“Informal ties, Social Capital and development: Popular Committees in Egypt, a Case Study Post-25th of January Revolution”

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Political Science

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

by

Lamyaa Khaled Rayan

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The American University in Cairo

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ABSTRACT
The 25th of January revolution, was the mark of an extraordinary event in the history of Egypt. Mass mobilizations of people in the capital; Cairo, and many big cities such as; Alexandria, and neighboring governorates went down marching in the streets calling for the toppling of the Mubarak regime. Intense struggle between the people and security forces, has left the country with a wide security gap. The security gap as a result made way to a very significant phenomenon all over the country known as; “Al-Legaan Al-Sha’abeya” or “Popular defense committees”. The Popular defense committees resembled informal-ties that brought together residents of defined neighbourhoods to collectively protect their neighborhoods, their families, and their properties during intense days of violence on Egyptian streets. However, with security relatively restored after the toppling of the Mubarak regime, these Popular defense committees dropped the ‘defense’ or ‘security’ element they used to play, changing its name and function to another protective duty, but this time protecting the revolution. They formed what came to be known as “Al-Legaan Al-Sha’abeya Lel Defa’a ‘An Al-Thawra” or “Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution”. Adopting four case studies of popular committees of; ‘Mit Oqba’, ‘Imbaba, Mohandessin, Dokki and Agouza’, and ‘Maadi’ in this thesis, this thesis thus attempts to find out to what extent these informal-ties represented in the popular committees that were first built during moments of security gap help later to consolidate the stock of social capital, and how this might possible affect development in the future.

The thesis finds out that the popular committees represented more of formal associations rather than those representing informal ties; the majority of the activities that were carried out by the Popular Committees were political, and the developmental impact that might result as of such could be promising on the long run indeed. However, the low level of other activities (of social or economic dimensions) observed is a drawback. Also, certain limitations represented in lack of motivation elements, and financial resources, were great hindering
factors to the developmental impact the popular committees could have brought about, and thus little impact in its addition to the existing stock of social capital.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

After years of repression, corruption, and wide injustices, the 25th of January was a day that marked the spark of the Egyptian revolution toppling over Mubarak’s authoritarian regime. A series of intense eighteen days of instability, tension, and violence that took place between the 25th of January and February 11th (the day the former president Mohammed Hosni Mubarak stepped down) left the country with a remarkable wide security gap.

People were forced to protect themselves against possible robberies, and attacks by means of what they came to form collectively in each neighborhood as “Al-Legaan Al-Sha’abeya” or the “Popular defense committees” all over the country. Popular defense committees resembled informal-ties that brought together residents of defined neighbourhoods to collectively protect their neighborhood, their families, and their properties.

When security was technically restored back on the streets after the step down of Mubarak, the phenomenon of popular defense committees was almost over in every neighbourhood in Egypt, giving up the security role it came to play. Some Popular Committees however remained existent holding on to the title “popular committees” (PC’s), dropping however the word “defense” from its title, as well as, from its role. By such the Popular Committees were announcing themselves as informal society structures that sought to engage actively in society.

According to one study by Jennifer Bremer (2011), the Popular Committee’s new roles came to be illustrated in either service provision, act as pressuring agents on the government to deliver services, or even more oriented with a political rhetoric. The Popular Committee’s have also developed in organization into one of two forms. First, neighbourhood or city-wide organizations that worked on the betterment of their localities; and second, some
were motivated to address the problems that their localities might face where individuals were encouraged to put forth their professional expertise and skills into solving the problems (Bremer, 2011, 4).

The phenomenon of Popular Committees could indeed fit into wider areas and conceptions of social science. A resultant of a recent shared experience country-wide, and having demonstrated forms of solidarity amongst individuals towards a common goal, the Popular Committees in turn relates very much to the literature on Social Capital and how it may lead to possible developmental benefits.

Much literature in the field of political sciences observes positive correlations between social capital and development (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Welzel et.al, 2005; Tavits, 2006); especially local settings, and is able to foster collective action to achieve certain defined developmental goals (Dhesi, 2000; Grant, 2001; Hays and Kogl, 2007; Tsai, 2007; Karishma et.al, 2008). It is thus worth examining through whether such informal ties consolidate the stock of social capital in Egyptian neighborhood settings; and whether they contribute to development.

Toward those ends, this thesis has selected a sample of four neighborhoods located in the Greater Cairo Region (GRC) as case studies namely; Mit Oqba; Imbaba; Dokki, Mohandessin, and Agouza; and Maadi. By using a comparative case-study approach, the case studies will attempt to illustrate the possibility of whether the Popular Committees as a phenomenon of informal ties that were built during moments of security gap, could help to consolidate the stock of existing social capital in local communities and the possible developmental benefits that could be brought about as a result of such.
1.2 The Research Problem

This thesis will try to find out to what extent the informal-ties that are built during moments of security gap help later to consolidate the stock of Social Capital? And how would this in turn affect development?

1.3 Research questions

- What is the possibility that the informal-ties that were built during moments of a security gap would survive?
- Could informal-ties that were built during moments of a security gap expand social capital?
- Will the informal-ties that were built during moments of a security gap help promote development?
- What are the factors that help maintain the informal-ties that were built during a moment of security gap?
- What are the factors that would erode the informal-ties built during moments of a security gap?

1.4 Research Objectives

- This thesis has specific objectives which include:
  Exploring the possibility of which informal-ties that were built during a moment of security gap (represented in the ‘popular committees’), could serve as a consolidating resource to the stock of social capital.
• Attempt to analyze the dynamics of how the informal-ties that were built during a moment of security gap; (represented in the ‘popular committees’), is able to contribute to development.

• Attempt to analyze the factors that play a role in nourishing the effectiveness of the informal-ties that were built during a moment of security gap; (represented in the ‘popular committees’); as well as analyzing the limitations.

• Come up with further research questions and recommendations for future research on the subject in study.

1.5 Structure of Thesis Chapters

The structure of this thesis is organized as follows; the first chapter as we have just seen gives an introduction about the topic of this study, the research problem, research questions, research objectives, and the structure of the thesis chapters as we explain.

Chapter two and chapter three represent the theoretical chapters of this study. Chapter two, holds a discussion on the concept of social capital and its theoretical frameworks. The chapter discusses social capital and development; forms of social capital; approached to the study of social capital; factors affecting social capital; and on measuring social capital.

In Chapter three a discussion of the theoretical framework and the research methodology take place.

In Chapter four, this study displays two case studies that might fit with the nature of this study on which informal ties, social capital and development are meant to be highlighted. The cases selected are that of Cuba and China.
Chapters five, six, and seven represent the heart of this study. Chapter five starts by giving an overview to the context of the study discussing the ‘revolutionary context’, and the status of social capital in Egypt. Chapter six then follows with a discussion on the phenomenon of Popular Committees in Egypt. In Chapter seven, the chapter illustrates the field work carried out for this study. A sample of four Popular committees namely; Mit oqba; Imbaba; Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin; and Maadi are discussed highlighting their activities and the possible efforts they shape in building of social capital. The last section of the chapter then holds an extensive analysis to the field work performed for this study.

Finally, chapter nine holds the conclusion to this study highlighting the major observation this thesis comes to hold.
CHAPTER II: ON SOCIAL CAPITAL: THE CONCEPT AND ITS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“It is a literature to which all the social science disciplines have contributed, and it is beginning to generate a remarkable consensus regarding the role and importance of institutions and communities in development” (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 228).

As inferred from the above quotation on the literature of Social Capital, there are many theories and approaches available in the existing literature on social capital, that tackles the relationship between social capital -in its various forms and representation-, and its relation to development; whether its community-based development, political development, or economic development…etc.

Indeed literature on social capital has been found to be numerous, and it is noteworthy to point out that here in this chapter that we only display a sample of the huge literature that is existent on the subject in study. We start off by pointing out the main trends present on the study of social capital and its relation to development, followed by a discussion on the following topics; forms of social capital; approaches to the study of social capital; factors affecting social capital; and finally measuring social capital.

2.1 Social Capital and Development

Literature on the subject of social capital and development entails both theoretical and empirical studies. The relationship between social capital and development has been presented in literature and influenced by either of two schools; those who support Pierre Bourdieu’s definition of social capital, and those who support Robert Putnam’s definition. The main distinguishing difference highlighted in the literature between the two definitions is that, scholars who support Bourdieu’s definition do not collapse social networks and social
capital together; whereas scholar’s supporting Putnam’s definition collapses networks and connections with capital. To illustrate such; Bourdieu defines social capital as: “Social capital is ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1983, 249). As one study attempts to elaborate on Bourdieu’s definition, the author explains that,

“Social capital is an individual capacity that results from occupying a particular position within existing power structures… (and that) …one’s interactions with others may constitute a network of connections, and may generate trust, but depending on the larger economic and political power structures within which these interactions occur, they may or may not constitute resources that an individual or group may draw upon to pursue political or economic goals.” (Hays and Kogl, 2007)

In that sense, Bourdieu’s definition indicates that for social networks to be translated into a resource and indicate the existence of social capital; some sort of political or economic outcome/benefit must be evident as a resultant.

On the other hand, Robert Putnam’s definition of social capital is defined as: “social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue” ” (Putnam, 2000, 19). Putnam’s definition asserts the importance of ‘attitude’ and ‘behavior’ and does not place an emphasis that social-networks of interaction need to be placed within a certain framework of structured “power-networks” like Bordieu’s definition. In that sense, all social networks to Putnam constitute
social capital; even though he points out that some might serve as democratic and others as exclusionary.

While both proponents’ works have received criticism, we are not concerned here about displaying the literature that criticizes their works; however, what we mean to point out by mentioning that; is that their works have nevertheless served as foundational basis to many other works on the concept of social capital and its significance as a resource for development. For example theoretical works by; Coleman, Portes, and Foley (1988, 1998, 1999) built their works on Bourdieu’s; and Fukuyama, Woolcock, and Adler (1995, 1998, 2000) built their works on Putnam. (Claridge, 2004)

Some studies have indeed come to provide propositions supporting the possible positive relationship between social capital and development (Fox, 1996; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Welzel et.al., 2005; Klesner, 2007); while others have come to argue that it is possibly a myth that not all forms of social capital could contribute to development; such as De Filipis (2001).

However, one study attempted to provide an understanding of social capital that tended to unite all the possible understandings that were contributed into that domain. In Welz1 et.al. (2005), the authors propose that most theories recognize that the central importance of social capital resides within its ability to produce collective action. Much emphasis has been put on institutionalized forms (voluntary associations, professional organizations,..etc.) of community involvement whereas little attention has been given to the role of non-institutionalized forms (such as peaceful demonstrations, strikes, petitions,…etc.). Seldom have studies considered ‘elite challenging actions’ as a form of social capital; instead it has been thought to undermine social capital (Putnam, 2000). However, “Given that most theories see the central importance of social capital in its function to produce collective action, there is
no conceptual justification to exclude elite-challenging action from the study of social capital. For elite-challenging action is a form of collective action.” (Welzel et.al, 2005, 124).

Thus in that sense the authors develop a comprehensive understanding of social capital in that it involves three facets: ties, actions and something translating ties into actions. (Welzel et.al, 2005, 140).

The authors believe that the study of social capital should “be open to all types of community ties, all types of translators, and all types of collective actions” (Welzel et.al, 2005, 141). Thus to understand social capital the study provides the following propositions:

“(a) A communal basis on which it can operate: all possible sorts of community ties.

(b) “Translators”; which are factors that help ‘translate’ given ties into collective action namely:

(1) Resource-based capabilities: material and intellectual resources
(2) Institution-based incentives: appropriate norms and institutions.
(3) Value-based motivators: Trust, and adequate value orientations.

(c) A product: Producing collective action; where the frequency and radius of collective action in a society measures the productivity of social capital. ” (Welzel et.al, 2005, 141).

In general, The closest literature to our subject of study is found in a variety of studies that place certain institutionalized conceptions under the umbrella of social capital. Studies that discuss for example, neighborhood associations or neighborhood organizations (Grant, 2001; Purdue, 2001; Hays and Kogl, 2007; Tsai, 2007; Pratt, 2008; Andrews, 2011),
voluntary associations or voluntary organizations (Price, 2002; Teorell, 2003; Claibourn and Martin, 2007; Wollebaek and Stromsnes, 2008), and social-networks or social-cohesion (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Heuser, 2005; Hulse and Stone, 2007); all of which are structures which scholars have come to study with their regards: the issue of when and how these structures hold basis for social capital; and whether or not this capital would or would not be translated into some sort of resource that would push forward for development.

2.2 Forms of Social Capital

Many studies have come to contribute on the various forms of social capital. The various forms of social capital existent in the literature is represented in the following forms: Formal social capital, Informal social capital, Bridging social capital, Bonding social capital, structural social capital, and cognitive social capital. These mentioned forms of social capital are amongst the popular found in a diversity of literature on the subject.

**Formal social capital**; is a form of social capital which represented in the social ties and relationships that are build within the framework of formal institutions such as; governmental institutions, and civil society organizations. Robert Putnam and other scholars such as Brehm and Rahn (1997), and Gootaert (2001) have focused in their studies on the membership of people in formal organizations as a measure of social capital. (Brock and Green, 2005,3).

**Informal social capital**; is the form of social capital which is represented in the social relationships and ties that are formed within the framework of informal institutions such as; family relations, neighborhood or friends gatherings. Scholars such as La Due Lacke and Huckfeldt (1998), and Coleman (1990), are examples of scholars who have contributed on such form of social capital. (Brock and Green, 2005,3)
Bonding social capital; is a concept which refers to the form of social capital which results as a result of the existing social ties and relationships within a given closed community or network; and the ability of the existing ties to expand within these networks creating larger circles of trust among its members. Traditional ties such as religion, race, or culture are examples of the networks that might experience bonding of social capital. Scholars such as Putnam (2002), Frank (2003), and Vidal (2004), are examples of scholars who contributed on such concept. (Brisson, 2009, 4)

Bridging social capital; is a concept which refers to the form of social capital which results as a result of ‘extra-community’ relationships, those that represent relationships and ties that are created between different communities. (Brisson, 2009, 4)

Structural social capital; is one which “facilitates information sharing and collective action and decision making through established roles and social networks supplemented by rules, procedures, and precedents”; while Cognitive social capital, refers to “shared norms, values, trust, attitudes, and beliefs, and is therefore a more subjective and intangible concept”. (Grootaert, and Bastelaer, 2003, 3).

2.3 Approaches to the study of Social Capital

Of the major contributions on the approaches of studying social capital was a study by Woolcock and Narayan (2000), which has outlined four major approaches/views used to study social capital namely; Communitarian view, Networks view, Institutional view, and Synergy view. (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 229)

Communitarian view, this approach to the study of social capital identifies local organizations such as associations and clubs as social capital. The communitarian approach
takes into consideration the number of groups in a certain community as an indicator to social capital, and views these kinds of groups to be very vital in helping poor people’s vulnerable conditions. This approach however was criticized that it is only concerned with only one form of organization, and that is the social capital within the formal organizations, or institutions. Yet, proponents of this approach support their argument that the availability and accessibility of the information of the formal groups or formal institutions, is what makes them focus on these types of networks instead of other informal types that are very difficult to collect data on. (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 229)

Network view, this approach to the study of social capital focuses on both the horizontal and vertical associations between people; which has later been known as “bonding” and “bridging” social capital. Different combinations of the two dimensions “bonding” and “bridging” social capital can thus in effect be responsible for a variety of outcomes. The network view might very much recognize groups of bonding social capital in a way that might both help and hinder economic development; since the more there is bonding of social capital, the less opportunities of engagements with formal institutions and create space for the creation of bridging social capital occurs. Thus, “its proponents thus are highly sceptical of arguments that social capital can (or should) be measured across larger social aggregates, such as societies or nations”. (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 233)

Institutional view, this approach to the study of social capital views social capital as a dependent variable where it is highly affected by the political, legal, and institutional environment it exists in. The strength of this approach resides in the fact that it focuses of macroeconomic policy concerns; however, it lacks focus on the microeconomic component. (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 234)
Synergy view, this approach to the study of social capital incorporated both propositions from the networks view and the institutional view. One has to define the social relationships and ties in a given society understudy; as well as, the nature of the existing institutions that arise within its framework (whether they are formal or informal). The external factors that might affect the existing institutions should not however be disregarded. Social capital in that sense plays a role as a mediating variable between public and private institutions. (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 237)

2.4 Factors affecting social capital

There are studies on the subject of social capital that have come to mention the various factors that might influence the effectiveness of an existing form of social capital on development in general. Studies that came to focus on examining the different attitudes and behaviors among social networks as capital in relation to development, by highlighting the importance of certain factors or variables (at times explicitly and other times implicitly); whether its culture, place, form of governance (authoritarian, transitional, or democratic settings) or even a factor of security; all of which played an important role in affecting the relation between social capital and development outcomes.

