STAKING SPACE: Planning, Public Space, and Visions of the Subaltern in the Context of Kabul

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I FORGET THE THRONES OF DELHI
When I remember the mountaintops of my Afghan land,
If I must choose between the world and you,
I shall not hesitate to claim
Your barren deserts as my own

Ahmad Shah Durrani
This thesis is dedicated to the Afghan people who have allowed me to turn their narrative into a thesis. The strength, integrity, and perseverance with which they confront the world is unparalleled.
ABSTRACT

This thesis will review how public spaces in Kabul, Afghanistan will be affected by plans for development and formalization under proposed city plans. The core argument is that these processes of development under guises of modernity, combined with the inconsistencies of land rights and a vast informal population within the city of Kabul are challenging the existence of these valuable public spaces. The existence of these spaces are of significant importance as they are places in which residents of Kabul from a myriad of ethnic backgrounds and income levels interact, indicating that they have broader social implications than just physical space.

The vision of Kabul as a failed city is one that perpetuates its marginalization and the exploitation of the majority of its informal population. In turn, the lack of publicly available salient data contributes to the misconceptions of the city. The West propagates these struggles as it allows itself to define its own superiority in the subaltern nature of the Other. Kabul Jadid, the plan for urban development in Kabul commissioned by King Amanullah Khan in 1923, followed by the Three Master Plans for Kabul made in the 1960s-1970s are examined in relation to its trajectory for how modernity was imagined for Kabul.

While this developed the lens under which this paper was written, several interviews were conducted with a number of demographically varied Afghans from both in and out of Afghanistan. From these interviews, the three most frequented spaces in the city of Kabul emerged: Shahri Now, Mandawi, and Mikrorayon 3. Current and potentially future urban development in Kabul threatens these three spaces. The potential eradication or exclusive nature of these spaces also pose a number of planning challenges concerning informality and land rights, the concept of unmapping people, and the involvement of the community in the process of planning the city. However, there are a number of physical interventions that can be strategized in order to protect these spaces.

The questions this thesis will seek to answer are: How are plans for development and formalization under guises of modernity in the Third Master Plan challenging the existence of valuable public spaces in Kabul, Afghanistan? How can what Kabulis identify as valuable public spaces for gathering be used to strategize preservation of these spaces under the Third Master Plan and future plans?
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Ananya Roy's *City Requiem* starts out in the midst of a yearly book fair located in the heart of urban Calcutta. The normalcy of the book fair would almost convince any outside observer that all is right in Calcutta; surely the cosmopolitanism of having a production of books from all over the world and having individual stalls dedicated to different nations would indicate Calcutta as a center of a world exhibition. Instead there is great irony at this attempt at cosmopolitanism, at this showing of Calcutta as a “city of spectacle” (Harvey, 1987) because, soon, a fire ensues which forces an abrupt end to the fair. The irony lies in the metaphor between the book fair and Calcutta as a whole, which Roy compares to the crumbling infrastructure of Calcutta. This idea of a crumbling infrastructure becomes apparent when the lack of running water, heat, and electricity almost convinces one to believe that the government, let alone public works, does not exist. So this exhibition at a book fair becomes just that, an exhibition, a spectacle— for the heart of these big cities that claim being cosmopolitan and progressive lies in the flames that drive the “French publishers who arrived in the city ever so tentatively” (Roy, 2003) away. The spectacle that displays the city’s ineptitude of putting out a simple fire.

A similar spectacle of the city has been made of Kabul, Afghanistan, yet in a manner slightly distinct than what Roy posits Calcutta to have become. The spectacle that is the city of Kabul is not one that attempts to conceal its crumbling infrastructure, but one that embraces and embellishes its Other status as the West perpetuates visions of
Afghanistan being a subaltern space. The spectacle therefore is both within and without Afghanistan. Those who are within and maintain localized power embrace visions of modernity and the market-led postwar recovery that this modernity habitually entails. These visions of modernity are what Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong label as the “inter-referencing” (Ong & Roy, 2011) of Asian models of modernity. Because these models are more near and familiar, they are ultimately more accessible. Those who are outside are enchanted by what they do not understand and are fully engrained in a politics of location. They brand and romanticize the experience of those in the country, subconsciously asserting their modernity through their expressions of anxiety about Afghans that are perpetuated through imperialistic dialogue. The West therefore defines their modernity against the backward tradition of the Afghans, unaware and perhaps ignorant to the fact that 23 years of war has not destroyed Afghanistan. Rather, the local regime of institutionalized practices and their embedded assumptions have persisted as four national leaderships have been overthrown. In reality, the current trend in Kabul exemplifies what many planners such as Jane Jacobs have aspired to as the urban ideal of a vibrant walkable city of mixed-use low-rise density; sustainable patterns of urban development that ultimately help the country simply because Kabulis cannot afford to consume resources in the way Westerners do (Calogero, 2011).

While this dialogue and rhetoric have served to further marginalize populations, I have elected to examine Afghanistan as it has persisted in its own attempts at modernity dating from the 1920s. I examine how this dialogue and constant struggle has shaped development and how it may affect public spaces that are commonly frequented in Kabul. The aim of this thesis is, upon finding the frequented public spaces in Kabul through extensive interviews and mapping exercise, to discover both the planning implications and potential strategies that can be employed in light of plans for the city. It is hoped that in light of development and attempts at modernization, that these spaces can remain intact, inclusive, with the character that has drawn people to it in the first place.

I question the role of planners in dealing with societal and cultural dynamics in preserving these spaces, while making the government accountable to its citizens. Ultimately, I hope to bring the Afghan voice and narrative to the planning dialogue.
CHAPTER TWO

MODERNITY

2.1 KABUL AS A FAILED CITY

The image of Kabul as a failed city, barren and oppressive has constantly persisted through Western media and dialogue. Mike Davis in the *Planet of Slums* posits that societies and nations allow such peripheries to exist and to be in a constant state of desperation so that they can be exploited. The sole type of integration that is desired and allowed is the type that allows those marginalized into the informal economy, where informal labor can be exploited with no consequences by state actors, if such state actors do in fact exist. In doing so, states can justify the marginality of those on the peripheries of societies, while perpetuating an Other status. Therefore, states will not feel accountable to, or burdened by, this Other population, or any sort of responsibility towards them. (Davis, 2006)
2.2 NEOLIBERALIZING SPACE

The repercussions of such policies and visions are magnified throughout the entirety of both the city of Kabul and Afghanistan on a much broader scale. The lack of salient data and information on comprehensive demographic data displays a disregard for accountability. Coalition forces and the International Security Assistance Force, what Pietro Calogero identifies as part of the Urban Regime in Kabul, maintain a direct role in shaping the urban space and what it means to interact in this space. Ultimately this control directs how this space is governed. Yet, regardless of the influx of resources into both the city and country, information has become a capital asset in that planning and access to information are privatized. Seemingly as a direct result of this privatization, the urban elite does not need or want to know how many people live in Kabul and under what conditions. This lack of comprehensive demographic data assumes that the neighborhood cannot be evaluated and changes to the rapidly evolving situations in relation to Kabul cannot be evaluated. The people are thus unmapped (Roy, 2003) from existence. In Roy’s Requiem the State is able to maintain the informality marginalized populations experience in Calcutta experience

Image 2.1: The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing survey team engineers deciding the routes and locations to be surveyed (Calogero, 2003)
by keeping things uncertain in their daily lives through the absence of maps. What data is collected is privatized. When an official survey of population, migration, and income was made by the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing planners, the information was retained by the Planning and Development Collaborative International (PADCO). PADCO wanted to sell its planning services and knowledge of Kabul to the multilateral agencies that inhabit Afghanistan (Calogero, 2011). Kabul was being sold information about itself to itself.

This level of governing parallels the complex relationship between what Foucault identifies as the concept of government and governing. The relationship of one self to itself in that individuals are expected to govern their own behavior and choices, while also expecting that they will be governed. The individual is both an agent of action and an object of domination (Foucault, The Subject and the Power, 1983). The privatization of services, of information, displays how as a whole the city of Kabul is both the agent of action in that it is enabled to conduct surveys and gather information as it pleases, yet it is also the object of domination in that it surrenders that very same information and is unable to access it. PADCO had led a survey team in Kabul in 2003 developing a list of 35 questions about population, recent migration, income and living costs, and urban services which were then turned over to Afghanistan’s Ministry of Urban Development and Housing. Ultimately, however, PADCO was unwilling to share detailed information on its initial analysis of housing and urban conditions as they wanted to maintain it as negotiating leverage, even though much of the raw data was gathered by volunteers outside of PADCO through a direct request from Engineer Pashtun, the Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Calogero, 2011). Perhaps even more remarkable was the general disinterest in the social-demographic survey. Calogero, a volunteer who was directed under Engineer Pashtun to partake in data collection under contract with PADCO, indicates that PADCO withheld the data in hopes of a contract to write a general plan for Kabul, but never did receive such a contract and thus all survey-analysis work was lost. How then is a quantitative analysis to be conducted, and a grounded set of planning recommendations to be proposed, upon data that does not exist?

Foucault identifies and describes power relations through a series of struggles that emerge as a resistance to these different forms of power. These struggles are often linked to what he identifies as knowledge, competence, and qualification, ultimately struggles against the “privileges of knowledge” (Foucault, The Subject and Power, 1982). This struggle against the power over knowledge is in direct opposition to secrecy and deformation. It is a question of how knowledge functions and circulates, not a complete refusal of this knowledge. It is about the régime du savoir (Foucault, The Subject and Power, 1982). The privatization of Kabuli demographic and survey information is a means of continued mystification
of the representations imposed on the people of Afghanistan, and this mystification is a result of murky identities. Foucault underscores the growing importance of the struggle against forms of subjection, one that places individuals into various categories and permanently attaches him to his own identity, forcing upon him a law of truth that the individual must observe and carry out in his daily activities. Not only is it a “law of truth” that the subject must recognize of himself, but it is one where everyone else recognizes in him as well. In short, individuals become tied to what they produce, what they do, or what others identify them as producing and doing. Therefore though Afghan citizens, and Kabulis in particular, are in a constant struggle against the various forms of domination and exploitation that seem to plague the country. Their struggle against the forms of subjection is emerging as an increasingly paramount concern. It is through the impositions of mystifications and the withholding of salient information regarding the people of Afghanistan that Afghans are constantly being forced to embody the Other. When information about them is not made apparent, misconceptions persist as the West defines their modernity in the face of all that is “backward” about Afghanistan. (Foucault, The Subject and Power, 1982)
2.3 THE FLEXIBILIZATION OF LAND

Image 2.2: In the city of Kabul, the difference between destruction caused by war and lucrative development is stark (Moore)

The nonexistence of land titling is maintained by the lack of maps; therefore, multiple territorial claims are made at any given time because no formal proof exists of the land belonging to one political party or another. This is what Roy identifies as the “flexibilization of land” (Roy, 2003). In Kabul, the urban elite similarly maintains land in a persistent state of limbo but does so until a remunerative development project is proposed and carried through. The flexibilization of land promotes a high level of tenure insecurity; informal planning persists as urban development is governed through the withholding of explicit commitments from the Kabul Municipality, who house the Plan Implementation Office. The very establishment and implementation of a solid urban plan, in whatever form this may materialize to be, means that those with the power of enforcement has committed to protect this area as secure. The flexibilization of land releases those with the power of enforcement from the responsibility of maintaining this land as secure. The lack of formalization of this land, and almost the complete disregard of it while Afghans are in the process of planning, neither provides a secured terrain, but absolves the government from having to address the issue. They are not written into plans so that when a development project reveals itself, the land can be used, written
into the plan, and ultimately reinforce Kabul’s modernity. The regime is denying recognition to development they know is occurring. According to Calogero, if this urban regime fails to provide the security that is required for the secured terrain written into the plan because of urbanization pressures, the regime itself becomes an informal entity. Therefore it is in the best interest of the regime to not write anything about land too explicitly into the plan, and instead see what development project may arise. They could then include that into the plan, garner a profit from it, meanwhile protecting the land while achieving goals of modernity. This of lends itself to bribes and political vote buying with promises to turn in these favors in the future. However, this does not just occur in Kabul; these types of practices, similar to land banking, occur in the most supposedly urbanely advanced cities in the West. Where then is the negotiation that occurs? How does the Ministry and City government deal with unplanned urban development as a process of gaining political favors when they are not the ones working on this development? What happens when this type of development is being done by the Ministry of Defense, who is giving out land in favor of political favors (Calogero, 2011)? The majority of those receiving these political favors do not see anything fundamentally wrong with being given, or handing out, this land. This highlights the fact that, what Calogero refers to as the urban regime, is not necessarily the formal planners; rather the urban regime are those who influence the
shape of the city, who are involved with strategies with what to do with formality, regardless of the fact that they are highly involved in informal development themselves. The urban regime in this case is both the Ministry of Defense who is giving out the land and ultimately the city, who does not know how to deal with the situation because they have disagreements among themselves about policies regarding squatters.

It is interesting, however, to consider what risks the formalization of land may bring should the poor obtain this apparently desired formalization. So if we do consider the formalization of housing and land titling as the commodification of urban space as Hernando de Soto implicitly argues for (de Soto, 1989), and as is typically argued when resources are treated as investment collateral once formalized, then we must look at what this does to the overall indebtedness of the poor. This should be examined not only in terms of tenure security, but also in terms of the relationship of dependence that is then perpetuated. The poor become indebted to anyone who can afford to lend and invest, and in the urban environment, these people are the social elite who have strong relationships with the political elite. In turn, these lenders influence how local interest rates are figured. The social elite is in control of the poor who have been given the opportunity to indebted themselves through this tenure security. However, if they owe a mortgage and default on their payment because of low wage earnings, they lose their homes, which they were previously able to occupy without ownership (Polanyi, 1944). We may be concerned with the lack of tenure security for informal housing, but gentrification and a culture of dependence is perpetuated and clears homes legally (Calogero, 2011). In Kabul, the demolition of informal housing has strong popular support, even though it is restricted to road-widening projects that are consistent with the 1978 Master Plan. The rights of these tenants are then extremely unsubstantial, weak, and negotiable, completely dependent on acts of recognition.

