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The University of Osaka

Doctoral Dissertation

**A Study on Characteristics of Informal Settlements  
and Effects of Upgrading from Aspects of Houses, Land  
Acquisition, and Social Factors in Kabul City,  
Afghanistan**

アフガニスタン、カブール市における住宅、  
土地取得、社会的要因からみた非正規市街地の  
特徴と改良事業の効果に関する研究

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December 2016

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## **Abstract of Dissertation**

Kabul as one of those fast-growing cities has witnessed rapid urbanization with the many inevitable challenges including, the manifestation of informal settlements. Rapid migration and vast urban expansion have contributed to large informal settlements in Kabul city. Post-war refugees, the return of internally displaced residents to the city, and rural migration are some causal factors. This, in addition to limited planning capacity of the government to meet the high demand for building plots has led to growth of the informal settlements. The attempt to address the growing presence of informal settlements in the city has led to the strategy of informal settlement upgrading employed by local government together with international organizations.

However, the continues growth of informal settlements require the need for empirical research evidence on characteristics, conditions, process of the growth and an evaluation of existing strategies for any sustainable improvements to occur. In view of this, this study attempts to fill gaps in existing research by analyzing characteristics and conditions in informal settlements and then assesses the role of the informal settlement upgrading program in Kabul. This is essential in providing important hints for the future improvement of the many informal settlements in the city.

To achieve this research objective, a case study research methodology was employed, the methods includes: literature review, physical measurement, observation, interview with the residents and governmental urban institutions.

With respond to the first objective of understanding the characteristics and conditions in informal settlement in Kabul, the study provided significant results based on the four case study areas. Findings from the study revealed that informal settlements are mainly characterized by informal land tenure, inadequate access to basic urban services, substandard housing, and structures. Moreover most of the residents in the surveyed areas were owner-occupiers rather than tenants as the land had been bought from local landholders or powerful individuals who had grabbed the undeveloped land and sold it at a very low price. Contrary to popular perception, residents comprised not only poor but also middle and higher income earners in the city.

Furthermore, evidence from this study revealed that informal settlement upgrading has had considerable effects on housing improvement, accessibility and local economic conditions. On housing improvement, survey results indicated that the upgrading program in Kabul is limited to improving infrastructure in the neighborhood, however, it has encouraged individual house improvements.

Within the purview of the above, the state proposed a set of recommendations for the future improvement of informal settlement conditions of Kabul. This includes the need for collective community organizing and community based improvement practices. This proposal is suggested within the current social structure in many informal communities, where local can organize the people and lead out in identifying common activities for improving their settlements or neighborhood within them. In addition, the study also suggests land readjustment experimentation in the area and the subsequent need for conversion of existing structures to the public spaces like park and playground.

In conclusion, this study has been relevant in revealing important informal settlement practices, characteristics, conditions and the effects of upgrading in Kabul. This is necessary as a crucial step into identifying innovative ideas for the future development of Kabul city. Connected to this is also the need for further research to provide additional insights and heats for the sustainable urban development of Kabul. Therefore, the study proposes the need for further research into the exploring the potential of community –based improvement practices based on the existing social and religion systems in the neighborhoods.

Also, the need to understand the socio-spatial structure of informal settlements in Kabul is proposed as an area for further research to provide important information of the interrelations between space, behavior and land use for spatial development of informal settlements.

Keyword: Informal settlements, housing quality, housing typology, Plot acquisition, urban upgrading, houses improvement, Kabul city

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Urbanization is a global phenomenon which is acknowledged by many countries throughout the world. However, it can be seen as a major issue in developing countries where the rate of urbanization is also much higher than the developed countries. Afghanistan is also a rapidly urbanizing country where the rate of the growth of its population faster than its planning and economic capacity.

In particular, Kabul city is one of the fast growing cities in the region that has witnessed a major population growth in the last decades, with many challenges including informal settlements, which have become an inevitable manifestation.

Kabul's population is currently estimated more than 6 million people. According to the World Bank report (2005), the population has grown by about 15% per year, between 1999 and 2004. Most of this growth resulted from immigration, initially from rural areas or internally displaced persons (IDPs), seeking better public services such as education, health, employment opportunities and security in urban areas, and this growth accelerated further since 2001 after the fall of Taliban regime by the return of Afghan refugees, those who emigrated to neighboring countries like Pakistan and Iran during the war and conflict in Afghanistan. An estimated 2 million people in 2001 to around 3.5 million in 2005 and around 6 million population 2014 (Beall and Esser 2005, the guardian 2014).

A rapid increase in the urban population of Kabul and its related consequences have been difficult to handle and manage, and also, the limited capacity of the government to meet the high demand for building plots has led to the growth of informal settlements which is how most residents have provided

themselves with shelter. Now a great majority of the urban population lives in informal settlements, According to World Bank report (2005) informal settlements represent about 69% of all residential areas in Kabul and provide shelter to about 80% of its inhabitants.

Kabul city had the master plan and detail plans for the planned population of 2 million which was the last master plan of Kabul city developed and prepared in 1976 and approved in 1978 (JICA.2011). However, because of social and political problems, the limited economic capacity of government and civil wars the master plan has not been implemented completely and by 2002 only about 20 percent of the master plan had been implemented (Habib 2001 and Viaro 2004). Those areas which were reserved for environmental conservation, safety, recreation and undeveloped areas have been grabbed by the people and the land grabber and have sold it to low-income migrants and people around the neighborhood and transformed to informal housings. These areas usually suffer from lack or access to infrastructure as, sewerage system and solid waste disposal service as well as inadequate access to public services like park and playground and most importantly land tenure.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Informal settlement development is one of the major causes of the urban expansion. The last three decades have also witnessed a remarkable increase in the number, size, and growth of these settlements in Kabul. Today, informal settlements represent about 69% of all residential areas in Kabul.

Even though the majority of residents in Kabul live in informal settlements, government planning response has been quite weak. The current government land policy even seeks to upgrade informal settlements in collaboration with relevant communities based standards certified by Ministry of urban development and municipalities. The government's main planning strategy has been upgrading in the form of provision of facilities and improving elements of physical infrastructure, such as paving the streets and footpaths, improving drains and sanitation and providing electricity and water. However, priority is given to land not belonging to the state or other public entity, without litigation or legal obstacles and well located in the city. Yet, the problem of informal settlements continue to rise in conditions are getting worse by day.

In order to advance efforts towards the improvement of conditions in informal settlements, there is the need for a research based understanding of characteristics and conditions, as well as the effect of existing approaches towards their improvement. This research, therefore, is to examine the characteristics and conditions of informal settlements in Kabul firstly and, furthermore, to provide an insight into the implementation and effects of national upgrading program in Kabul city.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study.**

This research basically has two main objectives. First is to analyze the comprehensive characteristics and conditions of informal settlements in Kabul city. It specifically includes characteristics and conditions of houses, cause for its appearance, housing typology, income of residents and perception, and the process of land acquisition within four selected areas in Kabul.

Second to understand effect of upgrading program in Kabul city's informal settlement by exploring how upgrading of informal areas effect on house improving, local economy and accessibility. Moreover, to explore satisfaction of resident's in the settlement after upgrading and identity lesson for their improving.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study.**

The overall purpose of this study is to give a general understanding of the informal settlements, their growth in Kabul city and to understand the effect of upgrading program and residents' satisfaction with it. Some of the questions that will be answered are follow.

What are the comprehensive characteristics and conditions of informal settlements?

What are the influential factors that cause people to emigrate to informal settlements?

What are effect of the government upgrading program in informal settlements?

How the residents are satisfied with upgrading programs in informal settlements?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

So far many research has been conducted about Kabul's urban development and its informal settlements but still there missing link in the land acquisition, resident characteristics and house conditions informal settlements. This missing gap is consequently the key focus of this paper. Through a selection of four case study areas, the main concern is to compare upgraded and non-upgraded informal areas, flat and mountain slope areas, in terms of physical conditions, resident's characteristics and land tenure to obtain a comprehensive understanding on informal settlements in Kabul City

This is a significant study as a proper understanding of the phenomenon of informal settlements for the future urban planning and development of Kabul city, as dealing with the emerging challenges of informal settlements is critical to the welfare of its residents, the productiveness of the city, efficiency in the delivery of urban services and overall living experience of residents.

Moreover, understanding the effects of upgrading programs in postwar urban settlements will contribute to the rich diversity of ongoing scholarly work on the subject. This study also provides an insight into the implementation and effects of the national upgrading program in Kabul city enables us to understand the dynamics of upgrading programs in volatile urban communities with urbanization and limited local government capacity. It will also enhance existing knowledge on improving informal settlement conditions in areas scarcely considered in urban studies, like Kabul with vulnerable security situations and undergoing postwar urbanization.

In view of the government's new policy on expanding informal settlement upgrading to most cities in Afghanistan, it is important to understand the current state of upgraded areas to provide lessons for new programs.

## 1.6 Previous Studies

Several researches have been conducted regarding Kabul city, its informal settlements and upgrading program. For instances;

Bertaud (2005), conducted a study regarding Kabul urban development: current city structure, spatial issues, and recommendation for urban planning of Kabul city. This study attempts to provide the government of Afghanistan with policy advice on land management and land development in Kabul. The study revealed that Kabul current urban spatial structure, dominated by informal settlements, is the result of exceptionally rapid demographic growth and Kabul main problem is not housing but infrastructure and access to legally subdivided land. Therefore, the study recommended, that government should guarantee property right in formal and informal settlements, develop a legal framework and finally invest in infrastructure and social services. This study is significant in providing a general information about Kabul's urban development and recommendation for its improvement.

Nabizada and Kita (2012), did a research on the process and mechanism of transformation in settlements in Kabul city and the relationship between the typology of spatial structure and resident's demands. Their research focused on the transformation process of the settlements in relation to their typology and behavioral aspects (focusing on the resident's satisfaction with their quality of life and residents activities). They indicate types of transformations taking place in the houses and emphasized that majority of the increasing population is accommodated by the transformed houses. Their study selected four areas in Kabul city to compare the spatial formation and behavior among historical, informal, modernized and planned areas. However, only one of the study areas was an informal settlement. In addition, they did not focus on informal settlements directly but rather engaged it as a comparative case. Their study is, therefore, useful in understanding the housing transformation process in Kabul, though a clear understanding of informal settlement characteristics, conditions and land tenure is missing

JICA (2011) conducted a study on the promotion of Kabul metropolitan area development. This study attempts to provide an overview and conditions of all 22

districts, classify the residential areas and finally to propose a strategy for the urban development of Kabul city. The study emphasizes, informal settlements have been developed in different conditions and during different periods of time and rapid population increase reinforces the expansion of unplanned residential area in several districts. This study is significant in providing a comprehensive understand of each district's status and types of residential areas in Kabul city. However, it does not specifically focus on characteristics and conditions of informal settlements and also the residents living there.

Another study was done by the Humanitarian Policy Group (2012) focused on urban displacement and vulnerability in Kabul city which is one of the causes of the growth of the informal settlements. They explored the phenomenon of displacement in the urban environment and the implications and challenges in Kabul city. The finding of this research indicates that the vast majority of Kabul's urban poor have been displaced at one time during their lifetime and the causes of their displacement were effects of political conflict in the country.

Beyond Kabul, other international research explored land tenure and improvement practices in informal settlements in Venezuela and Puerto Rico Caldeiron, (2012) and complexities of informal settlements in other developing countries such as South Africa (Smit, 2006) Caldeiron, for example, uses survey method to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze land tenure roles in self-improvement in informal settlements. He stressed that actual land tenure security does not affect willingness to improve house conditions. Nonetheless, the process of land acquisition and the characteristics of those who have improved houses is however, missing to offer a comprehensive understanding. Smith, on the other hand, uses a field based survey to reveal the complex intersections of physical, social, economic and spatial issues at play in informal settlements. His focus is to argue for complexities and the need for an integrated approach.

It is noteworthy that all these previous studies have been useful in understanding the dynamics at play in informal settlements. Yet there appear to be a missing link in the land acquisition, resident characteristics and house conditions informal settlements. This missing gap is consequently the key focus of one of the objectives of this research. Through a selection of four case study areas, the main concern is to identify compare upgraded and non-upgraded

informal areas, flat and mountain slope areas, in terms of physical conditions, resident's characteristics and land tenure to obtain a comprehensive understanding on informal settlements in Kabul City.

Regarding upgrading, a vast repository of literature exists on informal settlement upgrading across the world, especially in the context of developing countries.