With regards to studies that highlight the effect of a security variable or factor on the conception of social capital in relation to development; we find that scholars highlight how that a threatening security factor might foster social networks coming together into action into tackling a certain problem they face (Grant, 2001; De Silva et al., 2007). For example; in Guatemala a study which analyses the ways with which two low-income communities in Guatemala have worked on improving both their physical and social environment, the two low-income communities relied on two strategies; that of mobilization through informal links
(links to other groupings or stakeholders, or through political clientelism), and through protest (to attract the attention of the municipal government, the national government or even the international community and press) to reach their community development goals. In this case, the security element was the communities’ issue of ‘land tenure’ that kept encouraging the communities to keep up with the protests and demonstrations until the government granted the tenure with a reasonable symbolic price (Grant, 2001).

Other scholars have highlighted the importance of ‘place’ as a very important factor to be taken into consideration while exploring the relationship between social capital and development. In this domain we might refer to literature which tackles neighborhood organizations and associations and how that a neighborhood as a “defined set place” could in itself be one context for the production and maintenance of social capital (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Purdue, 2001; Kirshna, 2007); serve as a place-based network to empower disadvantaged communities (Mc Callum et al., 2002; Hays and Kogl, 2007; Karishma et al. 2008); or even being home to a set of pressing problems attributed to a specific ‘place’ which in turn, it might inspire those who might be withdrawn from political life to participate and thus fostering civic engagement (Pratt, 1971; Fox, 1996; De Silva, 2007; Andrews, 2011; ).

For example, in a case-study of low-and moderate-income residents of Waterloo, Iowa; based on interviews with a representative sample of neighborhood residents in this small industrial city; the study suggests that strong informal networks of social capital might exist within neighborhoods; noting that people who were more strongly engaged in these networks were not necessarily more involved in the efforts of formal neighbourhood associations. However, individuals who were involved in these formal associations were much more likely to be connected to the local and national political systems through voting and other forms of participation (Hays and Kogl, 2007). The variable of ‘place’ thus indicates a very important factor into mobilizing a specific given form of civic participation by people who do not
necessarily have to be part of any formal association in a given set place. The study indicates that “place” has been a neglected variable in most literature on place-based participation (Hays and Kogl, 2007, 185). The importance of highlighting “place” as a variable in their study is based on Alexis de-Tocqueville’s that “ordinary citizens, including those tempted to withdraw from political life, will be more motivated to participate at the local level because local issues are immediate and tangible” (Hays and Kogl, 2007, 185). They believe that such a proposition may inspire and reinforce citizen participation when they realize that their fate is tied to the fate of the neighborhood; thus inspiring and reinforcing participation.

While some have argued that place-based networks in certain neighbourhoods might be a resultant of discontent or frustration (for example: neglect by public officials) as motivators to participation (Clark, 1994, 952), thus undermining the conception of social capital; a recent study however has put forth an argument that “elite-challenging” actions; which may take the form of expressing discontent; might reflect social capital (Welzel et.al., 2005). This proposition of “elite-challenging” action as a representation of social capital could indeed serve useful to settings especially those that represent undemocratic forms of rule.

An in-depth case study research of 316 villages in China, has shown that villages which have developed ‘Solidary groups’ have been able to enforce informal institutions of accountability which subjects and enforces local officials to meet with their public obligations; and thus have better local public goods provision (Tsai, 2007). Some studies might also come to serve as justifying cases to such a proposition; though not explicitly mentioning “elite-challenging” action per say as a form of social capital. These studies could be those which relate membership in voluntary associations and their positive effect on policy accountability for example (Claiborne, Martin, 2007), or even attempt to pressure government performance (Tavits, 2006).
However, in a study by Amaney Jamal (2007) she questions whether civic associations in non-western settings might promote democratic governance or not. She proposes that associational contexts characterized by ‘patron-client’ relationships might very much push associations to replicate these very same ties as well. In her case study in West Bank, Palestine, she found out that relations within associations which supported FATAH) were based on trust but did not promote democratic practices. Associations that were hostile to FATAH promoted democratic practices, but the level of interpersonal trust among their members was very low. Social trust was thus seen as inversely related to support for democratic institutions. (Jamal, 2007, 3, 133)

Finally, considering studies that highlight the importance of the variable of ‘culture’ (Dhesi, 2000; Fuhrman, 2006), we could find that scholars stress on how the importance of exploring social capital in a given cultural setting in order to develop the correct measuring tools for social capital in a particular setting and its possible effect on development (political, or economic or even community-based development); for social capital might be a product of a certain moment of historical, political, or even ideological developments. For example in one study on Kyrgyzstan, it was the traditional social networks through concepts such as “nuuganchilik, a concept which obliges the Kyrgyz people to help and avenge their fellow community members, provides the basis of all social institutions in Kyrgyzstan” (Fuhrman, 2006, 19-20) and the concept of a “sherine an informal association of people who make contributions to a fund that is given to each contributor in turn. The practice requires a great deal of trust, because there are incentives for individuals to cease contributions once their own payoff has been received” (Fuhrman, 2006, 19-20). These above mentioned examples a few of many examples that stress how the variable or factor of culture might indeed play a very important role in mobilizing collective action –to the extent of very large scales such as that represented in the revolution that took place in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. The traditional social
networks that existed based on ‘culture’ played a role in “providing a forum for discourse on political issues, fostering social trust by encouraging citizens to act collectively, and allowing information on political related events to spread easily” (Fuhrman, 2006, 16).

2.5 On measuring social capital

Literature on the issue of measuring social capital has highlighted the problematic complexity that this issue comes to shape. To have a single measure of social capital is almost impossible. This is because the concept of social capital has many definitions, and the various natures and forms of social capital that are ever changing and evolving. One possible means of measurement is the membership in formal and informal networks and associations. The World Values Survey is also one other means of measurement of the norms and values which for example, facilitate interactions, transaction, and the sharing of information; all of which might be considered a manifestation of social capital. Many studies have also attempted to develop indices of social capital, to measure social capital on both national and sub-national levels. Examples of these studies are “The National commission of Philanthropy and Civic Renewal (1998), The Social Capital Community Benchmark, a comprehensive survey of social capital in the United states (Putnam 2000)”. (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 239- 240) Fukuyama (1995), constructed three determinants upon which social capital should be measured, and these are ‘internal cohesion’, ‘radius of trust’, and ‘externalities’. (Fukuyama 1995, 100) Many empirical studies also have attempted to construct indicators upon which they tried to measure social capital. In India on exploring the root causes of the Hindu and Muslim riots, Varshney (2000) focused on the role of inter-communal networks. In another study, the World Bank’s social capital initiative in Panama and India by Kirshna and shrader (1999). (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, 239- 240) These studies attempted to
provide instruments to the study and measurement of social capital in given societies. In that sense, the issue of measuring social capital is indeed far from being generalized or resolved.

Having reviewed the selected literature above, the nature of this study pushes us to adopt Welzl et.al.’s definition of the concept of social capital. The simplicity and yet comprehensiveness of its approach to social capital makes it a more useful to adopt and use as a perspective to identify the role Popular Committees might play in contributing to the existing stock of social capital. Moreover, the fact that Popular Committees exist within neighborhoods pushes us to give high considerations to the variable of ‘place’ -as highlighted earlier in the study by Hays and Kogl.

Finally, while the majority of studies reviewed on measuring social capital have used quantitative tools, this study will depend on the use of qualitative tools since not sufficient quantitative data could be found. The following chapter extensively elaborates on the theoretical framework and methodology.
CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Many studies on the subject of social capital and development have come to contribute diverse understandings to what social capital constitutes of in an attempt to provide us with a definition to the concept and its possible effect on development in general as we’ve seen in the previous chapter. To examine the topic at hand, this thesis will thus employ Welzel et.al.’s (2005) approach to the understanding of social capital.

“Most theories see the central importance of social capital in its function to produce collective action...Thus, social capital involves three distinct facets: ties, actions and something translating ties into actions” (Welzel et.al., 2005, 140).

Thus to understand social capital the study provides the following propositions:

a) “A communal basis on which it can operate: all possible sorts of community ties.

b) “Translators”; which are factors that help ‘translate’ given ties into collective action namely:

   (1) Resource-based capabilities: material and intellectual resources.

   (2) Institution-based incentives: appropriate norms and institutions.

   (3) Value-based motivators: Trust, and adequate value orientations.
c) A product: Producing collective action; where the frequency and radius of collective action in a society measures the productivity of social capital. " (Welzel et.al, 2005, 141).

Communal basis or Community ties refers to what social capital is built on. This entails all possible sorts of community ties, whether they are networks of ‘interpersonal contacts, psychological ties to a given community, or even group identities or territorial identities’. These ties thus are very important without which social capital cannot exist, however, they do not constitute social capital in itself. Social capital in the authors’ understanding would thus comprise all the possible factors that would in turn ‘translate’ given community ties into collective action. (Welzel et.al, 2005, 140)

The concept of ‘Translators’ that the authors employ in their study is divided into three types as seen in the above definition. They are: resource-based capabilities, institution-based incentives, and value-based motivators. These translators are based on propositions from ‘resource-mobilization theory’, ‘political opportunity structure’, ‘transaction-cost theory’, and ‘value-expectancy theory’. The resource-mobilization theory suggests that resources such as material and intellectual ones are necessary to make people capable of translating the existing ties between them into collective action. Whereas the theory of political opportunity structure argues that certain norms and institutions are necessary as positive incentives that play a role in encouraging people to make use of their ties for collective action. Moreover, transaction cost theories argue that there are various forms of trust that lower transaction costs, ones which if invested become highly beneficial in initiating collective action. Finally, the theory of value-expectancy argues that certain value orientations serve as motivators encouraging people to use their ties into collective action. ((Welzel et.al, 2005, 140-141)

What Social capital then does is manifested in collective action. Based on such openness in the definition and understanding of social capital, one can analyze which forms of social
capital are most beneficial. (Welzel et.al, 2005, 141)

This thesis also draws attention to the variable of ‘Place’ as highlighted in Hays and Kogl’s study (2007). They indicate that “Place” has been a neglected variable in most literature on place-based participation (Hays and Kogl, 2007, 185); since “ordinary citizens, including those tempted to withdraw from political life, will be more motivated to participate at the local level because local issues are immediate and tangible” (Hays and Kogl, 2007,185).

This framework discussed above will be applied to the case of Egypt; namely the Greater Cairo region (GRC) by focusing on the following neighbourhoods: Mit Oqba, Imbaba, Mohandessin, Dokki, Agouza, and Maadi; in order to see whether the informal-ties represented in the Popular Committee structures of the above mentioned neighborhoods can actually add up to the existing stock of social capital and demonstrate tangible effects on development. We will assess such using Welzel et.al.’s (2005) approach to the understanding and identification of social capital discussed above by identifying the following:

- Whether the popular committees in the neighborhoods under study are identified as a communal basis on which social capital can operate. A close attention is given to the nature of relationship between the members of the Popular Committee.
- Identify the “translators” that serve as factors to translate the informal ties represented in the popular committee into an observable action. A close attention is given to the possible material and intellectual resources available or accessible to the Popular Committee; internal as well as external institutions affecting popular committees; actions that manifest trust (level of inclusion or exclusion of certain members); and possibly observant ( or observed?) value orientations.
• Assessing the product or collective action performed by the popular committee, by examining the scope of increase in the informal social ties existent in the neighbourhood and represented in the structure of Popular Committees, or with other Popular Committees. In that sense, attention is given to the activities, and the frequency of their occurrence.

The variable of place that we give attention to, is represented in the specific neighbourhoods under study. It will be taken into consideration how they might serve as a conditional indicator in and of themselves (for example: local problems) into fostering social capital that might push forward for development.

3.2 Research Methodology

In this study, we employ a comparative-case study approach; which is one of the important qualitative approaches widely used. We use a comparative-case study approach to track down the commonalities and differences in the dynamics and effectiveness that popular committees come to represent as a possible resource for social capital and its possible effect on development.

Thus, we selected a sample of popular committees of the following neighbourhoods: Mit Oqba, Imbaba, Mohandessin, Dokki and Agouza, and Maadi. It is important to note that these are only four popular committees and not six; since Mohandessin, Dokki and Agouza represent one popular committee. Thus under study we have: Popular Committee of Mit Oqba, Popular Committee of Imbaba, Popular Committee of Mohandessin, Dokki and Agouza, and Popular Committee of Maadi.

It is noteworthy to point out that the selection of the above mentioned popular committees/neighbourhoods is not a representative sample of the whole phenomenon/population of
popular committees across the Greater Cairo region; i.e.: random sampling wasn’t applied to this study. This sample of popular committees was selected on a major factor that is, ‘accessibility’ to the places/locations of these popular committees and its members by the researcher.

Our sample thus only seeks to magnify a small sample of an existing phenomenon, in an attempt to provide useful information and discover prospects, and possibly recommendations on whether there is a possibility for those popular committees to serve as an existing resource adding up to the existing stock of social capital, and thus push forward for development.

We seek to explore the internal environment of the popular committee, and the extent of which social capital is existent within it through identifying the following:

- The nature of relationship between the members of the popular committee.
- The number of members participating in the popular committee.
- The degree of neighborhood representation that they come to hold.
- The means by which possible disputes might be handled.
- The means by which decision-making is undertook.
- The type of orientation of the popular committees.
- Source of income or finances of the popular committees.
- Possible limitations to the activities/actions carried out.
- The source of participation motivators.

Concerning the external environment, and whether popular committees contribute to expanding social capital beyond its boundaries, we attempt to identify the following:

- The relationship between the popular committee and other existing popular committees.
The popularity of the popular committee in its neighborhood.

Based on the above mentioned focal points, we use them to compare the four case studies under study to highlight the main points of commonalities and differences; weaknesses and strengths; in an attempt to get a glimpse of their possible effectiveness in society, and how they might contribute to development or not.

This study used the following tools in assisting the conduct of this study: qualitative-in-depth interviews, short-interviews, and field observations.

**The qualitative-in-depth interviews** were applied on members of Popular Committees. We selected two members of each popular committee from the sample of the popular committees of the neighbourhoods under study. The study ensured that the selection of interviewees was gender sensitive; where both males and females were interviewed. Topics of discussion revolved around topics related to the formation, structure, values and beliefs that the popular committees came to hold. Also a discussion of the various activities and efforts that are carried out to mobilize citizens to participate with the actions that popular committees came to implement. (See interview guide: Appendix)

**Short-interviews** were a few questions that were asked to inhabitants of the above-mentioned neighbourhoods. The questions were used to reflect the degree with which the Popular Committee in a given neighbourhood was popular or not; whether they have participated with any of its activities; and their opinion about it in general. (See interview guide: Appendix)

The selection of inhabitants/interviewees was not based on a specific sampling technique. The researcher randomly questioned people on the ‘main streets’ (where events of the Popular committees were most likely to have taken place), and has ensured that the selection
of interviewees was gender sensitive, and to some extent religiously sensitive based on symbols that identified such.

By field observations, we mean any observations significant or important about the existing environment that the popular committee exists in.

All fieldwork was conducted during the months of June 2012- July 2012.
CHAPTER IV: OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDIES: INFORMAL TIES, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter, we will review two case studies of which we believe are close enough in concept to the nature of our study. We will briefly examine the cases of Cuba and China. Cuba and China demonstrate examples of bringing together informal ties, social capital and development under focus. We specifically chose the case of Cuba since we wanted to focus on a post-revolutionary status, which is similar to the current case of Egypt witnessing a post-revolutionary phase. Both cases may also represent cases of countries in transition. Cuba according to Ranis and Kosack (2004) represents one, and Min (2011) confirms such too with the case of China. While Egypt is an underdeveloped country; now after the revolution however, it might optimistically be put on its very first steps on its road to transition; though relatively very different than Cuba and China in terms of pace and development of course. It is noteworthy too to point out before proceeding with our cases, that there was only but little literature in English available on Cuba when it comes to social capital. Literature addressing social capital in the case of China has started to prevail very recently (Chan, 2009); especially those that came to focus on social capital (informal social capital) and its association with possible developmental benefits.

4.1 The Cuban Case

Starting of with the Cuban case; after the revolution that took place in 1959 toppling Batista’s regime, a very large Cuban mass organization known as the Committees for the defence of the revolution or Comites de Defensa de la Revolucion (CDR) came to existence. The CDR are very much close in concept to the Popular defence committees (PDCs) that came to existence during the Egyptian revolution. Both represent networks of people in every neighbourhood; even though bearing in mind that the driving factor of their existence during
both revolutions is very different, and the way they are observed in society is very different as well; as we will later see. Before we continue into the nature and role of the CDRs in Cuba, it is important to stop and closely observe the main actors behind the Cuban revolution and highlight how social capital has been indeed one of the underlying factors behind its success—even though not explicitly mentioned—and playing a major role pushing forward change in the political history of Cuba.