This then becomes an interesting dynamic between what is considered a right and what is codified into law. One would expect laws to protect basic rights. Informal settlements in this regard can be considered a claim on urban space, an assertion of the “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1968). This is in essence, citizenship in its purest form—citizens claiming their land through their urban informality because they are not being recognized any other way. It has, in fact, been only a recent phenomenon to reformulate rights into actual law. Ideas and theories of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Paine have been often credited for this. Even though, in 1789 the Constitutional Congress agreed to pass a Bill of Rights to be put into the Constitution. This was more of a strategic move—an amendment that had to be passed in order to get states to accept and ratify the other seven articles of the Constitution. (Calogero, 2011)

At the same time, these codified rules are static—protected and enforced by the privileged urban
elite of every society, unmoving to the growing changes and often times, to the growing disparities between the privileged and unprivileged. Eventually, rights that are meant to be innate are not protected by a set of codified rules that were put in place a long time ago. The needs of the underprivileged change throughout time and under different circumstances, and these static rights do not change along with them. In situations in the West, urban informality and the rights denied to the underprivileged are out of sight, as segregation make the poor seemingly invisible to the rich, and as racist dialogue and xenophobia socially push the illegal down to a less-than-human level, one not deserving of rights (Calogero, 2011). But this distance, both physically and through dialogue does not exist in Kabul; spatial segregation between Afghan residents is seemingly nonexistent, as informal settlements climb up the mountain and seemingly loom over the entire city. Similarly, families are made up of both formal and informal members, and informal homes are usually attached to formal ones with cousins and relatives occupying the informal places, and ultimately treated as servants. Dialogue cannot distance formal and informal citizens from each other, nor can those who are considered formal see those who are informal as "less than human." This is due to the fact that most informality in Kabul, as is the situation in many developing countries, cuts across ethnic groups and virtually all social variables except for class. As Calogero asserts, vulnerability to eviction even, does not correlate with the degree of legality of the development, but how connected the owners are through their social connections with the urban regime. Therefore those who are wealthier and have these connections are still considered squatters because the land was informally given to them; they can in essence, claim the land in the same way the older and poorer squatters can and do.


2.4 POPULATION MANAGEMENT

The West and the Rest

When a power looks after their population's well being in Western cities, it is termed planning. When this same power goes beyond their own jurisdiction in caring for other populations, this care is termed development. This is a western tradition, to transcend borders and boundaries in the name of development. This is not to say that the presence and levels of sovereignty is completely determined by the West and transnational actors within developing countries and more specifically, the city of Kabul. Rather, this sovereignty is constantly compromised, negotiated, molded, and divided between local, national, and transnational actors. This divvying up of sovereignty between these various actors seems to be the most effective and efficient way of domination. Though the West, namely the United States, is the most dominant political and military force in Kabul, they avoid answering to many international objections and criticisms by not exercising full sovereignty and outright colonization. This also relieves them of having to deal with a slew of responsibilities that have no direct and immediate bearing to their interests. There are responsibilities and justifications for political leaders to rule over their own population, but these political leaders do not have to answer to many cross border populations. (Calogero, 2011)

The term West is utilized throughout this paper to refer to those from developed countries in North America and Europe who have various forces, whether they be diplomatic or military forces, NGOs, or contractors in Afghanistan. Calogero identifies elite Afghans as a grounded projection of the West in their ability to access capital from outside of Afghanistan and their ability to leave the country at whatever point they want to. How the West views Afghan citizens who are not the Afghan elite have played a major role in the way resources are distributed throughout Kabul and the way elite spaces are secured in Kabul. The security measures put in place in an effort to protect the risks to the elite in Kabul, both foreign and international, shape the character of the public spaces and entire neighborhoods in Kabul. The ISAF front in Kabul has changed the city into a haven for local elite Afghans, but other military forces, such as the United States' Coalition Forces in their attempts to protect Western security, have actually deflected all the risk onto other populations in favor of the protection of a single population in Kabul. What then to say about those Afghans who lay outside of this ability to be protected by these various forces existing throughout the city and shaping the city's character, neighborhoods and public spaces? They fall outside of the scope because their romanticization has resisted even the simple discussion of protecting these citizens in the same way Western forces or Afghan elites are protected. Thus, the actual protection and security of these various bodies, is an intentional form of planning as it allocates scarce urban resources in a manner that significantly alters...
the spatial characteristics of the city. (Calogero, 2011)

This is telling when issues of public space come into play and how common Afghan citizens utilize this space and interact with it in comparison to the Western presence and Afghan elite. Such as the case of the security post at the entry of an Afghan ministry in Image 2.4.

Barbed wire lines the entrance and protrudes into public and sidewalk spaces, driving virtually everyone on the outside of this Ministry onto the street with traffic, among the traffic. Residents with cars are typically upper class, and like the Ministry, resent the pedestrians and vendors in their space. This is what Calogero refers to as outsiders deferring risk from themselves onto Kabulis who are merely trying to move about, trade, and make a living in their city. The physical sidewalk is being given to these foreigners without their permission.

As is the case in a particular instance for a store owner who is seeing their shop and home being repurposed and taken by the Municipality in order to make space for the urban elite who are moving about the space in their cars:

This store has been in my family for generations, it is attached to my home on the second level, and they want to give me money and cut half my property off and then build a road through it. How could they do this to us? Who made it okay to do this? Just because they decided to build a road?

Outsiders in Afghanistan, regardless of their reasons for being there, are actively involved in an urban self-segregation. They are protected in a way that infringes upon the public space of Afghan residents and evolves into self-isolation. The irony lies in how foreign agencies can conduct and engage communities and make policies influencing their lives when there is both a physical and metaphorical boundary between them. The urbanism in Kabul is a "splintered urbanism" such that immediate neighbors seem to inhabit completely different worlds (Graham & Marvin, 2001).

This spatial segregation has further debilitating effects on the discourse surrounding Afghanistan in the West as it perpetuates an ignorance of
the actual conditions in Kabul. As barricades are drawn up and foreign workers and the elite physically separate themselves from the site, they have an experience of supposed lowered risk. This experience is far removed from a direct experience of the actual sites they occupy throughout the city, limiting how these foreigners experience Afghanistan. In this regard, not knowing what Kabul and Afghanistan are actually like, this ignorance circulates fear of the area. This fear further encourages higher security measures that in turn prevents these people from directly experience the site. Spatial segregation contributes to the irrelevance of many cultural sensitivities that are required in order to properly assimilate into the Afghan culture and way of thinking in order to best understand the people and "help" them. Language-acquisition is not necessarily encouraged as it does not help in the advancement of one’s career in many of these NGOs and international institutions. Foreign workers have 12-14 hour days, so actual learning must occur during their own spare time.

The specialization in best practices that can be transferred from one geographical region to the next has taken over much of the aid industry in a manner that requires those with these skills to interact with other institutions and transnational aid agencies themselves. It simply is not always necessary to know much about the culture and the language, if you barricade yourself from the public and interact with those who speak your professional jargon. Many understandings of Afghan culture are thus not transferred to Westerners and the urban elite whose decisions greatly affect the outcome of the urban space of Kabul. Take for example U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry who said on August 17, 2009 that “in 2001, there were no institutions in Afghanistan,” (Calogero, 2011) when in reality, many institutions were present. Even the ones that the United States did not want to be around were present, such as the Third Master Plan of 1978, a Soviet-assisted plan that continues even today to govern much of the formal urban development in Kabul. Given Eikenberry’s extensive experience in Kabul, what can be said about the degree of separation between Westerners and Afghans and their exposure to each other? What type of intelligence gathering is actually occurring if intentions of overcoming cultural barriers and promoting understanding are not being transferred over the various channels of flowing information? Accountability and corruption discussions, debates, and research revolve around deliverables for various projects. The neoliberal ideal of sending out aid as soon as possible and as less expensive as possible does not consider the accountability to the people who are being directly impacted by these aid projects. The irony lying in that these agencies are extremely responsive to local needs, but not at all accountable to the local people which is all that agency-donor relationships seem to be. Fostering a desired culture of dependence in the midst of a complete lack of accountability. The politics of urban development in Kabul are linked to the politics of Washington D.C., and the West in its entirety.
STAKING SPACE PLANNING, PUBLIC SPACE, AND VISIONS OF THE SUBALTERN
2.5 ADDRESSING THE ROLE OF AFGHANS IN THE WEST

Discussions between the West and those that currently live in Kabul or in Afghanistan as a whole, surfaces an important dynamic between these groups of people and those Afghans who have grown up in the West, but still consider themselves to be highly involved in the future of Afghanistan. When Afghans discuss the “we” in future plans for the city, does this “we” include the Afghan-Americans or expatriates who may desire to return to the country at some point in the future. Does this we exclude this diaspora, and if so, does that mean the diaspora is not allowed to plan the city?

This does not seem to be the case, as many western Afghans are actively pursuing current planning efforts. Take for example Calogero’s encounter with the Afghan-American from Virginia. This individual was working with the Ministry of the Interior, translating the Fairfax Planning Code into Farsi in hopes of implementing it in Kabul. The irony lies in that Fairfax was designed for low-density suburban development, with segregated urban uses, when Kabul is extremely dense with commercial uses that are very well integrated throughout residential areas. Despite Calogero’s encouragement of many of the current practices of design in Kabul as supporting sustainable low-rise mixed-use development, this Afghan-American accused him of promoting the Otherness of Kabul and not wanting the city and country to modernize. What then, is the distinction between someone who comes from within a community versus an outsider in urban planning? How is the Virginian an insider if he was educated and had a large majority of his experiences outside of Afghanistan? Is it just that he considers himself Afghan, is he not an Other? These identities, particularly of Afghan-Americans, are under constant negotiation. This is identity politics, at its worst, where groups are defining itself by what it is not; not an outsider, not an Other (Said, 1978). Some have contrasted this view of identity politics in indicating that individuals do not depend on merely just differences to constitute their respective identities. Rather, the formation of identities is more aggressive and antagonistic in understanding the differences that exist between various groups (Mouffe, 2005). Whether this identity definition in Afghans is an “antagonistic understanding of difference,” or merely the politics of identity that are formed by a simple realization of difference to both foreigners and everyone else, it is instrumental when considering public participation in the decision making process, as well as the term “public” when designing and integrating various spaces throughout the city.
CHAPTER THREE
KABUL JADID

3.1 KING AMANULLAH

The common misconception of Afghanistan as a space that has halted development or any type of progression throughout years of internal and external conflict can easily be rebuked with former King Amanullah’s visions for a modern Kabul, a Kabul Jadid. Kabul has been portrayed, imagined, and reimagined through a changing lens that has been shaped by the politics of the time. This provides a number of contradictions between Kabul as it is experienced and observed, and Kabul as it is depicted. On the one hand people are fed images of Afghanistan laden with war, blood, victims, mud huts, bomb shelters, and land mines. On the other hand, the city is laden with traces of development, modernization, and plans. Though the former most certainly exists, they also serve to perpetuate an image of Afghanistan as backward, perhaps contributing to the Western belief that their presence in these subaltern spaces are necessary to save the savages.

Kabul Jadid is translated from Farsi as Modern Kabul. It was King Amanullah’s modernization plan for Kabul.
Amanullah commissioned Kabul Jadid in 1923 as an attempt to modernize Kabul, and wished to emulate the Turkish. He was an admirer of the Turkish in their ability to both preserve local history and culture and use contemporary models of urbanization throughout their city. Amanullah's efforts at modernization, however, were not merely limited to the layout and design of the city. Rather, he wished to modernize the entire experience of Kabul; embodying modernization not only in their physical surroundings through an experience of Beaux-Arts style urban design, electrification, and a railroad, but also through their clothing, requiring Kabulis to dress in European-style clothing while in the public spaces of the capital (Wild, 1982).

Antoine de Saint-Exupery mocks the belief among many Europeans that knowledge can only be produced by those who were dressed in properly European clothing, as he indicates in Le Petit Prince:

I have serious reason to believe that the planet from which the little prince came is the asteroid known as B612. This asteroid has only been seen one time through the telescope, in 1909, by a Turkish astronomer.

He thence made a grand presentation of his discovery to the International Astronomical Congress. But no one believed him because of his clothing. Grown-ups are like that.

Fortunately, for the reputation of Asteroid B612, a Turkish dictator insisted that his people, under pain of death, dress themselves in European clothing. In 1920 the astronomer gave his demonstration all over again, dressed in a very elegant suit. And this time everybody accepted his report. (Saint-Exupéry, 1943)

This attempt to design a modern Kabul was a not so subtle attempt to modernize the entire society through a spatial-aesthetic lived experience. The irony in the Saint

Exupery's passage lies in the fact that the astronomer has the competence to make an observation that the Europeans could not, and the Europeans refused to accept modern technical competence from someone who did not appear themselves to be modern. Modernization itself looks down upon all previous attempts
at modernity, and the West seems to highly ignore all these previous attempts at modernization that Afghans have had in their city projects since the 1920s. (Calogero, 2011)

Amanullah’s regime collapsed in 1929, but Kabul Jadid has persisted to today. The monarchy that ruled Afghanistan following Amanullah continued to developed new districts, yet they were still aligned with Kabul Jadid. In fact, the original land-use allocations that were commissioned during the time of Amanullah are still used to this day.

