Building urban livelihoods: two generations in an unauthorized settlement in Damascus
Zakarya, N.

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3. Migration and settlement in unauthorized areas, 
a livelihoods perspective

The aim of this study is to analyze the manner in which a specific migrant group have built up and created livelihoods as they settled in the Duelha of Damascus. In order to understand the present local community of Duelha and the way of life of its population, two major phenomena should be kept in mind. First, the community of Duelha is relatively new. Its inhabitants began to settle the area on the outskirts of Damascus, arriving from the rural parts of Syria, during the 1970's. The majority of the inhabitants are either direct migrants or second-generation offspring. Consequently, rural-urban migration will be an important concept in this thesis.

Second and perhaps more important, is that Duelha is an unauthorized low-income settlement. For the purpose of my thesis, I define an unauthorized settlement as a residential area that has developed with legal claims to other kinds of use (in this case, agricultural land) but without legal permission from the concerned authorities to build homes. In other words, those who migrated from the rural areas settled on what was considered agricultural land surrounding the city. Despite the agricultural status, homes were built, and over the last thirty years, Duelha has become a vibrant community with many facilities.

Both phenomena help to contextualize the inhabitants' way of life from the perspective of the livelihoods approach. That being said, I address the question of how people in the local community have built up their 'capitals' – a notion which will be discussed in more detail below. In doing so, I will highlight the ways in which both migration and building up unauthorized settlements are vital elements in peoples' livelihood strategies.

Taking these central concepts as a starting point, this study aims to deepen the understanding of life in an unauthorized settlement and slum in an urban area of a developing country. I will do so by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do migrants use their capitals to develop a livelihood strategy and how do the sets of capitals change during this process?
2. How does the context of an unauthorized settlement affect the way residents there build up their livelihood strategies?
3. How have livelihood strategies changed over time between the first and the second generations in Duelha?
3.1. The Livelihoods Approach and the Concept of Capitals

The concept of a livelihoods approach was first introduced in the 1987 Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development, and expanded upon in the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Krantz 2001). Moreover, Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway presented an analysis exploring the ways people in rural areas put together different resources in a combination of strategies (Chambers, 1992; Bebbington, 1999; de Haan, 2000). The livelihoods approach was extended from a rural context to urban studies, notably in the “assets and vulnerability framework” developed by Moser (1998) and Rakodi’s livelihoods and capital assets analysis (Rakodi, 1999; Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002).

The livelihoods approach has become a popular framework and is currently also used by many international development agencies, such as UNDP, DFID, and CARE. However, these agencies use the approach slightly differently in their strategic orientation and methodological frameworks (Krants, 2001: 11). The livelihoods approach has both strengths and limitations. One of its strengths is that it offers a holistic view on how people construct their livelihoods by multiplying assets, and combining resources; including not only physical and natural resources, but also their social, cultural and human capital. The approach has another crucial positive aspect in that it can be applied at different levels, such as formal and informal institutional levels, to social factors at the local level, as well as to economic processes, and legislative frameworks at the macro level (ibid.21).

The main critiques and limitations of the livelihood approach concern its views on poverty and the poor. The agency of the poor is stressed almost to the exclusion of the constraints posed by power relations in existing institutions and processes, which actively contribute to their poverty. It suggests that their agency is enough to get them out of poverty. Gender issues also have not been very clearly specified in the approach, although several authors do emphasize the necessity of including a gendered perspective (Moser, 1998; Silvey and Elmhirst, 2003). I think, these are important elements, and should be more widely included by researchers, by allowing more time for participation in a local community in order to have a sufficient understanding of its inner workings. The following figure is an example from the CARE model, explaining how development agencies use the framework depending on the particular areas in which they are interested.
The mode that CARE uses focuses mainly on agency of household members, concentrating its attention on rural livelihoods. The figure stresses a rural context as the livelihood inputs considered are natural resources, infrastructure, economic capital, and the cultural and political environment. CARE examines the shocks and stress on these inputs, such as drought, exclusion of groups and social and political unrest.

CARE emphasizes empowerment strategies for the poor, by taking into account the way that human capital enhances the capability of household members, and the way that social capital and the situation of households aids their claims and access to land and water. In assessing the economic situation the model takes into consideration both production and income generation, as well as consumption patterns. A third question is how the dynamics of economic exchange can empower households and eventually entire rural communities.

CARE’s livelihood model is an approach aimed at allowing local communities to develop dynamic strategies empowering their members to achieve a certain level of security in food, nutrition, health, water, shelter, education, community participation and personal safety. “Since 1994, CARE has used Households Livelihood Strategies security (HLS) as framework for programme analysis, design, monitoring and evaluation”. (Krantz, 2001:3)
Using the livelihoods approach as my theoretical framework for the study of Duelha I will attempt to highlight the way people build up four out of five different types of capitals discussed here: physical, social, human and financial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3.1: Capitals in the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human capital</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The labor resources available to households in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The quantitative dimension refers to the number of household members and the time available to engage in income-earning activities. Qualitative aspects refer to the level of education and skills and the health status of household members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social and political capital</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and political capital refers to the social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust and reciprocity, access to wider institutions of society) upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihoods.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Physical capital</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical or produced capital is the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy, communications) and the production equipment and the means by which enable people to pursue their livelihoods.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Financial capital</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial capital comprises the financial resources available to people (including saving, credit, remittances and pensions) which provide them with different livelihood options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural capital</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The natural resource stocks from which resource flows useful to livelihoods are derived, including land, water, and other environmental resources, especially common pool resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Carney, 1999:7

According to Carney (1999: 7), the livelihood analytical framework distinguishes five main types of capitals *i.e.* human, social, political, physical, financial and natural. An understanding of what capitals people have available is essential in the analysis of livelihood strategies, because it allows us to identify in which way people use their resources to avail opportunities and constraints (Rakodi, 2002). Box 3.1 provides a description of the different capitals based on Carney (1999: 7).
The asset pentagon (Figure 3.2) lies at the core of the livelihoods framework. The pentagon was developed to enable information about people's assets to be presented visually, thereby bringing to life important inter-relationships between the various assets.