According to one scholar; in reality he mentions, workers and peasants were the ones who carried out the expropriations of the revolution; to the extent that he says that without their direct participation, the revolution in Cuba would not have been possible. “The revolutionary government had been brought to power by a series of mass mobilisations of the workers and peasants” (Slee, 2008, 44).

“The idea that this was done by the cadre of a peasant-based rebel army of at most 1000 is preposterous. Tens of thousands of armed, disciplined workers took part in the takeover of factories, plants and warehouses simultaneously in October of 1960 through their militia units and hundreds of thousands of workers took part in reactivating the workplaces over the next several days through their unions.” (Slee, 2008, 29).

The bonds of trust—as simple as how social capital might be defined—; is implicitly evident underlying the successful efforts of this mass mobilization of peasants and workers in helping topple Batista’s regime, could not be left unnoticed.

Looking into the status of social capital prior to the revolution, indeed social capital in Cuban society was significant according to one study by Sanguinetty. Sanguinetty saw social capital existent on different levels among different sectors of society from managers, business owners, engineers, to university professors, and journalists…etc. (Sanguinetty, 2006, 223);
and it wasn’t only until after the revolution that he believes that Cuba witnessed significant losses in its social capital represented in this capital of people who had lots of information and knowledge about the economy, or even merely interpersonal relations (Sanguinetty, 2006, 224). While he does not undermine the continuity of new forms of social capital after the revolution, he however highlights the negative nature it came to represent in unofficial networks such as illegal black market transactions that grew afterwards (Sanguinetty, 2006, 225). Many families were also torn apart with those that chose to leave the country and emigrate. Some were even forbidden to enter the country. This was greatly evident when Cubans settled in different geographical locations outside the country. Thus in reference to social capital outside Cuba; in an attempt to highlight the loss Sanguinetty says,

“Because of the intangible but solid relationships created years earlier as social capital networks that survived the exodus and the dramatic change from one society to another... (that)...enterprises that required less social capital to develop were the first ones to develop and operate efficiently, and they were also the ones to contribute first to the development of the country. This group of enterprises were probably being smallest in size.” (Sanguinetty, 2006, 228).

Sanguinetty’s study came to reveal an anti-communist stance, and thus has very narrowly focused on the negativities of the new communist setting and pictured social capital as a dying phenomenon.

“One way to constrain social capital growth is by implicitly rationing “leisure” time, which is a necessary factor for investing in social capital... Relationships and interpersonal trust do not develop quickly
without relatively long periods of gestation. The rationing of time, on the other hand, is implemented in many different ways such as forcing consumers and workers to stand in line for many activities, by frequent participation in political rallies, and by not having easy access to transportation, making them to wait long hours to get to work and back, etc.” (Sanginetty, 2006, 225).

On the other hand, several other studies have illustrated a more positive image about the role and scope of social capital in communist Cuba. Acknowledging the fact that state and society aren’t much separate spheres in Cuba, social capital is thus then viewed in many instances as extension of the state; especially formal types of social capital represented in civil society organizations and many other institutions present in society. This in turn conforms to a Gramscian definition of civil society where he defines it as “State=political society + civil society” (Reaud, 2006, 231) The CDR or Committees for the Defence of the revolution are a case in point. They have become formally recognized by the state shortly after the successful revolution of 1959 - if not even formed by it- since a revolutionary government after all ran the state, and the CDR meant to ensure that the revolution reached every neighbourhood. (Reaud, 2006, 236) Thus whereas civil society represents a significant portion of social capital existent in one society, the CDR as an institution formed during the revolution was indeed an additional asset to the stock of social capital in Cuba; along with other institutions that came to formation.

“although their role as agents of influence is limited from the perspective of a post-Communist transition as the domestic sphere for social action is still largely state-controlled, their access to the community of Cubans and reification of civic participation is worthy
Comites de Defensa de la Revolucion (CDRs) is considered one of Cuba’s largest mass organizations; one that has created many cells in almost every neighborhood in Cuba. The CDRs have been regarded as critical components to the state in terms of security and surveillance after the revolution; however they have also been increasingly recognized in being actively participant in many forms of social services, such as street cleaning and vaccinations. Members within the CDR are considered to be one of the largest compared to other possible organizations, where 85% of the population at age over fourteen are eligible to be part of it. (Reaud, 2006, 239)

Generally speaking, the CDR was established to increase the mobilization of Cuban people,

“Although these organizations are not independent from the state, and are agents of influence in perpetuating the current Party ideology, their extensive social infrastructure requires that they be considered in any post-Communist transition. Furthermore, the existence of this infrastructure among a highly educated public perpetuates solidarity and associational values that are critical components of civil society”

(Reaud, 2006, 240)

Its slogan “In every neighborhood, Revolution” has reflected an “essence of community organizing, community empowerment, and community engagement or alternatively it presages government spying and the pressures of totalitarian oversight” (Beane, 2010, 3). For several years after the Cuban revolution, the CDR’s major purpose was
to keep an eye on any possible activities that might counter the revolution. However, once the degree of threat was low, the CDRs yet continued to exist whereas they might have very much disbanded. Their existence continued for community-based outreach. (Beane, 2010, 3)

Some of the CDR’s activities in neighborhoods consisted of activities such as, block watches, organize for blood donations, motivate people to engage in cleaning up the neighborhood, and carry out beautification activities whenever there are available resources to carry out such. Sometimes even the CDR is responsible for arranging mutual aid between people in a given neighborhood. For example: if a resident of a certain neighborhood has an emergence for home repairs, the CDR would make sure to take case of such.

On one important account that Cuba has gone through –during the economic crisis– the CDRs played a very important role to the assistance of families, and facilitate addressing the crisis by for example introducing the idea of ‘community vegetable gardens’. (Coyuba and Hamberg, 2003, 22)

According to one study, the CDR has proven very valuable in both ‘literacy education’ and ‘health promotion’. “(The CDRs) have enabled Cuba to prevent an epidemic of HIV (Cuba’s rate of HIV infection is 0.03% vs. the 2.0% rate in many U.S. urban areas)” (Beane, 2012, 3). Also, the CDRs have manifested what Beane came to term “intersectoriality” (which might very much relate to the concept of bridging social capital), in a sense where there appears to be “coordination and collaboration between sectors…There appears to be a commonly held view that the inevitable interweave of personal (or societal) issues requires an inclusive, coordinated delivery of a range of social and health services” with which the CDRs come to manage. (Beane, 2012, 3-4)

Recent news however this year (2012), have come to report on celebrating the fifty-second anniversary of the formation of CDRs in Cuba. Officials however reported that there
has been an observable decrease in the activity of CDRs in some of the neighborhoods. Martha Ojeda Sánchez, who is a CDR coordinator said, “Of the 753 bases, 58 aren’t functioning properly for various reasons – for example because unsuitable leaders were elected”. A Cuban activist Clemente Álvarez Díaz commented on such fact that “Large-scale absenteeism [affects] CDR neighbourhood watch groups (because) many leaders lack community leadership skills and some of them behave in a positively antisocial manner”. (Tur Valladares, IWPR online, 2012)

While literature indeed has been so few on the subject, what we have from information might lead us to draw some concluding remarks concerning the status of CDRs in Cuba and its possible role in adding to the stock of social capital in Cuba. Being a revolutionary structure that was formalized by the state indeed has given it an edge in society in terms of its effectiveness. While it has served as a security and surveillance apparatus during the early years of the revolution, the fact that CDRs as a phenomenon did not disappear proves that it had created very strong ties within the neighborhoods it has existed it, where it has played a very important role with the provision and facilitation of community-based activities as we’ve seen in the above mentioned examples, and where membership rates are still high. Yet according to recent news, it seems that some CDRs in specific neighborhoods across Cuba have witnessed a decrease in their activity. One of the major limitations seems that a lack in community leadership skills has been one major impediment.
4.2 The Chinese Case

While not much of attention has been paid to the issue of social capital at a collective level until very recent (Chan, 2009), according to Francis Fukuyama (1995), Fukuyama classified China as a “low trust” economy, and has put much emphasis on the role of informal social capital (especially represented in families) in explaining its recent road to success. (Raiser et.al, 2001)

Some studies on the case of China have been found to conform to Fukuyama’s proposition, highlighting the role of informal social capital in China and its possible developmental effects on many levels. In one study by Fan Xiaoguang (2012), Xiaoguang explains how Chinese culture –represented in the Confucian culture- has a significant role on support networks (in an economic sense). Xiaoguang reflects on the notion of ‘chaxu gejul’ put forth by Fei Xiaotong. This notion suggests, “the household is the center of networks composed of all private contacts (Fei 1998:24-30)… Residents in Chinese societies would obtain supports from informal networks including family members, relatives and friends (Lee, Ruan and Lai 2005)”. (Xiaoguang, 2012, 101)

While the Communist party in China has attempted to replace the traditional family networks with communist organizations (known as the people’s communes), Min (2011) has found that bonding social capital is prevalent in many rural places in China. Familial ties have even re-emerged and strengthened after the post-Mao reforms, and the collapse of the people’s communes. By surveying four hundred and ten villages, only one hundred and fourteen villages have kinship organizations.

“The majority of the surveyed villages have high stocks of particular trust, which is measured in this study by indicators of the belief in the
trustworthiness of relatives and residents of the same village with the same family name.” (Min, 2011, 151)

Min also notes on the prospects of how the moderate stock of ‘bridging social capital’ may also increase because of the ongoing post-Mao reforms that started even since the late seventies adopting more open economic policies and the process of marketization. He says in his study that, “With the deepening of the post-Mao reforms and the ongoing process of marketization, general trust and inclusive social networks that connect people with different backgrounds have emerged in rural areas.” (Min, 2011, 152) This in turn, may result in an encouragement of individuals to engage in cooperating and compromising actions across many divides; whether social, economic or ethnic divides.

One other study has illustrated an example of such by coming to report how ‘non-state actors’ have been found in many instances in rural china taking a lead with the provision of public goods. While this might reflect a weak state apparatus, and it might reflect ‘replacement of the state’ or ‘substitution of the state’- which in turn might lead its citizens to start questioning the state’s responsibility with the provision of public goods, and further question its legitimacy; these informal networks of non-state actors might be looked upon in terms of ‘co-producing with the state’. Officials may very much make use of such existing community actors and capitalize on its benefits in the governments favour in a positive way. (Tsai, 2011, 48-49)

“Local officials often believe that co-production of public goods with community groups in particular, often with community actors taking the lead, can build trust between officials and citizens that can spill over into increased citizen compliance with state demands.” (Tsai, 2011, 46)
Tsai backs up her proposition based on Putnam (1993), Evans (1997), and Posner (2004) ‘s theoretical contributions supporting her Chinese case arguing that societal actors can foster political development; represented in building state capacity. According to Putnam, cooperation in a specific area can lead to cooperation in another area. While Putnam refers to cooperation between societal actors, a similar hypothesis put forward by Evans highlights cooperation between state and societal actors, where civic engagement can serve to strengthen state institutions. Posner also argues that groups that provide public goods are more likely to contribute to the rebuilding of a state capacity in the case of a failed state; more than advocacy groups. (Tsai, 2011, 48)

‘Co-production’ between non-state actors at the local level, and the government officials, increases face-to-face interactions, and build relationships of trusts that are very important especially in contexts that experience a low degree of trust between citizens and the government. In effect, she explains why some local officials might cooperate and not curb down such active non-state actors in many parts of rural china; where they might have very much regarded them as threat to their regime, yet instead some do capitalize on the benefits of their existence in favour of political development, and better governance.

In a study similar to the one discussed above, Tsai has found that Villages where ‘Solidary groups’ existed had better local governmental public goods provision than villages that did not have ‘Solidary groups’ within their villages. (Tsai, 2007, 355) ‘Solidary groups’ are groups of people who hold a shared moral obligation and a shared interest. These groups are characterized by two characteristics ‘encompassing’ (open to everyone) and ‘embedding’ (incorporating local officials within the group). The benefit of these groups being embedding to local officials ensures local official’s social obligation to these groups and their demands. Village temples, village Churches and village lineages are considered as Solidary groups in many villages in China. While the degree on encompassing and embeddedness might vary in
all three types, it is nevertheless beneficial in ensuring the provision of public goods especially in authoritarian or transitional systems. (Tsai, 2007, 355-357, 370-371)

Moreover, China holds a very similar institution like that of the Cuban CDR known as “Residents Committee” that exist in Chinese neighborhoods. Since after the post-Mao reforms, the Chinese state has been witnessing many governing challenges finding it thus necessary to start decentralizing its power within the hands of the people. The “Residents Committee” thus has come to play a very prominent role. Still being connected to the state, but performing roles that vary from social relief, neighborhood sanitation, and other ‘non-coercive’ areas just like the Cuban CDRs. (Wang, 2009, 13-16)

In that sense, the studies reviewed above give us a sense of how informal ties do play a significant role bringing about developmental benefits in China. Even though the Confucian culture seems to shape a great underlying motivator to foster informal sources of social capital among the Chinese people (represented in family ties); the post-Mao reforms paved the way for the existence of the notion of ‘chaxu gejul’, non-state actors, Solidary groups, and Residents Committees as successful examples. These structures starting-off as informal ties manifest the existence of social capital among people, and show how it has been formally recognized by the state, and capitalized upon at many instances bringing about developmental benefits. While indeed the role of the state seems at many times embedded within such structures like the Cuban CDRs case as discussed earlier, it has nevertheless served as a means of empowering and strengthening state institutions, which in turn might be viewed as pushing forward for political development.

Even though the formal cooperation of the Cuban and Chinese states to the informal sources/structures discussed above, might lead us to question the ‘informal’ nature, this is
only because the political ideologies of the above-mentioned cases shape very much the nature of relationship between state and society where there is a lot of overlap between the two spheres.
CHAPTER V: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONTEXT

5.1 Revolutionary Context

By the eve of January 25, 2011, Egypt had already been suffering from a series of accumulated wide political tension, corruption, inequality and many injustices that it could no longer bear after thirty years of a dictatorship led by former overthrown president Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, and his ‘men’. The whole region in fact, had already been witnessing similar conditions with authoritarian rule for the past decade. It was only when Tunisia’s Bou Azizi ignited the road to a series of uprisings that the region witnessed, and its repercussions arrived to Egypt on January 25, 2011. The 25th of January revolution, was the mark of an extraordinary event in the history of Egypt.

Mass mobilizations of people in the capital; Cairo, and many big cities such as; Alexandria, and neighboring governorates went down marching in the streets calling for the toppling of the Mubarak regime. People called for just trials to be held for those whom have been responsible for many outrageous incidents; especially ones related to police suppression, violence and torture to political and human rights activists. Many social movements and civil society organizations calling for democracy, freedom, and fight against corruption; were part of the huge call for justice to prevail fairly. The death of a young Egyptian man named “Khaled Saeed” was one of the major triggers mobilizing public opinion and support for the overthrow of the Mubarak regime on January 25. The incident of the church bombing in Alexandria on Christmas Eve, and the very slow investigations on such a devastating crime was another trigger too. In Cairo, the protestors chose “Tahrir Square” as their home for the months that followed until they reached one of their major goals: “toppling over Mubarak’s regime”.
Caught by surprise, the Mubarak regime did not imagine that the calls for toppling over his regime would receive a wide consensus among many classes of society. Brutally violent and oppressing as ever has been throughout its rule, the Mubarak regime tried to clear Tahrir square using violence, tear gas bombs, random arrests, physical abuse (including women’s harassment), and even hiring thugs that beat the protestors up to the extent that some came riding horses and camels with swords in their hands. This incident ironically enough was later known as the “Camel Battle”, and which was the mark of the beginning of Mubarak’s regime’s end. Soon afterwards, the country witnessed an unprecedented element of surprise that further helped the toppling down of the revolution and that was the withdrawal of security forces and police from the streets. The reason behind such incident is yet to be known. However, whether it was part of a terrorizing plan put by the regime to terrorize its citizens with no security on the streets, (proliferating false rumors and news through its corrupt media about news of thugs and thieves racing out to the streets and breaking out of prisons carrying out acts of violence, murder, and robberies) ; or whether it was not part of a plan (which in and of itself is a scenario that is too complex to comprehend or analyze), the security gap created has as a result made way to a very significant phenomenon all over the country known as; “Al-Legaan Al-Sha’abeya” or “Popular defense committees”.