Khlaifa (2015), for example, has reviewed the evolution of settlement upgrading in terms of change and policy in Egypt. This study aims at investigating the change and evolution of informal upgrading strategies and policies with a focus on the Egyptian context. The study revealed that informal settlements upgrading policies show that government has moved away from eradication policies to provision, enabling and participatory policies. This shift was motivated that informal settlements were not a problem but a solution stimulated by the society when the formal housing markets cannot fulfill its demand. (Abbott, 2002) provides a review of different approaches to informal settlement upgrading. It begins by showing how linking informal settlement upgrading and sites and service provision as twin approaches to development led firstly to a situation where the former was situated within a particular development paradigm and then to an ideological divide between externally driven and community supported upgrading initiatives. He argues that the origin of the intervention is less important than a substantiation of the results of the intervention. It then identifies three "thematic approaches" that could be essential in upgrading which are physical infrastructure provision, community microplanning, and physical transformation through and holistic plan.

Another study on a review of physical and socio-economic characteristics and intervention approaches of informal settlements by Weru (2004). This study describes the physical and socio-economic characteristics and the factors attributed to the proliferation of the informal settlements and intervention approaches with the objectives of to establish how such settlements could be improved and hence the quality of life of the majority of the urban population. He argues physical and socio-economic conditions found in informal settlements are generally serious and hazardous to health due to urban poor and environmental pollution. Moreover, the proliferation of the informal settlements in most cities of

developing countries is as a result of market and public policy failure for a deal with the urban poor population.

Moreover, the effects of upgrading in terms of tenure security, community cohesion, and sanitation through community-based program exist for Pakistan, India, and Thailand (Burra, 2005 Boonyabancha, 2005, 2009). These studies specifically examine the institutional framework and financial mechanisms for informal settlement upgrading, including the use of transferable development rights and assesses their strengths and limitations.

In spite of these studies, which have provided critical information on best practices and effective mechanisms for settlement, there is a paucity of experiences in the case of Afghanistan. Upgrading in Afghanistan is more recent but the knowledge on its experiences and effects is limited. Turkstra and Popal (2010) provides useful information on the policy and implementation process in Afghanistan. They describe the process of community development which goes far beyond just participation in development processes but gives also the community access to budgets to implement projects. And also looks into the incremental process to increase the tenure security of the inhabitants of informal settlements and moreover, explore strategic municipal action planning and how the positive elements of informal settlements can be combined with the formal development of settlements to develop urban land at scale and affordable. They recommend that the central and local Governments have to face the fact that cities are to a large extent developing informally, build by the people themselves and to develop and apply an urban land policy and a settlement upgrading /regularization policy.

The UN-Habitat, as an urban think tank, has been instrumental in the informal settlement in Kabul, including upgrading. Beyond this, and few other reports from international agencies (e.g. JICA, 2011), there is still little known on informal settlement upgrading in Kabul, where about 69 percent of the city is informal housing.

## 1.7 Limitation of the Study

The research has some limitation that can be summarized as follow:

First, unwillingness of some residents to cooperate during the survey and interview due to the privacy of houses, security, and since informal settlements suffer from tenure insecurity, they feel threatened when someone asks them for some information about their houses. They think that the government will expropriate their land. Second, unwillingness of some residents to respond exact and in detail, during the interview with residents, most of them responded the questions with short answers quickly without thinking and giving more details. Third, lack of exact data in municipality and ministry of urban development regarding population of Kabul's districts and neighborhood and also detailed maps of Kabul city's districts

## 1.8 The Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters.

- Chapter 1: This chapter provides a brief background of the research as well as the objectives and specific research questions. The significance of the study was discussed in the implication of this research for the future development of Kabul city. Furthermore, some previous studies about informal settlements and upgrading discussed to support this research.
- Chapter 2: begins with a review of literature studies about informal settlements and upgrading which is highly affiliated with the aim of the research. It tries to clarify what an informal settlement is and examine the concept of informal settlements and upgrading. Furthermore, the chapter provides an overview of urban development in Kabul and discussed various issues such as, historical evolution of the city, city's master plans, the transformation of the city and urban challenges that the city is facing as a result of rapid population and civil wars. The discussion is based on analysis of historical records and previous researches.
- Chapter 3: Contains the methodology adopted in this research. It explains the different paths that were selected for carrying out the research and how the study was designed and conducted. Furthermore, this chapter introduces

all the five studies areas profile and specifications (*Tape-e Panjsad family, Taimani, Chihil Sotun, Shah Shahid* and *Afshar*) and criteria for selection of sites.

- Chapter 4: this chapter presents the data from the first four studied areas (*Tape-e Panjsad family, Taimani, Chihil Sotun* and *Shah Shahid*) which described in chapter 3 and discussed the results. It describes comprehensive characteristics and conditions of informal settlements in Kabul city. It specifically includes characteristics and conditions of informal settlements in Kabul city. It specifically includes characteristics and conditions of houses, causes for its appearance, housing typology, income of residents and perception, and the process of land acquisition within four studied areas in Kabul city.
- Chapter 5: This chapter describes the data from the additional studied area (*Afshar*) which described in chapter 3 and discusses the results. It provides an insight into the implementation and effects of the upgrading program in Kabul city which enable us to understand the dynamics and effects of upgrading programs on houses improvement, accessibility of the area, local economy and local resident's satisfaction.
- Chapter 6: This presents conclusions that are organized in relation to the aim of the research is presented. Additionally, recommendations were drawn from the findings to improve the situation in Kabul's informal settlements. In addition, the future research was described.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Definition of Informal Settlements

Over the last two decades, there is a growing number of research on urban informal settlements across the world, especially in developing countries. This research target is increasing due to the current urbanization trends that the majority of the urban population is residing into informal settlements. This extant of informal settlement research provides a literature background from which we can conceptualize and theoretically frame any study on urban informal settlements, including Kabul. This literature chapter, therefore, attempts to point on some of the relevant literature on this subject in connection with the objectives of this study.

“Worldwide, a rapidly increasing urbanization and population growth, along with the lack of implemented legislation have led to an extensive development of slums. Approximately one-sixth of the world’s population is at present residing informally. A majority of these settlers are suffering from poverty and substandard or hazardous living conditions. Furthermore, they often lack legal rights, which subsequently may lead to social exclusion and difficulties in sustainment” (UN-Habitat, 2003).

According to UN-Habitat (2007) report since the 1960s, cities in developing countries around the world have faced a high rate of urbanization and increasing poverty. The result is the uncontrolled development of non-planned urban settlements, through the illegal invasion of land and construction of shelter, where people live in poor housing and living conditions. It is estimated that one in three of the total urban population and one in six of the whole world population lives in informal settlements (USAID/OFDA, 2009; WHO and UN-Habitat, 2010), (Figure 1). The percentage is even higher in developing countries where 20% to

80% of the city population lives in informal settlements (Aluko and Amidu, 2006 cited in Mensah, 2010).

These places have through history been named differently, and so even today. Informal settlements, squatter settlements, unplanned towns, among others are some of the popular terminologies adopted in literature to describe them. Hague (1982 cited in Ngulumu, 2003) mentions different names that have been used by different authors in classifying informal settlements including; spontaneous settlements, shantytowns, squatter settlements, pirate towns, autonomous settlement and slum. However Gilbert (2007) asserts that “slum” has increasingly been considered as “bad and poor shelter” refer to house or a settlement considered to be substandard and inhabited by poor. Therefore, the UN Habitat (2003) acknowledges this when it mentions that the best indicators associated with their work are term that do not have universally agreed definitions. However the most appropriate concept which has been used is “informal settlement”.

Based on the UN Habitat (1996) definition, these are defined as: i) residential areas where a group of housing units has been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim, or which they occupy illegally; ii) unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations(unauthorized housing). It characterized by Lack or inadequate access to basic infrastructure (paved roads, drainages, and sanitation), inadequate access to the public services (Clinic, park and playground) and most importantly lack of land tenure (UN-Habitat, 2003)

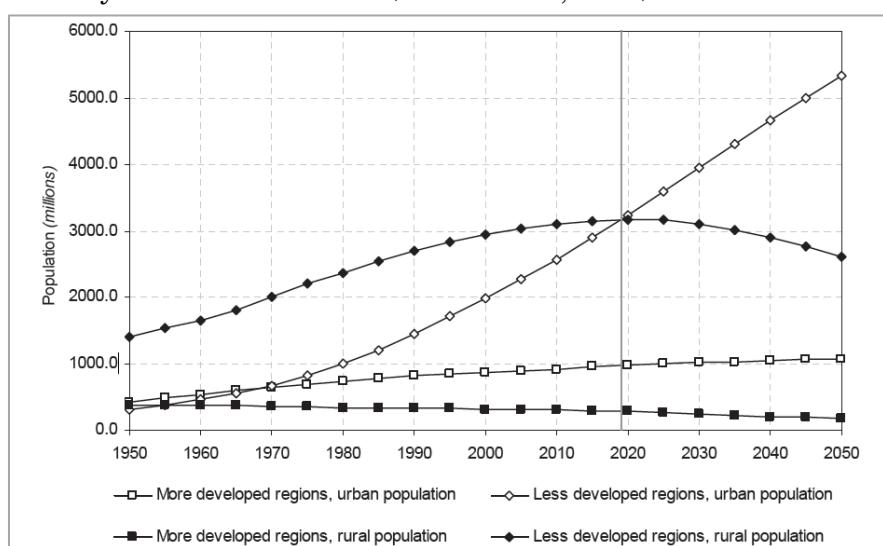


Figure 1. Urban and rural populations, by development group, 1950-2050  
(Source UN habitat 2007)

## 2.2 Challenges and Significance of Informal Settlements

Despite all the critical functions informal settlements provide, most informal dwellers live in poverty. The physical conditions of informal settlements and their informal status itself often pose serious threats to their inhabitant's well-being Ehebrecht (2014). Some key characteristics already mentioned, inadequate access to basic infrastructure and public facilities, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding, and insecure residential status. Particularly insecurity of tenure is a major concern as land is grabbed illegally without official approval by the owner and state which is usually a constant threat of eviction and sometimes they are also forced to live in an area devoid of open spaces and recreation. On the other hand the location of settlements themselves which can pose risks and vulnerability for the settlers. Many informal settlements are located on unsuitable land, e. g. on steep slopes, on land that is close to stations and hence might be contaminated or on land that is prone to flooding (UN-Habitat 2003). Moreover, those areas are inadequate circulation and access to the residential units, making services such as emergency provisions and garbage collection extremely difficult (Magalhaes and Eduardo, 2007).

With the fact presented above, therefore, informal settlements should not be confused with homelessness, a conclusion that is made sometimes Acioly, 2002. Even though people are mostly living in poor conditions, in a shack that according to different definitions is not an adequate house it can still be considered by the inhabitant to be a home. This is where that person has lived, maybe for a long time; this is where the people have created connections to family and friends and based their life. It can be stated that people living in informal settlements may not be homeless, but they may be lacking an adequate house and land ownership. As John Turner, (1976) writes "the important thing about housing is not what it is, but what it does in people's lives, in other words, that dweller satisfaction is not necessarily related to the imposition of the standards". This is an important aspect that needs to be considered when discussing informal settlements.

## 2.3 Definition of Informal Settlements Upgrading

The term ‘upgrading’ refers to the measures to improve the quality of housing and provision of housing related infrastructure and services of the settlements that are considered to be slum or developed illegally (Satterthwaite, 2012 and Masum). Moreover, upgrading is a common concept, which basically means the provision of basic services to improve living conditions in an existing settlement in a manner that does not result in major changes to the physical layout of a neighborhood, it also refers to any sector-based intervention that results in quantifiable improvement in the lives of people (Abbot 2002). According to Cities Alliance (2009), it is a process through which informal areas are gradually improved, formalized and incorporated into the city itself through extending land, services and citizenship to informal dwellers. It involves providing or improving basic infrastructure and services: water supply and sanitation, electricity, drainage, and roads (Acioly, 2002, Menshawya et al., 2011), and, more importantly, legalizing and regularizing insecure land tenure (Imparato and Ruster, 2003).

Upgrading in unplanned urban areas addresses the lack of access to basic services, which municipalities usually do not provide, given the informal status of the settlement. In all cases, urban families are usually unable to afford the provision of such services on their own. For instance, most communities will not be able to construct roads and canals or provide potable drinking water. For this reason, they look to the municipality and government to provide them with at least the most basic services. Provision of such services have significant impacts on the people’s life and will bring trunk changes to the life of residents’ of the unplanned areas.