Figure 3-2: The Asset Pentagon

![Asset Pentagon Diagram](image)

Source: Carney, 1999

The concept of cultural capital is not represented in the asset pentagon; however it is a very relevant capital, which needs to be distinguished from social capital. I will consider it therefore in this study. I define the concept of cultural capital as collective ways of seeing the social world or the ways of doing things within that world (lifestyle), incorporating a socially defined hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1993). Cultural capital is related to differences in the body of knowledge obtained through education, religious organization or class. For this study the first two arenas are taken into account and class is not, because no comparison is made between different social classes in this study. The term cultural capital is also used because a given cultural 'inheritance' can be translated into social resources. People socialised into the dominant culture have a large advantage over people not socialised into this culture because society at large tends to reproduce most extensively dominant cultural values and ideas.

There is little need to deal with natural capital for the purpose of my thesis since water for irrigation, land for agriculture and other communal resources play a minimal role in an urban setting as compared to rural areas. What is important, however are the collective 'public goods' with which local citizens are provided or excluded from by local governments in urban areas (Baud, 2000). Local authorities have the responsibility to supply city residents with the needed resources such as water and electricity. This type of capital will be analyzed under the heading of physical capital, included in housing.
The operational shape of the capital framework used in this particular study is as follows:

Figure 3-3: The structure of the Capital Framework in Duelha

The first version of the above diagram, conceptualized by Rakodi (2002), illustrates how different capitals interact, affect and overlap each other. The manner in which different capitals interact and overlap has been discussed and interpreted in various ways. For example, Flora has generalized the concept of this interaction by suggesting that all
capitals are interconnected and affect each other; “Each form of capital can enhance the productivity of other forms of capital”. (Flora, 1997: 1). Similarly, Bourdieu also emphasizes “how these different appearances of capital transform themselves into each other in order to maximize accumulation” (Schuller, Baron and Field, 2001:4). Moser also mentions the dynamics between capitals. She states:

Human capital development is closely linked to the economic and social infrastructure provision. Social services such as education ensure that people gained skills and knowledge, while economic infrastructure such as water, transport, and electricity –together with health care- ensure that they used their skills and knowledge productivel (Moser, 1998:9).

Thus, I will examine these overlapping relations in the case of Duelha and try to demonstrate the relations among capitals at the level of the local community.

The livelihood approach allows poverty to be conceptualized from a material and non-material perspective. It can be used to demonstrate the manner in which people in local communities access resources to improve their material assets, which allows them to enhance their quality of life and provide needed capital “...to confront the social conditions which produces poverty [Bebbington, 1999]”. In other words, the ability to increase one’s capitals enhances one’s well-being through empowerment. This empowerment provides opportunities to change one’s financial and social situations.

This framework thus understands these assets as vehicles for instrumental action (making a living), hermeneutic action (making living meaningful) and emancipatory action (challenging the structure under which one makes a living)” [Habermus (1971) cited in Bebbington, 1999: 2022].

While material assets are certainly a fundamental factor in poverty easement, scholars have also commented on the importance of non-tangible assets for poverty alleviation. For example, Rakodi (2002: 10) emphasizes the non-material aspects of capitals:

Assets do not only include the cash or savings poor people may have, but also other material or non-material assets, such as their health, labor, knowledge and skills, their friends and family, and the natural resources around them.

By including social relations and other non-material assets, Rakodi has touched upon the way in which human, financial, social and physical capitals can overlap and interact. In the following sections, I will expand on each type of capital and its structure. But before doing so, I will explain why and how the household should be seen as the focal and starting point for analysis using the livelihood approach. The household can be defined as a social unit of people living together and trying to create and build a strategy for a better life. (Mc Netting, 1984).

Another definition of a household is “commonly defined as a person or co-resident group of people who contribute to and/or benefit from a joint economy in either cash or domestic labor-that is, a group of people who live and eat together” (Rakodi, 2002:7). However, the concept of a household must be examined contextually within their wider culture and system of social relations. A household is not a collection of individual
persons, but joined together usually by family relationships. Therefore, for the purpose of my analysis, it is necessary to address them in such a way, that they reflect the Middle Eastern cultural context, which constructs households in a specific fashion. At the same time, it must be considered that the concept of a household is not static over time, as the surrounding society evolves and changes, patterns of households, both in rural and urban contexts will also change. For example in the Middle East, there are trends indicating a shift from extended families to the nuclear family model, therefore the concept of a household will eventually change accordingly. According to Kabeer:

Households are neither a group of people acting as if they were a single individual nor are they a collection of individuals co-operating in the interests of maximizing economic gain. Households are, by and large, made up of families, and hence the sites of particular kinds of social relationships, which are very distinct from other relationships in any society (Kabeer, 2003/4: 3).

Rakodi (2002) presents a clear approach to the concepts of household livelihood strategies. She does so by building upon the work of authors such as Carney (1999), Chambers and Conway (1992). She argues that the livelihood approach is the key to understanding the process of how poor people manage their lives and how they build their capitals. The livelihoods approach analyzes how households combine available resources and assets in multiple activities in order to construct a livelihood and how external shocks and trends, policies and interventions influence their effort. The term strategy is used here to refer to the choices and decisions that individuals in a household make. A strategy indicates how individuals in the local community obtain their livelihoods and the instruments used to obtain them. Rakodi clearly highlights the importance of social networking among relatives, friends and others, to expand the choices in building livelihoods. Similarly, according to Wolf (1992), widening these choices includes, among others, utilizing a variety of contexts, such as the social context, cultural and ideological expectations and access to resources.

