these households, women have become the involuntary head due to death, divorce or the departure of the spouse, or because the wife herself fled an abusive relationship. Family abandonment and widowhood are most common in Al Baraka due to the concentration of many Darfurian groups who have fled the turmoil in their region. Males were either conscripted in the different factions of the conflicts, killed or have sought separate livelihoods elsewhere. Divorce rates are highest

in Siriha, followed by Dar es Salam. Divorce is high among Arabized communities, while family abandonment is high in the Africanized communities. The majority of the chronically ill and disabled are to be found among the 'Always Poor'.

**Chart 8:1**
**Distribution of 'Always Poor' household members according to age group**

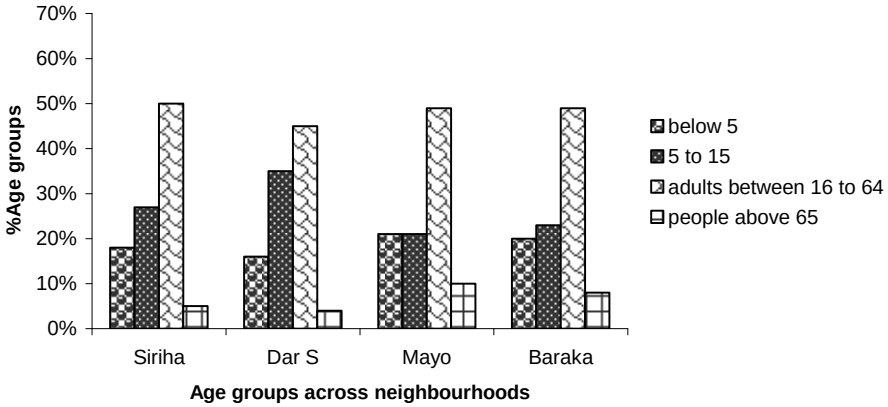

*Source*: Fieldwork research

The majority of the 'Always Poor' are from the Africanized communities, -except in Dar es Salam, compared to households from the other categories in the same neighbourhood. Although the 'Always Poor' households are predominantly Muslims, except in Mayo, they have the highest concentration of non-Muslims compared to other categories.

*Demographic characteristics: The 'Sometimes Poor'*

Average household size in this category is smaller than the 'Always Poor' for the same neighbourhood, except in Dar es Salam where the 'Sometimes Poor' households are relatively bigger. As for the 'Always Poor', more than 40% of household members of the 'Sometimes Poor' are under 16 years of age (see Chart 8:2). The proportion of adult members in the 16 to 64 age group is higher than their peers in the 'Always Poor' households. The male/female ratio remains the same as the 'Always Poor' except in Al Baraka where it increases to 47%. Incidences of divorce, family abandonment and widowhood are lower compared to the 'Always Poor' and there are fewer households headed by women. In Siriha and Dar es Salam, the majority of the 'Sometimes Poor' households are Muslims, while in Al Baraka and Mayo the majority of the 'Sometimes Poor' are non-Muslims. Ethnically, the 'Sometimes Poor' households are mainly composed of Africanized groups, except in Dar es Salam.

**Chart 8:2**
**Distribution of 'Sometimes Poor' household members according to age group**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

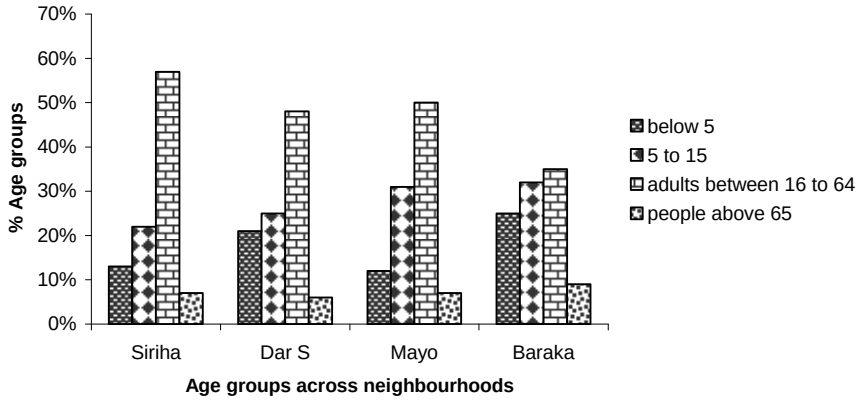
*Demographic characteristics: The 'Medium Poor'*

The average household size in this group is relatively smaller than the previous two. Unlike the 'Sometimes Poor' and 'Always Poor' the proportion of adult members (16 to 64) is higher than the proportion of young members (see Chart 8:3) except in Al Baraka. The proportion of female-headed households is much smaller than among the 'Sometimes Poor' and 'Always Poor' groups. Like the 'Non-Poor', household heads in the 'Medium Poor' category are more likely to be relatively older compared to those in the other two categories. The few female-headed household heads in this category are elderly widowed women with no dependents; they are the main income earner and often own their house. The ratio of male to female is almost balanced within this category for all neighbourhoods. The majority of households in the 'Medium Poor' category are Muslim and belong to the Arabized ethnic group, except in Mayo where the majority are Christians and descendants of Africanized groups.

*Demographic characteristics: The 'Non-Poor'*

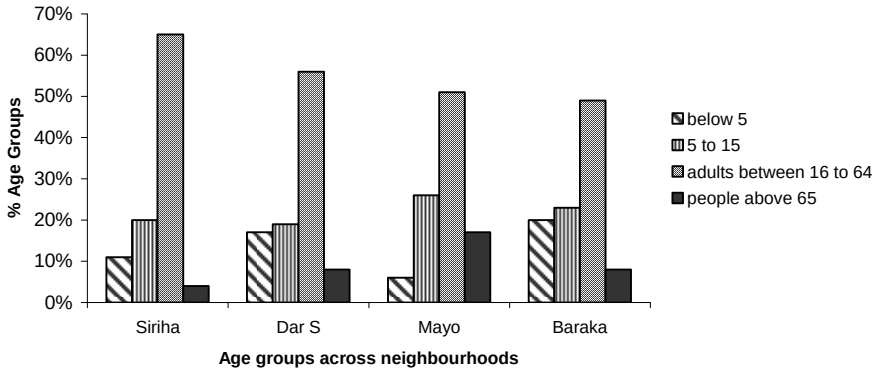
Non-Poor households have the smallest number of household members in all the neighbourhoods, ranging from 5.8 persons in Dar es Salam to 7.2 for Mayo. The dependency ratio is the lowest across all the neighbourhoods and categories. This is reflected in the relatively smaller percentage of people under the age of 16 (see Chart 8:4). The adult population in the 16 to 64 age category is the highest. For example, 65% of household members in Siriha and 49% of those in Mayo belong to this group. The female/male ratio is similar to the 'Medium Poor' category. None of the 'Non-Poor' household is headed by a woman except in Al Baraka where 10% of households have a female head. The majority of the 'Non-Poor' households belong to Arabized ethnic groups. In Siriha and Dar es Salam, all the 'Non-Poor' households belong to the Arabized and Muslim group. Only 30% of the 'Non-Poor' in Mayo and 10% of their peers in Al Baraka belong to Africanized groups.

**Chart 8:3**
**Distribution of 'Medium Poor' household members according to age group**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 8:4**
**Distribution of 'Non Poor' household members according to age group**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

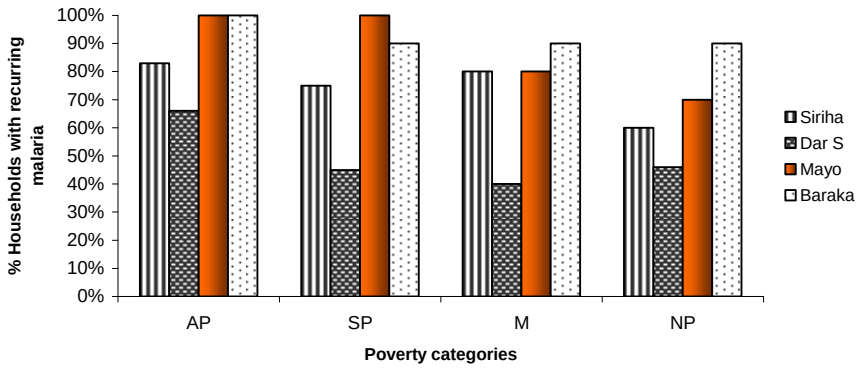
In summary, people's classifications overall reflected strong linkages between poverty and the composition of households in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. The 'Always Poor' are mainly made up of households from the minority ethnic groups, headed by women and having a lot of young members. The 'Non-Poor' are mainly made up of households that belong to the dominant ethnic groups, headed by males, and with fewer dependent members.

*Health*

Ill health characterizes the majority of the sample households, particularly those in the 'Always Poor' category. There are variations, however; between people's health problems and the way they seek medical help or otherwise. These differences are based on gender, age, ethnicity and well-being category. The 'Always Poor' households

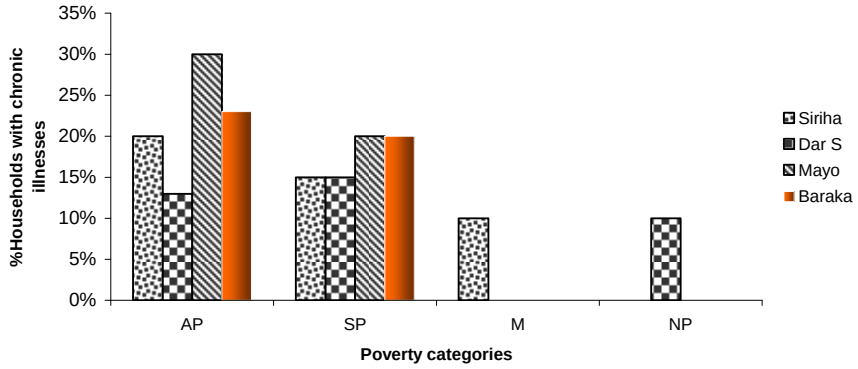
demonstrated clear evidence of greater levels of ill health; while those in the Non-Poor are relatively healthier (see Charts 8:5 & 8:6).

**Chart 8:5**
**Percentage of households with one or more members with recurring malaria**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 8:6**
**Percentage of households with one or more members with chronic illness or disability**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Malaria is the major illness among the majority of people in the different well-being categories and in different age groups within the four neighbourhoods. The high levels of malaria are due to the neighbourhoods' disturbed and poorly managed environments. Swarms of malaria-carrying mosquitoes breed freely all year round in the numerous untreated small pools of rainwater and in the open-pit latrines, causing high levels of malaria, especially among children and pregnant women. Mayo and Al Baraka have the highest percentages of households with at least one member with recurring malaria due to their specific locations. Mayo is next to the municipal sewage dump, while Al Baraka

is adjacent to agricultural fields. The prevalence of malaria is thus due to a lack of governmental concern about people's health, and the lack of a public health programme focusing on citizens' needs. Furthermore, the exorbitant price of malaria drugs puts them beyond the reach of the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households that are then less able to cope with malaria and, due to illness, struggle to earn an income. A typical bout of malaria usually lasts between one and three weeks during which time the patient suffers recurring high fever with chills, headache, back pain, sweating, weakness, nausea and anaemia. Malaria patients become extremely frail and completely dependent on other household members for days afterwards. Malaria attacks are worse during the rainy season when the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are at their lowest point financially due to reduced job opportunities in this season. Malaria thus exposes 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households' vulnerability, particularly if the patient is the sole or main breadwinner

'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have the highest percentage of members with physical disabilities and people with a stigmatizing disease like leprosy. Member with such health limitations are more prone to being discriminated against, even within their households, and are more likely to be neglected and malnourished. They are often not considered part of a community's social life; cannot go to school and cannot work or earn a living. These issues combine to cut them off from the rest of society and make them fell unwanted. At the same time, the inaccessibility of health care leaves them with no support, which exposes them to more difficulties and further health problems. Variations in health conditions are more apparent in older age among the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. Although people may be cared for by their families in older age, they become more vulnerable when they get sick, particularly with an incapacitating illness that make them dependent on others for their survival. Depression is very common among the elderly who are suffering from long-term illness. Men and women from the different well-being categories expressed their fears about living too long, suffering pain and causing their caregivers trouble.

Women among the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households face greater health risks due to the types of livelihood activities they undertake. For example in 23% of 'Always Poor' households there was at least one woman who had severe sight damage or a lung disorder due to long-term smoke inhalation while cooking over a biomass fire or kerosene. Among them are those whose livelihood activities have forced them to be in constant contact with smoke while cooking.

Fad-lu (AP) is 49 and a widow from Siriha. For the past 13 years she made and sold *kisra* (traditional bread,) for restaurants. She started to experience a burning sensation in her eyes some years ago and used traditional medication. However when her problem became exacerbated she saw a doctor who advised her to avoid smoke and heat. She couldn't afford to do so and continued her work with increased pain and difficulty. Over the past three years her problem became more complex and she started to lose her eyesight. Fad-lu can no longer work or even see her way around the house but at the same time she cannot seek help because she cannot afford it (LH36-S).

Women from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households suffer health complication as a result of their hard physical labour. Women who carry heavy head loads to markets or to the main city as part of their livelihood activities indicated that they suffer problems such as back pain and chronic headache. Childbirth for women in 'Always Poor' households mostly take place at home and with no professional help whatsoever, except maybe for a local midwife if the household budget allows it. Childbirth for

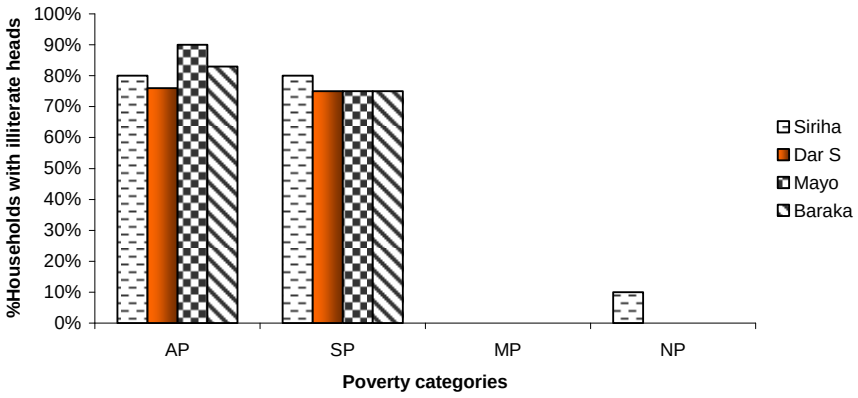
females from 'Non-Poor' households usually takes place at hospital. From the entire sample, almost all the young girls from Arabized ethnic groups and some Africanized ethnic groups had either undergone genital mutilation or were waiting for it to happen some time in the near future.

In summary, ill health is closely connected to the poorly managed environment, with significant variation between neighbourhoods. It is also related to the type of livelihood activities undertaken and the gender and age of household members. Disease, particularly malaria, impacts heavily on the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households' livelihood options due to their inability to access health care. Ill health also impairs poorer people's physical capacity to undertake sustainable livelihood activities.

*Education*

The inability to read and write is widespread among members of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. Among the 'Always Poor' group, illiteracy rates among those over the age of 29 is very high, ranging between 76 percent in Dar es Salam to 90% in Mayo (see Chart 8:7). This is because most people never attended school and have never had access to an adult literacy programme. Illiteracy is much higher among women than men: 90% of females from the 'Always Poor' group had never been to school in comparison with 78% of the men. On the other hand, except for Siriha, all 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' household heads had a primary-school education or higher. In contrast, only 10% to 24% of household heads from 'Always Poor' households had completed primary school.

**Chart 8:7**
**Percentage of households with illiterate heads**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Among all the poverty categories, children between six and fifteen had the highest enrolment rate in primary-school education compared to older children (15+). However there are also variations among different categories and between different neighbourhoods. Children from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households have the highest rates of primary-school attendance. For example, all children aged between six and fifteen from 'Non-Poor' and 'Medium Poor' households in all the neighbourhoods were enrolled in school but among the 'Always Poor' households in Mayo 40 % of the

children of that age and around 20% of their peers in Siriha were not enrolled in education. This is attributed to the high cost of education, which forces the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households to withdraw their children from school. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. In addition, ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households with s small number of adult labourers tend to send their children to work rather than to school, compared to households with more adult labourers. This is also apparent among female-headed households, such as those in the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ categories.

The proportion of female children and male children attending school in the 6-15 age group also varies between the different well-being categories and neighbourhoods. Following the classic pattern, girls’ enrolment is overall much lower than that of boys across all the well-being categories and neighbourhoods. Among the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households large numbers of children, particularly girls, are still never enrolled in school. For example, among the ‘Always Poor’ households of Mayo, the percentage of boys enrolled in primary school is almost twice as high as the number of girls. It is only in Al Baraka that girls’ enrolment in primary education is almost similar to that of boys. School access has been a principal constraint on girls’ education among ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households. Parents cite school fees as the most important reason for non-enrolment among both boys and girls. Variations in school enrolment were also related to household characteristics (including demographic shocks), school characteristics (including the availability of public and NGO-run schools, costs and distance) as well as cultural constraints. Since the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households are the ones more prone to these shocks and lack the ability to respond to them, (see Chapter 10), only in exceptional cases have their children made it to secondary school and/or university, but then they were either supported by an NGO or the church.

Enrolment in education varies between those who attend a full school year without interruption, those who drop out from time to time and those who drop out and never resume education. Dropping out is often due to the high cost of education and a lack of credit support to cover a child’s education from primary school to a higher level (see Chapter 9).

The drop-out rate is higher among girls than boys. A number of complex and interrelated factors contribute to this high level among girls from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households. The life histories (e.g. LH4-M and LH11-M) show that while household economic shocks affected both girls’ and boys’ schooling negatively, they have more effect on girls. When ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households were confronted with economic shocks they always withdrew girls from education first. Likewise, when households were confronted with demographic shocks such as the death of the mother, it was the girls who were withdrawn from school to look after the family. Many girls were married at a very young age, preventing them from receiving further education. Girls from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households are, therefore, at a double disadvantage compared to their male counterparts in the same households.

To sum up, poorer households have the least education due to issues of access. Throughout the discussions, it was made clear that education was essential for a decent standard of living and that many felt a poor education was the underlying cause of their poverty and one of the key reasons that many were unable to access decent employment, housing and health care. Many participants felt that poor education was a key

indicator of exclusion, and one of the most significant barriers limiting their choices and opportunities.

## Physical capital

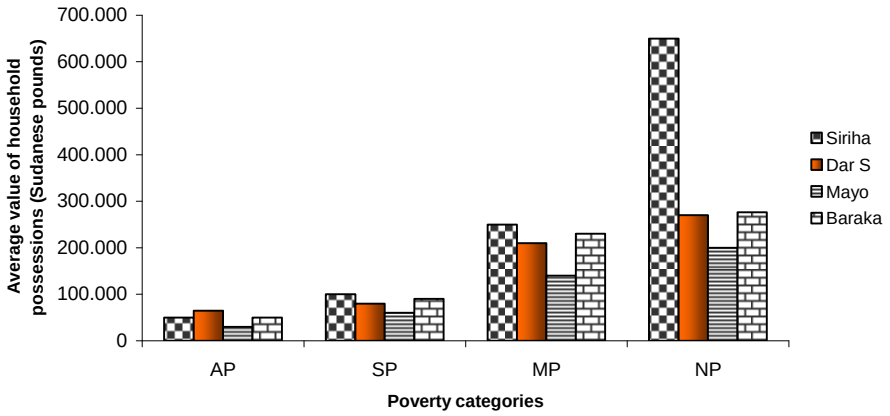
*Household assets*

A household's assets include saleable personal belongings that households currently possess such as jewellery, clothing, bicycles, kitchen utensils, electronics and furniture. Most Non-Poor households, particularly those in Siriha, have a higher stock of valuable belongings such as TV sets and refrigerators and a few of them even have gas cookers. People indicated that they relied on these goods generating cash in times of need. Men from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households, particularly the 'Non-Poor' households, command more productive assets from which they can receive cash or in-kind income, for example sewing machines, merchandise, handcarts and livestock. Men from Siriha's 'Non-Poor' households have more productive assets than their peers in other neighbourhoods. Similarly, women from Non-Poor households in Siriha have the highest number of productive assets among their peers from other neighbourhoods. Women's productive assets basically include poultry or goats and a little jewellery.

The data show that the possession of valuable items is highly stratified. The majority of the 'Always Poor' households have no valuable assets from which they can gain income. Some households that have no physical capital indicate that their capital was either sold or destroyed during demolition, *kashat* or floods and fire. Many have sold their physical capital, including houses, during times of emergency. More than 30% of households from each neighbourhood owned no household capital of any significant financial value that could be sold in a time of need. For example the estimated resale price of goods for the 'Always Poor' households in Mayo have an average value of only SP 30,000 ($12), while their peers in Siriha owned capital worth SP 50,000 ($20) (see Chart 8:8).

Chart 8:8 indicates that there is a gradual change moving from the 'Non-Poor' through the 'Always Poor' households. Each category is distinct although the difference might not be as huge between the last two categories. The ownership of capital among the 'Sometimes Poor' households does not differ so much from that of the 'Always Poor'. A larger difference exists between the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households on the one hand and the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households on the other. Differences also exist among the matching well-being categories within the different neighbourhoods. For example, average household capital available for the 'Medium Poor' households in Siriha is SP 250,000 ($100), while it is SP 140,000 ($56) for the 'Medium Poor' in Mayo. 'Non-Poor' households in Siriha have average assets to a value of SP 650,000 ($260) which is the highest among all the groups. While 'Non-Poor' households in Mayo have an average asset value of SP 200,000 ($80), which is not only the lowest among their category in other neighbourhoods but also lower than the average asset values of all 'Medium Poor' households in other neighbourhoods. Overall, households from Mayo have the lowest physical capital under command compared with their respective categories from other neighbourhoods, while households from Siriha have the highest. The difference in ownership of physical capital between the 'Non-Poor' and the 'Always Poor' in Siriha is the highest when compared to similar categories in other neighbourhoods.

**Chart 8:8**
**Average value of household possesions**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have extremely low valuable physical capital that can be utilized in times of needs. These households have the least choice in terms of their livelihood strategies and thus are the most vulnerable when confronted with adversity.

*Housing*

Ownership of dwelling has a powerful cultural and economic importance for all well-being categories. It is also an effective indicator to differentiate between he 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' and the rest of the groups. All the 'Non-Poor' households and 'Medium Poor' households from all the neighbourhoods have secure tenure status. Compared to the 'Sometimes Poor' households, the 'Always Poor' households have the most uncertain tenure situation (see Charts 8:9 & 8:10), having the largest number of squatters and renters. The 'Always Poor' in Mayo enjoy the least stability in terms of their dwelling arrangements compared to their category in other neighbourhoods

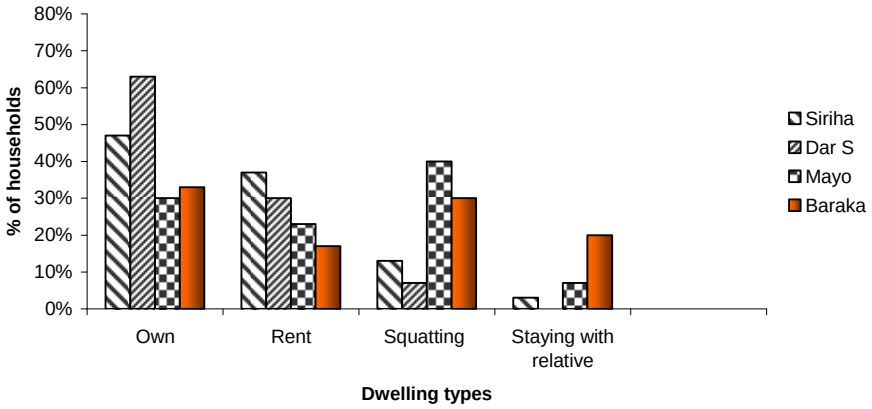
The quality of dwelling varies considerably between the different well-being categories. A typical 'Non-Poor' household's house has a 300 $m^2$ plot or more, is built of red bricks, cement or mud and coated with cement from inside, and consists of more than one room, a kitchen, a bathroom and a toilet. A typical house in the 'Always Poor' category ranges in size from 10 $m^2$ to 200 $m^2$, is built from any available materials such as mud, straw, traditional thatch or bamboo, recycled pieces of tin or plastic, and has no toilet. Dwellings of the 'Medium Poor' are mostly built of solid materials. As most dwellings of the 'Always Poor' households are not made good-quality materials and cannot stand harsh weather conditions, these houses are prone to being swept away by rain or blown away by strong winds. Seasonal rains and flooding account for huge annual losses of houses. The floods of 1988 in particular left many families homeless. In Al Baraka and Mayo squatter families from the 'Always Poor' group maintain a precarious existence on flood and drainage canals and banks of streams.

These locations enable them to access job opportunities without incurring any transport costs but at the same time put them at the mercy of the weather. Rented houses, particularly in Al Baraka and Mayo, are extremely small and rundown with many

having problems related to leaking ceilings, inappropriate drainage for rain water, a lack of toilet facilities or unsafe pit latrine that flood or collapse during the rainy season. Traditional landowners who live in the main city are usually unwilling to allow any building of permanent housing on their land or to fix problems with their houses. They also oppose the provision of running water fearing that they may lose control over their land.

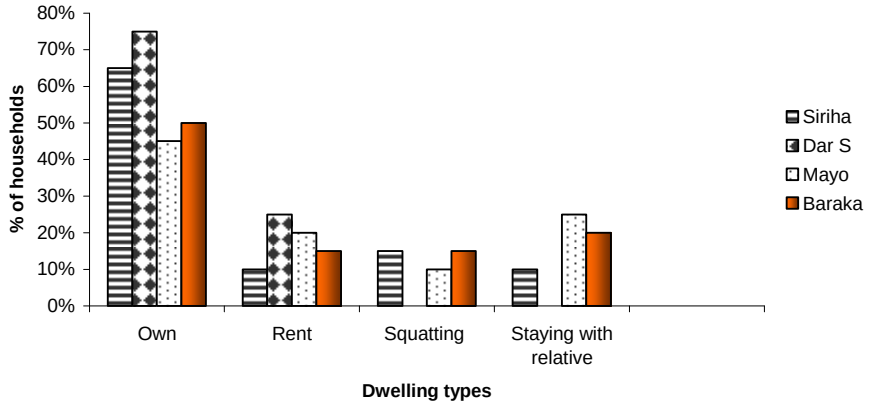
To sum up, poorer households' living arrangements are characterized by high instability. Houses are generally small and sub-standard and expose them to a myriad of hazards. Out of all these problems, the main determining factor is the issue of tenure security that differentiates between the poor and the non-poor.

**Chart 8:9**
**Tenure security for 'Always Poor' households**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 8:10**
**Tenure security of 'Sometimes Poor' households**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

*Social and political capital*

Social networks among poorer households tend to consist of people at similar levels. The family provides the first and main line of support and in most cases the only line of support for 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. However, family disintegration is higher among these particular households than others. Crisis in the rural areas has contributed significantly in this respect. Frequently, the family disintegrates as the male head goes off in search of income or joins a militia, and the wives and children are left behind in the city. Divorce is high in Arabized communities, while family abandonment is high among the Africanized communities. Family breakdown due to abandonment is the highest among the 'Always Poor' households of Mayo (30%) and Al Baraka (20%). Similarly, divorce is very high among the 'Always Poor' households, particularly in Siriha. Domestic violence and aggression against women and children are common and often lead to the breakdown of household relations.

Networks of vertical linkages that operate with local- and national-level authorities are extremely limited. Community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) highlighted this issue as a lack of *Dahar* or *Wasta*, which refers to a lack of useful kinship relations, connections and contacts. *Dahar* and *Wasta* often simplify more vertical relations that link people across diverse and unequal situations, and allow the accessing of better livelihood opportunities. A well-known proverb used to signify how these vertical relationships work: 'A person who lacks *Dahar* will be hit in the stomach', meaning that a person without *Dahar* will starve. Links with local government authorities are seen to be of crucial importance in order to access, land, education, health facilities, job opportunities etc. Some individuals may have formal or informal connections with officials and politicians which they mobilize to influence their access to resources. For example, traditional leaders have used these connections to access urban services and other resources (e.g. LH2-M). However, poor households have no means of interacting with the state, nor are they able to interact with each other or exercise autonomy in their organizations. The relationship between residents and the locality is mediated by PCs. These relations are strongly state-oriented, hierarchical in nature and allow no room for residents' participation. The focus-group discussions (FGD-M8, FGD-M18 and FGD-B6) also indicate that the PCs and the traditional leaders are not true representatives of their communities. While PC members and traditional headmen ae able, through their position, to access personal benefits, the community and particularly 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households were the least able to benefit. The four communities lack any effective forms of grassroots associations to enable them to voice their demands or to pursue common interests collectively. According to the law, people are prohibited from forming any organizations apart from church groups, *tajweed* and other Islamic groups, and regional and/or ethnically based associations. Other group meetings and gatherings are also not allowed and those who are found to be breaking the rules are persecuted and jailed.

Men have relatively better access to vertical networks than women. For example, women are not represented on the PCs or local committees for water management or other public affairs, and very few people have links with CBOs or NGOs in their areas. Some local organizations, such as the Sudanese Development Association (SDA), has helped women to organize a CBO for savings and credit (registered as a co-operatives or an NGO depending on their choice) (see Chapter 9). Although such mobilization was established to empower women traders in the informal sector who were experience

excessive harassment by the authority, it soon spread beyond this level. However, the network's outreach is extremely limited in its scope.

Affiliation with political parties is a recent phenomenon that has emerged with the new orientation towards democracy. However, kinship ties have been the main channel through which a few men and women from the neighbourhood have gained access to political positions as party representatives in their neighbourhoods. Non-elected representatives of political parties in the area often come from 'Non-Poor' households or from traditional headmen. Either way, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are not included. The involvement of people from the neighbourhood in the political environment remains cosmetic and they have no opportunity to influence policies. The involvement of women in particular has been inherently low compared to that of men. And non-elected representatives are not able to make any connections between residents and their political parties let alone with the state. Yet in terms of personal gains, those who have denoted political roles have been able to access credit and regular wage opportunities, food and health care assistance (WFGD-M9, FGD-M18 and FGD-S14).

Regular salaried employment can open the door to more beneficial vertical networks. Individuals in regular salaried employment are involved in networks such as trade unions, workers' cooperatives and national health insurance schemes. Employees can benefit from workers' cooperatives that are active primarily in the provision of daily household items at wholesale prices. All regular wage workers are automatically members of their organization's trade union. Although, due to their nature, trade unions are not able to play their expected role, i.e. pressing for demands vis-à-vis the employers in favour of workers, workers on the committee have been able to ensure better working situations for themselves and have also facilitated employment entry for their relatives. Workers in casual work and self-employment lack any form of organization. The only available union in this respect is the Association of Women Vendors of Food and Tea in Abu Zeid Market. The association has empowered its members to defend themselves against different forms of exploitation and to demand their rights through collective action (see Chapter 9).

Savings and credit cooperatives (*Sanduqes*) are probably the most important form of neighbourhood networking used by the different well-being categories. The way S*anduqes* work provides additional benefits to those involved. During the collection and distribution of credit, members also get to collect various forms of information on prices, places where they can find cheap products, get to know influential members of the community, etc. Information is also disseminated on various matters that concern the community. However, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are less involved in *Sanduqes* due to their limited resources.

Perceptions of the neighbourhood impact on people's opportunities to succeed in forming effective relationships and beneficial networks beyond their communities. In particular Mayo and Al Baraka are considered as being strongly influenced by political as well as criminal elements that act as a conduit or barrier for any benefits accruing to the people. This stigmatization was cited in meetings as a reason why some were discriminated against in front of the police, when applying for jobs or for waiving school fees, when legalizing land, or participating in a variety of personal networks (FGD-B19, FGD-M18 and FGD-S12).

In sum, it appears that the community lacks the essential mechanisms of support that provide an environment for individuals and groups to access resources. However, even with this advantage, the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households seem to be

most disadvantaged compared to others. In the light of a lack of economic opportunities, diminishing health and education services, ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ people can easily fall into desperate poverty.

*Natural capital*

Natural capital in the form of land, water and trees is of less significance to people’s livelihood strategies, although scarcity of water did not allow people to incorporate urban agriculture in their livelihood’s strategies, as is the case in other African countries. In all well-being categories, land is only used for shelters due to a lack of water. People have very limited access to land for shelter due to issues of property and user rights. The life histories (i.e. LH2-M) indicated that people were not able to cope with consecutive shocks without seriously depleting the natural resources around them. This is particularly true during their initial period of residence in a neighbourhood when many households incorporated strategies of common resources, such as tree cutting and wood collection, to generate income. Tree cutting had also intensified as people built and rebuilt their housing due to demolition. Eventually the areas were bare and the poor people lost an important source of building material, fuel and biodiversity that the trees offered, as well as herbal medicines and an important source of income.

## Livelihood activities: How do households make a living?

Livelihood strategies for both men and women are principally labour-based and reliant on forms of social networks. Livelihood activities for the sample households can be divided into three broad activity groups: self-employment, regular wage/salaried employment, and casual labour. Ascribing one of these activities as a main source of living for a certain household is rather arbitrary because the main source of income tends to change in response to factors within and outside households, such as demographic shocks, seasonality of work, regulatory constraints, the availability of transport, etc. The intensity of such change is much more apparent among ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households than among ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households. This research project looked at the activities that households derived their major income from over the previous six months.

Very few household heads were unemployed since the poor cannot afford to stay unemployed. Those who were unemployed were the physically disabled or the very old. They represented only 3% of the ‘Always Poor’ of Al Baraka, while all the ‘Always Poor’ households in other neighbourhoods had at least one income earner. Households with no income earner depended on food donations from neighbours and on begging. While these households were categorized among the ‘Always Poor’, they suffered far more deprivation than the category they belong to. They were more vulnerable when confronted with health shocks or the demolition of their shelters. Similarly, households with physically disabled members, even if they were not the household head, were among the poorest households and exhibited more vulnerability to adversity. This was due to the high cost of medicines and because every household member needs to be involved in income generation.

All the members of the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households can be engaged in increased work efforts and undertake multiple activities. The poorer the household, the more income earners it requires. On the other hand ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households have relatively smaller numbers of income earners and in some

cases the household head is the sole income earner. Secondary income earners among 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households were mainly young, while among 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households they were adults. It is also evident that secondary earners usually have less well-paid jobs than the main income earner. Workforce participation in manual labour among elderly males over the age of 65 was relatively high in the 'Always Poor' group; unlike in the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households where some of the elderly are pensioners or have other forms of work. Elderly females had the lowest participation in activities outside the home, although they were usually involved in home industries or in looking after smaller children in the household.

Life histories (e.g. LH14-D) show that the earnings of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households tend to fluctuate more than 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. Wages fluctuate during slack seasons and when there is an abundance of labour, during *kashat* (municipal raids on non-formal activities), in the rainy season when some manual labour stops, and when a member of a household is sick. Accordingly, being a main income earner shifts from one member to another. This dynamic is more apparent among the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households than among 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. The shifting of the position of main income earner can be as frequent as every month or every week, particularly for those working in jobs that are characterized by high insecurity. An example of this is Zakia's household:

> Zakia (SP) is 48 years old. She lives in Dar es Salam and earns her living by selling tea, coffee and donuts but without the necessary permits. Most days she brings home around SP 4,000 ($1.60). Her husband works as a casual labour in construction making around SP 10,000 ($4) per day, but he usually works on short contracts and most days he does not find work and sometimes he earns less. Zakia's work is mostly dependent on factors beyond her control, such as; *kashat* and weather conditions. When her husband finds work, he provides the household's main income, since he earns far more than Zakia does. However, when the husband doesn't find employment, the family depends on her income alone. During the past six months, for example, (Jan-June 2004), the husband was only able to work for 60 days. But the work was good enough that he was able to pay the rent, to secure some household necessities and raise the cost of transport to go back home (to Gezira) where he worked in cotton picking (Oct-Dec). When Zakia and her husband could not earn sufficient income, their two teenage sons worked as loaders in the Libya market and brought home around SP 2,000 ($0.80) each a day. Although consumption had to be cut and no rent or school fees could be paid, no one went hungry (LH14-D).

There are considerable differences in the main employment activities of men and women that influence the level of income earned in male- and female-headed households. Women have lower earnings opportunities compared to men because by virtue of cultural norms and legal and labour market barriers, they have greater constraints on their socio-economic mobility. In addition, they are burdened with the responsibility of caring for their young, older and chronically ill household members. Households that endure severe poverty are, therefore, those female-headed households with no husband present, especially among the minority ethnic groups.

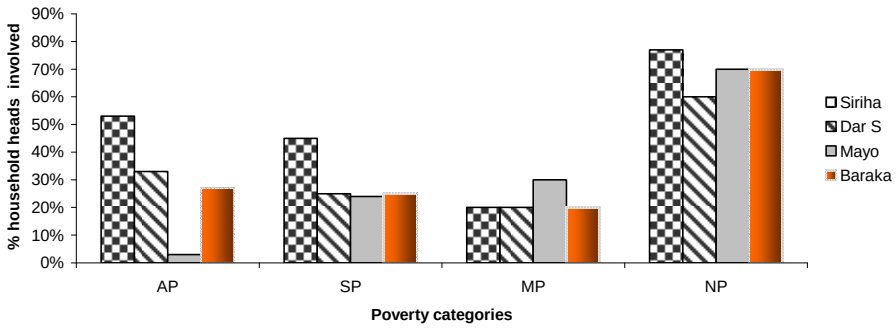
Minority ethnic groups and particularly those who have recently moved to the city from war-torn or drought-ridden areas or in search of employment are confronted with a wide range of constraints that people in the same category do not commonly face. These groups often take the hazardous and low-paying jobs that are least popular among the local community. A lack of education and training, coupled with language barriers, expose them to exploitation by their employers and even by the well-established people in their own group. Their children are marginalized by their language, culture and

extreme poverty and are especially at risk. The following section looks at various details of these activities and constraints.

*Self-employment*

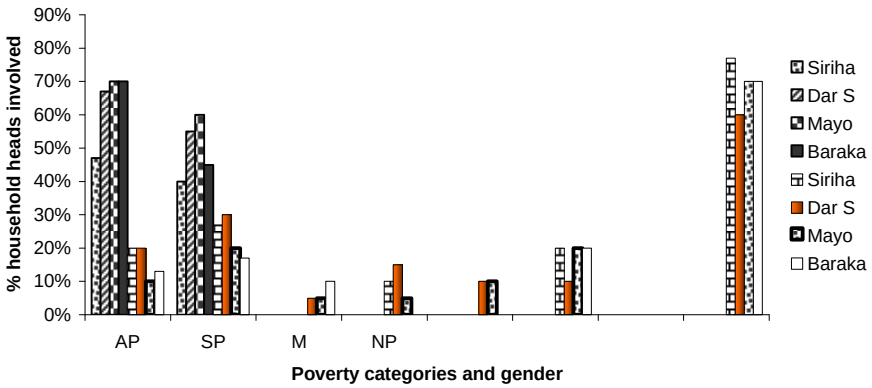
Self-employment makes a significant contribution to a household's income across all the well-being categories (see Charts 8:11 & 8:12). These activities include small-scale manufacturing (furniture production, metal welding, wood or stone carving, household utensils including traditional beds and mattresses, baskets, mats, pots), vending and petty trade, transport (donkey carts), shoe repair, small-scale car and bicycle repair, scavenging, and a wide range of legal and illegal products. They also cover activities performed by traditional healers and *fakis*, *Zar Shikhas*, fortune tellers and theft. These activities provide the major share of a household's income for the Non-Poor category in comparison with all other categories including 'Medium Poor' households from all

**Chart 8:11**
**Involvement in self-employment activities by household heads**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 8:12**
**Self-employment activities by gender and poverty category (household heads)**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

neighbourhoods. The involvement of household heads from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ is higher than that of the ‘Medium Poor’ in all the neighbourhoods. Involvement in self-employment activities is differentiated by the area that people operate from. People from Siriha have relatively higher involvement in self-employment, while ‘Always Poor’ heads from Mayo depend the least on self-employment compared to their peers from other neighbourhoods.