It is important to stress that settlement upgrading has moved from the basic historical process of physical developments to encompass environmental, institutional and economic interventions (Wekesa, et al, 2011).

## 2.4 Approaches to Informal Settlements Upgrading

Generally, two dominant approaches exist to the upgrading of informal settlements and slums: the “total redevelopment,” and the “in situ” upgrading

approaches (Ziblim, 2013, Figure 2). Total redevelopment is a situation where, the existing informal settlement is demolished and the inhabitants relocated to elsewhere, normally, at the periphery of cities. The *in situ* upgrading approach on the other hand, entails developing the existing informal settlement, at where it is, by gradually extending to the residents, land tenure, infrastructure and, social services, such as water, sanitation and electricity (Mistro and Hensher, 2009; Franklin, 2011). In spite of the divergent opinions on the strategy of informal settlement upgrading (Smolka and Bidderman, 2011, Okyere et al., 2016), it is highly favored compared to demolition (Durrand-Lasserve and Royston, 2002) and proven to be useful in community led and integrated development interventions (Hasan, 2006, Weru, 2004, Burra, 2005).

However, as opposed to the practice of complete relocation of slum dwellers to somewhere else which has tendency to disrupt their “fragile community networks” and “livelihood opportunities,” current best practice advocates the *in situ* upgrading approach (Franklin, 2011). Experience with upgrading shows that governments have moved away from eradication and eviction or “total redevelopment” policies that advocated the bulldoze of these settlements and the relocation of families to other areas to “*in situ*” which aims to minimize the disruption to social and economic networks by reducing the number of households that are relocated to another site or elsewhere on the site (Del Mistro, et al., 2009).

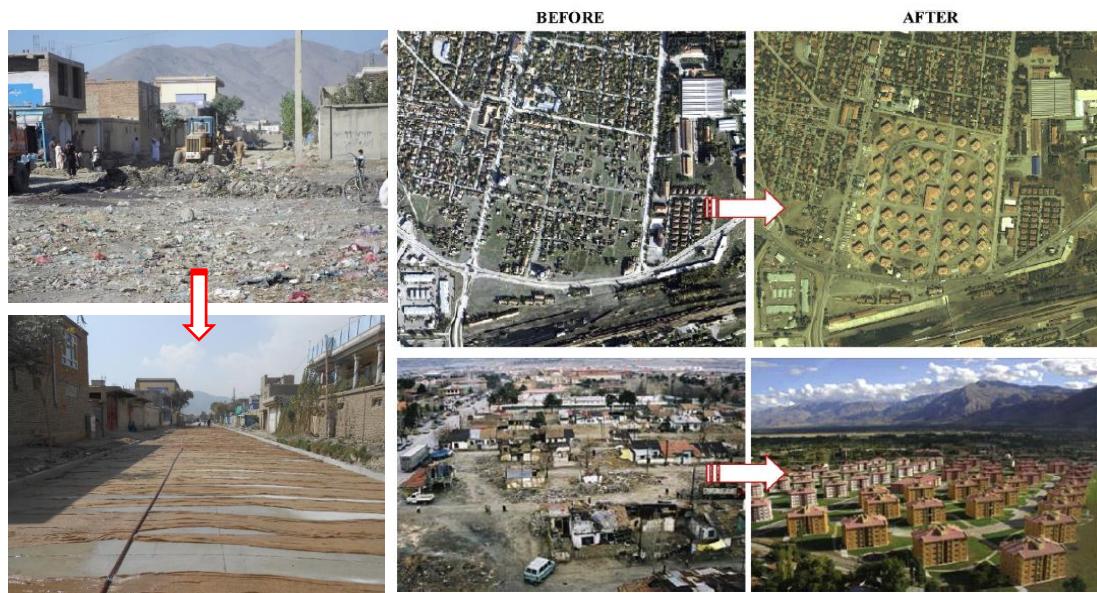


Figure 2. Example of redevelopment and *in Situ* upgrading: Right photos represent an example of redevelopment (source: Uzun et al, 2010) left photos represent an Example of *in Situ* (Source: KMDP, 2015)

This shift was motivated in a great deal by the recognition that informal settlements were not a problem but a solution engendered by the population who could have neither access to land and housing nor to credit and means to purchase land (Figure 3, Acioly, 2002). Generally, the projects have a set of common objectives: land regularization, infrastructure improvement, provision of public facilities, establishment a mechanisms to support self-help housing and housing improvement, and social & economic development.

Evidence suggest that, in situ upgrading has significant linkage with the socio-economic and well-being to people living in informal settlements. As Adel El Menshawy et al (2011) argue that the benefit are simply that people obtain an improved, healthy and secure living environment without being displaced. The investments they have already made to their properties remain and are enhanced this is significantly better than removing them to costlier alternatives that are less acceptable to them. Moreover, it can help in combating poverty and vulnerability, achieving sustainable human development and promoting environmental sustainability and it preserves the existing social networks and community cohesion where they exist. (UN Habitat, 2003, Acioly, 2002).

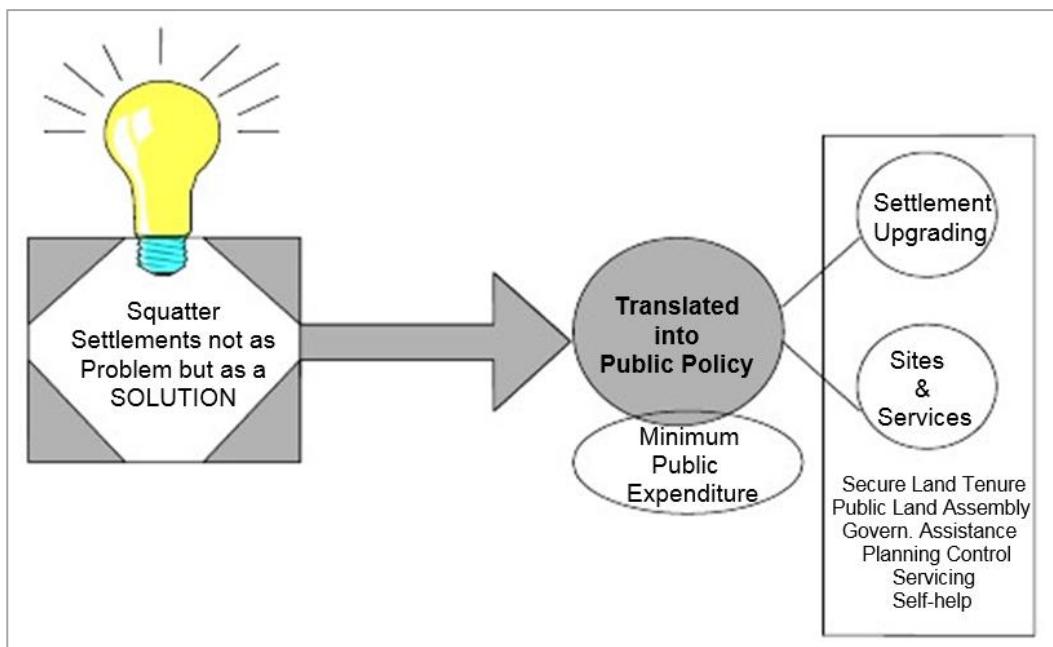


Figure 3. Shift in housing polices (Source: Acioly, 2002)

There have been numerous cases of such upgrading interventions led by community organizations and federations with a certain local government involvement. In light of government apathy, ambivalence, and minimal involvement, it appears community-based upgrading has become widespread (see Environment and Urbanization, 2004). Community-based upgrading (CBU) based on community consultations where community council discusses the priority needs of the neighborhood.

Community participation and commitment are essential for any project to be sustainable Masiteng (2013). Success in sustainable development projects can also depend on whether or not the objectives of community participation are met (Huchzermeyer, et al.; 2006). Huchzermeyer further postulates that participation is especially important in informal settlement upgrading, where there are already existing communities and significant numbers of vulnerable households whose livelihood strategies may potentially be at risk because of inappropriate interventions. One of the objectives of community participation is to empower people. This can help people to take control of their destinies by making decisions and having control over resources that affect their lives. In this way, they will be able to attract and manage resources in an efficient way (Bolnick, et al.; 2004).

Moreover, when communities have control over resources affecting their lives, it can lead to a change in knowledge and skills. In the process, they become self-aware, gain confidence and become self-reliant. Theron (2005 postulates that community participation ensures that projects are developed according to the needs of the people. This can improve the outcome of projects through cost sharing, increased efficiency, and effectiveness. This approach is very helpful as it enables communities to assess their own situation, organize themselves as a powerful group and work creatively towards changing society and building up a new world (Table 1). Again, increases the capacity of individuals, allows communities to mobilize and help themselves, minimizes dependence on the state and creates a bottom-up approach (Midgley et al., 1986).

Table 1. Advantages of community upgrading methodology based on an upgrading project in Kabul city (source Salam, 2006)

Community based upgrading approaches	Municipality based approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project management process is very transparent</li> <li>• Community participation and contribution is very high</li> <li>• Community feel ownership of the project and take care of the project during implementation and after completion of the project</li> <li>• Employment of the local labor</li> <li>• Participation of women in decision making and monitoring of the project activities on daily bases</li> <li>• The project leadership has community support during implementation of the project</li> <li>• Community pays especial attention on quality, quantity, and cost of the project activities and construction material</li> <li>• Cause good relation among community members and between the community council and the Municipality's District Office</li> <li>• Because of community contributions the project financial cost is cheaper</li> <li>• Community contribution is between 10 – 15 percent cost of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process financially is not very transparent</li> <li>• Community participation is limited and contribution is nothing</li> <li>• Community does not feel ownership of the project</li> <li>• Limited opportunities for local employment</li> <li>• Women participation in decision making is nil</li> <li>• Limited community support</li> <li>• Community does not feel any responsibility</li> <li>• Lack of coordination between community and Municipality</li> <li>• The project financial cost is higher than the community approach</li> <li>• There is no community contribution.</li> </ul>

Having digested these two concepts, informal settlements and upgrading, the rest of the thesis will then go further, to explore these topics in chapter 4 and chapter 5 based on the finding from studied areas.

## 2.3 Urbanization and Urban Development in Kabul City

### 2.3.1 An Historical Evolution and the Spatial Structure of Kabul City

The formation and growth of urban informal settlements in Kabul is conditioned within the broader process of urbanization and urban development in the city of Kabul. Thus, understanding the general urban development framework or process is quite significant to appreciation informality as a sub-process in both the city and Afghanistan as a whole. In view of this, this part highlights the historical and spatial structure of the Kabul city, to show how the practice of informality is highly embedded in the city's history, evolution and governance.

“The original birth place of Kabul City was Khord Kabul (34° 23` N and 69° 23`E) which has a small distance to the east of present Kabul City. [...] Khord Kabul was also called Shah Kabul because the first emperor of Kushanid empire established the capital of his empire there” (AREZ and Dittmann2005). Kabul city has a story of 3,500 years and it is a center of political decision-making and economic and cultural center. “It was under the control successively of the Great Alexander, Sassanian Persia, the Islam Empire, the Timur Empire, the Mughal Empire, and others. Afghanistan was brought under the authority of the Durrani Dynasty in 1747, and Kabul became its capital in 1775” (JICA, 2011).

Kabul city is the capital and the largest city in Afghanistan, situated at 5,900 feet (1,800 m) above sea-level in a narrow valley, wedged between the Hindu Kush Mountains along the Kabul River.

Kabul city extends to the east to *Tange Gharo* and *Bot Khak*, to the west to *Qarqh* and *Paghman* mountains, to the north to *Khair Khana* and *Khwaja Rawash* mountains, and to the south to *Tajbik* hills and *Chardehi*. The City and its suburbs are surrounded by a series of mountains and its peaks reach approximately 5000 meters elevations. A range of lower mountains divides the city into the eastern area and western area.