In the case of Duelha, the expectation is that households, family, friends, neighborhood networks are an important part of individual social capital. For poor households, securing supportive networks is very important in order to reduce vulnerability.
The above diagram illustrates how the Oxfam agency adapted the livelihood approach framework and brought together the several actors shaping the process; starting from vulnerability of households, analyzing their assets, and explaining the process and policies that support the strategies, which help achieve well being.

It also shows the more balanced approach in dealing with the agency of households and their access to institutions. The poverty of households is also linked to what several authors have called the ‘structures of constraint’. This concept deals with the barriers posed to different social groups – in casu low-income households. Folbre (1994) describes women-headed families – in gaining access to institutions for obtaining the different resources they provide. Ways of overcoming such constraints in access to institutions and what networks or ‘intermediary figures’ can promote such access will be taken up in this study (this paragraph is based on personal discussions with I. Baud).

### 3.1.1. Human capital

An essential aspect of the livelihood strategy framework consists of building human capital; not only in terms of the number of contributing individuals in a household but also the capabilities that they bring to the household. Rakodi (2002: 10) refers to human capital as the quantity and the quality of labor resources available to the household. She writes about these resources:

> Both [quantitative and qualitative labor resources] are important to the fulfillment of productive and reproductive tasks. The ability of households to manage their labor assets to take advantage of opportunity for economic activity is constrained, first by the levels of education and skills and the health status of household members, and second by the demands of household maintenance. Households may respond to economic stress by returning to low-return subsistence or survival activities, increasing participation rates or
increasing returns to labor by increasing its productivity. Lack of human capital in the form of skills and education affects the ability to secure a livelihood more directly in urban labor markets than in rural areas (Rakodi, 2002: 10).

The keys elements that constitute the concept of human capital are labor, employment, health, knowledge, education, and skills. Sen (1997) also comments that the increase in human capital not only makes people produce better but it also increases the meaningfulness in their lives and the ability to make changes in their futures [Sen (1997) cited in Bebbington, 1999]. The term human capital itself overlaps and is linked with other capitals as will be clarified below. The concept of human capital in the livelihood framework discourse requires that its meaning, nature and role are understood from different views and perspectives. In the following sections, I will expand upon the elements of human capital and provide various views from different authors.

**Labor and employment:**

According to many authors (Tacoli, 1998; Moser, 1996) the concept of human capital is primarily connected to labor. Both Moser (1996) and Tacoli (1998) designate human capital as the most important asset for low-income households. They link labor to skills, knowledge and the physical ability to work. Consequently, employment is an essential element in building human capital.

Moser highlights the fact that when there is increased competition for work, there is increased vulnerability in the low-income households. For example, she indicates that an increase in vulnerability may translate in the school drop out rate, a decrease in the use of health care facilities, and a lack of access to infrastructure (Moser, 1996:3). A household strategy to reduce its vulnerability to outside pressures and increase capital is to mobilize additional labor of women and children in order to contribute to the household income (Moser, 1996:5). These women usually enter the informal labor market, where they are generally paid less than men.

In the particular case of Syria, where the government is the largest employer, formal employment in government institutions has more security of tenure and fringe benefits, since the state has regular rules for social policies such as pensions and retirement, and unions to protect its employees. Informal work has no such safety measures, nor protection for basic wage levels or fringe benefits.

As mentioned before, the increase in vulnerability in the household also has negative implications for the potential to build up the other aspects of human capital, such as health and education levels, and for care and reproduction activities within the household.

**Health:**

It is clear that one of the key elements to building a successful livelihood is good health, as good health allows one to work harder and more efficiently. It is especially important to note that living conditions in slums and unauthorized settlements may have adverse
effects on people’s health. Inadequate and overcrowded living conditions may also affect community dwellers’ mental, physical and psychological health.

Pryer (1993) showed the importance of health by addressing the connection between poor quality of housing, health problems and low economic returns as a consequence of income lost from days off work and medical expenses. He also showed that medical expenses were greater than the cost of improving the infrastructure to eliminate the health problems. Moser (1998) also comments on the importance of health to low-income communities. In her research, she found that the poor give priority to their health issues despite financial burdens and limitations. She justifies this by emphasizing the need for low-income people to contribute to the household either by working or studying (Moser, 1998:10).

Because of the importance of health to working people in low-income communities, the World Health Organization (WHO) initiated Health City Projects in 1987. This project gives responsibilities to both local governments and civil society in order to ensure public health. Van Naerssen emphasizes the dynamic role of local government by saying, “local government clearly offers a range of possibilities to provide good quality service” (van Naerssen, 1999:13). On the other hand, community involvement has long been advocated as desirable in a wide range of government activities, including urban planning and the management of health services (Rakodi and Lloyd -Jones 2002; Montiel and Barten, 1999:13). Thus, an assurance for the existence of healthy people and communities requires many factors, especially for the poor in developing countries; it is not only the duty of local government but also demands community participation.

**Knowledge, education and skills**

The acquisition of knowledge and education also plays an integral part in building human capital. It is one of the intangible aspects of human capital with which people can make radical changes in their lives by not only enhancing their capabilities to enter the labor market; but also providing them with the resources needed to empower them [Giddens, 1979, cited in Bebbington, 1999:5]. In other words, human capital provides people with the resources needed to become agents of changes and take control over their own lives. Education and training provide people with work related skills, which allow them to look for work with higher levels of income, contributing to an increase in material assets, more importantly though, it arms people with knowledge of how to access information and further education. This also includes the knowledge migrants acquire in adapting to their new urban way of life. Such knowledge about new contexts empowers them in various domains. Although knowledge and education are elements of human capital, strong connections exist with social, financial and cultural capitals (Bebbington, 1999:5). Higher levels of education can, *inter alia*, influence people to have fewer children, affect their social status (Al Sharabi, 1985:61), their values or norms (Al Kassam, 1999:130) marriage patterns (Maluli, 1996). People with a higher level of education generally have fewer children and tend to provide them with higher education. Young women with higher levels of education tend to marry at a later age (ibid), and spread childbirth more widely.
Schools, colleges and universities play a major role in the construction of human capital. This also applies to training courses and community colleges, which provide vocational training such as hair-dressing, car repairing and many other technical skills. Thus, education as knowledge production has a major impact on human capital formation, since many employment opportunities require training and diplomas. To say the least, education helps to ensure employment and reduces vulnerability in the specific case of Syria.