Darulaman was to be at the very center of this new Kabul, and the area around Darulaman were to be saved for administrative purposes (Wild, 1982). While the West sees Darulaman as the complete destruction of the country, a visual for the ruined state of Afghanistan, Afghans do not harbor similar feelings of nostalgia or attachment to the building. In fact, Darulaman itself is rarely frequented (Calogero, 2011). The area surrounding Darulaman, however is continually being developed as an administrative area as the 1923 Kabul Jadid was laid out under Amanullah. Currently, the United Nations, ISAF, and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development all have facilities around the palace. This presents two images of Afghanistan: one, that Afghanistan is still chaotic and anti-modern and developing under a plan that was formulated and implemented in 1923; two, that Afghans in fact are following urban development in an organized fashion, and in places where development is formal through the city, they are following land-use allocations and rules laid out (Calogero, 2011). The

Image 3.2: Map of the City of Kabul, Darulaman extracted (Afghanistan Information Management Services, 2005)
rhetoric surrounding the choice between the two are part of a similar trajectory of Afghanistan being a subaltern space.
Amanullah’s father-in-law, Mahmud Tarzi grew up in exile in Damascus under Ottoman rule. This connected Amanullah to become a meticulous follower of recent Turkish history. Along with his wife Soraya, Amanullah and Tarzi concentrated on modernization as the major component of his time in power (Wild, 1982). Amanullah wanted Kabul to follow the Beaux-Arts style of urban design that was made popular by Daniel Burnham in the Chicago’s World Fair in 1893 so he hired a German architect, Albert Harten, to lay out Kabul in the same manner. Harten’s employment formalized the direction that Kabul was headed in the world modernization conversation. Here Darulaman was heavily modeled after and referred to the Reichstag in Berlin. (Wild, 1982)

Darulaman was thus designed to be a visual and physical center point for all of the administrative offices, and ultimately the center of this new modern city, this *kabul jadid*. A number of radial avenues physically
and visually connected Darulaman with its surrounding neighborhoods, making it the center of all these neighborhoods and holding its administrative importance. (Wild, 1982)

Amanullah’s attempt at modernization was seen merely as symbolic to Afghans, as Darulaman was being built and the areas around developed, Afghans did not see a parallel increase in their standard of living for the majority of the population. Thus, when Amanullah returned from his seven month tour of Europe in 1928 and was forced to renounce his throne, Nader Shah Musahiban, Amanullah’s former Army Chief, was named king. While Amanullah was seen as having been involved in symbolic acts of modernization, Nader Shah established a number of institutional changes that were identified as actual modernization, such as opening up many schools. (Gregorian, 1969)

Nader Shah’s work heavily impacted patterns of urbanization in Kabul. The federal government was able to control the development of land in Kabul specifically because he turned over the royal property to the public treasury, so that the Ministry of Finance could administer it (Shah, 1939). Nader Shah then decided to expand northwest instead of the initial plans of expanding southwest. The base at Bibi Mahru hill that later became an actual district by the name of Shahri Now (meaning New City). Nader Shah began urbanizing the surrounding areas of what is today Shahri Now with a particular concentration on the urbanization of the gardens of the area (Calogero, 2011). The neighborhood that had its primary function replaced by Shahri Now became known as Shahri Kona, the Old City. Old in this tense means used and second-hand, and less romanticized as ancient and
deserving to be preserved. The language of modernization has been imposed upon Kabul, identifying everything that has been developed as kona, ancient, and backwards, and everything else as new. This distinction caused the wealthy families that previously lived in Shahri Kona to move out and into Shahri Now and rent their homes in Shahri Kona to poorer families. This caused an increase in density and the rate of poverty among residents in the Old City.

If modern meant new, then an obvious preference would be made to modernity, not only physically, but psychologically in everything that Shahri Now became. Amanullah in his time used a strategy of "spatial ordering" (Calogero, 2011) in the layout of Kabul Jadid, as was the case in Egypt before the British occupied the country in 1882. In Egypt, the Khedive built orthogonal towns as a means of psychologically controlling the population with a technology of rule representing the political order that exists to today in Shahri Now (Calogero, 2011). The Musahibans² were not as explicit in creating a visually modern urban order, but this order did exist, especially as patterns of development were following what was initially laid out with Kabul Jadid. The way in which Shahri Now was developed followed a pattern of how gardens were patterned in the city. These gardens were commonly owned by aristocrats, so in this way the aristocrats contributed to the act of shaping the modern city. On a different note, Afghan planners were

²Musahibans were the reign of brothers who ruled after Amanullah was overthrown
recognizing the importance of having a passive-solar urban housing type in the 1940s, years before the West was considering such things. (Calogero, 2011) See Image 3.7.

However, this is not to say that the type of planning that occurred was necessarily a positive one, because while some planners were focused on a passive-solar housing type to guide the development of Shahri Now, there was a subsequent process of urban renewal in the inner-city was occurring. The Jad-e Maiwand and the Jad-e Nader Pashtun were built starting in 1949 as enormous, straight avenues that ran straight through the Shahri Kona. Along these avenues, big concrete buildings were built, solidifying them, formalizing them.

This was an assurance that these streets were now considered part of, and served, the new section of the city by guiding traffic, goods, and customers flow to Shahri Now (Arez & Dittman, 2005). Like most urban renewal projects throughout the world, the urban renewal of Shahri Kona was successful in connecting commerce with the core of the city. (Nemat, 1976)

But it is not our place to say what the planners in Kabul should have done at that point. Ananya Roy identifies a “management of difference” asserting that the act of urban conservation under situations of colonization is actually another technology of rule that colonial powers use to control their supposed colonies. The very fact that Afghan
planners wanted and could take part in urban renewal was an actual mark of their sovereignty. (Calogero, 2011)

Amanullah had planned out concentric districts that are known in Farsi as kart, with Darulaman as the center. The zones were to be planned with Karta-i-Awal as administrative, Kart-i-Duwom as commercial and Karta-i-Sey and any subsequent karts as residential. Though all the neighborhoods were not exactly developed according to Amanullah's plans, they all maintained a strong trace of Kabul Jadid and its relationship to it. Karta-i-Char is a residential area, and though Karta-i-Awal is not being used for administrative purposes, the Afghan government still owns the land. Still, around Darulaman, many organizations such as the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Kabul National Museum, and the American University of Kabul have established their bases indicating that Kabul Jadid still influences land uses in this area of Kabul even to today. This shows that Afghans did dabble with and experience modern planning in a manner that allowed this experience to have an influence on the shape of the city. Though in subsequent years, Soviet-influenced planning played a greater role in the development of Kabul and the country, the common discourse implies that this Soviet inspired transnational planning was exactly just that—a model taken from Western models. Calogero argues, “though Amanullah’s Beaux-Arts planning might have explicitly emulated Western models, the socio-political bargaining of the years of rule following the overthrow of Amanullah produced an urban modernity that can be classified as distinctly Afghan.” (Calogero, 2011)
3.3 LEAD UP TO THE COLD WAR

Amanullah declared war on the British in 1919, which soon gained them independence. Therefore in 1920 Afghanistan became one of the few Asian states that had full sovereignty from any imperial power (Wild, 1982). Soon after, the Musahibans in an effort to protect this sovereignty joined the League of Nations in 1934 to ensure this. This independence became an important part of the urban landscape throughout Kabul such as in the Independence Monument near Deh Mazang, the Monument to the Unknown Soldier which is located at the intersection of Jad-e Maiwand and Jad-e Nader Pashtun in Shahri Kona.

However, the buildup and the onslaught of the Cold War put Afghanistan and the Musahibans in a precarious position. As American President Dwight Eisenhower saw the Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru’s non-alignment as siding with the USSR and a refusal of being part of the Western Bloc, he gained neighboring Pakistan as an ally and provided them with military and political affiliation with the United States in the Cold War. Afghanistan, seeing the Durand Treaty as void after India gained independence from Great Britain, did not recognize Pakistan as an official state, and instead border tensions arose between the two countries. The border is still a source of contention between Afghanistan and Pakistan to this day, as Afghanistan was unable to balance the interests of powers in South Asia against the Soviets to the north in a manner that Afghan leaders had always done (Calogero, 2011). Meanwhile the United States reinstated the Shah of Iran by overthrowing the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq so that the US would have an ally in the Persian Gulf (Kinzer, 2003). In Afghanistan, Prime Minister Shah Mahmoud Khan was overthrown after he lost credibility within the country; King Zahir Shah’s cousin, Daoud Khan, succeeded Shah Mahmoud as the Prime Minister. (Ahmadi, 2006)

Developmental assistance arose as the competition between the Eastern and Western Bloc became more serious and Cold War players wanted to gain support from political allies around the world. Under Daoud Khan, Prime Minister Shah Mahmoud Khan sought and received a great deal of development assistance from the Soviet Union casting Afghanistan into a much more aggressive period of modernization while the United States seemingly ignored Afghanistan at this time, almost thrusting the country into the arms of the Soviet Union. (Calogero, 2011)
3.4 SOVIET URBAN PLANNING

Premier Nikita Khrushchev was different than Joseph Stalin in that instead of solely focusing on quick industrialization, he considered and realized the value of urbanization that occurred in parallel with industrialization and acted upon this by instilling urban development programs in the Soviet Union. In addition, many of the perspectives that Khrushchev and the Soviets held at that time about the theory of city form were passed down to Afghan planners, as development assistance was funneled through the country. The Soviets were heavily influenced from the very beginning by the urban planning mechanisms and beliefs of Ebenezer Howard who physically presented his ideas to the Soviet Union, on top of being well known by Socialists and social-justice reformers in Great Britain. His theories of comprehensive urban planning, for example and belief that there was an appropriate size to cities were incorporated in Afghan planning. (French, 1994)

Urban green space also became a very important aspect of Afghan planning and is even reflected in conversations with Afghans today. The Soviet Union developed urban parks and green spaces across the USSR, as a means of “marrying the best traits of the city and country together” (Howard, 1902). This effect is most directly evident in Afghan planning today where in the Master Plans of Kabul, a large proportion of the city was dedicated to green space. In 2008, the mayor of Kabul described the need to create these green spaces as “lungs of the city,” an important and key phrase of the Garden City movement. Sadly, the type of parkland that is desired by Kabulis and Afghan planners is almost undoable because of the scarcity of water and the demand for housing in Kabul. Mikrorayons, which were mass produced apartment blocks, with many major components housed within and shared infrastructure were. As seen in Image 3.10 and

Housing was also an issue that became transferred to Afghan planners due to the concern of the shortage of urban housing in Soviet cities. Following principles of mass-produced housing, designs from Bauhaus (Sherwood, 1978) and Le Corbusier’s (Corbusier, 1927) advocacy of high-rise housing and super-blocks, played a major role in addressing the housing needs of Kabul. Mikrorayons, which were mass produced apartment blocks, with many major components housed within and shared infrastructure were. As seen in Image 3.10 and

Image 3.10: Typical Mikrorayon (Krogius)
3.11, open space was a common space, encouraging of leisurely time spent and enjoyed by everyone as a whole in an open arena. (Calogero, 2011)

Furthermore, in an attempt to transform and guide the psyche of urban dwellers through spatial transformations, urban planning and the development of Mikrorayons aimed to do just that. Relations between the early Soviet Union and Afghanistan were very cordial. The Soviets called Amanullah the Red Prince because his efforts to modernize Afghan society paralleled the material-spatial efforts of the Soviet Union in their efforts at revolutionary social transformation. They saw Amanullah’s Kabul Jadid as bringing Afghanistan towards proletarian communism. The development of the first Mikrorayon in Kabul began very shortly after the Soviets had built a prototype of the region in Moscow. (Calogero, 2011)

It is apparent, therefore, that even before current attempts at modernity by Western powers, the Soviets believed in and pursued the concept of social control and governmental enforcement, the Soviet version of rational-comprehensive planning. Throughout the 30 years of development assistance, this method of rational-comprehensive planning was undoubtedly passed onto Afghans who were willing to receive this transmission in guidance. (Krogius)
3.5 FIRST MASTER PLAN

Before the First Master Plan of Kabul was even formulated in 1964, Afghanistan was already looking ahead to national economic development and thus producing five year plans for this very type of development. There is significant evidence that the First and Second Master Plans portray the Soviets as playing a major role in influencing methods and assumptions about what master-planning was and how it was to be completed. For instance, the survey map of Kabul in 1963 used as a basis for the First Master Plan was put together in Moscow. In addition, in 1963, the Soviets built and educated the staff of the Polytechnic University of Kabul in 1963 and the Housing Construction Unit in 1965. A French planner led the First Master Plan, the major project completed under this plan was Mikrorayon 1, a derivative of Soviet high-rise apartment complex planning. (Calogero, 2011)

Calogero has developed the following two master plans at the same scale, using the same graphic conventions in order to indicate the continuity between the Master Plans and how, with each revision, there has been a growing sophistication of the planners. The figure on the next page shows how in the First Master Plan of Kabul in 1964, the plan proposed replacing most of the Old City (A) with public uses. The main areas of the Arg (B), Shahri Now (C), Kabul University (D), and Darulaman Palace (E) are proposed to remain as is. Though the First Master Plan did not show specifically dedicated open space, the undeveloped mountainous areas and the belt along the Kabul River look to be dedicated open space, while the following master plans confirmed that this space does become planned open space. (Calogero, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master Plan No.</th>
<th>Year (AH/AD)</th>
<th>Projected Population</th>
<th>Allowed Floors</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>1343/1964</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>French-led team of 15 expatriates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>1346/1970</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>UNDP-led team from 35 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>1357-8/1978</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>USSR-led team from CZ, GDR, IN, AU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghulam Dastagir, Senior Planner, Plan Implementation Office, City of Kabul (May 2007)

Table 3.1: Master Plans of Kabul (Calogero)
Chapter 3  Kabul Jadid

Image 3.12: First Master Plan of Kabul (Calogero)