The location of Asmaye and Sher Darwaza mountains in the middle of Kabul City divides the city it into two parts (north east and south west) (AREZ 1973). These two parts have been joined by two main roads in *Gozargah* Gorge located

between *Asmaye* and *Sher Darwaza* mountains (34.510252, 69.161553 N, E) and the *Bagh-e-Bala* pass located on the north-west side of the *Aliabad* Mountain (Figure 4). (Gieben, 2010)

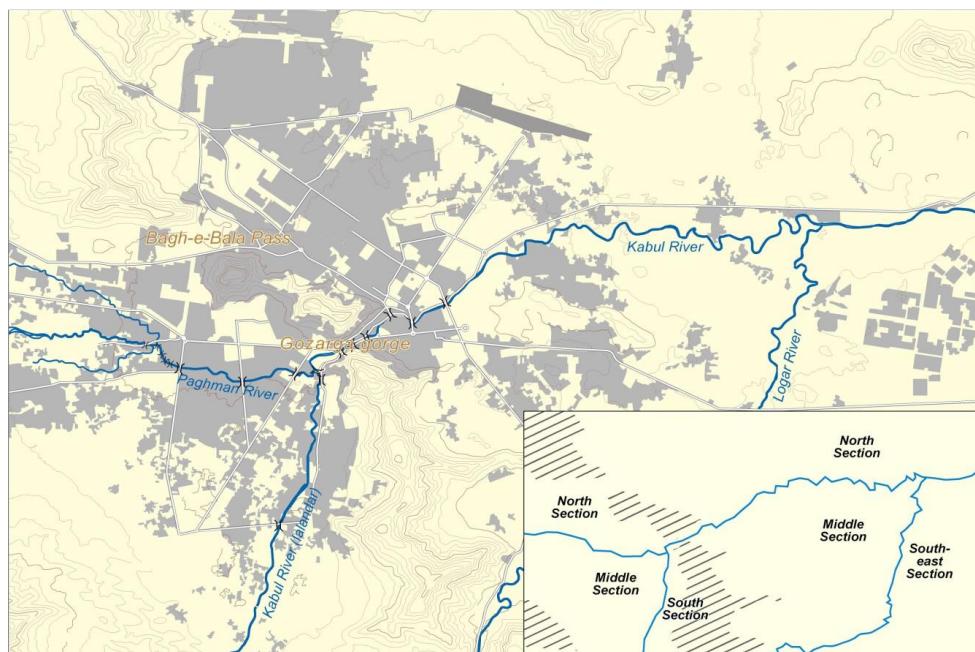


Figure 4. Kabul City topography (Source: information, NOORI based on AIMS map, Cartography by Institute of Geography of University of Giessen 2010)

### 2.3.2 Kabul City Function and Population

Kabul is the capital of Afghanistan, is the center of political decision-making, economic and cultural. Kabul city has experienced a series of political turmoil since 1970. During civil wars, particularly after the collapse of the communist regime in 1992, Kabul was destroyed not only in its urban infrastructure but also in its social system for education, medical and services, it has reported that these civil wars caused the deaths of thousands of civilians, serious damages to infrastructure and an exodus of refugees. After the war, Kabul city has become the main destination of migrants who immigrated to neighboring countries during the conflict and war, IDP, and also for Afghans looking for security and better life and the city has become the focal points for social, economic and cultural development. Hence the population rate has rapidly increased in recent years (Figure 4 and 5)

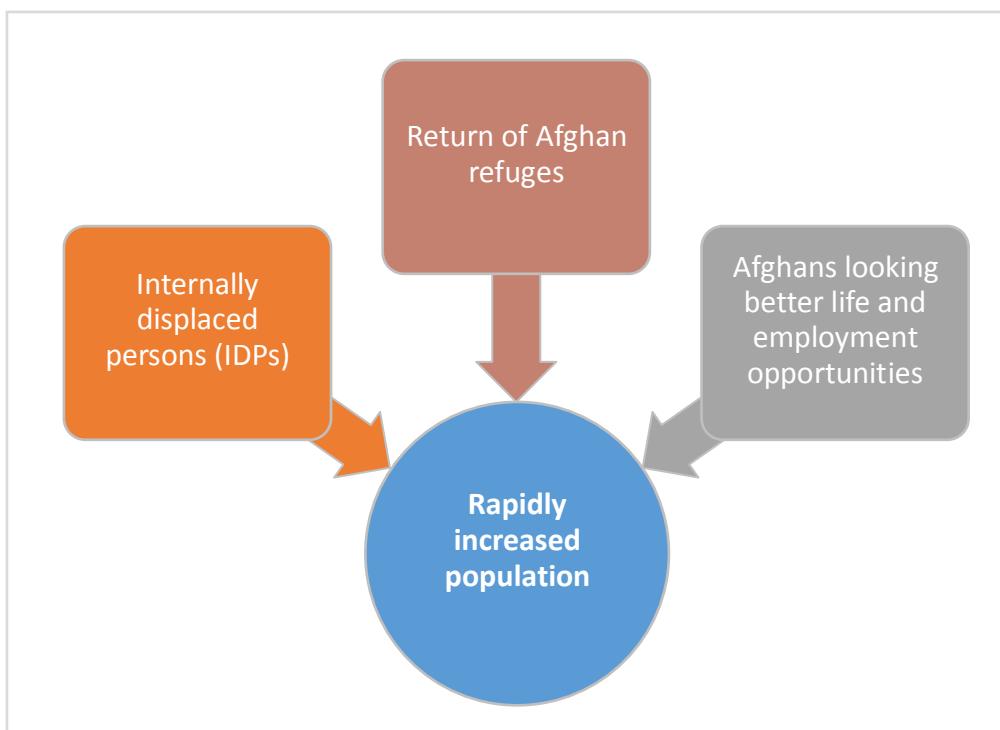


Figure 5. Factors that caused rapidly increased population in Kabul city (Source: Author's Elaboration, 2016)

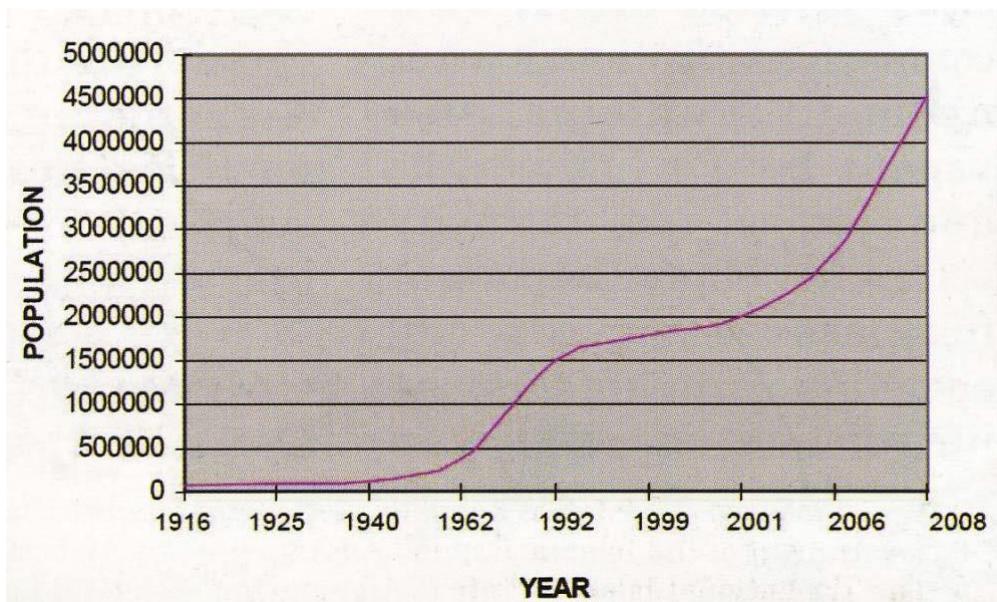


Figure 6. Kabul City population (Source: Ministry of Urban Development of Afghanistan, 2008)

There are some challenges with figures for the city's population due in part to its security situation. However, some available estimates put the city's population growth rate at 15 percent per annum. In 2004, the total population of the city was estimated at 3 million inhabitants, an increase from 1.78 million in 1999 (Noori, 2010 and Esser, 2005). Other sources such as Kabul municipality and the ministry of urban development have estimated population 4.5 million in 2008. Between 1999 1.78 million and 2002 the city's population grew at 15 percent out of which 12 percent was due to migration per year and was estimated at approximately 3 million in 2004. Growth will remain at about 5 percent (about 3 percent natural growth plus 2 percent migration) for the next few years. This represents a yearly increase of about 150,000 people or about 20,000 households" (World Bank, 2005) which will be about 4 million in 2010, and on 2014 population estimated approximately 6 million (The Guardian, 2014, Beall). The urban expansion in Kabul city during 1960-2002 is shown in Figure 6.

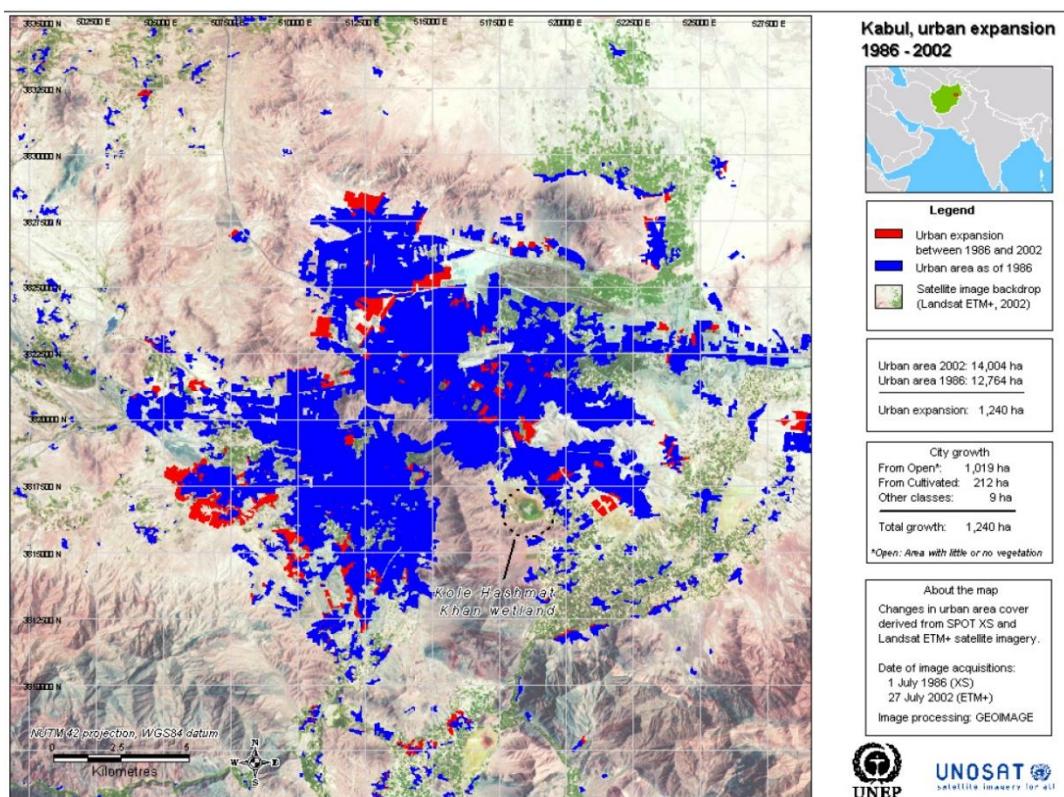


Figure 7. Urban Expansion - Kabul City 1996 -2002 (Source ICT, 2007)

### 2.3.3 Past Master Plans for Kabul City

To manage the shape of urbanization and controlling the urban development of the Kabul city, three master plans were developed in the past.

The basic structure of the city was established in the 1940 and 1950s, during which residential development actively took place. The expansion of the streets and the residential development continued after the 1950 and Kabul became the largest city in Afghanistan with its population reaching 380,000 in 1962, when the government decided to make a master plan to guide urban development.

Therefore, The first master plan prepared by Afghan expert with help of foreign planner in 1962. The plan was expected for a city of 800,000 people in 23,780-hectare land area within the time frame of 25 years (Figure 7)

This master plan proposed to replace most part of the old city to the typical Soviet style like apartment buildings Microregion or Microrayon (It is a residential complex—a primary structural element of the residential area construction in the Soviet Union and in some post-Soviet and former Communist states. Residential districts in most of the cities and towns in Russia and the republics of the former Soviet Union were built in accordance with this concept, Wikipedia, 2016). However, the implementation of the plan took place without enough control and inspection of the authorities. As a result, same areas of the city were distributed among people and developed informally (Nabizada, 2012). And those undeveloped mountainous areas which reserved for recreation and green space filled with unplanned settlements.