3.1.2. Physical / Financial capital

Physical capital refers to housing (rental or owned), infrastructure (roads, transportation, water, sewage, electricity) and material assets (homes, property, income, possessions). Financial capital refers to income generation, access to credit, transfers and saving, and notions of expenditure and consumption. Tacoli (1999) in her discussion of the sustainable livelihood framework, she refers to physical capital as infrastructure, tools and equipment. For the purpose of this study we also include the notion of productive capital. According to Tacoli (ibid.) the urban-based livelihood model takes a broader approach to productive assets than rural-based ones. Housing in the urban context, for example, represents what land is for rural people: an asset on which income-generating activities can be based. The house is a crucial asset for the household, for example, by providing working space for a home-based enterprise or by contributing to a household’s income through rental accommodations to migrant workers (Tacoli, 1999:7; Verrest 2004).

Moser (1998) addresses the notion of housing in the context of the asset vulnerability framework, of which labour, infrastructure and social capital form a part. In a case study carried out in Cisne Dos, Guayaquil (Ecuador) she found that housing ownership was by far the most important productive asset of the urban poor. In the unauthorized settlement where the land market is unregulated, families have used an intergenerational densification strategy. This is to say that people built separate housing structures on their plot of land on an informal basis for additional household members in order to reduce the fragmentation of housing and vulnerability of newly formed young households or of elderly parents (Moser, 1998:10).

Rakodi (2002: 11) includes housing in the concept of physical capital, together with productive and household assets such as tools, equipment, household goods, as well as stocks (such as jewellery). She adds to this the notion of investment since the ability to invest in productive equipment may directly generate income and enhance labour productivity. Moreover, like Tacoli, she points out the multifunctional nature of shelter, which potentially provides income from rent as well as a location for a home-based enterprise.

For many in the Middle East, obtaining housing in cities is one of the most problematic and challenging issues in their livelihood strategies, a problem that has been addressed by many Arabic and Western researchers. Many of these studies have been carried out in Egypt. Sociological and anthropological research on housing issues is well developed there. Examples are the studies on urban Cairo and the strategies employed by house renters and owners, Al Husaini (1991), Rugh (1979), Abu-Lughod (1971) and others.
Egypt faces relatively greater housing needs than other countries in the region. In some cases, rural migrants built dwellings on a government property; others rented very old houses, which were not renovated as the owners were renting at very low prices. To provide more housing, they built wooden rooms on the roofs, where entire families live in one room (Al Husaini, 1991:39). More alarmingly, there have been instances of people in Cairo living in the tombs of cemeteries. To say the least, the Egyptian urban housing problem is vast, nonetheless the Egyptian government is more forthright in addressing this problem a compared to other governments in the region.

Physical and financial capitals are often discussed together for urban areas, as there is an overlap in the physical asset of a house and the house as a place of income generation. In fact, the house can and often is used to generate extra income by renting out extra space or by running a small business through the home. “Shelter is multifunctional, potentially providing income from rent as well as a home based enterprise” (Rakodi & Lloyd- Jones, 2002: 11). This income allows people to increase their financial capital, which in turn provides more opportunities for people to make changes in their lives. This additional capital helps low-income households to cope with potential obstacles or shocks that can set a household back financially. In addition, the extra income allows people to consume, produce and invest more in themselves, their business and their homes.(ibid: 11-12).

In the case of Syria, current housing policies do not allow use of agricultural land for housing purposes, nor are housing extensions allowed without prior approval. There are no specific policies towards minorities. In practice, housing regulations are flexible and there are examples of tolerated ‘laisser-faire’. In cases where housing extensions are done without the knowledge of the government, and if the extension is inhabited, Syrian law prohibits the eviction and demolition of the house. For the study in Duelha, housing is one of the most important issues raised. In order to create an accurate picture of its importance, the focus will be on the courtyard, as housing is centred around a courtyard where rooms are occupied by several families and where many households live together.

People in low-income communities are less likely to have extra money to save. The community of Duelha is one of these. However, informal savings as a financial mechanism should be examined to reduce vulnerability. For example, many small groups utilize the concept of Jamiah, which means a rotating savings and credit system, among household members, relatives and friend. This kind of informal community savings system plays a major role within communities in the Middle East, as elsewhere. Access to credit is very limited, (during the research, 2000- 2003, there was just one national Bank) and it is mainly available to government organisations, such as unions. Such unions are committed to their own employees. For example the teachers union provides loans for its members, and such loans are also used for brothers and sisters and even friend who are in need.

Gold and jewellery also play a major economic and financial role, as well as social role. Women customarily receive gold and jewellery from friends and relatives as gifts at henna parties, weddings, graduations, baptisms etc. Women customarily keep these items for times of crises as they can easily be transformed into cash. As they are the repositories and owners of these valuables, they have control over and participate in the decision of selling or giving these items. Finally, remittances from relatives who live and work abroad are an important source of income.
3.1.3. Social capital

Although many scholars have argued that human capital is the most important capital for their studies, social and cultural capital are equally essential for this study. Social capital comprises social resources such as networks, membership to groups, relationships of trust and reciprocity, and access to wider institutions of society upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihoods. It is a very broad and diverse concept and its definition is not easy to conceptualise. For example, Narayan defines social capital as:

...the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures, and society's institutional arrangements, which enable its members to achieve their individual and community objectives [cited in Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002: 10].

Other authors, such as Bourdieu take a more symbolic approach and define social capital as follows:

An aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of recognition...which provide each of its members with the backing of collectively owned capital [Bourdieu, 1997 cited in Schuller et al. 2001: 4-5].