Self-employment among the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households were noticeably more oriented toward street vending and petty trade, while in ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households they were more oriented towards small production and trade. Vending is one of the most important activities undertaken by large numbers of different members of households in different well-being categories. For example ‘Medium Poor’ households have often combined vending with regular or other types of employment (i.e. LH16-B). Even casual labourers turn to vending during a bad season, or visa versa, and vendors turn to casual employment during times of harassment by the authorities. Vending takes place from a multiplicity of locations and different age groups also undertake activities in this field. The majority of heads in ‘Non-Poor’ households have undertaken self-employment as their major and permanent source of living. The majority of young secondary income earners among ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ are self-employed. Young graduates who cannot find jobs in the formal sector also undertake self-employment activities such as vending and petty trade while looking for jobs. Some school-age children who are currently enrolled in schools have also participated during school holidays or combined work with schooling.

Engagement in self-employment activities vary by gender and ethnicity. Women’s enterprises are much smaller, with lower investments, mostly based at home and with little access to the market. Women from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households are mostly active in the less-rewarding, low-skilled and more risky areas while the men are mostly self-employed in the relatively lucrative, higher-capital areas. For example, women are specialized in processing alcohol which puts them in a confrontational position regarding the police, and in selling perishable goods which makes them more vulnerable to losing their capital. Furthermore, women’s trading and vending are more of an extension of their domestic work as they concentrate mainly on traditionally female jobs such as sewing and food and drink preparation while men predominate in skilled and unskilled labour, small manufacturing and transport. Men and women from certain minority ethnic groups are barely eking out a subsistence living through very low productive activities such as collecting and selling firewood, waste material collection, scavenging and selling scavenged materials, begging and steeling. According to the community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4), some young men from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households are involved in the trade of weapons, drug dealing, theft and violence. These activities affect the community badly and place the people involved in constant conflict with the authorities.

Returns from self-employment vary from ‘adequate’ when the household’s livelihood depends mainly on them as the case with the ‘Non-Poor’ and ‘Medium Poor’ households, to ‘meagre’ and cannot sustain the household without combining it with other activities as is the case for ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households. ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households in this field are better equipped to deal with whatever changes and influences their activities and their activities thus have more stability. On the other hand, the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households are less able to control their working environment, which directly impacts on the stability and the

benefits they derive from these activities. Although more members from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households are available to engage in self-employment activities, their remuneration approaches zero. As Charts 8:11 and 8:12 indicate, ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households do not rely on these activities in the long term as their major source of income compared to ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households.

Activities in this field were influenced by external and internal factors including household characteristics, government policies towards formal and informal activities, the seasonality of work, and financial and social capital. The vulnerability of ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households is closely connected to fluctuations in and the seasonal nature of demands for the goods and services they produce and sell. For example, street vending decreases during the autumn from May to August and then picks up slowly by September. Activities, such as water vending and local cart transport flourish best during this period. Demands for cooked meals decrease greatly during March and June due to the school holidays, and so on. Seasonality leads to low and insecure incomes during lean seasons and many ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ household members would shift to casual employments or other form of self-employment.

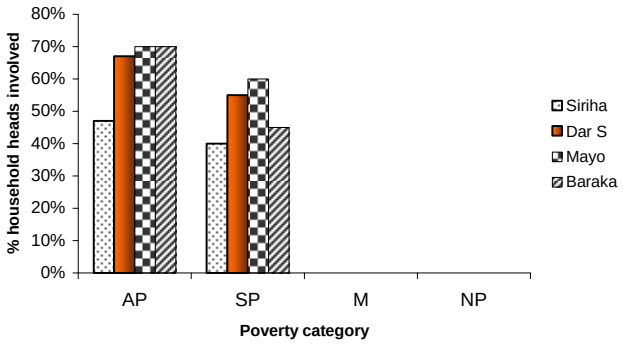
A distinction can be made in self-employment between activities in the formal sector and those in the informal sector. The overwhelming majority of ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households operate in the formal sector. On the other hand, all the self-employed members of the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households operate in the informal sector. Those informal entrepreneurs are often connected to larger firms and wealthier individuals through subcontracting agreements and the supply of materials and/or the supply of goods or services to formal firms. Remaining in the informal sector threatens the security of their livelihoods, not only by restricting people’s access to the support and services available within the formal economy but by destroying people’s livelihoods altogether. However, involvement in informal-sector activities has been a logical response to formal-sector regulation and bureaucracy. As the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households grapple with a decreasing profitability of labour, it becomes extremely difficult for them to comply with the law without jeopardizing their immediate survival. This has decreased the benefits they derive, as will as exposing them to forms of vulnerability. ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households in the informal economy were able to tap into the grey area between legality and illegality by bribing government officials such as health inspectors, market administrators and tax collectors. However, the poor cannot afford these payments. ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households avoid confrontation with the law by employing members from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households to undertake the risky part of their activities such as selling merchandise in the street or selling illegal products on their behalf.

Self-employed people from the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households operate mainly from their respective neighbourhoods, while ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households usually operate between different neighbourhoods and the main city. As a result, ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ enterprises have difficulties due to reduced or no access to raw materials, markets, finances or transport. Self-employment within neighbourhoods is an arena of competition, exploitation and struggle between people with varying powers. While ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households were able to employ their network of relations for credit and the supply of materials, ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households lacked essential resources to support their

initiatives. A lack of resources including a lack of financial capital for running or the start-up of a business is a key barrier for 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households and even some 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households entering into more profitable areas or develop their firms. Although operators in this field are technically self-employed, they remain heavily dependent on relationships with traders or larger firms. Formal financial institutions are usually inaccessible even to the majority of the 'Non-Poor' (see Chapter 9).

In summary, there are variations in terms of the type of possible self-employment activities that individuals can pursue. The benefits that poorer households can derive from these informal sources are seldom adequate and often uncertain due to their lack of access to social networks and a wide range of institutions that are concerned with the provision of support and resources. For them, the most widely used options are not always the most effective.

**Chart 8:13**
**Involvement in casual wage employment by household heads**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

*Casual wage labour*

Casual wage employment is disproportionately represented among the 'Always Poor' in all neighbourhoods but represents an important source of income for large number of the 'Sometimes Poor' households (Chart 8:13). None of the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' household heads work as casual labourers though young members from their households may work during their school holidays.

Casual employment is undertaken not only by heads of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households but also by household members in significant numbers. Young people are likely to be employed as part-time labourers, especially in the manufacturing industry, domestic work or in nearby markets. Their pay is much lower than that received by adult males. Elderly people are less likely to undertake casual employment. However, for the 'Always Poor', the economic compulsion to work combined with a lack of alternative jobs to suit the elderly, forces them to undertake casual wage activities in jobs which might not suit them physically. They are then more vulnerable to falling sick and have no social security. More females are involved in casual employment among the 'Always Poor' compared to the 'Sometimes Poor'

households due to the concentration of households headed by females in this group (Chart 8:14).

People work as causal labourers in agriculture, poultry and animal farms, construction, in-house services and as unskilled workers. There are differences in the terms of labour that heads from the 'Always Poor' and those from the 'Sometimes Poor' undertake. Casual employment provides the lowest income among the others, where the majority of households earned an average income of SP 75,000 ($30) (see Charts 8:11 & 8:12). Daily wage rates are very variable depending on gender, age and the seasonality of the job among other things. In general, wages lie in the range of SP 2,500 to SP 10,000 ($1 to $4) per day for adults. For skilled labour in construction and the manufacturing industry, the rate can go up to SP 20,000 ($8) per day but very few works as skilled labour. All workers in the sample have short-term or seasonal jobs. The majority have no skills and have received no training in the work they do so they remain in low-paid labour. Although the bulk of casual labours are illiterate or come from those who have attained only basic primary education, there are also workers who have completed higher education and have been forced due to a lack of other alternatives to take casual employment. In addition, university students and students at different levels can undertake casual labour as a part-time job or during school holidays.

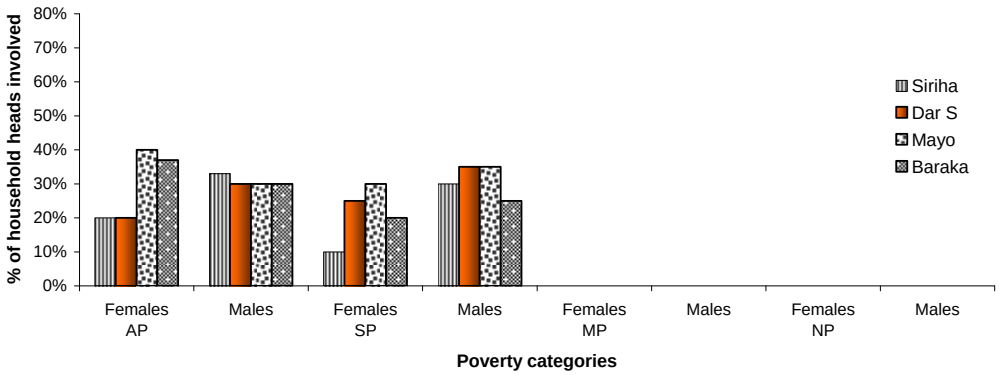
Casual employment varies greatly according to the season, decreasing markedly from April until September, and then picking up slowly by October. The slack season accompanies a decreased demand for casual labour in agriculture, the manufacturing industry and construction, with a rising proportion of workers seeking employment within the neighbourhoods and the main city. Workers usually seek alternative jobs in their own neighbourhood first. However, the demand for casual paid labour is much lower in these neighbourhoods. The majority of inhabitants tend to undertake jobs related to building and mending and many get help from neighbours, relatives and friends through a system of mutual cooperation. Work in the main city represents the best option. Workers are either hired through contractors in their neighbourhoods to work in the city, hired independently in the city or get the job through relatives and friends. Those who are hired through neighbourhood contractors are better off since they can get transport and longer-term employment but they are paid less compared to those seeking independent contracts in the city. Those who work through relatives are likely to get better paid but the cost of transport often takes a large part of their wage. Alternatively, workers live on site until their contract ends.

'Always Poor' heads predominate in precarious jobs which the 'Sometimes Poor' are reluctant to take on, such as washing cars, collecting garbage, shoe polishing, selling illegal drugs and even sex. Some of the least popular or stigmatized jobs are undertaken by males from minority ethnic groups. These include human-waste disposal and waste collection working directly for individuals or contracted by a government agency or private contractor. While this type of labour is crucial for a household survival, they have lower wages and the local, as well as, the wider community have a deeply held prejudice against these labourers. People who undertake such work usually end up deprived of income, status and social respect. Furthermore, these groups become exposed to a wide range of risks like disease or being injured by sharp objects, fine shards of glass or hypodermic needles in the solid waste. Sometimes the jobs for which demand rises may be culturally defined as women's jobs, such as domestic work. Female heads from Arabized ethnic groups are less likely to be involved in casual work. Chart 8:26 show that women from Siriha are less involved in casual employment than

their peers from other neighbourhoods. This is particularly true for the Arabized ethnic groups among the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households compared to other neighbourhoods. Female heads from Africanized ethnic groups are more likely to be involved in domestic work. The 'Always Poor' of Mayo and Al Baraka have the highest involvement of women in domestic work, which coincides with the fact that these two neighbourhoods have the highest concentration of Africanized ethnic groups (Chart 8:26 below). Domestic drudgery is never the preferred occupation for the majority of women since it is socially stigmatized; making it even harder for poor people to gain access to the resources they need for survival. When opportunities for better work (i.e. in agriculture) become available, they usually take them.

'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households that cannot regulate their businesses employ members from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households as vendors to sell their merchandise in an attempt to avoid direct confrontation with the law. They receive the minimum amount that provides them with just enough money for a small meal and at the same time they bear the consequences when merchandise is lost or stolen. Workers in this case are subject to a triple exclusion: the precariousness of the type of employment, exclusion from labour legislation and exploitation by employers (e.g. LH12-S).

**Chart 8:14**
**Involvement in casual employment by gender (household heads)**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

The highest involvement in casual labour is found among the 'Always Poor' of Mayo and Al Baraka due to the agricultural projects there as well as poultry and animal farms nearby. Households that rely on agricultural labour as a major source of income suffer not only from low average incomes but also a large variation in income. Although agriculture provides a vital source of income for a good part of the year, the seasonality of the work is a major source of vulnerability. In Al Baraka, males can expect to get up to 122 days of employment a year, and female members up to 150 days. However, this is rarely the case. Due to the competition for work in these projects, and their low capacity to absorb labour from the neighbourhood on a regular basis, a worker would usually get 70 and 90 working days a year respectively. Both males and females are involved in agricultural work: men are usually specialized in ploughing and sowing, while women

work in harvesting and tending vegetables. Females have a higher involvement in this work than males (see Chart 8:26 below). Women are preferred to men in agricultural work because they are likely to work longer hours and accept a low wage. For example, a male resident of Al Baraka usually receives SP 10,000 ($4) per day for his work on the Silate project, while a female resident receives SP 5,000 ($2) per day on the same project, and newcomers (males and females) receive between SP 2,500 and Sp 3,000 ($1 to $1.20) per day for doing the same job.

Lack of access to other employment activities within easy reach ensures that there is a steady supply of people desperate enough to take on any task for any period of time and for a mere pittance. Therefore, employers can set their own conditions and wage levels, and will still have people who would work for even lower wages.

> Fatima is a 28-year-old Darfurian who is squatting in Al Baraka. She came to the neighbourhood three years ago with her brother, mother and her two children. She works on the Silate project earning around SP 5,000 ($2) or less per day in vegetable harvesting. She would even negotiate a lower wage herself to guarantee work but due to completion and the seasonality of the work, her monthly earnings usually do not exceed SP 30,000 ($12). At least at the end of the day she 'brings some money home' (LH17-B).

In summary, a much larger percentage of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are casual labourers. They earn pitiful wages that condemn them to survive in a state of disproportionate poverty and undignified daily existence. The likelihood of a households being poor depends not only on the wages earned but also on factors such as the security and seasonality of the work and the nature of employment. The exclusionary economic setting ensures that women and some minority ethnic groups' activities remain very limited, or confined to menial, difficult and hazardous work making it even harder for them to gain access to the resources they need for survival. Casual labourers are, therefore, the most vulnerable groups among workers, barely surviving on the fringes of the larger society.

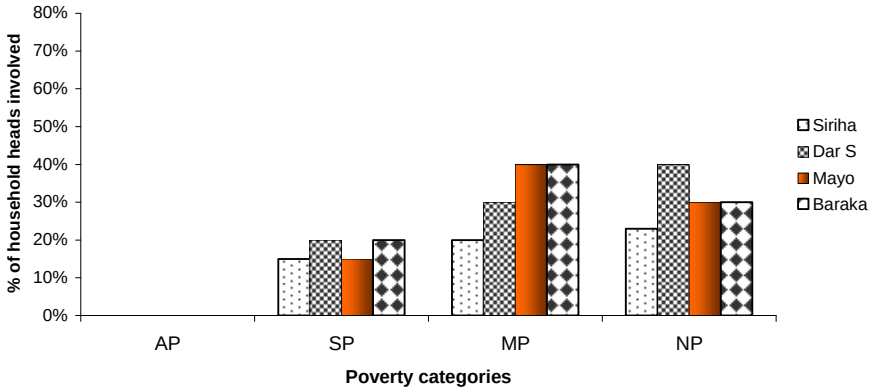
*Regular wage employments*

This category includes households living on s regular wage or salaried employment as their major sources of income. The best jobs available include officers and personnel with NGOs, primary-school teachers, clerical jobs in local-authority offices and other government offices, and low-ranking military personnel. Most employment comes from the government, private firms or small owner-operated micro-enterprises. There are also variations among different well-being categories in terms of the type of wage employment accessed.

When comparing casual workers to those working in regular wage/salaried employment, the majority of the latter seem to do much better. The majority of regular wage employees belong to 'Medium Poor' households followed by 'Non-Poor' households (Chart 8:15). Among 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households, there is higher male involvement than female. Household heads that used to be wage employees but have retired and receive a pension have a better well-being status than those who have lost their wage employment due to retrenchment. There are also former employees who are retired and have a regular pension. The majority of them belong to the 'Medium Poor' households. There are also former employees who have lost their jobs in formerly protected sectors due to the changing nature of the economy. This group of former regular wage employees is spread across well-being categories. For example, 20% of the 'Sometimes Poor' in Siriha and 13% of their peers in Dar es Salam have a re-

trenched household member. Although none of the 'Always Poor' heads or members of their households currently hold regular salary jobs, some of them or members of their household used to do so and were retrenched or sacked. For example, in 6% of the 'Always Poor' households in Mayo and in 13% of their peers in Siriha there was at least one regular salaried employee who had lost his/her job at some point in the history of the household.

**Chart 8:15**
**Involvement in regular salaried employment by household heads**



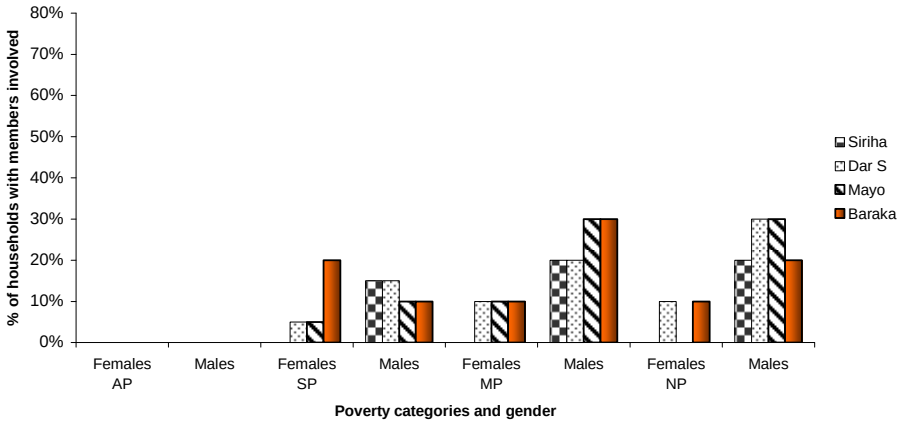

*Source*: Fieldwork research

Households become more vulnerable when they switch their economic activities in response to job loss. The extent to which such an effect translates into current well-being status is determined by a worker's ability to respond to alternative economic opportunities based on their access to capitals. 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households suffer due to their lack of resources, including knowledge and intra-household dynamics. Job losses in this case push formerly employed workers into deep long-term poverty that is then transmitted inter-generationally (i.e. LH12-S).

However, having regular wage employment does not automatically lead to households being lifted out of poverty. The vulnerability of regular wage employees and their dependents is directly related to salient labour-market trends over the past two decades, specifically, the increase in precarious non-standard employment and stagnant minimum wages. Many workers do not work in standard jobs with secure contracts, mandated benefits and social protection. The majority of workers with such work are to be found among the 'Sometimes Poor' who tend to move in and out of regular jobs. The precarious nature of their work leads to seasonal stress. These workers are typically younger, less educated, less skilled, are paid lower rates than full-time workers, and have fewer rights. Workers from this category are concentrated in low-skilled low-paid jobs with little opportunity of advancing up the career ladder. Women in particular tend to be confined to even worse jobs with lower payment. Gender roles and stereotypes have an impact on the terms of employment offered to women workers. For example, all the female formal workers among the 'Sometimes Poor' in Al Baraka work in service, as

cleaners and cooks or in similar occupations. Their higher involvement in this work is explained by the need for this type of service by firms in the vicinity of Al Baraka.

**Chart 8:16**
**Regular salaried employment by gender**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Low-wage employment is one of the most important reasons for workers' vulnerability in this field. None of the households heads currently employed earned the minimum wage. The monthly incomes of those employed in regular salaried employment were too low to sustain a household. An individual working full-time for the current minimum wage earns about SP 160,000 ($64) per month. On average, a formal-sector operator makes a monthly income similar to or a bit higher than the monthly earnings in self-employment and casual wage activities for the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor'. However, the majority of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households attach high value to these types of jobs and aspire to them because a formal, salaried job offers more livelihood security as well as providing the opportunity to access additional activities and resources that compensate for the low salary.

> Joseph is 48-year-old man from Al Baraka who has been working as a messenger for a government ministry for the past 20 years. His wage is SP 160,000 ($64). While this is too little to sustain his big family, his job allows him the opportunity to make and sell refreshments to employees. The combined income enabled him to pay the school fees for two of his children and to build a three-room house. Having a National Health Insurance card also enabled him to overcome the difficult times when a member of his family was sick. When his house was swept away by flood in 1988, his employer gave him a long-term loan for rebuilding. And when his daughter completed her education, he was able to use his network in the ministry to secure her a job as a receptionist. (LH16-B)

The emergence of the low-wage economy, with its temporary and seasonal jobs pushes workers to substitute their income by combining several different livelihood activities at one time. As the life histories show, it is quite usual for regular wage employment to be combined with vending or casual employment after or between working hours (i.e. LH12-S and LH16-B). 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households were successful in accessing better-paid profitable or long-term secondary jobs. However the 'Sometimes Poor' cannot do this because they have neither the skills nor the resources to access them. A critical feature of the work environment is potential loss of

employment, either permanently or temporary. Workers in these sectors tend to be concentrated in less-skilled jobs (i.e. loading, packaging, collection, labelling, typesetting, etc.). These types of jobs are increasingly disappearing due to automation. Older workers in traditional crafts and newcomers with low skills are always prone to losing their jobs. Those who have lost regular employment have more difficulty replacing lost income with the earnings of secondary earners and due to lack of savings (i.e. LH33-B).

In such employment, workers are not protected by health and unemployment benefits or workers' safety regulations. Although the Ministry of Labour has set a minimum compensation package according to the job and industry, people indicated that tough regulations imposed by both private and public firms have kept them in a continuous state of fear about losing their jobs. A lack of channels for workers' complaints, such as trade unions, or the independent political powers of labours makes it difficult for them to claim any right. No workers in the private and parastatal sectors have any constitutional right to trade unions of their own. The law allows for the unionization of a company provided that the union includes both workers and enterprise management. Unions are therefore made up of parties of conflicting interests and in private firms they are mostly non existent and workers are not expected to engage in any beneficial bargaining with their employer.

The 'Always Poor' and some of the 'Sometimes Poor' could not access regular wage employment. Access to job opportunities is often also determined by a person's network and access to information about jobs. The life histories show that those who have regular employment are likely to be able to help relatives in getting jobs in the same firms (i.e. LH2-M). It was indicated during various community meetings (i.e. WFGD-M9, FGD-B6) that a lack of information tools and resources that help job seekers identify job opportunities makes current regular wage employees from the neighbourhood, or from a particular ethnic group, the main channel through which information on jobs are circulated. Furthermore, local employees may be able to recommend a job seeker for lower-ranked jobs but job seekers' livelihood and chances depend on whether they have the right link or not. Since this channel is not neutral, job seekers from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households usually do not benefit. Wage employment contracts within the neighbourhood were often disadvantageous, involving multiple employers and excluding the possibility of collective bargaining.

Limited access to the formal labour market, in particular for women and ethnic groups, pushes more of these households into the informal sector with all the risks identified earlier. Therefore, the new or additional activities that workers had undertaken did not provide adequate levels of income to meet their increasing needs for cash.

To sum up, regular salaried jobs are structured along the lines of well-being status; with poorer households effectively excluded from the relatively better jobs due to a lack of essential capitals. Jobs (even for some 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households) are characterized by being low-paying, temporary, seasonal with little job security, and having limited opportunity for training and skill development. A low income has made it necessary for workers to carry out multiple activities, while poorer households are barely surviving by combining activities. 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households have managed successfully to combine wage employment with alternative sources of income.

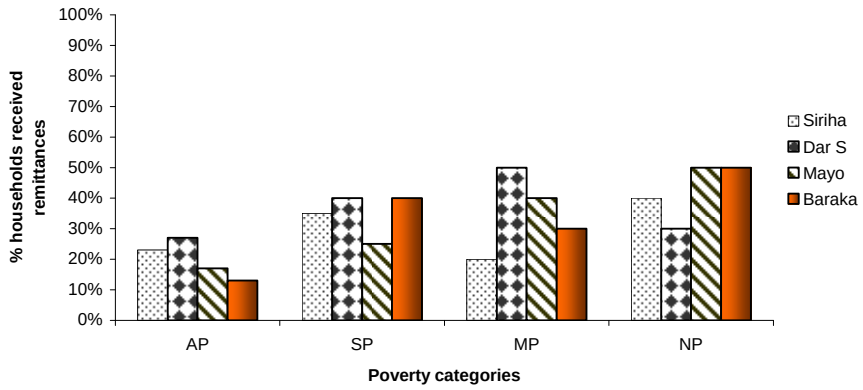
## Financial outcome of livelihoods activities

Most households in the four categories generate income from four broad categories of activity: regular employment, casual labour, self-employment or a, pension. There are also households who have income from sources that cannot be classified as employment or pension, for example income derived from rent (renting out a house or a room, renting electrical lines), remittances, irregular donations of food and cash and *Zakat*.

*Remittances*

Remittances are usually received from the rural areas from relative there or from household members who have migrated there for a long or short term. They are basically sent to 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households, as very few 'Always Poor' or 'Sometimes Poor' households receive them. For example, only 3% of the 'Always Poor' households in Al Baraka reported receiving irregular remittance as opposed to 40% of the 'Non-Poor' in Al Baraka (see Chart 8:17).

**Chart 8:17**
**Percentage of households who receive irrigular remittances from rural areas**




Source: Fieldwork research

The main characteristic of remittances is their irregularity as they are usually sent once or twice a year and immediately after the cereal harvest and come in the form of cereals and food stuffs (dates, dried okra, dried beans and fruit). Quantities vary and tend to increase for 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households and decrease for 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. For example, the 'Always Poor' households that received cereals had supplies for up to three months and those that received cereals from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households had supplies that lasted them up to eight months.

Remittances of this kind require the harvest in the rural base to be good enough to produce a surplus and for there to be transport available to get the produce from the rural area to the city. Cash remittances are extremely rare but households from the northern part of the country that received dates, fruit and dried beans as well as house-

holds in southern Sudan were able to sell part or all of their remittances and use the money to buy other basic needs.

Remittances from northern Sudan usually arrive between October and January, a time when 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have fewer resources and less work. It is therefore vital for 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households to receive remittances as they boost the average income earned by the household and are often sold to meet debts and/or cover health expenditure or other household necessities.

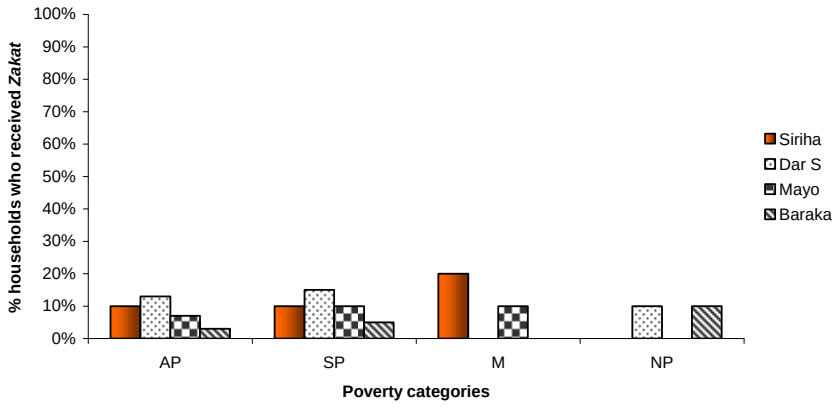
Remittances from urban to rural areas are also common but their form and regularity varies between households in different well-being categories. Remittances from the city take the form of cash, dry rations and medicines. Some 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households allocate their labour resources between rural and urban areas, with a husband working in the urban areas while his wife and family migrate to the rural area. Among these households, remittances are more common than for the rest of their category (e.g. LH12-S). Although 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households have not adopted the above-mentioned strategies, some of them have sent irregular remittances to their rural base.

Although remittances do not form a significant part of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households' livelihood strategies, they are vital for the few who are able to receive them, and allow these households to cope with immediate shocks.

*Zakat*

*Zakat* – the social development fund – does not provide a regular income but is instead mostly a one-off payment and varies in amount, with eligibility being determined on the basis of an assessment of need. The 'Always Poor' households are not necessarily the most eligible (see Chart 8:18).

**Chart 8:18**
**Percentage of households who received *Zakat* at least once in their lifetime**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

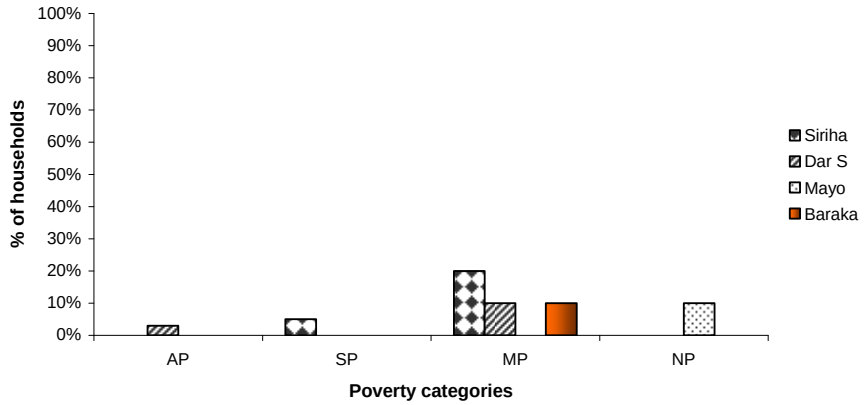
This is because more 'Sometimes Poor' and 'Medium Poor' households received *Zakat* than 'Always Poor' households. Some 'Non-Poor' households also received *Zakat* at a certain point in their lives. For example only 3% and 7% of the 'Always

Poor' households in Al Baraka and Mayo respectively received *Zakat*, and it was a one-off payment. Those who received *Zakat* used it to rebuild a shelter that was demolished by flood, to pay for medicines or to pay for funeral costs. 'Always Poor' households that received this money claimed that the actual level of payment was not adequate to address their current problem. Furthermore, the bureaucracy and cost of transport between different offices rendered the amount received insignificant.

*Pensions*

Very few households have access to a pension. The majority are concentrated among the 'Medium Poor' households. While none of the 'Always Poor' households has a claim to a pension, 20% of the households in the 'Medium Poor' category in Mayo and Siriha, and 10% from Al Baraka and Dar es Salam claim a pension (see Chart 8:19).

**Chart 8:19**
**Households with access to pension**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Pension rates are theoretically related to past earnings but the current level of monthly pensions has sharply decreased compared to 25 years ago. Pensioners suffer bureaucratic procedures and have to pay the cost of transport from their neighbourhoods to the pension office in central Khartoum two or three times a month before they can cash their money. The final amount received becomes insignificant. None of the households that receive a pension depends on it as their only or major source of income.

*Income from rent*

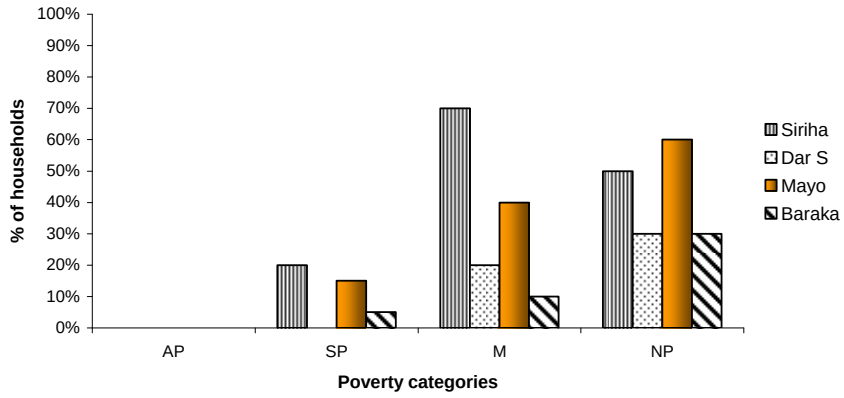
Owning a house with more than one room can provide an additional source income, particularly in Siriha and Mayo. However, it is mainly 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households that have access to this type of income. Very few households from the 'Sometimes Poor' group have access to income from rent while none of the 'Always Poor' households have generated income from such venues. Rent varies according to the neighbourhood and the type of house.

Siriha neighbourhood provides the best opportunity for rent since it is closer to the main city and has relatively regular transport. The majority of 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households in Siriha have income from rent (see Chart 8:20). These house-

holds live in part of the house and rent out a room or two. People who live near the main road in Mayo have good opportunities to rent out rooms, while Al Baraka and Dar es Salam have the least chance to rent rooms due to their proximity. Rent in Siriha is by far the most expensive of all the other neighbourhoods. For example, while the majority of 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households in Siriha have rented out their houses for an average SP 96,000 ($38.40), the majority of 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households in Mayo rent their houses for an average of SP 36,000 ($14.40) per month. 'Sometimes Poor' households usually rent out small spaces in their premise for an average monthly income of SP 11,000 ($4.40). Renting out a room in a house is one of the most important strategies that 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households can undertake and that enables them to cope with various adversities. Even households that are not currently renting would consider doing so if the need arose.

Households with access to grid electricity or power generators are able to rent lines to neighbours in the vicinity. Lines are rented per night or per month to households that have no electricity or a generator. The cost of lighting one bulb per night ranges from SP 500 to SP 600 ($0.20-$0.24). None of the 'Always Poor' or 'Sometimes Poor' households have access to this type of income. Power generators are mainly owned by the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households in the neighbourhoods. Some households in Siriha that are connected to grid electricity are also able to illegally rent out a-line by the night. At least 30% or more of the Non-Poor households in all the neighbourhoods earn a monthly income ranging between SP 15,000 and SP 30,000 ($6-$12) per month from renting out a line (see Chart 8:21).

**Chart 8:20**
**Households with access to income from rent (room)**

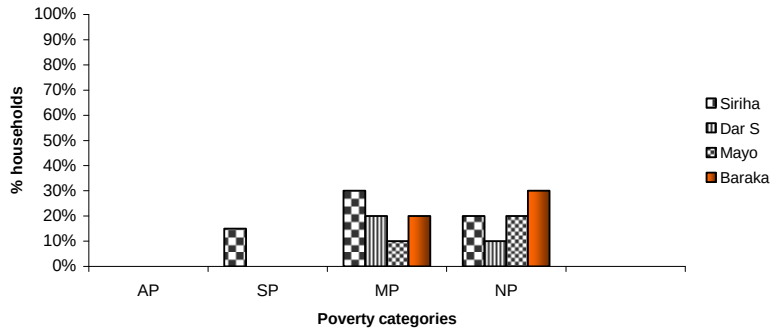



*Source*: Field work research

None of the 'Always Poor' households from any of the neighbourhoods have an income from renting out electricity lines, while a few 'Sometimes Poor' households in Siriha have an income of SP 15000 or less. Demands for electricity increase during social events such as weddings or deaths, in the festive seasons (December-January, during Ramadan and *Eid al Fiter*), as well as in February and March at the time of school examinations. Although a few of the 'Sometimes Poor' households can rent a

line from time to time, the majority of the 'Always Poor' households do not incur any costs from line renting.

**Chart 8:21**
**Households with income from renting (line)**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

*Donations of food, cash and medical treatment*

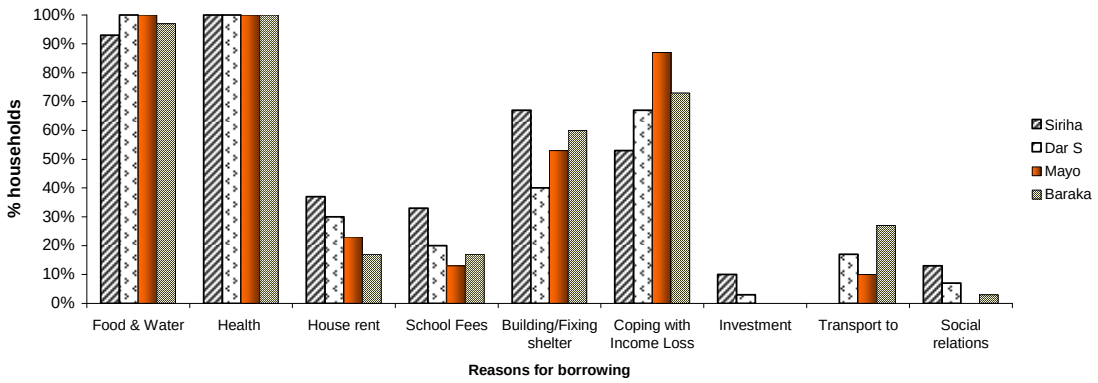
Local programmes providing economic assistance to persons in need are mainly confined to humanitarian assistance and are provided by NGOs. Food items are donated from emergency relief stocks either directly to those most believed to be in need or are submitted to the PCs or the headmen to disperse. This can include food items such as sugar, sorghum and oil but can also include medical assistance at times of crisis. Within the sample, a very few households from the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' had received this support on one or two occasions. The state might also distribute assistance during religious festivals through their organizations represented in the *Shaheed* (Martyr), and General Union of Sudanese Women. Only 7% of households from the 'Always Poor' in Siriha and 3% in Al Baraka had received such assistance from the sate. These were mainly households that had lost members in the war while fighting for the Popular Defense Forces (PDF). This assistance was a one-off and was not repeated. Religious institutions such as the church and mosques sometimes distribute food donations but these tend to be rare and of negligible amounts. During the Muslim religious festivals (Ramadan and *Eid-Ul-Fitr*) private contributions of *Zakat* and *Sadakat* (assistants provided on an *ad hoc* basis) are made to share the joy of the season with the poor and disadvantaged groups in the community. Donations include cash and food parcels containing cereals, meat, edible oil and pulses. Only 10% or less of 'Always Poor' households in Al Baraka and Siriha have benefited from these donations in the last ten years. The figure is slightly higher in Mayo where 17% of 'Always Poor' and 10% of 'Sometimes Poor' households have received non-cash private contributions of *Zakat* and *Sadakat*. Private donations of food and medicines have a very limited reach and are of negligible value to the poor. Even for those who receive them, they only provide temporarily relief in helping households cope with shocks.

*Borrowing*

Access to other financial resources is critical to the livelihood strategies of households in the different well-being categories. Loan funds may reduce households' vulnerability

to income fluctuations or assist households to better manage their existing capital base. Access to credit helps households or individuals to meet their demands for cash without having to sell or pawn essential capitals used in generating income (FGD-S13, FGD-B6). Most households access cash resources by borrowing. Borrowing and indebtedness are common among all categories to varying degrees. Although the intensity of debt changes seasonally, the majority of 'Always Poor' households almost always carry debts with them through the year. 'Always Poor' households take out credit for food, water, health problems, their domestic rent, school fees, rebuilding shelters, coping with income loss, transport, social relations, and investment (Chart 8:22).

**Chart 8:22**
**Reasons for borrowing among 'Always Poor' households**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

People can b free of loans for three reasons. Either they are extremely poor so nobody would lend them money as they have no means to pay it back, or they have stigmatized disease and people do not have any exchange with them, or they are not in need of a loan. Households who are not able to borrow because of their inability to repay the money are the most vulnerable. To give this statement a face,

> Khadiga (AP) is a 26-year-old divorcee with three young children. She works hard almost every day making *tuaki*, selling empty bottles and cans. Her daily income is very low and some days she does not sell anything at all. Any money she makes is used to buy food. She always has to borrow money because her income is not sufficient to cover the cost of food but most of the time she is unable to repay her debts. Therefore, she is finding it increasingly difficulty to borrow from the same sources. When her children get sick, she has no means to pay for medical attention. Her ability to borrow money makes the difference between life and death for her sick child. (LH6-S)

NGO micro-credit programmes have provided vital support to some 'Non-Poor' households and enabled them to establish or develop their business. Although the loan is often too small by itself to start a small business, those who have received it and had other sources of borrowing were able to use it for investment, ppurposes rather than consumption. A micro credit given to women often plays a far more important role than other form of loan. Although 'Always Poor' women who had access to this programme in the past were not able to use it for investment purposes, being able to access credit has strengthened their position within the household as well as, providing them with the confidence to assume public roles.