The Second Master Plan, shown in (Fig 2.3) was designed in 1970 with the assistance of Soviet planners and UNESCO for 1.2 million population in a land area of 29,900 Ha over a period of 25 years. The purpose of this plan was to guide the growth of Kabul from 800,000 to 1.2 million people (Table 2.1). As with contemporaneous Soviet master plans, substantial urban areas were set aside explicitly for both green spaces and for industry. In contrast to the First Master Plan, where all new residential development appeared to be Microregions, this plan also included single-family housing districts similar to what Afghan planners had been doing themselves from 1930 to 1961 (Calogero, 2011). Some areas on the northwest and western of the Kabul city were developed according to this plan.

The failure of this plan was the lack of sufficient economic resource, shortage of technical and professional at that time and political and social problem didn't let the master plan to be implemented (Nabizada, 2012)

The Third Master Plan, shown in (Fig 2.5&2.6) was revised and updated by the Afghan and international planners in 1978 as a legal document to guide the growth of Kabul city to a population of two million over a twenty-five year period, from 1978 to 2003 in 32,330Ha land area.

It has been said that it was a perfect master plan. It was expected in the plan that Kabul city will experience and rapid population, therefore, it promote much higher residential densities as a way of doubling the population of the city. However, due conflicts, instability, and the general fragile political, economic and social situation have affected the implementation of the city's master plan. As at 2002, only 20 percent of the master plan had been implemented (Habib 2001, Viaro 2004, JICA, 2011). Areas reserved for environmental conservation, safety, recreation, and undeveloped areas have been grabbed and sold to low-income migrants and transferred to informal settlements.

Table 2. Master plans of Kabul city (Source: Calogero, 2001)

	Approved Year	Horizon Year	Planned Populaiotn (Million)	Covered Area (Km2)
First Master Plan	1962	1987	0.8	23,780
Second Master Plan	1970	1995	1.4	29,900
Third Master Plan	1978	2002	2.0	32,330

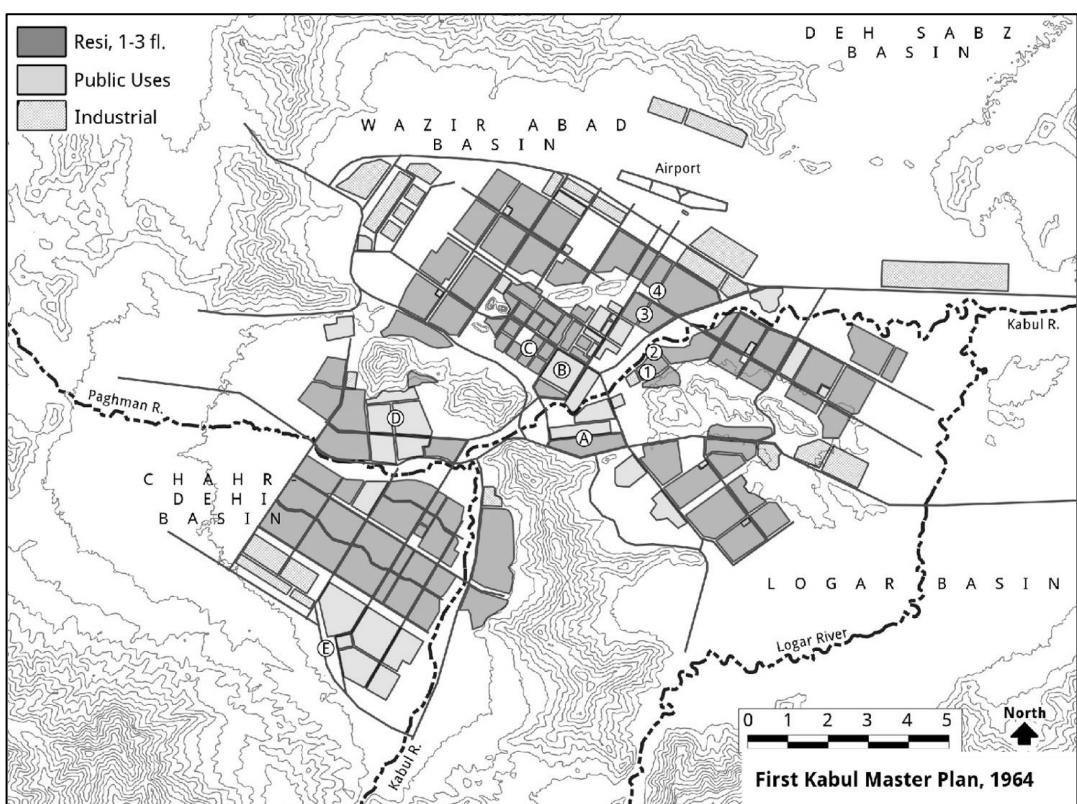


Figure 8. First master plan of Kabul city (Source: Caloger 2006)

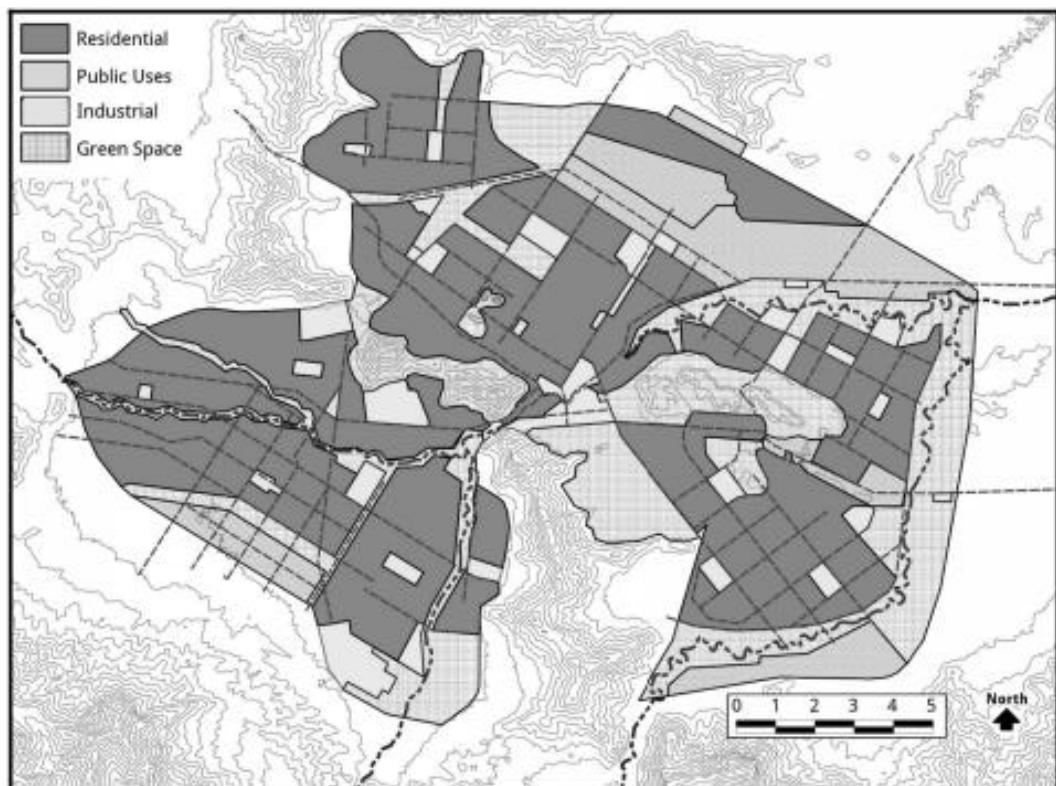


Figure 9. Figure 7. Second master plan of Kabul city (Source: Caloger 2006)

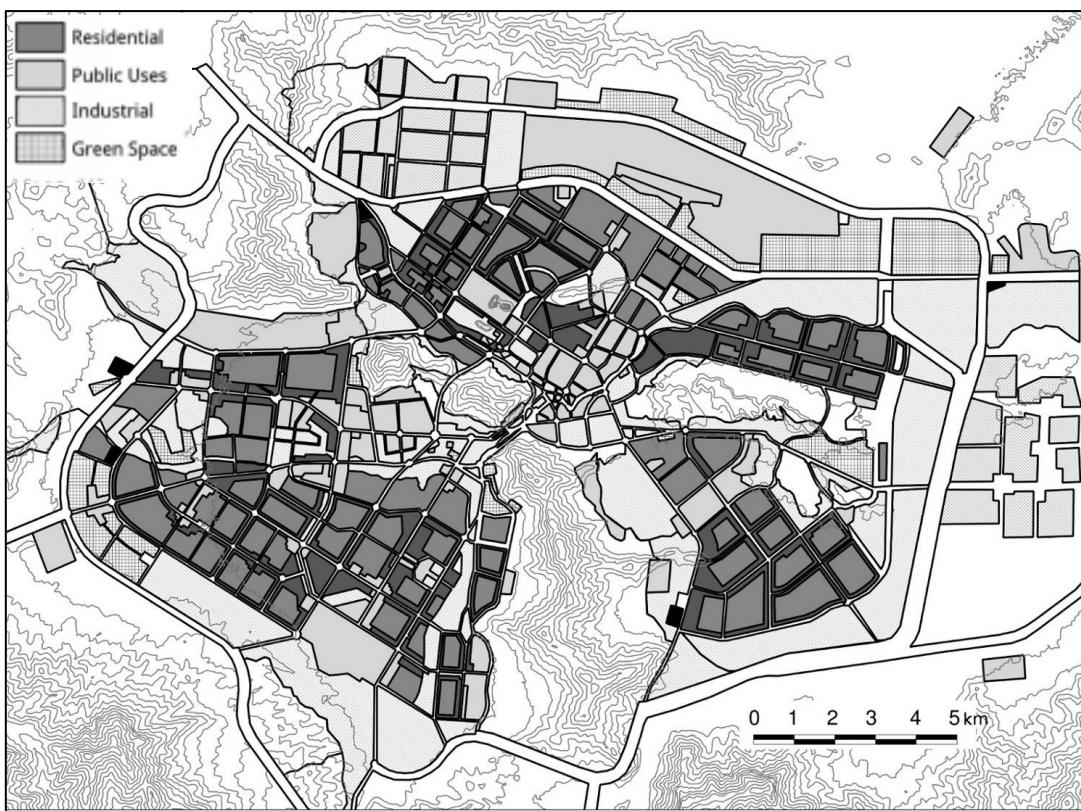


Figure 10. Figure 7. Third master plan of Kabul city (Source: Caloger 2006)

#### **2.3.4 Urban Transformation of Kabul City**

Afghanistan urbanization has accelerated following the country's dramatic regime changes over the past years. The push and pull factors which influence people's decision to migrate to the urban area are common in most part of the world. However, in Kabul, recent political shits and war in Afghanistan have led to the increased migration both internally and refugees from neighboring countries. In recent years, more than three million refugees returned in the country, with the majority settling in the country's urban centers and primarily in the capital city, Kabul. Kabul is the focal points for social, economic and cultural development and a magnet for Afghans looking for security and a better life after decades of civil wars, particularly for refugees returning from abroad and internally displaced persons (IDPs) throughout the country. These circumstances lead to tremendous urbanization rate, which is one characteristic of Kabul city as well. The enormous urbanization rate, together with the inability of the government to meet the high demand for building land in the formal way of land application, results in the developing of informal settlements, which mad Kabul being the fifth fastest growing city in the world (Pavgi, 2011; Gilsinan, 2013).

According to MoUD Kabul has experienced massive population growth since the late 1990s. Between 1999 and 2005 the city's population grew at 15% per year and was estimated at approximately 3 million in 2004. Growth will remain at about 5% (about 3% natural growth plus 2% migration) for the next few years. This represents a yearly increase of about 150,000 people or about 20,000 households that will require access to land and services.

The latest master plan and details plan for the city were prepared in 1976 and approved in 1978 for the planned population of two million in 25 years through 2003 (JICA, 2011). However, it could not foresee and estimate the number of returnees and inner-border migrations. Moreover, because of social problems, the limited economic capacity of government and civil wars the master plan has not been implemented completely and by 2002 only about 20 percent of the master plan had been implemented (Habib 2001 and Viaro 2004).

World Bank (2005) reports, Informal settlements now shelter about 80% of Kabul's population and cover 70% of its land area (See table 3). However, the vast

majority of informal settlements (90.2%) are on land that is considered flat consequently, only 9.8% of all informal settlements on slope mountains which are particularly difficult to service (Figure 10, Figure 11).