Although Bourdieu stresses the importance of cultural capital, his interpretation of social capital implies interdependency between social, cultural and economic capitals.

Social capital is not reducible to economic or cultural capital, nor is it independent of them, acting as a multiplier for the other two forms while being created and maintained by the conversion of economic and cultural capital in the 'unceasing effort of sociability' [Bourdieu, 1997 cited in Schuller et al. 2001: 4-5].

"Social capital has become very important and it is now acknowledged to have a significant impact on development processes and the formation of human capitals" [(Coleman, 1988), cited in Schuller et al., 2001:6]. A range of complex social, economic and political processes influence the formation of social capital in urban areas and therefore any attempt to support the development of social capital should seek to understand and build upon these processes (chapter by Phillips cited in Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002).

Several authors and development organizations have made attempts to describe the notion of social capital and have done so holding many different views and addressing many different aspects. Schuller et al. (2001: 2) notes that the definition of social capital is itself problematic, and refers to the prominent work of Robert Putnam (1994) in political science, James Coleman (1988) in educational sociology, and Francis Fukuyama in economic history and sociology.
Putnam et al (1994) emphasizes the significance of social capital and considers it a public good. This means that the social networks, organizations and institutions that people participate in work to provide those people with more than just access to material assets. Rather, social capital includes important intangibles such as trustworthiness, reciprocity and social expectations. These are “...so fundamental to civilized life that all prominent moral codes contain some equivalent of the Golden Rule [Putnam, cited in Schuller et al. 2001:11]”. He states that social capital is affected by many economic and political projects, such as, participation in clubs, sports, churches and local communities which all increase social capital. He argues that as a society we must be aware of the risks of destroying social capital.

Precisely because social capital is a public good, the costs of closing factories and destroying communities go beyond the personal trauma borne by individuals. Worse yet, some government programs themselves, such as urban renewal and public housing projects, have needlessly ravaged existing social networks. The fact that these collective costs are not well measured in our current accounting schemes does not mean that they are not real [ibid. p. 7].

Lin emphasizes the intersections between structure and action: structure as the extent of “embeddedness”, opportunity as accessibility through social networks and action (Lin, 2001: 41). He points out the importance of social capital by using the notion of ‘It’s not just what you know but who you know’. Social capital thus has an essential role in maintaining valued resources of people and promoting their well being by bringing people together for mutual support and collective action.

In sum, various authors have shown the importance of the concept of social capital. Both social and cultural elements are included in this concept. Due to the nature of my study area, where religion plays an important role to bring people together, and the role of the local churches is so crucial in everyday life of the inhabitant, I prefer, however, to differentiate between cultural and social capital.

3.1.4. Cultural capital

Cultural capital is comprised of religious, ethnic and social norms and values. It also includes gender relations and the concept of generation. Household relations and politics also form an essential part of cultural capital. Addressing the cultural capital as an asset, Tacoli (1999: 9) notes that:

Cultural capital is the asset, which brings the capitals and capabilities framework beyond the impact of livelihood strategies on poverty and income indicators and, together with social capital, is critical in enhancing people’s capacity to be their own agents of change (Tacoli 1999: 9).
In his famous book, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam addresses three types of institutional structures for social capital, each one referring to the nature of human interactions involved (i.e. bonding, bridging and linking). We consider the first type of social capital more culturally bound than bridging and linking social capital. Bonding occurs among family members and ethnic groups and facilitates the sharing of resources on the basis of norms and values defined by the institutional cultural agreements defined by family ties, friendship or ethnic groups. Bridging occurs among distant friends, colleagues and associations, and promotes the transcendence of one’s narrow traditional cultural focus to that of the broader society. Linking is a yet a broader concept of relationships based on institutional arrangements that promote the exchange of power, wealth and status among different social and cultural groups with different levels of assets (Harriss, 2001). This picture of cultural capital promoting bonding, linking and bridging across cultural boundaries, can also have a negative impact on relationships. Mersha and Mengistu, for example note that:

*Exclusive bonding can preclude transcendence to the detriment of personal development or social and financial benefit of individuals, families or ethnic groups through the constraint of interactions and trust-building with others. The same is true for bridging and linking, whereby restrictive norms and values can promote exclusion, or a silo-effect, which at a minimum result in discrimination, segregation or sanctions that limit social capital development, economic development and in a worst case scenario lead to escalated and protracted inter/intra-ethnic conflict (Mersha and Mengistu, 2002).*

As I will show later, the concept of cultural capital as interpreted in this section is very relevant to the case study of Duelha, where religious, ethnic and social interactions between local community members and others from Damascus so clearly shape the community. This is seen in the interrelation patterns of groups with different religions. Notably, the variety of roles that the church and the government perform in Duelha is an important aspect to consider. I will discuss these issues in great detail in the following chapters.
3.2. The study of Migration

While the main theoretical framework of this thesis utilizes the livelihood strategies approach, in my study of Duelha, understanding rural-urban migration theories will also help to understand and give texture to the people of the community. It is not uncommon for families and/or individuals in a given rural area who are experiencing difficulties, to migrate to other areas where livelihood opportunities may be more abundant. Making such a decision however is not an easy task and encompasses multiple dimensions. Rural-urban migration and illegally settling in a large city such as Damascus, forces people to create and utilize multiple strategies in order to acquire certain capitals.

There are many, sometimes very diverging, theories dealing with migration, some studies deal with migration as individual decision-making processes, others consider migration as a result of the combined interplay of push and pull factors and still others focus on gender aspects of migration. Studies have also presented migration in a very positive and optimistic way, such as those based on the modernisation theory that highlight the economic, social and cultural change that it brings. Kearney (1986: 333) writes about this approach:

*Migrants were seen as progressive types who would have a positive impact on development by bringing back to their home communities innovations and knowledge that would break down traditionalism* (Kearney 1986: 333).