> Um Gimaa (MP) is 52-year-old female from the Danagla Arabized ethnic group. She used to raise chicken and sell their eggs in the neighbourhood or to a middleman. Her profit was so low that her basic source of living came from her husband's work and she only complemented that with her income. Um Gimaa had never travelled by herself outside the neighbourhood before due to traditional mobility constraints and social convention. When her husband decided to take a second wife and desert her after 35 years of marriage she felt vulnerable, particularly since she has no children or relative to rely on for financial support. Her neighbour who was already a member of a micro-credit CBO programme introduced her to the management. Her loan was approved eight months later and with it she was able to build a poultry house in her yard. She was also helped with advice on raising and marketing her poultry. Um Gimaa was encouraged and required to have more time and mobility to devote to her business so as to make it a success. At first she did not have the confidence to travel alone but because of the increased economic pressures and the imminent dissolution of her family she has had no choice but to overcome these constraints on her mobility. Um Gimaa travels on an almost daily basis to different parts of the city selling her products or buying what she needs for her business. Her project has taken off very well and she has been able to make long-term clients, and at the same time repay all the loan instalments. She became the major contributor to the household and at the same time has established contacts around the city. Her new role and status within and outside the household has increased her security, autonomy and self-confidence. Although her husband is no longer thinking about having a second wife, Um Gimaa is now thinking that she might be better off without him. Encouraged by her own success and having gained greater respect in her household and community, Um Gimaa has become a local leader, actively participating in community concerns. (LH31-B)

People in the neighbourhoods lack access to convenient basic forms of financial services such as credit, savings, mortgage lending, insurance and remittance mechanisms. Commercial banks demand a high collateral minimum balance and other requirements that most people cannot meet. Almost all small business entrepreneurs conduct their business transactions without ever using any mainstream financial services. Apart from 20% of the Non-Poor members from Siriha, none of the households in the sample had access to financial services. The most common type of substitute collateral has been community-based Savings and Credit Cooperatives or *Sanduqes*.

*Savings and credit cooperatives (Sanduqes)*

Savings and credit cooperatives (*Sanduqes*) are probably the most common and important means of informal neighbourhood networking used by the different well-being categories. They are a good source of credit for those who have a regular income and are able to save or set aside a certain amount on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. *Sanduqes* are initiated and run predominantly by women, although men can become members. Potential members must have a group of five to 20 women and agree on an acceptable amount (between SP 1000 to SP 5000 ($0.40-$2) that will be deposited by each member on daily, weekly or monthly basis. The group also agrees on the sequence of payments. Quite often the sequence of receiving credit changes if a member unexpectedly has an emergency, is ill or there is a death in the family. A scheme may carry on for many years, shifting the turns of the recipients so that each gets an equal opportunity. Women involved in *Sanduqes* pay their instalments mainly from their income-generating activities or from cutting household daily food expenditure. However, since the 'Always Poor' households are not in a position to save on a regular basis due to the seasonality of their income, they are not part of these schemes. For the majority of households who live on hand-to-mouth types of activities, weekly or monthly savings are not feasible. At the time of the survey all 'Non-Poor' and many of 'Medium Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have at least one member in *Sanduqes.* On the other hand, none of the 'Always Poor' households has any members participating. However, many 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households who currently are not involved

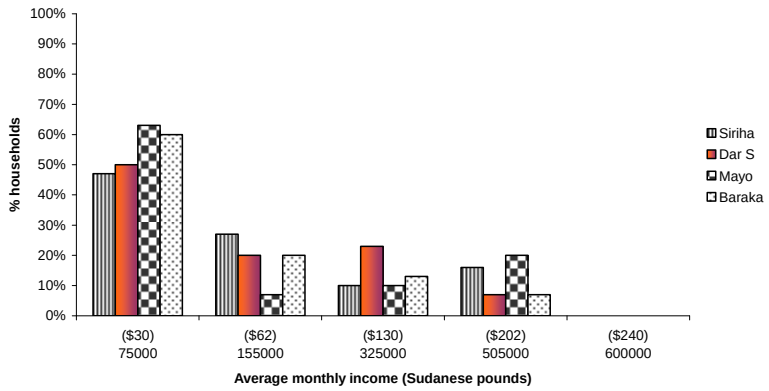
in *Sanduqes* indicated that they used to be members at irregular intervals and when there was sufficient income to save. The 'Always Poor' used to be involved in *Sanduqes* that were based on a daily payment more than on weekly or monthly ones. The experience of these groups shows that although the saving of group members may be small in nature, it gives individuals the courage to plan for the future instead of living from one day to the next. It also gives a measure of personal security and confidence to take risks and launch new initiatives. This is particularly true for members from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households where the need for daily food is met by more staple sources. The majority of women from the Non-Poor have invested their Sanduqes money in activities in which they are already skilled, such as food processing and selling, raising chickens, operating a small shop, making, buying and selling clothing or shoes. For members from the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households, the loan is usually utilized for the fulfilment of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter and health) as well as, many of indirect longer-term needs such as school fees.

In summary, access to loans is critical for livelihood strategies for households in different well-being categories. Although 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households are able to access loans through different means, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households experience increasing difficulties in doing so and thus have no choice but to sell their productive assets or to enter into forms of borrowing that makes them sink deep into poverty.

*Total household income*

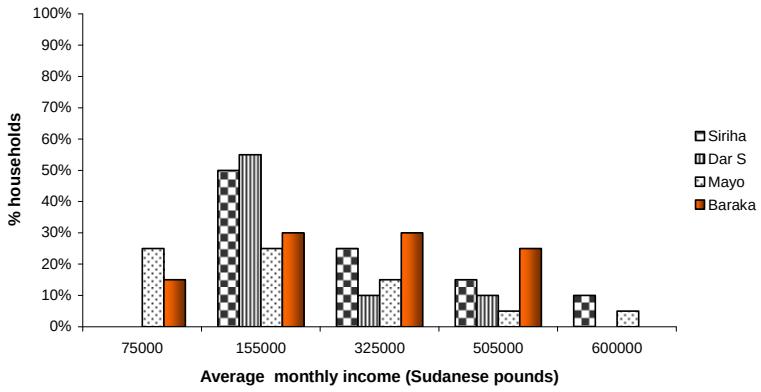
There is a clear variation between the earnings of the households within the different well-being categories (see Charts 8:11 & 8:12). 'Always Poor' households in all the neighbourhoods have the smallest and most unpredictable financial resources driven from casual work and unregulated, businesses and occasional food, donations. The majority of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households earned an average total monthly income of 75,000 ($30) (see Charts 8:11 & 12). While none of the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' has a total earning that is less than SP 155,000 ($62). All the 'Non-Poor' and more than 50% of 'Medium Poor' households have a total monthly income averaging SP 505,000 ($202) or more.

**Chart 8.23**
**Monthly earnings of the 'Always Poor' households**



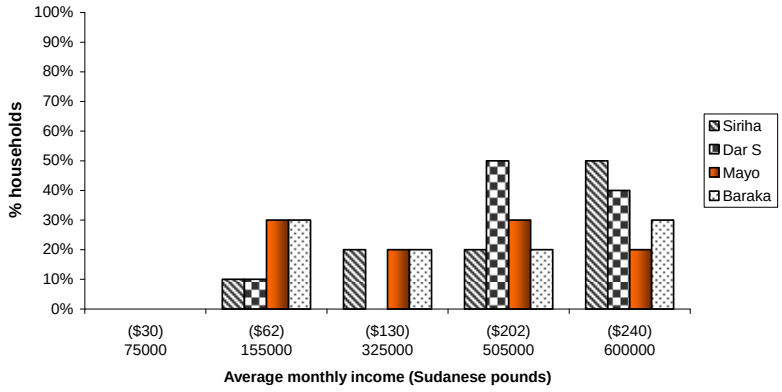

*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 8:24**
**Monthly earnings of the the 'Sometimes Poor' households**



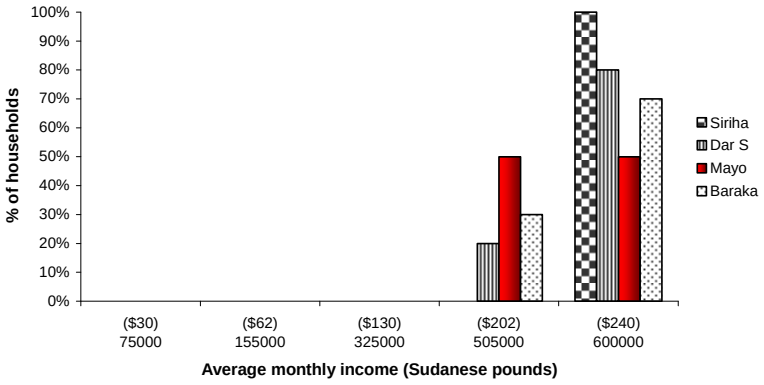

*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 8:25**
**Monthly earnings for the 'Medium Poor' households**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 8:26**
**Monthly earnings of the 'Non Poor' households**



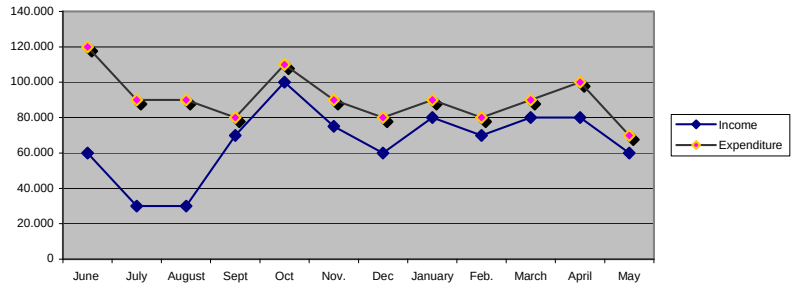

*Source*: Fieldwork research

There are apparent variations between similar well-being categories within the different neighbourhoods. For example the ‘Always Poor’ households in Mayo have far less income compared to their counterparts in other neighbourhoods, while their peers from Siriha and Al Baraka have the highest income levels.

The total incomes of ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households tend to fluctuate due to seasonality and the health of the income earners, or due to the regulations of the informal sector. In addition, there is significant intra-household income difference with women and children having far lower earnings than adult males. As the life histories indicate, seasonal fluctuations in employment, income and consumption decreases the ability of ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households’ to deal with shocks and stresses (LH12-S, LH14-M).

Households need to use this income for essential items such as food and non-food items such as water, medicines, rent, transport, school fees and uniforms, books and other necessities. For each income category, the life histories (e.g. LH3-B, LH4-M, LH14-M) show that the cost of living generally exceeds direct income (see for example Chart 8.27).

**Chart 8:27**
**Monthly income and expenditures for an 'Always Poor' household (LH3-B)**



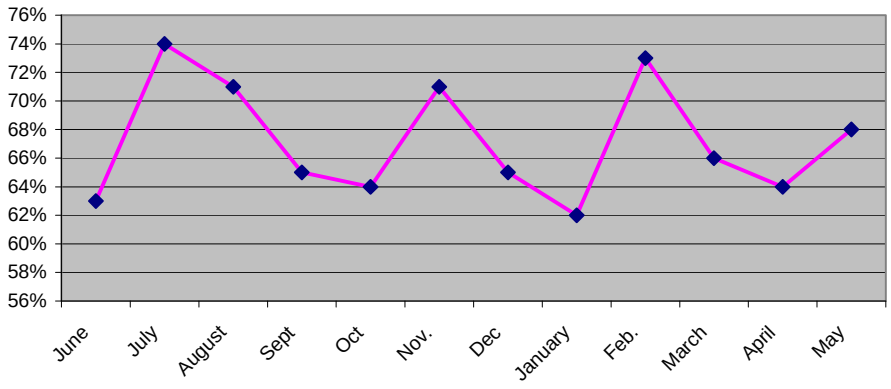

*Source*: Fieldwork research

The difference between income and expenditure is often bridged by borrowing and selling assets. Expenditure on food accounts for almost two-thirds of the total household expenditure of the ‘Always Poor’ (Chart 8:28). Expenditure may be variable over short periods of time due to the seasonality of work, illness or when school fees have to be paid.

Expenditure increases between June and September when households have to pay school fees and other school requirements, and due to the need to repair houses after the rainy season. The rainy season also brings malaria with it and the associated complications that may call for medication. Unfortunately, these demands coincide with the time of decreasing income opportunities for casual labourers and street vendors. Spending on illnesses, school fees and transport amount to a large share of household income. For many renters, their rent takes a large slice out of their income. A recurring theme in the focus-group discussions (FGD-S13, FGD-S7) was the impact that scarce financial resources or a shortage of money can have on obtaining a decent standard of living.

Many felt that a lack of financial resources influenced their choices and opportunities in life. A lack of financial resources forces people to make choices between items that are all important for long-term survival because their money cannot cover the basic necessities. For some, this means missing out on food and for others it involves missing out on decent housing or being unable to pay bills.

**Chart 8:28**
**Percentage of income spent on food for 'Always Poor' (LH14-D)**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

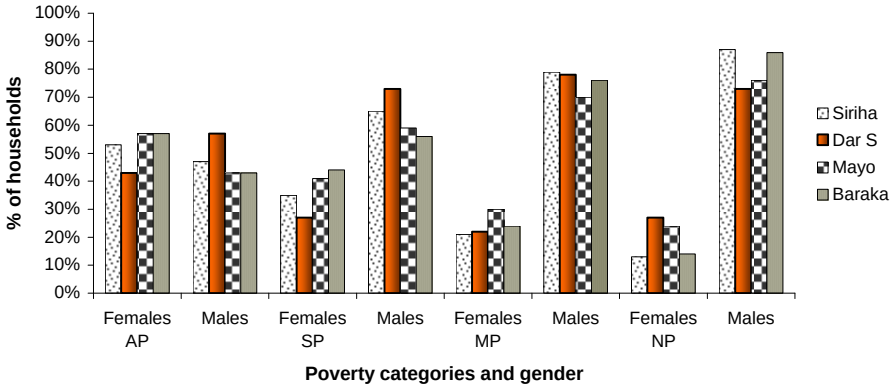
*Women's livelihood activities*

Women are the main income earners in 'Always Poor' households in all neighbourhoods except Dar es Salam. Female income earners have high representation among 'Sometimes Poor' households (Chart 8:29). Females also contribute significantly to their household's livelihoods as secondary income earners. Such involvement decreases if we move through to the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households to the 'Non-Poor' where the contribution by women is the lowest. A similar trend is also observed within neighbourhoods: the poorer the neighbourhood, the higher the involvement of women in income-earning activities. The highest female involvement of all the age groups is in Mayo and the lowest is in Siriha. Apparently, the mere involvement of women in income-generating activities is not sufficient to enhance the well-being of the household or strengthen their control over decision-making. The type of employment that women are able to undertake seems to correlate with poverty and its duration. Although women are represented across the employment spectrum, they tend to be concentrated more in the 'informal' and risky activities than men.

Women undertake certain home-based livelihood activities as full-time jobs or combine them with other income-generating activities. Home industries involve clothing, handicrafts such as hand-woven baskets, *Tuaki*, bags, mats, kitchen accessories, food such as *kisra*, snacks, sweets, fried bean balls and local drinks. Home industries are seen as a convenient way of ensuring that there is some cash in hand. Many of the currently not economically active 'Non-Poor', 'Medium Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' women consider home industry as a fallback situation in times of need. Home

industry also has the advantage of flexibility in terms of working hours and independence, making it more compatible with domestic duties and their reproductive role.

**Chart 8:29**
**Households' main income earners by poverty category and gender**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Women from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households tend to undertake home industry irregularly and only from home. Poorer women would take home industry as a part-time job but combine it with other income-generating activities outside the home. Some either specialize in production or marketing or only in production. Simple home industry faces substantial competition from the international market. Many of the products women produce face stiff competition *vis-à-vis* products imported from abroad, as well as locally manufactured products. Varieties of Asian-made goods that were not available in shops before are now being imported into the country by private businessmen. These products have replaced traditional handmade products with synthetic ones and other substitutes that are sold cheaper than locally made products. Women producing these items are finding it increasingly difficult to compete with imports and are having to withdraw from the market and find other activities.

> Amal (SP) is a 38-year-old divorcee from Siriha who earns her living by making and selling *Tuaki*. She said that 'Even the traditional Sudanese *Tuaki* (men;s head covering) that have been made by women for over a thousand of years are now imported from *Khaleej* (abroad). They are made from shiny colours and sell for less than the local ones. But they do not last long, they wears out quickly. Butit seems that no body really cares about that." (LH40-S)

Vending is a relatively more accessible activity for women from different well-being categories. Income usually is low, the investment too is low but it does not require special skills or training, and a spot by the roadside, in front of schools or from home is all it takes to start the business. Vending within the neighbourhood is less profitable than if women opt for the main city. But this is balanced by irregularity and transport costs. Most importantly, the regulation of vendors is much tougher in the city compared to the neighbourhoods. Since all poorer women operate in the informal sector, the measures taken by the locality have led to disruption, dislocation and worst of all, the destruction of women vendor and producers' means of livelihood (i.e. LH12-S).

Furthermore, the competition in this type of activity is tough and drives profits down in some locations such as Siriha. Ethnicity plays an important role in determining the winners and losers in the competition over attractive spots such as in front of schools or in a corner of an informal market where people from the same ethnic group would usually opt to buy from their counterparts. The most extreme situation is when women of certain origins are denied access to operate in the perceived vicinity of their opponent's group.

Their household's pressing needs for survival are the main drivers of women's participation in the workforce but the choice of employment is always restricted. A much smaller percentage of women are employed on a regular salary compared to men and usually belong to the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. As a group, women are disadvantage in respect of education and training. They are concentrated in low-paid and low-skilled jobs and are mostly involved in part-time or casual employment, which makes them poorer than their male counterparts. These characteristics are shared by both women from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households as well as those from the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. Furthermore, women have received unfair wages in the past that disproportionately do not allow for a minimum standard of living or even a modicum of dignity and so households deprived of male labour are more vulnerable than other households. The majority of women also have to combine multiple livelihood activities with domestic labouring.

The majority of women income earners from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households are able to undertake the types of jobs that are culturally defined as suitable for them, but poorer women are increasingly moving away from this labelling. Women from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' categories do not have much choice or the luxury of following what is considered as the socially accepted norms. They have been employed in jobs considered socially unacceptable and at the end of the list of available options and, hence, have stepped outside society's norms. These women have various problems with their social relationships, including stigma and social isolation. Many 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are only able to survive because they have females who took demeaning risky or stigmatizing jobs such as domestic work, alcohol brewing and sex work as full-time or irregular jobs (i.e. LH12-S, LH39-B). Brewing and selling traditional homemade alcohol provides a relatively higher income than any other home industry but it is a highly risky job. Homemade beer such as *Araki* and *Marisa* are considered important components of the indigenous diet for the majority of southern and western ethnic groups. However, the making, selling or consumption of alcohol is prohibited by law and women – Muslims and non-Muslims – who are found to be involved are prosecuted. Women in any business and particularly those in manufacturing and the selling of alcohol are subject to strict codes of public morality as defined by the 2001 Public Order Law. The women's focus-group discussions (FGD-D11, FGD-B15, WFGD-M9) ) indicated that since the Act's introduction, many women have been flogged and humiliated in public, sent to prison and police stations for long periods of incarceration without charge and their merchandise was confiscated. However, a lack of other alternative makes women come back to the same job (i.e. LH39-B).

Women from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are faced with the choice of either starving or pursuing the type of livelihood activity that makes them incur more shame and loss of status (i.e. LH12-S). Young women from the 'Always Poor' households are likely to work as domestic workers in the city but since the demand for women in domestic services in the city is usually high this activity tends to

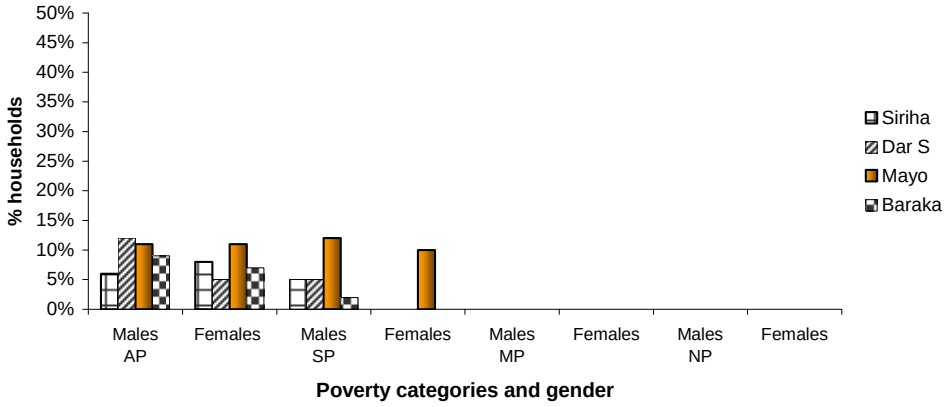
be more stable compared to agriculture and petty trade. Domestic work also represents a fallback option for poor petty traders when they are faced with harassment by the authorities for taxes, licences and prohibited activities. Wages for domestic work tend to be much lower than other activities. Furthermore, the cost of transport reduces the benefit that women make and forces them to stay at their employers' residences. Some find themselves at the beck and call of their employers on a 24-hour basis. These women are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

In summary, poverty among women seems to be produced by interlocking social relations and processes that constrain the range of opportunities these women can draw on. The economic contributions that women therefore make do not materialize into the better well-being of the household.

*Child labour*

Child workers come from very poor backgrounds both in terms of household human capital and physical capital assets. Children from these households become extremely vulnerable to income variability because their households often respond sharply to a decline in earnings of the main income earner by involving other family members, usually children who are withdrawn from school. A significant proportion of children from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are involved in both paid and unpaid work on a regular basis rather than going to school (Chart 8:30).Community meetings indicated that their households had no other choice than to draw on their children's support on a regular basis (CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4). For them, child labour is of crucial importance to their livelihood strategies during their usually short spells of severe poverty, unemployment or sickness of the main income earner. Child labour is more prominent among households headed by women due to the absence of male labour. Child wages are far lower than those received by adults and range between SP 500 and SP 3000 ($0.20-$1.20) a day. Yet, many households would not be able to survive without the labour of their children. In some of these household a child's

**Chart 8:30**
**Households with at least one child as income earner, by poverty category and gender**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

income accounted for between 20% and 100% of the total household income (i.e. LH34-M).

There is, nevertheless, a trade-off between work and school attendance among children that is expected to influence their school performance. As discussed earlier, the school enrolment of children from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households has been affected negatively by the introduction of school fees in primary education. Nonetheless, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households lack the ability to invest in the education of their children and large numbers of primary-school-aged children do not even enter the school system, while others drop out. For the majority of children from the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households who have to work on daily basis, attending school is nearly impossible even if a child could raise the school fees from his/her own work (i.e. LH18-M). The majority of 'Sometimes Poor' working children work sporadically. Some children from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households go to school every day and work only during school holidays. Working children from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households usually assist their household in the running of their businesses.

Children's participation in the labour force is also heightened by family disintegration. Children are particularly affected by the breakdown of social cohesion as they have had to leave home at an early age to fend for themselves somewhere else (i.e. LH13-B). Child labour is also associated with the poverty of the neighbourhood: the poorer the neighbourhood the more child labour there is. For example, among the 'Always Poor' households the highest involvement of children in paid labour is to be found in Mayo where in 22% of the 'Always Poor' households there is at least one child under the age of 15 who works on a regular base. On the other hand, the lowest involvement is in Siriha where the figure drops to 15%. Other neighbourhoods fall between the two.

The share of female/male children in paid labour varies but boys have higher share than girls except in Mayo where children are equally involved in paid work. Children who have had no formal education had hardly any opportunities outside the informal sector. Therefore, they tend to work in jobs that put them in direct confrontation with the authorities. Children from poor households may work in one activity or combine several income-earning activities at any one time. Among the 'Always Poor' households in Mayo, 40% of the working children do casual work most of the time as shop helpers, domestic workers, loaders and porters. Street vending is also undertaken by children either for their parents or for others for a wage. Girls are often involved in home industry as well as domestic labour. Boys work as porters, carry goods in markets, load, unload and fetch luggage in bus parks, and transport goods (i.e. LH18-M). Sex work is used as a last resort for girls and represents one of the few areas in which relatively high incomes can be obtained (i.e. LH19-S). Begging is used as a last resort for boys, and sometimes becomes the only option between jobs or alongside casual employment. Some children are being used by criminal syndicates, especially in the sale and distribution of illegal drugs.

A working day can start at 6 a.m. and end 6 p.m. or later. A long working day for such a low wage compels children to work extra days to meet their family's needs. A critical issue is that most children can become trapped in this web of activities and find themselves unable to escape poverty in the future.

> Rita (SP) is a 14-year-old sex worker in Siriha. She went to school up to fifth grade. Her mother became a sex worker herself after separating from her abusive and alcoholic husband. Rita was en-

> couraged to enter the trade she used to shun. She wanted to quit her job and go to school, and may be 'become a respectable teacher'. However, she has not found a way out because her mother could no longer work and she is the main income earner in the household. (LH19-S)

To sum up, household-levels of poverty often compel children to work and undertake work that is not appropriate for their age and maturity and which traps them in a destructive cycle of exhausting tasks and does not allow them access to formal education let alone recreation. This evidence points to the intergenerational dimension of social exclusion and the extensive barriers to essential livelihood capitals today that predict the continued social exclusion and poverty of these households in the future.

## Conclusion

The discussion above has detailed households' capital and the different activities pursued by individuals in the various well-being categories. To capture the diversity between people within each of the four neighbourhoods, the study developed exercises to explore the full continuum of well-being within the communities. Four categories of well-being were identified; the 'Always Poor', the 'Sometimes Poor', the 'Medium Poor' and the 'Non-Poor'. These categories were set with reference to the way people make their livelihoods and the security or vulnerability of their efforts. The other dimension that also supported such categorization was security of tenure. 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households have a larger portfolio of capitals than poorer ones. People's classifications of households into different well-being categories reflected social differentiation and inequalities between people within neighbourhoods and strong linkages between poverty and the composition of households in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. The 'Always Poor' are mainly made up of households that belong to minority ethnic groups, headed by female, and that have young members. The 'Non-Poor' are mainly made up of households that belong to dominant ethnic groups, are headed by males, and have fewer dependent members. While the 'Sometimes Poor' may share some of the characteristics of the 'Always Poor' households, they may have other measures that lessen their vulnerability.

The vulnerability of households is closely related to their livelihood activities, in particular to being informally employed, being a woman, being a child and being poor. For each, there are specific sets of vulnerabilities that are imposed by the nature of the work and access to various capitals. Capitals provide people with varying degrees of livelihood sustainability. 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households have a larger portfolio of capitals and men's portfolios are bigger than women's. Female poverty is produced by interlocking, social relations and processes that constrain the range of opportunities women can draw on. The economic contribution women make does not materializes into a better well-being of the household. Therefore, households headed by females are much poorer than households headed by males within the same groups due to their lack of access to male portfolios. Poorer households have lower human capital due to multiple barriers to health care and education and these households have extremely low valuable physical capitals and lack tenure security. Average household income differs across categories and these differences, combined with lower unpredictable and fluctuating incomes from informal-sector activities help to explain who the poor are and who the better-off are. Poorer households and particularly the 'Always Poor' derive most of their income from casual work and self-employment in the informal sector, sources that are not steady or predictable. Furthermore, the exclusionary

economic setting ensures that women and some minority ethnic group activities remain very limited or confined to menial, difficult, and hazardous work that makes it even harder for them to gain access to the resources they need for survival. Better-off households derive a higher percentage of their household income from regular employment, regulated self-employment, pensions, capitals and remittances. Incomes obtained by poorer households are often inadequate and are too little to maintain a livelihood, cope with emergencies or make even small investments. In addition, poorer households lack capitals that could be liquidated to cope with crisis. Their low incomes make it necessary for these households to carry out multiple activities and involve more members in their livelihood activities. Household-levels of poverty frequently compel children to work and undertake work that is not appropriate for their age and maturity and which traps them in a destructive cycle of exhausting tasks. This does not allow them access to formal education let alone recreation. This evidence points to the intergenerational dimension of social exclusion where the extensive barriers to essential livelihood capitals predict the continued social exclusion and poverty of these households in the future.

Borrowing by the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households is almost always linked to meeting emergency consumption needs, healthcare expenses, school expenses and, most importantly, meeting the expenses of building and rebuilding shelters. They are, therefore, confront an with an unprecedented level of debt that makes them not only less equipped to deal with the current situation but also vulnerable to even harder shocks in the future. These people have the least choice in terms of their livelihood strategies and are the most vulnerable when confronted with adversity.

# 9

# Household access and opportunity

## Introduction

The previous chapter examined the assets that households and individuals have and the way they are employed in livelihood strategies. The analysis showed how some social groups lack the necessary capital and opportunity to pursue a sustainable livelihood. The discussion in this chapter will identify the reasons preventing them from accessing assets and determine the type of livelihood strategies they could pursue. Following our theoretical model, the policies, institutions and processes that determine people's access to resources are central to such understanding. Therefore, the system of entitlements or the legal, social and other factors that facilitate or block access to human, physical, natural, social and financial assets are assessed in an attempt to understand who is able to draw upon a specific asset and who is not.

## Proximity to the main city

The ability of households to secure a job is governed in part by their neighbourhood's geographic proximity to the main city. The stratified structure of the city has impacted negatively on neighbourhood residents by disconnecting places of work from places of residence. All neighbourhoods are located on the periphery of the capital city. Poor-quality or non-existent paved roads and expensive transport services add to the physical isolation of the neighbourhoods by discouraging mobility and restricting people's ability to benefit from opportunities outside their neighbourhood. Livelihood activities in neighbourhoods are less profitable and wages in the neighbourhoods are much lower than those offered for the same job in the main city. A causal labourer in construction in the city would earn up to SP 10,000 ($4) per day, while a casual labour in a neighbourhood (particularly in Dar es Salam or Al Baraka) would earn a maximum of SP 6,000 ($2.40) a day. Workers in the city also get longer contracts than those in the neighbourhoods. In addition, the demand for homemade products such as cooked meals; snacks and handicrafts is extremely low in the neighbourhoods (LH14-M, LH12-S). Yet the 'Always Poor'' and 'Sometimes Poor' categories had no choice but to struggle with less profitable activities in their neighbourhoods (LH14-M, LH12-S). For example, most household heads in the 'Always Poor' category were involved in activities within their neighbourhoods. And women from these households had very few or even no opportunities to develop their businesses in their neighbourhood. This is due to the seasonality of work, lower profitability and intense competition (LH14-M, LH12-S). On

the other hand all heads from ‘Non-Poor’ households are involved in income generating activities outside their neighbourhoods. All were able to commute frequently to the main city and some were able to buy essential goods from the main city at wholesale prices and sell them in their neighbourhood at a profit. They also bought homemade products from producers in their neighbourhoods and sold them in the main city markets. Their network of relationships with larger businesses in the main city grew stronger and helped them to access credit and finance (i.e. LH2-M).

There are variations between the four neighbourhoods in terms of their proximity to the main city and ease of mobility. Compared to other neighbourhoods, Dar es Salam and then Al Baraka are the neighbourhoods furthest away. Siriha has the most convenient location due to its relative proximity to the main city and also the availability of transport there. Its location has enabled even members of ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households to operate between the neighbourhood and the main city’s major markets. Members of ‘Always Poor’ households in Siriha were also in a relatively better position to look for or access jobs and casual work in the main city compared to their peers in other neighbourhoods. Although they walked six to eight miles and back a day to get to the main city, they had the option to do so if necessary.

In summary, there are evident connections between proximity to the main city and the livelihood activities people are able to pursue. Physical distance compounded by a lack of affordable and accessible transport to where livelihood activities are located in the city considerably constrained poorer people’s options and locked them in less-rewarding activities in their own neighbourhoods.

## Regulation of the informal sector

The localities impose numerous laws, restrictions and taxes on self-employment. These laws apply to everything sold, directly prohibit hawking as a profession and impose restrictions on the use of space for undertaking various activities. Informal-sector regulations applied to people operating at home, in the street and in designated market places. Home-based workers are often the most disadvantaged group in terms of returns or choices but members of ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households operating outside their home are also disadvantaged due to informal-sector regulations. Working from home makes it harder for workers, particularly women, to reach and be organized than for those working in market places and even on the streets. Focus-group discussion indicated that market places provide a better location for operating compared to home-based or street hawking (FGD-M8, FGD-M8, and CM-S4). There are about five to six market spaces in each neighbourhood. However, market areas are not permanent, even the planned ones can shift to surrounding streets with vendors, artisans and service providers setting up informal kiosks, particularly during times of inspection and tax collection, and in the rainy season when sites became inaccessible. They accommodate from a couple of hundred vendors, artisans and service providers in Mayo to around sixteen in Dar es Salam. Goods are sold from fixed stalls, semi-fixed stalls or commodities can simply be piled up on the ground on mats or gunny bags. All the markets lacked access to public-service utilities such as sanitary facilities, potable water, electricity and storage facilities.

Few of the market spaces are designated by the locality as ‘legal’ markets and the majority operate outside the locality’s regulatory framework. At the legal ones, some of the entrepreneurs had permission to operate while others took their chances and

operated without the required licence. Focus-group discussions (FGD-M18, FGD-B19 and FGD-S13) indicated that even those with the necessary permission are not usually consulted in any of the decisions taken or any enforcement of the law, development plans or activities that concern their working space. They also have limited access to policymakers and planners and do not have the capacity to make use of any formal resources to improve their business. But still they are in a better position than their informal counterparts. A feature of the small enterprises of the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' household members is their inability to compete with well-off enterprises for space in the planned or regulated market place. They usually undertake their activities from a multiplicity of locations to avoid being caught without a licence. The majority operated along road sides and streets, from homes, unauthorized market places, on shop verandas, from an open space, in front of hospitals, at bus stations and bus stops or other places where there is a concentration of people and therefore potential customers. However, at all the locations they had to deal with the locality's tough regulations.

All the 'Always Poor' and the majority of the 'Sometimes Poor' households operated without the proper permits and legal status due to the ill-designed rules and regulations relating to taxation and business registration. Community meetings (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) indicated that, on top of the burdensome financial payments required, there is also excessive bureaucracy that overwhelms 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' people in a web of regulations. To formalize a business, an entrepreneur is required to comply with nine different procedures before the firm can begin trading. Entrepreneurs from the neighbourhoods have to shuttle back and forth between different offices in the main city to pay different taxes and supply different forms and papers that some of them had never heard of before. Due to their lack of resources and the cumbersome rules, entrepreneurs have no choice but to operate illegally and without the proper permits. Working without a license and from an unregulated space is far more expensive than if vendors and artisans used regulated spaces and obtained licenses. It is also subject to a high daily fee or what is called a Temporary Daily License and is burdensome for all but particularly for the 'Always Poor'. A daily sum of SP 7000 to SP 20000 ($2.80 to $8) is demanded, which significantly raises the cost of doing business in the formal sector and makes any benefits extremely meagre, The majority cannot afford the daily license but government policies toward those who are not able to pay the daily fee are harsh and include the confiscation of merchandise, the forced removal and demolition of structures, mass arrests, fines and imprisonment. Workers in this field usually operate for a few days and then the locality *kashat* invades, arrests workers and confiscates their goods. This has contributed immensely to creating a vicious circle of vulnerability in which the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' were not able to operate formally, were severely punished by the authorities and had to start again from a weaker position than before. Consequently these households became less able to deal even with the smallest shocks. One of the most devastating actions that members from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households feared is imprisonment since this removes their ability to pursue any livelihood at all.

> Peter is 36 years old and from Al Baraka (SP) and claims that the problem with imprisonment is that it increases the burden of debts. Coming out of prison, one had to start looking for a new job to help pay off previous debts and replace merchandice that were confiscated. No pawnbrokers or suppliers want to provide supplies or offer a new loan for fresh start-up capital before am earlier loan has been paid in full (Quotes 13-B).

When ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ household heads lose their resources due to regulations or they are imprisoned, they cope by changing their household’s labour participation. More members become involved, particularly women and children (i.e. LH12-S). Therefore, female labour participation and child labour have intensified among ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ self-employed households as they confront such situations. For these households, the distinction between self-employment and other forms of employment is rather arbitrary. Workers move between self-employment and casual day labour or combine different type of activities at any one time in response to seasonality and shocks due to regulation (i.e. LH14-D).

The majority of workers adopted strategies to avoid any confrontation with the law and minimize losses if caught. For ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households these include frequent changes of location and working from an open space. These strategies have made it too difficult for their businesses to operate, let alone upgrade or develop, and have put them at a disadvantage in relation to larger businesses in this domain.

> Zakia (referred to in the previous chapter) is 48 years old and lives in Dar es Salam, She earns her living by selling tea, coffee and donuts but has no permanent spot. So she has to carry the two large baskets containing her stove, cooking equipment and ingredients to different vending sites and street corners to make and sell her products. She has to keep changing places because if she stays in one place for too long she will be a constant target for police harassment. This does not allow her to make regular customers and her daily income fluctuates depending on the location (LH14-D).

Some members from ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households have ramshackle structures that are rebuilt in the same location when destroyed. These households also adopted a strategy that each time there is an extra income; it is set aside to cover reconstruction. On the other hand, a large proportion of the ‘Non-Poor’ and ‘Medium Poor’ households’ activities are characterized by some form of stability, i.e. they have a fixed or semi-fixed spot and have some or all of the necessary legal documents required to operate. Some of them also struggle to comply with the excessive rules and regulations but these households may resort to bribery to avoid punishment or to obtain certain services and protection. Some of the self-employed ‘Non-Poor’ believe that government officials think that people in self-employment are a source of personal revenue. Authorized persons request bribes to avoid confiscation or a tax notice or to ease the complexity of bureaucratic procedures. Focus-group discussions (WFGD-M9, FGD-M18, FGD-B6, FGD-B19 and FGD-B19) stated that even if bribes are paid, there is no guarantee that a different official will not come tomorrow and demand something else. A lack of representation and voice and limited knowledge about their rights and duties make self-employed persons prone to exploitation.

People operate in the informal sector because they have been challenged by the costs and complexity of formalization. The consequence is not only a lack of access to formal resource but also the destruction of livelihoods. This has contributed to creating a vicious circle of vulnerability in which ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households have not been able to operate formally but still bear the consequence and eventually become less able to deal with adversity.

## Dynamics of political and social capital

People in all the well-being categories lack effective political representation and this has important implications for their livelihoods. The previous chapter maintained that

regular salaried employment can open the door for more beneficial vertical networks. However, workers in casual and self-employments lack any form of organization. The only available union in this respect is the Association of Women Vendors of Food and Tea in Abu Zeid Market. This union is supported by the Sudanese Development Association (SDA), a local NGO, and empowers its members to defend themselves against different forms of exploitation and demands their rights through collective action. Life histories show that members enjoy a more secure working environment and in addition have managed to improve their working conditions, a goal that would otherwise not have been attainable.

> Kisma, a 36-year-old food vendor, worked in Abu Zeid Market with 56 other women vendors who sell a range of basic domestic amenities as well as traditional items, including clothing and handicrafts. But Kisma, with her small capital, was only able to make and sell *kisra*. Since she was barely able to break even, she was not able pay for the required permission, like most of the women in the market-. Therefore, she was often the target of wide-spread and systematic harassment, destruction and even physical assault. At other times, she has fallen victim to natural disasters such as floods and fire. Her plight was exacerbated due to her inability to have access to space and basic facilities for her business. At many points in her life, Kisma has begged and gone without food to ensure that her children ate. Then a CBO took an initiative to organize those workers in the informal economy to form their own union, and equipped them with skills development programmes on marketing, bookkeeping, managing, occupational health, safety and environmental standards, etc. When Kisma joined, she was suspicious of the intentions of the organization and thought it was just another form of *di' aaia* (trick) of the government to make them leave the market. But Kisma learned many skills despite her very limited education, and devoted time and effort to union work and came to love her new work very much. The union became a recognized body that negotiates with the authorities on behalf of the women vendors in terms of payment of tax and the location of their business. Kisma has always been part of the negotiating team and has been very active in lobbying the government to protect the plight of vulnerable vendors and at the same time ensure that labour standards are applied and respected. Kisma also represents the union outside Sudan where she learned from the experience of others in this field. Together, Kisma and the other vendors are currently enjoying stable working conditions and access to various resources in the city. (LH37-D)

Many people from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households resort to individual, non-political problem-solving strategies are based on kinship, ethnic and neighbourhoods relations. The majority of households have come to live in a specific spot in a neighbourhood because they have either relatives or people they know from the same region or the same ethnic group. According to different community meetings and focus-group discussions (i.e. (FGD-S14, FGD-S13, CM-S4 and FGD-D17), these relationships provide an important source of protection and support that many would not have been able to live without. They have been able to tap into well-established social networks and use them to facilitate aspects of their relocation. Support provided by relatives, the ethnic group or people from the same region can take the form of accommodating newcomers until they are able to build shelters of their own. Quite often the labour needed for building the shelter is supplied from these networks. Such relationships also provide general information, financial support to facilitate the move, employment as well as emotional and psychological support. In other cases, they replace the justice system within the groups, physically defending their members against attack or aggression from non-members. They also provide the services that members could not afford such as water supply and a legal or illegal electricity supply from generators and from the grid.