First Kabul Master Plan. 1964
By the time it was time to formulate the Second Master Plan, there was a shift in attempting to guide the growth of the population by an additional 300,000 people. The Second Master Plan designated specific areas for green space and industry, in addition to developing single family homes. (Calogero, 2011)
3.7 THIRD MASTER PLAN

This Master Plan was intended to guide Kabul’s growth to a 2 million person population over the course of 25 years. The former Mayor of Kabul, Ghulam Siddiq Noorzad, a major proponent of the Third Master Plan was quoted in the Wall Street Journal saying “It’s a perfect plan made by top engineers from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, and India” (Cloud, 2005). The Third Master Plan promoted a high residential density as a way to sustain the projected growth of 2 million without the necessity of sprawl; second, the Logar Riverway and part of the Kabul River are designated as aquifer-recharge areas, which until this day, the City pumps its water supply. Potable water is, and always has been, a very important and scarce resource in Kabul. The integration of this into the Master Plan was paramount in having this concern addressed and recognized by the government. (Calogero, 2011)

However, as I, and some other planners view this Third Master Plan, it is as though this 1978 plan is literally a graphic representation of how the city should be developed into a Modernist city. Abdur-Rashid Janbaz, the City Economic Planning Director indicated that the City fully intended to relocate the informal residents who would be displaced in this plan outside of the borders of Kabul, rebuild the informal areas consistent with the Master Plan, and then bring them back and settle them into the newly built formal housing. This, of course, poses many issues. Afghans have been temporary relocated for longer terms than intended, just as millions of Afghans had already lived for the past twenty-five years in refugee camps set up in Pakistan, and much like Palestinians have been living for the past sixty years in temporary camps outside their homes (Calogero, 2011). Another concern was of course the social networks that would be heavily disrupted upon this proposed relocation. As Janice Perlman noted in Rio de Janeiro, the government’s new social housing and relocation of slum-dwellers back into the formal housing after they had been initially displaced, disrupted their intact family and social life. (Perlman, 2004)

Image 3.14 and 3.15 show what architects identify as a high-Modernist style. “Modernism as a formal style is one expression of modernity; but another dimension of modernity as a condition of urban political economy is expressed by the informal housing climbing up the slope of the mountain behind the Polytechnic,” Calogero identifies the juxtaposition of the formal and informal in modernity. The favoring of a beautiful building, plaza is displayed in Image 3.15, along with an informal settlement encroaching from behind. Image 3.14 is a concept sketch of modern downtown which the House Building Unit of Kabul made in 1981. Urban informality is just as much an indicator and signifier of modernity as is a modernist building like the Polytechnic. There is a tendency,
especially in Modernist design and the development trade to assume that a one-size fits all models exists and can be successfully implemented in places regardless of the cultural context. These "best practices" are established in a manner to be replicated, as is outlined in *Rule of Experts* a critique of there being "principles true in every country" (Mitchell, 1988). Clients in various countries expect and request American building codes. These codes embody a number of assumptions specific to American buildings, obviously. The dimensions work, however, it serves to create a particular type of physical space. When transnational clients expect this type of space, a homogenization of designed and built spaces across nations exist. Political factors, efforts of control; the physical-determinist argument that not only should ‘good design result in good people,’ but ‘bad design produces bad people.’ (Calogero, 2011)

However, Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau attribute modernity to what one experiences in their everyday life, ultimately a psychological condition. The continuation of modernizing political rationalities from Amanullah onward allowed Kabul to modernize throughout 73 years even though political powers shifted and changed in parallel. Though Amanullah’s policies have been considered over-the-top by many, Afghans today look back on Amanullah’s reforms as a king who was able to gain full sovereignty and that the policies he instilled were ones Afghans had a hand in. Some even look back on Amanullah’s regime with nostalgia, as a time when Afghanistan was able to compete in development with the rest of the world. And though Nader Shah (king, 1930-1933) and Zahir Shah (king, 1933-1973) had their own hesitations with the extent to which Amanullah took his policies and programs, both Shah and Gregorian point out that these Musahiban rulers continued many of their own modernization programs. By the time Afghanistan reached the 1950s, the King at the time, Daoud Shah, became actively involved in military reform with the Soviets and promoted a more public role for women. (Calogero, 2011)

The Afghan Civil War of 1992-1996 destroyed much of the Old City, leaving a very miniscule remainder of what is considered “traditional” urban fabric in Kabul. Thus any new
development that did not match an orthogonal street and lot layout indicated in the Third Master Plan or failed to use modern building materials was ultimately considered the anti-modern. Yet because the concrete-production factories were destroyed in either the Civil War or the Coalition bombing of industrial facilities in 2001, concrete became too expensive for poor households to even afford. Ironic in that, if a development regime remained and continued after 1992, households would have been able to afford this concrete and assert their permanence on the land. So though a large number of urban residents explicitly violate the Master Plan, especially in the case of building materials, the Kabul Municipality would like to reassert their position in obtaining full sovereignty over the space and population of Kabul. So though they “quietly encroach” (Bayat, 2000) collectively in order to secure their livelihood, the reality is that the urban elite is not providing the means to afford modernizing that is explicitly required in the plan. (Calogero, 2011)
CHAPTER FOUR
THE REEMERGENCE OF THE MASTER PLAN

In 2004, Ghulam Sakhi Noorzad was appointed as the Mayor of Kabul, after he had served as Mayor in 1978 when the Third Master Plan was ratified. Noorzad saw having an actual plan as the main way to restore a functioning government in Kabul and restoring Kabul into an orderly city. Though many believed that progress came to a standstill during times of political instability in Afghanistan, the cranes Image 4.1 in Mikrorayon 4 clearly depict the persistence of the implementation of the Master Plan from 1978 to 1992. Noorzad’s biggest challenge was to try and convince the Ministry that Plan Implementation should resume in face of the removal of the majority of the informal housing in Kabul. Noorzad butt heads with the Ministry of the Interior, which eventually resulted in an official suspension of the Master Plan in 2005. (Calogero, 2011)
Chapter 4  Reemergence of the Master Plan

Image 4.1: Abandoned construction equipment at Mikrorayni 4 (Calogero)
4.1 MUNICIPALITY AND MINISTRY TENSION

In politics at play, the Municipality of Kabul has been gaining a significant amount of support and backing by the Afghan people, whereas the national government, and consequently the Ministries have been consistently losing credibility. Afghan President, Hamid Karzai has been having a difficult time finding a Mayor for Kabul that works well with the Ministry, and so the Third Master Plan remains suspended as the Plan Implementation Office is waiting for further direction from the Ministry of Urban Development. The Kabul Municipality has been implementing the Master Plan, however just the components involving the road framework. They are able to finance this road construction by setting a price themselves of property they have expropriated, and then resell this land at an exponentially higher amount after the adjacent road has been built. The Municipality is able to act in complete independence from the Ministry because of a Municipal Law enacted in 1990 that makes the Kabul Municipality officially part of the national government. Therefore, Municipality leaders need not report to their provincial governors as every other municipality has to. Instead, they report directly to the President. President Karzai who has replaced the Mayor of Kabul multiple times in an effort to create a working dynamic between the Municipality and Ministry has consistently reaffirmed this privileged position. The Interior Minister appoints every other mayor. Thus, the Municipality is able to collect and raise its own revenues and have their budget approved by the Ministry of Finance, just as other ministries are. It is through this unique ability that the Municipality has been able to proceed with the implementation of certain parts of the Third Master Plan. (Calogero, 2011)

Thus, Kabul is in a position of competition with the national government, not with other Afghan cities, especially when it comes to how the city's path and process of development can, should, and will be controlled and governed (Calogero, 2011). It is clear that the Municipality is asserting its power over the development of the city. The Master Plan represents a commitment on behalf of the government. It represents stability and permanence in a time where there is extreme economic and political uncertainty. The Plan displays intentionality and clarity in the face of vagueness and unclear commitments and loyalties of the national government. The Afghan public is therefore in favor of the plan, especially the taxi drivers. While foreigners and Afghan-Americans have no real idea of what the Master Plan comprises and what the actual geometry of it is, taxi drivers have a deep understanding and relationship to the Plan. The lack of information and actual wording in the Plan has been deliberately secretive, a way of asserting the Municipality's position as the urban-regime and their intentionality in guiding this development in the wake of many groups hiding their regime status and intentions with the city. Calogero says of the Third Master Plan, “There is extensive documentation for Plan 3
Table 4. -- NATIONAL URBAN PLANNING AGENCIES; REORGANIZATIONS AND RELATED EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Urbanization and Housing Unit created with Ministry of Public Works (MoPW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>King Zahir Shah pressures Daoud Khan to resign as both Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. Zahir convenes constitutional commission, begins 'decade of democracy'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>First Master Plan adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Unit is upgraded to the Bureau of Urbanization, within MoPW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Bureau upgraded to Directorate of Urbanization and Housing within MoPW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Second Master Plan adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>King Zahir Shah deposed by his cousin Daoud Khan; Republic of Afghanistan proclaimed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Daoud Khan assassinated by a faction of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), who proclaim the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Third Master Plan adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Directorate becomes an 'independent non-profit government enterprise': the Institute of Urban and Structural Projects Creation (sazi), abbreviated as ShTaPa from the full Pashto name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>ShTaPa becomes the Central Institute for Project Creation, abbreviated as PAMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>PAMA becomes the Central Administration of Urbanization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Najibullah resigns; mujahideen factions proclaim the Islamic State of Afghanistan. PAMA is upgraded to the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The Taliban capture Kabul and proclaim the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. MUDH is downgraded again to PAMA and is placed under the Ministry of Public Works again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>PAMA upgraded again to Ministry of Urban Development and Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>&quot;Housing&quot; is dropped from the name and the mission of the Ministry, which becomes the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: Ahmad Shah Hemat, Ministry of Urban Development via Calogero

Chapter 4 Reemergence of the Master Plan

in the Office of Plan Implementation in Park Shahr-e Naw. So far as I know, no Westerner has been allowed to see it (including me). I don’t even know if it is in Farsi or Russian."

The taxi drivers of Kabul were in favor of the Plan more than most supporters of the Plan. Their main push was in completing the roadways of the Master Plan. In addition to being well versed in the city’s plans and the Master Plan, the taxi drivers are also the most vocal group among the entire city. Inside the taxicabs is where public space actually occurs. People may or may not interact with each other among different groups in designated public spaces of Kabul, but they most certainly speak to and interact with the cab drivers. However, they not only listen to the public concerns within these cabs, they also relay information; this produces a circular flow of information, where the taxi drivers receive various points of views and in turn relay them to others in the cab. The City has fully realized the extent of this knowledge and power, and thus have enlisted the support of this
faction of the public on the topic of roadways. (Calogero, 2011)

Figure 4.1 shows the political instability of Afghanistan. It is apparent that federal level control over urban development has gone through various stages of control and lack of control ever since the Master Plan was formulated and adopted. However, the Kabul Municipality’s Plan-Making Office has remained in place for a number of years. Polanyi would call this Municipal Plan-Making Office a “socially embedded” institution. The Municipality is free from having to adhere to very strict accountability standards in their project proposals because they do not have to interact often with multilateral agencies and donors. Currently, the Ministry is working on forming the Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project (KURP), which though well implemented, is very slow paced and small in its scale not allowing it to adequately address the growth rate of the city. (Calogero, 2011)
4.2 MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT ATTEMPTS AT FORMAL URBANIZATION

While the Kabul Municipality has continued to retain control over urban development within the confines of the city of Kabul, the Ministry of Urban Development issued a revised version of Amanullah’s plan, entitling it Kabul Jadid/Dih Sabz Plan in 2009. This has given them the ability to proceed with implementing formal development, but only in areas where the Municipality does not retain control. This could be seen as one of two things: the federal government is desiring to make money from the real-estate development deals; or that the federal government has completely given up trying to guide development within the Municipal boundaries (Calogero, 2011). This has ultimately led to an inconsistency in much of the terminology and maps. While completing a GIS project for Kabul, I noted that the shapefiles were inconsistent in the spelling of names and even upon political boundaries, and subdivisions. This made it almost impossible to join tables and combine data across different shapefiles to depict a graphical representation of Afghanistan through a map. It was simply not feasible. In this paper, I have elected to utilize the spelling in the maps produced by AIMS, as I refer to it most often.

The Kabul Jadid of 2009 made it clear that the Ministry wanted full control over the northward expansion of Kabul into Dih Sabz, therefore denying and flat out rejecting any of the Municipality’s attempts at development here, even though this has already occurred. Still though, this urban development both by the Municipality and Ministry is formal, it is following a plan of action laid out in their respective plans.

However, the tension between the two organizations has resulted in an interference with investment in Kabul. Because Karzai formally suspended the Third Master Plan of Kabul, there has been a hesitation in purchasing land throughout the city because it is unclear who has planning rights in the given areas. What if someone was to purchase land and either the Ministry or the Municipality were to expropriate the land at a mere fraction of what someone paid for it? This uncertainty affects the construction of the physical city and the social relations that are produced or put off.