Migration certainly does have a variety of impacts on individuals and households. People leave their natal places, local culture, their relatives and networks, to settle in a new environment and seek a new way of life. They are forced to deal with many social and economic factors, which differ substantially from those in their areas of origin.

Linking migration to the concept of livelihood strategy, as is done in this study, is not a new phenomenon. Many researchers have studied the relationships between migration and development. What differentiates my study from previous analyses of livelihood strategies is that many past authors have ignored the small community as a field of study with the individual as the basic functional unit and have tended to focus on the larger psychological and cultural complexities of migration, seeking to link the micro level (e.g. the neighborhood) to the macro level (e.g. the national or international economy). As alluded to earlier, livelihood strategies are explained in term of capital and vulnerability, and migration can be analyzed within that framework as well. Migration forces people to appraise their capital. Scholars look at this concept from different ways, as Kofman (2000) makes clear:

*Till the 1970s the influential theories were those proffered by neo-classical theorists who viewed individual migration decisions as a result of push-pull factors. They located decision-making in individuals, rather than with wider social units, but also conceptualized the reasons for migration within a reductive econometrics framework. Migration is the product of rational decisions made by individuals who sit down and weigh up the costs and benefits of a move.* (Kofman 2000: 22).
Other authors also link the notions of human security and globalization to migration (Graham and Poku 2000: 23). With rural-urban migration playing a dominant role in most if not all less-developed countries, many authors have emphasized the contrasting physical, social and economic environments in their efforts to explain migration (Nam, Serow and Sly 1990: 19). The primary reasons for internal migration in less-developed countries are still subject to considerable debate among social scientists and economists. Some emphasize the importance of push factors in rural areas, such as low-income generating opportunities, poor living conditions, and lack of infrastructure. Others insist on the urban pull factors, such as educational opportunities, better health care and the presence of large well-equipped hospitals, a higher variety of employment opportunities, and more social and cultural activities in the field of arts and theatre.

Based on their study in India, Prasanta and Majumbar (1978: 114) summarize the most common causes of and motivations for migration of the rural poor to the city as follows: expanding employment opportunities; inducement by relatives and friends in the cities; the hope and dream of a better life in any crisis situation; and in certain cases, a sense of “adventure”.

Economic explanations of migration are among the oldest and most established theories in the social sciences. The classical notion that people move as a consequence of weighing economic alternatives between places and consequently select a site that optimizes their material well-being is by far the most predominant theory (Jobes 2000: 25). Authors such as Hayata (1992), Ellis (1998) and Satterthwaite and Tacoli (2002) also acknowledge that access to non-agricultural employment is increasingly important for rural populations and that in many cases diversification of income sources is an effective survival strategy for vulnerable groups with limited access to assets. For the rural population, migration is therefore an important means of increasing or diversifying income and/or ensuring access to assets (Satterthwaite and Tacoli 2002: 55). Finally, various disruptions in society (war, environmental disaster) also act as motivators for migration.

New models of migration deriving from an interest in migration networks crossing borders, has led to a new approach to migration based on several new assumptions. In the 1990s, the Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary was still offering a definition of migration as ‘the act of moving from one country, place or locality to another’. Olwig and Sorensen (2002: 4) argued that this is a static definition by stressing that migration often consists not of one but of many moves.

*Indeed, a host of recent migration studies have documented an increasing tendency for migrants to engage in repeated moves and to maintain a strong presence in more than one locality through active engagement in fields of socio-economic relations that span more than one locality (Olwig and Sorensen 2002: 5).*
3.2.1. Transnationalism

New theories of international migration now utilize the concept of transnationalism (Vertovec, 1999; Mazzucato et al. 2004). The concept has different assumptions concerning the ways migrants deal with their place of origin and the localities to which they have migrated. Rather than assuming a one-way linear movement, the assumption is that migrants straddle different localities in their social networks, contributing and drawing on different localities simultaneously. The concept of such networks across different localities can be adapted and used in the study undertaken here. The main similarity lies in the phenomenon of linking people and institutions in more than one locality; that can be used in analysing rural/urban migration. Rural-urban migrants develop intensive system of ties, interactions, exchange, and mobility between their villages, families members and their new habitat in the city.

The main difference lies in the fact that in rural-urban migration there are no legal constraints posed by national borders, and the distinctiveness between different cultures can also be assumed to be less. This is not to say there are no differences in 'rural lifestyles' and 'urban lifestyles'.

The characteristics of transnationalism indicated by Vertovec (1999) include the following: 1-Social morphology, 2-type of consciousness, 3-mode of cultural reproduction, 4-avenue of capital, 5-site of political engagement and 6-(Re) construction of place or locality. These factors can be linked to the question of how people build up their livelihoods in the present study. Here I will examine these themes and analyse which questions are useful to raise in the study of Duelha.

The first element of transnationalism deals with the triadic relationship, defined as "a-globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups, b-the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and c- the homeland states and the contexts where they or their forebears came" (Sheffer 1986, Safran 1991). The pattern of social formation or structures of relationships are best described as a network. The question is to what extent these patterns of identity play a role in people's networks and geographical mobility.

The second element concerns the type of consciousness, i.e. the development of awareness of belonging to one place, with roots and common history and culture binding people together. the meaning concept of being here and I came from there. The question is to what extent such collective types of consciousness are built up and maintained among groups of migrants, or new types of consciousness are created. As Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge put it (1989) "diasporas always leave a trail of collective memory about another place and time and create new maps of desire and of attachment" (quoted in Vertovec:451). For the study of the settlers in Duelha, the question will be raised of the level of consciousness among the different generations.

The third element is the mode of cultural reproduction. Vertovec describes this element as "fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions and everyday practices. These are often described in terms of syncretism, creolization, bricolage, cultural translation and hybridity. Fashion, music, film and visual arts are some of the most conspicuous areas in which such processes are observed." (Ibid:451). In the case of Duelha, the potential of
more than one culture exists - based on rural and urban lifestyles, with religious and ethnic diversity also playing a role in building new experiences. I will examine to what extent these different cultural worlds are reproduced, and in what shape and form they emerge in the urban context.