However, this type of support is not automatic or enjoyed equally by people in different well-being categories. For example, when migrating to the city, many 'Always Poor' households have stayed in camps outside the city, rather than staying with rela-

tives in the city. Though they were in disparate need of remittances from rural areas, most ‘Always Poor’ households were not able to enjoy this kind of support while more members from ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households have (see Chart 8:11). Kinship ties are differentiated by class, gender, age and the health of individual members. It was established during the fieldwork that people with stigmatized illnesses, such as leprosy, had difficulties accessing support from their close relatives and wider ethnic groups. Similarly, people with a long-term illness were abandoned by their families who were no longer able to support them. Women of a certain age have a more limited social asset than men. Poor people from certain ethnic groups were not able to benefit from their ties with the wealthy members of their group.

A clear example of the class dimension in social capital is to be seen in Siriha among the Shanabela (Arabized) ethnic groups. Shanabela are the most affluent small traders in Siriha and most well-off group in the sample. Many members of the Shanabela are able to enjoy support from wealthy relatives. Well-off members were able to secure jobs for their relatives and to provide them with credit and finance in times of need or for the start-up or development and growth of their small business. Some poorer members in the group were employed by prosperous members as mobile vendors, workers or as transport operators of donkey carts (i.e. LH7-S). Although these relations play an important role in the livelihood strategies of many group members, disparities among individuals within the Shanabela ethnic group seem to be bigger than disparities among individuals within other ethnic groups. The differences in living conditions of ‘Non-Poor’ households and ‘Always Poor’ households from the Shanabela ethnic group are huge. Poorer members are likely to be exploited by their own group members under the guise of group solidarity.

> Ahmed is 27, from Siriha, and belongs to Shanabela, Ahmed is barely literate and works as a transport operator. He is very grateful to his relative who provides him with a loan every time he needs it. He is also grateful to him because he provided him with the donkey cart he works on to transport people around the area. However, Ahmed is required to supply a fixed amount of SP 3000 ($1.20) to his patron on a daily basis and whatever left is for Ahmed. However, most days the work barely makes SP 3000. To make some profit Ahmed starts at 5 a.m. and keeps going till 8 p.m. His desire to tap opportunities for economic advancement in other places is restricted by his inability to pay off his loan to his patron. The latter, in turn, encourages him to work longer hours and to go to the remote corners of the neighbourhood, but can’t take any less than his fixed rate. (LH7-S)

These types of relationships though they may cushion households against an immediate shock do not form the type of relationships that lift people out of poverty – the contrary could in fact be true and people trapped in such relationships may find themselves sinking even deeper into poverty.

Where ethnic and regional ties are non-existent or tenuous, friendship and neighbourhood links may form a critical part of a person’s informal support network. Focus-group discussions and community meetings (FGD-S12, FGD-D11, CM-B2, CM-D3 and FGD-M5) indicated that neighbourhood ties are instrumental in building and rebuilding houses after demolition, lending money or other items, and in looking after children when their parents could not be home because of work or imprisonment. These relations were often equated with kinship relations. For example, children and young people usually used fictive kinship terms to address older neighbours, such as, *Ammi* or *Khaltie (*my father’s brother or my mother’s sister). A common proverb used to describe the level of neighbourhood relations is that ‘The neighbour who is closer to you is better than the brothers who are far away’. Forming such relationships is fortified by extensive contacts and trust. People who have lived in the neighbourhood longer were better

connected and able to call upon their relationships within the neighbourhood and the community at large regardless of their ethnic background. However, recurring demolitions have had an adverse impact on the social support which the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' people have built. These demolitions force the poor to relocate on their own, and destroy social capital in the process. In some rare cases, the poor would choose not to benefit from community ties. Although these ties can provide enormous support and benefit to people in need, the fear of stigma and social isolation that result from being labelled as poorer than the community prevent some poor people from showing signs of distress to the world outside their household. Individuals and households adhere to this ideal are generally referred to, as the *mastureen*, or those who show no sign of need despite being in extreme need. The *mastureen* try to keep this image with some sacrifices.

> 'Even when I don't have any money to buy my daily food, then I go to the market pretending that I am buying food, so my neighbours would see me and think that I buy food every day, and that I don't need any handouts.' (Saffia [SP] is a 46-year-old Jaalia (Arabized) woman from Siriha (LH8-S)

This trend limits the scope of support and cooperation that community networking can bring but increases the risk of these households being permanently poor. The main coping mechanisms adopted by *mastureen* are built around immediate family relations and in rare cases kin who reside far away. People indicated that social bonds with neighbours and friends are ideally reinforced at certain events through visits, presents and money. If this is not done, people who could provide critical backing in various stages of life will be alienated (FGD-B19, FGD-S7, FGD-D11). For this type of support to work, the existence of other resources is essential. Some households indicated that they used to have strong ties with their rural origins, which provided them with irregular remittances at times of need, however, because they were not able to reciprocate, i.e. send cash or other resources, these types of support are no longer there. Some also had ties in the city or within the neighbourhood with which they were able to reciprocate obligations. Such ties enabled them to access jobs and housing but being extremely poor did not allow them to reciprocate favours and these relationships faded away. Women highlighted the importance of being able to reciprocate for a relationship to continue.

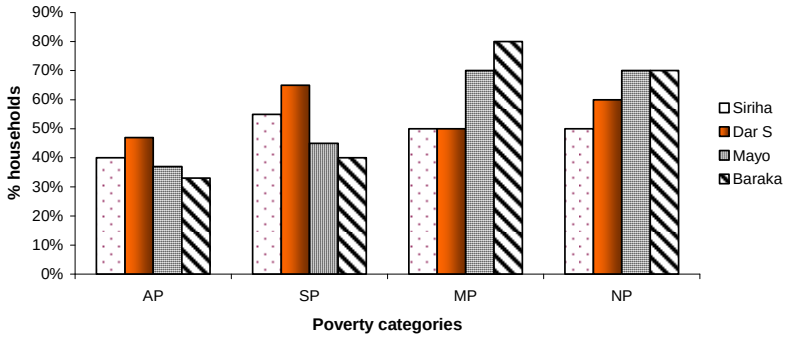
> 'It is so difficult just to think about visiting my friends as I used to. Because if I go to visit them, it will look bad not to buy some presents, at least half a kilo of sugar or some coffee beans — and with my current circumstances I cant even afford to pay for the bus fare to visit them.' (Fatheea, a 52-year-old woman from Al Baraka) (LH38-B)

With few personal assets, members of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are less able to reciprocate relations and thus lose an important type of support.

Social and political capital is differentiated by age and gender. Households headed by men enjoy relatively more beneficial exchange with the community than those headed by females. This is because some of the important areas in which people get to extend and receive support from friends and neighbours involve activities that are socially designated as 'male'. These include building, rebuilding and fixing houses, digging trenches during the rainy season, physical defence against aggression of individuals and groups, carrying coffins to the cemetery and grave-digging. Males usually get involved and participate with their neighbours in activities of this type. However, since female-headed households cannot participate, they are more likely to need to pay for the continuous process of building, rebuilding and fixing of their houses. Chart 9:1 indicates that 'Always Poor' households (that have the highest concentration

of female heads) had the least support among all the groups in building or fixing their houses.

**Chart 9:1**
**Households who received support with building or fixing houses**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Women substitute this by strengthening their relationships with male neighbours, relatives, in-laws and employers to help in activities that they cannot undertake by themselves. Young women from the Muslim community are less likely to employ this strategy due to the prevalent culture of gender segregation. They have far more restrictions on their exchange with the community or even restrictions in terms of their general appearance, particularly if they are divorced and/or young. As they get older, they are less likely to cultivate ties with outsiders that can be utilized in their livelihood strategies. However, the contrary is true for women from many non-Muslim communities. For instance, across southern Sudan ethnic groups, older women who are, well advanced in their personal and household life cycles, reap the rewards of their high investment in social relations. Kinship and neighbourhood ties continue to form a significant part of the informal networks of men well into old age. The traditional prestige and respect owed to senior males, from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households are quite common in many ethnic groups. Substantial support in a variety of forms is extended to elderly males in several ethnic groups by their families as well as their relatives. Most of the daily responsibilities for caring for an older member fall on women, usually the wife, daughter or daughter-in-law. However, this support tends to vary according to the well-being of the household. As the data indicates (Chart 8:1), household within 'Always Poor' group are less likely to co-reside with elderly members compared to 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households.

At several times and for a variety of circumstances, people in the neighbourhoods came together using traditional strategies of communication within the community to apply pressure through demonstrations, civil disobedience and law-breaking. The principles of unification and mobilization often coalesce in land rights. However people participate in these actions, their 'illegal' informal socialization, and participation bears little in their sense of trust and connectedness with different social groups within the neighbourhoods. More often than not, powerful ethnic groups used force to demarcate their territory and prevent other groups from occupying their area. These conflicts often

turn brutal and divide communities along ethnic lines as the community meetings and the locality reports indicate. Levels of conflict between different ethnic groups remain high and create feelings of powerlessness, threat and alienation among minorities (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4).

In summary, the ability of individuals and households to pursue certain livelihood strategies is defined to a large extent by their position in their ethnic group. Such identities have principally determined the amount of social and political capital necessary to access resources and deal with adversities.

## Access to secure housing

People perceive tenure security as a key characteristic that distinguishes 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households (see Chapter 8). Those who are unable to secure a piece of land either rent or stay with others. Unlike 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households, the dwelling arrangements of the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households, whether renting, squatting or staying with others, are almost always short term and or prone to sudden termination. 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are either currently squatting or had done so in the past. Furthermore, compared to 'Sometimes Poor' households, the 'Always Poor' households have the most uncertain tenure situation (see Charts 8:9 & 8:10). They have the largest squatter and tenant households. Squatting exposes households to eviction and recurring demolition. Most households in the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' have gone through demolition at least once. Some 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households too had experienced demolition before legalizing their land (e.g. LH12-S, LH2-M). In terms of demolition patterns, the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' exhibit similar incidences of demolition for the entire neighbourhood. For example, the 'Always Poor' households in Mayo have experienced more demolition by the municipal authorities than their peers in other neighbourhoods. When a house is demolished, householders end up sleeping in the open for varying lengths of time depending on their asset base and support network. Since their resources are limited, and as they usually have no property elsewhere, their period in the open is always longer than a month. As a strategy to avoid incurring more costs on a house that will be demolished anyway, many people – particularly from Mayo and Al Baraka – had to double up with another family. It is very common that more than two families would be crammed into tight living quarters that were supposed to house only one family.

> Augustine (AP) is a 66-year-old Nuer (Africanized ethnic group) from Mayo. He and his nine family members live in a small room in a single-family home shared by three other families. A total of 22 people are living in the house. Augustine's room was demolished in 1992, 1994 and 2000. 'Before 1992 we were told that there were some procedures that should be followed prior to granting us legal rights to our homes. We had to borrow and sell our belongings to raise the fee required by the area planning authorities. However, instead of that, we just saw bulldozers destroying our homes. We lived in the open for days. My children got cholera and when I took them to the hospital they asked me to pay a hospital fee in advance', (LH35-M)

After demolitions, the city authority will usually relocate residents to new sites that are even further away from the city and where people will not be able to get to the city due to a lack of transportation. However, this has always proved to be an unviable solution for both the government and the poor. For the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households in all neighbourhoods, livelihood security is dependent on wages and employment, and their jobs determine where they live. They keep coming back every

time they are moved and have rebuilt their homes over and over again. Some households have gone through the process of demolition as many as eight times. Recurring demolition has often led to a loss of resources since the land on which informal people built their houses is obtained through illegal squatting on private property and no compensation is paid. The costs for households of gaining access to another dwelling are very much higher than any poor household could afford. For example, the minimum cost of a dwelling consisting of one bedroom, a shed, windows, doors and a pit latrine and built according to minimum community standards is SP 500,000 SP ($200).

However, this can be considerably reduced if the household belongs to an influential ethnic group or has a good relationship with the headman of a strong group. In this case, the labour would be supplied at no cost. Help would also be provided regarding fetching local materials. Brutal state actions such as destroying houses without warning have encouraged the poor to organize themselves informally by participating in demonstrations against demolition and forced evacuations. These actions have taken place despite the absence of structures that permit collective actions. These actions by the inhabitants have been geared to forcing the state to act to resolve the land tenure problem. Squatting is not the preferred choice of poorer people as they are aware of the repercussions of squatting. However, when weighing up their options, squatting was the best possible option for them because they are not able to formally buy or even legally rent shelter. The high price set for land in those neighbourhoods is beyond the reach of many ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households (see Chapters 7 and 8). Furthermore, a lack of formal financial institutions that could provide loans for the poor has made it difficult for them to pay the full amount upfront. These households therefore keep moving between different arrangements such as renting for two months when income is good, squatting until a dwelling is demolished, staying with others according to certain conditions (such as labour conditions), being evicted and so on. The majority of renters belong to the ‘Sometimes Poor’ and ‘Always Poor’ category. For example 37% of the ‘Always Poor’ households in Siriha and 30% of their peers in Dar es Salam were renting for varying lengths of time. There are also variations between areas in this regard. For example Siriha has the largest proportion of tenants due to its proximity to the main city. ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ people usually rent in certain areas because they want to cut transport costs and they rent because they cannot squat in specific areas.

A constant source of insecurity for these households is the fear of forced eviction in times when eviction would mean loss of employment too. Tenants typically pay between SP 10,000 and SP 90,000 ($4-$35) per month, a sum most of them cannot afford for more than a few months. Men and women from ‘Always Poor’ households indicated that tenure security is their number one priority. These households often had to trade off between allocating their small amount of earnings to food and meeting the other important need, namely shelter. They naturally choose to fulfil the basic survival needs and forgo the issue of rent. ‘Always Poor’ households thus usually rent for a short period of time (i.e. 1 to 2 months) and get evicted due to the non-payment of rent or move by themselves to squat on open space. They may also rent again when there is sufficient income. Rented houses are dilapidated and can be categorized as slums, either built on government land or land that belongs to others. This means that the shadow of eviction follows tenants even if they could afford to rent.

People fear demolition and eviction the most because such actions put an end to their former shelters. They lose resources in the process as well as affordable shelter at a convenient location to work and probably an interdependent community lifestyle too.

To sum up, poorer people live on informal land because they cannot find affordable land or a more secure shelter arrangement. Informal tenure status and informal activities expose them to a variety of actions that undermine their livelihood strategies by gradually eroding their forms of capital and their ability to generate income.

## Access to financial institutions

The previous chapter argued that all 'Always Poor' households lack liquid assets and that few 'Sometimes Poor' have the financial resources to invest in ways that would improve their well-being in the long-term. Access to alternative sources of formal financial support has been a determining factor in the vulnerability of most households. The 'Always Poor' has less choice in terms of which venue to borrow from. Within the neighbourhoods, local shops constitute the main, and sometimes the only, available source of consumption credit for the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. However, local shops do not provide cash loans. Some households also rely on cash loans from neighbours, friends or relatives who are mostly at a similar level of well-being as the borrowers themselves. However, loans from these sources tend to be small and short term. Kinship ties may provide the necessary loans during time of need but not without cost. Loans provided by better-off individuals in specific ethnic groups to poorer individuals in the same group are common. However, a loan of this nature is often attached to labour relationship conditions, usually a lower wage (LH7-S, LH12-S). Accordingly, poorer individuals are able to cope in the short run but become trapped in a relationship that perpetuates their poverty in the long term.

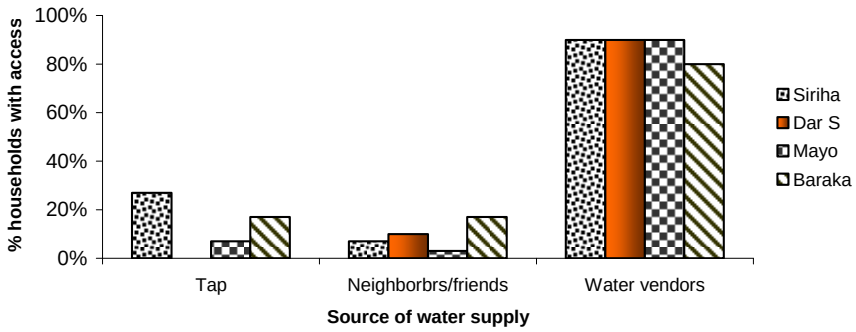
Formal financial institutions are usually inaccessible even to the majority of the 'Non-Poor'. For example, among all the households in the sample only 20% of the 'Non-Poor' households in Siriha were able to borrow from formal institutions. The procedure requires personal collateral or security from borrowers, who often do not have the sort of capitals needed. Self-employed persons, therefore, turn to the more affluent people in their community for support but the accessibility of this option is governed by complex factors. Ethnic affiliations play an important role in supporting the start-up and running of a business. For example, in Siriha in particular, the Shanabela, an affluent Arabized ethnic group with established businesses in the city, are able to provide some of their members with credit and finance for the start up or development and growth of their small businesses. Small-business operators in Siriha represent the best-off group in the neighbourhood. However, while such networks play an important role in livelihood strategies for some, they also succeed in keeping the benefits within a small circle. Moreover, outsiders can be exploited due to their desperation for funds, since the group represents the only viable source of funding in the area. These types of relationships often force 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households to accept unfair and risky terms of trades, lower payments and to enter into bonded labour relationships where business owners claim their labour and/or attach conditions in case of the loss of merchandise (LH12-S 2003-2007). People in the sector lack representation and a voice, except for the small group of women food vendors in Soque Libya who have a union. These factors have heightened the social exclusion and the highly unpredictable working conditions of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households.

## Access to urban services

*Access to water supply*

Households vary in their access to the sources and types of water they use. Water sources include an in-house tap, water vendors, fetching water directly from borehole, or from neighbours or relatives. Piped water is considered cheaper, safer and more convenient than the other sources. All the neighbourhoods have access to piped water in some parts except for Dar es Salam. Water is provided by different bodies including the government, the private sector and NGOs. However, access to an in-house piped water connection is very limited and is mostly confined to 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. The majority of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households in the four communities do not have access to in-house/single-family taps, nor do they have access to safe, sufficient and reliable water supplies (Chart 9:2). On the other hand, the majority of the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households have access to private in-house taps that grant them access to a relatively safe and cheap water supply (Chart 9:3). With just under 30% of the 'Always Poor' households in Siriha and less than 20% of their peers in Al Baraka having direct access to private in-house tap, all 'Non-Poor' households in the same neighbourhoods have access to private in-house taps.

**Chart 9:2**
**Sources of water supply for the 'Always Poor' households**

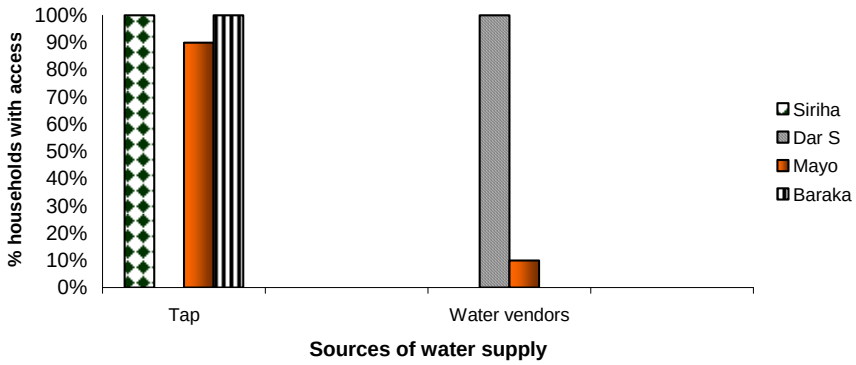



*Source*: Fieldwork research

Squatters are not entitled to any water connection and there are no water connections in certain areas in the neighbourhood. However in practice, a water connection can be accessed illegally through social relations or intermediary personnel. This practice is widely used in 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. Connecting to water supply through legal channels is expensive and unaffordable for the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. For example, water in Al Baraka is supplied by a private company (the National Industry Corporation) on behalf of municipal governments. A household is required to pay a connection fee of SP 390,000 ($156) plus a flat monthly rate of SP 10,000 ($4) for consumption. Although the monthly fee is much lower than buying from water vendors, paying the connection fee up-front is not feasible for 'Always Poor' households who are unlikely to have any savings and typically lack access to credit markets. The policy that some households from the same ethnic groups

adopt is to pool resources and share one tap that is connected in the house that is at a convenient distance for all members. As many as 15 households can share a single private tap. Women and children from ‘Always Poor’ households who have no access to tap water walk miles to fetch water directly from the well, or from a relative who resides far a way. Water is carried to the household in buckets or open containers carried on heads.

**Chart 9:3**
**Sources of water supply for the 'Non Poor' households**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

Having access to piped water does not provide a sustainable supply a household can rely on. The supply varies from one neighbourhood to another. Mayo, for example, can be completely dry for long periods and in Al Baraka and Siriha, the water supply has poor pressure or an inadequate flow during the day. Low pressure is more than just a nuisance. On average women from three ‘Always Poor’ households from Siriha spend three hours a day collecting water which they store in recycled containers. In Dar es Salam where there is no connection to piped water, all households have to buy their water or rely on relationships to access water. In all neighbourhoods and across all well-being categories, the majority of households use water bought from donkey carts as their primary source, even if they have access to tap water.

Those who have access to tap water paid far less than those who bought water from water vendors. Water prices usually depend on the time of year and on how scarce water is. During the summer and the rainy season, the water price goes up and prices decrease in winter. The price of water also depends on the quality of the water sold. Water prices also vary between neighbourhoods and areas within the same neighbourhood. For example, vendors in Al Baraka and Mayo charge much higher rates than vendors in the other two neighbourhoods. However, on average, water vendors sell water for between SP 2,000 and SP 3,000 ($0.80 to $1.20) per twenty litres (an average daily household supply). On the other hand, those connected to taps pay SP 333 ($0.10) for their daily supply. In comparison, those who buy from vendors pay around nine times the amount paid by a consumer connected to the mains. Water vendors themselves are burdened by high tax. For a donkey cart to operate in the neighbourhood, an annual license of SP

31,000 ($12.40) is charged and in addition there is a monthly licence of SP 7,000 ($2.80) that has to be paid or the cart is confiscated.

There are two types of water sold; potable water and lower quality water that is unfit for human consumption. The quality of the piped water in Mayo and Al Baraka is also low, 'salty' or 'ferruginous'. Lower quality or salty water is used for washing and cleaning, while potable water is bought for drinking and cocking. However, when members of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are forced to choose between buying potable water and buying food, they would buy food and if there is any money left they would buy lower-quality water. Those who have no other option but to consume low-quality water indicated that they had often suffered the debilitating effects of water-borne diseases like diarrhoea, gastroenteritis and cholera. In other cases, people borrow small amounts for drinking from neighbours and relatives but this is not a sustainable method of water supply. Water-saving practices are important and are used when resources are limited or water is not readily available. People try to consume as little water as possible. Some older people from rural areas were also unfamiliar with modern sanitary practices and had a predisposition against them for cultural reasons. During the rainy season when water is less available and more expensive, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households collect rainwater in large open vats. Most of these containers are uncovered and within hours the rainwater will become polluted with algae, dust and bird droppings. Water pollution and incidences of water-borne diseases are higher among 'Always Poor' households.

Yard taps in Mayo can become scenes of tension and conflicts between individuals wanting to get their turn. Conflicts are usually personalized and take on ethnic or regional lines and grow out of all proportion. Such conflicts are increasingly resulting in psychological, verbal or physical violence. Sometimes not only the inhabitants of the neighbourhood are party to the conflicts but also external actors who manipulate conflicts to serve other purposes. These conflicts have far-reaching consequences for the social cohesion of society as a whole since they divide the community into factions f those powerful enough to deny others access, and those less powerful who are denied access. The 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households usually belong to the latter group.

In summary, the 'Always Poor' in all the neighbourhoods are the most disadvantaged because they lack access to an adequate, reliable and safe water supply. Lack of financial and social resources often forces them to use unsafe water, which results in an increase in ill health and disease. A large number of the poor (particularly in Mayo) are coming to view access to water as a more critical problem than access to food, health care and education.

*Access to health care*

Access to medical services is essential to the survival of members of the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. Each neighbourhood has a wide array of health facilities provided by various actors. Health care is provided by private voluntary organizations in the form of clinics and community-based primary health care projects, government clinics and pharmacies, midwives and traditional healers. None of the four neighbourhoods has a hospital and as hospitals are far away, people rarely use them. The selection of channels of health care depends on the resources a household commands and can use for non-food items and the cost of the service. The majority of the NGO healthcare providers offer a much more affordable service than that provided by

the government or private practices. According to people's perceptions of those services (FGD-B15, FGD-B6, FGD-B19, FGD-B19), NGO services are much closer to them than the services provided by the government. Traditional health practitioners (including herbalists, religious healers, birth attendants, *Zarr sheikh*, etc.) represent important sources of health care and advice in the four communities. They are much more attractive because they are affordable and relate to prevalent cultural beliefs and practices. Within the four neighbourhoods, the number of traditional healers has always been far greater than the number of health agents, nurses and doctors available to the community.

Although most health clinics are within reach of the majority of the people, people from the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households will not seek medical help from them most of the time. The cost of a consultation and medicine is the major deterrent for people. Medication usually costs anything from between SP 7,000 ($2.80) to numbers no one could afford for a recurring illness such as malaria. If people require more intensive treatment in hospital then this option is frequently dismissed or replaced by a more affordable option. Although the cost of admission to government hospitals tends to be lower than private ones, only 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households that have medical insurance can afford it. A person without insurance has to pay SP 20,000 ($8) for each night spent in hospital, excluding the cost of medicines. If causal labourers who receive SP 5,000 ($2) per day are admitted to hospital then they have to have savings of at least four working days to cover one hospital night. There are also the costs of food and transport to and from hospital as well as the cost of medication if required. The option of hospitalization is, therefore, beyond the reach of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households. The high cost of treatment and transportation to cover the journeys to the medical facility imposes a serious threat for the survival of other household members. The illness of an 'Always Poor' family member overburdens the rest of the household members and leads to a loss of income, especially if the sick person is the main breadwinner.

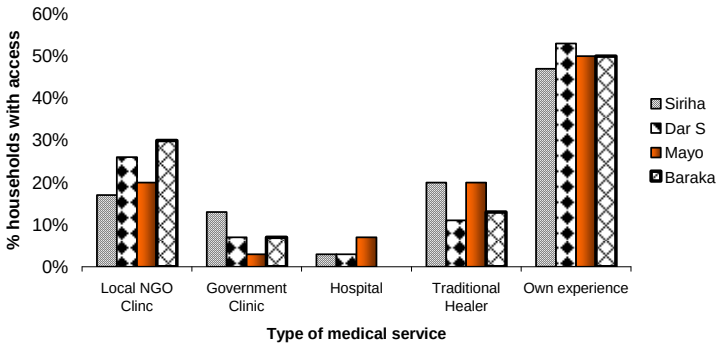
> Hawa, (AP) is a 42-year-old single mother with five children who sells vegetables and spices in the local market, and from time to time gets an evening assignments as a cook for occasions that are taking place in the neighbourhoods or the city. The family depends on her income most of the time, but since she has recurring malaria condition, her sixteen-year-old son has become the only breadwinner when she is sick. When her condition is bad, she cannot lift a finger and depends on her small children and neighbours for help. During the past six months she had three severe malaria attacks and two mild ones. She was taken to the doctor only once when she went into a coma. Her son works as a loader in the vegetable market and receives between SP 3,000 and SP 5,000 ($1.20-$2) a day but he is likely to have only 18-20 days work a month. Any money earned goes first to the mother's treatment. What is left is usually not enough for two meals so they buy bread and tomatoes for the evening meal. (LH34-M)

Expensive and limited access to health care and drugs renders otherwise treatable conditions, such as malaria, fatal for many of those who cannot afford treatment. Being so familiar with malaria, it is very rare for household members to seek medical help. People from 'Always Poor' households use traditional treatments bought from local market, while people from 'Sometimes Poor', 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households may buy over-the-counter malaria tablets. Members from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have to pay for treatment out of their own resources. National health insurance schemes cover a very few pensioners, government employees and a few industries and individuals with health coverage belong mainly to the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' categories.

The difficulty of obtaining adequate and affordable health care undermines the health of many residents in the four neighbourhoods. The problem is particularly acute for the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' groups that are, though more susceptible to disease, less frequent users of medical facilities than 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' groups tend to rely on their own experience and use local medication. Members of the 'Always Poor' households from Mayo are the least likely to seek formal medical advice compared to their peers in other neighbourhoods. As Chart 9:4 indicates, the majority of households' first choice would be their own experience in treating the disease. Secondly, they would consult a traditional healer or *Faki* and thirdly they would go to an NGO clinic in the area.

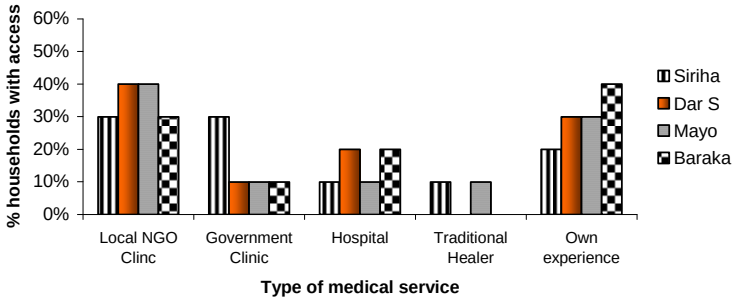
Even 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households would not seek help at a public hospital except as a last resort and when all else has failed. Seventy per cent or more of households from the 'Always Poor' group did not make use of NGOs clinics because of the costs involved and even though these were lower than at government facilities, they were still high for them.

**Chart 9:4**
**Places where people seek medication**
**('Always Poor' households)**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

**Chart 9:5**
**Places where people seek medication**
**('Non Poor' households)**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

While the majority of 'Non-Poor' households agree that the cost of medicine is too high, they are likely to use NGOs and government health facilities more frequently than the other groups (see Chart 9:5) because those working for the government and private firms and some pensioners have a National Insurance Health Card that entitles them, and in some cases their families too, to free or lower fees for medical consultations. It also entitles them to a discount on certain medications but having a medical insurance card does not guarantee that individuals will not go bankrupt because of medical expenses, since obligations for other members within the household are not covered and can erode households' financial resources. 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households are able to mobilize assets and social networks to access medical facilities (i.e. LH2-M). They also borrow money, pawn houses or cut food consumption. The 'Always Poor' were only able to cut back on food consumption or borrow money. Borrowing to cover health care expenses is extremely widespread in all categories.

The majority of elderly members from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households had either 'rarely' or 'never' visited any formal health facilities. Elderly members from 'Non-Poor' and 'Medium Poor' households are more likely to visit them, particularly when their illness relates to eyesight. Among the 'Non-Poor', and 'Medium Poor' households, men access health facilities more frequently when having malaria than women do. Overall, women are more likely to delay seeking health care because their symptoms are not considered severe but, more importantly, because of a lack of money. Even when women sought care, they were more likely to look for spiritual causes of physical ailments, and hence turn to traditional healers or *Zar sheikhas*.

In summary, it was apparent that the availability of healthcare facilities within neighbourhoods did not grant poorer people access to them. Many individuals from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households had walked passed the local formal health facilities to seek medication from a traditional healer in some other part of the neighbourhood. The majority relied on their own experiences first in diagnosing and treating illness such as malaria, chest infections, fevers, etc.

Expensive and difficult access to health services has led many people to harbour a sense of grievance against the government. Many believe that the inaccessibility of health facilities is the main cause for them having malaria all year and for their children suffering and dying from simple malaria attacks, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

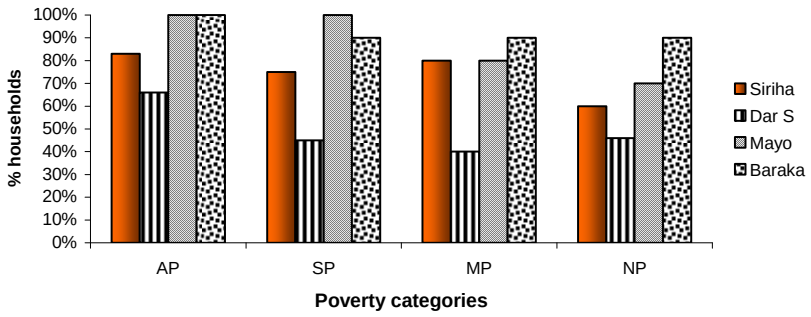
*Access to sanitation services and vulnerability to health hazards*

The neighbourhoods do not have particular problems with waste disposal. The Company of Locality of Khartoum undertakes garbage collection and each house or shack has to pay a monthly fee of SP 3,000 ($1.20) for garbage collection. However, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households cannot afford this and are thus not served with garbage collection, which impacts on the community as a whole. A lack of other sanitation infrastructure, such as sewers, impacts on the livelihood of the inhabitants. Several of the most immediate threats to health are linked to environmental conditions at the household or neighbourhood level. The source of pollution is mainly the shallow-pit latrines and unhandled rain water. Access to sanitation differs between 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households and 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. The majority of 'Always Poor' households have no access to safe and convenient sanitation and the majority of the sample households used various forms of flimsy pit latrines. For example 87% of the 'Always Poor' in Mayo and 57% of their peers from Baraka have no pit latrines. Those with no private facilities defecate in the open but this carries

particular risks for people's personal security. On the other hand, all 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households have pit latrines on their premises.

People in all the neighbourhoods are more vulnerable to disease during the rainy season than any other time. Rain water washes across the ground and into the houses, carrying with it any uncollected garbage and the contents of pit toilets. Stagnant water from poor drainage and streams from open-pit latrines become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other disease-carrying pests. The mosquito threat is distressing to members of all the categories but particularly for the poor who can not afford to pay for medication (WFGD-M9, FGD-M18). While inhabitants in all neighbourhoods are exposed to health hazards, the people in Mayo neighbourhood suffer most due to its location next to a sewage disposal site. More of its households members are affected by malaria than other neighbourhoods (see Chart 9:6). The majority of the 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' are also affected by malaria while the least affected were the 'Non-Poor' households in Dar es Salam followed by their peers in Siriha.

**Chart 9:6**
**Households with at least one member with recurring malaria**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

All the neighbourhoods lack essential drainage channels for rainwater and during the rainy season everything comes to a standstill. After heavy rain it can take several weeks for muddy lanes to dry out. Water collects in the dips at the bottom of the road making it impassable for public transport and even donkey carts. This keeps the old and the children captive in their homes for days and workers have to walk long distances to get to their work since there is no transport.

A lack of access to services that help preserve a healthy environment, particularly sanitation, increase the vulnerability of the inhabitants in the four neighbourhoods to the effects of vector-borne diseases. While the whole community is prone to these hazards, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are less well-equipped to cope with any repercussions due to their lack of access to health care.

*Access to energy*

The majority of the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households rely on biomass for cooking, and candles and battery-operated torches to meet their lighting needs. Kerosene is the next most commonly used energy source of lighting, while for some

households, (mostly ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’) electricity from the grid or a diesel or petrol-powered generator is an alternative. Electricity is not only considered a necessity but is also seen as a sign of power and well-being. Gas fuel and electric lighting are aspired to by all four categories of households.

Electricity, either from the grid or a diesel or petrol-powered generator, is used mainly for lighting. Grid electricity is only available to a few households in Mayo and Siriha. Although the infrastructure for extending electricity access is already in place in these two neighbourhoods, the ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households were not able to connect to the grid because they could not afford the connection fees or monthly rates. Strong links exist between the energy used and poverty categories. In Mayo none of the ‘Always Poor’ households have access to grid electricity as opposed to 70% of ‘Non-Poor’ households who are connected to the grid. In Siriha, only 3% of ‘Always Poor’ households have access to grid electricity, as opposed to 90% of ‘Non-Poor’ households from the same neighbourhood who have access to grid electricity. Connection to the grid provides a source of power and authority for those connected and those with power and authority can access electricity using various methods (see the discussion on social capital). In Siriha some ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ household have managed to arrange illegal electricity connections with the help of junior employees or workers on site. In return, they make a payment or other form of compensation. These households are also able to rent out individuals lines of supply for neighbours and gain an important source of income (see the discussion on financial capital).

However, even for those connected to the grid in Siriha and Mayo, electricity expenses and the quality of supply means that ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households connected either could not use it or, if they could, had to use it sparingly, such as lighting one or two bulbs a night. The majority of these households continue to meet their energy needs using multiple-fuel strategies. Some ‘Non-Poor’ households use electricity not only for lighting but also to operate TV sets, cassette recorders and refrigerators. The majority of those connected to the grid suffer poor-quality service with frequent blackouts and this forces the majority to keep an alternative energy source such as kerosene lamp to hand. ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households that have no direct access to grid electricity may substitute that by having power generators or renting a line. This is more apparent in Siriha and Al Baraka, (where there is no grid electricity) where more than 40% of ‘Non-Poor’ households owned power generators.

In general, none of the ‘Always Poor’ households has access to electricity from a powered generator. Within the sample, all ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households that owned power generators have rented out lines of individual supplies to some other households on a daily or monthly basis (see the discussion on financial capital).

All cooking and baking is done with biomass fuels like wood and dung or wood converted to charcoal. Cooking is performed over a smoky four-stone fire, over tin on charcoal or wood, or over rudimentary stoves in a poorly lit and badly ventilated kitchen. Burnt on open fires and rudimentary stoves, the emission of biomass fuels has a far-reaching impact on women’s health by increasing the risk of respiratory ailments. People use kerosene for lighting which is dangerous to the users and the community as a whole. Kerosene is burnt either in open wick lamps, usually with an open flame from a wick sticking out of a simple jar or bottle of fuel; and is surrounded by a glass chimney. During summer gales, open fires from kerosene lamps can catch the thatched roofs of the houses and burn them down. Among the most significant disasters that the community remembers are those fires caused by kerosene lamps. Furthermore, kerosene lamps

provide very low lighting, below the level required to read. A lack of electricity lights in the street has contributed to making the streets a place of crime at night where robbers await their victims.

Baking basic staples such as the daily bread (*kisra*) is done over firewood even among 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households are more likely to use charcoal and a very few have gas cookers. Poor households would rather use wood and dung energy collected from around the neighbourhood. Large numbers of people used to be engaged in wood-fuel production and trading. However, the conversion of scarce wood to charcoal has led to deforestation around neighbourhoods, particularly around Mayo and Al Baraka. Women from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households fetch straw and dung over a 20-mile range or so around the neighbourhood. However, neither of these sources is available to them now. The scarcity of biomass has forced the majority to buy it and hence the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have to rely on energy sources bought from the market. Women from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have the sole responsibility of providing energy for cooking. That means if there is no cash to pay, the women has the duty of fetching it from around the neighbourhood, to borrow or to beg some for that day's use. The responsibility for cooking energy among 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households mostly falls on men or is a shared one. However, it is not unusual for women and children from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households to spend two or three hours a day collecting those items.

Gas is far cheaper than charcoal and firewood. A sack of charcoal costs SP 30,000 ($12) and lasts an average family of six for about 20 to 25 days. Filling a gas cylinder costs SP 20,000 ($8) and lasts a family for about 45 days. Despite this difference 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households cannot use gas because they cannot afford to pay for the infrastructure needed for gas use (a gas cooker, cylinder and organizer). They also have no means to transport cylinder to and from filling stations. Therefore, 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households can spend up to half or more of their income on energy. However, saving on energy is common and people have innovative ways of doing so. Women may alternate fuel types, for example, they might use firewood for baking *kisra* and then use the charcoal produced from it for cooking. Women also shift to less-efficient energy sources such as cardboard boxes, and items collected from the garbage. Women from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households might only cook once a day to use less charcoal. Poorer women from the same ethnic groups share one stove and take turns in cooking. 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households buy fool, *moyat fool* (cooked beans or its soup) and bread from the local shop. 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households use raw vegetables and bread instead of a cooked meal. Women from all the well-being categories see a lack of energy as the main indicator of their poverty and differentiation.

> It makes you feel useless when you cannot make tea for your children before they go to school, because you don't have charcoal or wood or because the rain has made the charcoal and wood wet and there is no way they will burn. (Azziza, a 26 year old female from Al Baraka) (LH20-B).