The “Popular defense committees” resemble informal-ties that brought together residents of defined neighbourhoods to collectively protect their neighborhoods, their families, and their properties. Popular defense committees were in every neighborhood in every district in every governorate all over the country. The Popular defense committees in our opinion was another element of surprise; however this time for the regime. The regime was not able to terrorize or tear down the strength, commitment, and insistence of the Egyptian people for their demands. Popular defense committees even existed at the entrance
and exits of Tahrir square in an attempt to secure it from thugs or pro-regime supporters (those whom are later to be known for: Folool; which if transliterated would be known as remnants of the regime). The period from the 25th of January until the 11th of February witnessed a lack of security, due to the security gap incident that took place. The popular defense committees were the sole player substituting for the element of security. It was only until after the 11th of February, when Mubarak announced his step down and handed over the rule to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) marking the victory of the protestors, did security start to gradually prevail again in the streets.

The Popular defense committees’ role was exceptional and is a phenomenon in the history of Egypt that should not ever be left unattended. Indeed, it came to formation as a result of a pressing necessity due to the security gap, however, this does not discount the fact that the phenomenon in and of itself speaks of—or at least leads us to curiously question—an underlying form of capital that has played a very important role in its success.

The Popular defense committees with security back on the streets—relatively—after the step down of Mubarak, were longer needed to secure and protect its neighborhoods. What is interesting however was the positive trend of transforming these Popular defense committees into only “Popular Committees”—dropping the ‘defense’ or ‘security’ element it used to play—, changing its name and function to another protective duty, but this time protecting the revolution. They formed what came to be known as “Al-Legaan Al-Sha’abeya Lel Defa’a ‘An Al-Thawra” or “Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution”. While this is the official name that some popular committees in neighborhoods should bear, it is most likely and common to find it addressed as “Popular committees”, or the Popular Committee of neighborhood ‘x’.
It is interesting to pause here and reflect on the Cuban and Chinese cases discussed earlier in the context of our discussion of the case of Egypt. While indeed the context of each of the three countries is entirely different from the other, it might be observed though that a factor of ‘weak state institutions’ in all of them has paved the way to the development of informal structures that put social capital into play, bringing about developmental benefits in our cases. In Cuba, the case of the CDRs came to existence in the context of a revolution. Acknowledging how vulnerable the state was at such moment, the CDRs were spread in every neighborhood to ensure that the revolution did reach every corner, and that no possible anti-revolutionary acts took place. What gave strength to such organizations was the Cuban state’s recognition of these structures, and even making use of them for its own benefit as well as for the development of the neighbourhoods.

In China, the post-Mao reforms have created a context within which the state was adopting more decentralized measures on the political and economic levels. These measures, even though reformist, yet unveiled weak state institutions leaving space for informal ties to complement state action. This paved the way for the emergence of the notion of ‘chaxugejul’, non-state actors providing public goods, mainly Solidary Groups, and Residents Committees as successful examples. Yet like the case of Cuba, these examples received formal recognition from the state, with state officials engaging in their activities.
5.2 The Status of Social Capital in Egypt

Before we proceed with a discussion on the phenomenon of Popular Committees, a discussion on the status of social capital in Egypt is of worth.

Literature in English language on the status of social capital in Egypt is very rare; there are however some studies published on the subject yet in Arabic language. In one study published by the Information and Decision Support Centre under the umbrella of the Egyptian cabinet, “Developmental policies for the development of Social Capital for the enhancement of sustainable development in rural and urban areas (in Arabic)” (Badawi, et.al, 2005). The study came to contribute that indeed social capital in Egypt has been building up and accumulating ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century based on a multiple of indicators that came to prove such. It also came to highlight that measuring social capital in Egypt is very difficult; yet still the most significant sources of social capital existent in the Egyptian society may be identified and which are resembled in; governmental institutions, formal civil society groups, and informal civil society groups. Examples of the formal sources of social capital listed were: Political parties, Business associations, Cooperatives, Trade unions, Professional syndicates, Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and Youth centers; while examples of informal sources were: “self-help” groups or known as “gam’eyaat” (where informal social assistance is provided by members of society to each other). (Badawi, et.al, 2005, 19).

The study also referred to the possible uses of social capital in Egypt in the following areas: environment (agricultural waste management or medical waste management), Health (represented in NGOs that provide health services, and awareness campaigns), and Social issues (such as; illiteracy eradication services, or heath services provided by NGOs).
(Badawi, et.al, 2005, 22-23). The study also referred to the limitations that face social capital in Egypt and might limit its increase, they listed the limitations as follows:

“- The misuse of the existing stock of social capital in achieving efficient cooperative actions.
- The unavailability of the sufficient growth/development scale in each of economic, social, and political arenas in society might very much contribute as limitation to the effectiveness of the existent social capital.
- The decrease in the number of organizational memberships; in addition to, the ineffectiveness of the existing internal ties in a given organization between its members.
- The decrease in the effectiveness of some existing organizations/institutions; due to possible tense relationships between them and the government; which in turn might lead to halting its activities for some given period of time.” (Badawi, et.al., 2005, 23).

In general, the study concludes that a decrease in the stock of social capital might be one of the major contributions to the slowdown of the developmental process in Egypt, and a fact which has raised the cost of dealings between (or with) governmental institutions (a condition which has led Egypt to rank among one of the late countries according to the Transparency index). Another reason why the stock of social capital in Egypt might be ineffective is due to the limited stock of other forms of capital, such as financial capital. For example: one of the main reasons why some national projects are implemented throughout a longer period than the duration planned, is partially due to a slow process in dispute resolution with its regards,
which in effect signifies the ineffectiveness of social capital in this area. (Badawi, et.al., 2005, 24).

In another study by Ingy Abdelhamid on “The role of civil society in building social capital: A case study on the non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) in Egypt (in Arabic)” (Abdelhamid, 2009). In her study, Abdelhamid points out the difficulty of measuring social capital quantitatively. This she notes is due to the difficulty of coming up with indicators through which one can measure social capital. The majority of studies that discussed social capital in Egypt (which are very few), have majorly dealt with the subject in a theoretical way, and have identified that its sources also serve to be its indicators at the same time. According to Abdelhamid, there are four sources of social capital in Egypt, which are; Culture, Religion, Family, and Civil Society. (Abdelhamid, 2009, 94).

Concerning culture, Abdelhamid explains that culture in general is a source of social capital in Egypt. She concludes such after reviewing several studies that attempted to examine the nature of the Egyptian culture or the Egyptian ‘character, she elaborates that it is a culture based on skepticism and caution when dealing with others, and where priority is always given to personal interest in the first place, followed by interest of the family, followed by interest of the village or district/neighborhood (of which is only prioritized during times of crisis or problems). Thus the Egyptian citizen is only willing to ‘engage’ only if there is a pressing need for such, and most probably when certain existent factors are meant to touch upon his/her daily personal life. (Abdelhamid, 2009, 98). In that sense, the Egyptian culture has contributed to a unique modality of social capital; one which depends on the person’s primordial loyalties in fulfilling his needs -and to a great extent unconscious of any factors outside that circle-, unless faced by conditions that the person could not face alone such as; natural disasters, and severe times of crises.
Concerning religion as a source of social capital, Abdelhamid explains that in the name of religion (Islam and Christianity), vulnerable people in society have been provided with financial and moral support under its name. Also, one of the very important phenomenon witnessed in the Egyptian society -especially by the Islamic movement in society-, was that of financially diversifying people’s money in different projects that had a wide tangible effect on the Egyptian economy at a certain point in the modern history of Egypt. People relied on their trust in a specific company only because it had ‘religious’ backgrounds and success of that business was solely based on the wide range of trust exercised towards them. (Abdelhamid, 2009, 102). In general, Abdelhamid comes to a point where she highlights that religion as a source of social capital in Egypt only plays a very important role in terms of ‘bonding social capital’, and not ‘bridging social capital’; in fact, the more bonding of social capital between a certain religious network, the less bridging of social capital among various networks is most likely to occur. (Abdelhamid, 2009, 103).

On family as a source of social capital, Abdelhamid points out that it is one source where its use is only confined to a small range of members. Whereas family does indeed serve as one source playing a major role in solving many of its members’ problems, it is however not made use of in a wider range or scale; if compared to other cases around the world such as Asian countries. In some cases of Asian countries, they were able to make use of family or ‘family ties’ into a very positive source of social capital that aimed at the betterment of the social conditions, and even economic conditions in some villages, and even whole cities to some extent. For example: ‘Bank for the poor’ in countries of South East Asia. (Abdelhamid, 2009, 105-106).

Since civil society serves as a major source of social capital -as comes in many books on social capital-, civil society in Egypt as well is a case in point. It is noteworthy to highlight though –Abdelhamid says- that context or surrounding environment with which these
institutions exist is highly determinant to the degree of which it is able to contribute to the stock of social capital. Thus if one relied only on the number of existing civil society organizations in Egypt; which according to one source she cites is around twenty five thousand, Egypt would be one of the leading countries. However, the surrounding environment; greatly limits its scope of work. Another limitation has to do with the composition of these organizations, which is that they are not representative of all sectors of society. In general, both formal and informal forms of civil society exist in the Egyptian society; formal institutions such as: Political parties, Cooperatives, Professional syndicates, Labor Unions, Business Associations, and Non Governmental Associations; and informal institutions such as: Self-help associations, and Social movements. (Abdelhamid, 2009, 111-130).

In concluding remarks on the status of social capital in Egypt, Abdelhamid states that in the case of Egypt, social capital is mostly and widely represented in the form of a network of members in institutions, and does not extend outside the borders of these established institutions. She also remarks that, indeed social capital in Egypt does have a multiple of sources in the Egyptian society, however the major source which is most effective are those that are established through informal social relations such as; family, religion, and neighborhood groups; and the more the Egyptian citizen steps outside these circles, the more cautious and less trusting he/she is with his/her surroundings. Nevertheless, the role social capital has played in supporting various sects of the Egyptian society, especially the poor people or those who are less fortunate with adapting to societal changes. The informal networks or relations, has in many cases served a network of social security that poor people resort to when facing their everyday life problems. Had it not been for such form of social capital, the Egyptian society would have witnessed recurrent waves of instability. (Abdelhamid, 2009, 172-173).
The world value surveys (WVS) of the years (2005-2008) are worth considering as well. In both surveys of the years mentioned above, we will find that Egypt is one of the countries that come with low ranks in the trust index.

The trust index in general is calculated by the following formula:

“Trust Index=100+ (% most people can be) – (% can’t be too careful)” (WVS website). The countries usually then fit into either of the following categories:

“(1) More Trusty 140 and up, (2) 100-140, (3) 60-100, (4) 20-60, (5) less than 20; more careful” (WVS website).

Egypt’s Trust index scores: 37.2, which puts it in the category before last; which in turn signifies a low trust index. (WVS website).


The following tables illustrate the percentages found:

**On trusting people in general:**

**Table (1)**

VALUES SURVEY DATABANK

*Selected countries/samples: Egypt [2008]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASE=3045 Weight [with split ups]</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most people can be trusted</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people can be trusted</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t be too careful</td>
<td>81.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3045 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Values Surveys Databank
On trusting people met for the first time:

Table (2)
VALUES SURVEY DATABANK
Selected countries/samples: Egypt [2008]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust: People you meet for the first time</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight [with split ups]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASE=3047</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust completely</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust a little</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust very much</td>
<td>53.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust at all</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3047 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Values Surveys Databank

On trusting people personally known:

Table (3):
VALUES SURVEY DATABANK
Selected countries/samples: Egypt [2008]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust: People you know personally</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight [with split ups]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASE=3050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust completely</td>
<td>44.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust a little</td>
<td>46.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust very much</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust at all</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3050 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Values Surveys Databank
On Trusting the Family:

Table (4):
VALUES SURVEY DATABANK
Selected countries/samples: Egypt [2008]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust them completely</td>
<td>96.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust them somewhat</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not trust them very much</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3050 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Values Surveys Databank

On trusting the Neighborhood:

Table (5):
VALUES SURVEY DATABANK
Selected countries/samples: Egypt [2008]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust completely</td>
<td>48.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust a little</td>
<td>46.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust very much</td>
<td>4.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust at all</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3050 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Values Surveys Databank
On trusting people of other religion:

Table (6):
VALUES SURVEY DATABANK
Selected countries/samples: Egypt [2008]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust completely</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust a little</td>
<td>35.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust very much</td>
<td>38.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trust at all</td>
<td>22.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3045 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Values Surveys Databank

If we closely observe the above-mentioned statistics we will see that all of the samples interviewed for their trust in family displays the highest forms of trust amongst the other forms when questioned. It could thus be inferred from the above-mentioned examples of statistics that, the trend of trust is relatively low. It is an indicator somehow, but we could not generalize based on it the general status of social capital in Egypt of course.

In the Egypt human development report of 2003, we can find that it mentioned the fact that social capital is weak in Egypt, and had stressed on the importance of developing and improving social capital in Egypt to push forth for sustainable development.

“All the developing countries (including Egypt) lack social capital (its elements and components). Therefore, it is extremely necessary to create, develop, and improve social capital in order to achieve sustainable development.” (HDR 2003, p.68).
CHAPTER VI: THE POPULAR COMMITTEES IN EGYPT

Academic literature on the Popular committees in Egypt is almost rare due to the newness of the subject. There is only one study however found up to this date of the study on the subject by Jennifer Bremer; “Leadership and Collective Action in Egypt’s Popular Committees: Emergence of Authentic Civic Activism in the Absence of the State” (Bremer, 2011). In her study, Bremer seeks to document the phenomenon of popular committees as a collective action taking place at the community level, taking into consideration the conditions under which these informal networks have emerged, and whether there is a possibility to sustain their existence; however bearing in mind that since it’s a new experience, it is prone to either succeed or fail. (Bremer 2011, 4).

Bremer documents the very first existence of such phenomenon to the date January 29th, where,

“Not just every neighborhood, but virtually every block had an organized group dedicated to protecting the lives, property, and safety of its residents. These groups operated on a continuous basis throughout the first two weeks leading up to the departure of former President Mubarak, substituting for the police who had been withdrawn from the streets.” (Bremer 2011, 1).

Six months after the above-mentioned date, the majority of the popular defense committees have long disbanded, but some remained active and have “to create new federations at the district, city, governorate, and national level... some of these groups decided to continue and to transform themselves into ongoing neighborhood or citywide organizations for local betterment.” (Bremer 2011, 2-4). Bremer views such fact as an important development in ‘bottom-up organizational formation’ through out Egyptian
history; one that she believes might hold promising prospects for civic activism in Egyptian localities. (Bremer 2011, 2).

“The PCs taught Egypt’s man on the street that he and his neighbors have the capability to govern themselves. This has been a transformative idea in a society that has historically looked always to the leaders at the top of the pyramid to solve their problems and been sharply punished whenever another approach was tried.” (Bremer 2011, 3).

In her study, Bremer presents eight examples of local civic activist organizations; four of which represent local popular committees; three from the Greater Cairo Region (GCR), and one from Alexandria. On the national level, she presents the national association of popular committees, and examines the phenomenon -on a national level- relying on the analysis of Facebook pages. The popular committees in her study are; Popular Committee for the Defense of the Revolution in Imbaba (GCR), Popular Committee group in Mit Oqba (GCR), Zamalek Guardian (GCR), and the Popular Committee for the defense of the revolution. (Bremer 2011, 8-9).

Bremer further documents that the first three above mentioned popular committees belong as part of a network of the “Popular Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (PCDR)”. The Popular Committee for the Defense of the Revolution came into formation six months after the step down of the former president Mubarak.

“The PCDR remains a loose coalition of individual PCs, most of which have adopted the PCDR name and logo (the closed fist). It is broadly leftist in orientation, as shown by its use of the offices of the Egyptian Center for Socialist Studies as its regular meeting place. It is independent of this organization, however. The PCDR seeks to promote and support the PCs in
individual locations and to meld them into a coalition that can be effective on the national level. As its name implies, it has defined itself as a defender of the Egyptian Revolution against those who would undermine it from any direction, be it the previous regime, the Islamists, or others.” (Bremer 2011, 9).

On further documentation on the Popular Committee for the defense of the revolution, Bremer notes that about twenty popular committees have been attending its regular meetings, however by mid-July 2011, participation has been cut down to about half the above-mentioned number. (Bremer 2011, 10).

Further through out her study, Bremer points out two major trends or orientations in the activities of the Popular committees; either those with political orientations, or others more service-oriented. Some ever she notes attempt to join between both; however find a difficulty in coordinating them. She also highlights that the popular committee for the defense of the revolution in Alexandria, holds to be one of the largest to have arisen from the revolution compared to the cases of Mit Oqba, Imbaba, or the Zamalek guardians. (Bremer 11-16).