The fourth element is the venue of capital. Vertovec mainly refers to the role of transnational corporations (TNCs) as the Big Players in the global economy, and to the Little Players such as the remittances from immigrants to their places of origin. Transnational companies play a minor role in Syria in general because of its international isolation. Remittances by migrants have a different role when they occur within the country than on an international basis (the lack of difference in currencies reduce the advantages of international migration substantially). However, the question of remittances and economic exchanges more generally between urban and rural areas will be taken up.

The fifth theme is the site of political engagement. Vertovec considers politics as "politics of homeland, engaging members of diasporas or transnational communities in a variety of ways. The relations between immigrants, home-country politics and politicians have always been dynamic" (ibid, 455). Syria is a country in which political engagement by citizens has been relatively muted in the period covered by the study. However, the question is raised to what extent NGOs play a role in the areas of political engagement.

The last theme concerns the re-construction of place or locality. Vertovec defines this as "practices and meaning derived from specific geographical and historical points of origin [which] have always been transferred and re-grounded. Today, a high degree of human mobility, telecommunications, films, video and satellite TV, and the Internet have contributed to the creation of trans-local understanding" (ibid, 455). The question to what extent rural lifestyles are re-created in the urban context will be taken up in this study.

3.2.2. Arabic studies on migration

Several Arabic authors have dealt with migration in the Arabic world. One scholar, in particular, Al Kuttoob (1986), has dealt with rural migration to the cities, analyzing its causes and subsequent conflicts. Al Kutob defines rural-urban migration as the continuous change of residence from one environment to another, with the aim to settle in a new environment. Al Kutob further distinguished between free and compulsory migration, according to the push factors that underlie the migratory movement. In the first case, the migrants are free to settle where they wish and choose the place that best suits their situation. With respect to compulsory migration, Al Kutob distinguishes between migration during times of war, when migrants are forced to leave their land (as was the case in Lebanon and Palestine) and migration in times of peace, such as in the case of Nobe in Egypt where the local population was displaced by the construction of a large dam (Al Kutob, 1986).

In much the same way, another Arab author, Dweir Fuad, writing in 'The Internal Migration in Syria' (1978) presents statistical information on mobility between rural areas and cities in particular historical periods. He too mentions the decline of the
agricultural sector as an essential push factor for rural-urban migration and the growing industrial sector in many cities as a pull factor. He illustrates his statements on the basis of data referring to the cities of Damascus and Aleppo.

In a different light, Khader Zakarya, in his book ‘The Syrian Internal Migration, Starting Point and Progression’ (1987), attributes internal migration in Syria to the failure of the so-called (Al Islah-Al Zirai) land reform law. He refers to the land reform law passed in a period during which the socialist government was nationalizing all large properties in order to reallocate land to poor farmers. In his book, Zakarya argues that push factors in the Syrian villages are more important in explaining the migration of farmers than the pull factors of the cities.

More recently, a report by the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies (Fafo, 2002), written by Marwan Khawaja, deals with internal migration in Syria based on the findings from a national survey carried out in 2000.

Table 3-1: Net internal Migration Flows across administrative regions, Syria - 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Number of in-migrants</th>
<th>Number of out-migrants</th>
<th>Net migration</th>
<th>Net migration rate (per 1,000 people)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damascus City</td>
<td>223,841</td>
<td>279,325</td>
<td>-55,484</td>
<td>-34.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus province</td>
<td>388,182</td>
<td>87,668</td>
<td>300,514</td>
<td>157.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homs</td>
<td>69,959</td>
<td>72,860</td>
<td>-2,901</td>
<td>-2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hama</td>
<td>36,833</td>
<td>89,997</td>
<td>-53,164</td>
<td>-41.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tartos</td>
<td>38,424</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>-7,576</td>
<td>-11.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latakia</td>
<td>49,522</td>
<td>62,899</td>
<td>-13,377</td>
<td>-15.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edleb</td>
<td>20,923</td>
<td>90,736</td>
<td>-69,813</td>
<td>-63.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>90,974</td>
<td>90,911</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakka</td>
<td>27,218</td>
<td>41,538</td>
<td>-14,320</td>
<td>-21.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Elzor</td>
<td>11,694</td>
<td>32,212</td>
<td>-20,518</td>
<td>-23.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasakeh</td>
<td>64,763</td>
<td>38,874</td>
<td>25,889</td>
<td>21.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweda</td>
<td>16,961</td>
<td>21,111</td>
<td>-4,150</td>
<td>-14.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dara</td>
<td>43,831</td>
<td>49,236</td>
<td>-5,405</td>
<td>-7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qunitra</td>
<td>6,553</td>
<td>86,553</td>
<td>-79,758</td>
<td>-781.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fafo, 2002
The bold figures represent the positive net migration flows.
Note: Refer to Map 2-1 for locating the main cities “Map of Syria including borders and major cities”.

Khawaja (ibid., p. 19) found that roughly 14% of the Syrian population had migrated from their birthplace and were currently living in another administrative region (Table 3-1). He claims that this rate of internal migration is not particularly high in a regional or international perspective. Indeed, international comparative data show that internal migration in the developing countries is relatively low as compared to the industrial world.
The Fafo report also found that migration patterns vary regionally within Syria. The overall rates of rural-urban migration are high across regions, with a range from 8% in Dara to about 30% in Latakia (Table 3-2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Rural origin</th>
<th>Urban origin</th>
<th>Mixed rural-urban setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dara</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qunitra</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweda</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edleb</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Elzor</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hama</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus province</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakka</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus City</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasakeh</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homs</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tartos</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latakia</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fafo, 2002

Note: Refer to Map 2-1 for locating the main cities “Map of Syria including borders and major cities”.