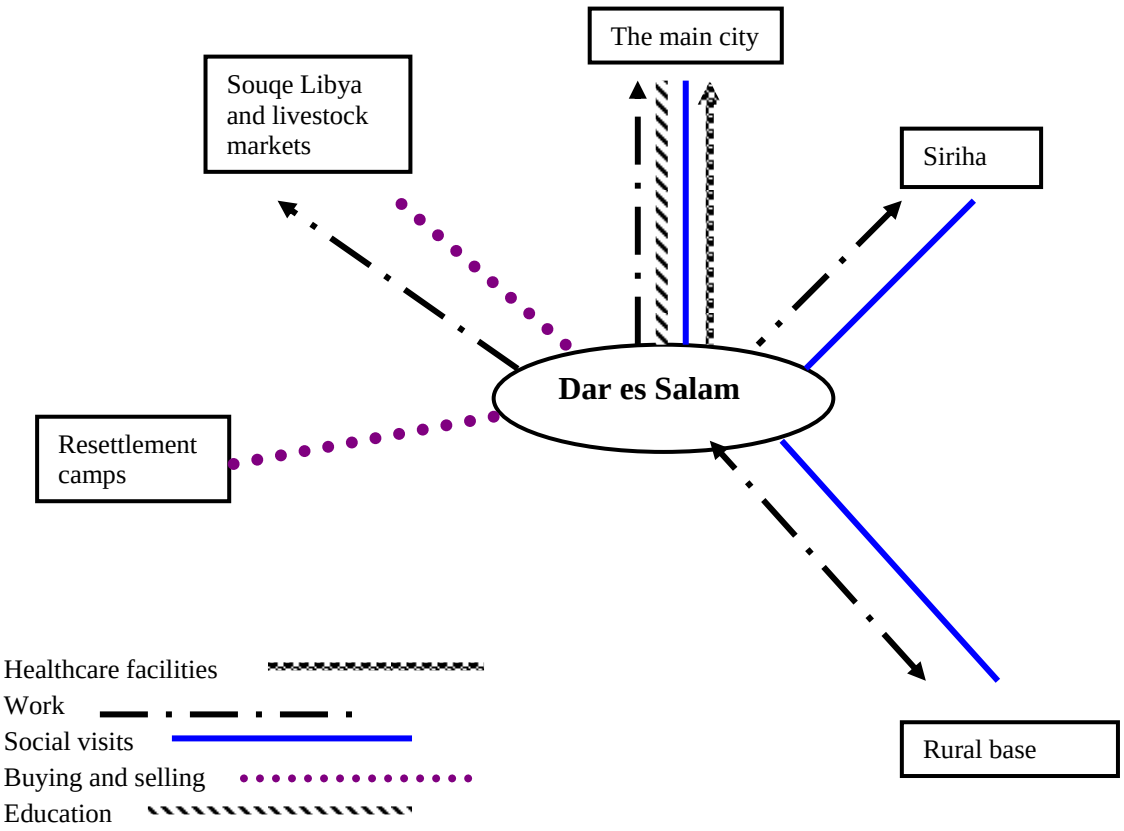
To sum up, a lack of access to modern energy services strains household budgets, makes simple tasks like preparing a meal fraught with health risks, reduces people's ability to conduct any activity after dark and increases environmental damage due to the use of traditional fuels.

*Access to transport services*

The vast majority of the sample needed to make regular trips either to work, to school or to health facilities or they made social visits within the neighbourhood or outside it. People move between their respective neighbourhoods, the city and other places for various reasons (see Map 9.1).

The ease and feasibility of these trips are determined by the availability and affordability of transport. Non-motorized transport (footpaths, cycle paths, donkeys etc.) are extremely significant to the poor particularly within neighbourhoods. Carts pulled by donkeys or horses account for a considerable proportion of public transport within all the neighbourhoods, including Siriha. Other means of transport are dominated by private buses and minibuses, rebuilt pick-up trucks and vans (*Amjad*), and tricycles (*Rakshat*). The deregulation of transport has resulted in monopolies as bigger operators have swallowed up smaller ones and services are run to minimum standards. Many vehicles are old, badly designed and poorly maintained.

*Map 9.1* Mobility Map (for men, women and children from Dar es Salam)




*Source*: Fieldwork research

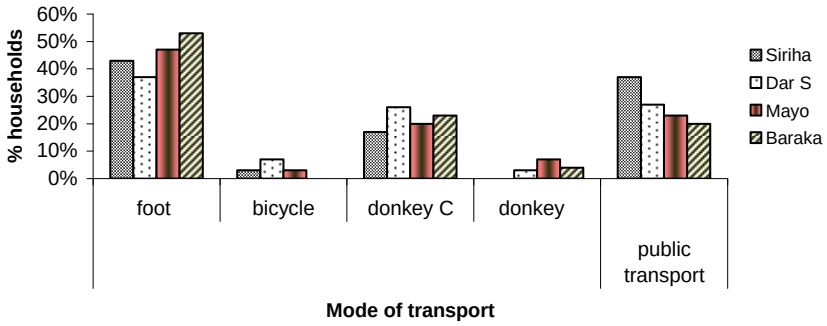
All the neighbourhoods suffer from a lack of internal transport and bad roads, particularly during the rainy season. Roads within neighbourhoods are not paved except for two in Siriha. In Mayo and Dar es Salam only the roads leading to the main city are

paved. In Al Baraka even the road leading to the main city is not paved. Most internal roads, as well as trails are impassable during the rainy season when water collects in the dips at the bottom of the roads and makes them impassable, even for donkey carts. Children and old people can be stuck in their houses for days and vehicles abandon poor routes altogether or at certain times of the day. In all neighbourhoods, there are some areas which become effectively 'no go' areas for transport services or are not even serviced by any type of transport at all. This matter has far-reaching effects for those working in the main city or even in the neighbourhood itself. Able-bodied people from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are forced to walk a long way to work when there is no transport. Others might lose their jobs because they cannot get to work on time.

Transport used by different categories demonstrates a complex trade-off between the location and the remoteness of the area, as well as the cost of the transport used. Most 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households live in locations that are closer to transport routes. For example, all the 'Non-Poor' households in Siriha and Dar es Salam live by the main transport routes, while most of the 'Always Poor' households live far from these routes. Some live in areas that are not serviced by any type of transport including donkey carts and for these people it becomes difficult to access critical services on which their livelihood may depend.

Better-off households use public transport frequently, and as their major means of transport to get to work, to access health care, to get to school and to maintain a network of social contacts around the city. 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households use public transport less frequently, mainly to get to work or in cases of medical emergencies (see Charts 9:7 & 9:8).

**Chart 9:7**
**Major means of transport for the 'Always Poor' households**

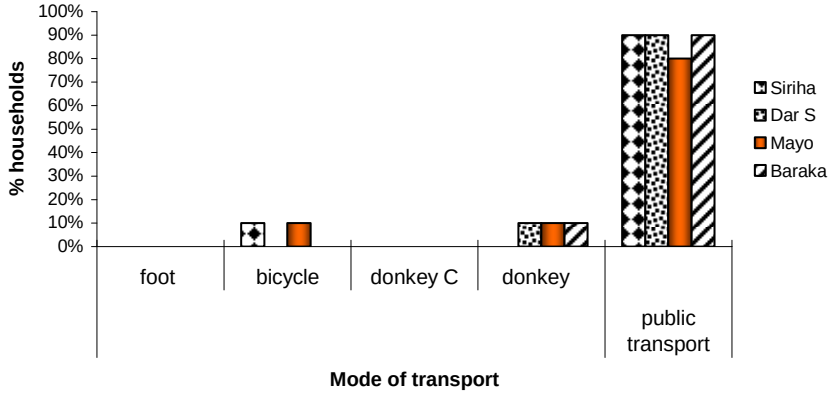



*Source*: Fieldwork research

'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households rarely use transport to maintain their network of social contacts beyond the neighbourhood, and rely on social networks in the immediate vicinity and that are accessible on foot. The cost of transport is a major deterrent that prevents poorer households from using transport. Transport costs within neighbourhoods and to the main city vary from one neighbourhood to the other. Trans-

port to the main city is most expensive in Al Baraka followed by Dar es Salam while Siriha has the lowest fares. Within the neighbourhoods fares range from between SP 500 ($0.20) to SP 1,000 ($0.40) for a single journey. For travel to the main city this goes up to three to ten times depending on the means of transport used and the time of the day, and also the season. For donkey carts, the fare is much lower but during the rainy season the cost of transport increases significantly. For 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households, the proportion of their income spent on transport seems to be much higher. For poorer households, transport is an item that a household tends to economize on, through different means, mainly by walking. Members from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households use *rakshat* and minibuses on regular basis and members of 'Always Poor' households walk first and then use donkey carts as second choice. To economize on transport costs, it is also common among 'Always Poor' households to use more than one means of transport for the same journey. For example, they would walk from home up to the main road and then take a bus from there to work and do the same on the trip home. Many of the 'Always Poor' from all neighbourhoods welcome working within the neighbourhood despite the low wages because they balance it against transport costs. New arrivals and mothers of young children often have difficulty with jobs in the centre of the city because of the travel costs and complex travel patterns needed to get to work.

**Chart 9:8**
**Major means of transport for the 'Non Poor' households**




*Source*: Fieldwork research

The difference in transport use is most pronounced during daytime medical emergencies. Better-off households use taxis when transporting patients to medical facilities in the city. 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households use donkey carts and try to get lifts from private vehicles along the main route. For medical emergencies at night, all categories would wait until the morning due to a lack of any kind of transport after dark. The lack of emergency medical services in all areas, as well as the lack of transport at night can cost people their lives.

Lack of transport, inaccessible roads as well as the prohibitive cost of fares perpetuate the geographical isolation of neighbourhoods and significantly contribute to the

sense of isolation and insecurity of the inhabitants. Members of 'Always Poor' households demonstrated with different examples the way they were held back by problem of transport from accessing work opportunities, education, healthcare facilities and contact with relatives and friends, and the way this impacted on their lives and livelihoods. Men from 'Always Poor' households in Dar es Salam and Al Baraka see transport problems as the most important issue, coming ahead even of water and health care. In Mayo, children who attended school in the Sahafa area ranked transport as the most important element that keeps them from achieving better results or continuing their education. Transport problems have, therefore, become part of the interrelated chain of other problems that includes housing, electricity, employment, to mention but some which interact to create barriers that make it difficult or impossible for people to participate fully in society.

*Access to school*

Responsibility for the provision of education at all levels is shared between public and private providers. Private education is provided by individuals from outside the community and some NGOs. The number of government schools is higher but the number of schools is usually far less than the demand. In neighbourhoods like Mayo and Al Baraka, a classroom can have up to 120 or 130 pupils in the middle of the week. The differential quality of primary schooling is an important issue that families are becoming concerned about. Private schools are less crowded and better staffed, but still a classroom in a private school can have up to 60 pupils. Public schools are run-down, many of them have no water or bathrooms, no windows or doors in the buildings and some are mud sheds with thatched roofs and no furniture. On the other hand, private schools are relatively better equipped, mostly with windows and doors and most of them have potable water and toilets. A lack of transport or the inability of a family to pay a daily cost severely limits the option of attending schools outside the neighbourhood. Therefore, schools in all neighbourhoods and particularly in Mayo and Al Baraka are extremely overcrowded.

There are strong cleavages between staffing and the performance of pupils in private schools on the one hand and those in public schools on the other. Public schools in the neighbourhoods suffer acute shortages of trained teachers. Salary incentives and overall working conditions appear to have an important motivating effect on the decision of teachers to leave a neighbourhood school. For example, at the end of the 2002/2003 school year, only 30% of the teachers at the Al Baraka primary school planned to continue teaching there in the following school year (LK, 2005-EN). Public-school teachers receive low salaries and payment is often delayed until the middle of the month. Therefore large numbers of qualified teachers choose to work for private schools or combine teaching with another more profitable activity (FGD-M18).

Pupils in private schools achieve relatively better results than pupils in public schools. This is evident in the low performance of most public schools in the neighbourhoods (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3, and CM-S4). Pupils from Mayo were doubly disadvantaged compared to other neighbourhoods. For example the success rate of pupils in Grade 8 at Mayo primary school who sat the basic certificate exams in 2004, was 0% for both boys and girls (LK, 2005-EN). By comparison, there are always some pupils in private schools who pass such an exam. The low success rate in public schools is a deterrent for parents and this concern was voiced several times in the community meetings by parents who thought that there was no point in wasting money

on children's schooling if it would not qualify them to proceed any further (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3, and CM-S4). Very few of those attend school reach the last year of primary education. This matter also points to the intergenerational dimension of social exclusion; extensive barriers to educational access and the resulting poor educational results of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households' children today predict their continued social exclusion and poverty in the future.

All 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households whose children attend schools go to government schools because these schools are far cheaper than private schools. Families with pupils in public schools are burdened with education expenses (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3, and CM-S4). The government, which has control over educational resources, provides the localities with little and irregular financial support for education. The localities in turns are asked to cover most of the costs of basic education, including paying teachers' wages from their own limited resources. Therefore, schools suffer from an acute shortage of financial and administrative support, which is supplemented by fees. Fees in public schools vary between neighbourhoods and among the schools in each neighbourhood. Some schools in Mayo for example charge much higher daily fees per student than those in Al Baraka or Dar es Salam. Pupils in private schools pay between SP 25,000 ($10) to SP 45,000 ($18) per month. Pupils in government schools pay a basic fee of SP 3,000 ($1.20) to SP 10,000 ($4) per month. Additional fees are imposed according to a school's long- or short-term needs. In general, pupils in public schools have to pay for text books, stationary, uniforms, chalk, chairs, desks, drinking water, etc. Pupils are also responsible for fixing schools structurally and undertaking the cleaning of the building. Therefore, a large number of children from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households cannot afford to go to school. For example, among the 'Always Poor' in Mayo, 40% of children from the age of six to fifteen and 20% of their peers from Dar es Salam are unable to attend primary schools. The high cost of education prevents parents from sending their children to school (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4) and sometimes also forces them to withdraw their children from school if their income is too low to pay their school fees. Some 'Always Poor' families may send one or two of their children to school while the reset undertaking income-generating activities.

Most of the children enrolled in school from 'Always Poor' households can only attend school on a semi-regular basis depending on their household's income in a certain season of the year and their subsequent ability to pay school fees. Some children attend school on a semi-regular basis while undertaking income-earning activities or assist their family in such activities. For example, in 50% of the 'Always Poor' households in Mayo there was at least one child who combined school with an income-earning activity. This deprives children of the privilege of a good learning environment.

> Khameese (AP) is a 12-year-old boy who lives in Mayo. His elder brother is thirteen and is still very much at large and has never been to school. However Khameese is determined to attend school and finances his studies from his casual work. But when there is no work he cannot go to school. Khameese wakes up as early as five in the morning to transfer baskets of goods to the market, some weighing between 10 kg and 15 kg. He receives around SP 200 ($0.50) per load. He comes home, has some plain tea and bread, puts on his school uniform and walks four km to the Sahafa primary school. Khameese says that 'the teachers don't seem to be too happy about my progress; they say I am too lazy and I am always sleepy, but I want to be educated so one day I will be rich and can buy a van'. (LH18-M)

The life histories (e.g. LH18-M and LH10-S) show that combining school with income-earning activities is a short-term strategy that cannot be sustained and children eventually drop out and never resume their education.

Public schools vary in their attitude towards socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. An exemption from paying fees is sometimes linked to pupils' academic achievements but in the end, only a very few can qualify. Some schools require a certificate from the locality to exempt a student from school fees. Such certificates may, in turn, depend on other factors relating to networks and the power structure in the community (FGD-M18, FGD-B6, FGD-B19, FGD-B19). As established earlier in the section on social capital, the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households are extremely disadvantaged in relation to these networks. Other schools make no exemptions whatsoever. Pupils go to school in the morning expecting to be part of the group of learners, and are asked to leave if they are unable to raise the required daily or monthly fees. They are not allowed to show up again until they fulfil their financial obligations. The negative experiences that children have with rejection during the first years of life are likely to have long-lasting effects, form the basis of their future interactions and lay the ground for their social, language and intellectual development.

> For Adeela (SP) a single Fur (Africanized ethnic group) mother from Mayo, it is quite normal that her two younger sons aged 8 and 9 come home from school an hour after they have left the house because she cannot pay their school fees. Adeela was not successful in securing even a partial fee exemption for her sons and was told that there are much poorer children than hers at the school. Adeela works as a domestic helper and her salary usually lasts up to the middle of the month. Therefore, she pays only the first two weeks of each month when her children attend regularly. At other times her children cannot go to school because she is sick and cannot work. This arrangement has made her sons' schooling a very complex and difficult endeavour particularly in light of their limited knowledge of Arabic. And even when Adeela has money, her children do not want to go to school or sneak out to play in the street. The two boys themselves said what they did not like about school is 'that education is very tough and that there is too much money to pay'. Their mother would have liked them to continue their education on a regular basis but could not afford that. She spoke of her hopes for her children's future and her bitterness that this will never materialize. (LH32-M)

The quality of the educational programme impacts on the cognitive, social and emotional outcomes for children. Public and private primary schools – except for NGO schools – adopt similar educational curricula but their goals do not necessarily meet the actual needs or interests of the pupils from that community. A clear one is the fanatic adoption of an intensive Arabic and Islamic learning programme that hardly responds to the culturally diverse communities in the different neighbourhoods. A lack of proficiency in Arabic can severely handicap a pupil's ability to make progress in primary education. Using Arabic as the main medium of instruction clearly separates those who are able to speak and understand Arabic from those who are not. As the majority of 'Always Poor' pupils are non-Arabic-speaking, it is expected that those children will be more disadvantaged than pupils from 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households. Similarly, adult education programmes provided by the Ministry of Education are also geared towards the Islamic and Arabic norms and values that do not correspond with the reality of many of the adult learners.

People have their own preference for the type of school their children will attend. 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households would prefer schools with relatively lower fees. Its location also matters and most households from all categories would prefer their children to go to a school close to their home that does not require using transport. However, better-off households can consider more expensive schools within

their wider area. ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households would consider a less expensive school which is far from where the family lives as long as the child can still walk (WFGD-M9, FGD-M18, FGD-B6, FGD-B19, FGD-B19). Pupils from ‘Always Poor’ households in Al Baraka and Mayo can walk up to eight km a day to attend a school in another area. If children from ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households have no option but to attend a faraway school, they often take the bus or other means of transport such as a donkey cart to get to school. The decision as to which school children attend is not entirely in the hands of the parents. The school authorities can exercise significant discretion in selecting new pupils. Schools have the authority to determine class sizes and can turn away children to reduce the overall number of pupils per class. This is despite the law that stipulates the eligibility of every child who shows up at a school to be enrolled as a student there. In reality, many children are turned away from schools on grounds such as age (too old or too young) or a lack of readiness.

Children from the neighbourhoods are disadvantaged in terms of access to education. It is assumed that their first line of support — their families — would be able to provide for their education but this is not true due to their poverty. Unfortunately, it is also true that public funds and services are not meeting their educational needs. With the high cost of education, many children from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households are not attending schools, dropping out of school or are not able to benefit from the opportunity of being at the school. Children from ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households attend schools that are not able to help them achieve academic success. Not being able to make progress in primary education will limit employment opportunities in the future. Men women and children were acutely aware of the need to have better access to schools and adult-learning institutions. They were also aware of the importance of having good-quality schools and teaching. They felt that they lacked leverage on the government and NGOs to allow them to voice their concerns and become active participants in the educational process.

*Security and access to justice*

A basic characteristic of all neighbourhoods is the high crime rate and the frequent conflicts between residents and the authorities. A lack of right to land, informal-sector activities and the prevalence of illegal activities such as sex work, the brewing of alcohol, weapons, drug dealing, theft and violence are all factors that put residents into constant friction with the authorities. Each neighbourhood has a police station with two or three staff. According to police reports (LK 2004- R2), rates of violent crime and property crime are much higher in Mayo, followed by Al Baraka. With mounting pressure to ban and criminalize all political activities in the neighbourhoods, residents who are caught holding or participating in any meeting are also considered to be undertaking criminal activities. For these reasons, most inhabitants have frequent confrontation with the justice system, whether they choose to or not. Within the sample households, most of the ‘Always Poor’ experience friction with the legal system related to the demolition of their shelters and the type of livelihood activities they undertake. Members of ‘Always Poor’ households had, therefore, more encounters with the police and the legal system than other groups.

‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ households’ main contact with the authorities relates to theft or break-ins. Most ‘Non-Poor’ and ‘Medium Poor’ households’ domestic conflicts and violence were solved through the mediation of ethnic group’s leaders or headmen. ‘Always Poor’ households from smaller ethnic groups often look to the police

and the courts to resolve domestic conflicts and neighbourhood tensions. Too often, poorer women who face domestic violence have no place to turn and find themselves caught between the traditional headmen and society, which legitimizes gender-based violence and the corrupt police force. Even when people reported cases to the police, they were extremely dissatisfied with the results. Cases reported were sometimes not registered on the grounds that stories were fabricated or full of lies. Cases might also be downgraded to minor cases to give an impression of low crime in the area because incidences of crime and conviction figures are used to evaluate the performance of the police station. In addition, the majority of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have no resources to allow them to follow their cases any further so they are likely to lose whatever claims they have made. This is particularly likely if the accused is a man from a strong ethnic group and has better financial resources that enable him to pay his way before the case reaches court.

At the entry point of the justice system are the police personnel who are authorized to arrest people using force if necessary. Women in any business, and particularly those involved in manufacturing, selling and drinking alcohol, are subject to strict codes of public morality as defined by the 2001 Public Order Law. The primary enforcement agents are the Public Order Police who invade and confiscate whatever merchandise and equipment the women have. According to community meetings (CM-M-1), in the absence of adults in the house, children are taken to the police station to force their parents to come there. Alternatively, people who are able to come up with pay-ffs can avoid such harassment, at least for a while. Bribes can protect goods from being confiscated or people from being taken to court, particularly those undertaking informal-sector or illegal activities. 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor' households are able to pay bribes at certain points in their dispute but members of 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households experience more difficulties in dealing with the police due to their inability to use this option. The opinion of 'Always Poor' households who sought police help was that it was a useless process and they were better-off not reporting incidents to the police. People from Mayo felt that the police responded very fast to matters that destroy people's livelihood but never came when other assistance was needed. A community meeting in Mayo indicated the following:

> The contradiction is that if someone is injured in a fight or an accident, and you ask the police for help, they would tell you that you have to take the injured to the hospital yourself because they have no enough cars or fuel. But when it comes to arresting a poor woman who sells *araki* then there are plenty of cars and lots of fuel. (CM-M-1)

'Always Poor' households' experiences with the police and the justice system were marred by 'rudeness', 'humiliation' and 'harassment'. Residents were subjected to beatings and detention in centres that failed to safeguard their basic human rights. Those who were detained in custody remained there without coming before a magistrate for varying lengths of time (CM-M-1, CM-B2, CM-D3 and CM-S4). The 'Always Poor' from Mayo and Al Baraka suffered the most, not just because they have fewer and indispensable assets but also due to the preconception held by the authorities and the city community about their neighbourhoods. Residents of these neighbourhoods are perceived as a potential source of crime and are thought to be slowing down development. Residents are likely to be judged by the police and the legal system before any fair trial can take place. Certain ethnic groups have been associated with crimes and their members are usually the first to be interrogated, harassed and detained when a crime is committed anywhere in the city. Instead of protecting and facilitating the poor's

access to justice, the authorities' abuse of power not only obstructs people's access to justice but also obstructs their efforts to pursue their livelihoods. Therefore, a lack of trust in the justice system has led to the prevalence of informal, non-state mechanisms of social control that include revenge violence and extra-judicial types of justice such as Councils of Mediators or *Majales al Judia*, a committee that is formed locally of 'wise older men' for the purpose of solving certain problems and then is dissolves after fulfilling its purpose. Although these initiatives can serve to preserve community cohesion, they are mostly biased according to ethnic background. Women believed that *Majales al Judia* rendered their victimization insignificant when they have problems relating to intra-family disputes and violence. Men would rather have their problems solved through *Majales al Judia* than by a popular committee or the police.

Women feel doubly disadvantaged. The basis for discrimination against women is laid out in Article 14 of the 1985 Sudan Constitution, which was ratified in 1989. Although it acknowledges the equal rights of men and women in all fields, it states that such equality should not contradict Sharia law (Badri 2004: 33). Women are now denied their major rights as Sharia law institutionalizes oppression and discrimination against women specifically in matters relating to marriage, domestic violence, inheritance, travel and their participation in public life. Instead of protecting women from coercion and assault, the law is willing to punish the victims of such assault. Increasing numbers of women particularly from 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households have been flogged and humiliated in public, sent to prison for long periods of incarceration without charges being brought and their goods and equipments were confiscated. This has contributed to their increasing vulnerability.

> Angelina is 43-year-old woman, (SP) who lives in Al Baraka and whose husband works on a poultry farm nearby. But his income hardly meets the basic needs of the family of eight. Angelina has brewed and sold *araki* for the past sixteen years. She could not even remember how many times she was jailed or whipped during this period. However, in the past seven years she has been jailed six times. The longest period was for five months and the shortest was for eight days. She was whipped thirteen times, each time between fifteen and thirty lashes. She fell sick and needed medical care in five of the thirteen times. Every time she came out of prison she found that her children out of school, and that the household's belongings had been sold to buy food. She usually resumes her work in brewing with other friends until she raises sufficient money to buy her own equipment. Angelina has never been to school, and she never knew any other job. Besides, she has a problem with her knees and cannot walk long distances or carry heavy loads without falling. She therefore keeps brewing. (LH39-B)

The detention or imprisonment of women impacts on both the women themselves as well as on their families. The immediate impact is the loss of their scarce business resources and the loss of breadwinners when they are in prison. The long-term effects relate to children's education being interrupted because of a lack of income to pay school fees and because of the need for their labour to assist in household expenses. Some NGOs, such as the Catholic Church, step in to help women who were detained and imprisoned for brewing alcohol by providing legal assistance but none of the women from the sample had received any support except from their family relations.

When people stood before the criminal justice system, it did not uphold their rights or protect the vulnerable. Instead the vulnerable were the most unprotected and discriminated against. Members of 'Always Poor' households in particular experienced extreme difficulties in operating under the Pubic Order Act which restricts the only type of activities that is possible for them to undertake. Women expressed their fears for the future since they have no other training or skills to allow them to undertake alternative

activities. Men and women who work illegally without proper permits fear losing their livelihoods and the repercussions this will have on their families.

## Conclusion

Poorer households have extremely reduced access to water, health care, education, energy, transport, security and justice. Despite the availability of these basic services, poorer households cannot benefit from them due to legal and financial barriers. The inability of poorer people to access resources is based on who they are, where they live and what they do. The ability of individuals and households to pursue certain livelihood strategies is defined by their status that derives from their position in their ethnic group, their gender or their level of well-being. Such factors have principally determined the amount of social and political capital necessary to access resources, ranging from financial support to building shelters and extending services such as water and electricity. For example, poorer people, and women in particular, tend to have reduced access to resources so the vulnerability of their households tends to decrease or increase according to these factors.

Reduced access to resources has spelled out a myriad of disadvantages for the poor. Lack of access to an adequate, reliable and safe water supply (due to a lack of financial and social resources) often forces poorer people to use unsafe water that results in increased ill-health and disease. Ill-health is compounded by a lack of access to services that help preserve a healthy environment, particularly sanitation. Many individuals from poorer households cannot access health care when they need to because they cannot afford it. This has impacted on their quality of their lives and their ability to pursue successful livelihoods. Lack of access to modern energy services has forced poorer households to resort to less-efficient and more-expensive energy sources. It also makes simple tasks, like preparing a meal, fraught with health risks and increases environmental damage as a result of the use of traditional fuels. Children from poorer households are disadvantaged in terms of their access to education. With the high cost of education, many do not attend schools, drop out of school, or are not able to benefit from the opportunity of being at school. Children from poorer households attend schools that are not able to aid them in achieving academic success and at the same time burden them with high costs. Not being able to make progress in primary education can limit employment opportunities in the future and perpetuate the intergenerational aspect of exclusion.

Poorer households are held back by problems of transport to accessing work opportunities, education and health care and contact with their relatives and friends. The physical distance and remoteness of their neighbourhoods compounded by a lack of affordable and accessible transport to the location of livelihood activities in the city considerably constrained ‘Always Poor’ and ‘Sometimes Poor’ households’ options and locked them in less-rewarding activities within their own neighbourhoods. Many people are not able to pursue a sustainable livelihood due to legal and financial barriers. A larger proportion are undertaking activities in the informal sector and occupy informal land, thus becoming extremely prone to shocks associated with regulations. However the people who undertake these activities have no other alternative and they need to generate cash for basic needs and vital services, such as water and health care. Those who lived on informal land were challenged by the costs and complexity of formalization. As they grapple with decreasing profitability of labour, it becomes extremely

difficult for them to comply with the law without jeopardizing their immediate survival. Informal tenure status and informal activities expose households to a variety of actions that undermine their livelihood strategies by gradually eroding their forms of capital and their ability to generate income. The vulnerability of people with informal status is intrinsically linked to the application of informal-sector regulations that are not able to take their situation into consideration. The inability of the poor to comply with these rules is a clear indication of the failure of such regulations to cater for the reality of poorer people.

When people come into contact with the criminal justice system, it does not always uphold their rights or protect the vulnerable. Instead, the vulnerable are the most unprotected and discriminated against. A lack of access to effective justice and other institutional services that can redress people's entitlement to fundamental rights represents an important constraint that prevents them from using their agency and capabilities to act and bring about change in their situation. Poorer women in particular have confronted numerous barriers to securing redress for their grievances through the legal system. This is because women's rights are informed by society's gender-based institutional rules, norms and practices that prevent women from taking advantage of different livelihood opportunities.

Based on the above, the livelihood strategies followed by poorer households offer lower returns and no upward social mobility because there are so many constraints on them that are preventing them from realizing their full potential.

# 10

# Life paths and changing patterns of vulnerability

## Introduction

This chapter examines the life paths of people within different well-being groups in order to understand how they have navigated their way through various institutional environments. The sustainable livelihoods framework that guides this study includes an analysis of vulnerability, the effect of trends and shocks that influence livelihoods, as well as the policies and institutions that determine who gains access to different resources. Such an understanding is possible by examining the livelihood strategies that different households or groups pursue and the historical pathways they have taken.

Livelihood pathways demonstrate strategic and unintentional behaviour and have emerged over time (see Chapter 6). Life histories are used here to demonstrate and explain factors behind long- and short-term changes and to shed light on the way power is constituted and reproduced in daily life, and how people negotiate its different levels and structures to attain the best feasible outcome for their livelihoods.

Forty households provided detailed accounts of the major incidents and events that have shaped their lives over the past 25 years. The history of the current household refers to events that took place for the present household but also looks at the history of its members over the past twenty-five years. For households that did not exist twenty-five years ago, reference is made to members of the same household. For example, young members might have been living with their parents and tin such cases, household histories might refer to their parent's households rather than their current household. The level of analysis has been similarly increased to embrace changes in a livelihood not just as it changes year on year, but over entire lifetimes. This period was marked with common national events that took place, such as major droughts and the mass exodus of the rural population of 1984, the floods of 1988, times of demolition, outbreaks of cholera, and major political events. The question as to why people came to live in a particular neighbourhood has brought about the history of events that pushed households to the area, and also provided the basis to discuss events that took place even earlier.

The choices people make to enable them to cope with shocks and crisis were determined by where they lived. The patterns indicate that those who used to live in rural areas have taken different routes from those taken by urban households. Factors associ-

ated with increased vulnerability and poverty of the households were specific to the geographical space and the livelihood that it was possible to pursue within that context. People came from diverse geographical places and few of them were from foreign countries. A typical answer people provided to the question about what caused them to be poor or what brought them to the specific neighbourhood were: job loss; the war, drought and conflicts; high rents in the city and price increases. An important thread between their various stories was that there were several problems that have being going on for as long as people can remember but they have been exacerbated by one major crisis such as drought, war and lack of security and hence led to the subsequent migration to the city.

In-depth life history interviews that provided a retrospective view on trajectories of change were conducted with 40 households (1 member each) representing all social classes in the four localities. Ten households were selected from each neighbourhood.

Although livelihood issues within rural or urban areas are wide and complex and it is difficult to group them into just a few categories, life histories were arranged in two categories for the purpose of this study according to broad livelihood means. These are: the livelihoods of those who came to the neighbourhoods from rural areas (23 life histories) and livelihoods of those who came to the neighbourhoods from urban areas (17 life histories). The rural sample was further divided into three groups which include: peasants from rain-fed agriculture (11 life histories), their peers from irrigated agricultural schemes, namely the Gezira Scheme (9), and pastoralists (3). The next section details each of these groups, taking an example that demonstrates most of the common issues discussed by others.

## Before coming to the city

*Livelihood in rain-fed agriculture*

This part is constructed from 11 life histories of people: 6 women (LH26-B, LH27-B, LH38-B, LH17-B, LH15-D, LH31-B) and 5 men (LH30-B, LH9-D, LH3-B, LH7-S, LH33-B), 4 of them from Arabized ethnic groups and 7 from Africanized ethnic groups. The major common denominator is that they had all depended on rain-fed agriculture and the use of natural resources for their livelihoods. It refers to livelihood systems in the Kordofan and Dar Fur regions.

*Livelihood context*

Among the eleven life histories, the ability of a household to feed itself depended mainly on its own agricultural production, which was supplemented by farm wage incomes, livestock rearing and the sale of various products. Non-farm income was rare. Despite the abundance of land, access to arable land was the most critical issue and although every member of the ethnic groups from these regions were entitled to residential land and farmland, this was not as straightforward as it could have been.

Until the 1970s, people's lives were characterized by continuous mobility in search of arable land and water. This had shaped their access to land, their relationships with each other and their livelihood outcomes. Older people recalled times when they settled in a certain geographical spot as a group (*fareek*) of relatives with between three and five households. Their numbers continued to grow as a result of intermarriage and the arrival of others from the same ethnic group. Cross-ethnic marriages linked kin groups

of different ethnic origin to new social units and created affiliations and obligations between different groups across different geographical boundaries.

The *fareek* then developed a larger sense of identity with the new locality or settlement through members' participation in traditional ceremonies, local festivals, communal meetings and social events. As the group grew into a village, they formed their internal power structure which comprised the headman of the village or the *Nazir*, *Omda*, *Shartay* or *Sheikh* according to the ethnic group. Their relationships with other *fareeks* from different ethnic groups were continually reinforced by patterns of mutual aid and reciprocal obligations guided by the headmen. The headman allocated and approved land use, took responsibility for deciding where to settle and when to move, and solved disputes within the community and those with other communities. He also validated and witnessed marriages and divorces. When a headman dies, his son becomes the headman and if he did not have a son, the closest male relative will take on his responsibilities. Sometimes headmen were appointed by the state but the position was never transferred to women under any circumstances.

Members trusted the headmen more than any other government authorities. Access to land was controlled by the headman and was contingent upon ethnic group, *fareek* or village membership. People gained the right to use land by customary law and by inheritance. Although everyone had access to land, access to arable land for everyone in the community was not possible. Some households had access to arable land while others would have access to infertile land, which inevitably led to conflicts erupting within groups. Even after the enactment of the 1971 Local Government Act, the headmen continued to govern access to land, define village boundaries and provide more land when it was needed. People disregard the administrative councils which were established by the Act and continued their reliance on the headmen. Even when the council were requested to resolve certain conflicts or allocate land, their decision was not considered final unless the headman indicated so. The only contact people remembered with the local authorities related to collecting taxes (*tulba, gibaya*), on their livestock. After a certain period of time, the land around the settlement would have been over exploited and the group would move to look for new fertile land.

Having access to pastures, water, forests and woodlands was detrimental to the survival of all but particularly to land-poor households. Some communal land had more resources such as those containing Acacia Senegal (*hashab*), the tree from which gum Arabic is collected and sold. Conflicts often erupted between the various groups competing for resources. Relationships with different ethnic groups were important for defining the way natural and physical resources were to be shared. Cooperation was an important value for households in their early stages of residence and could be so through the course of their life time in the settlement. However, people recalled that they were often moving from one place to another in search of more fertile land, and greener pasture, which reduced the opportunity to strengthen cooperation. On the contrary, the increased geographical mobility of people had often put them in positions of confrontation with other groups that assumed ownership of certain communal resource.

Domestic conflicts flared up periodically. In the context of a lack of any form of formal administration, the group (whether *fareek* or village) as well as the ethnic group at large represented the main institutions that served and protected members' interests. The outcome of these conflicts was mediated by the dynamic relationships between the headman and members of his groups with their varying levels of power and status and

was informed by the perceived power of the group. Smaller ethnic groups faced greater insecurity with poorer prospects of accessing land and thus obtaining a livelihood. Members of the bigger ethnic groups remember with pride how they conquered their opponents, prevented them from using resources and commandeered their livestock and resources. Older people from the smaller ethnic groups remember with bitterness the harsh times they experienced when they had to cope with aggression and a lack of resources with no protection from the state and with no allies among the other groups. Their members were often forced on to less marginal land, and they relocated to the mountains where they could see their enemy and protect themselves in caves. They also relocated to the borders where they could easily move to other geographical zones with more security. This was until there was no alternative but to come to the city.

*Livelihood activities*

During the early 1970s there was a broad range of livelihood activities that varied according to the asset base of households. People had relied more on farming and on raising livestock: livestock were raised for food, the market and for transport; and farm produce was used mainly for household consumption; with a little being sold locally after the harvest to purchase non-farm goods (e.g. sugar, tea, coffee, clothes, utensils) from local bazaars. Common natural resources provided an important source of living. For example, land-poor households collected fuel and fodder from common lands and they collected wild fruits and okra for consumption during the rainy season. Natural resources had a detrimental effect on a household's survival in that changes in these resources affected its availability for all households and increased a household's vulnerability to poverty and to famine. However, private holdings of productive assets (land, livestock, farm capital and human capital) had mostly complemented common pool resources or even substituted them at certain times. Therefore, better-off households (then) did not suffer as much as poorer household (then). The vulnerability of the household was essentially linked to this context of lack of other livelihood options.

Although both poor and better-off households were reliant on agriculture as their main source of livelihood, better-off households had greater diversification, such as raising livestock and trading that took place between rural and urban centres. Commerce was limited to low weight, low volume, non-perishable and essential items such as sugar, salt, soap, etc. Diversification also occurred among poorer households, particularly during the slack season when it was depicted as a sign of increased stress rather than progress out of poverty. These households grew subsistence and cash crops, worked on their own farms and on other people's farms as wage labourers or according to the system of labour exchange. However non-farm activities tended to be extremely limited in the village and the surrounding areas.

Wage labour intensified during peak agricultural seasons and involved poor casual wage labourers who were diverted from working on their own farms to those of better-off households, or to the Gezira Scheme in central Sudan. Poorer households from smaller ethnic groups worked for wage on better-off households' farms or established seasonal migration patterns to the Gezira Scheme during the cotton-picking season. Migratory labour opportunities to the scheme were pursued by all family members or by men who left the women to care for their rural-based activities, or they abandoned their own farm altogether. Men from better of households had migrated to the urban centres. Male remittances to their rural households were not always reliable and those who did not remit or return caused increased destitution among the women and children left

behind. In these situations, women undertook a wider range of activities to maintain food production for the household's subsistence. Male migrants who managed to establish themselves in the city and found a stable source of income enabled their households in the rural base not only to survive but to improve their well-being.

The labour, skill and organization required for productive activities within a farm household were usually provided by both male and female family members. Labour exchange was an important mechanism and members of related families worked together and for each other's farms in constructing and repairing shelters. However, as more males left their communities for seasonal or year-round employment elsewhere, this cooperative pattern became steadily harder to follow.

Women played an important role in sowing, weeding and harvesting, as well as in post-harvest operations such as threshing, husking, drying, grinding and storage. Women from households with no livestock often head-loaded their produce to local markets, which were usually far from the villages. In addition, women undertook animal husbandry and, vegetable gardening around the homestead during the rainy season. This was added to their usual domestic chores of cooking, taking care of children, the elderly and the disabled, fetching water and fuel, and cleaning and maintaining the house. Men undertook other agricultural operations, hunted together or individually during slack season and attended village meetings. Men had almost exclusive authority over decisions concerning seeds, the buying and selling of livestock and agricultural products, what to grow and where to sell their produce. Women made decisions on poultry and contributed to decisions related to any small animals.