Table 3. Kabul- Distribution of the housing stock by type (Source: Kabul Bank, 2005)

Distribution of formal and informal housing					
Resident	Area	Population	Area (%)	Population (%)	Average density (p/ha)
Formal	32.66	531,000	31%	18%	163
Informal	71.56	2,442,000	69%	82%	341
Total residential area	104.22	2,973,000	100%	100%	285

Distribution of formal housing					
Apartment	1.80	91,000	1.7%	3.1%	505
Townhouse	0.17	5,000	0.2%	0.2%	293
Detached house	30.69	435,000	29.5%	14.6%	142

Distribution of informal housing					
Detached houses	3.33	88,000	3.2%	3.0%	264
Courtyard houses	57.96	1,980,000	55.6 %	66.6%	342
House on slopes	10.26	375,000	9.8%	12.6%	365

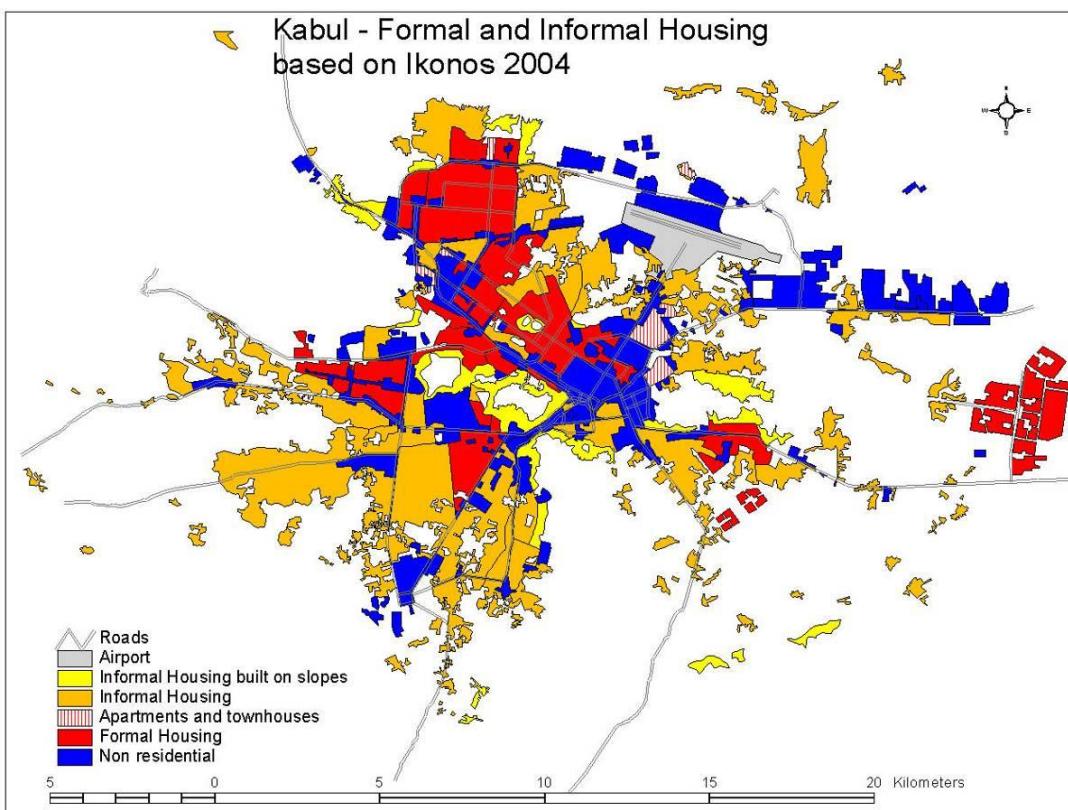


Figure 11 Formal and informal housing (Source: World bank, 2005)



Figure 12. Informal housing on flat and mountain slopes (Autor's own pictures)

### **2.3.5 Urban Challenges of Kabul City**

Due to the recent urbanization trend throughout the world, most of the developing countries and their cities are challenged socially, economically, physically and environmentally to fulfill the city dwellers' demands (Corburn, 2004, United Nations, 2009). These challenges are described as providing sufficient housing, access to public facilities, providing better education, an improved health system and a sustainable environment that is suitable both for living and working settings for all city residents. More than three decades of war in the Afghanistan has led to so many challenges in major cities, particularly Kabul city, including rapid urban growth, traffic transportation problem, property rights, destruction of infrastructure exposure to environmental degradation, and weak urban management. However, the growth of informal settlement is an additional problem in Kabul city. Due to rapid population growth and influx of IDPs, a large scale of informal or unplanned housing development took place in the city. While these informal houses have prevented an even larger crisis of homelessness, it has led to legal and regulatory violations, including violations of property rights and rights of way, and has left insufficient space for infrastructure and social facilities. These all had a negative impact on a well-functioning land and property. Following are some of the urban challenges of Kabul city.

- The absence of an updated master plan to cope with the growth of population in the Kabul city.
- The insufficiency of urban professionals, urban governance and the ongoing war in the country
- Destruction of physical infrastructure: Much of Kabul's physical infrastructure has been destroyed following decades of conflict, war and lack of maintenance. This has created housing shortages and service delivery backlogs resulting in, for example, a lack of clean water supply and urban traffic congestion and so on.
- Shortage of low-income housing to provide shelter for the poor in the country: This has led to the creation and spread of unplanned, informal, or squatter, settlements throughout Kabul city. It is estimated that today, informal settlements represent about 69% of all residential areas in Kabul

and provide shelter to about 80% of its population which most of the informal housing is built on governmental lands and in it in poor condition.

- Lacking rule of law: lack of rules and regulations for urban development activities and expansion of built-up areas which, as a result, decisions led to driven solely by the pursuit of individual interests.

## Chapter 3

### Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Data Collection

Based on the above understanding and objectives, this study has employed different data collection tools to have a better understanding of phenomena of informal settlement and effect of upgrading. Therefore, during the course of this research, field surveys were conducted in October 2013, May 2015, and June 2016 in five different districts of Kabul city (Figure 12) (*Tape-e Panjsad family, Taimani, Chihil Sotun, Shah Shahid and Afshar*). First four study areas which cover 51 houses focus on characteristics and conditions of informal settlements. One additional area (*Afshar*) which cover 94 houses focus on effect of upgrading and residents satisfaction with it. Survey data was collected door by door based on the objectives of the research and the methods used for the research are:

- Literature review which covers; informal settlements and informal settlements upgrading in Kabul and other developing countries.
- Reconnaissance survey of informal areas and subsequent selection of five study areas. The criteria for selection includes a) Having different characteristics in term of physical condition (Table 4). b) The location of the studied areas in relation to or near with the existed facilities (mosque, shops/market, etc.) in the area. c) The agreement or cooperation of resident for their houses to be surveyed (since the majority of people are not willing to survey their houses in Kabul city due to security issue).

In terms of upgrading *Afshar* area was selected due to: First, compared to other informal areas which have been upgraded recently, the *Afshar* area has been upgraded over past five years, which offers adequate time to analyses effects. Secondly, the land is located in a flat area, as compared to other informal areas, which made it much

easier to access houses and interview residents, and thirdly, the location of the area is near to the central part of the city which is preferred in view of security and safety considerations within Kabul city.

- Physical measurement of streets and observation of building material, housing condition and facilities in the area.
- Taking photographs and observation to capture or specify construction materials of the houses and physical condition of the areas. Moreover it used to ascertain upgrading interventions and their effects in the settlement.
- Interviews with the residents to obtain information on: the size of housing unit (Ground area, the number of rooms and stories), building material, housing unit sharing (number of households per housing unit), type of ownership, the period of living, ways of plot accusation, employment status and so on. In term of upgrading, to draw out information on; houses, and neighborhood improvement before and after upgrading, the respondent's view and experience about the effect of upgrading and satisfaction with the physical environment in the area.
- Additional meetings and interviews were conducted with the governmental urban institutions such as Ministry of urban development of Afghanistan (department of upgrading unplanned area) and the municipality of Kabul (Kabul municipal development program office) to understand approaches and mechanisms of the upgrading process.

Table 4. Studied areas

Characteristic of area	Flat areas	Slop area
Upgraded areas	<i>Chihil Sotun, Shah Shahid</i>	-
Non upgraded areas	<i>Taimani</i>	<i>Tap-e Panjsad Family</i>

*Shah Shahid* is strategically close to downtown of Kabul city and major employment centers with a better physical condition that makes it different than *Chihil Sotun*.

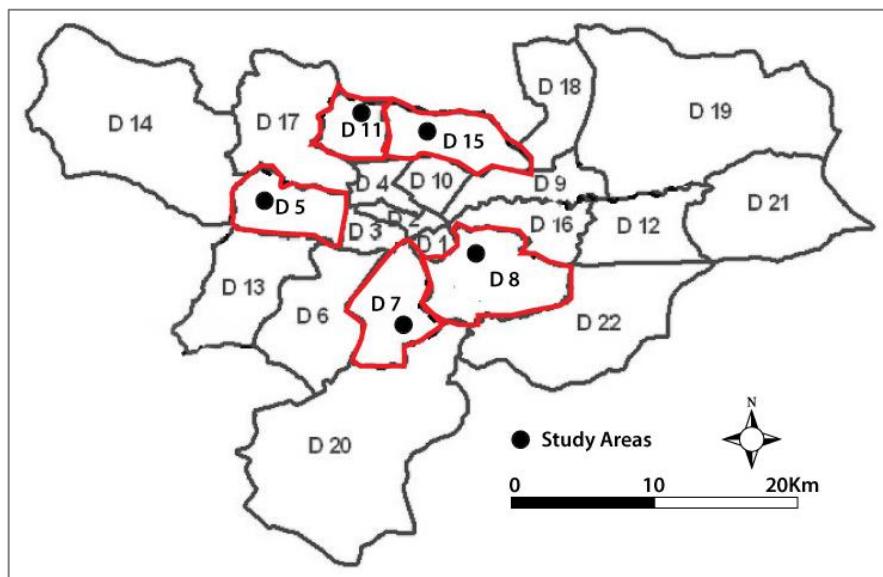


Figure 13. The location of studied areas (Source MoUD, 2010)

### 3.2 The Studied Areas

#### 1) *Taimani* (District 15):

According to municipality plan Kabul is divided to 22 districts. *Taimani* is located in district 15. The population of this district is approximately 320,000 (2009). Most of the established informal settlements are located on flat and agriculture land. And few areas in district 15 have been upgraded. For this study a typical non-upgraded area selected which contain a block of 12 houses in the densest neighborhood of *Taimani* (Figure 13). However one of the houses were under construction and 11 houses were selected for the survey.

According to the survey the constructions of the houses made of raw material (timber roof + sun-dried brick walls) covered with a mixture of mud and stew (*Kohgel*) as plaster. This system can be found in most informal settlements and in rare cases formal settlements. From the survey about 90.9% of the houses are single story and only 9.1 % are two-stories, and period of living ranges from 4-20 years (Table 5). The width of streets was approximately 2-3m, through which vehicles cannot access the houses, the local streets are not paved, creating problems for the residents during the winter and rain (Figure 14)

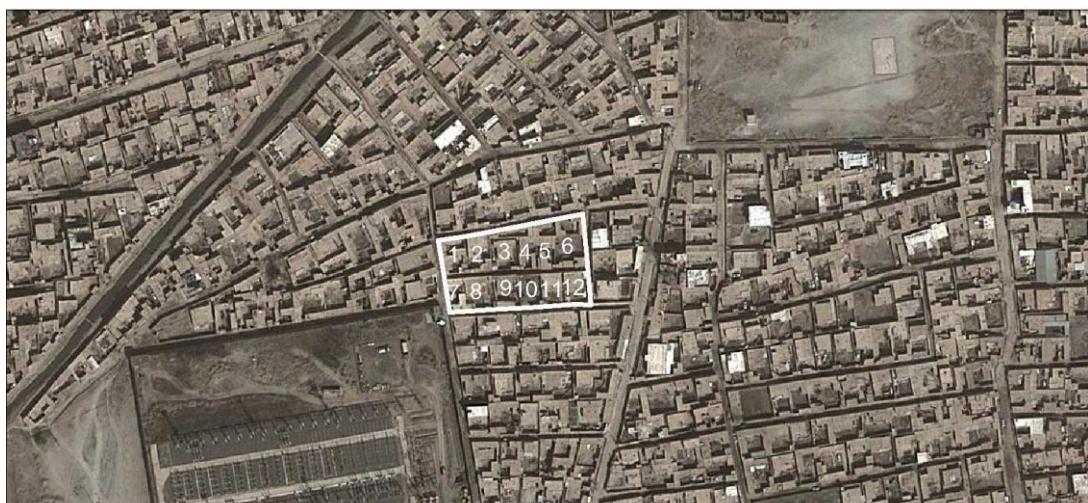


Figure 14. The studied area of *Taimani*



Figure 15. Street and houses condition in studied area of *Taimani* (Author's own picture)

## 2) *Tap-e Panjsad Family (District-11):*

The studied area of *Tap-e Panjsad Family* is located in district 11. The population of this district is approximately 450,000 (2009) which is the most populated district. Informal settlements in this district are mostly located on mountain slopes and are the most inaccessible. For this study, a block of 15 houses was selected which constitutes 16 families (Figure 15).