In concluding remarks of her study, Bremer pointed out that some popular committees, though only a few, remained active shifting their focus on community activities. They were meant to serve as a voice of their communities through holding the government accountable and ensuring that services were delivered. In her point of view, Bremer believes that these informal ties or informal networks of people do hold the potential for developing into a strong authentic voice for the people, one that has been lacking for so long. (Bremer 2011, 34).

There are yet however some organizational challenges from Bremer’s point of view, that need to be identified and tackled before attempting to generalize that such form of organization will develop. (Bremer 2011, 34).
“Tahrir Documents”, an online ongoing effort meant to document, archive, and translate activist documents that were possibly circulating around during the Egyptian revolution. Tahrir Documents has documented some of the important events under the name of the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. According to Tahrir Documents, the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution held its first foundational public conference on Friday, 22\textsuperscript{nd} of April, 2011 at noon in Tahrir Square. The conference meant to announce the Committees’ plans and political directives for the upcoming period that was to proceed after the foundational conference. The conference held the slogan of “Social Justice, Freedom, and Trials for the Regime’s Corrupt”. (Tahrir Documents online).

Tahrir documents’ documentation on anything related to the Popular Committees only covered that of the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution; that is to say that there is no documentation on a specific popular committee of a given neighborhood across Egypt. The majority of documentations held public statements issued by the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, or issues of a ‘revolutionary news paper’ that was popular during the very beginning of its activities. The documentations on the news or activities by the Popular committees for the Defense of the Revolution by Tahrir documents however seem to have stopped at a date of May 2012. (Tahrir Documents online).

Some local newspapers have also shed the light on the phenomenon of popular committees on both the national level, and more locally highlighting specific cases of popular committees across the neighborhoods of Egypt.

Ahram Online on the event of the first general conference for the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, Gaber Yassin was able to interview some of its founding members on the role that the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution was to
play in society. One active member of the organizational committee of the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and author of its public statement; Mr. Khaled Abdel Shaheed said that,

“three slogans: change, freedom and social equity” used during the 18 days in Tahrir Square need to be championed continuously until each demand is achieved...for this to happen after 11 February, a group of the Tahrir youth needed there to be social activity outside the old or the newly forming political parties...The point was to create some sort of coordination and continuation of the same spirit of Tahrir where one couldn't differentiate between leftists, conservatives and other political groups...It became clear that pressure by the people is what actualises the demands...Our ultimate aim is for there to be social monitoring in the coming period for all branches of the government and all institutions as a guarantee of the revolution’s consummation.” (Gaber 2011, Ahram online)

In one article by Alia Mossallam to Al Masry Al Youm (one of the local Egyptian newspapers), “Egypt: A report on the emergence and role of “popular committees”, Mossallam briefly documents examples of popular committees and their activities across Egypt. In one example on the Popular Committee in Al-Qanater, a rural community located in the northern region of Cairo, the Popular Committee has been putting efforts to involve youth of Al-Qanater in electoral politics. Another Popular Committee of Hadayeq El Qubba, a neighborhood in Cairo, had launched awareness campaigns through which they attempted to help people in the neighborhood understand the difference between liberal, socialist, and Islamist approaches to economic issues; since people in Hadayeq el Qubba had expressed their tiresome from being manipulated with by intellectuals who would propagate to one approach or another for the people. The example of the Popular Committee in El Saf,
another neighborhood in Cairo, have held conferences on “how governorate boundaries have been redrawn several times over the last few years without community input, debating how planning can take place with more community participation”. (Mosallam 2011, Al Masry Al Youm online). In concluding remarks, Mosallam notes,

“It’s in the work of these groups that the revolution continues: From representing community demands to engaging local residents to hold their government accountable, these committees are making politics relevant to people’s everyday lives…For most committees, politics is no longer “out there” in a remote sphere from which they feel marginalized; politics is at home. For the broader society, popular committees are an opportunity to communicate with once-invisible citizens.” (Mosallam 2011, Al Masry Al Youm online).

In another news article in Ahram Online dating around mid-July of 2012, it documents one of Giza governorate’s Popular Committee’s activity; that of the Popular Committee in Saft El-Laban, a low-income neighborhood in Giza governorate. Residents of Saft El Laban had been suffering from extreme water shortage. According to the Ahram Online reporter, the protestors has said that they’ve met a number of times with the Giza governor, who promised them that he will handle the case, however it was all in vain. The protestors from Saft El Laban thus headed to the governorate headquarters blocking all exists (however making way for women only to leave the building) in protest and rage against their rights and demands that have not been met as promised several times from the governor of Giza then. (Ahram Online, Jul.2012).

On joint activities between popular committees and each other in the Greater Cairo region, we find in an article by Rana Khazbak in Al-Masry Al Youm news paper online in
her article “Popular committees bring true spirit of democracy to the streets” (Khazbak 2011, Al-Masry Al-Youm online), and another article by Sara Nour Eldeen and Yasmine Al-Qadi in Al-Masry Al Youm, “Popular Committees pressure Giza governor to address trash problems” (Nour El Deen, Al-Qadi 2011, Al-Masry Al-Youm online); both articles have addressed the joint efforts between several Popular Committees across the capital coming together to take action under a campaign they had launched known as “Know Your Rights”.

The Campaign aimed to mobilize people to be more participant and active in their local communities, and a call for the general awareness of the demands they have a right to ask for from the government. The very first practical action under the title of this campaign was launched by the Popular committee in Imbaba. They were focusing on their right to the removal of garbage from the streets in Imbaba. (Khazbak 2011, Al-Masry Al-Youm online).

In effect, Popular committees from many neighborhoods in the Greater Cairo region started to collect piles of garbage, and trash them in front of the Giza governorate head quarters in objection to the passive stance that the Giza governorate held with regards to this issue. Coordinators of this even reported that they informed the governor that their main basic demand was to set a specific timeline of which is to be followed for cleaning up the streets and neighborhoods of Giza, and they asked for being in contact with an official for this mission -one they can hold accountable if their demands were not met. (Nour El Deen, Al-Qadi 2011, Al-Masry Al-Youm online).

A day later after this event took place; the governor ordered a truck to be sent to pick up the garbage. People felt an over all sense of success that they were able to put pressure and influence for change to come about their neighborhoods. (Khazbak 2011, Al-Masry Al-Youm online).

An example of Popular Committee activity in other than the Greater Cairo region, we can take Suez for example. In Suez, Mohamed El Meshad reports to Al-Masry Al-Youm in
“In Suez, popular committees drive change” (El Meshad, Jul 2011, Al Masry Al- Youm online); that the Popular Committee in Suez has engaged in many events for example; they engaged in the monitoring of markets, in order to make sure that shop owners did not abuse the lack of oversight and the weak security to sell products with high prices that might be exaggerated than the usual. One member El Meshad reports said that the Committee even “took it upon (their selves) to collect some of the arms that were stolen from the police stations and hand them over to the military police,” said Sabry Seyam, a 37-year-old Popular Committee member.” (El Meshad, Jul 2011, Al Masry Al- Youm online). Other forms of activities were such as participating in campaigns that sought to bring down the corruption witnessed in the municipal governments that were dominated by the former National Democratic Party.

Facebook might also serve as a source of information on Popular Committees in Egypt. Right after the revolution, many Facebook pages were created for many Popular Committees across the country propagating for themselves, and trying to use the page to attract many people to consider being members with them, or use the pages to mobilize people for certain events they are to undertake in a given neighborhood. It is noteworthy to point out though that, not all members on the Facebook pages of a given Popular Committee represent its actual members in a given neighborhood; many followers and supporters might subscribe to its news and many are just regarded as virtual ‘Likers’ to the Facebook page, and do not represent the actual active members on solid grounds in a specific given neighborhood. Many Popular Committees’ Facebook pages could be found, and the majority are managed in Arabic language. Examples of pages found (though in Arabic) are; Popular Committees for the defense of the revolution page, Popular Committee for the defense of the Revolution in Maad, Popular Committee in Shaikh Zayed (6th of October district), Popular Committee for the defense of the Revolution in Helwan, Popular Committee for the defense
of the revolution in Imbaba. (Facebook, 2011). The two latter pages of Popular committees seem to be the most active according to their last “posts” or updated “statuses” shared on the page. However seldom did we find any detailed information about possible activities on the ground, only a few posts and some photos of the events. The majority of the activity on the page is sharing news of importance, and political opinions on specific situations going on in the country, or possibly have online debates or chats. (Popular Committee for the defense of the revolution in Helwan, Popular Committee for the defense of the revolution in Imbaba, online on Facebook.)

It could thus be inferred from the above sources of information on the subject of Popular Committees in Egypt that it was only given attention or only gained fame during a specific period in time, which is right after the revolution and maybe only a few random documentations lasting up to a year from the date of their formation/existence. Online activity of Popular Committees on Facebook is also not so active. Many pages have remained idle, and thus no updates on its activity. Thus, in general, there is a lack of information on the documentation of this phenomenon in Egypt, and its possible development up to date of this study.
CHAPTER VII: POPULAR COMMITTEES ACTIVITIES AND BUILDING OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

In an attempt to explore the nature behind the role of Popular committees in building or contributing to the existing stock of social capital in the Egyptian society, and the prospects of which it can push forward for development; this study attempts to explore such by studying four cases of popular committees in the Greater Cairo region namely; Popular Committee of Mit Oqba, Popular Committee of Imbaba, Popular Committee of Mohandessin, Dokki and Agouza, and Popular Committee of Maadi.

Our field work attempted to explore the following:

A. The Internal Environment of the Popular committee:
   - The nature of relationship between the members of the popular committee.
   - The number of members participating in the popular committee.
   - The degree of neighborhood representation that they come to hold.
   - The means by which possible disputes might be handled.
   - The means by which decision making is undertook.
   - The type of orientation of the popular committees.
   - Source of income or finances of the popular committees.
   - Possible limitations to the activities/actions carried out.
   - The source of participation motivators.

B. External Environment:
   - The relationship between the popular committee and other existing popular committees.
   - The popularity of the popular committee in its neighborhood.
We used the following research tools to assist in the collection of data: qualitative-in-depth interviews, short-interviews, and field observations.

It is noteworthy to point out again as mentioned in the earlier chapters, that the selection of the above mentioned popular committees/neighbourhoods is not a representative sample of the whole phenomenon/population of popular committees across the Greater Cairo region; i.e.: random sampling wasn’t applied to this study. This sample of popular committees was selected on a major factor that is, ‘accessibility’ to the places/locations of these popular committees and its members by the researcher. The facilitation of contact with these Popular committees was through a political activist acquaintance of the researcher. The political activist was involved in many of the activities of the Popular Committees across the greater Cairo region.

Our sample thus only seeks to magnify a small sample of an existing phenomenon, in an attempt to provide useful information and discover prospects, and possibly recommendations on whether there is a possibility for those popular committees to serve as an existing resource adding up to the existing stock of social capital, and thus push forward for development.

7.1. Popular Committee of Mit Oqba

It is noteworthy to state that unfortunately there are no official or reliable sources to cite from or confirm the following information attempted to describe the location, population, and characteristics of Mit Oqba. Thus, the following information is based solely on field work experience, and observations performed or noted then.

Mit Oqba is located in the greater Cairo region; namely Giza. It is widely known to be a low-income neighborhood that is home for many workers, and their workshops. Its
geographic location is small in size compared to other neighborhoods across the capital. According to a word of mouth from one of its residents during one of the interviews; he estimates that the total population of Mit Oqba might probably be around 700,000.

By interviewing two members of the Popular Committee in Mit Oqba; one male and one female; The Popular committee in Mit Oqba first started as a Popular defense committee during the revolution. People used to organize themselves in shifts inside the neighborhood of Mit Oqba, and others to go represent Mit Oqba in Tahrir Square. All members participating in rounds protecting the neighborhood were males, there were no females. Right after the step down of Mubarak, and security forces coming back to the streets, the members with already established connections and new relationships, started coming together at first to organize for cleaning the streets, painting school walls,…etc., yet it wasn’t very organized. Members that participated in the Popular defense committee during the revolution then called for meetings through which they started brainstorming the pressing problems within the neighborhood and prioritizing needs to be satisfied. They agreed that as a network of members represented in the Popular Committee, they would be pressure groups on those responsible for solving the neighborhood problems.

Members of the Popular Committee in Mit Oqba usually meet once a week; they did however during the early days of their formation meet more than once and that was roughly around the period between March 2011 to September 2011, and then they started meeting once a week when the number of members started decreasing, and some found that meeting more than once was too much.

The number of participants in the Popular Committee first started roughly around fifty members, but then started decreasing reaching a number of twenty members only (to the date of the field work). Some of the reasons that the interviewees mentioned on the possible
reasons why the number of participating members started decreasing was either because; the meeting timing wasn’t suitable for some, some people weren’t fond of group decision making and wanted their opinions to be dominating; especially the elders.

The Popular Committee of Mit Oqba has both males and female members; even though the percentage of female participating members is only ten percent. At the beginning it used to represent both youth and elderly people; but now it only represents a wide range of youth members, with age ranges from twenty years old to forty two years old. The elderly people are always on call however whenever there is a pressing problem that needs their experience and guidance.

The Popular Committee also holds members from different religious backgrounds; both Muslims and Christians. Members also represent a diversity in their educational, social, financial, and even ideological backgrounds. It is noteworthy to draw light to the fact that the Popular Committee held members of different ideologies or political thought from extreme conservative Islamists (Salafists), liberals, leftists, and even at the beginning they had members supporting the Muslim Brotherhood; but once the Freedom and Justice party of the Muslim Brotherhood came to existence they broke away to join a similar structure to the Popular Committee working in parallel to the Popular Committees under the name of the Muslim Brotherhood in Mit Oqba.

    The Popular Committee functions internally on a horizontal scheme; a rejection to a pyramid scheme or hierarchy was agreed upon from the very beginning. At the early beginning of their activity during the first few months, they divided themselves into small groups voluntarily -and not by orders from someone-, to follow up specific raised issues that needed solving or following up. However, when the number of members started to decrease, all members focused on only one problem to be addressed one at a time. Of course disagreements were prone to erupt and did at many instances erupt, however the means by
which such is managed, is through voting. The members of the Popular committee vote on issues that are subject to disagreement, and the majority of votes thus dictate a specific stance; however are not compulsory for all members to follow or implement if they disagree to it.

Concerning the type of activities’ orientation that the Popular Committee carries out, it is both political oriented and service oriented. With regards to the latter, the interviewees highlighted that the services that they try to facilitate does not intend to substitute the original service providers for a given service; however to mobilize people with them to demand for a given service that is in their right to ask for. Thus the main reason behind activities of this type is to raise peoples’ awareness of their rights and implant a sense of civic activism and duty. A very eminent example of such was the extension of the natural gas pipe lines in Mit Oqba. One of the interviewees mentioned that before the revolution the governorate promised to extend natural gas pipe lines into the neighborhood, and indeed they started working on such project, but the work was never completed. Thus after the revolution and under the name of the Popular Committee in Mit Oqba, they went to the Giza governorate head quarters demanding for such. Their consistent visits since the end of February 2011 served as a pressure on the governorate, which led in the end for the project to take place, and now almost 75% of Mit Oqba has natural gas pipe lines extended to their homes. The workers used to resort to the members of the Popular Committee whenever they faced any difficulties in the place. In light of the Butane tubes crisis, the Popular Committee members decided to provide Butane tubes in their original prices, and not the prices that started prevailing because of the black market dealings. At first it was very difficult for them since the whole issue was a big political game and there was lots of corruption underlying the story. The interviewees did not get into details of the type of corruption, but it response to such they called for and organized a march up to the Ministry of social solidarity in objection to the corruption they
found out from within the local officials’ offices, and outside networks. Both interviewees on this story commented that this event was the most of which people from Mit Oqba were mobilized to join in the march, and the percentage of women’s participation was relatively high. In the end, they were able to force the provision of a truck—and sometimes two trucks—for twenty-seven days (the period of shortage) loaded with Butane tubes that were sold for five Egyptian pounds. Since this was a very pressing need from people of Mit Oqba, both interviewees stressed on the observable high participatory trend during these above mentioned twenty seven days between people and the members of the Popular Committee in organizing for the selling of these butane tubes, and control the quantity sold to one person.