Livestock was an important component of the farming system and the main characteristic which differentiate between the poor and the better-off. Better-off, households were typically engaged in rearing livestock and agricultural commodity trading. Cattle, goats and poultry were the most commonly raised animals. Livestock had competing and vital uses: for meat, milk, manure and transport. Goats and poultry were raised as a source of cash income as well as for food. Poorer households usually had no livestock but they may have had small animals such as goats and poultry.

Soil fertility was closely associated with the household's well-being. Poorer households had less fertile land because they were not able to access the limited arable land or because of year-long droughts or because they had overused land as they were not able to rotate their crops. This resulted in the over-exploitation of village land as poorer people reduced their fallow periods, thereby reducing the long-term sustainability of the bush fallow system. They were not able to cultivate the optimal farm size because of a lack of finance to purchase inputs upfront. These households cultivated smaller plots of land that could not produce enough food to meet their subsistence needs. Poor households also sold part of their produce, although selling food at the market did not necessarily mean the household itself had sufficient food. Poor households often sold their produce before it was even harvested.

Better-off households were better equipped to maintain land fertility. They had relatively more fertile land and enough produce to meet their household's subsistence needs. They used to sell any surplus at the market or stored it for time of food shortage. During difficult times, the stored grains were more valuable than any physical assets a household had. People recalled that the areas where they came from had suffered uneven rainfall distribution and frequent crop failure. Each drought brought crop failure, a loss of livestock and loss of pasture land. Poor households had no choice but to consume seeds meant for agricultural purposes because of a lack of food. Better-off

households relied on their stored grains from the previous season or sold some of their livestock. When the situation improved, poor households sought to borrow through different means but a lack of any form of credit constrained their subsistence production and was a major source of vulnerability for their survival. Credit was obtained through entering interlinked sharecropping contracts, land-leasing and labour arrangements with outsiders or better-off households. According to the agreement, the poor received cash, cereals and/or agricultural inputs in exchange for the future delivery of harvested crops. This arrangement usually resulted in greater food insecurity for poor households and led to a downward spiral. Any cash received was used mainly to buy food.

When poorer households were confronted with the choice between pursuing further risky and low productivity agriculture and securing an immediate need for food, they chose the later since agriculture could be a gamble. The poor, therefore, were the first to abandon their farm and seek wage labour in the surrounding areas or to migrate to find wage labour somewhere else. Wage labour provided the cash that enabled poorer households to purchase food during a drought or after a harvest shortfall. When the decline continued and deepened during the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were few options for practical and forward-looking actions for households that were hovering around the minimum. Their set of choices became extremely limited in terms of how to pursue known and traditional coping strategies. Better-off households had their assets to serve as a buffer against shocks in the first stage. These households started to pawn belongings for the wealthiest group within the community and outside the community. Poor households had mostly sold their assets before the onset of the crisis that led to their migration. They were only left with their labour but at certain point the option of pursuing wage labour also disappeared simply because there was no more agriculture being practised.

Poor households borrowed grain from better-off households in the hope that the situation would improve and they would be able to repay them. The crisis peaked and eventually culminated in a famine that hit the whole region. People dug seeds that did not grow and women dug up wild roots and searched for seeds around anthills. They could no longer borrow or sell and people grabbed food from whatever source. At that stage the better-off households became the most vulnerable group: their homes were ransacked and they were forced to give away food that did not exist. The very survival of women and children was jeopardized as stronger men began to dominate and take the little that weaker members could get hold of. Survival became more of an individual endeavour than a household goal as each member of the household was engaged in looking for food. Older people who were not able to fend for themselves suffered the worst consequence of malnutrition. Decisions on food allocation were some of the toughest that people took. People remember such decisions with great bitterness and how some household members, such as the old and women, had to take the least or none at all in order to allow the stronger members to survive. Some were able to make the journey to the nearest aid camps where food was distributed, others were not. Food aid came too late for many but also saved many people from starvation. Women recall songs that were sang depicting the changes that took place in their lives. These songs condemn the bad time that made them ‘extend their hands to ask others for food’ or living on food aid. They pitied themselves and those who became so impoverished that they were living off ‘Reagan sorghum’, which was aid from the US or any other country.

Before arriving in the city, men used to think of Khartoum as a place which offered numerous rewarding jobs. Young people imagined it as a new way of life, a freer and smarter way of life that they did not have in the countryside. Women who were not happy about migration took consolation in the fact that they wouldn't have to worry about fetching water or about children being sick. They dreamed that their children would be educated and have good jobs. On arrival to the city, those with relatives in the city or other neighbourhoods joined them and those without remained in the camps around Khartoum, in particular Dar es Salam and Siriha. People's initial encounters with the city were very disappointing. Young men could not secure jobs for a long time and if they did have a job they faced humiliation, low wages and discriminations on numerous accounts. When comparing their lives now with their early days in their villages, older people thought there were many drawbacks to living in the city. The lack of water and their inability to use health or education facilities was a big disappointment for all. Women who had thought that the city would provide a comfortable or at least less tiring way of life were proved wrong. Both men and women agreed that women's workloads have increased and became much more complicated. They also agreed that the issue of household consumption has become extremely difficult. Better-off people thought that the city would offer opportunities for those who worked hard and had the right guidance and support. Older men thought that the city would make them lose their position and the authority they used to enjoy in the household. In particular, they refer to young working members' independent decisions about using their resources. They also referred to the way women decide to allocate their income without consulting their male partners.

*The story of Digair*

Digair (SP) is around 80 years of age and lives in Dar es Salam. He is originally from Sherkeila village, East Kurdafan; and belongs to the Habbania[1] ethnic group. Digair remembers when he was 6 years old how his family used to be cattle nomads but eventually they lost some of their animals due to drought and conflicts between them and other ethnic groups over water and land. They then became settled cultivators. They grew some *dukhn* (millet) and *daura* (sorghum) for consumption, and kept some small animals for household use. Although the whole group *fareek* lacked all the necessary services, the lack of water was the most important problem they encountered as settled cultivators because they could not move with the rain. Water consumption was extremely low, particularly in the dry season when it became very scarce. When Digair was 18 years old the whole group moved again to settle 5 or 6 km from Kadada, after a borehole was dug in 1950. The group selected the spot of land because of its location near permanent water supplies. The area later on attracted more people and animals and grew into a village. He remembers this period as a good and prosperous one. The households managed to grow and sell some of their crops for cash and to invest in animals. They also grew cash crops such as sesame and groundnuts as well as *dukhn* (millet) and *daura* (sorghum). But due to the limited rainfall in the area, they had little choice in terms of the crops they were able to grow. The good period lasted for about 8 years. By that time he was married with 5 children, and most of his brothers were also married with several children. The area cultivated by his paternal household also corresponds with the increased family members. However, it was apparent that there was a limit to such an increase due to the shortage of arable land. The traditional system of rotation in cultivation was applied at first. But eventually, as the household continued to grow bigger, farm produce became hardly sufficient to meet their needs. His brothers opted for cultivating

[1] Arabized ethnic group.

their own land away from the family. The farm became fragmented. Digair remained with his parents and younger brothers and sisters. Continuous cultivation led to increased soil degradation and loss of fertility. Although everyone was aware of this, there was no other choice for them. In addition, people and their animals from outside the village came to use the water points and added to the pressure on local resources, leading to over-grazing around the water points and the removal of vegetation cover. As a result, the whole village including Digair's household suffered due to the lack of fodder for their animals.

When a school and a temporary medical centre were established in Kadada in the late 1960s, Digair decided to enrol two of his younger sons in the school. His decision was based on the fact that there was not much need for them in agriculture and enrolment was free. These facilities also coincided with the establishment of marketing facilities. These new services had also attracted people from different parts of the region and added to the pressure on water, land and services. Some of Digair's animals died and others were sold to meet consumption needs. The household suffered periods of acute food shortage and indebtedness. Two of his sons and those of his brothers' headed to the Gezira Scheme, to Rahad town and to Khartoum in search of wage labour employment. These migrants managed to send a little money on an irregular basis. Money sent was ploughed back into the land and food consumption.

During the early 1970s Digair moved with his nuclear family to Sherkeila village where water sources and cultivation were still good. Sherkeila was also selected because there was a daily market, instead of the bi-weakly market in Kadada, that was visited by large numbers of cattle-owning nomads and other groups of people searching for water, pasture and health services. These visiting groups often bought products and required different services for cash. They also provided vital information about neighbouring villages and towns and the prospects there. However, the new location was not much better than the old village as land became exhausted as a result of continuous cultivation, and the demand for labour decreased. Digair and his family had to find alternative sources of income. Some of his sons worked for wages but wage rates were low as a result of the decreased demand for agricultural labour, as large numbers of farmers were withdrawing from agriculture due to lack of rain and land infertility. The little they earned from wage labour or received in remittances was spent on food.

When the consecutive drought culminated in famine in 1984, the household had few assets left. They sold their belongings first. Tracing the narrowing range of options left for the household for securing adequate food, the only option left was to migrate to the city for employment or to seek food aid. Their migration-decision was agreed upon by all the household members but it took Digair longer to accept it. All family members migrated together and all hoped to find some employment in Khartoum where some of their family members were already working. Upon their arrival with several other households, Digair and his family considered themselves lucky to have relatives in Dar es Salam (then Abu Zied). Digair was old and had no energy for wage labour. He also had no training or education to enable him to work in jobs less physically demanding. Therefore, he depended on his children. His sons undertook different casual wage employments. Sometimes they pooled resources and sometimes they took turns to contribute to the household's subsistence. However, this arrangement could not continue for long because of conflicts among them about the fact that some of them were able to contribute more than others due to the type of their jobs, while others were not able to contribute anything at all because they could not find job or because of the restriction on the type of activities they were able to do. The support provided to their father's household was gradually withdrawn. As their own nuclear families grew bigger, it became clear that this arrangement could no longer sustain everyone. His sons eventually went their separate ways. Some of them sent him support in the form of food stuffs. However, they are no longer sending support but they allow him to stay in their house. Digair's house has never been demolished because the land was bought by one of his sons. Digair has being left with one divorced daughter. During the early 1990s Digair started to

> lose his eyesight. From 1994 he could no longer walk and depended completely on his divorced daughter for everything. His daughter works as a domestic worker in the main city and receives SP 200,000 ($80) a month, from which she spends SP 60,000 ($24) on transport to work. The amount left is sufficient to pay for the family's food. She also gets 3 meals a day and has some food to bring home from time to time. She gets cloths for herself, her father and her two sons. During Eid she gets Zakat in the form of sugar and sorghum to bring home. Digair died in March 2006 and up to the time of his death his situation and that of his daughter remained the same. However, later on his sons came and claimed their house. Digair's daughter with her two sons was moved out of the house. She erected a small shack on the outskirts of Dar es Salam, which was swept away by rain in 2007. She erected another one from the same materials. Due to the increased cost of transport, Digair's daughter is unable to make the journey to her work on daily basis so she stays in her employer's house and comes once a weak. On the day she stays with them, she cooks them food and washes their clothes. Her sons, now 10 and 11, live by themselves in their shack 6 days a weak and go around the neighbourhood looking for small jobs and food. (LH13-M)

In summary, people from rain-fed areas were smallholder farmers who lived in low-fertility regions and were reliant on uncertain rainfall. Their areas have traditionally been marginalized and they always struggled with deteriorating soil fertility, declining productivity and old agricultural practices. When drought hit, they were not able to use their traditional mechanisms to deal with it due to the continuous depletion of their assets. They therefore, become highly vulnerable to climatic variability and drought, and these made them incur a high social cost affecting livestock and crop production with serious consequence for their food security and livelihoods. Both the poor farmers and the better-off were driven into the landless labour market and came to the city to join the army of the poor. Landless workers who sold their labour during seasonal peaks also undertook seasonal or permanent migration to the city due to a lack of any productive assets or the availability of alternative employment options in rural areas.

*Livelihoods in the irrigated Gezira Scheme*

The findings below summarizes the main features of the life histories of six tenants: two females (LH13-B, LH14-D) and four males (LH10-S, LH28-S, LH11-M, LH24-S), and three male wage labourers (LH16-B, LH1-S, LH5-M) from the Gezira Scheme. These life histories show that people who lived in the irrigated schemes enjoyed relatively more stable livelihoods than their peers in the rain-fed agricultural zones. However, people from the irrigated Gezira Scheme experienced different forms of vulnerability that brought them to the neighbourhood. The Gezira Scheme has most of the services that are lacking in areas of rain-fed agriculture. The scheme had health and education facilities, credit and agriculture inputs and, most importantly, water for irrigation and consumption. However, infrastructure and services have been declining more or less continuously since the 1970s. People had to cope with other problems that were imposed by the tenancy system agreement, which impacted on both tenants and wage labourers. These problems were brought about by the institutional arrangements that control the process of crop production in the Gezira Scheme, such as the land tenure system, the cropping system and credit and marketing arrangements. The land tenure system was built on the compulsory land tenancy policy and although a tenancy can be inherited, according to the agreement farmers cannot sell, rent or sublet their tenancies. The agreement did not give the tenants the right to terminate the compulsory lease or cultivate their tenancies with crops other than those specified by the Gezira Board. They

also have no say in the choice of crop mix and crop rotation. Hence, from the start tenants were alienated from the processes that affected their livelihoods.

Management, administration and services are also organized centrally. The management is divided between the Ministry of Irrigation (MOI), which is responsible for the irrigation network, and the Sudan Gezira Board (SGB), which oversees agricultural operation and determines irrigation water requirements. Cotton was considered a strategic product and is pre financed and marketed by the Gezira Board. At a later stage, it started financing the mechanical harvesting of wheat and provides cash advances, particularly for cultivation, weeding and picking of cotton. Tenants were allowed to grow other products such as *lubia*, sorghum and groundnuts outside the tenancy agreement. The tenants pay the costs of all inputs provided by the Gezira Board for the production of cotton as well as other crops. The net proceeds are divided among the three parties in the agreement (the Ministry of Irrigation [MOI], the Sudan Gezira Board [SGB] and the tenants).

Cash advances were often much smaller than the actual costs incurred by tenants for the various agricultural operations. Tenants were always confronted with the problem of securing additional cash loans to cover different agricultural operations. Issues of indebtedness have been one of the most cited problems in the discussion. Older farmers indicated that best time was during the 1960s and the early 1970s when services were at their best, credit was at its lowest and yields were good. There was plenty of food, which was accessed through their farms and the sale of livestock. Likewise, medicines and education were easy to access. The whole family worked on the farm and during cotton-picking sufficient labour could be hired. Seasonal workers were employed for three to four months depending on the needs of the farm, and not on the availability of cash. Tenants also got labour through labour exchange and kinship relations. The wage paid for the casual job was adequate and may be even satisfactory so labourers kept coming from all over the country during the seasonal demand for labour. For tenants, those days were marked by increased wealth, which was translated into more livestock, improved housing conditions, the establishment of new businesses (such as small shops), and the purchase of jewellery. Better-off households had more members to participate in agricultural operations and also had members who were engaged in wage employment (teaching, small administrative work and service jobs). Farmers who owned and operated small shops, cafes, milling machines and vehicles for transport were the wealthiest.

Conditions during the early 1980s were not bad. Even when tenants had other businesses, the farm remained their basic source for income. Most farmers (or tenants) depended on agriculture and supplemented their income through livestock rearing and various products from the forests – most notably fuel wood and wood for construction. However, better-off and wealthy farmers had more livestock, particularly cows. Poor households mainly depended on wages from agricultural labour and may have owned a few small animals. A village wage labourer had a better income than the seasonal wage labourer. S/he also had the opportunity to work in off-farm wage labouring activities. People from better-off households were able to enjoy a sufficient level of food security – eating on average three meals a day and a variety of foods such as *kisra* (staple bread), vegetables, meat, beans, lentils, rice, eggs, milk, bread, coffee and tea. Poor households had always less to eat; they ate one or two meals with a staple food and went without the luxury of meat. Even when there was a shortage of food and the poor households had sheep or poultry; these were sold rather than eaten. These were more or less the

conditions until around 1980. In the mid-1980s the deterioration was so apparent that some farmers considered it as a blow. The deterioration of the scheme was most visible in the people and their livelihoods. The most difficult time farmers recalled was characterized by increased debts, deteriorating services, decreased labour and low productivity and tenants were not in a position to obtain break-even yields. The SGB and MOI were not able to deliver their part of the tenancy agreement. This was manifest in the increased silt in canals which led to clogged water flows and deprived farms of water. Repeated breakdowns in the telephone system meant a break in communication regarding processes of water movement. It was clear that a lack of financial resources was restraining the Ministry of Irrigation's ability to fund the operation and maintenance of machinery and equipment that were used to remove silt and clear weeds from the canals. The outcome was a lack of adequate irrigation for crops, which impacted significantly on yields and subsequently on tenants' incomes.

Tenants suffered low yields and food shortages that had only been a thing of the past became a daily reality. Tenants who had no livestock became desperately poor because they did not have the capacity to withstand the loss of food and income from crop failure due to a lack of water. The livestock economy was considered a more secure investment than the rigidly controlled crop economy of the scheme. Better-off tenants started to lean more toward the livestock economy, particularly those with nomadic backgrounds. Livestock also provided a more secure source of income for the non-nomadic population. Better-off tenants with assets sold or pawned them. The first asset to be sold was smaller livestock, followed by large livestock. Jewellery was sold when loans could not be secured. Wage labourers sold their poultry and shoats, and then looked for loans. What aggravated the matter even further for both wage labourers and tenants were the national policies of the 1990s. Prior to the 1990s, cash advances and all services and inputs for tenants were financed by the government through the Central Bank and administered by the Gezira Board. With the adoption of liberalization policies in the early 1990s, the Gezira Board could no longer rely on the Bank of Sudan to finance production activities and foreign exchange. In 1993 a Consortium of Commercial Banks was established to provide the finance required for the Gezira Scheme. The period that followed the implementation of liberalization policies witnessed further deterioration in production and infrastructure. The levels of fees paid by tenants for agricultural mechanical operations rose and the quality of the work performed by SGB deteriorated. Returns for tenants had become low even though they had spent so much. As services continued to deteriorate, cash loans provided by the SGB became too little to cover agricultural operations. A recurring theme was the issue of lack of cash to cover the costs incurred in various agricultural operations. Farmers indicated that the cash advances provided by the SGB were much lower than their actual need and they therefore had to find other sources of finance. If they could not secure additional cash loans for costly agricultural operations, they would not be able to cover their daily household consumption.

Farmers with few resources lost the incentive to produce, although they were legally obligated to fulfil their production quotas for cotton. The situation worsened year after year moving from low yields in one year to complete crop failure in the next. Hired wage labour decreased and payments became smaller. An important problem tenants faced was their inability to supply all the labour needed for agricultural operations from their households but they had too few resources to pay for wage labourers. This impacted on the low wages offered to workers and were forced to seek better job opportu-

nities. Farms now operated with a minimum workforce. Tenants suffered delays in settling accounts and became heavily indebted to the SGB and moneylenders in the community. They resorted to arrangements which increased their vulnerability such as sub-leasing, and crop sharing. In emergencies, tenants used the system of *Al Shail* which is the selling of future crops to private traders at planting time in return for the right to purchase the whole crop (except cotton) at harvest time for price even lower than the market rate at that time. It has been indicated that even when the yield was good, debts could not be fully paid from one crop. Tenants thus became locked into a cycle of debts. Farm wage labourers also got credit from traders and better-off tenants between cultivation and harvest periods when the work decreased and when tenants had already used up their resources in cultivation. Credit from wealthy tenants tied labourers into predetermined rates that locked the labourer into a vicious circle of low wages. Women farmers who headed households had more difficulty in acquiring credit due to gender bias. The size of their harvest was often dependent on how much work on the farms they managed to squeeze into their already busy days, and how much labour they received under the system of labour exchange. Such inequalities were additional burdens for female-headed households, making them generally poorer and lacking in resources in comparison to other households. Better-off tenants still had assets and savings to rely on, but poor tenants and wage labourers seldom had this support and so fell quickly into a cycle of impoverishment. This was especially true for tenants due to their limited options in terms of using the last assets they had, namely land. The tenancy agreement with the SGB prohibits the sale of land and thus limits tenant land allocation choices, which affects their costs and financial situation substantially. Yet when confronted with extreme choices, poor tenants resort to selling their farms. Sales of land were made illegally to better-off or wealthy tenants and for very small amounts.

By 1996, farmers had already suffered mounting debts and bad yields or crop failure at least three or four times. Farmers who were unable to depend on cultivation as a livelihood were now relying on non-farm income more than farm income. Landless agricultural labourers and poor tenants were affected badly and barely survived the late 1980s and all of the 1990s. They were left with absolutely no savings which made them depend for survival on credit from wealthy households. The crisis afflicted all members of the community, not just tenants and wage labourers, because the community was tied into agricultural activities through their different activities, whether in trade, transport or services. Social services, such as health and education, followed suit and the introduction of user fees in all public-health facilities in 1993 made it difficult for tenants and wage labourers to access them. The availability of these services was an additional problem. At the same time, health conditions were deteriorating due to the increase in waterborne diseases such as bilharzia and malaria.

In such a context, poor tenants and wage labourers migrated to faraway places like Medani and Khartoum in search of wage employment. The farms they left behind had the minimum or no labour. Female-headed households, for example, farmed less land and had less household labour but they were the last to migrate. Those who had relatives in the cities migrated first. Labourers and poor tenants migrated for short periods at the beginning but as the crisis intensified, they never went back to their villages to farm. When comparing their current situation with their former one, young educated males thought they were doing much better now than before in the sense that they were earning more and doing less laborious work. Adult males thought that although migration to the city might have given them food to eat, they were no less poor than they

were. Women from poorer households thought that their life in the city had increased their workload and led to the break-up of their family and left older people with the least support.

*Maria's story*

Maria (AP) is 56 years old, a Fur[2] woman from La-auta village in the Gezira Scheme. During the early 1960s and before she got married she remembers life used to be much easier and better. Her father and three of her uncles were all tenants in the scheme. She also worked on a regular basis with them in all processes, and particularly during cotton-picking. In fact all her family worked in their *hawasha* including children on a regular basis. They also worked for their uncles' *hawashas* from time to time, as did the families of their uncles. For Maria, the yield was often good judging from the way they lived compared to other people without *hawasha* and those who worked for wages. After each harvest her father bought some livestock as a way of investing the money. In 1966 they had so many livestock that they had to build a barn outside the village and her father and younger brothers took turns in looking after them. Milk was sold by her mother to the villagers and also used for household consumption. After her marriage, Maria continued to live in her father's house but she became busy with her own family; she went to her father's *hawasha* from time to time and during cotton-picking. However because her husband had no land, he worked with her father on a regular basis; he also marketed the milk products that Maria and her mother made. After Maria's father died, most of the *hawasha* was inherited by her 5 younger brothers, while she and her 3 sisters got the least share according to the law. Her married brothers and sisters claimed their share in the livestock left by their father. Both Maria and her husband continued to do the same work they used to, since all the new owners were either married or working on their husband's *hawashas* or they were young and going to school. Maria's family had difficult times because of the division of *hawasha* income among the big family who lived in their separate homes. However, in the mid 1970s Maria's family got engaged in the production of groundnuts, which had a good market then. They also planted sorghum for food and onions for sale while cotton and wheat provided the bulk of their income. Maria was able to buy a cow and 2 goats for her nuclear family. With the next crop, she bought more goats. They also allocated some money to agricultural labourers to free their younger members for schooling. However, during the late 1970s things started to change. Production decreased greatly in one year when water from the main canal did not reach the sub-canals due to silt build-up. Although most plots that relied on that sub-canal had being affected, the location of Maria's *hawasha*, on the edge of the irrigation system made it more prone to drought. Increasing silt deposits, inadequate and delayed silt removal and the continuous deterioration of the irrigation network all resulted in very poor crop yields in the subsequent years. In 1984, the deterioration of the irrigation network accelerated rapidly, Maria's farm used far less irrigation for crops than recommended, and took longer intervals. This resulted in crop failure and her inability to repay previous loans.

Compelled to meet production requisites and consumption needs, she had no other option but to turn to the traditional, informal lending arrangement of *Al Shail* (selling future crop to private traders). Afterwards, Maria always marketed her produce through the *shail* system until she left the scheme. In the following season, Maria's husband fell ill with bilharzia and she had to work singlehanded and hire more labour. The season that flowed was worse and lenders needed their money. Maria sold what was left of her livestock, paid off a small part of her debt and used the rest to pay for labour for the new season, and to meet some of her immediate consumption needs. In 1985/86, bad weather conditions decreased her productivity greatly, especially cotton, and she incurred greater losses that led to more borrowing. The *hawasha* arrangement remained the same, that she and two of her daughters

[2] Africanized ethnic group.

were the main workers as her husband was extremely ill, three of her brothers were working in service jobs in Wadi Shaeer, and her sisters were working with their husbands on their land and were unable to lend a hand. In the subsequent years, she had some good yields from time to time but was always in debt and had to pay back all the returns she received. She had to sell some of her household belonging from time to time. Due to her mounting debts, she was not able to pay for water and administration costs so the Gezira Board deducted a certain quantity of her products at harvest time to cover these cost. She remembers 1994 with great bitterness. She had 9 children by then but it was almost impossible to meet their needs. Her older sons would venture into the area for wage employments but it was rare and wages were meagre. The family had no livestock or small animals. Schooling was the first item that they decided to drop. The family's main source of food then was *asida* and *waika* (sorghum porridge and wild okra). For those who were sick, she could only use herbs to maintain their health. In 1995 her husband's condition deteriorated and he was transferred to Khartoum hospital for operation. She subleased land and entered into crop-sharing arrangements. When she received a cash advance from the Gezira Board to meet agricultural operations, she had no choice but to use it for her husband's treatment. Leaving her children behind, she headed for Khartoum with her ill husband and two of her older sons. They stayed in the hospital for 3 months until their cash came to an end. Her sons took wage employment in different places in the city, including the hospital to finance their stay. When she came back after the death of her husband, there was virtually nothing left to live on. The *hawasha* was taken on by her brothers and with her tiny share in land, she could no longer claim any yield. Eventually she illegally sold her share in the land, and headed back to Khartoum where she had left her two sons, but this time she brought all her children to stay. They ended up in Al Baraka where they lived with her sons who had a shack there. Three months later she built her own one-bedroom house of mud and thatch. She was helped by the family and her close neighbours. Between April and September each year, she worked in agriculture in the Silate project. In the off-season, Maria made and sold traditional food from different places. Her unmarried sons were working in casual activities and assisted her from time to time. Maria had no right to the land she occupied. This presented a major source of insecurity for the family. In January 1999 her house was demolished and they had to stay in the open for two weeks before an NGO provided them with blankets and some food. Maria attempted to go back to La-auta because she did not want to go through the demolition experience again. But since she had no money to finance the return of the whole family, she went by herself first. She stayed with her brothers and worked for wages. However, the money was so little that she was hardly meeting her consumption needs let alone thise of her children in Khartoum. She used the money from her work to finance her trip back to the city. In the city, she started from a clean slate. She had to rebuild the house and compete for work in the project. Her smaller children were no longer going to school and were working or had run away. Selling traditional food became very difficult with the increased controls by the local authorities. Because of her few resources and the fear of police harassment, Maria cannot venture outside Al Baraka where there are better prospects. In January 2001, her dwelling was demolished again. The neighbours helped her erect a shack from what was left of her old house. The family was left destitute and Maria begs from strangers in the city for survival. Occasionally, her 15-year-old daughter teams up with her to work in Silate on a casual basis when they were given a chance to. The income from begging and from casual jobs is not enough to provide the whole family with food. By the end of 2004 Maria was introduced to a local NGO specializing in training and community development in parallel with credit for income-generating activities. After obtaining her loan, Maria invested it in food vending. At the same time, she received business training, which includes adult literacy and numeracy concerning loans and savings. Maria's daughter also received training in different aspects of sewing and stitching, and after completing her training she started to work with a tailor in Al Baraka. During the first year of the loan Maria was not able to repay her loan instalments because she was not able to make good profits due to an oversupply in Al Baraka. However,

> this situation was resolved after she obtained the necessary licences. Maria was also provided with practical information on how to establish business links to buy her raw materials at cheaper or wholesale market prices and with possible venues of sale in Bahari and the neighbouring areas. At first, Maria was reluctant to go beyond her neighbourhood in fear of incurring costs without being able to repay her loans; however, her experience was positive. Maria's level of mobility outside the home has increased greatly because she also attends the monthly meetings of the NGO and goes to the NGO office to deposit savings and to repay loan instalments. Although Maria's small savings did not enable her to graduate to a high-income activity, she believes that she has gone through a big change and that the security of her job and the new networks of relations and new skills she learnt make her life worth living. (LH13-B)

In summary, farmers in the Gezira Scheme operated according to the tenancy agreement but this did not allow them to make decisions about processes that affected their livelihood. Furthermore, the withdrawal of state support coupled with a lack of appropriate institutional arrangements, poor maintenance and deteriorating services influenced both productivity and poverty levels. These problems led to a drastic decline in yields and increased debts. Over the years, these households depleted their assets while trying to compensate for the loss or declining production or returns on labour. Many of these households sought alternative sources of income outside agriculture and went to the city in search of wage labour.

*Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists*

The summaries below describe the main features of the life histories of one Nilotics woman (LH4-M) and two Nilotics men (LH2-M, LH29-B) from the Dinka[3] pastoralists from the southern part of the country.

Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists lived in areas that lacked basic social services such as health and education. Their life histories show that they both faced continuous insecurity due to their internal conflicts as well those related to external conflicts and the war between the government and the SPLA. They have become marginalized as a result of natural disruptions which resulted in the loss of their main source of livelihood.

Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists almost always combine subsistence farming with raising livestock. The groups depend on agro-pastoralist subsistence and sheep, goats, cattle and either camels or donkeys for their livelihood. Livestock for many ethnic groups such as the Dinka are essential components of social relations, religious values and political institutions. Nilotics pastoralists and agro-pastoralists used to move or stay together in groups of two to fifteen households depending on grazing conditions. Their pattern of movements was imposed by the availability or otherwise of water and grazing. These groups were built according to clanship and were divided internally into several categories of age-sets or generation-sets that were made up of a number of age groups assuming and shedding rights and responsibilities according to these age-sets. Members of the group worked together, pooling their labour, allocating different pastoral work to members or taking turns in herding. Working together afforded them a way of complementing labour shortages among the group caused by temporary problems such as illness. The group usually adheres to some form of traditional rule. This could be within the group or from somewhere else. Headmen gained their position by demonstrating exceptional skills in managing conflicts within the group, mediating and solving problems with other groups, had the ability to launch raids and wars against

[3] Africanized ethnic group.

other opponents and negotiate conditions for sharing pasture resources in territories of other agro-pastoralists. Headmen also had the power to divide and use the land. Groups maintained considerable mobility and flux in the composition of their settlements and camps. Many of the internal structures of the group, including age-sets saw changes due to conflicts and the conscription of youth into the army or militias, and increased women's responsibilities for the livelihood of their families.

Relationships between one group and other neighbouring groups took different forms. They either related to each other in a hostile or symbiotic manner, raiding for cattle, women and children or exchanging goods and sometimes intermarrying. Historically, customary arrangements managed to take care of the heterogeneity of interests within different groups, however, barriers to transhumant routes, civil conflict, the involvement of increased numbers of parties in conflicts and the proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons contributed to increasing insecurity and impunity, as well as the inability of pastoralists to use traditional systems to solve their problems.

Historically, the pastoralist agro-pastoral zones in southern Sudan suffered periods of drought severely affecting its traditional systems of production. During the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the area suffered low rainfall, long dry seasons and a spatial inconsistency of water levels in seasonal ponds (*hafirs*). Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists had to travel longer distances during these periods. Travelling relatively longer distances with cattle in such regions always runs the risk that part of the herd will perish due to water or grazing shortages. The pastoralist and agro-pastoralists who live in variable environments have a tradition of respect for the land they rely on for their survival. This was reflected in the way they rotate grazing to avoid overgrazing and the way they follow certain routes in their movements to preserve the vegetation cover. However, they had no choice but to abandon such tradition because of the insecurity and war in the area. Overgrazing and the inability to rotate had a catastrophic effect on the environment and subsequently on agriculture and livestock. Agriculture was no longer viable and livestock were either decimated by famine or commandeered by different conflicts and warring factions leaving people in dire poverty. At a certain stage, these household put an end to what used to be their livelihoods in the rural areas and moved to the city for security and survival. What little livestock remained was left in the care of mainly older women and men who were not willing or able to make the journey.

Those who had relatives in the city found accommodations and food for the first few days or months of their stay. Those who came from disaster areas and had no relatives to stay with lived in camps waiting for the opportunity to get a job, settle in the city or make money and move back to the rural base. Since pastoralists and agro-pastoralists had far less access to social services in their rural base compared to the sedentary rural populations, their expectation of life in the capital city was one of access to those facilities, as well as being less vulnerable to periodic famines. Poorer women believed that migration would give them the security they lacked in the past, but it also took their independence, and freedom as well as burdening them with the huge task of being the sole breadwinner for their families. Although these women shunned domestic labour if at all possible, since it bore a social stigma, becoming a domestic worker became one of the few options available to them. Women who work as domestic workers often felt deeply isolated and unhappy. Unmarried girls who took this work also worried about their future lives as this job defines the type of husbands they would be able to marry. For older males from better-off backgrounds, life in the city is a transitional period that enables them to save money, buy cows and go back home when the situation improves.

Males from poor background prefer to stay in the city and find more rewarding jobs than going back to where they came from. Young members who went to school were fascinated by life in the city. They were also impressed with aspects that their counterparts back in the village had never heard about. For them, the future is in securing regular salaried employment in the city and never going back to the rural base, except maybe for marriage.

*Malou's story*

Malou (NP) is a descendant of a Dinka[4] royal family from Bahr el Ghazel in southern Sudan. He was the headman of his pastoralist group until the mid-1980s when his household enjoyed a life of wealth and happiness. His household was then composed of around 32 members but he had to abandon some, some also went their separate ways and daughters got married and joined their husbands' households. Currently Malou has 6 sons, 4 daughters and 3 wives living with him. His life and that of his household then revolved around cattle grazing and seasonal movements between specific areas. Malou has a sedentary family branch that settled in El Da'ein town where his cousins received their primary and secondary education and proceeded to Khartoum for further education or jobs. However, due to the type of pastoralist life that Malou's father had followed, neither Malou, nor his older children had the opportunity for any education. Before coming to the city, Malou moved through a known territory on a seasonal basis, taking his cattle further to the swampy areas (*toic*) during the dry season and bringing them closer to settlement camps (*baii*) during the rainy season. His wives and younger children remained with the small animals (sheep and goats) closer to settlements during this time. In the rainy season the household cultivated cassava and sorghum for household consumption but also sold some in the local market or in the big market in Abyie. Immediately after selling farm products, basic household necessities (sugar, clothes, utensils and other necessities) were purchased. When mosquitoes and other insects increased at the beginning of the rainy season, Malou brought his cattle to the settlement camp to protect them. At the onset of the dry season, the cattle start to move away from the settlement camp until they reached the swampy area. Malou was using the same old routes that his father and grandfathers had used. Using the same route did not only have a cultural value, it was also a conscious action to protect both the environment and the livestock. Recurring livestock along the same routes leads to firming the clay soil such that it does not turn into mud that harms livestock hooves. At the same time it keeps the damage to the soil to a minimum. These basic facts explain the reluctance of his groups to open new routes when insecurity or other land users blocked their traditional path. Conflicts used to arise between his group and other groups even from the same ethnic background. These conflicts related to the use of resources. When there were spells of drought, the swampy areas and their surroundings became so crowded with livestock and people, friction between different users was usually unavoidable. That did not affect his life and that of his group in significant ways but the increased cattle raids during the early 1980s did. These were characterized by armed and violent attacks on groups which curtailed traditional migration patterns. Malou and his group were no longer able to follow traditional routes across certain zones to reach pastures or water resources in swampy areas. As access to large parts of grazing areas was lost and the whole rotational grazing system was disrupted, there was a loss of livestock. His group suffered badly and became weaker than before. While cattle raiders took cattle, they also destroyed others and killed some of the men in his group. Increasing numbers of people were displaced to areas around El Da'ein. Some lost all their animals and had to stay permanently in the village and supplement their income from farming by taking part in any other activities. If they succeeded, they invested any surplus in livestock and then readjusted their

[4] Africanized ethnic group.

life-style to suit the raising of livestock, and rejoined the group. However, Malou and few members of the groups maintained their traditional old lives with some changes. They sold cattle and bought arms to defend themselves when attacked. The fear of raids prompted Malou and his group to sideline crop farming since settling in one place for longer would make them an easy target for armed raiders. Their food security during dry seasons was therefore greatly affected. Malou loaned some of his cattle in what was known as the *koei* system to a close relative near Abyie. His relative was better equipped to provide protection for the cattle. When it seemed more secure again, he tried to acquire more livestock through purchases and breeding but it was still too little to match what had been lost. During 1984 the theft of livestock became more frequent and having many cattle was a source of danger. More traditional grazing areas that became insecure were abandoned, causing more secure pasture to be badly overgrazed. Malou and his group encountered frequent losses of cattle due to droughts and the over-intensive use of land that led to desertification. They eventually suffered acute food shortages. Not being able to produce food, it was essential for them to sell or trade their small animals for food. However, prices for sheep and goats dropped sharply. Terms of trade also declined in 1986 compared to previous years when it was possible to trade a goat for a 50 kg bag of sorghum. But with the changing conditions in 1986, Malou needed to trade at least three goats for a 50 kg bag of sorghum. It became difficult to trade small animal for food because everyone was selling or trading them and there was little cash left for buyers after prolonged periods of raids and droughts. The same thing happened when Malou and his group decided to sell their cattle. They were not able to do so not only because of the cattle's weak physical condition but essentially because of a lack of interest and purchasing power. Again, most pastoralists and agro-pastoralists were following the same strategy at the same time, namely selling cattle.

Malou found it difficult to sustain a big family in such a situation. He sent his wives and children to El Da'ein town, the nearest urban centre in the north. The women worked to harvest groundnuts and the children took different casual jobs. He remained with what was left of his cattle, still hoping that the situation would improve and he would be able to buy bread and more animals. He also knew that since he had many daughters, he would definitely receive cattle as dowries when they got married. However, the situations went from bad to worse. In 1987 the escalating conflict, led to a massacre in El Da'ein, where his family resided, and spread across the region. Malou lost 4 members of his family, and the cattle raids, which increased with this incident, claimed all his livestock. Malou was only left with the few livestock he had left in the custody of his relatives near Abyie.

Malou sold these livestock in Abyie and headed for El Da'ein to join his family there. In El Daein, the situation was tense among the Dinka as a group as well as between the Dinka and the government-supported militia. Malou found it difficult to settle in the town which became a scene of continuous conflict and clashes between these groups. He decided to move to Khartoum after the crisis had destroyed everything important to him. However, he took consolation in seeing his relocation as a way of saving money to buy cattle and coming back to his old way of life. Before moving to Khartoum, Malou bought cheap food products such as ghee and honey to sell in Khartoum, as he was advised by his relatives in the city. In Khartoum he stayed with one of his cousins in Sahafa. Two months later, his other cousin found him a job as a security guard in a vegetable oil and soap factory. This job enabled him to buy oil and soap from the factory ar wholesale prices and sell them to people in Sahafa and make a profit. His additional work enabled him to contribute money and groceries to his cousin who was putting him up. Most importantly, it enabled him to send money (irregularly) to his family in El Da'ein. A year later he was joined by his family and had to move to his own space since the family was too big to be accommodated in his cousin's house. In Mayo he selected a piece of land near some of his relatives were he built two huts from mud and straw aided by his family and relatives and by people who knew his royal origins. Two months later, a flood swept through the neighbourhood took his huts with it. Malou also lost his merchandise in the flood. One of his cousins lent him some money and

other gave him grain. The family built a house in the same place using mud and wood from trees around and within Mayo. In June 1991, Malou's house was demolished together with several other houses of his relatives. The factory were he worked provided him with a loan that was repayable in three years. The employees of the factory also contributed a small amount of money to help him rebuild his house. Malou was able to build a temporary house with the help of the community and using local material. Later on in 1993 Malou bought the land he then occupied with the money he saved. In 1996 he rebuilt his house from bricks and arranged water connections and electricity. Malou also bought various merchandise to sell from a small additional room that was built in the house. Most members of the households – except the children- took turns in selling in the small shop. Being connected to mains electricity gave Malou an additional source of income. He rents two lines on an almost daily basis to different neighbours. Malou continued his work as a security guard but when he comes home, he checks on the items sold and keeps the money in a place that no one in his family has access to. Adult members of his family undertook different activities within the city and in Mayo itself. Six members of his family were able to attend school on a regular basis. Two of his wives brew *Araki* while three of his older sons used to cut wood from trees in the area and sold it in the neighbourhood and in the city. Later on, they took different jobs in the city and three of them had regular salaried jobs. Two of Malou's daughters are engaging in handicraft activities or helping their mothers in their income-generating activities. Some of them also attend school and Malou does not put any pressure on them in terms of what type of activity to take. Although Malou works in the factory, it does not include any benefits in terms of health or education, but, being a royal descendant of sultans enabled Malou to assume a wider role in his community and this has strengthened his relationships with the authorities within and beyond his neighbourhood. These relations have helped him a great deal. For example, four of his sons and daughters were able to receive free education. When one of his daughters was sick and needed hospitalization, his contacts enabled him to provide her with all the required treatment for free. When four of his sons and daughters graduated and sought jobs, he managed to find them regular jobs in the same factory where he works and else where. On the rare occasions when his wives were taken in the *kashat*, he was able to bail them out in a very short time.