According to the survey, the period of living ranges from 8-17 years. And all the houses were a private owner rather than tenants, and the number of low-income people is higher compared to other studied areas. Sixty percent (60%) of the houses in this area are single story and 40% are two stories, made of raw material (Timber roof+sun dried brick walls) (Table 5).

Residents have been provided electricity. However, streets and sidewalks are really in a bad condition and since this area is located on the slopes, it creates problems for the pedestrian during the winter and rain (Figure 16).

According to the survey and observation, the main priority for residents in term of upgrading are street and sidewalk improvement due to inaccessibility to the area.



Figure 16. The studied area of *Tap-e Panjsad Family*



Figure 17. Street and houses condition in studied area of *Tap-e Panjsad Family*  
(Author's own picture)

### 3) *Shah Shahid*.(Districtd-8):

The studied area of *Shah Shahid* is located in district 8 with a total population of approximately 320,000 (2009). This district is close to downtown of Kabul. Most of the informal settlements in this district are located on flat and agricultural land which is easy to service or upgrade. For this study, 10 houses were selected which includes 13 families (Figure 17).

According to the survey, 40% of the houses are single storey and 60% a two storey, with a period of living from 1-23 years (Table 5).

In contrast, to another district, the local streets are paved and are in good condition (Figure 18). However, the priority for the residents is construction of park and playground (Figure 19)



Figure 18. The Studied area of *Shah Shahid*



Figure 19. Street and houses condition in studied area of *Shah Shahid* (Author's own picture)

#### 4) *Chihil Sotun* (District-7):

The studied area of *Chihil Sotun* is located in district 7. This district is one of the historical areas in Kabul with a population of approximately 250,000(2009).

The majority of informal settlements located in this district. For this study, a total of 15 houses were selected which includes totally, 22 families (Figure 20).

According to the survey various forms of houses construction of can be found in this area: Concrete + burned brick walls and Timber roof + sun-dried brick walls. Moreover, about 46.7% of the houses are single stories, similarly, 46.7% are two stories and 6.7% are three stories. Period of living ranges from 4-25 years and the number of the low and mid-income people are almost same in this area (Table 5).

Some upgrading activities have already been done by national and international organizations, such as the supply of water and electricity, paving the streets and construction of drainage (Figure 21). However there is a lack of basic public facilities such as parks and other public facilities, this explains according to the survey the main priority for residents are park and playground (Figure 19).

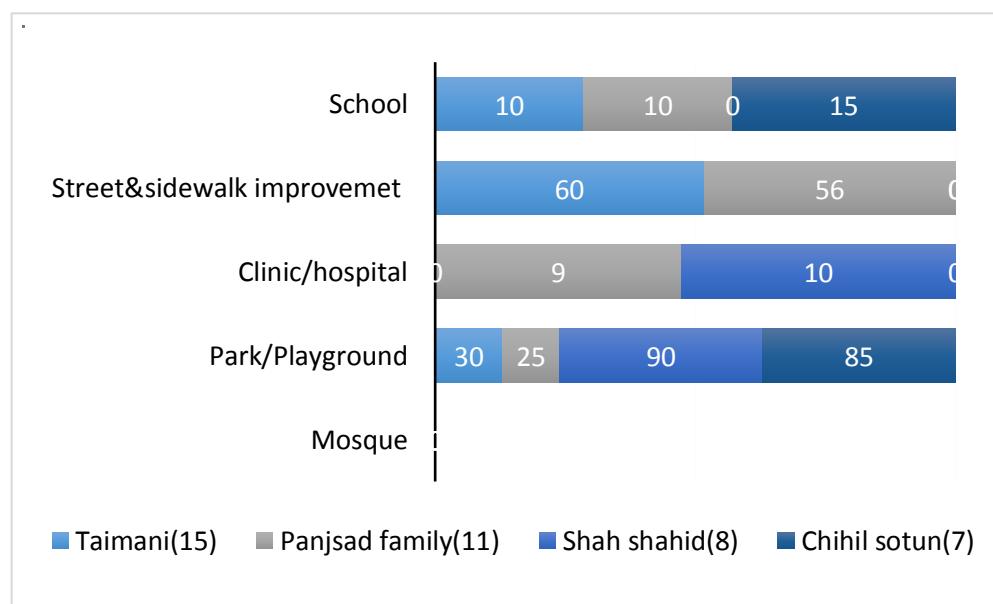


Figure 20. Priority for facility and services (Residents perception)

Figure 3 indicates that those areas which upgraded like *Shah Shahid* and *Chihil Sotun*, their priority for improving their neighborhood is the construction of park and playground, on the other hand, those areas which are not upgraded like *Taimani* and *Panjsad family*, the main priority for improving their neighborhoods are street and sidewalk improvement.



Figure 21. The Studied area of *Chihil Suton*



Figure 22. Street and houses condition in studied area of *chihil Sotun* (Author's own picture)

Table 5. Analysis of the surveyed houses in the four residential areas of Kabul city

	Type of ownership		No of stories	No of family	Period of living	Housing material		Type of houses		Modes of informal plot accusation	Housing extension (Rebuild)	Resident's occupation	
	Own	Rent				C roof +BB walls	T roof +SD brick walls	Courtyard based	Detached based				
Talismari (District-15)	T-1	O	-	1	1	20	-	O	O	-	BH	-	NGO. staff
	T-2	O	-	1	11	15	-	O	O	-	T	-	Gov. employee
	T-3	O	-	1	2	4	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Shopkeeper
	T-4	O	-	1	1	20	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Private work
	T-5	O	-	2	2	25	-	O	O	-	T	-	Labor
	T-6	O	-	1	1	15	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Gov. employee
	T-7	O	-	1	1	20	-	O	-	O	BH	O	Engineer
	T-8	O	-	1	2	23	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Shopkeeper
	T-9	O	-	1	2	19	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Driver
	T-10	O	-	1	1	5	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Guard
	T-11	O	-	1	1	17	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Labor
Tareq Paizaj Family (District-11)	Pf-1	O	-	2	1	10	-	O	O	-	BL	O	Jobless
	Pf-2	O	-	1	1	10	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Gov. employee
	Pf-3	O	-	2	1	8	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Gov. employee
	Pf-4	O	-	2	1	16	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Labor
	Pf-5	O	-	1	1	17	-	O	O	-	T	-	Driver
	Pf-6	O	-	1	2	11	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Currency Exe
	Pf-7	O	-	1	1	10	-	O	O	-	ON	-	Driver
	Pf-8	O	-	1	1	16	-	O	O	-	T	-	Labor
	Pf-9	O	-	2	1	15	-	O	O	-	ON	-	Private worker
	Pf-10	O	-	1	1	13	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Shopkeeper
	Pf-11	O	-	1	1	11	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Guard
	Pf-12	O	-	1	1	12	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Labor
	Pf-13	O	-	2	1	12	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Mechanic
	Pf-14	O	-	1	1	10	-	O	-	O	ON	-	Shopkeeper
	Pf-15	O	-	2	1	11	O	-	-	O	BL	O	Teacher
Shah Shabzid (District-8)	Sh-1	O	-	2	1	23	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Gov. employee
	Sh-2	O	-	2	1	5	O	-	-	O	BL	O	Doctor
	Sh-3	O	-	2	1	20	-	O	-	O	BL	O	Businessman
	Sh-4	O	-	1	1	10	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Teacher
	Sh-5	-	O	1	1	1	-	O	O	-	BL	O	Labor
	Sh-6	O	-	2	2	15	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Engineer
	Sh-7	O	-	2	2	15	-	O	O	-	T	-	Gov. employee
	Sh-8	O	-	2	2	10	-	O	-	O	BL	-	Carpenter
	Sh-9	O	-	1	1	2	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Baker
	Sh-10	O	-	1	1	20	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Gov. employee
Chihil Sazan (District-7)	Ch-1	O	-	2	1	23	-	O	O	-	BH	O	Gov. employee
	Ch-2	-	O	1	1	4	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Mechanic
	Ch-3	O	-	2	2	20	-	O	O	-	BL	O	Gov. employee
	Ch-4	O	-	2	1	10	O	-	-	O	BL	O	Engineer
	Ch-5	-	O	1	2	3	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Labor
	Ch-6	-	O	2	2	2	-	O	O	-	T	-	Shopkeeper
	Ch-7	O	-	2	1	15	O	-	-	O	BL	O	Doctor
	Ch-8	O	-	1	1	23	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Guard
	Ch-9	O	-	2	2	6	-	O	O	-	BL	O	Teacher
	Ch-10	O	-	3	1	2	O	-	-	O	BL	O	Businessman
	Ch-11	O	-	1	2	25	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Gov. employee
	Ch-12	O	-	1	2	25	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Butcher
	Ch-13	O	-	2	2	10	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Gov. employee
	Ch-14	-	O	1	11	1	-	O	O	-	BL	-	Painter
	Ch-15	O	-	1	1	2	-	O	O	-	BH	-	Gov. employee

C roof= Concrete roof BB wall= burned bricks wall T roof= timber roof SD= sun dried bricks wall BH= bought the house and land from previous informal buyer T= tenant (by rent) BL= bought the land from local land holder ON= Occupied by themselves with no permission

##### 5) *Afshar* (District-5):

Additional areas were selected to analyze the effect of upgrading. The area is located in *Afshar*, district 5 (Figure 22) the population of this district is approximately 320,000 (2009). Most of the informal settlements in this district are located on flat and agricultural land while some are located on the mountain slopes. The areas located on flat land have mostly been upgraded (Figure 23). For this study 94 houses that are located in a neighborhood was selected. The average period of residence in the area is about 18 years, which provides enough period to understand conditions before and after the upgrading program. The majority of the residents were owner-occupiers (88%), as compared to the rental population (12%) (Table 6). In terms of employment, only 11 percent of the respondents were unemployed. More than half of the respondents were into individual private enterprises (59%), which confirm earlier studies on informal settlements (Okyere and Kita, 2016, Ojong, 2011, Jabeen, Johnson and Allen, 2010). However, as much as 31 percent of respondents in the informal areas were employed in the public and corporate sectors, which reinforces recent observations in the Middle East and Asia that there is an interweaving of formal-informal relations where workers in the formal sector could be found in informal settlements (AlSayyad, 2004, Roy, 2005, 2011).

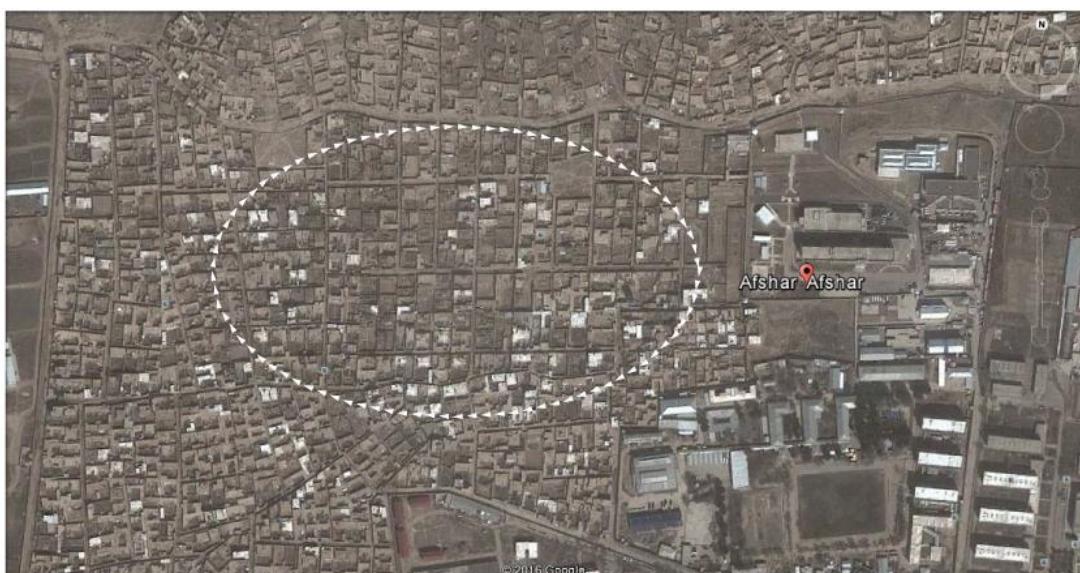


Figure 23. The Studied area of *Afshar*

In terms of the housing structure, majority of the houses were one-story (54%), followed by two-story (30%), three-story (11%) and four-story (5%). Plot sizes were quite large, ranging from 300 to 700m<sup>2</sup>. In terms of building material, about 66% of houses were made of timber roof and sun-dried brick walls. The remaining houses were built from concrete and burnt brick walls. Usually, residents rely on locally available materials, which are cheap and easily accessible, to construct houses. However, this also affects the quality of housing.