Khawaja classifies the emerging patterns from the data into three groups:
1. Those with essentially rural-urban migrant households (the largest one);
2. Those with relatively low rates of rural-urban migration as compared to other forms of migration (i.e. rural-rural, urban-urban and urban-rural); and
3. Those with a mix of both rural-urban and other kinds of migration.

Khawaja shows that the first group is the largest, encompassing about eight mohafazas (districts), including Aleppo (Table 3-2). Three of the mohafazas fall into the second group, including the small mohafazas of Dara, Qunitra and Sweda. Here, the number of migrants of urban origin is proportionally larger than that of their rural counterparts.

There are also three mohafazas in the third group, including the capital of Damascus. While rural-urban migration predominates here, the proportions of urban-origin migrants are relatively high and range from 15% in Hasakeh to about 9% in the mohafaza of Damascus. Interestingly, about one out of every ten households in the capital has a migrant from an urban area. Most likely, these migrants come from cities located outside the Damascus region (Khawaja 2002: 42)
3.3. Migration and Urban settlements: accessing the city

Migrants who move to urban areas eventually follow very different paths of settlement. Some groups will look for a cheap rental location, others move in with relatives or friends for a short time, and still others may form an unauthorized settlement on the outskirts of a city (van Lindert, 1997). With a view to placing Duellha in a broader context, this section presents an overview of various studies that deal with settling in cities.

Relevant in the study of slums and unauthorized settlements is the concept of peri-urban interface introduced by Rakodi (1999). This can be defined as the transition zone between fully urbanised areas in cities and the areas where agricultural use predominates. This zone is dynamic, both spatially and structurally. With the continuous growth of large cities all worldwide, settlement in these zones is currently very common. Land prices in the peri-urban zone are still lower than those in the city. However, given the increase in rural-urban migration, prices in the periphery have risen dramatically. However, not all low-income migrants settle in the periphery. Frequently, people are unable to build their own dwelling as they do not have relatives or friends that can assist them. Furthermore, recently arrived migrants often prefer accommodation in the central tenement districts, their main concern being to secure employment. Renting provides them a high degree of flexibility (van Lindert and van Westen 1991: 1009). However, some studies reveal different strategies by which migrants try to stabilise their lives. In this respect, van Lindert (1997: 203-107) distinguishes three stages in his study on housing strategies of low-income urban migrants in Latin America.

1) Entry into the urban housing market. Most starters are restricted in their search for accommodation and either look for the rental sector, or lodge temporarily or stay with relatives or friends.

2) Moving to another dwelling. This stage generally indicates a strategy for improvement, although a household may also be forced by circumstances to seek other accommodations. There are several reasons to move to another house: those sharing with friends or family do not wish to overstay, households with increasing numbers of children will want more living space, while others prefer to live close to their work or look for a lower rent.

3) Improvement of the self-help construction. In order to acquire a larger living space and more privacy and to improve spatial functionality, new rooms are created for specific uses such as cooking, sleeping or studying. Moreover, crucially important for many households is that parts of the house contribute to income generation, by letting or using them as a shop or workshop.

In the Arabic world, Ibrahim (2000) points to the formation of unauthorized settlements such as the squatter town Al Maamora near Alexandria in Egypt. The Al Maamora inhabitants are mainly poor farmers pushed out from their villages who migrated to the urban area in search of employment and to build their livelihood. The land in Al Maamora is for agriculture and not planned for housing and belongs to the state or to the urban elite. Settlement in this area is exemplary for what happens in many expanding cities in the developing world. The poor migrants occupied the property and erected their dwellings quickly and in a short period time, mostly at night, using whatever items were
at hand (stones, wood and tin) prepared to defend their rights against the government and the landlords. Such unauthorized settlements almost always lack planning and organization, as well as many basic facilities such as drinking water, electricity and a sewerage system. In Al Maamora people later started knocking on the local authority’s door, asking for construction of basic facilities. In the beginning, the municipality refused and ignored the community’s demands, but after repeated asking the local community succeeded in changing the municipality’s attitudes and in realizing their basic needs. The local community’s main concern was to get government approval for their situation. After the government met the community’s demands and supplied the basic facilities, the community started to renovate and improve their dwellings by adding more solid and appropriate items.

Another important study on urban sociology in the Arabic world is that of Al Kassir in Morocco (1993). Al Kassir presents a detailed case study of an unauthorized settlement in the city of Kunai Tara in Morocco, studying a sample of 450 families residing there. He addresses rural-urban migration to this shantytown and the residents’ relationship with their villages of origin. Al Kassir points to the fact that many households prefer to maintain their lives in the slum after getting used to living in such a community. Al Kassir can be criticized for his view on women, whom he holds responsible for male unemployment.

Awad (1997) studied a slum (ashash) in Port Said (Egypt). He uses the term Eshae – meaning bird nest – to refer to a small dwelling in a very poor shape that is made of very poor items. Awad explains how difficult it is for a researcher to obtain the requisite environmental and sociological data that are needed to understand the way of life in such a community. In his study, he addresses several crucial issues; inter alia, physical quality of the dwellings and the sociological characteristics of its inhabitants.

By addressing these issues and using ethnographical approaches, Awad seeks to understand the relationship between the physical setting of an area and the socio-economic events and patterns that occur in the area. His study includes how people organize themselves in the neighborhood, and the way in which they interact with local government.

The most important aspects that come out of the review of existing studies, are the concern over housing per se (quality, costs and basic services), issues of community organizations in order to obtain basic infrastructure and services, and economic issues (access to employment). As yet, there has been little attention given in studies in the Middle East, to issues of poverty and household assets, as has been done in South America and Asia (Moser, 1998; Hordijk, 2000). This study contributes to this debate by looking at the way in which households build up their livelihood strategies on the basis of their assets/capitals in an unauthorized settlement in Damascus, Syria.