In addition, because of this growing tension, the two agencies have not been paying enough deserved attention to the return of millions of refugees who have moved back into the city. Because the Ministry does not want to make a plan to follow the Third Master Plan, and has instead issued the Kabul Jadid/Dih Sabz plan, this represents the fragmentation of the urban elite that is now planning in areas where they maintain control, indicating the lack of administrative coherence between the Municipality and the Ministry. (Calogero, 2011)

Lastly, it is unclear when the
Municipality will begin to clear out informal development and replace it with formal development. This produces an ambiguity because the Municipality has been implementing parts of the Third Master Plan, indicating that the clearing of informal housing is in the works. Refusing to legalize informal developments is intentional and planned, regardless of understanding the distress these households are in and how much their livelihoods depend on them.
CHAPTER FIVE
METHODOLOGY

After assessing Western policies in Kabul, Afghanistan and the history and continuation of planning in Afghanistan under the various political forces that have existed in the country, the goal of this thesis is to have a clear understanding of how the Afghan public have determined for themselves what their public spaces have been, in light of the changing regimes and apparent instability of the city. While the implementation and the actual wording of Kabul Jadid, the First, Second, and Third Master Plan are not readily available to those not working in the City Plan Implementation Office, people interacting with, or who have interacted with, the City of Kabul have a distinct understanding of the spaces throughout the city. With their knowledge, I am seeking to understand Kabul on a neighborhood level, allowing me to see where people from different backgrounds, neighborhoods, income levels, and ages, have typically gathered. In doing so, I hope to determine the characteristics of these spaces...are they near particular neighborhoods, tourist centers, or parks? Are they at the crossroads of particular streets? Do they come with certain amenities and are they green spaces? With this information, I hope to determine the future of these public spaces with the little that is known about the implementation of the Third Master Plan and its intention of the demolition of informal housing. The research will utilize qualitative data collection methods as future recommendations rely on the importance of the social, cultural, and spatial way people have interacted with Kabul.
Chapter 5  Methodology

5.1 SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS

There have been two primary methods in which I have collected data for this research. First, there has been extensive document review through connections I have established inside and outside of Afghanistan. Next, I have utilized what has been made available online and through library archives. These include historical maps that were created from the time of Amanullah Khan onward, interviews given by prominent Afghan politicians who have played a major role in shaping the city of Kabul, as well as those who worked in the physical planning of Afghanistan in various capacities whether bureaucratic or through development. My second method of data collection has been through extensive interviews I have conducted of people who have lived, worked, or gone to school in the city of Kabul. These people have ranged in their demographic characteristics in age, income, level of education, and the particular neighborhoods they associate themselves with. Lastly, a number of photographs that were taken by me and my colleagues during our respective time in Kabul has been used to assess certain sections of Kabul and street life.
5.2 EXTENDED METHODOLOGY

Data collection primarily consisted of interviews with those who have lived, worked, or were educated in Kabul. After posting an announcement through various social mediums including Facebook, Twitter, and an email to various Afghan listservs, I reached out to Afghan community organizations in California and Virginia, two states with sizable Afghan populations. I compiled a list of interested participants (n=200), who then completed an initial survey that collected information on how long they were educated, lived in, or worked in Kabul, their ages, neighborhoods, reasons for leaving Afghanistan (if they were not currently living there), their income at the time they were living in Kabul, and the ethnic group they most closely identified with, if any at all. From this pool of Afghans, I chose 100 participants who varied among these variables, in order to encompass a range of positions and Afghans who come from different communities and backgrounds. However, I oversampled those who had the longest and most recent duration of time in Kabul in order to accurately depict the city as it stands today in the midst of the Third Master Plan implementation.

Subsequently, I formulated a semi-structured survey interview with all 100 participants. These were conducted in person if the person was local, and over Skype calls if the person was not. The questions were to gauge an understanding of where they spent the majority of their time in relation to where they lived, worked, or went to school. They were also to determine where they thought were the most crowded spaces, and the kinds of activities that took place there. When asking these questions, I used a map I obtained from AIMS (see appendix) as it is the most recently updated publicly available map that most Afghans have viewed which incorporates the city as it stands at time of publishing. This map allowed interviewees to identify neighborhoods and spaces without misinterpretation of these spaces on my part. When interviews were conducted over Skype, I ensured that they had access to this map, through email or through a family member who printed it for them, in the case of the elderly. In addition, various questions on the subject of modernity were asked; what the term meant to each person, whether they would consider any particular section of Kabul to be modern, and what they identified as the modern spaces outside of Afghanistan. Questions of modernity were asked in order to gauge an understanding of the spatial reference point of what modernity was for the interviewees.

Lastly, I conducted numerous follow-up interviews in order to clarify locations of certain neighborhoods and spaces that were initially mentioned in the interview in order to maintain consistency. Maps were more heavily used during this section of the interview to identify these spaces.
5.3 FIRST ROUND DATA COLLECTION

The initial survey of n=200 gathered information upon the following variables for each of the participants:

- Familial Identification and Occupation
- Length of Time Spent in Kabul
- Age
- Political Situation in Afghanistan Upon Leaving
- Ethnic Group
- Neighborhood From

FAMILIAL IDENTIFICATION AND OCCUPATION
This inquiry was used as a filter; I wanted to be extremely cautious of the urban elite I was sampling from. In Afghanistan, it is very clear that the elite experience the city in a different manner than the everyday citizens. The urban elite often live in gated communities such as Wazir Akbar Khan, with the capital available to maneuver the city by taxi or by car, and the ability to use the various sections of Kabul. I also knew that there would be a larger number of these people accessible for interview as this is the population of people who were privileged enough (i.e. had the financial and political connections) to leave. Therefore this variable was used as a filter. This information was sensitive and therefore remains confidential. Though these views and opinions are valuable in their own right, the manner in which I wish to address this research is through the eyes of the population of Afghanistan that has been commonly disregarded and slighted in the planning of the city.

LENGTH OF TIME SPENT IN KABUL
This variable was primarily used as a filtering variable, as well. In recent years there have been a number of people who have traveled to and from Kabul for short periods of time. Though these individuals and families play an important role, I wanted a more in depth understanding of the city with a great deal of experience moving about the city.

POLITICAL SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN UPON LEAVING
I identified this as an important variable to consider when surveying the initial group. The reason for this was that the time these individuals spent in Afghanistan under the given political situation indicated how they knew the city, through its various changes, developments, destruction, and progression. It became a valuable nostalgic reflection upon how the various political regimes imprinted not only the city, but how the public felt, identified, and remembered the city. There were four categories for these. (a) Pre-Soviet Occupation, before 1979 (b) Soviet Occupation, 1979 – 1989 (c) Post-Soviet Occupation + Mujahiddin, 1989-1996 (d) Taliban Era 1990 – 2001 (e) Post 9/11 and American Occupation 2001 – Present (f) Still Resident in Afghanistan.
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Figure 4.2: Breakdown of responses for political situation in Kabul at time of leaving the country (author)

Figure 4.3: Breakdown of responses for ethnicities (author)

AGE
This variable is closely related to the previous variable. People from Afghanistan have been moving out in waves for a myriad of reasons, spanning from receiving an education Pre-Soviet era, to leaving as refugees during the Soviet Occupation and Taliban rule, leaving for education today. These reasons had an effect on what age they left and at what age they experienced the city spaces.

ETHNIC GROUP
At the crossroads of the Silk Road, the empire of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and the Persian Empire, Afghanistan is comprised of various ethnic groups. Kabul, as the capital and center of the country attracted a variety of these groups. According to a National Geographic Society map, the city of Kabul is comprised of 45% Tajiks, 25% Hazaras, 25% Pashtuns, 2% Uzbeks, 1% Baluchis, 1% Turkmen, and 1% classified as Other. As there are a variety of ethnic enclaves within the city of Kabul, this variable was important to consider to ensure there would be a sizable sampling from a variety of ethnic
groups across the entire city from different neighborhoods.

**NEIGHBORHOOD FROM**
The neighborhood each of the interviewees were from or identified most closely with. This variable was especially important in the first stage of interviews in that it also served as a means to ensure that a variety of different populations and neighborhoods were being represented from across the entire city. Although utilized to provide a representative sample to begin with in the first round of interviews, later when more detailed questions were asked, this variable proved to be important because correlations and mapping could be made between the neighborhoods residents lived, and in what spaces they spent time.

Initially, I considered looking at other variables, such as reasons why residents left Kabul, if they were not currently in Kabul, or if they were not planning on returning in the immediate future. This information was entirely omitted, as it was sensitive information. There are a number of Afghan residents who are here under political asylum or here illegally, therefore the incorporation of this information was not directly related to the purpose of this research.

![Figure 4.4: Breakdown of responses for age groups (author)](image)
5.4 SECOND ROUND INTERVIEWS

Following these initial interviews, due to both time constraints and to oversample certain variables, I used Familial Identification/Occupation and Length of Time Spent in Afghanistan as the primary filters and an indicator of who might be able to provide detailed information about Kabul. I then oversampled those who had most recently spent time in Kabul, and those who had spent the longest amount of time in Kabul.

The second set of interviews provided me information away from individual demographic information and to more about Kabul and the interviewees' relationships to it. The following are the topics that were addressed further:

- Spaces and Neighborhoods Spent Time In
- Spaces and Neighborhoods they Noticed Others Spending Time In
- What Modernity Meant
- Spaces in Kabul that Fit this Definition
- Cities Outside of Kabul and Afghanistan Fitting this Definition

SPACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS SPENT TIME IN
This variable was an especially valuable component of the research, as it indicates where people used public spaces and for what reasons, but also, paired with which neighborhoods individuals were from, this variable indicated where individuals spent their time in and for what reasons. It showed whether people spent time in the immediate vicinity of where they lived or worked, or if they traveled to various spaces in the city where they spent time. It also indicated whether these spaces were spaces designated by the city as a public space, or whether the public staked their own spaces throughout the city. This variable also turned into a commentary of the political situation of the time.

When paired with when people left Kabul, the spaces that people spent time in varied, from inside the home for women during the time of the Taliban, to the Mikrorayons Pre-Soviet Occupation, to Shari Now post-9/11 and during the heavy investment in development today. When paired with whether people were in Kabul by themselves or with family, this variable shed light on where the places were that individuals spent time in with their families, by themselves, or with friends and colleagues.

SPACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS THEY NOTICED OTHERS SPENDING TIME IN
In the case that individuals may have limited time spent in Kabul or in public spaces, this variable was an indicator of where they noticed others spending time. This was valuable given what the political situation was when these individuals were in Kabul, their gender, and familial affiliation and what that said about how they spent their time in spaces in relation to others, especially in the wake of heavy foreign presence in Kabul in
WHAT MODERNITY MEANT TO THEM
Because I was attempting to garner information on the theme of modernity from people in Kabul, I determined it vital to learn individual definitions of modernity itself.

ANY SPACE IN KABUL THAT FITS THIS DEFINITION
This question was asked to see if they considered any space in Kabul that fit this definition. This was interesting when paired with the variable of what neighborhoods people spent time in in Kabul, whether this space was modern in Kabul, or whether these were the areas people did not venture to, felt excluded from, etc.

WHAT CITIES OUTSIDE OF KABUL AND AFGHANISTAN FIT THIS DEFINITION
I wanted to see what the spatial reference point was for modernity and how this differed based upon where people were currently and at what time they left Kabul. Aihwa Ong and Ananya Roy refer to in “Worlding Cities” that Asia is the spatial reference point of modernity for many in Southeast Asia, and it is no longer America. This proved interesting when comparing to the image of modernity the West has made for itself in that it defines its own modernity based upon all that is not modern in the developing world.
5.5 100 AFGHANS.

The following is detailed information on the n=100 Afghans I have chosen to focus on much more closely.

Figure 4.5: Breakdown of responses for age groups (author)

Figure 4.6: Breakdown of responses for ethnicities (author)
Figure 4.7: Breakdown of responses for modern cities (author)

Figure 4.8: Breakdown of responses for political situation in Kabul at time of leaving the country (author)

Figure 4.9: Breakdown of responses for most frequented spaces in Kabul (author)
5.6 METHOD ANALYSIS

After completing the interviews, I mapped out the neighborhoods people lived in and the spaces they spent the majority of their time in while in Kabul. Using different markers for each, this gave me the ability to see, from my pool of interviewees, whether there was a minimal correlation between the two. It also allowed me to determine where most people spent their time, regardless of their neighborhood.

After completing this mapping exercise, I chose the three spaces that emerged as the most frequented. These three spaces were Shahri Now, Mandawi, and Mikrorayon 3.

I conducted further research on these spaces in order to determine the characteristics of each. These included general demographics of the area surrounding the space, the type of space it was, and how long it had been there, in addition to physical characteristics such as street sizes.

What has emerged as a result of my study and research is an interesting narrative and understanding of the city of Kabul depicted and told by residents, refugees, immigrants, and visitors, men and women, young and old. An understanding of Kabul partially reflected by nostalgia, and partially reflecting upon what each individual demands of the city.
CHAPTER SIX
ANALYSIS

6.1 SHAHRI NOW

Shahri Now is located in the ISAF defined boundary of District 4 of Kabul, which is just slightly North West of the center of the city. It is not the most crowded and busy of all areas in Kabul, though it is the most frequented by the most diverse group of people from a range of ethnic groups and income levels, and residents and expats. It is adjacent to the wealthiest section of the city, Wazir Akbar Khan, though Wazir Akbar Khan is located in District 10. Kolola Poshta, a neighborhood in District 4 and directly adjacent to the West of the Shahri Now neighborhood is also a wealthy area. Sharara, another neighborhood in the vicinity, was also a wealthy area. It is no longer considered as wealthy of an area because of the population influx into the city and the settling of various groups into Sharara.
Just south of Shahri Now, Salaang Road forms part of the bottom boundary of District 2 and becomes the divisive mechanism separating Shahri Now from the much poorer neighborhood of Qoli Abchakan. This road runs to Salaang, a prominent area north of Kabul known for its mountains and pristine river. Further south to Qoli Abchakan are the Asmayi Mountains, location of one of the largest informal populations in the city, which seem to provide almost a fortified boundary to Shahri Now.

Indicated through interviews and personal experience, Shahri Now has a feel to it allowing it to both exist within Kabul and at the same time be completely removed from the city. Shahri Now also emerged as what individuals identified as among the most modern sections of Kabul (second to the neighborhood of Wazir Akbar Khan). The main attractions of Shahri Now has been
the multitude of restaurants that are present, ranging from Chinese and Italian, among others. In addition, it has four hospitals in the vicinity of District 2, and a number of hotels catered to visitors of the city. The Kabul Micro Finance building looms over the Shahri Now Park, a symbol of wealth, and opportunity.