Malou is the main decision-maker in terms of allocating members earnings. Income received from his wives' work is used to buy food for daily consumption. Part of the income received from his children's work as well as income from his job and profits from the shop are used to pay for school requirements and transport for all members. Older sons and daughters are given small bursaries from time to time in addition to transport money. The rest of the money is saved by Malou in a secure place or sent back home to buy cattle for when he returns. Buying cattle is an essential target for him and for his sons. Without cattle, a man from his group cannot marry. Therefore, his sons collaborate with him to reach this target but revolts often arise regarding the way he keeps tight control over their earnings. He does not allow them to enjoy the luxury the city provides, such as going to the cinema or buying better clothes or food from time to time. Between Malou and his daughters, the main source of disagreement lies in the way they conduct themselves and associate with people from minority ethnic groups. The worst conflicts in the household usually arise between Malou and his wives, regarding the way they use their resources. These are often started by him as he is always suspicions that his wives are either keeping some of their earnings for themselves or that they are spending money unwisely. However, most of the time he is able to suppress any revolt by his wives by using force (beating them up) or threatening to withdraw his support and protection as they would not be able to carry on their work without such protection. If after these conflicts a wife decides to leave the household, she always comes back after some time because of a lack of other options and because she is prone to the harassment of the authorities after Malou withdraws his protection, as well as, because of her children. Malou says his wives always come back 'because [he] gives them the opportunity to live a good life'. Although Malou is content that life in the city has enabled

> him to educate his children, he is reluctant to settle permanently and forsake his nomadic life. Malou reflects on his former good times through oral folklore and poetry, which depict his state of dissatisfaction with the current situation and his yearning to go back. As the situation started to improve in his province, the savings Malou and his household have are sent to relatives in the rural areas to buy them cattle. In early 2007, Malou went back on a short visit to his village to assess the situation for his possible relocation. On returning to Khartoum, Malou started to make the necessary arrangements to return, including selling his house. Two of his wives do not agree about moving back to the village and are planning to stay in the city. However, if Malou sells the house this would leave them with no option but to follow. Since the law gives Malou full authority over the household, his wives are not considering any legal action in this regard, however, they are thinking of suing him for separation maintenance. However, when an NGO offered to help them, they were reluctant, fearing that if they lose the case they will also lose Malou's support forever. (LH2-M)

In summary, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists lived in marginalized and remote areas that lacked access to basic veterinary services, and social services such as health and education. Mobility and flexibility were their coping mechanisms during seasonal droughts. However, state development programmes and land-rights policies have either undermined these rights or favoured certain groups over others and thus fostered tensions that have resulted in violent conflict between and among different groups. The possible strategies adopted led to depleted grazing lands among pastoralists who remain on the rangelands. The combined end-product was a sharp decrease in the ability of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists to survive and the subsequent threat of famine. The main strategy left for them was to move to the city in search for wage labour.

## Always lived in the city

This section is based on the detailed life histories of 17 household members: 11 women (LH12-S, LH40-S, LH39-B, LH37-D, LH36-S, LH34-M, LH32-M, LH19-S, LH6-S, LH8-S, LH20-B) and 6 men (LH35-M, (LH22-B, LH25-M, LH18-M, LH21-B, LH23-B), 6 from Arabized and 11 from Africanized ethnic groups. They have lived in the city for most of their lives and came to live in the neighbourhoods studied at some time in the past.

Urban residents have diverse and complicated methods of pursuing their livelihoods that have been affected by several factors over the past 25 years. Older people referred with nostalgia to life in the 1970s as a time of plenty when their quality of life was much better than at present. Wages were seen as adequate to provide the basic needs for food and shelter then and 'children were able to go to school for free, sick persons were able to seek free medical treatment from government hospitals, and transport cost did not chop off half of one's salary'. However, they also recalled that they lived modest lives (*mastora)* and that their living conditions were much worse. For example, they were not able to access and enjoy the leisure and material luxuries such as TV sets, fridges, chocolates and supermarket bread that were enjoyed by people with better incomes. Wage employment provided them with their main source of income. The decline in living conditions for respondents started in the late 1970s and continued. This decline was marked by a loss of income and declining real wages and job opportunities as a result of the adoption of Structural Adjustment Policies in 1978. While some respondents considered what happened to them as being the result of bad government policy, others were acquainted with political jargon, such as 'enslavement, debt, IMF and the World Bank', and saw them as the main cause of what had happened. Workers

who were trade union members recalled those ‘useless’ demonstrations and condemned the new actions that impoverished workers. Women in particular recalled the songs that were sung to denounce those who were following prescriptions that made them ever poorer.

Although for almost all respondents such policies had a detrimental direct or indirect impact on their livelihoods, their life histories reveal that even before the implementation of SAPs, respondents had a hand-to-mouth existence and that wages were barely adequate to meet all their basic needs let alone establish any savings for emergencies. Wages were only upgraded every five years and workers were constantly living on the edge. They were, therefore, easily pushed over the edge by sudden job loss, decreasing real incomes and an increase in prices. People were also affected by several other crises relating to work in the informal sector, severe health problems, increased user fees for public services, the death of the main or secondary breadwinners; personal insecurity and the loss of assets due to theft, robbery, cheating and marriage expenses. For some urban households, the crisis that was taking place in the rural areas affected them adversely by eliminating essential remittances that used to be received from there. These factors led to a partial or total income or asset loss. Though some of these crises were common to different households, their impact was distinct in each. Overall, the coping strategies that were adopted touched on nutrition, impacted on health and education and contributed to unequal intra-household allocations.

The period from the late 1970s onwards was one of momentous change for respondents when they had to cope with difficulties in accessing food. The decline in real income was accompanied by an increase in food prices. Some low-priced food products that were important to the poor and which had once been affordable were no longer affordable or had disappeared from the market altogether. The price increase reduced access to people’s staple diet, which depended principally on sorghum or wheat. Whole sorghum and wheat or flour used to be a low-priced food until the early 1980s; by the end of the 1980s most respondents were no longer able to buy them. These grains could not be found in the market place, except for wheat bread which was sold according to a ration system. Women and children were usually the ones who took turns in queuing for rations and children either missed school or went without food for the whole day. Individual daily bread rations were cut to the minimum that would sustain life and people had to queue for hours to get their ration. Every time people went for their rations, they would be up to three or four hours in a queue, and people talked. They would relay their experiences of a raid, or talk about food and the different things you could do to stretch rations. The life histories show that the lack of bread and the experience of getting it went beyond the issue of consumption. For some people this marked the first time they had experienced real humiliation and a loss of dignity. The need to secure bread rations and the fear of being caught by the police for queuing during curfew hours were just some of the bad memories of that period. People talked mostly about their inability to extend the expected support to their close relatives who came to visit them from the rural areas because they were tied by the rations system.

Cheap and partly subsidized food products at the start of this period were unavailable for the poor by the late 1980 when state subsidies on food and price controls were removed. Health care, education and transport, which had been free or highly subsidized, had been subjected to large price increases together with a move to introduce pay principles. Although food availability did not appear to be a problem, the accessibility of food became the issue. Basic foods such as bread, flour, sugar and oil were sold in

supermarkets at prices that were beyond the means of those on a low income. People went onto limited food supplies to cut food costs. A great deal of effort was spent tracking down the best deals and the cheapest food so shopping started to consume much more time, particularly for women. Consumption and social services were cut to a minimum and some households even resorted to begging to make ends meet.

People had far more need for a cash income to spend on food and non-food necessities. Wage labourers and government employees faced difficulties in stretching their incomes to meet the increasing prices of basic food and necessities. People in the private sector faced an unpredictable and risky time and, to a large extent, households had to depend on their own initiative to survive. They were compelled to engage in multiple economic activities and household survival was about being able to access new activities or put more working time into current ones. When a household had to confront the job loss of its main breadwinner or when jobs became less-rewarding financially, additional or new jobs were sought. How soon a new (or additional) job was secured as well as how profitable it would be were often the decisive matters in a household's survival. Educated or trained workers were able to shift to other relatively profitable jobs or combined their job with other types of income-generating activities. Recollections reveal that new or additional activities did not provide adequate levels of income compared to the one lost or they were not able to meet the increasing need for cash. Members of poorer households engaged in increased work efforts, undertook multiple activities in multiple spaces and, in most cases, withdrew children from education to free them for income-earning activities.

Social capital provided vital support during times of need. This support tended to be in the form of loans or contacts that enable people to access jobs. It also became important when people were detained or imprisoned for reasons related to their involvement in political activities against the system or those related to informal-sector activities. However, poorer households have far fewer relationships of this type, and they were less able to draw upon informal networks of support provided by the wider family than in the past. Many talked about their inability to repay loans and reciprocate favours, which affected their ability to secure loans and other support. Some reported asking local government authorities for help in matters relating to land, educational or medical subsidies, but to no avail. The rural base provided critical support for those living in the city. People who had relatives in rural areas received support such as food grains and dried vegetables and fruits. People also sent their families to their rural base to cut down on their high living costs in the city but as rural areas were suffering an even more severe crisis, this support gradually decreased or diminished. After the mid-1980s, those who had close dependants in rural areas were expected to support them during the slack season and host them if they come to the city in search of temporary or permanent work. These trends imposed a huge burden on the limited resources of poorer households in the city.

Tenants suffered the most due to increases in rent. Co-residing with family-related households was possible for short periods but as time went by people had to search for independent options. A strategy that was frequently used to cut down on rent costs was to relocate to an informal settlement and make a temporary or permanent shelter and reside there.

When people from the city came to the neighbourhoods studied for the first time, the areas were made up of a few shacks made of boxes and sticks. Later on, the houses that were built were so small that they resembled small huts. Those who were government

employees or ex-government employees saw their residence in the neighbourhood as a temporary situation that would change when things got better. Women suffered the most because of a lack of water and electricity. Children found it difficult to access schools in the surrounding areas due to the high cost of transport or a lack of it. On arriving in the neighbourhood, the majority had few assets. They continued their former work activities in the city, while searching for new opportunities in the areas adjacent to the neighbourhood. Those who retired from government jobs depended mainly on their retirement fund but were also better off than the majority in the community.

*Massara's story*

Massara (AP) is a 54-year-old Shaigeeia[5] woman. She sells food in front of different schools and markets in Siriha and she weaves and sells baskets during the school holidays. Massara is a divorcee and has 9 children most of them are grown up and still living with her in the same house. When she was 12 she got married to Sabeel, a man whose parents lived in her village in northern Sudan, and came to live with him in Khartoum in 1958. Musara never went to school as there was no school in her village and she was never given any education beyond studying the Koran. Her husband Sabeel was a low-paid worker in the Ministry of Agriculture. The wage he got was barely enough to maintain the livelihood of his family. However during the early 1980s, the family had to struggle even more to meet their household needs. Inflation imposed a great burden on Sabeel's family not only in terms of the cost of food and rent but also in terms of other necessities such as medical bills and education-related expenses. Sabeel's parents in the village also expected him to remit from time to time. In turn, Sabeel received remittance once or twice a year from his rural base in the form of dried fruits and grains, which helped a great deal during difficult times.

The salary Sabeel received in 1984 could barely last the family for two weeks, food alone wiped out the entire salary. Remittances from the rural areas became rare. Although Sabeel was brought up in a tradition where women's work is considered unworthy, as the situation worsened he had no choice but to allow Massara to undertake income-earning activities outside the home. Massara weaved baskets and sold them to neighbours as well as in the nearby market. Her earnings were low and many days she would not sell any thing at all. Whatever earnings Massara made was used to buy food either for the entire family or for the smaller children only. The family was not able to pay the rent for the two-room house they occupied so they were eventually kicked out of the house and had to look for an alternative. Since it was not feasible for them to rent, the decision was taken by Sabeel to send Massara and the children back to the village. All the families' belongings were sold to cover the cost of the trip back to the village, and to finance their initial stay there in 1986. Sabeel remained with two of his older sons in the city. In the village Massara and her children stayed with her in-laws and worked in agriculture with them. In return, they she received grain, dates and shelter. In the city her husband moved to the outskirts of Khartoum where he erected a shack and lived with his sons. His sons were doing different jobs in the informal sector. Sabeel continued his work at the Ministry while also sneaking few hours from work to work as a loader in the nearby market. The two branches of the family maintained close relations with each other. The city branch sent the village a cash payment early in the agricultural season and the village branch sent the city dried vegetables and fruits after the harvest season in October. Sabeel came to visit his family in the village once a year and brought with him clothes, sugar and medicine for the sick. He also took his third son to the city and found him a job with his older brothers.

The family maintained this arrangement, for about nine years despite the mounting pressure on each side due to price increases and their inability to feed a large family. During

[5] Arabized ethnic group.

this time the family income was hit by the older son's alcohol addiction because whatever he earned was used to support his addiction. To make things worse, in 1992 Sabeel was re-trenched with several other workers. Sabeel tried his best to find another regular job while maintaining his informal job, but didn't succeed. He had limited skills and education to compete for better jobs. With the redundancy money Sabeel received, he bought a donkey and cart and worked in transporting water in Al Baraka. The income he received was very small and variable and he was not able to send money to his family in the village. At the same time, flooding kept sweeping through the village and its surrounding area and this hit agricultural production there. The smaller children were no longer going to school and there were no jobs available for them. It became impossible for the family in the village to maintain its livelihood, let alone send remittance to the family in the city.

In 1994 Massara decided to join her husband and sons in the city where she and her children could earn cash. She took the older children with her, leaving three of her younger ones with their grandparents. Her in-laws were happy to see her go so they lent her money for transport. In the city the whole family stayed in the shack that Sabeel and his sons had built. Her 12-year-old son joined his three older brothers and father in the informal sector. Massara started her day by looking for wage employment in the nearby agricultural projects. Most days she were not successful as demand for this type of job was very high, and supervisors preferred to employ women who had worked on the project before. Massara also weaved mats and baskets and sold them at the market. Her work was less rewarding than the men's work. Five or six days would pass without her selling anything at all. She wanted to go to the main city to sell her products but the transport costs were too high. Her two daughters were not able to find job since they had never had any education. Massara depended for her living and that of her two daughters on her sons and her husband. This put great pressure on the men in the household. When her younger son became critically ill with malaria, there was no money for his treatment, Massara asked the local authorities for help but she got nothing. As most of their relatives and friends were just as poor as themselves, the family could not borrow money. Sabeel sold the donkey and the cart, to meet his son's treatment costs. When his son died Sabeel did not have the money for a funeral but a religious NGO helped cover the cost.

Their life as one family afterwards was characterized by continuous conflict and stress. Their situation was complicated further as their shack was razed by government bulldozers a year after their arrival in the city. The family did not have much inside the shack but Massara lost the opportunity to work on the irrigated project. The family moved to the industrial area and constructed a shelter from sacks and sticks. Sabeel and his sons resumed work or searching for daily work in the area. Massara also looked for jobs but could not find anything. She begged sometimes and got food for her daughters. Living in the new area allowed the family to search or to undertake daily work without incurring transport costs. They rarely went hungry at this time but five months later, their shack was again destroyed by the authorities. The family moved to Siriha in 1996 where they constructed a small shack from sacks and sticks. Massara sought work within the neighbourhood, such as making *kisra* (traditional bread) or helping wealthy neighbours with domestic chores. After a long working day, she would come home with a little *kisra* and no cash. Sabeel and two of his sons were mostly hired by wealthy neighbours to do different jobs, such as house maintenance, operating water carts or selling cigarettes, candy and toys in the city. However at the end of the day they were paid a small amount of money that was barely sufficient to feed one person. At times when they lost their merchandises to the local authorities, their employers would demand they work for free until they could pay back the cost of the merchandise lost. The men in the household contributed very little to the subsistence of the family. Their contribution was confined to occasional small sacks of grains or sugar and tea. After a long working day, the family only shared the shelter; the men ate outside home and Massara and her daughters shared what she had been able to get. When Massara was not able to secure food for her daughters and she asked her sons or husband for money, they would get angry

and quarrel with her. On one of these occasions, Sabeel decided to leave home and start a new life of his own without such obligations. He divorced Massara and left. Although his contribution had not been that great, after he left and her sons had loans to repay due to lost merchandise, Massara and her daughters suffered the most. However, all of a sudden Massara's daughters found rewarding jobs in the city although she did not know the whereabouts or the nature of their work. Massara's sons suspected that their sisters were working as prostitutes, which led to continuous violence against the two girls who had to stay at home for days until their wounds healed. The money Massara and her two daughters made was usually used to buy the household's daily food but the alcoholic son often forced them to give him their money or he would beat them up and threatens to kill them. Massara and the girls would go without food sometimes. Massara turned to the popular committee and to the police for protection against her son's violence but she was asked to discipline her daughters first, and no words were directed at the boys. When the two girls were able to work, they gave most of their income to their mother and kept a little for transport. Although her sons were no longer contributing to the households on the grounds that their sisters were not behaving well, they still shared whatever food is available in the house before any of the women did. Massara's income improved and she was selling food in front of schools and during the school holiday she could afford to take transport to sell in the market. Although from time to time she faced harassment from the municipality and on two occasions she lost all her merchandise, she saw that her income was improving. Massara sent a little cash to her in-laws who were keeping the rest of her children in the village. Massara's goal was to be able to buy land, build a mud house and bring her children from the village to live with her. However, she was worried that she would never be able to fulfil such a goal given her difficult circumstances. However, with her daughters' earnings and the profit she made from selling food, Massara managed to save some money and bought a plot of land on the edge of a new development area in 2006. She erected a shack on it and moved with her family. Later on, she expanded the house by adding 2 mud rooms and a toilet. She also brought her children from the rural areas and one of them is enrolled in primary school. For Massara, her biggest achievement was brining her children from the village and sending one of them to school, something that she could not dream of before. Although Massara now has better financial resources and manages to save a little, she and her daughters feel deeply sad, unhappy and rejected. On her own initiative, Massara decided to avoid any close contacts with people around her for fear of rejection and stigmatization due to her daughters' sex work. Massara is also scarred due to her previous experience in Siriha when she faced daily rejection, accusations, abuse and contempt by the community, to the extent of being thrown out of the neighbourhood by angry wealthy neighbours who refused to have sex workers living next to their 'respectable' families. Even within the households and at different times, Massara's sons and brothers-in-law either urge the two girls to make *Zawage Oorfie* (temporary marriage) as a kind of cover for their work or to commit suicide to prevent bringing more shame upon the family. (LH12-S)

In summary, urban people have employed diverse and complicated methods in pursuing their livelihoods. These methods have been affected by several factors over the past 25 years but the real decline in respondents' living conditions started in the late 1970s as a result of the adoption of Structural Adjustment Policies. However despite the detrimental impacts of these policies, life histories reveal that even before the implementation of SAPs, respondents were existing on a hand-to-mouth basis and wages were barely adequate to meet all basic needs let alone setting aside savings for emergencies. People were, therefore, easily pushed into poverty by shocks, trends and seasonality.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined both short- and long-term changes in household positions and the historical processes that lead to such changes. In particular, it examined the major changes for people over different periods, and the effects such events have had on their livelihood strategies and the factors that have shaped these processes. It revealed the processes that allowed some households to escape poverty and maintain successful trajectories, and identified those that hindered others. The route a household takes is always governed by the wider structural context, the nature of the institutional environment, access to various assets and intra-household relations and decision-making processes. The descent into poverty and long-term or severe poverty for the majority started in the early 1980s and has continued through the 1990s until the present. Poverty always accompanies losses in the quality of life and the destruction of natural resources when people lack the rights and means to respond to changes adequately. Many of the factors that have caused households to plunge into poverty have been at play for decades and households have always used whatever means they have available to cope with them. However, the continuous loss of assets compounded by a lack of opportunity and time to rebuild these assets has left some people extremely poor. They have thus suffered from cumulative disadvantages and while their current conditions reflect their past, poverty tends to be passed on to the next generation. When confronted with more changes to their livelihoods, poorer people can no longer employ their traditional coping strategies that were pursued and tested over many decades. In the face of adversity, the type of strategies they have been able to purse have almost always not been secure or sustainable. While the poor have lost their assets before landing in the neighbourhoods under study, many government policies continue to deny them the opportunity to develop new assets by restricting their access to shelter; markets, infrastructure and education. Their new strategies in difficult times have by necessity been determined by market forces and contra-poor state policies. In the process of developing new livelihood strategies themselves, some households have been less successful in their endeavours than others. The vulnerability of these households is intimately linked to the context of their lack of means to respond adequately to adverse events.

Overall, livelihood strategies of poorer households were never a result of choice. The life histories have highlighted two important factors in their poverty; the constraints on their choices, and their diminishing ability to respond and cope with adversity. To pursue a certain livelihood strategy, people need to bargain with the different institutions that mediate resources beyond the household. Lack of access to resources was detrimental to a household's response to adversity. The structures of power within the society have played a key role in determining people's access to or exclusion from the most vital resources for survival and the route they have eventually taken. Control over livelihood resources is mediated through complex identities, power structures or disparities and vice versa. Such factors have principally determined roles, rights, and obligations for men and women, and influenced actions, perceptions and structured opportunities and constraints for livelihood strategies. These factors have become both resources for accessing capital, networks and information, as well as, sources of vulnerability and exclusion. The groups that apparently had no meaningful strategy in response to adversity were made up of women and men from minority ethnic groups

who were denied access to political resources and representation in neighbourhood governance and were not able to represent themselves or have their voice heard.

# 11

# Summary and conclusions

## Introduction

The last sixteen years in Sudan have witnessed massive socio-political upheavals that have affected people's lives and livelihoods. Shifts in institutions and ideologies have had harsh negative effects on poverty in the country as a whole and in Khartoum, the capital, in particular. War and environmental crises have added to the already-existing economic crisis. Until recently, poverty was synonymous with rural conditions but the rapid urbanization of the country has given rise to a large class of urban poor. Government policies have not only failed to improve the rural problems but have contributed to undermining peasant economic production systems and the survival of natural resources for most Sudanese people.

As they are more integrated into the cash and wage economies and more dependent on food and other social-sector subsidies, the majority of Khartoum's residents have been badly hit. Their access to human and physical capitals, particularly urban services, has been significantly reduced. Some groups were already marginalized and these seem to have been affected the most by these changes, while others have benefited from their intricate networks of kinship and political affiliation. This study set out to investigate the options available to poor households to pursue sustainable livelihoods in the light of these changes.

The basic questions investigated included the following:

1. Who are the poor and who are the better-off? What capital do they have, and how do they construct their livelihoods?
2. What are the key institutions and processes, including rights, that are concerned with providing and/or denying access?
3. What have the major changes been for people in different periods and what effects have these had on their livelihood strategies? And what factors have shaped these processes?

By understanding these questions, it is hoped that the research will contribute to the understanding of urban livelihood systems in Khartoum within the wider context of socio-economic and political processes in Sudan.

## Theoretical background and analytical framework of the study

This study reviewed key poverty approaches that are relevant to the debate. To start with, poverty is conceptualized as a dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon that is

much broader than income deprivation alone. Poverty results not only from a lack of material resources but essentially from constraints on people's capacities and choices, which leads to increased vulnerability. The study conceptualizes poverty in terms of vulnerability or the inability of people to respond adequately to shocks and hazards. A variety of economic, social and environmental concerns makes an individual or group vulnerable or at greater risk of social ills. The notion of vulnerability thus goes beyond mere exposure to shocks and hazard and underlies people's capacity to deal successfully with them. There is an intrinsic and reinforcing relationship between poverty and vulnerability, and vulnerability can be both a cause and a symptom of poverty. This suggests that the prospect of lower well-being is associated with greater vulnerability. Vulnerability and subsequent deprivation in any form are linked to the imbalance of power relations in a specific society and influence people's capacity to make full use of the resources available to them. In this regard, social exclusion can generate and increase people's vulnerability.

The concept of social exclusion is seen as enabling to understand relations of power and control, and underlies the process through which some groups in society are marginalized and impoverished. Exclusion occurs to certain groups, often the ones with marginal significance to those who hold the economic and political power. Excluded individuals usually have certain social traits that locate them outside the dominant social and political power. Disadvantaged groups with less-favoured traits (class, ethnicity, religion, gender etc.) who are denied the opportunities available to others to enhance their livelihoods are likely to become less able to respond to shocks and trends.

Social exclusion places centre stage questions such as who the excluded are, what exactly they are excluded from and who the formal and informal custodians of membership and inclusion are. The terms on which people gain access to resources are always linked to issues of power distribution within a society. Institutions and behaviour that reproduce and enforce prevailing social attitudes and values, particularly those of powerful actors in society, work to exclude some people. Hence, vulnerability and subsequent deprivation in any form are intrinsically linked to the imbalance of power relations in a specific society that restricts people's capacity to make full use of the resources available to them.

The social exclusion of the poor and their lack of power in relation to the powerful in society clearly indicate the need to create new mechanisms to enable them to regain power and control over their destiny. It has been argued that the fundamental shift and transformation of power for the poor starts with the poor themselves. The extent to which the poor are able to combat social exclusion is determined by factors within themselves (agency) as well as by societal factors. The poor's consciousness/understanding (power within) is seen as a prerequisite for effecting change not only on the individual level but also at a group or collective level. The study is anchored in the premise that questions of empowerment require being located within the individual actor's social, cultural and historical context. Poor people cannot successfully change the rules without power enshrined in formal institutions. In this context, it is also useful to distinguish empowerment, in the sense of actors' capacities from rights. Rights can empower the poor and marginalized groups to combat social exclusion on an empowered footing. Hence rights and empowerment approaches can be mutually supportive.

It is in this sense that the concepts of vulnerability and social exclusion were used to construct a more comprehensive understanding of the factors underlying relative disadvantage, disparities and the well-being of the poor in Sudan.

To better understand the factors that influence people's livelihoods in the urban context, this thesis discusses the specific nature of urban livelihoods and the context-specific vulnerabilities of the urban poor. It also highlights the interrelationships between urban and rural livelihoods in order to understand the particular constraints that the urban poor face in maintaining their livelihoods. Wages and employment are crucial to livelihood sources for the urban poor and the chief dimension in their vulnerability is the issue of labour markets, for example, insecurity of employment and/or casual labour. Several constraints are imposed here by both the national and international context. A lack of economic opportunities and the blocking of channels through which people are equipped with capacities that allow them to seize opportunities is very important in this respect. Housing and tenure security are also identified as a source of vulnerability. It has been argued that housing is a key asset to the urban poor but it can also become a key source of vulnerability. Ownership of, or secure access to, housing is central to ensuring access to other resources, such as income-generating activities, education and health, as well as political rights such as being able to vote. However, overlapping land rights and the plurality of property systems and institutions create conditions of increased vulnerability. Housing vulnerability is often magnified by a general lack of access to urban services. State provision is important to the urban poor but is subject to local and national political processes. State machineries can be biased and are likely to replicate wider social powers so that socially excluded groups are also less likely to gain access to social services offered by the state. Informal provision is mostly inadequate or expensive. Social-service provision in poor areas is mostly undertaken by NGOs that are largely funded from external sources. The thesis looked at the role of social networks (in particular grassroots organizations) and the extent to which they are able to penetrate and mobilize urban communities. It was argued that this role is dependant on various political actors and their different vested interests, goals and ideals. Problems of plurality, polarization and conflict of interests are all part and parcel of the existence of social networks. In Africa, due to factors related to the political context, grassroots organizations are less able to represent the interests of the urban poor. Hence, solid networks of civic involvement are not a sign or a source of definite support. For all these reasons, the options for the urban poor become extremely limited due to their lack of support mechanisms.

The sustainable livelihoods approach is considered more relevant to the study of urban livelihoods. Therefore, the thesis reviewed this approach and highlighted the points that make it relevant to the study. In addition, a framework for analyzing poverty in Khartoum was formulated and the methodological approach was presented. Conceptualizing poverty, as mentioned above, provided the guiding principles informing the study of poverty in the context of Khartoum. The tool through which such an understanding was translated into practical steps is the sustainable livelihoods framework. It was argued that this approach is flexible and dynamic and focuses on aspects that most matter to people in a holistic manner and provides a tool for understanding the constraints on achieving them. The approach also takes into account the interrelationship between forms of vulnerability of the poor and the systems of support available to them to deal with negative situations successfully.

While the sustainable livelihoods approach is just one tool for examining the main aspects related to poverty, it is not the only approach and it needs to be adapted to suit local circumstances as well as to overcome some of its perceived shortcomings. While this approach's main elements have guided the study, other issues, which are not

covered explicitly by the SL framework but impact on poverty, were incorporated in the adapted framework. It has been argued that the existence of capitals is not enough for households to build sustainable livelihoods but what is critical is accessibility to these capitals and this is largely determined by power and politics. These factors were made explicit within the modified framework that also reflects on the specific characteristics of urban situations, taking on board the key contextual factors that are specific to urban areas. It treats them as mutually interrelated in the final outcome of poverty.

With respect to the methodology of the study, Participatory Poverty Analysis (PPA) methods were used for data collection and analysis. This is in line with the framework that seeks to understand the opinions and analysis of members of the community, and especially poorer men and women, in matters that concern their own realities and their ideas about ways of addressing these issues. Four neighbourhoods were selected to monitor the diversity and dynamics of livelihood activities and possibly compare patterns. The study then chose to explore the full continuum of well-being levels within the communities under study. Households were classified into four broad levels of well-being: those who are 'Always Poor' (*tabaneen*) and usually require assistance to cope; the 'Sometimes Poor' or (*nus nus*); the 'Medium Poor' (*wasat*) and finally the 'Non-Poor' (*murtaheen*). This classification relied mostly on the type and stability of employment and the duration of poverty as the most important criteria. Using a stratified sampling technique, 70 households were selected from each neighbourhood, representing these levels of well-being. Various techniques were used including a household survey, a community survey, focus-group discussions and interviews. Interviews and meetings were semi-structured and open-ended questions and topics for discussion were prepared in advance. In-depth life history interviews, which provided a retrospective view of trajectories of change, were conducted with 40 households representing the four well-being categories. The life history interviews were geared towards generating information about what had determined certain routes in individuals' lives and the availability or absence of options. Officials and leaders of mass organizations at district and provincial level were interviewed. Secondary data was collected at different levels, notably local statistics and provincial strategy documents. Both qualitative and quantitative data were generated. Collective perceptions and estimates obtained from participants' own life experiences formed the basis of the analysis. On-site analysis was made by the participants through visual diagrams, maps, matrices and calendars.

## Context of the study

It was argued in Chapter 1 that the challenges facing Sudan cannot be separated from those facing the African content as a whole. These include environmental degradation, war and conflict, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and other diseases, and the challenges of democracy and good governance. With the powerful forces of globalization moving fast in running the macro-economics of the continent, it has become crucial for African states to reshape their economic system and address the importance of sustainable poverty reduction.

Although Sudan is endowed with rich natural resources, the country has been unsuccessful in using these in an efficient and equitable way. Poverty in Sudan is largely a result of structural factors; particularly those that influence modes of ownership, production and distribution of productive capitals, each with its own dynamics. Ill-conceived development policies that neglected rural development, erratic macro-econo-

mic polices and poor management of resources have set the Sudanese economy on a downward spiral. Furthermore, land-tenure systems have allowed inequitable land distribution among different groups. The scarcity of productive land and mounting demographic pressures have transformed land into a highly sensitive issue along ethnic, intra-ethnic and class-lines. Five decades of marginalization, mismanagement, military rule, corruption, patronages and the alienation of civil-society organizations from participating in the country's affairs have contributed to intensifying conflict and war in different parts of the country. However, prospects for peace grew stronger with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that recognizes southern Sudan's right to self-determination. However, the success of the CPA and its implementation may be judged by its capacity not only to deliver peace and security but also to effect radical social change through an informed, critical and active citizenry.

This study was conducted in Greater Khartoum, the largest and most affluent city in Sudan. Chapter 3 provided background information on the city, pointing out that Khartoum city has seen steady population growth since the colonial era, although most of this growth has occurred in the last two decades. Population growth has been the result of an increased influx of people pushed out of their home areas by civil strife, the collapse of the peasant farming economy and successive waves of drought and desertification. As in other cities affected by the crisis, the poor gravitated toward those areas where some wealth still existed. Poorer populations have settled illegally on government land in informal squatter settlements where they face problems relating to the availability and accessibility of water, health and education services and unequal access to these services, especially for the poor and women. This massive urban migration has fuelled poverty and congestion, and has placed a huge strain on the city's traditional infrastructure and service-delivery system. The mass relocation to Khartoum took place in a context of declining employment opportunities in the formal sector and agriculture and with no industrial jobs emerging to fill the gap. In addition, the cost of living for families in Khartoum has continued to rise substantially, resulting in tighter conditions for workers whose incomes on average are only a fraction of the nominal cost of living.

Four neighbourhoods were selected for the study and their characteristics were discussed in Chapter 7. Although the neighbourhoods share common features; they are also intrinsically unequal and different. They are located over a wide and complex geographical area on the outskirts of Greater Khartoum. They were not officially included in the city structure and thus there is no provision of basic urban services – water, electricity, sewers or paved roads – except in small areas. Some of these neighbourhoods have become partially formal although there are also variations in terms of the size of the formalized space in each neighbourhood. Houses in these neighbourhoods are made mainly from mud and thatch and many have used flimsy scrounged materials such as plastic sheets, cardboard or scrap metal or the cheapest construction materials for roofing. However, their appearance has significantly changed during the course of the study (2003-2007), with improvements in the way people build their houses and the overall appearance of the neighbourhoods.

## Major findings and contributions to the debate

Policies, institutions and processes were discussed in Chapter 7. The inhabitants of the four neighbourhoods are mainly the poor working in the informal sector, many of whom lack titles or deeds to the plots of land they occupy. Their access to productive assets

and livelihood opportunities is mediated by a complex matrix of formal and informal policies, institutions and processes that work to create opportunities and/or constraints on access to resources in numerous ways. These include; localities (*Mahalyat*), Popular Committees (PCs), and regulations on small-scale and micro-enterprises, *Zakat* (Social Development Fund), the land-tenure system, NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), traditional headmen, ethnicity and gender.

The informal or illegal status of the poor limits their rights to influence formal political processes. Land tenure is one of the major institutions that affect people's livelihoods and to which they attach high importance. However, legalizing land involves high costs that are required one instalment and is beyond the capacity of the poor. In addition, it involves complex and bureaucratic procedures. Therefore, the only option available to the poor is informal land and housing that may well be prone to demolition without compensation. Most poor people undertake their livelihood activities without proper permits and have no legal status. These groups become exposed to fines under the Public Order Act and the 2001 Act that specifies fines and taxes on small businesses as well as procedures for legalizing activities. This Act has concentrated mostly on the treatment of negative manifestations of informal activities rather than their root causes. The Act's application has effectively deprived the poor of their hard-earned income and savings, and every possible source of livelihood. The lack of an efficient and reliable social safety net to protect households from a loss of assets, unemployment and poverty has left poor people without any form of support. The only government-run safety net, *Zakat*, did not help the poor to overcome difficult times or rebuild their lost assets.

Neighbourhood residents lack the means to participate in decisions that affect their lives. By virtue of their marginalization and exclusion, the poor are not represented in decision-making bodies. When they were included; it was only to legitimize the decision and policy process rather than to genuinely listen to their opinions or allow them some control over their lives. The cosmetic participation of the community is undertaken through the appointed PCs and supporting the traditional powers of the headmen within the communities. The locality is the main formal institution that is concerned with the direct governance of the neighbourhoods through the PCs. The localities are not able to fill the role of the community institution responsible for programme design and service delivery. What characterizes their governance of the neighbourhoods are centralization and penetration. Centralization has allowed control over the economy and the political system, while penetration has enabled control down to the neighbourhood level. The locality's staff and leadership from the lowest level to the top are controlled by the central authority. Operating within a very limited budget, with low-capacity human resources and being accountable only to their hierarchical superiors, the localities are not in a position to respond to local needs nor to tap into local traditions of cooperation and participation.

Compared to the rest of the city, the classic form of governance has undergone significant transformations within the neighbourhoods. There is a clear move away from an increased role by the state in the city, towards systems of ethnicity and traditional leaders in running everyday affairs in the neighbourhoods. These traditional authorities have a formal nature that they are assigned by formal state institutions and are given the mandate in some critical domains. However, they are deprived of any autonomy through policies of state corporatism. Traditional headmen in the community uphold and maintain the status quo because they are aware that they will lose power and authority unless they adapt their institution to accommodate the mandate of the broader political

context. PCs too are created by the state as a mechanism of cooption and controlled inclusion and there is, therefore, no space for popular participation. The power and authority of PCs and traditional headmen have helped institutionalize rigid hierarchical patterns of political participation, excluding large segments of the population from economic and political power. Several NGOs are working in the areas, substituting the diminishing role of the state. However, the potentially constructive influence of these networks has been hard to realize under the strong control of the state and the weakness of these organization. Some CBOs have been successful in penetrating and mobilizing the community but they have not been successful in making demands on the state or influencing state actions.

Gender and ethnicity are important determinants to the way populations are included or excluded from societal resources, power and opportunities. Gender is defined by practices and ideologies, and in interaction with other structures of social relations such as class, and ethnicity. In general, it denotes an unequal division of labour, power, responsibilities and rights between men and women. On the other hand, ethnicity results in an extremely heterogeneous and complex mixture of the population, with extreme disparity in social status. These have provided the base of everyday interaction between people as well as a means to access political and economic resources.

The thesis provides an in-depth overview of the basic characteristics of the sample households and the quality of the capitals they have and their livelihood activities. It addresses the question of: who the poor are and who the better-off are. It also considers what capitals they have and how they construct their livelihoods. The analysis started by enumerating the characteristics of different well-being categories proposed by the communities. These categories were set with reference to the ways people make their livelihoods and the security or vulnerability of their efforts. Security of tenure also supported such categorization. People's classifications of their households into different well-being categories reflected social differentiation and the inequalities between people within neighbourhoods. It also reveals strong linkages between poverty and the composition of households in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. The 'Always Poor' are mainly made up of households that belong to minority ethnic groups, are headed by a woman and have more young members in them. The 'Non-Poor' are predominantly made up of households that belong to dominant ethnic groups, headed by males and have fewer dependent members within them. While the 'Sometimes Poor' group may share some of the characteristics of the 'Always Poor' households, they may have other measures that lessen their vulnerability.