On the other hand, politically oriented activities are always generated related to the general political events happening in the country. For example: in light of the presidential elections, they initiated awareness campaigns in the neighborhood where they wanted help people how to choose their right candidate during the first round of the presidential elections. They did not propagate for a certain candidate. They did however take a stance against two candidates who were popular among revolutionaries as “Foolool” (or remnants of the old regime), represented in Lieutenant general Ahmed shafiq, and Mr. Amr Moussa. They used a very interesting and creative way to help people identify their favourite candidate. They held a meeting in Mit Oqba’s youth centre (the place where members of the Popular committee met), and they came up with a mock presidential program that represented Mit Oqba’s problems and demands. They then distributed this mock presidential program so that people would compare it with the real presidential candidates’ programs, and choose based upon it. The success of this event was measured by the quick dissemination of this mock presidential program, to the extent that some people who did not attend the meeting lowered down baskets from their balconies asking for copies.
Other political activities are represented in marches whenever there was a wide-spread call for one across the nation for a certain cause. For example: the Friday marches from every neighborhood to Tahrir square.

The Popular Committee does not carry out any income generating activities. The only possible income generating activity that was proposed was distributing bread as a service to people of Mit Oqba in return for a fee to the volunteers. However, this was very difficult to implement since the issue of bread and its making had its very own corruption variables in the whole process.

Concerning financing the Popular committee’s activities, they do not rely on finances from institutions. Members of the popular committee contribute a monthly donation of fixed ten Egyptian pounds to finance any activity that might require the expenditure of money; for example: the printing of flyers. They might also accept donations from members outside the Popular committee. One interviewee mentioned that they once received a donation of five thousand Egyptian pounds, which they used to buy some light bulbs for lighting fifty streets in the neighborhood. Sometimes a shortage in finances is indeed a limitation to the carrying out of certain planned activities they wish to carry out, and they have to wait until the estimated sum of money is available.

In general, the activities and events have been the major propagating methods that the Popular committee has used to attract new members, and in many cases they were successful in attracting many of Mit Oqba’s youth to join. At the very beginning when the number of members was fifty members, they printed out T-shirts with the logo of the popular committee on it, so that people would be curious to ask them what they were wearing and what it resembled. Other than that, they ensure of taking their activities to many different streets in Mit Oqba; such as “Askar Katheboon campaign” or “a campaign against Military liars”
during the period where the Supreme Council of Armed forces (SCAF) held rule of the country after the step down of Mubarak. The popular committee ensured to take the campaign to major streets in different parts of Mit Oqba. One of the interviewees mentioned a local neighborhood news paper that used to be distributed in the very beginning of the Popular committees activities explaining who they were, and what they did, and aim to do; but soon did it stop since it was very costly to continue doing it.

The two interviewees expressed their opinion about their overall experience with the Popular Committee to be a very positive one, and that there is considerable harmony among the members however sometimes the short-sighted members, the obstacles faced in practice when implementing many of their activities and campaigns; is sometimes discouraging, and positive change then always seems a very distant goal; but they believe that they should never stop. In general both interviewees believe that the phenomenon of Popular Committees would not survive if the Popular Committee starts engaging in activities that would be replacing some of the government's duties. The Popular Committees in general should always act as pressure groups, and hold the government accountable, that’s only when there is future for them.

With regards to communication between the Popular Committee of Mit Oqba and other Popular Committees across other neighborhoods, it has been evident at many instances based on the two interviewees’ experiences as members within the Popular Committee. For example: they joined with the Popular Committee of Imbaba and others in protest against the issue of uncollected garbage in Imbaba. Since the Popular Committee is part of the ‘Popular Committees for the defense of the revolution’, they join in events under its name with other Popular Committees such as; “Know your Rights” campaign and “A campaign against Military Liars”.

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In Mit Oqba, the small geographic location of the neighborhood helped spread the word about the Popular Committee in Mit Oqba. Out of fifteen respondents from the people of Mit Oqba to a few interview questions, five respondents only knew about the Popular Committee and its activities. Only two participated with some of its activities, while the rest simply responded that “they don’t have time”. Nine respondents said that they only heard of the term “Popular Committee” during the revolution when there was a security gap, but never heard of it afterwards. One respondent said she did not hear about the concept at all; neither during the revolution, nor after the revolution. All respondents think that the Popular Committee in title won’t survive.

7.2. Popular Committee of Imbaba

Imbaba is widely known as “a country within a country”. People of Imbaba are proud that it holds this description, since they believe that security forces aren’t able to penetrate their neighborhood due to the highly organized gangs that are known to exist in the place. Imbaba is also one of the largest districts in the Greater Cairo region. It is known as a low-income neighborhood, and its characteristics are very much similar to slum areas, where there are some households in Imbaba that don’t have the simplest of facilities and services. Houses look very random and unorganized typical like any slum area. The total population of Imbaba is around one million. In Imbaba people come from various backgrounds and different families. Usually people of the same backgrounds and origins live in the same area. For example: ‘Ezbit Al- Sa’aydah’ or ‘Ezbit Abdel-Moneim’ is known as home for people whose origins are from upper Egypt. In general, it’s a very ‘live’ neighborhood where it holds many vital places such as the “Amiri press”, “the Heart Institute” and “Imbaba hospital (Homeyaat)”. It has around fourteen to fifteen churches, and numerous mosques. Sometimes
Imbaba is known to be as home for Salafists and extreme Islamist radicals, whom are known to be mostly concentrated in ‘Al-Wi’hda’ street, and ‘Ard ‘Al- Jammi’eya’ in Imbaba. (Hisham, 2011, Ahram gate online).

The Popular Committee in Imbaba started to come into formation by the end of February of the year 2011; this is according to one of the interviewees who was one of its founding members. At the beginning they used to only be seven to eight members. Only four members were always fixed and the rest kept on changing. The maximum number that the Popular Committee of Imbaba reached was forty five members, but then gradually started to decrease to only hold a number of twelve to fifteen members. The interviewees however noted that when there is any event or demonstration under their name, they can easily mobilize people to come and join them. The Popular Committee holds a majority of males and only four female members. Members are of age ranges from twenty years old to forty years old. There are no elders however, but they are accessible when they need their guidance or expertise. The members represent people of different religions; both Christians and Muslims. It also represents people from various educational, social and financial backgrounds. Ideological diversity among its members is present as well, however with the exception to those who support political Islam ideologies or thought. One of the interviewees mentioned that if someone of such background approached them to join the Popular Committee, they had to first ask about the person and dig into his backgrounds and orientation.

The Popular Committee in Imbaba used to meet up twice or even sometimes three times per week; however as the days went by, it was more practical to meet once a week. Sometimes the time of meeting is not suitable for female members, so male members would meet at a coffee shop discussing the latest issues, and inform their female colleagues by phone. This however does not happen much; the interviewees stressed. The members do not allow anyone to attend the meetings; unless they prove that they are willing to sincerely
participate and be one of them. They are very cautious of who attends since they know that they are most likely to be prone to security intelligence’s surveillance.

The internal structure of the Popular Committee seemed vague. The interviewees claimed that there is no hierarchy and that they very much follow a horizontal scheme; yet it was evident that some members were implicitly in charge and directing the activity of the Popular Committee. One of the interviewees was actually the official representative of the Popular Committee in Imbaba, and it seemed that the majority of issues are managed and organized through him and three other colleagues of his. This was evident when the second interviewee, who is a female member in the Popular Committee of Imbaba, kept constantly referring to him with regards to many decisions taken by him.

Both interviewees however commented on the general harmony that the members of the Committee are characterized by. Decision-making takes place by voting, and if any disagreements occur, they try to ensure that the best optimal compromise is reached by the end of their meeting.

The Popular Committee in Imbaba is very politically oriented; where the majority of its activities reflect a political orientation. When asked about the nature and type of activities undergone under the Popular Committee’s name in Imbaba, one interviewee mentioned that they decided to concentrate and work on campaigns that were initiated by the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. For example: the campaign “Know your Rights”, they decided to define what these rights were, and choose one of these rights and keep working on ensuring that it is met. Thus, they chose ‘the right to a clean environment’ as the major concern they want to achieve. Indeed when we walked in the streets of Imbaba, there is always a tremendous amount of garbage everywhere. Sometimes to the extent that garbage may block the streets and cars could not pass through easily. Under this main
agenda, they organized and did many events in order to achieve their goal (which was pretty much unmet during field observations). They made stands holding posters on it statements to attract people’s attention to the issue, and calling for their support; they wrote public statements in simple Arabic language and distributed it among people of Imbaba trying to mobilize them for a stand in front of the Giza governor’s office throwing trash in front of his office.

By the arrival of the first anniversary of the Egyptian revolution on the 25th of January 2012, the Popular Committee started focusing of ‘the martyr’s rights’. They organized visits to families in Imbaba who lost their children in the revolution. While this might sound as a social activity, it did extend to hold a political flavour with the ‘Campaign against Military Liars’. This campaign was entitled to expose the corruption and lies of the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces’ (who ran the country then). At first they witnessed lots of violence from thugs who destroyed screens and projectors that were used to display this presentation, but the incident of violence in itself attracted many people to curiously approach them and listen to what they had to say or present. Of course the nation wide marches and demonstrations were one of the vital events that the Popular Committee mobilized people for.

Sometimes the Popular Committee of Imbaba suggested activities of a social/health nature; one such as that of exposing the filthiness of Public schools’ lavatories and how this in turn might bring about many diseases to the children. They tried to climb up school walls at night to take pictures, but they were always caught by police and prevented from doing so.

When asked whether the Popular Committee in Imbaba arranges for activities that might be ‘service-oriented’, one interviewee mentioned that they will never adopt such kind of activity; since the interviewee said that they do not want to be like the ‘political Islamist wing’ (by which he meant the Muslim Brotherhood).
“If you have the right to receive the service, why don’t you go ask for your right? Why do you have to wait for it to come to you in the form of charity? You don’t have to wait to receive things where you stand, you have to go fight and ask for your right (translated)”, said the interviewee.

The majority of activities are thus political oriented activities; since as one interviewee believes that “if politics is going fine and in the right direction, the economy will go in the same direction too”. In that sense, they don’t believe that they should be carrying out activities that might be income-generating or so.

The popular committee finances itself relying on monthly contributions. The monthly contributions are usually around twenty Egyptian pounds per month. Sometimes it’s not enough to finance some of their activities; such as printing out flyers, or painting big charts for demonstrations. In such cases, the members start collecting from each other the required amount of money. They have always refused to receive any external funding; only if it is from individual members, but that even never really happened.

In that sense, finances might some time serve as limitation hindering the scope and range of activities in a very large neighborhood such as Imbaba. In general, the Popular Committee of Imbaba does not face many limitations; only on few occasions they witnessed violence from people of the neighborhood whom were sceptical of them at the beginning. An interesting factor also that tries to hinder down or tie back the efforts of the Popular Committee is two other local networks; one representing the Muslim Brotherhood, and the other holds also the title of a ‘popular committee’ but it is widely known by the Popular Committee members that they represent and funded by ‘folool’ members. This latter ‘folool’ popular committee tried to prevent the ‘revolutionary’ Popular Committee of Imbaba from throwing trash in front of the Giza governor’s office in Imbaba. This was however the only
‘explicit’ account on which this group of ‘folool’ tried to obstruct the work of the Popular Committee of Imbaba.

When it comes to adopting participation motivation methods or recruiting methods for people from Imbaba to join the Popular Committee, they rely very much on the ‘word of mouth’, and try as much as possible to take their events, stands, flyers,…etc. to many streets across Imbaba. Nevertheless, the number of members working in a population so huge like that in Imbaba is seemingly very much ineffective, and is thus very limited in its effectiveness.

On the level of cooperation or communication between the Popular Committee of Imbaba and other Popular Committees, the two interviewees mentioned a couple of examples that ensured instances of such. For example one interviewee mentioned that many Popular Committees joined in the event of protesting against the garbage in front of the Giza governor’s office in Imbaba. One interviewee also mentioned that they were very impressed by Helwan’s popular Committee and the degree of organization and recruitment efforts that they carry out. Information and knowledge sharing about experiences is usually shared during the meetings of the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution meetings at the Socialist studies centre in Giza.

The popularity of the Popular Committee in Imbaba is very low. Only three respondents out of fifteen interviewees recognized the Popular Committee in Imbaba. Two respondents recognized it by relating to one of its activities (cleaning up and painting lamp posts). The other respondent actually mentioned that she was part of the Popular Committee in Imbaba but left because they were not welcoming members of ‘political Islam’ orientations. One other respondent confused the Popular Committee with the Muslim Brotherhood group. The majority of the respondents showed interest in receiving questions, but once they knew it was
related to the revolution, some gave very irrelevant answers that implicitly said that they won’t answer. Of such responses was “All is great”, and “we didn’t witness any violence during the days of the revolution, everything was secure”. Some simply said “No” and walked away. In general, a very high sense of scepticism was felt in the neighborhood of Imbaba towards the interviewer. All respondents thought that the Popular Committee in title won’t survive.

7.3. Popular Committee of Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin

Like the case of Mit Oqba, unfortunately there are no official or reliable sources to cite from information about the location, population, and characteristics of Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin districts. The above mentioned districts/neighborhoods are located in the Greater Cairo region; namely Giza. They are large in size compared to Mit Oqba. These neighborhoods are known as middle and upper middle- income neighborhoods. The observed characteristics of these neighborhoods is that they hold a mixture of new and old houses/villas; many health, educational, entertaining, shopping and sports facilities and services are widely and easily accessible in these neighborhoods. Also many companies, offices, and even some embassies are found in these neighborhoods.

The Popular Committee of Dokki, Agouza and Mohandessin are different than the former two cases since it represents three neighborhoods. Another very important note to highlight is that the Popular Committee of these neighborhoods was formed twice. The first was formed shortly after the revolution (2011), and was reformed again earlier this year (2012).

Each of the interviewees represent the Popular Committee of Dokki, Agouza and Mohandessin. One represents the Popular Committee in its early formation, and the other
representing the latest one. Though it is noteworthy to point out that both interviewees knew each other and were aware of both formations.

The very first existence of the Popular Committee of Dokki, Agouza and Mohandessin; emerged during the period from April 2011, to July 2011. The reason why they joined to form one Popular Committee is because the number of participants from these neighborhoods was really low. The number of participating members was around ten to fifteen members. On the number of members, the interviewee thinks that the number is sufficient enough for all three neighborhoods. In all cases, the majority of people “react and not pro-act”; the interviewee said. Thus, its all about the events they prepare for and the “word of mouth” used to spread the news within the neighborhoods is what is important; the interviewee added. It is very difficult to assume that the Popular Committee was representative of the three neighborhoods. Members of the Popular Committee held both male and female members, where the majority of the members were males. An estimate of the female members was not accurate, but on average twenty five percent of the members were females. The members also represented both Muslim and Christian religious identities. There were no ideological backgrounds evident to be notices, but there were definitely no Muslim Brotherhood participants; the interviewee highlighted. At the beginning, they used to meet regularly once per week, and then the rate of meeting up started to decrease to once every two weeks; until the Popular Committee’s activity was nearly dead by the beginning of July 2011. The Popular Committee did not have a certain internal structure, and any kind of disagreements were handled peacefully reaching compromises. Usually, the majority of the differences reflect a disagreement on the means by which the activities of the Popular Committee were carried out.

The activities which the Popular Committee carried out during the period between April 2011 to July 2011 were all politically oriented represented in political awareness campaigns.
Some of these campaigns were those that were called for by the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution; such as: “Know Your Rights” that was popular during that period then. Some of the campaigns held both a social and political component; for example: monitoring the prices in a popular market place in Soliman Gohar street; they even tried to move the market to the Ministry of Agriculture street since many people living nearby were greatly bothered by it. Their trials however failed, the interviewee concluded. Another example was that of trying to uncover acts of corruption taking place between bakeries and fast food restaurants- related to the selling of subsidized flour to fast food restaurants, they did indeed track down the timings of which such corrupt dealings take place, however it was too risky for them to proceed with any legal issues against that. Also, there was a call for boycotting the electric bill monthly payments, especially the fee paid in return for garbage collection. Measuring its effect however was very difficult.

The Popular Committee used to self-finance itself. They did not accept any funds from institutions; only personal donations were accepted. They did not specify a specific sum of money to be paid by the members; they just collected from each other the contributions that everyone could give until they had the required sum of money. One resident of Dokki in fact did volunteer to collect money from neighbors and friends to support the financing of the Popular Committee’s activities; but that only happened once, the interviewee mentioned.

In general, the Popular Committee relied on a ‘word of mouth’ for recruiting members, and they did in fact construct a website of which they were hoping through it their number would increase. The website’s address is: http://dokki.leganthawreya.com/index.php.

In an attempt to reflect the degree of cooperation between the Popular Committee in Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin during the period between April 2011 to July 2011, the interviewee mentioned an example of the cooperation with the Popular Committee of Mit
Oqba in re-equipping a health centre there, and reaching out to possible physicians from Dokki, Agouza and Mohandessin to volunteer in the health centre free of charge.