When you are in Shahri Now, it is like a tease. You see money in front of you, you see Afghans who are spending it, and you think that maybe you too deserve that life. I just do not know how to get it, but I can see it.

Said an interviewee who frequents Shahri Now.

Shahri Now Park is one of the major attractions that the public has been able to utilize, as it is easily accessible and free. Although not as frequented by families because the neighborhood is crowded, it is most commonly frequented by young adults who spend time in Shahri Now to meet each other. In many ways it supersedes some of the cultural restrictions that have recently emerged between female and male relationships, in the sense that these interactions take place under the watchful eyes of community members and elders, making them acceptable. So though they are still in a public space often times away from family members, they inhabit a muted way of Western interaction. Shahri Now has a higher population of foreigners, and these young adults see themselves as assimilated into a Western culture as they get to know each other and the foreigners. As one interview revealed:

**Interviewee:** I used to go to Shahri Now after school and give foreigners tours of the area. It was for fun, We used to give them tours of Shahri Now

**Me:** What did you see from these tours?
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Interviewee: We began to see what they liked and what they were interested in.

Me: So why did you give these tours?

Interviewee: Because we got to make friends with people who are not Afghan

Another interviewee laughed as he recalled his memories of Shahri Now:

Interviewee: After work, I used to take chicks to the one good park behind our office in Shahri Now.

Me: Afghan chicks?

Interviewee: No, not Afghans, all other chicks...the international ones.

Me: Why there?

Interviewee: It was clean, it looked like Boston Garden, but not as good. Chicks were smoking cigarettes there, and I looked good because I was their friend.

Shahri Now has then become the arena in which a public space is available that exposes Afghans from various backgrounds to this seemingly Western way of life with latent opportunity and female/male interactions. Though Wazir Akbar Khan emerged in the interviews as the most modern space in Kabul, defined by each individual's definition of modernity (a fascinating connection on its own), it is primarily residential. This has made common spaces not as readily available to outsiders, perpetuating a character of exclusion; in essence, another dollar that must be made for another border that must be crossed. The free movement in and out of Wazir Akbar Khan into Shahri Now is easy for the residents of Wazir Akbar Khan, a flow reserved only for Kabul's elite. Many times, those who live in Wazir Akbar Khan are the same people, the urban elite, who are able to maintain other types of flows. This is the flow into and out of the country when the situation in Afghanistan becomes volatile. They are the privileged elite who have options, and in turn symbolically secure the borders of their community as the West does their own.

The underlying issue, however, is not just how Shahri Now represents modernity and accessibility to the West to the residents of Kabul, but how the implemented Third Master Plan is going to affect Shahri Now as this accessible space. Given the strategic locations of Qoli Abchakan and Kohi Asmayi both to a major road in the city, Salaang Road, and the neighborhood of Shahri Now, these neighborhoods are in immediate danger given the expressed concerns and interests of plan implementors in the Office. The neighborhoods in Kohi Asmayi are especially threatened in that they are informal residents of the city, quietly encroaching upon the city. This area and land, because of their proximity to Shahri Now and a major road in Afghanistan, Salaang Road, are in danger of reappropriation. As the Municipality of Kabul continues to assert their power of the city and attempts to control growth and bring in revenue for the city, they may purchase this property from residents, rebuild it with better
accessibility for taxis, improve road conditions, and then place the land for sale at about 10 times the price that it was initially valued. Even with intentions of formalizing areas such as Kohi Asmayi by removing its residents until improvements are made and then moving them back in, there is the danger of disrupting long standing social networks and ties. In addition, there is no guarantee that these residents will ever be moved back into their homes. This poses a great threat to the current culture of Shahri Now. As better roads are formed, informal housing becomes formal, informal residents are displaced, and thus more formal neighborhoods begin to surround Shahri Now, there is a quiet enclosing of the neighborhood of Shahri Now in a manner welcome only to those who are actively taking part in eating at the restaurants, visiting the hospitals, and the exchanges occurring at the bank. These better neighborhoods form the type of boundary that Wazir Akbar Khan does.
A closer look at Wazir Akbar Khan can show how planned and protected the neighborhood is as shown in Image 6.5 and 6.6.

What may save Shahri Now from gentrification may be that its Park will still attract a similar group of people that currently utilize the space. However, the free movement throughout the neighborhood will be severely restricted and limited, making it convenient for cars, and less so for pedestrians outside of the surrounding neighborhoods. The proposed implementation of the Third Master Plan with its road improvements and ease in accessibility through these frequented sections of Kabul, combined with the Municipalities intentions of formalization and upgrading the various areas around Shahri Now threatens, marginalizes, and gentrifies whole communities of the surrounding neighborhoods that actively use Shahri Now as a place of leisure, and for better or worse, exposure to the “modern” and Western world. Out of sight, out of mind.
6.2 MANDAWI

Mandawi is nestled in the middle of the city and as said by one interviewee:

"I love going to Kabul, and I want to feel like I am in Kabul, so I go to Mandawi, that is where the life of the city is."

Simply put, Mandawi represents Kabul and Afghanistan at its bare bones. Its chaos, its agglomeration of ethnicities, its pushcart vendors, children running around between adults chasing each other, a slew of colors and spices. If Kabul is ever romanticized as the exotic other, Mandawi is what you would picture.

This was a similar point of view echoed by many of the interviewees. Mandawi does not offer people a place to live, rather it is a marketplace where residents of the city gather to do their shopping and socialize with each other. It is a wholesale market, and business and vendors can be found there at any point throughout the day. The streets are narrow and networked with each other, and have miraculously escaped severe destruction and bombing during the Soviet, Mujahiddin, Taliban, and American conflicts.

"I used to go to Mandawi, it was the place to go and the place to see. Even if people did not need anything, it was always busy. Most of the wholesalers used to go there and shop there, fashion, everything."
Mandawi is nestled in a nook of the Kabul River in the center of the city and surrounded by the heavy traffic along Maiwand Road. The marketplace is its main attraction. Mandawi is not considered modern, not a single respondent mentioned it in his or her response, but it is accessible for everyone and is Afghanistan. The Masjid-e Poli Khishti is on the outskirts of Mandawi attracting a family crowd, and especially busy during Friday afternoon prayers. Mandawi is also home to Lycee Aisha Durrani, a high school for girls, allowing the female presence to be noticed and felt in the city in a manner that is not in all neighborhoods.

I am always doing something. Girls habits do not go and hang out for nothing. We go to Mandawi a lot, for buying stuff.

Though there is a park adjacent to the high school, Park-e-Timur Shah, it is a part of the Tomb of Timur Shah making it not as frequented as the Shahri Now Park. Mandawi also exemplifies the type of urban development that have been identified as explicitly Afghan where three types of retail spaces exist in Mandawi. One type was a standard shop, a dukan, another were the pushcart vendors, dukan-e karachi, and one of most explicit types of retail were the dukan-e amwari, cabinet shops (Calogero, 2011). These dukans are present all throughout Mandawi and exist just outside of the need for building code enforcement and thus do not need regulation.

There are people that are going to business in Mandawi...these are actually the areas for the trades people, shopkeepers, there are people that are pulling those carts. People actually prefer buying their stuff in Mandawi because if you’re doing shopping once a week, it’s better to do it in Mandawi because it’s much cheaper. Mandawi is also a wholesale market, so there are people from other parts of the city that come buy their stuff once in awhile because it’s so traditional still.

Shor Bazar, the neighborhood next to Mandawi, is one of the poorest places in Kabul, and houses many of the older musicians of Kabul. Known as Kochi Kharabat, in English meaning Street of Destruction, the musicians sit in their homes with their instruments mourning and singing of the days in Afghanistan where they could sing. With the onslaught of the Taliban music was banned, and in recent years there has been an emergence of newer westernized musicians in efforts to appeal to people beyond just the boundaries of Kabul. Older musicians have become obsolete. Sadly they reside in this neighborhood, where you can sometimes here remnants of song when you pass by their homes.
Sari Chawk, Char Rahi meaning, intersection. This intersection exemplifies the traffic problems of Kabul.

Image 6.9 is an accurate depiction of what a typical day might look like in this intersection. This intersection is particularly interesting because it is the intersection through which the neighborhoods of Hindu Guzar, Shor Bazar, and Babay Khuda, some of the poorest areas of the city gain direct access to downtown, and access to both the marketplace and areas of Shahri Now. This intersection has become a cross-section of worlds and lives represented not only through the paths it leads you to throughout the city, but represented by the various means of transportation in the city, by foot, by car, by cart. All are represented in this intersection.

It is feared that with the heavy focus on transportation throughout the city, one of the main changes that might be proposed with the implementation of the Third Master Plan is a removal of the pushcart vendors from this intersection as their presence severely holds up traffic. Because the major pushes for the Third Master Plan have been by the wealthier residents in the city, and because these residents are the ones with access to transportation methods such as taxis and personal cars. There is an inconvenience of being stuck in traffic, in the midst of Mandawi, where things are not considered modern, beggars come up to your door, and you cannot avoid direct contact with parts of society that one would otherwise disregard. As one interviewee expressed:

*It is horrible, it is the business center of Kabul. All the trash and good things are there. Too crowded. Trash and good things. Small narrow streets.*
It is almost unclear what the interviewee describes as good or bad. Mandawi just is. This is Afghanistan. The good and the bad. The crossroads between all a citizen desires from a city, and all it wants to simultaneously reject. Mandawi displays Kabul’s ineptitude to provide a decent sanitation system for a neighborhood that drives so much of its commercial activity.

The greatest threat for this area is the relocation or ban on the pushcart vendors due to the traffic and fights they may cause. There has been a huge push to try and relocate the Mandawi area, though I do not believe this is in serious consideration for the city. Still though, severe restrictions and threats are constantly placed upon Mandawi threatening those whose livelihoods depend on this area.
6.3 MIKRORAYON 3

Mikrorayon is the perfect place for me. I still have all the necessities I need. Also, if I need something, I do not have to travel to Mandawi, I just go to the marketplace of Mikrorayon 3.

The Soviet involvement in Afghanistan both pre- and post-occupation resulted in a number of Mikrorayons built. They were one of the few places in Kabul that had infrastructure provision and small courtyards for community space and playing, communal efforts that were valued under the Soviet regime and very well received by Afghans. Initially all respondents indicated the Mikrorayons were one of the spaces that were most utilized by residents of the city. Four Mikrorayons were built in proximity to each other, but still in different locations. It was necessary to determine which of them emerged as the most frequented. Though they were similar in physical design, the four had very different characteristics that distinguished them from each other. Mikrorayon 3 emerged as the most utilized.

Mikrorayon 3 is different than the other Mikrorayons because of its marketplace strategically located on Sarak Maydan Awayee, the major and heavily renovated road that goes from the center of the city to Kabul International Airport. In addition to having a market, Mikrorayon 3 is more organized and developed than Mikrorayon 2 or 4. Though similar physically to Mikrorayon 1, it stands out precisely because of this market and its location to one of the city's most widely used street.

Mikrorayon 3 has attracted a diverse crowd for this very reason. Away
from the hustle and the intensity of the center of the city, it provides both a space for leisurely shopping and passing of time in the communal courtyard. It is neither striving for modernity today in the way Shahri Now exemplifies, and it is neither bogged down by the chaos of the downtown city. Even those who do not live in the Mikrorayons use Mikrorayon 3’s courtyard. If you know some who lives in one of the units, you are in.

People used to hang out in Mikrorayon 3, it has a market, a lot of people used to hang out there. Kabul doesn’t have any good spaces, khaq (dirt) used to go in your face. But people have to live there. It’s their country. Good or bad, it’s ours.

This interview resonated with me. The interviewee switched between using the third person and then the first person the entire interview. At first, he separated himself from Mikrorayon, from the city, from the country. Then he embraced the country, the city, Mikrorayon as his own. In many ways, this dichotomy represents the multitude of feelings and responsibilities Afghans feel in their relationship with Afghanistan. A striving for something beyond national boundaries, yet sustenance, pride, and an acceptance of even khaq in the face.

Mikrorayon 3’s popularity has especially been heightened by the development of the Sarak Maydan Aawayee during post American occupation. What was previously a dusty traffic-ridden road, is now paved with much less traffic.

Mikrorayon 3 is located to the east next to Qalai Zaman Khan, Simint Khana and some other impoverished informal neighborhoods. They seem to be almost looming over
the mikrorayons. The irony in Simint Khana is that it means "Cement House" because it used to be a Cement Factory until it was destroyed in the wars. Ironically, cement represents permanence and modernity because one who could afford it and could stake their claim in the land, was the one who was more likely to live there and build with cement. However, those who currently inhabit the now destroyed Simint Khana neighborhood, are the very ones who can't afford to purchase and utilize this material of permanence. Their homes are made of mud, as seemingly unstable as their livelihoods in the city.

With current plan implementations, it is not clear what will happen to Mikrorayon 3. Though the regions next to Mickorayon 3 are poor, they are still pretty formal, meaning that the city may not completely displace the residents to upgrade the neighborhood. However, directly across the Airport Road, the neighborhood of Bibi Mahru, is also located along the Airport Road. There is a stark contrast between this neighborhood of Bibi Mahru and its surrounding areas, almost as if it is out of place. Expats and visitors often visit Bib Mahru Hill because of the Mughal history attached to the area, and its proximity to Wazir Akbar Khan makes the neighborhood safer than it commonly would be in other areas. An abandoned pool, a symbol of abandoned promises is at the top of Bibi Mahru Hill where kids currently play.