The vulnerability of households is closely related to livelihood activities and, in particular, is closely related to being informally employed, being a woman, being a child and being poor. For each of the poverty categories, there are specific sets of vulnerabilities that are imposed by the nature of the work and people's access to various capitals, which may have provided them with varying degrees of livelihood sustainability. Better-off households have a larger portfolio of capitals and men's stocks of capitals are bigger than women's. Interlocking social relations produce poverty amongst women and processes that constrain the range of opportunities these women can draw on. Hence, the economic contribution women make does not materialize into better well-being of their household. Therefore, households headed by females are much poorer than households headed by males within the same groups due to their lack of access to male portfolios. Poorer households have lower human capital due to multiple barriers to health care and education. These households also have extremely low valuable physical

capitals and lack tenure security. Average household income differs across categories and these differences, combined with lower unpredictable and fluctuating incomes from the informal sector activities, help to explain the nature of the vulnerability faced by the poor. Poorer households, and particularly the 'Always Poor', have generated a largest proportion of their income from casual and self-employments in the informal sector. But these sources are neither steady nor predictable. The exclusionary economic setting ensures that women and some minority ethnic groups' activities remain very limited or confined to menial, difficult and hazardous work that makes it even harder for them to gain access to the resources they need to earn a living. Better-off households generate a higher percentage of their household income from regular employment, regulated self-employment, pensions, assets and remittances. Incomes obtained by poorer households are often inadequate and indeed too little to maintain a household's livelihood, cope with emergencies or pursue small investments. In addition, poorer households lack the types of capital that could be liquidated to cope with adversities. Low income has made it necessary for workers from these households to carry out multiple activities and involve more household members in their livelihood activities. Household levels of poverty often compel children to work, in most cases, undertaking work that is not appropriate for their age and maturity. This work traps them in a destructive cycle of exhausting tasks and does not allow them access to formal education, let alone recreation. Evidence points to the intergenerational dimensions of social exclusion: extensive barriers to essential livelihood capitals today predict the continued social exclusion and poverty of these households in the future too.

Borrowing by 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' households was almost always linked to meeting emergency consumption needs, healthcare expenses, school expenses and, most importantly, meeting the expenses of building and rebuilding their shelters. They therefore, confront an unprecedented level of debt that makes them not only less equipped to deal with the current situation but also vulnerable to even harder shocks in the future. They have the fewest choice in terms of livelihoods strategies and thus are the most vulnerable when confronted with adversity. Poorer households have the least capitals and the most unpredictable activities. On the other hand, better-off households are relatively in a better position in terms of capital holdings and activities.

The analysis identified the reasons preventing poorer households from accessing important capitals and thus determining the type of livelihood strategies they can pursue. It addressed questions about key institutions and processes including rights concerned with providing and/or denying access. It has been argued that the role of institutions and policies are critical to the livelihood strategies of the poor, where PIPs often operate on the basis of having a *dahar*, or having strong ties with more powerful individuals within and beyond one's neighbourhood who could provide access to various livelihood assets. The basic and most important ones are family ties, which provide the crucial social safety net. However, it is almost always those social relations beyond the immediate family that typically count for meaningful support. Access to various livelihood resources has been a determining factor in the vulnerability of households. Access to resources is interlinked. Several critical assets that are needed to pursue a livelihood or to decrease vulnerability, such as health, education and skills, are dependent on access to a range of household assets (e.g. access to financial, social capital as well as physical assets).

Access to financial capitals varies between different categories. The 'Always Poor' have small and unpredictable financial resources from casual work, unregulated busi-

nesses and occasional food donations. This is in contrast with 'Non-Poor' households that have stable sources of income driven from employment, a pension, regulated businesses and/or remittances. On the other hand, the 'Sometimes Poor' have fluctuating sources of income from employment, food donations and *Zakat*. This differs from the 'Medium Poor' poor who have stable sources of income coming from employment, a pension, regulated or unregulated businesses and remittances. Borrowing helps households overcome different types of shocks and stresses but the majority lack access to formal borrowing, savings and insurance services. Unlike the 'Non-Poor', the 'Always Poor' experience increased difficulties in securing loans through informal financial systems within neighbourhoods. Their loans were mostly in kind and linked to labour or other conditions. The 'Sometimes Poor' were more successful in securing cash loans compared to the 'Always Poor'.

Different households have different access to a water supply, health care, education, energy, transport, security and justice. Within the four neighbourhoods, there is an almost total reliance on private operators and the informal provision of essential services. Informality of service and land delivery often increase costs for the poor. However, the 'Always Poor' have neither the income to purchase them or the access to services subsidized by the NGOs or the government. For example, while 'Non-Poor' households own an in-house tap or were able to buy clean water, the 'Always Poor' could only access water from unreliable public hand pumps or by borrowing or begging from neighbours. A lack of financial and social resources often forces these households to use unsafe water, which results in increased ill health and disease. Ill health was accentuated by a lack of access to services that help preserve a healthy environment, particularly sanitation. Many individuals from poorer households could not access health care when they needed to because they could not afford it. When they sought medical help, this often overstrained their budget and impacted on their ability to pursue sustainable livelihoods. None of the 'Always Poor' households have electricity, while all the 'Non-Poor' and some of the 'Medium Poor' households have access to electricity. Lack of access to modern energy services forced poorer households to resort to more expensive and less efficient alternative sources and this impacted negatively on their health and produced increased environmental damage.

Unlike members of 'Non-Poor' households, the 'Always Poor' were held back by transport problems from accessing work opportunities, education and literacy programmes, health care and contacts beyond the neighbourhood. Although the 'Non-Poor' live in the same neighbourhood, they were usually centrally located, closer to transport roots and were able to regularly get to work and school. The 'Always Poor' live in the remote corners of the neighbourhoods, and could just walk or divide the journey between different means of transport, and were only able to access jobs and schools within the neighbourhood. The children of the 'Always Poor' and 'Sometimes Poor' categories were disadvantaged in terms of their access to education. With the high cost of education, many are not attending school, dropping out or not being able to fully benefit from the opportunity of being at school.

The tenure status of the 'Always Poor' is always not secure; they live in small, makeshift and unsafe dwellings that are extremely prone to weather conditions. Though the 'Sometimes Poor' may live in similar conditions, they were able to access safe and/or legal shelters for longer period of times than the 'Always Poor'. On the other hand, it was evident that the legal right to land has resulted in increased security and

livelihood opportunities for the ‘Non-Poor’ and ‘Medium Poor’ households, allowing them to pursue long-term livelihood strategies and maximize their incomes.

The presence and operation of regulatory constraints on small businesses have varying impacts on households in the different well-being categories. The state often abused poorer people’s civil rights and deliberately deprived them of possible means of livelihood. The ‘Always Poor’ category has frequent contact with the police and the legal system due to their informal status concerning land and activities. Although the ‘Medium Poor’ may practise activities in the informal sector they were able to come up with pay-offs to avoid punishment. On the other hand, the ‘Non-Poor’ had less contact with the police and the legal system and when they did they were able to defend themselves and to take their cases to court. In addition, both the ‘Medium Poor’ and ‘Non-Poor’ were able to access informal means of justice within their communities. The notion of gender provides important insight into the social and power relations that govern access to and the use of resources. Women across the well-being categories – including the ‘Non-Poor’ – were the most unprotected and discriminated against in the face of the law. They confront numerous barriers in securing a redress of their grievances through the legal system. Overall, the absence of a culture of rights is worsened by the structural constraints that prevent the translation of formal rights, even poorly defined, into actual rights that will be applied and respected.

The differences that exist between the different well-being categories can be verified in terms of the existence and levels of social and political resources a household commands. ‘Always Poor’ households are less able to speak for themselves, have fewer and weaker social networks, and no formal institutions and collectives to draw on. Some of the networks they could access have acted as an obstacle, locking them in unequal patronage relationships, and further increasing their vulnerability. At the other end of the scale, ‘Non-Poor’ households have more influential members who are able to make beneficial relations that provide credit and were able to make decisions for themselves and others. While the ‘Sometimes Poor’ could rely on supportive networks to a limited extent, the ‘Medium Poor’ were able to make beneficial relations and speak up for themselves and express their opinions. Individual biography and life events are relevant to a household’s ability to access resources. Women tend to suffer decreased access to resources than men within their respective categories. Therefore, household vulnerability tend to decrease or increase according to the gender of the household head. Moreover, individuals who belong to social groups whose ethnicity and culture enjoy the least amount of recognition, influence and power in society (the ‘Always Poor’) suffer more access failure than others. Access to resources is almost completely dependent on the household’s social position in the community, with ethnic and gender identities being very influential factors. Such identities principally determine the amount of social and political capital necessary to access resources and cope with adversity. Based on the above, the livelihood strategies followed by poorer households offer lower returns and no upward social mobility.

Chapter 10 examined the historical pathways of 40 different households in an attempt to understand how they navigated their way through institutional environments. It considered the major changes for people in different periods and what effects these have had on their livelihood strategies and the factors have shaped these processes. Life histories were used to explain factors behind the long- and short-term changes that took place over time to shed light on the way power is constituted and reproduced in daily life, and how people negotiate within its different levels and structures to attain the best

feasible outcome for their livelihoods. This had also helped to understand the processes that allowed some households to escape poverty and maintain successful trajectories as well as processes that hinder other households. It became clear from the discussion that the path that an individual and/or a household takes is determined by a set of interlocking factors. Decent into poverty always accompanied losses in quality of life and the destruction of natural resources when people lack the right and means to respond to these changes. But these were not a one-time life event, as people continue to experience intense shocks and crisis. Many government policies continue to deny them the opportunity to develop new assets by restricting their access to shelter; markets, infrastructure and education. Continuous loss of assets, compounded by a lack of opportunity and time to rebuild these assets had left some individuals and groups extremely poor.

In the face of adversity, households at different levels of well-being needed to resort to alternative strategies instead of those that had failed. Several livelihood strategies were followed by households depending on external as well as internal factors. Some households were able to make up the difference through new strategies, and utilizing their capitals. These have enabled them to recover more rapidly and to protect themselves from further shocks such as the demolition of their house. They managed to maintain a relatively successful livelihood trajectory but in the process of developing new livelihood strategies, some households were less successful in their endeavours than others. The vulnerability of these households was intimately linked to the context of their lack of means to respond adequately to adverse events. Overall, the strategies these households were able to undertake were characterized by uncertainty and due to their insecure rights and access to resources, they tend to generate little return and expose people to harmful long-term consequences. While people were aware of this outcome, their options were exceedingly constrained. The structures of power within the society have played a key role in determining their access to or exclusion from most vital resources of survival and the route they eventually take. It is clear that individuals' and households' abilities to effectively carve new strategy are determined by their various identities. Many of the limitations they experienced were imposed by their lower social position compared to the other groups in the community. In the face of adversity, the type of strategies they are able to purse are almost always neither secure nor sustainable. Although some of these strategies allow them to cope in the short run, they become more vulnerable in the long term. Their vulnerability keeps changing over time according to changes in their employment or access to resources, and shocks and trends. They thus suffered from cumulative disadvantage because while their current conditions reflected their past, it also tends to be passed on to the next generation.

As a contribution to the poverty and livelihoods debate, the thesis has succeeded in adapting and using a structured and consistent conceptual framework (sustainable livelihoods framework) and to successfully developing and implementing research methodologies in a complex setting. Since few researches have attempted to examine vulnerability in the context of urban Sudan, this study's contribution is in developing an analytical framework that captures the livelihood situation of the urban poor in Sudan, and indicates the potential that this can have in informing policy formulation and interventions.

The study explored the specific characteristics of the urban poor's vulnerability within key contextual factors that are specific to urban areas as well as people's ability to respond to them adequately. By exploring the way access is negotiated, attained or

denied, this thesis has offered insight into the role of power in shaping people's livelihoods.

One of the contributions of this study is a deepen understanding of the specific nature of interrelationships between different capitals in urban areas and an indication of the combinations required for different livelihood strategies. It has also taken into consideration the dynamic and historical context within which various livelihood capitals are combined and has demonstrated that the livelihoods of the urban poor are constructed from multiple and dynamic portfolios of capitals (and activities).

More research with concrete findings and realistic recommendations needs to be carried out in urban areas to explore the complex linkages and dynamic interactions of rural-urban populations and to gain insight into the interdependence and vulnerability of the two contexts.

## Policy notes

The thesis shows that the livelihoods of poor people have been severely constrained by both formal and informal institutions. They have not been able to achieve their desired outcome due to the lack of an enabling environment that would allow them to access capitals and choose the way they want to utilize them. The concept of vulnerability is seen as central to this debate. The descent into poverty has always accompanied losses in quality of life and the destruction of natural resources when people lacked the rights and means to respond adequately to changes. A continuous loss of capitals, compounded by a lack of opportunity and time to rebuild, has left some people extremely vulnerable. People became vulnerable not only because they were exposed to adversity but also because they did not have the capacity to deal successfully with it. The root causes of vulnerability and its return over time reflect the exercise and distribution of power in society. The inability of the poor to gain access to essential resources, which left them in dire poverty, has always been connected to factors beyond the poor's control since power creates constraints or imposes limits on what people can achieve. As society is made up of diverse social groups, the ability of the individuals that belong to marginalized groups to access resources is significantly eroded, leaving them more vulnerable to poverty than others. The results suggest two important factors that lead to poverty: constraints on the choice of livelihood strategies, and a diminishing ability to respond to and cope with adversity. Policies geared at reducing poverty need to take these factors into consideration.

In identifying the most important resources that have prevented the poor from translating their capital base into effective agency, it is necessary to return to the Participatory Poverty Analysis activities and people's conceptualization of their own priorities. It also requires revisiting the basic assumption of this study that overcoming exclusion is, basically, in the hands of the poor themselves and a function of their awareness. It has been argued that the social exclusion of the poor and their lack of power in relation to the more powerful actors in society clearly indicate the need to create new mechanisms to enable them to regain power and control over their destiny. It is also believed that, in its true sense, empowerment should lead to self-determined change. But that change should be made possible by transforming the environment in which poor people operate to enable them to build and mobilize their own resources.

Accordingly, the following policy recommendations suggest two inter-related requirements: the importance of supporting the 'power within' of disempowered people

and facilitating the building of their inner strength and self-worth, and the need to transform the dominant patterns of access to and control over vital livelihood resources or the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain existing power structures.

1. Challenging the mediating structures that justify social inequality. Empowerment should seek to shift political, social and economic power between and among individuals and social groups in a way that challenges the ideologies of gender, ethnicity and class. The poor would have a greater possibility to influence decision-making under conditions of good governance (i.e. a system of government and a culture of governance that is participatory, inclusive, consensus-oriented, based on the rule of law, responsive to the needs of the population, efficient, transparent and accountable). At present, radical social change is constrained by the authoritarian regime that is based on a vacuum of social consensus. However, there is an opportunity for democratic transformation that could effect fundamental social change. The history of Sudan shows that the people, particularly the poor, have routinely stood up to oppressive structures and have twice thrown out regimes that were failing their interests and needs. This is a clear indication that the poor are capable of making radical changes towards building a political commitment that addresses their needs and priorities. The recent Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) has paved the way for such change. In the light of this, there is a need to strengthen individual and collective capacities in order to generate responsive social policy and to influence the peace process.
2. Knowledge transmission practices in the community should reflect this orientation. People need to build on their knowledge, skills and rights so that they can use their own resources to bring about change. Improved access to education is pertinent here. There is a strong correlation between poverty and school enrolment, poor educational experience and attainment. For this reason, investment in human capital should be a key responsibility for the government to assume in order to reduce poverty. The government could create positive incentives for school attendance by eliminating school fees and providing educational materials. In addition, educational curricula and strategies should be geared towards creating new spaces for the poor to collectivize shared experiences of poverty and exclusion.
3. Improving access to urban services. The current provision of urban services in poor areas is left to residents to handle on their own. However, the high costs of these services, compounded by the high cost of living, prevent the poor from accessing these services. To turn the tide, there is the need for more responsive institutions – formal or informal – to extend services to informal and poor settlements. Building partnerships between local service providers and the localities would encourage local service providers to deliver a more affordable and adequate service to the urban poor. Local government can play a key role in this concern as it is in a better position to deliver urban services.
4. Improving access to formal credit. The inaccessibility of formal financial institutions has impacted negatively on the sustainability of the livelihoods of the poor. This is particularly critical when it comes to housing or business finance. Therefore, it is important that credits and loans be provided through the state, cooperatives and a controlled private sector and be integrally linked with community-managed savings and loan schemes.

5. Identifying who the poor are. A key issue is identifying accurate profiles of who the poor are to determine the way they can effectively be reached by support programmes such as *Zakat* and other mechanisms.
6. Enhancing citizens' 'rights' to resources and institutions. Rights can empower the poor to combat social exclusion on an empowered footing. The challenge of the new regime should be to uphold equal political and civil rights of different groups, and effectively translate these rights into appropriate policies and effective practice. It should also ensure effective redress for citizens against violation by more powerful individuals and groups. Property rights can endow people with considerable normative power.
7. Tenure-insecurity has been shown to be one of the most important constraints on people using their resources effectively. It is important to undertake institutional reforms that would allow secure tenure of land already occupied as well as putting in place measures that would allow formal land markets and land-allocation systems to serve the poor. Any professional interventions designed to address tenure insecurity should seek to inject greater bottom-up input into policy processes and involve local communities in negotiating land security and in identifying and planning sites.
8. Changing regulations in the informal sector. Informal-sector regulations have contributed significantly to undermining the poor's livelihoods by eroding their various forms of capital and their ability to generate income. The current laws and regulations will need to be changed in a way that takes into consideration the needs and constraints of the poor. The local authorities should reform their laws to reduce the costs of regularization and at the same time raise the benefits for people of legalizing their activities. All levels of government can help facilitate an enabling environment for the poor that would allow them to pursue sustainable livelihoods. Knowledge of rights and political alternatives is an integral part of and a precondition to the above-mentioned processes.
9. Power sharing. The new regime needs to create a supportive environment so that the poor can take control of their lives and their environment by ensuring open and fair competition for power on the basis of popular votes. It has the opportunity to effect democratic transformation, open up more space for community-based organizations and provide a better environment for organized labour and trade-union participation. Local government could consider an alternative vision for community governance that would permit the participation of the community in their own governance and act as a platform for voicing demands and building rights awareness. For example, local leaders could be nominated through a transparent process that would allow the whole community to voice their views and opinions.

Central concerns remain, however, regarding the feasibility of putting these policy recommendations into practice in the current stifling political regime. Democratic change is fundamental and a prerequisite to any actions that may be geared at improving the livelihoods of the poor. The scope of the policy recommendations offered in this thesis is, therefore, linked to the type of regime that can entrench democratic governance and build a culture of democracy to advance economic, social and political inclusion with a diversity of actors. In this respect, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) offers a good opportunity for the Sudanese people to break the cycle of poverty and conflict if it is genuinely implemented.

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# Field study references

Community meeting 1 (CM-M-1) conducted in Mayo included 6 women from and 14 men from different ethnic groups (May 6th 2005)

Focus group discussions 5 (FGD-M5) conducted in Mayo included 8 women and 10 men from different ethnic groups (May 13th 2005)

Focus group discussions 8 (FGD-M8) conducted in Mayo included 4 women and 11 men from different ethnic groups (May 21st 2005)

Women focus group discussions 9 (WFGD-M9) conducted in Mayo included 12 women from different ethnic groups (May 22th 2005)

Focus group discussions 18 (FGD-M18) conducted in Mayo included 3 women and 7 men from different ethnic groups (June 24th 2005)

Community meeting 2 (CM-B2) conducted in Al Baraka included 5 women and 11 men from different ethnic groups 2 (May 7th 2005)

Focus group discussions 10 (FGD-B10) conducted in Al Baraka included 2 women and 10 men from different ethnic groups (May 27th 2005).

Women Focus group discussions 15 (FGD-B15) conducted in Al Baraka included 8 women from different ethnic groups (June 12th 2005)

Focus group discussions 6 (FGD-B6) conducted in Al Baraka included 2 women and 6 men from different ethnic groups (June 19th 2005)

Focus group discussions 19 (FGD-B19) conducted in Al Baraka included 4 women and 6 men from different ethnic groups (July 1st 2005)

Community meeting 3(CM-D3) conducted in Dar es Salam included 13 women and 11 men from different ethnic groups (May 8th 2005)

Focus group discussions 6 (FGD-D6) conducted in Dar es Salam included 6 women and 8 men from different ethnic groups (May 15th 2005)

Women Focus group discussions 11(FGD-D11) conducted in Dar es Salam included 19 women from different ethnic groups (May 28th 2005)

Focus group discussions 17 (FGD-D17) conducted in Dar es Salam included 2 women and 7 men from different ethnic groups (June 22nd 2005)

Community meeting 4 (CM-S4) conducted in Siriha included 7 women and 14 men from different ethnic groups (May 9th 2005)

Focus group discussions 12 (FGD-S12) conducted in Siriha included 3 women and 6 men from different ethnic groups (12 June 2nd 2005)

Focus group discussions 13 (FGD-S13) conducted in Siriha included 6 women and 8 men from different ethnic groups (June 8th 2005)

Women Focus group discussions 7 (FGD-S7) conducted in Siriha included 12 women from different ethnic groups (May 19th 2005)

Focus group discussions 14 (FGD-S14) conducted in Siriha included 3 women and 10 men from different ethnic groups (June 11th 2005)

## Life histories

Life history 1 (LH1-S) Abdelnoor, Siriha (2005)
Life history 2 (LH2-M) Malou, Mayo (2004-2007)
Life history 3 (LH3-B) Mohamed J, Al Baraka (2005)
Life history 4 (LH4-M) Tabitha, Mayo (2005)
Life history 5 (LH5-M) Faraj, Mayo (2005)
Life history 6 (LH6-S) Khadiga *K*, Siriha (2004-2005)
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Life history 8 (LH8-S) Saffia A, Siriha (2004-2005)
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## Quotes

(Quote 1-M) Peter Freed, Mayo, 2005
(Quote 2-B): Hussein K, Al Baraka, 2005
(Quote 6-M) Daniel, Mayo, 2005
(Quote 11-S) Fad-lu, Siriha, 2005

# Summary

In the last two decades Sudan has witnessed massive socio-political upheavals that have affected people's lives and livelihoods. Shifts in institutions and ideologies have led to greater poverty in the country as a whole and in Khartoum, the capital city, in particular. People living in Khartoum have been hardest hit because they are generally more integrated into the cash and wage economy and more dependent on food and other social-sector subsidies than those in the rural areas. Their access to urban services has been significantly reduced, with some groups appearing to have been more marginalized than others. This study investigates the ways in which these people have been marginalized and the options available to them for a sustainable livelihood.

The research questions included the following:

- Who are the poor and who are the better-off? What livelihood capitals do they have and how do they construct their livelihoods?
- What are the key institutions and processes, including rights, that are involved in providing and/or denying them access to a sustainable livelihood?
- What have been the major changes for people in different periods, and what effects have these had on their livelihood strategies? What factors have shaped these processes?

*Theoretical framework*

The key approaches to poverty that are relevant to the debate are reviewed. Poverty is conceptualized as a dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon that is much broader than income deprivation alone. Poverty results not only from a lack of material resources but essentially from constraints on people's capacities and choices that increase their vulnerability. The study conceptualizes poverty in terms of vulnerability or the inability of people to respond adequately to shocks and hazards, arguing that there is an intrinsic relationship between poverty and vulnerability. Vulnerability and subsequent deprivation in any form are linked to the imbalance of power relations in a specific society and this affects people's capacity to make full use of the resources available to them. In this respect, social exclusion is seen to generate and increase people's vulnerability. Institutions that reproduce and enforce prevailing social attitudes and values and thus the position of powerful actors in society work to exclude some people. It has been argued that the fundamental shift and transformation of power for the poor starts with the poor themselves. The study is anchored on the premise that questions of empowerment need to be located in the individual actor's social, cultural and historical context. It is also useful to distinguish empowerment, in the sense of actors' capacities, from rights.

The study details the specific factors that influence people's livelihoods in the urban context. Establishing strong interrelationships between urban and rural contexts, the centrality of issues of wages and employment, housing and tenure security, access to urban services in the light of the absence of effective community-based and grassroots organizations are highlighted.

*Analytical framework*

The tool used to translate this into practical steps is the sustainable livelihoods approach. This is a flexible and dynamic approach that focuses on issues that matter to people in a holistic manner and providing a tool to understand the constraints on achieving them. The approach also takes into account the interrelationships between the different forms of vulnerability facing the poor and the systems of support available to them so that they can deal successfully with these vulnerabilities. While the sustainable livelihoods framework guides the study, other issues that are not explicitly covered by it were also incorporated. Emphasis has been placed on access and power, and the importance of key contextual factors in urban areas, as explained above.

Participatory Poverty Analysis (PPA) methods were used for data collection and analysis. Four neighbourhoods were selected in Khartoum to monitor the diversity and dynamics of livelihood activities and for comparative purposes. The study then explored the full continuum of well-being levels in these communities. Participants classified households in four broad levels of well-being: 'Always Poor', 'Sometimes Poor', 'Medium Poor' and 'Non-Poor'. Using a stratified sampling technique, 70 households representing these categories were selected from each neighbourhood for further analysis. Various techniques were used including household and community surveys, focus-group discussions and interviews, and in-depth life history interviews. Secondary data were also collected. Both qualitative and quantitative data were generated.

*Context*

The challenges facing Sudan cannot be separated from those facing the African content as a whole and include environmental degradation, war and conflict, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and other killer diseases, and the challenges of democracy and good governance. For Sudan, poverty is largely a result of structural factors; particularly those influencing modes of ownership, production and the distribution of capital. Many of these factors have contributed to rural populations relocating to urban centres, particularly Khartoum. This massive wave of migration has taken place in a context of declining employment opportunities and at a time when no industrialized positions have been emerging to fill the gap.

The four neighbourhoods studied cover a wide and complex geographical area on the outskirts of Greater Khartoum. They are not included in the city's official structure and thus lack basic urban services such as water, electricity, sewers and paved roads, except in certain small areas. Some of these neighbourhoods have been partially formalized but there are also variations in terms of the amount of formalized space available in each neighbourhood.

*Major findings*

The role of Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs) that occupy a central position in the analytical framework and in the geographical and historical context in shaping access became clear. Internally, the communities are organized in hierarchies based on ethnicity, gender and the well-being of the household. In general, the PIPs did not reflect the conditions and needs of the poor and none of them translated into political agency. The institutions that are supposed to serve the poor often played a negative role in their livelihoods and the poor are not represented in decision-making bodies. If they were included; it was only to legitimize the decision-making and policy process rather than to hear their opinions or allow them some control over their lives.

The thesis provides an in-depth overview of the basic characteristics of the sample households, the quality of the capitals they have and their livelihood activities. There appear to be strong linkages between poverty and household composition in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. The vulnerability of households is closely related to livelihood activities, in particular to being employed in the informal sector or being a woman or child. Poor households have a smaller portfolio of capitals and men's stocks of capitals are bigger than women's. Incomes generated by poorer households are often inadequate to maintain their livelihood, cope with emergencies or pursue small investments. They have extremely low valuable physical capitals, lack tenure security and therefore confront an unprecedented level of debt that makes them not only less equipped to deal with the current situation but vulnerable to future shocks too. There are marked internal inequalities in access to water supply, health care, education, financial resources, energy, transport, security and justice. Poorer households are less able to take advantage of livelihood strategies that offer greater upward mobility due to their lack of social capital. Policies, institutions and process are very critically in this regard as PIPs often operate on the basis of strong ties with more powerful individuals within and beyond a person's neighbourhood and who could provide access to various livelihood assets. Women tend to have less access to resources than men within their respective categories of well-being. Therefore, the vulnerability of a household is likely to decrease or increase according to the gender of the household head. Moreover, individuals who belong to social groups whose ethnicity and culture enjoy the least recognition, influence and power in society tend to suffer more access failure than others. It has been argued that access to resources is almost entirely dependent on one's social position in the community, with ethnic and gender identities as very influential factors too. Such identities principally determine the amount of social and political capital necessary for accessing resources and coping with adversity.

Life histories indicated that the path an individual or household has taken is determined by a set of interlocking factors. Life histories of selected cases show that poverty always accompanied a decline in the quality of life and the destruction of natural resources when people lack the means and the right to respond to changes. The structures of power within society play a key role in determining their access to or exclusion from most vital resources of survival and the path they eventually take. Overall, the strategies these households were able to undertake were characterized by uncertainty due to insecure rights and access to resources, and they tended to generate few returns. The continuous loss of assets, compounded by a lack of opportunity and time to rebuild, has left some individuals and groups extremely poor.

The study demonstrates that the poor cannot achieve the desired outcome of their livelihood activities due to the lack of an enabling environment that would allow them to access capitals and choose the way they want to utilize them. This suggests two important factors that lead to poverty: constraints on choice, and the consequences of a decreased ability to respond to and cope with adversity. Policies geared towards poverty reduction need to take these factors into consideration by transforming the environment in which poor people operate and by enabling them to build and mobilize their own resources.

# Samenvatting (summary in Dutch)

In Soedan hebben de laatste twee decennia grote institutionele and ideologische veranderingen plaatsgevonden die hun weerslag hebben gehad op de *livelihoods* van de bevolking. In het hele land, en in het bijzonder in de hoofdstad Khartoem, is de armoedesituatie verslechterd. Juist de meerderheid van de inwoners van Khartoem is hard getroffen, omdat zij meer geïntegreerd zijn in de geldeconomie en de arbeidsmarkt en meer afhankelijk zijn van voedsel- en andere subsidies. Bovendien is hun toegang tot urbane voorzieningen aanzienlijk afgenomen. Ook zijn er tekenen dat sommige groepen meer gemarginaliseerd zijn dan andere. Deze studie heeft tot doel te onderzoeken op welke wijze deze groepen gemarginaliseerd zijn en welke opties ze nog hebben om een *sustainable livelihood* te bereiken.

De belangrijkste onderzoeksvragen voor deze studie zijn:

- Wie zijn de armen en wie is er niet arm? Welke *livelihood capitals* hebben ze en hoe organiseren zij hun *livelihood*?
- Welke zijn de belangrijkste instituties en processen, inclusief rechten, via welke zij wel of geen toegang kunnen verschaffen tot een *sustainable livelihood*?
- Wat waren in verschillende perioden de belangrijkste veranderingen en welke gevolgen hadden die op hun *livelihood* strategieën? Door welke factoren zijn deze processen gevormd?

*Theoretisch kader*

Allereerst worden in deze studie de belangrijkste benaderingen van het armoedevraagstuk besproken. Armoede is geconceptualiseerd als een dynamisch en multi-dimensionaal verschijnsel, dat veel breder is dan gebrek aan inkomen. Armoede is niet alleen het gevolg van gebrek aan materiële hulpbronnen, maar met name van beperkingen van capaciteiten en keuzes van mensen, waardoor hun kwetsbaarheid toeneemt. De studie conceptualiseert armoede in termen van kwetsbaarheid of het onvermogen van mensen adequaat te reageren op schokken en gevaren. Hiermee wordt aangegeven dat er een intrinsieke relatie is tussen armoede en kwetsbaarheid. Kwetsbaarheid en de daaropvolgende deprivatie in welke vorm dan ook, zijn verbonden met ongelijkheid in machtsrelaties in de samenleving, waardoor het vermogen van mensen om volledig gebruik te maken van *livelihood* hulpbronnen wordt aangetast. In deze zin bevordert sociale uitsluiting kwetsbaarheid. Instituties, die sociale attitudes en waarden in de samenleving reproduceren en versterken, en dus ook de positie van machtige actoren, sluiten bepaalde mensen uit. Echter, fundamentele veranderingen en transformatie van machtsverhoudingen ten gunste van de armen beginnen ook bij de armen zelf. Deze studie vertrekt daarom vanuit de premisse dat het vraagstuk van *empowerment* gelegen is in de individuele sociale, culturele en historische context van de actoren. In dit verband is het ook nuttig om een onderscheid te maken tussen *empowerment*, als een capaciteit van actoren, en rechten.

Vervolgens gaat de studie in op enkele specifieke factoren die van invloed zijn op *livelihoods* in een urbane context. Hoewel urbane en rurale contexten sterk met elkaar verbonden zijn, gaat het in de urbane context in het bijzonder over lonen en werkgele-

genheid, over zekerheid van huisvesting en grondbezit, en over toegang tot urbane voorzieningen en zulks in een situatie dat effectieve gemeenschaps- en basisorganisaties niet bestaan.

*Analytisch kader*
Door middel van het *sustainable livelihood*-kader worden bovenstaande theoretische overwegingen vertaald in praktische onderzoeksstappen. Dit betekent een flexibele en dynamische benadering van *livelihoods* die zich richt op aspecten die voor mensen op een holistische wijze belangrijk zijn en op hun beperkingen om die te bereiken. De benadering richt zich ook op de relaties tussen verschillende vormen van kwetsbaarheid van armen en de ondersteuning waarover ze kunnen beschikken om die de baas te worden. Hoewel gebaseerd op de *sustainable livelihood*-benadering, legt deze studie daarnaast nadruk op kwesties van 'toegang' en 'macht', die anders onderbelicht zouden blijven. Ook worden een aantal belangrijke factoren die te maken hebben met de urbane context van het onderzoek, zoals hierboven reeds uitgelegd, benadrukt.

De studie gebruikt de Participatory Poverty Analysis (PPA) als methode van dataverzameling en analyse. Vier buurten zijn geselecteerd in Khartoem om de diversiteit en dynamiek van *livelihoods* in beeld te brengen en patronen daarin te kunnen vergelijken. De studie richt zich op de exploratie van het volledige continuüm van welzijn. Huishoudens zijn daarom in vier categorieën van welzijn geclassificeerd, namelijk 'altijd arm', 'soms arm', 'gemiddeld arm' en 'niet arm'. Door middel van een gestratificeerde steekproef zijn 70 huishoudens uit deze categorieën per buurt geselecteerd voor verder onderzoek. Verschillende technieken zijn gebruikt, zoals surveys van huishouden en buurten, interviews en discussies in *focus groups* en diepte-interviews over levensgeschiedenissen. Ook secundaire data zijn verzameld. De verzamelde data zijn zowel kwalitatief als kwantitatief.

*Context*
De uitdagingen waarmee Soedan geconfronteerd wordt zijn dezelfde als waarmee heel Afrika te maken heeft. Dat zijn: milieudegradatie, oorlog en conflicten, HIV/AIDS, malaria en andere dodelijke ziekten en de uitdaging van democratie en goed bestuur. Armoede in Soedan is vooral het resultaat van structurele factoren, vooral die welke vormen van eigendom, productie en verdeling van *livelihood capitals* beïnvloeden. Veel van deze factoren droegen bij aan de trek van de rurale bevolking naar de steden, Khartoem in het bijzonder. De massale vestiging in Khartoem vond plaats in een tijd van dalende werkgelegenheid en er ontstonden geen banen in de industrie, die het tekort konden opvullen.

De vier onderzoeksbuurten zijn verspreid over een groot en complex geografisch gebied aan de randen van Groot-Khartoem. Ze zijn officieel geen onderdeel van de organisatie van de stad en daarom zijn er, enkele kleine uitzonderingen daargelaten, geen basisvoorzieningen als water, elektriciteit, riolering en geplaveide wegen. Sommige van deze buurten zijn gedeeltelijke geformaliseerd geworden, maar de mate waarin varieert sterk per buurt.

*Belangrijkste bevindingen*
Op de eerste plaats werd de werking van het cluster *Policies–Institutions-Processes* (PIPs), die een centrale positie inneemt in het analytisch kader, en van de invloed van de geografische en historische context in het bepalen van 'toegang' verhelderd. De

gemeenschappen zijn hiërarchisch georganiseerd op basis van etniciteit, *gender* en welzijn van huishoudens. In het algemeen weerspiegelden de PIPs niet de behoeften van de armen en geen enkele kon politieke *agency* bevorderen. Instituties die verondersteld werden de armen te bedienen speelden vaak een negatieve rol in hun *livelihoods*. De armen waren ook niet vertegenwoordigd in hun besluitvormingsorganen. Als dat toch het geval was, dan was het alleen maar om de besluitvorming te legitimeren en niet omdat men oprecht geïnteresseerd was in hun mening of om hen in staat te stellen controle over hun leven te krijgen.

De studie geeft een grondig overzicht van de belangrijkste kenmerken van de huishoudens in de steekproef, de kwaliteit van hun *livelihood capitals* en hun *livelihood* activiteiten. Er lijkt een sterk verband te bestaan tussen armoede en de samenstelling van het huishouden in termen van *gender*, etniciteit en leeftijd. Kwetsbaarheid van het huishouden is sterk gerelateerd aan *livelihood* activiteiten (met name informeel werk), aan vrouw-zijn of aan kind-zijn. Arme huishoudens hebben een kleinere hoeveelheid *capitals* en die van mannen is groter dan die van vrouwen. Inkomens van armere huishoudens zijn vaak onvoldoende om een bepaalde *livelihood* vol te houden, om met noodsituaties om te gaan of om kleine investeringen te doen. Ze hebben ook extreem weinig fysiek kapitaal en het ontbreekt hen aan zekerheid van huisvesting en grondbezit. Daardoor kijken ze tegen ongekend hoge schulden aan, waarmee ze in hun huidige situatie al problemen hebben en ook kwetsbaarder zijn voor schokken in de toekomst.

Er bestaat ook een duidelijke ongelijkheid in de toegang tot water, gezondheidszorg, onderwijs, financiële ondersteuning, energie, transport en veiligheid en justitie. Door hun gebrek aan sociaal kapitaal zijn armere huishoudens minder goed in staat om profijt te trekken van *livelihood* strategieën die een grotere opwaartse mobiliteit opleveren. Het cluster *policies-institutions-processes* is hierin erg belangrijk. PIPs opereren vaak op basis van sterke banden met machtige individuen binnen en buiten de buurt, die op hun beurt weer toegang kunnen verschaffen tot verschillende *livelihood capitals*.

In de verschillende categorieën van welzijn hebben vrouwen meestal minder toegang tot hulpbronnen dan mannen. Daarom hangt de kwetsbaarheid van huishoudens samen met de *gender* van het hoofd van het huishouden. Bovendien hebben individuen die tot etnische en culturele groepen behoren met weinig erkenning, invloed en macht in de samenleving, minder toegang dan anderen. Daarom wordt geconcludeerd dat toegang tot hulpbronnen bijna geheel afhankelijk is van de sociale positie in de gemeenschap, met etniciteit en *gender* als de meest invloedrijke factoren. Deze identiteiten bepalen de hoeveelheid sociaal en politiek kapitaal die nodig zijn om toegang te verschaffen tot hulpbronnen en om te gaan met tegenspoed.

Levensgeschiedenissen geven de weg aan die een individu of een huishouden heeft genomen onder invloed van een aantal met elkaar samenhangende factoren. Levensgeschiedenissen van een aantal geselecteerde respondenten laten zien dat armoede altijd vergezeld ging met verlies in kwaliteit van leven en vernietiging van natuurlijke hulpbronnen als het mensen aan het recht en middelen om te reageren op veranderingen ontbrak. De machtstructuren binnen de samenleving speelden een sleutelrol in het bepalen van hun toegang tot of uitsluiting van de meest essentiële hulpbronnen voor overleving en de weg die ze uiteindelijk hebben gevolgd. Over het algemeen werden de strategieën die deze huishoudens konden nemen gekenmerkt door onzekerheid, vanwege onzekere rechten op en toegang tot hulpbronnen en door het weinige dat ze opbrachten. Voortdurend verlies van middelen, verergerd door het gebrek aan mogelijk-

heden en tijd om ze weer op te bouwen, heeft een aantal van hen in extreme armoede gebracht.

De studie heeft aangetoond dat de armen niet de gewenste uitkomst van hun *livelihood* activiteiten kunnen bereiken door het gebrek aan een omgeving die hen daartoe in staat stelt. Die omgeving zou hen in staat moeten stellen om toegang te krijgen tot *livelihood capitals* en hun de keuze moeten laten hoe die te gebruiken. Dit suggereert twee belangrijke factoren die tot armoede leiden: de beperkingen op de keuze voor, en de gevolgen van, de beperkte mogelijkheid om te reageren op tegenspoed. Beleid dat gericht is op armoedebestrijding moet daarmee rekening houden door juist de omgeving waarbinnen armen opereren te transformeren, opdat de armen hun eigen hulpbronnen kunnen opbouwen en mobiliseren.

# Curriculum vitae

Muna A. Abdalla was born in August 1966 in Khartoum, the Capital of Sudan. After completing primary and secondary education in Sudan, she pursued her university education in Egypt, University of Zagazig, where she obtained her BSC in Science and Education. In 1989 she obtained an Advanced Diploma in Development and Adult Education, Post Graduate College, University of Khartoum, then a M.Ed. in Education, University of Manchester, UK, 1991. She worked as consultant/researcher on Africa's development challenges, poverty, gender and capacity building issues with ILO, OSSREA and the Ford Foundation in different countries. She coordinated and assisted in implementing and managing projects for UNECEF in Sudan, and worked for the Sudan Broadcasting Services and DPMF in Ethiopia.

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