The second interviewee was a member of the second Popular Committee formed after the first one was no longer existent. It came to existence around the first anniversary of the 25th of January revolution. They tried to come in contact with the former committee and indeed some of its members reengaged once again with the activities, and they were around twenty members. But no sooner did they find themselves decreasing in number and only seven members were active. All active members were male members, of age ranges in their twenty’s, and they represented both Muslim and Christian religious beliefs. No ideological basis were popular among the seven members, they were all pro-the revolution, and believed in Change.

The seven members do not have any defined structure of organization; they are a group of friends who meet up when they find the country’s events pressing to mobilize action based on it. For example: meeting up before the elections to prepare for awareness flyers against ‘folool’ candidates, mobilizing people to join in marches and demonstrations heading for Tahrir square. The majority of the activities are political oriented ever since they started their activities. There was one activity/event though that held a social dimension, which was related to fighting away people who used drugs on the streets; especially near ‘Midan Amman’ or ‘Amman Square’. Amman Square holds a relatively big park, which is poorly lit at night, and people living in the buildings nearby witness such illegal activity from their balconies. The Popular Committee then arranged with the Imam of the Mosque in Amman Square to call after Friday prayers for the people to meet with the members of the Popular Committee in the park to discuss such issue. The interviewee remarked that the number of people who came were many, which indeed reflected a pressing issue that people living in front of this park wanted to get rid of those drug addicts. They decided to solve the issue
peacefully without any possible means of violence, by collecting money to light up the park, and put a big spot light on top of one of the nearby buildings to light it up at night too. With regards to possible limitations that might be witnessed during the carry out of any given activity; the interviewee highlighted on the activities that were politically oriented and addressed people to come down to the streets; they usually were attacked by an informal group that calls itself “Asfeen Ya Rayes” or “We are sorry president”, a group which supports the former Mubarak regime, and seeks to destroy any possible seeds for a successful revolution. They usually hanged around ‘Mostafa Mahmoud square’ in Mohandessin.

Due to the small number of active members, there is seldom any disagreement with regards to exchanging ideas about possible activities or events. Of course a diversity of means is always brainstormed, but in the end a compromise is always reached easily, since they are already friends.

Financing the activities is also solely based on the members’ contributions, and they did not really work on any recruiting methods or approaches. The interviewee said that they relied on the ‘word of mouth’, and hoped that during their activities people would join them.

With regards to the relationship between the Popular Committee and other Popular Committees in different neighborhoods, the interviewee mentioned a couple of examples which justifies a joint cooperation amongst each other. The Popular Committee of Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin, used an easy technique for spraying graffiti signs in the streets; one which they learned from the Popular Committee of Imbaba. At the beginning they used to use carved-in paper, but no soon did it get destroyed. Thus, they learned from the experience of Imbaba to use carved wood instead. The Popular Committee of Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin, is mostly in contact with the Popular Committees in Mit Oqba, Faisal and Al-Haram.
The Popularity of the Popular Committee in Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin is very low too. All fifteen respondents to questions on the Popular committee were left unanswered. They only recognized the term “popular committee” with that which existed as a result of security gap. Two shop owners near Mostafa Mahmoud Square, and in G’ameat Al-Dowal Al-Arabeya street, recognized events of displaying the data show/video as part of the “campaign against Military Liars”, but they did not connect or know that was part of the activities of the Popular Committees. All respondents think that the Popular Committee in title won’t survive.

7.4. Popular Committee of Maadi

Like both Imbaba and Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin; Maadi is also one of the large neighborhoods across the Greater Cairo Region. It is located in Cairo, and its total population is around 190184. Maadi is around 253.8 Km2, where 5.050 Km2 of the total area is inhabited. (Ministry of Administrative Development website online) It is widely known to be a middle and upper middle-income neighborhood.

The Popular Committee of Maadi first came into an existence as a thought during Mid-February in Tahrir square after the step down of Mubarak. Its founding members were at first afraid to leave Tahrir square but they just decided that the revolution should reach out to all the streets and neighborhoods in Egypt. Thus, they started meeting weekly, but by almost a year and a half after the revolution, the interviewee noted that the meetings were no longer on a regular basis, and are only initiated when needed. At the beginning, the members were about twenty members when the Popular Committee first came to existence, and the number even peaked more during the period between April 2011 to November 2011, to maybe around forty members. By the beginning of the elections
campaigns, the number started decreasing, and the Popular Committee started witnessing internal divisions as polarities started to exist. People started leaving the Popular Committee to support specific presidential candidate figures and work under their presidential campaigns. The active twenty members are a mixture of male and female members, of age ranges beginning from twenty years old, to fifty years old. Both interviewees remarked that the percentage of female members was greater than that of males; however none were really able to estimate the average percentage of women present. Members represented diversity in the social, educational, and financial backgrounds. Members also represent people of both religions Christianity and Islam. With regards to diversity in political ideologies; both interviewees mentioned that a general rule was held in the Popular Committee, that members should be independent of Political parties.

The internal structure of the Popular Committee does not have a head, but it has two coordinators, one for financial issues, and the other for external communication and relations.

With regards to solving possible disagreements on activities or actions that the Popular Committee might be willing to implement, the Popular Committee resorts to voting on a given topic, and the decision reached is obligatory on all members, and the majority of the members usually abide by it. “People have reached to a degree where they trust in each other”, said one interviewee stressing on the fact that people followed a majority vote/rule.

Almost all the activities that the Popular Committee of Maadi carries out are political activities. These activities are mostly events where they march into the streets of Maadi holding banners for people to read, displaying data shows, highlighting or criticising political conditions that were prevailing at a specific given time. Examples of these activities were campaigns such as; “The campaign against Military Liars”, this was the most popular event that the Popular Committee of Maadi did. They went to ‘Itihad Square’ in Maadi, where they
hosted a popular new music band called “Eskenderella” (whose songs got very popular during and after the revolution), and they had a guest speaker “Dr. Yehia Salah”, who according to one of the interviewees is a very well known Ophthalmologist.

Other events or activities carried out by the Popular Committee of Maadi were “part of a whole”, one interviewee mentioned. The interviewee meant by such that they were events that were supposed to spread nation-wide in every neighborhood. They were called for by the Popular Committees for the defense of the revolution. These events or campaigns were like: “‘No’ for constitutional amendments”, “Down with Shafik”, “Know Your Rights”, “Against Military Liars”, “try them”, and “No for folool”. Other possible actions were those related to critical events happening in the country such as the ‘Mohamed Mahmoud’ clashes. Whenever there was a nation-wide call for demonstrating in Tahrir square, they would go, and go back to their neighborhoods “bringing Tahrir square to Maadi”; as one interviewee mentioned.

Financing the activities is always related to either of the following; in terms of paper materials, charts and banners, or a local news paper (‘Masr Al-Thawreya’ or ‘Revolutionary Egypt’). The means by which they finance the activities is not really fixed, but they usually depend on personal contributions. There is no specific set amount of money that members pay every month. Sometimes they might need a sum of two thousand Egyptian Pounds, and that is usually in a range very difficult to continuously collect from each other. Such large sums of money were mostly needed for the production of the local news paper that the Popular Committee distributed in Maadi. At first they used to issue it weekly, then monthly, then occasionally; until they stopped because of a shortage of finances.

Reflecting on the above mentioned paragraph; finances indeed shape a limitation to the activities of the Popular Committee. Other limitations discussed by the interviewees were
when political party orientations of members started surfacing in the Popular Committee creating internal divisions.

When asked whether the Popular Committee in Maadi used any recruiting methods or approaches that through which it attempted to attract possible new members; both interviewees mentioned that they mostly relied on the popularity of the events they made; in a sense that the event in itself would be eye catching, and draw some people’s curiosity to ask about who they were; and that then there might be a chance or recruiting new members. One of the interviewees mentioned though that at the early beginnings of their activity, they had an online application, through which they received many applications but only a few showed up through it.

With regards to the possible communication between the Popular Committee in Maadi and other Popular Committees in other neighborhoods, communication is most illustrated in the meetings that brought together the Popular Committees under the umbrella of the PCDR (Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution). An example of collaborated action was their support to the Popular Committee of Imbaba on the issue of garbage collection, by participating in the stand with them. Furthermore, one interviewee even mentioned an example of ‘knowledge or experience sharing’ between the union of Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution in Alexandria and the Popular Committee in Maadi. Some of the Popular Committees in Alexandria carried out activities like that of cooperatives, said one of the interviewees, and the Popular Committee in Maadi wanted to adopt some of their ideas and implement it. They believe that by doing so, they would be incorporating an economically oriented activity which in turn might help those who are economically in need.

The popularity of the Popular Committee in Maadi is very low. Based on random selection of
fifteen people in the main streets of Maadi (especially around ‘Itihad Square); none of the respondents heard of any activity of the Popular Committee. Only one respondent recognized the event that took place in ‘Itihad square’ which hosted the ‘Eskenderella band’. All the other respondents recognized the name “Popular Committee” with those that were established during the days of the revolution when there was a security gap, but none recognized it for any other particular activities. All respondents thought that the Popular Committee in title won’t survive.

7.5. Popular Committees, Social Capital and Development

As mentioned earlier in chapter two that this study employs a comparative approach while using Welzel et.al.’s (2005) approach to the understanding and identification of social capital by identifying the following in the four case studies of this study:

- Whether the popular committee’s in the neighborhoods in study are identified as a communal basis on which social capital can operate.
- Identify the “translators” that serve as factors to translate the informal ties represented in the popular committee into an observable action. (resource-based, institution-based, and value-based).
- Identify the product or collective action performed by the popular committee, by examining the scope of increase in the informal social ties existent in the neighborhood and represented in the structure of Popular Committees, or with other Popular Committees.

The variable of place is also given attention to, which is represented in the specific neighborhoods under study. It is taken into consideration how they might serve as a conditional indicator in and of themselves (for example: local problems) into fostering the existence of social capital that might push forward for development.
In our study, the informal networks represented in the Popular Committees under study have varied in number and composition. In general, the number of members participating in the Popular Committees is very low compared to the large population in their neighborhoods. The documented decreasing numbers ever since their existence is an indicator of the shrinking down to the possibility of it serving as a communal basis on which social capital is to operate. This has indeed been the case with the first formation of the Popular Committee in Dokki, Agouza and Mohandessin, where members started decreasing until its activity completely stopped by July 2011 leaving no communal basis for social capital to build on. Most cases have attempted to be representative of the neighborhoods in terms of gender, religion, social, educational, and financial factors (with the exception of the second formation of the Popular Committee in Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin that has a majority of male members). Representation of ideological beliefs varied greatly. The majority of Popular committees did not hold supporters of ‘political Islam’ or in other explicit terms the “Muslim Brotherhood”. Only the case of Mit Oqba represented a complete diversification in the political/ideological beliefs of its members including ‘Salafists’; yet also with no Muslim Brotherhood supporters (as they already had a similar local group composed by them in Mit Oqba neighborhood). The majority of the members in the Popular Committees are also youth. Elders were only resorted to based on need (especially in the cases of Mit Oqba, and Imbaba). The general trend of female members participating in the Popular Committee has been very low. It is also noteworthy that even though members of the Popular Committees were residents of the same neighborhoods, they saw each other only during the Popular Committee’s meetings. There are no indications that members held closer social ties other than being members of the same committee. This fact confers a more ‘formal’ character to the Popular Committees. The only exceptional case was that of the Popular Committee of Dokki, Mohandessin, and Agouza. Members of the Popular Committee were residents of
these neighbourhoods and also friends.

If we consider the ‘translators’ (resource-based, institution-based, and value-based), we might find that all cases of the Popular Committees under study had very few ‘resource-based’ translators represented in financial resources. All Popular Committees self-relied on themselves for the financing of their activities, and none accepted any funds or financial assistance from organizations or institutions. They only accepted financial assistance from individuals. Only the popular Committee of Mit Oqba and ‘Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin’ witnessed one account of such assistance ever since their existences till the duration of the field work, while community contributions in all of the Popular Committees were very low.

With regards to institution-based resources, the institution-based resources in this study came from two channels. The fist channel is represented in the internal institutions within the Popular Committee. Internally, all the Popular Committees followed a horizontal scheme for managing the Committee, in an attempt to allow more democratic practice among its members (with the exception of Imbaba, where it had been implicitly inferred that it is only following a horizontal scheme in theory, but not in practice). Voting was also used to resolve any possible disputes or disagreements with regards to a given topic, which in turn dictates the prevailing decision for the Popular Committee. Popular Committees whose decisions weren’t obligatory such as the case of Mit Oqba might be considered as a point of weakness, where such allows the Committee to be more prone to witness a limited scope of the activity implemented by its members. After all, the strength of the Popular Committee is in its ability to agree on one task/activity and have all its participating members (as human capital) voluntarily implement it.

The second channel is represented in the PCDR (Popular Committees for the defense of the
Revolution) as a structure that serves as an umbrella for the existing Popular Committees, and gives it communal legitimacy.

Identifying a value-based translator in this study could be represented in the ‘revolutionary sentiment’ that the Popular Committees held. Even though a factor of security did play a very important role in its early formations; slogans such as “Revolution in every neighborhood” was the major value upon which people got together into forming these informal ties/networks; even after security was technically restored. The nature of activities is also a manifestation of such; especially the politically oriented ones and how they were meant to serve the revolution. However, the lower the revolutionary sentiment goes, the less likely people are motivated to participate. This could be evident from the negative responses about the likelihood of the Popular Committees to survive.

The ‘Product’ that these communal bases have developed is represented in the activities that the Popular Committees underwent or participated in -whether in their local communities or across other local communities or neighborhoods-. In either case, it is obvious that the level and frequency of activities has mostly been connected to critical conditions that were ongoing in the country. In that sense, the majority of the activities have been politically oriented ones. The ongoing political conditions of the country might also (though not exclusively) serve as an indicator to predict the frequency of upcoming activities by the Popular Committees. This can be argued for based on the nature and type of political activities observed: marches and demonstrations; political campaigns reflecting the revolutionaries’ discontent with situations ongoing in the country such as: ‘the campaign against Military Liars’; campaigns before the elections; etc. Other activities such as service-oriented ones, (ones with a social dimension, or even economic-dimension) have been extremely rare in all of the Popular Committees. Any service-oriented activity that took place, reflected the role of ‘place’ and its attributes as a
variable determining the nature of these activities. For example: in the case of Mit Oqba and the Butane tube provision, and the case of Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin handling the issue of drugs in ‘Amman Square’. The Popular Committee of Maadi was the only Popular Committee to consider economic-oriented activities represented in studying ideas inspired by the Popular Committees in Alexandria; ideas which were similar to creating a system of cooperatives within the Maadi neighborhood, however, nothing was put into practice at the time of the field work.

While the frequency of the major activities is attributed to the frequency of major political events occurring in the country, the radius of collective action was very difficult to be observed locally (other than documenting stories related on the success of events through the interviewees). However, the means by which the Popular Committees relied on connecting with their communities; represented in ‘participation motivator methods’, might seem to reflect the scope of their radius for mobilizing collective action. In general it has been recognized to be very low, since the means used were very limited. The majority relied on ‘the word of mouth’, and the use of flyers as the two most common methods. Some Popular Committees used local newspapers in the very beginning such as; the Popular Committee in Mit Oqba, and the Popular Committee in Maadi. The variable of place here also has served as a great determinant to the effectivenes of these efforts. The larger the geographical location, the more difficult it was to work on expanding the radius of collective action. Since the majority of the neighborhoods under study were observed to be large in geographical location (with the exception of Mit Oqba), the radius of collective action can be inferred to be very low. It is interesting also to point out that it is a great weakness that the Popular Committees did not adopt internal motivating techniques or methods within their
structures so that they would ensure that people would not get bored and drop out; or in other terms ensuring a ‘bonding of social capital’.

The radius of collective action is also illustrated on the level of activity demonstrated between the different Popular Committees. This touches upon the concept of ‘bridging’ social capital too. A very evident example was one mentioned by all the Popular Committee interviewees; which was the event that brought three of the Popular Committees under study with the Popular Committee of Imbaba, throwing garbage in front of the Giza governor’s office in Imbaba protesting against the ineffectiveness of garbage collection services provided. Another example reflecting the radius of collective action might be the accounts on which “knowledge-transfer” or “experience-transfer” has been documented. For example: The Popular Committee in Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin and its use of wooden-carved graffiti prints instead of ones made out of paper. They adopted this technique from the Popular Committee in Imbaba. Also, the Popular Committee in Imbaba and its reference to learning from the Popular Committee in Helwan about the means and methods of internal organization, and recruitments is an example in point.