With plan implementation, the strategic location of Bibi Mahru along Airport road, and adjacent to the wealthy neighborhood of Wazir Akbar Khan, the neighborhood is in serious danger of being revitalized. This will directly effect the neighborhoods of the Mikrorayons and specifically Mikrorayon 3. A great number of interviewees from informal spaces in Kabul located
near Mikrorayon 3 indicated that this was a place that they utilized as public space to both meet others, have picnics, and that it was either too expensive or time consuming to go downtown or to the marketplace. The process of development along Airport Road is going to marginalize and gentrify populations in this area, and though the Mikrorayons will not be completely affected because they still have infrastructure that most of the city does not, most surrounding areas along Airport Road will be. This has greater implications on the marketplace either threatening its actual existence as those with money can perhaps afford to shop in Shahri Now, or severely reduce foot traffic in the area as is supported by the physically expansive and wide Airport Road. As is already being seen by the development of Qazi Building slight development is already occurring in the area of Bibi Mahru and Mikrorayon, threatening the livelihood and permanence of those who live in this housing.

The stark contrast of the seemingly permanent buildings and the mud homes in the area is a looming threat to the neighborhoods that fear their future in the city of Kabul. With further development along Airport Road, Mikrorayon 3 will be severely threatened. As traffic is further accommodated along this street, there will be less people walking around because this particular section of the city is not as pedestrian friendly as others are. This will detract people from visiting the courtyard from the various parts of the city or coming for Mikrorayon 3's marketplace.
CHAPTER SEVEN
PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 INFORMALITY AND LAND RIGHTS

Given the complexity of all that is occurring in Kabul, there are a myriad of implications for planning both as a profession and as a field of study. One of these issues is the question of land tenure. In Kabul, the informal population comprises 80% of the population, posing the question of how informality is actually defined. And, as indicated, informality is not defined in the most typical sense. Informality in Kabul is not synonymous with poor or slums or settlement, even though this may be the case in many instances. Rather, informality in Kabul is defined as those settlements that do not have their property titles recorded in the City Title office, and Kabul has a number of these informal settlement patterns that with any other definition would be considered formal. In some confidential documents the definition of informality that emerged were “settlements which are built after 1978 without compliance to the Third Master Plan and Detail Plans” (Anyone, 2012). In initial interviews and conversations about the topic of informality, I struggled to define what it meant in the context of Kabul to the people I spoke to. I defined it as squatter settlements, and foolishly referenced squatter settlements in India, as many people from Afghanistan had visited India. My definition did not resonate, nor did it address any of the questions I had.
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Me: Is Simint Khana considered poor?

Interviewee: Yes it is poor. You are looking for poor and rich areas? The only place which is rich in Kabul that is Share Naw and Wazir Akbar Khan. The rest of Kabul is poor.

Me: But is it formal or informal? Do they own the property? Or did they just show up there? Like those places in India you referred to?

Interviewee: Most of the places people own the property inside Kabul. But then don’t pass the design by the municipality. They make it by themselves.

Me: But like Kohi Asmayi, it’s informal. They just go there, it’s not in their name in the city right?

Interviewee: Yeah, the mountain houses they are all informal.

Me: What about Simint Khana? And Qalai Zaman Khan?

Interviewee: They are poor to middle areas.

Me: And do the people who live there own it?

Interviewee: They do own it. It is not land or property like other parts of Kabul. These are places where the houses existed and people came and build it or renewed it again.

Me: I’m not sure I understand. So they’re formal? Not informal?

Interviewee: What do you mean by formal or informal?

These initial interviews were particularly challenging because the concept of informality was not fully understood as I initially partook in my research. Many people stake land and space on land that is either not owned or have absentee owners. However, these people are not always poor squatters, as they are in Kohi Asmayi.

As Calogero discovered in his research, some of the informal population

The image above is a settlement pattern identified by Calogero. The bottom of the image from the left to the right is Kabul University and the formal region of Jemal Mena. However, north of this area is an informal area that was laid out under the development control of an army general. In this case, the informal pattern follows and mimics the formal pattern, indicating that informality does not necessarily inhabit the qualities that are typically associated with it.
are very well connected individuals who have hired people for the construction of their homes on this land. Their political and familial ties with police officers protect them from being uprooted. This exceptionalism has allowed this population to supersede legality in a manner that is beneficial to those who might have control over these developments. Various individuals that have administrative and governmental power intentionally deny the legality of these developments while limiting legal development for the very purpose that they may extract various privileges, favors, I.O.U.s in the future.

Calogero recounts a story:

A commander had built his house so that it projected well out into an existing roadway, blocking half of it. AbdulRashid Janbaz, the Economic Planning Director of Kabul in 2002-2004 accompanied the police chief to the site, to notify the commander that he would have to demolish the projecting part of his house, or have it demolished by the city. The police chief suddenly recognized the commander as a fellow mujahid; they had fought alongside each other against the Soviets in the 1980s. The police chief was then unwilling to insist that the commander demolish the projecting part of his house... this was an act of exception for the sake of loyalty. (Calogero, 2011)

These acts of exceptionalism pose greater threats and consequences to returning refugees who do not have the social, familial, or political ties that allow them the conditional permanence to stake space on land. 5 million refugees have returned to their homes since 2002, and over 3 million are still in Iran and Pakistan and may still return from these places. Though these acts of exceptionalism are occurring throughout the city, the majority of the informal residents in Kabul are renters. They pay rent to farmers whose land it once was, and this land is customarily recognized, and subject to the pricing of the housing market, which is at the moment almost comparable to the price of housing in San Francisco.

Their rights are being constantly negotiated, and they do not have the ties that might allow them to remain and keep their homes.

On the other hand are the land-tenure rights granted to those who have been forced to flee Afghanistan. While visions of the Taliban have normally been attributed to destruction of the city, and rightfully so, when they secured Kabul in 1996, they asked for the expatriate Afghans to come back to the country and claim their property and spend money, as a means of economically revitalizing the city. The irony lies in that they protected property rights and relations in a way that made it susceptible to market forces in order to generate an adequate and sustainable recovery. At this point, however, many expatriate Afghans have claimed their homes, particularly well-to-do ones in Wazir Akbar Khan and rent them out at exorbitant prices fit for a city like San Francisco. (Calogero, 2011)

This brings to mind questions of rights of access to the city; what
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does it mean for planning when the people who formally own land in a
city, a minority of the population, are not physically there? What does it
mean for the city that the majority of the population who is physically
in Kabul is considered informal and exists in a state of limbo with their
habitation constantly negotiated and renegotiated? Are efforts to
implement the Third Master Plan, or any subsequent plans stalled in order
to capitalize on the favors presented by the urban elite to those with
administrative power to formally decide how space is allocated? Do
formal public spaces like the ones discussed in the previous chapter
favor informality, regardless of the favoritism that occurs throughout
the city, because it does not threaten their existence? Finally, how does
one plan for an integration of these spaces in the face of exceptionalist
informality, fragmented governance, and a number of nonexistent formal
landowners?
7.2 LACK OF DATA AND INFORMATION

Another issue that affects methods of planning in the city, among many other things, is the lack of salient data made publicly available. This brings to light obvious question of accessibility and rights to information. However, further consequences are reverberated such as how planning occurs in the absence of maps. Planning indicates intentionality, regardless of formality and informality such as in the context of Kabul. The fact that this planning is still occurring without data or maps, makes one question who is actually being planned for. If informal residents are not properly accounted for by the City, or any agency, how can policies be made that accurately project for this segment of the population? This is not to advocate for the transformation of people into numbers, rather a better understanding of the variations in the population.

This is also not to say that no progress is being made on this issue. There are a variety of studies being conducted and demographic information collected, but its accessibility is murky; one can only obtain such highly classified documents if working with either a multilateral agency with such a clearance to obtain this data or within the segment of government that may provide one with this information, or simply this information may be provided to you if you know somebody with the access to it. This paper is not meant to undermine sufficient research done by agencies such as the World Bank, UN-Habitat, or even Afghan domestic agencies. Rather, it is drawing attention to the lack of salient neighborhood level data encompassing all relevant informal and formal information by an agency without intentions of altering the shape of the city in favor of a more Western city, catered to the transient elite population moving into and out of the city as their perceptions of safety continuously evolve. It is advised that this transfer of knowledge be made available through the public disposal of this information so that interested parties, NGOs, even international observers can be made aware of who the Afghan people are. The Afghan people, not just the woman in the blue burka, or the Talib, or Karzai's brother who owns the Afghan restaurant down in Kendall Square, or the child flying the kite, or the young bride. But the man who lives in Andarabi and has a dokan in Mandawi, or the student at Kabul Polytechnic University who believes planning to mean designing orthogonal streets, or the girl who utilizes graffiti as a means of expression throughout the city, or just simply, the Afghan person. It is when conceptions of the Other are set aside that we can begin seeing people as humans, and we can begin seeing people as humans once we begin to know them. And we know them, when we have information about them. Raw information that has not been transferred through the filters of the various intentions that shroud the city.

In my initial request with a responding of 200 people, for those who wrote to me through email,
I received an attachment of the map from Afghanistan Information Management Services of Kabul along with many of the responses. It indicated to me that there is a desire to know; that this map is one of the very few publicly available and accessible map (even though it was produced in 2005), and the fact that so many Afghans knew of its existence, knew where to find it, and that it was relevant to my research indicated that what information does exist does not go overlooked, but is sought out and circulated among the community. Though I had come across the map two years prior, I thanked each individual for this information and found it incredibly endearing. It was fascinating the amount of knowledge people had of what was made available; to make it seem that Afghans are unwilling participants of their own city is a gross undermining of the reality of the situation. The Afghan community I interacted with were willing participants of their own fate. The fact that Afghanistan has been political unstable for so many years can be testament to the fact that the Afghan population will not withstand oppression, colonialism, and mistreatment in general. Many of them were very well aware of situations around the city and how neighborhoods were formed:

*In Khair Khana, these people brought their own architects, made their own places, they made their own city because they needed to. Mini cities. Warlords, commanders bought the land from people and government, and the city, the shar wali, is saying we didn’t approve it. Another interviewee said regarding the lack of data:*

Regarding the lack of data/mapping: I emailed you that map last time and it was the first one like that which I’ve ever seen, ever. Not having access to basic mapping and demographic information prevents the emergence of localized business. There’s really no way for commerce to take shape if the necessary data/information isn’t available for entrepreneurs to access. Lastly, I think true demographic information in Kabul’s current state is difficult to amass because there was and is such an influx of people from the rural provinces that until things start to stabilize and folks situate themselves the powers that be can’t/ won’t embark on any effort to truly take a census or account of who is where.

Another:

I would like the data to be available because it will help to make any decision for the city and surrounding area. Decision such as number and location of hospitals, schools, parking spaces and other organization and facilities. It is very crucial as much as other data are for any city or county.

There is an issue of the lack of salient data and planning in the absence of maps, and the concept of unmapping as indicated in earlier chapters; it is convenient not to have any accountability to a people you do not map. The lack of information
made public also means the lack of people holding you accountable for the stipulations a government, or any other entity, has said they would provide. Beyond accountability and planning implications, however, there is the issue of intentionally keeping a public in the dark about themselves, and seeing that public as not deserving of knowing.
7.3 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The three public spaces that emerged through my interviews had their own particular characteristics. Upon further research of these spaces and information that was made available by the Third Master Plan and subsequent revisions of it, combined with predictions of future development based upon a trajectory that Kabul is following at the moment, it was also made apparent that other spaces throughout the city were at a risk, as well. Informal housing and neighborhoods, not necessarily the ones who housed those with political connections, but those who housed refugees, squatters, and the poor of the city are at an obvious risk. Kabul is located on a fault line and the settlements in the hills are at a greater risk in situations of emergency. Potential future development would assumingly address the housing that would be most affected by natural disasters such as these earthquakes and the flooding of the Kabul River.

In situations where the Kabul Municipality considers instilling an Urban Growth Boundary, the outskirts of the city may be most affected. In addition, future urban development and the focus on roads have the potential of turning various parts of the city into ethnic enclaves. Though the center of the city is more ethnically diverse, the outskirts still maintain majorities of one ethnic population or another and without considerable attention paid to integrating these communities into the city, ethnic tensions may be reinforced. This is not to posit that conflict in Kabul is an ethnic conflict, as many problems are attributed to, but that as the goals for any city are, the promotion of exposure to various backgrounds are of great importance. This is why this issue of public space in these regions are of commanding interest; people from the various sections of the city, from different ethnicities, come together in these spaces and interact in a way that they may not in their given neighborhoods. Simply said, roads do not necessarily mean integration, they also form physical boundaries.
7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT

As indicated earlier, the First Master Plan was prepared and written in 1964 by what are referred to as Afghan “experts with the support of advisors from the USSR.” The Second Master Plan in 1970 was made with heavier influence and assistance by the USSR and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Finally, the Third Master Plan was made in 1976 with further involvement and influence by the Soviets. A major component that is missing is public participation in the formulation of any of these plans, in addition to current ideas for plans that are being circulated. Not only is the withholding of information from the public a major problem, but so is the complete lack of their involvement in the process of gathering this information and making decisions and planning policies based upon them. This lack of involvement can imply that Afghanistan is not a communal culture and that community engagement is not a desired attribute. This could not be further from the truth. Experiences recounted by various interviewees in addition to personal experience and narratives derived from family, relatives, and friends, have always and traditionally referred to the various communal activities and decisions that have been made. Communal culture is definitely a tradition and a persistent part of rural Afghan culture today, and decisions are made with elders and with the input of the entire community. Though the tradition specific to the rural culture of Afghanistan carries some of its own challenges, it still displays the major role it plays in not only development, but also any of the various decisions that are made. The disregard for community involvement historically and currently in the development of the city parallels the withholding of information from them, and shows how the planner embodies visions of the technocrat, instilling policies and imparting information on the “ignorant” population. Visions of the subaltern are not only propagated in the West upon Afghans, but within the Afghan hierarchal system as well.

Those who are informally involved in any sort of plan for the future of Kabul are commonly the urban elite. The taxi drivers because circulation is of great importance to the plan implementers and the wealthy who can afford to take these taxis to get around the city. Other groups that are involved are Afghans who have been educated in the West and come back to influence policy and planning decisions (I can include myself in this population, unfortunately. It is a dialogue I am privileged to have in a manner that is not available to the very people that these policies affect) Even help from Western agencies itself is actively sought and desired as it indicates conditions of modernity, and of knowing better. Further engagement of the public must be actively sought for the stability and sustenance of any future plans of development. Their knowledge must not be undermined.
7.5 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this research it has been made increasingly clear that though there are various places throughout the city that have not been physically planned for public space, residents of the city are more inclined to be involved in spaces and areas that bring people of various income groups together from a diverse ethnic background. Though it is true that people do spend time in their own homes and their own backyards, there are various spaces throughout the city that draw a greater crowd in while supporting and maintaining the livelihoods of the individuals that take part in that aspect of the city. The Third Master Plan, what little is known about it, does not necessarily accommodate the three major spaces that I have identified as a popular and of paramount importance for public space gathering. Therefore, the following are recommendations that might be taken into consideration in order to accommodate these spaces and the people who utilize them. Acknowledging that these may be limited in scope as the major issue in Kabul transcends beyond just streetscape improvements, there is a role for design interventions that may mitigate some of the immediate effects of development in Kabul.

Shahri Now
Shahri Now is what most people in Kabul consider modernity. As interviews indicated, along with mere physical visualization of its buildings,
upkeep and general infrastructure, it is the most modern section of the city. The fear is that the city is going to begin formalizing surrounding neighborhoods, particularly Kohi Asmayi in addition to areas just south of Shahri Now.

If a street or overpass was built from this area directly towards the areas of Shari Now, greater accessibility might be provided for those in this region, allowing a greater flow into the neighborhood instead of having it completely exclusive.

As it currently stands, Salaang Road is a major divisive barrier between the southern part and Shahri Now. The buildings along that road are not human scale, providing an actual physical barrier as well. An integration of some road from the Qoli Abachakn region and Shahri Now might provide better flow, however a car road is not suggested. Those who live in this poorer region of Kabul do not necessarily own vehicles, nor are the mountains and hills in a state that a car can drive upon. Therefore, a pedestrian walkway is recommended.

In addition, storefront improvement to the spaces along Salaang Road so that it is welcoming and not exclusive may help retain some of the various residents of the street. Building another passageway in this region may ease traffic backed up in Mandawi, and allow greater flow throughout Shahri Now. This may also prevent a backup of traffic for visitors who wish to see the infamous Chicken Street. See Image 7.2 for a picture of Chicken Street.

However, I do not suggest nor recommend a complete halt to “modernity” in this section of Kabul. It is perhaps the only section of Kabul where residents come across what is typically associated with the West. The Municipal government’s ability and desire to emulate the West in this manner in the face of concerned planners who attempt to come in and stop them in the name of “good planning,” shows the government’s sovereignty over their own land. It is my own selfish identity of being Afghan that wants to preserve everything that I consider Afghan, however, if this space has emerged as the most populated, there is something about this connection to an outside world that has perhaps allowed Afghans to persist in their daily lives.

Formalization of property is also a major issue and the greatest threat to Shahri Now being used as a public space of gathering for those in the city. As indicated earlier in this chapter, informality and land rights are particularly shaky when it comes to poorer and refugee populations who fit these typical definitions of informality. While some informal settlements may not be particularly threatened in the immediate future because of their social, political, and financial ties to the elite who influence who can or cannot stay on the land, those without these connections are in danger. There may be plans to formalize these neighborhoods, or move residents out of Kohi Asmayi because of the seismic danger this region presents to their homes. At the same time, these particular areas are in danger because of their proximity to the city center and the lucrative development
opportunities that may eventually present themselves, which may be the point at which the city stalls any discussion of land rights, tenure, and space within the city. Plans of preserving and upgrading the cemetery at Qoli Abchakan is an additional concern; graveyards are contributing to conflict in various communities as there is a shortage of land made available for these spaces throughout the entire city. Informal areas around this cemetery may be cleared out in accordance to a grid or a formal plan in order to make more land available for the cemetery. It is not just lucrative development that threatens the surrounding areas of Shahri Now, but also land use allocations aside from public space and residential space. In considering demands of the cities and maintaining a holistic vision of requirements of municipalities, it is apparent that Kabulis demand just as much from their own cities than any other citizenry demands of their own.

Mandawi
The major obstacle in Mandawi is the traffic. Given the excessive amount of traffic, the municipality may push car hierarchy in this area to allow for better access to the city center. In doing so, pushcart vendors, a major component of retail in this area may become banned all together around this area. A car hierarchy will affect not only the pushcart vendors in this region, but may potentially affect pedestrian traffic, which is a major bearer of business for the marketplaces of Mandawi.

In considering potential solutions, Calogero suggests the following:

A number of wealthy Afghans were complaining that the pushcart vendors should be banned altogether, blaming them for the severe traffic congestion in the center of the city. I argued that one of the advantages of this regulation was to clarify where pushcart-vendors had a protected right to operate, rather than suffer sporadic police harassment and the need to pay bribes. (Calogero, 2011)

To have designated sections for these pushcart vendors would help ease traffic in the city in addition to protecting the livelihood of those running these carts. Having various channels and thoroughways for pedestrians in these areas, with further availability for shops in these regions, may ease traffics in the streets. Of greater consideration may be to construct a separate pedestrian bridge adjacent to where the current bridge is connected to the city center. This attention to a means of connecting Mandawi to the city center for pedestrians can encourage more leisurely activity around the Kabul River. The Kabul River did emerge as one of the more frequented spaces in Kabul. It is a river that runs throughout the city, but primarily utilized by males. To incorporate some level of activity around the River that both men and women can use, may bring greater utility to the women of the city, particularly given the location of Lycee Aisha Durrani to Mandawi and the River.

Another consideration that may be given to easing some of the traffic spaces so that Mandawi can
preserve the unique character that makes it popular to so many Afghans today, would be bicycle accessibility. Encouraging biking around this region would not only reduce traffic and pollution, but also aid health problems and a better quality of living in many ways. Bicycles and sustainability has typically been a middle-class conversation; those who are typically left on the fringes of society should not bear the burdens of the lifestyle of those with the most amount of consumption. This fact contributed to my hesitation in proposing bikes throughout the city as a better method of transportation for those who could access it. A planning implication and ultimate recommendation may be to encourage people to get around on bikes instead of just by foot or car. Those who elect to navigate through the city by car may continue to do so, but perhaps those who are currently navigating by foot may find it more convenient and easier to go through the city by bicycle. In this way, road improvements may help this segment of the population as well, instead of isolating pedestrians completely. Given the current social climate in Afghanistan today, I found that riding bicycles is a method of transportation primarily utilized by men. However, prior to the Taliban and Mujahideen era, several interviewees recounted the time when women rode their bikes in the city, though acknowledging not as often as men. They seldom rode bikes. Only in areas like Sharay Naw, Kartay char, mecrowrayan in our time. Now probably not at all.

I hesitate to encourage this as a major means of reducing traffic. All too often policies are formulated and implemented for the good of the society, and many times minorities or women are made to bear the burden of this contribution. This policy recommendation has the potential to exclude women who do not typically ride bikes whether due to comfort, clothing, or a myriad of other reasons. I acknowledge that as a whole, promoting bicycle accessibility may help ease some of the bad traffic situations and problems that may arise from development in the area.

The direction of future development in Kabul should encourage bicycle accessibility, however there are societal instabilities that discourage me from the outright promotion of this. Policy implementation in spaces like Kabul are often a patriarchal dialogue, and though I am attune to the cultural sensitivities in these cities, I hesitate to perpetuate this dialogue to solve a traffic and design problem. However, when women begin riding bicycles through the city when they have achieved their level of comfort in doing so, I wholeheartedly suggest and encourage greater bicycle accessibility in the city. Accommodating appropriately for gender dynamics in cities that may be sensitive to them also have major planning implications and can potentially be especially complex as an outsider attempting to influence city interventions and suggestions.

Mikrorayon 3

The Mikrorayons are strategically located on Airport Road. This strategic location not only means that there is a potential to gentrify the area, but also decrease foot
traffic as it becomes less pedestrian friendly and caters more to cars, making Mikrorayon 3 less successful as a marketplace and a space for public gathering. Of greater concern is Bibi Mahru Hill, which is already an attraction for expatriates and visitors from all around the country. If Bibi Mahru Hill incorporates a museum or site, as it already is an ancient neighborhood, foot traffic will be maintained even if land around the Mikrorayons becomes formalized. A bigger sidewalk on both ends of Airport Road would make the region pedestrian friendly. In addition, providing a means of crossing the expansive road by foot or bicycle so that easily people can get to and from the various neighborhoods on either side of the street, may help mitigate any potential damage from development. Traffic has eased a great deal in this region. If Mikrorayon 3 maintains its position as a shopping area and public space that is less chaotic than Mandawi, then further steps can in fact be taken to redirect severe traffic or chaos away from Mandawi. If Mikrorayon 3 becomes abandoned all together, then Mandawi will increase in traffic as families direct their shopping and leisure activities towards this section, amplifying current traffic problems.

Given these recommendations, I am not saying that the Planning Office is incompetent and that they are not considering the various factors when implementing the plan. What I am saying is that formalization and modernization is not necessarily the way to go when 80% of your entire city is considered informal. Are we solely planning and accommodating for the remaining 20%, most of which do not permanently reside in Kabul? I suggest that the plan be made available and public, so that suggestions from various agencies and individuals can be made who have the interest of the Afghan people at heart.
CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION

Through the various interviews and mapping exercises, three spaces emerged as the most frequented in all of Kabul, Shahri Now, Mandawi, and Mikrorayon. Though these spaces are very distinct in character and composition, they all have their livelihood threatened by components of the Third Master Plan in addition to proposed future development of Kabul. The preservation of these spaces is vital as the Afghan citizens who utilize these spaces are varied with regards to income and ethnicity among many other variables. These spaces provide a means of exposure and interaction amongst residents that may not necessarily be nurtured in neighborhood dynamics.

Though plans for development will not be completely abandoned as it represents security and modernity, there are a variety of strategies that can be implemented that may preserve these spaces or mitigate the effects of development. These include physical interventions as well as addressing broader planning implications that these spaces demand. While physical interventions do emerge from Western dialogues of city design and development, taking into consideration broader planning issues specific to the space of Kabul may contribute to the cultural sensitivity demanded in the planning for, or study of, these spaces in Kabul.
Throughout the course of Afghan history, it is apparent that Afghans have had a long struggle for what it means to be modern. This was evidenced in King Amanullah's efforts of designing Kabul in a beaux-arts manner and maintaining a European dresscode in the public spaces of Kabul during the 1920s. Kabul Jadid, his 1923 plan for Afghanistan was evidence of the physical manner in which he attempted to maintain order through spatial transformations of the city.

The regimes of power following Amanullah from Nader Shah to the rise and demise of the Soviet empire in Afghanistan witnessed subsequent attempts at modernization. However, what is most important to consider is that the struggle for and attempt at modernization is not, and has not been the sole narrative of the city. There are myriad of struggles against systemic pressures present in Kabul. While the West defines its modernity in the subaltern nature of the Other, they are working to instill Western logistics and a method of living into a system and country that is rejecting it. While many Afghans and Westerns may seem to embrace the Western logistics as a means of ruling Afghanistan, they are confronted with an underlying system in Afghanistan that does not align with these attempts. Taking the example of land-tenure and formalization in the face of family ties, loyalties, and political connections, attempts at formalization and order are rejected when the Officer refuses to remove the man whose home is violating city codes based upon loyalties. Is Afghanistan reinforcing its anti-modernity at each attempt...
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at instilling systems of modernity, formality, and order?

Can planning influence these socially embedded ties and institutions in a manner that is incorporating the voice of communities, the informal populations that constitute the majority of Kabul? The exportation of ideas and practices as though it is a commodity is repeatedly failing in other countries as evidenced by the lack of political stability in the American instilled government in Kabul and land tenure issues throughout the city.

In turn, the West propagates this dialogue towards modernity and struggle. Ironically, Afghans “inter-reference” modernity in Asia and the Middle East and the not the West as these spaces are visually and physically accessible to them. This is an interesting turn of events and threatens Western superiority. In contrast, Afghans see the West as being subaltern to cities like Dubai and East Asia.

Finally, there is an immediate need to change the rhetoric surrounding “subaltern” spaces in the implicit dialogue of planning. These spaces, and the residents who inhabit these spaces, are active and willing participants of their own city.
STAKING SPACE PLANNING, PUBLIC SPACE, AND VISIONS OF THE SUBALTERN


Additional Photo Credits


Map of Afghanistan (Vidiani)
Appendices

KABUL CITY MAP

LEGEND

BOUNDARY
- District
- Contours
- 50 Meter Lines
ROADS
- Highway
- Limited Boulevard
- Primary
- Secondary
- Bridge
DRAINAGE
- Lake
- River
URBAN LAND USE
- Built up Area
- Park
- Cemetery
PLACE OF INTEREST
- Airport
- Bank
- Historical Site
- Historical Wall
- Hospital
- Hotel
- Mosque
- Palace
- Police Station
- Post Office
- Restaurant
- School
- Stadium
- University/College
ANNOTATION
- District Number
- Mountain Name
- Place Name
- Square Name

SOURCES:
1. IKONOS Satellite Imagery, One Meter Resolution (2000 - 2002)
3. Municipality District Boundaries, Years 2008 from GOP, Year Titled Kabul Municipalties and Police Districts, Date 12 January 2009

Map Projection: Geographic
Geodetic Datum: PSCS 198

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