Thus the four cases of Popular Committees are not based on strong communal basis to build a good stock of social capital could take place; and their continued decreasing size does not favour such prospect. The ‘translators’ do not allow the product of these Popular Committees to contribute to an increase in the stock of social capital. Both the ‘translators’ and ‘Product’ as we’ve seen above were very limited, which may lead us to conclude that the samples understudy are very less likely to serve in adding up to the existing stock of social capital, thus limiting possible developmental benefits.
CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

The security gap witnessed during the Egyptian revolution that took place on the 25\textsuperscript{th} of January, 2011, has played a very important role giving birth to a new phenomenon in society known as the ‘Popular Defense Committees’. The Popular Defense Committees were informal networks of people in many neighborhoods who came down to the streets to protect themselves, their families and their properties. While the stepping down of the former president Mubarak paved the way for security to be restored back on the streets making these committees no longer necessary, some continued to operate. Many of the Popular Defense Committees decided to keep their activity alive in their neighborhoods responding to the call of bringing the revolution to every neighborhood across Egypt. An overall organization all these committees together was established in Tahrir Square known as “the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution” as a result of the joint efforts between founders and members of the Popular Committees in many different neighborhoods across the country. While its activity remained limited and idle for some time ever since the revolution (Bremer, 2011), the Popular Committees in some neighborhoods still functioned. This thesis enquires about these informal networks’ possible contribution to the existing stock of social capital in Egypt, and to development in future.

While very few scholars wrote about Social Capital in Egypt, the existing literature however has drawn attention to the low level of existing stock of social capital in Egypt. While it did identify some of the major sources of social capital; such as culture, religion, family and civil society (Abdelhamid, 2009), it still remains very problematic to accurately measure the stock of social capital in Egypt. This study adopted a comparative approach using Welzel et.al.’s (2005) to the study and identification of social capital, to find out whether the sample of Popular Committees was able to contribute to the existing stock of
social capital. Bearing in mind that the study covers only a small number of Popular Committees in the Greater Cairo region, the thesis offers some propositions on the possibility that these committees could contribute to the existing stock of social capital, and thus push forward for development.

In this respect, few conclusions could be formulated. The first is that neighbourhood factor did little in promoting social capital. The decreasing number of participants in the committees limited very much the potential of this factor. The fact that the majority of the popular committees did not demonstrate closer social ties other than that they were members of the same committee who lived in the same neighborhood and met only once a week, was another limitation. What Welzel et al named “Communal ties“ could not add to the existing stock of social capital in the neighbourhoods. Popular committees in that sense could thus be even regarded as a formal association more than representing informal ties that might add up to social capital.

The second conclusion is that the majority of the activities that were carried out by the Popular Committees were political, and the developmental impact that might result as of such could be promising on the long run indeed. However, the low level of other activities (of social or economic dimensions) observed in these cases is a drawback. It is a drawback since the political activities seemed only to be triggered by events that took place in the country, and if there weren’t any of these events taking place, members of committees might not have found anything else to bring them together. In that sense, promoting development in different areas other than ‘political development’ was indeed limited.

A third conclusion is related to the factors that should have helped maintain and expand the informal ties among members of the Popular Committees. While the internal composition and dynamics of work of these committees contributed to their survival (a
diversity of participants, following a horizontal scheme, and implementing a majority’s vote system), the lack of internal motivation sources/methods is a major limitation. Without internal motivation methods in the Popular Committee members, it is very easy for negative attitudes and passivity to prevail. Even the PCDR as an umbrella for the existing Popular Committees was only referred to on a couple of accounts in the form of initiatives it called for and nothing more. Thus the effort that the PCDR is supposed to play in mobilizing the individual Popular Committees under it was very limited as well.

Finally, limitation of the financial resources was one of the major factors that have greatly affected the level and performance of the Popular Committees. All Popular Committees self-relied on themselves for the financing of their activities, and none accepted any funds or financial assistance from other organizations or institutions. They only accepted financial assistance from individuals. Only the popular Committee of Mit Oqba and ‘Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin’ reported one case of such assistance ever since their existences till the duration of the field work, while community contributions in all of the Popular Committees were very low.

Thus based on the above mentioned conclusions the possibility of the informal ties that were built during moments of security gap did not consolidate the existing stock of social capital in their local communities, and thus had very little chance to affect development.

Drawing on these conclusions, concepts of ‘bonding social capital’ and ‘bridging social capital’ are valid to address in light of our concluding remarks. The majority of the Popular committees understudy now falling more into the category of formal neighborhood organizations/structures should have strengthened ties among their members ties (bonding social capital), and should have interacted more frequently with other popular committees and the PCDR (bridging social capital). This determines the availability of ‘translators’
necessary for such to take place. An increase in the resource-based, institution-based, and value-based translators would have improved for them the possibility of establishing stronger bonding and bridging social capital.

If we come to draw on the reviewed experiences of the cases of Cuba and China, the following propositions suggest other conditions that might have enabled the Popular Committees to add to the stock of social Capital in their neighbourhoods:

- The informal networks represented in the Popular Committees might gain strength if they were backed up by a strong revolutionary regime; which is unfortunately not the case up to this date, where the Muslim Brotherhood is in power, and is not representative of a revolutionary regime.

- Local officials can make use of these existing structures and capitalize on their efforts by supporting and interacting with them to engage in joint developmental efforts mutually beneficial.

It is noteworthy that even though the sources of social capital in Egypt seem to be manifested in a limited number of sources as reviewed in earlier chapters; and even though the World Value Survey shows that Egypt is a low trust country, the proliferation of popular defense committees across the country is a demonstration of a dormant stock of traditional social capital that facilitated for people to come together to defend their lives and properties under conditions of insecurity. This development reflects a potential; or what we could call as ‘residual reservoir’ of social capital manifesting itself. When all other means of dealing with common threats to security or life difficulties were exhausted, this residual reservoir of social capital has been a last resort for people. Thus, this development might explain a lot about the dynamics of how social capital might work in the Egyptian society, This indeed is supported by Abdelhamid’s (2009) discussion of the status of social capital in Egypt. Networks of
social security that poor people resort to when facing their everyday life problems is one example. Confronting consequences of natural disasters like the earthquake that struck Egypt in 1992 is another prominent example.

Possible recommendations that this study would recommend considering are;
- Policy makers should find ways to increase resources available to such committees as they could play an important role in increasing stock of social capital and contribute to development.

- Media should also shed the light on their work and efforts much more, by presenting them as models to be emulated by others and in turn encourage people to engage with these structures productively.

- Further research and study on the nature of trust in Egyptian society as well as motivators for civic activism needs to be undertaken in depth in context of the new political revolutionary situation that the country is experiencing at present.
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Annexes

Annex1: Interviewees:

- Male member of Mit Oqba Popular Committee, Interview, 17 June, 2012.

- Female member of Mit Oqba Popular Committee, Interview, 17 June, 2012.

- Male member of Imbaba Popular Committee, Interview, 21 June, 2012.

- Female member of Imbaba Popular Committee, Interview, 6 July, 2012.

- Male member of Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin Popular Committee, Interview, 3 July, 2012.

- Female member of Dokki, Agouza, and Mohandessin Popular Committee, Interview, 7 July, 2012.


- Female member of Maadi Popular Committee, Interview, 1 July, 2012.

- 15 respondents in each of the four neighborhoods (all identities were anonymous).
Annex 2: Interview guide (English and Arabic versions)

Interview guide in English

-Did you take part in the formation of the popular defense committee of your neighborhood during the security gap that took place during the early days of the revolution? How often did you participate?
-When and why did the popular committee in your neighborhood choose to continue?
-Do you believe that the phenomenon of popular committees may survive? And why?
-How frequent does the popular committee meets?
-Approximately, how many participants were present in the popular committee? How many participants are there now?
-Did new participants join the popular committee after possibly successful activities?
-Is there any contact between your popular committee and other popular committees?
-How does the popular committee attract new participants?
-What type of activities does the popular committee carry out?
  * Political oriented activities
  * Service oriented activities
  * Both
-What kind of political activities does the popular committee carry out?
-What kind of service oriented activities does the popular committee carry out?
-Would you consider the activities as ‘income generating activities’? How?
-Do you think the activities had a recognizable impact on your neighborhood? How?
-Did the activity have a direct positive impact on you?
-Does the popular committee engage both men and women in their activities?
-Does the popular committee engage old and young people?
-Does the popular committee engage both wealthy and poor people?
-Does the popular committee engage both Muslims and Christians?
- What is the current structure and organization of your popular committee?
- How frequent do you commit yourself to the meetings of the popular committee?
- Would you identify recognizable harmony amongst participants?
- Do members meet outside the framework of the Popular Committee meetings?
- If disagreements occur, how are they usually handled or compromised?
- How does the popular committee maintain its finances?

Questions to non-popular committee members:

- Have you ever heard of the popular committee in your neighborhood?
If the answer is yes: Have you ever considered participating with them?
If the answer is No: Would you consider participating with the popular committee in your neighborhood if it exists?

- What do you think of the idea of popular committees in general?

Interview guide in Arabic

 أسئلة المقابلة لأعضاء اللجان الشعبية

هل شاركت مع اللجنة الشعبية في منطقتك وقت الثورة؟ كم مرة شاركت؟
متي ولماذا اخترت اللجنة الشعبية بمنعفك قرار الاستمرار بنشاطها؟
هل تعتقد أن ظاهرة اللجان الشعبية ستعيش؟ ولماذا؟
كم مرة تجتمع اللجنة الشعبية؟

بالقرب، كم كان عدد الأعضاء المشتركين باللجنة الشعبية؟ وكم عددهم الآن؟
هل شارك أعضاء جدد مع نشاط اللجنة الشعبية بعد نجاح أنشطة قامت بها اللجنة؟
هل هناك اتصال بين اللجنة الشعبية في المنطقة عدك و بين لجان شعبية في مناطق أخرى؟

كيف تجذب اللجنة الشعبية الأعضاء الجدد إليها؟

ما هو نوع النشاط الذي تقوم به اللجنة الشعبية؟

*نشاط سياسي* نشاط خدمي *الاثنان معاً*

ما نوع الأنشطة السياسية التي تقوم بها اللجنة الشعبية؟

*ما نوع النشاط الخدمي الذي تقدمه اللجنة الشعبية؟

هل بمكنك اعتبار بعض أنشطة اللجنة الشعبية، أنها قادرة على توليد دخل ما؟ كيف؟

هل تعتقد أن أنشطة اللجنة الشعبية كان لها تأثير ملحوظ على منطقتك؟ كيف؟

هل كان للأنشطة تأثير إيجابي مباشر عليك؟

هل تضم اللجنة الشعبية كلاً من الرجال والنساء؟

هل تضم اللجنة الشعبية كلاً من كبار السن والشباب؟

هل تضم اللجنة الشعبية كلاً من المسلمين والمسيحيين؟

هل تضم اللجنة الشعبية كلاً من الغني والفقير؟

ما هو الهيكل التنظيمي للجنتك الشعبية؟

كم مرة تلزم نفسك بحضور اجتماعات اللجنة الشعبية؟

هل تلاحظ انضمام بين أعضاء اللجنة؟

هل يتفاوت أعضاء اللجنة خارج إطار اجتماعات اللجنة الشعبية؟

في حالة حدوث اختلافات في الرأي، كيف تتم مساواتها وتجاوزها؟

كيف تدير اللجنة الشعبية على مواردها المالية؟

سؤال لتغير الأعضاء

هل سمحت للجنة الشعبية في المنطقة التي تسكن بها؟

إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم: هل سبق لك أن شاركت معهم؟

إذا كانت الإجابة بلا: هل تنتظر في أمر المشاركة مع اللجنة الشعبية في منطقتك؟

- ما رأيك في فكرة اللجان الشعبية بشكل عام؟
With its brave revolution on January 25th, the Egyptian people achieved glorious victories that had long been a dream for millions. These began with the overthrow of the deposed dictator and the figureheads of the regime of looting, impoverishment, and political corruption and bringing them to court. They continued with the dissolution of the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council along with the corrupt ruling party. The end has not yet been reached; it waits for greater determination to meet the goals of the revolution: change and social justice. It was our revolution that was able to stun and confuse the regime of poverty and despotism, just as it inspired hope in social change and a move towards dignity, freedom, and social justice. During the darkest days of the revolution, the time of the attacks from gangs of thugs and the organized withdrawal of the police, the Popular Committees were born. They were formed spontaneously and automatically, assuredly united together—and originating from—the Egyptian people who insisted, courageously, on standing against intimidation, robbery, and organized killing. These Committees, which were the safety valve for society and a method of protecting and advancing the revolution, were formed firmly,
with all bravery, against the ruling regime of gangs. Hold on, for our civilization is not just words in history books, but also struggle and steadfastness in the face of killing and the robbery of the daily bread and property of the people. The Popular Committees continue to assume the various functions of defending the revolution and its goals, upon which millions agreed. These committees operate in agreement with a code of conduct ingrained in the true values of the Egyptian people:

- Dependence on voluntary efforts in neighborhoods, villages, hamlets, cities, and centers according to individual circumstances

- Solidarity with the principles of the revolution (dignity-freedom-social justice) despite the different political backgrounds of committee members

- Non-subordination to any governmental body, party, institution, organization along with the refusal of any financing from any actor, whether they be private, governmental, local, or foreign

The Popular Committees have become necessary for the defense of the revolution. The people need them to organize and mobilize the revolution’s masses and to be one of the ways to work on:

- Outreach and spreading awareness of democracy and social justice, without which freedom for society cannot be achieved

- Oversight and popular participation in the matters of society and its administration in a positive manner. This oversight includes services which the state undertakes (such as education, health, utilities, sanitation services, and the environment) as well as oversight of local agencies and the police
- Participation in plans to build the country and development through studies, discussion, coordination, and taking scientific and popular opinions on the state’s plans for neighborhood growth and development on two levels, local and national, to meet the needs of the revolution’s masses

- The participation of the people’s children without discriminating between men and women or discrimination between religious beliefs. Everyone has been united and agreed upon the goals of the revolution and upon building justice and democracy

The Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution are democratically working on coordination, cooperation, and exchange of information and knowledge among themselves, based on discussion and popular conversations open to the public. To achieve the voluntary missions, the Popular Committees utilize specialists in every field. The Popular Committees’ volunteers are working to achieve the short-term goals of the revolution, including:

- Quick and public trials of the deposed President, his family, and the rest being brought forward for investigation or trial without releasing them until their final sentencing for all their political and criminal offenses

- Forming a civilian presidential council for the administration of the country during the transitional period and the army’s return to its barracks for the protection of the country

- A general election for a drafting committee to draft a new Constitution which recognizes justice and democracy in a civilian parliamentary republic

- Holding parliamentary elections according to a proportional-list system, with voting to be done by national number, depending on completely new electoral lists
- Dissolving the Local Councils and holding new elections for their members on the basis of a new democratic law

- Direct election of governors, neighborhood and city mayors, village chiefs, shaykhs, university presidents, and college deans

- Activating the role of popular oversight over the nation’s institutions and officials

- Forbidding the presentation of civilians to military tribunals, the release of all prisoners of conscience, and the retrial of all those tried before military tribunals in civil court

- Restoring the nation’s lands, which the corrupt seized, and using them to house the youth, those living in shanty towns, and the residents of the graveyards

- Confiscating the factories which were sold in agreement with privatization plans and developing them in order to assist in reducing the rate of unemployment

- Dissolving the national security apparatus which is nothing but a continuation of the State Security Apparatus that was responsible for the torture, intimidation, and surveillance of the people

- Establishing a police service under popular and judicial supervision and dissolving the Central Security Apparatus

- Repealing legislation that restricts the freedom of opinion, demonstrating, sitting-in, and striking, the law of new parties, and the law of the thugs

- Repealing the Emergency Law

- Placing a minimum wage no less than 1500 EGP/month and a maximum not to exceed 15 times the minimum wage
- Indefinite cessation of the exportation of gas to the Zionist Entity and the Qualifying Industrial Zones Agreement that both serve to support the occupying entity and striving to build an independent national policy

With the spread and growth of the Popular Committees, it is possible to achieve the hopes and dreams of the people regarding:

Holding accountable the President of the Republic and ensuring this occurs, as well as his Vice President, the Prime Minister, and the government – national growth based on developing the production sectors, limiting foreign investment and dependency, and the just distribution of wealth – equitable development between rural and urban areas – just tax legislation, proportionate with income – equal growth for neighborhoods and provinces, without distinction – support for and the development of culture and the arts to enrich and rejuvenate popular heritage – real support for women.

The Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution call on all citizens eager for development for the sake of the people, not for the sake of investment—the aim of which is to only accumulate profit, to join and participate through voluntary work.

(Translated by: Thomas Levi Thompson, Translation reviewed by Elias Saba; see: www.tahrirdocuments.org )