Finding of this study are will be discussed in chapter 5.



Figure 24. Street and houses condition in studied area of Afshar (Author's own picture)

Table 6. Characteristics of houses in the study area ( Source: Field survey)

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
No of storey	
Four storey	5
Three storey	11
Two storey	30
One storey	54
Occupancy status	
Own	88
Rent	12
Size of plot/land	
300-400m <sup>2</sup>	84
500-600m <sup>2</sup>	16
Quality of housing	
Concrete roof + burned brick walls	34
Timber roof + sun dried brick walls	66
Residents year in the area	
Less than 10 years	31
Above 10 years	69
Employment status	
Gov. employee and company employee	31
Private worker/labor	59
Unemployed	11

# Chapter 4

## Characteristics and Emergence of Informal Settlements in Kabul City

### 4.1 Characteristics and Growth of Kabul's Informal Settlements

Although research evidence suggests that informal settlements are a universal and/or global phenomenon, there is also a scholarly consensus that there are distinct characteristics and features which are place-based. Subsequently, significant variations exist between and within countries and areas. The emphasis here is therefore to establish the characteristics, social factors and conditions of informal settlements in Kabul city.

In Kabul city, informal settlements are referred to as 'Zor abad', which literally translates as 'land taken by force'. It refers to the areas where people grabbed government and public land and sold it to others or build their houses without seeking official permission. The official criteria are that houses are: (a) in violation of the master plan of Kabul, and (b) without meeting formal requirements for access to land (Gebremedhin 2005).

People are aware of this problem, often referring to the fact that they are living outside the master plan of Kabul dating back to 1970. Accordingly, achieving long-term tenure security is perceived as one of the highest priorities among those households who managed to construct their own housing, as it would give them legitimate standing in the urban environment. This does not only apply to the settlers living in an emerging new settlement but also to long-term dwellers residing in self-built houses on land which has encroached upon, sometimes decades ago (Schutte, 2009).

The emergence of informal settlements has been greatly accelerated by social and political disruptions in the country with continued overwhelming migration from rural areas to Kabul in search of employment and other economic

opportunities and internally displaced persons and Afghan refugees, who left to neighboring countries during the conflict years, have returned to Kabul. Thus, rapid urban population growth and expansion remains a huge challenge for local government authorities in Kabul. The inability of the market to meet housing demand, limited planning capacity and uncontrolled development have meant that informal development of land and housing is a defining feature of urban expansion in Kabul city (Figure 24) The informal settlements occupy approximately 69 percent of existing residential area (World Bank, 2005) (Table 7) Informal settlements are therefore pervasive and extensive.

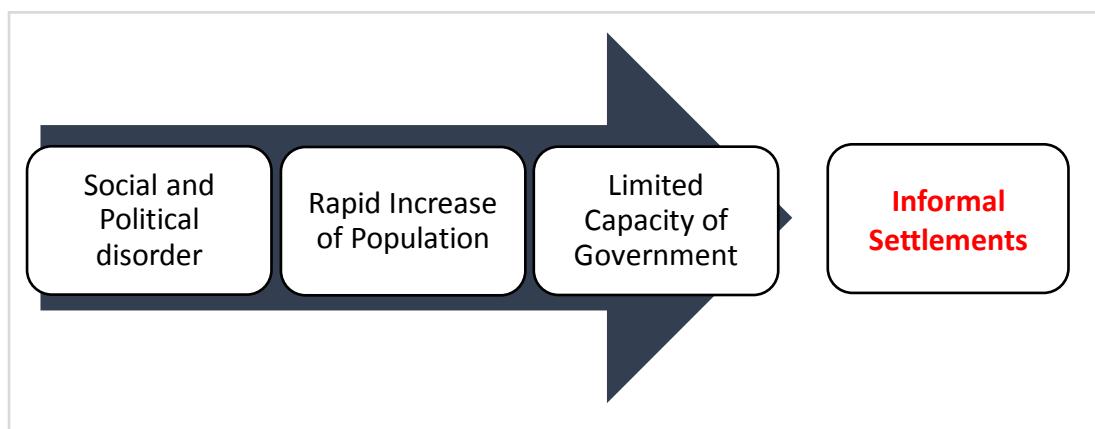


Figure 25. Factors driving informal settlements in Kabul city (Source: Author's Elaboration, 2016)

Table 7. Kabul formal and informal housing  
(Source: interpretation of data from Ikonos Satellite, 2004)

Type of settlements	Area (Km <sup>2</sup> )	Population	Area (%)	Population (%)	Average density (p/ha)
Formal	32.66	531,000	31%	18%	163
Informal	71.56	2,442,000	69%	82%	341
Total residential area	104.22	2,973,000	100%	100%	285

Informal settlements differ in size and other characteristics from country to country Huchzermeyer and Karam (2006). They restrict the term informal settlements to the urban poor, those that have developed through the

unauthorized occupation of land. Moreover, Okyere and Kita (2015) mentioned that informality cannot be simply restricted to the lower and poorer class of people, as it crosses class and social boundaries, occurring even in areas considered highly formal urban structure. Similarly, informal settlements in Kabul are complex and diverse, that consist of different settings, features and accommodate a wide range of social and economic groups of people. They range from high density to low, located centrally in the cities or sprawling at the edge of cities (Figure 24) and some are small in size than formal area, but some are larger and they have different compositions of people poor and rich. However, the vast majority of informal settlements (90.2%) are on land that is considered flat. Consequently, only 9.8% of all informal settlements are on mountain slopes where many houses have not vehicle access and plots are smaller in size. The provision of water and sewerage on the mountain slopes would prove to be initially costly and difficult to service or upgrade.

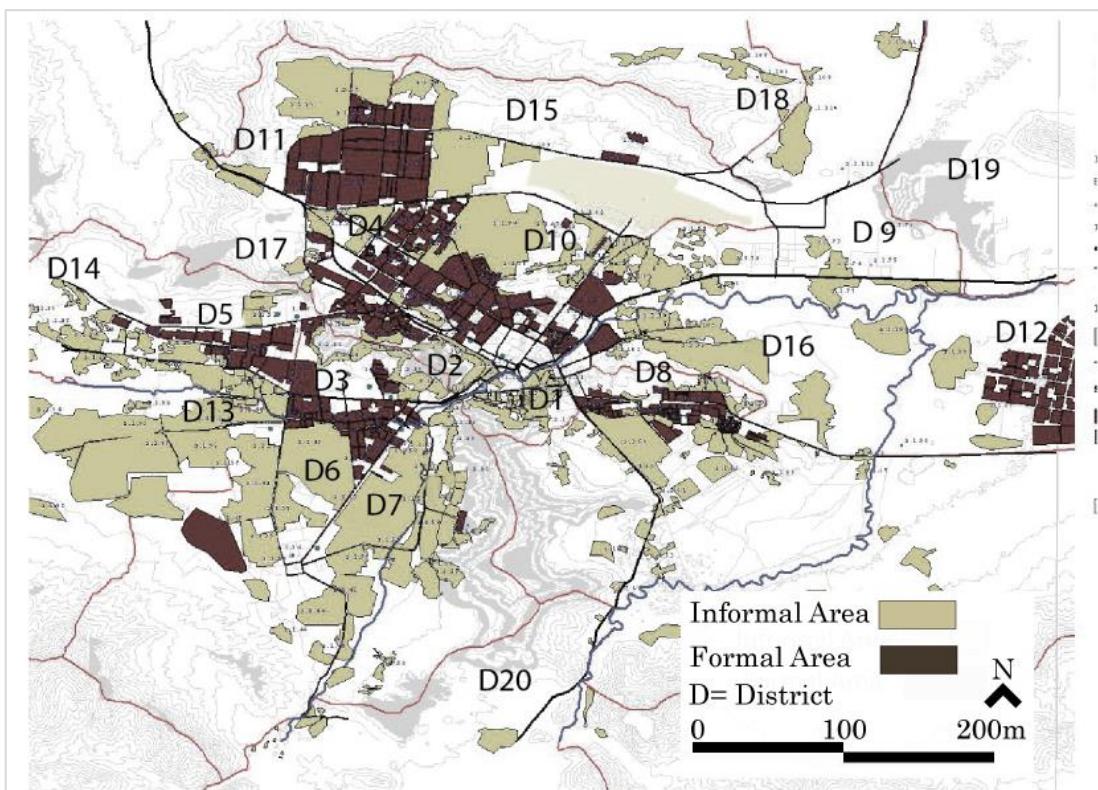


Figure 26. Kabul formal and informal housing

(Source: adapted from ministry of urban development, 2007)

While the informal land development process has been often messy, the overall outcome is certainly positive if one considers that the only possible alternative to informal land development would have been for migrants to live in temporary shelter or refugee camp waiting for the government's resettlement plan to materialize. Given the extraordinary number of people migrating to Kabul over the years, and taking into account the past political instability of the country, it is remarkable that only about 0.5% of the population is currently living in temporary shelters (World Bank, 2005). Therefore, like many settlements in developing countries, informal settlements Kabul offer low-income residents a 'right to the city' at low cost and it also provided adequate shelter to about 80% of low and mid-income families. The advantage of the informal land delivery system has been its ability to distribute land quickly to households who were then able to convert their own labor into capital by building sturdy houses. Because the labor of recent migrants has had very little opportunity cost, the informal land development process has been a boon to the Afghan economy. This is in large part due to the exceptional skill of Afghan rural migrants in building sturdy houses out of local materials. Although these informal settlements suffer from inadequate access to infrastructure, public facilities, as well as some areas being prone to flooding and other natural hazards. Table 8 shows some of the advantage and challenges presented by informal settlements for the residents of Kabul city.

Table 8. Advantage and challenges of Kabul's informal settlement

<i>Advantage typically afforded by informal settlements for the residents of Kabul:</i>	<i>Challenges presented by informal settlements for the residents of Kabul:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides access to the city (economic opportunities, social economic etc.) at unrivalled low cost and low barrier to entry</li> <li>▪ Prevention of the disaster of homeless families</li> <li>▪ Represents to a significant extent, people's choice about where they want to live (subject to a range of constraints) and etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ luck of tenure security</li> <li>▪ Poor sanitation, water supply and internal vehicle access especially those areas which are located on slopes.</li> <li>▪ Fire and health risks</li> <li>Poor structure/ building materials</li> <li>▪ Often poorly serviced with social facilities such as clinic and school (not often) and etc.</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Main Causes of Informal Settlements Development

The cause and emergence of informal settlements in Kabul city manifest themselves in a variety of ways. The development of informal settlements has been to the main problem associated with the expansion of Kabul city. As mentioned earlier there are many factors that affect the development of informal areas in Kabul city, as a result of series of social disruption in the county that led to a wave of displacement and migration, and also existing formal urban planning policies and regulations not being able to cope with the pace of the growth, contributed to the growth of informal settlements. However, according to the studied areas there are several other factors affect the development of informal settlements in Kabul city on undeveloped lands, agricultural lands, and mountain slopes. As shown in (Figure 25) decision to choose Kabul as a place to move in, residents provided a number of reasons, including the job opportunities, the opportunity to own their house (cheap way), and problem in place of origin among other factors. 37.7% of household in survey area explained that they believed there was more employment opportunity in Kabul. It also seems that quite a significant number of household 17.5% said better facility and house opportunity encouraged them to move in Kabul.

It means as a result of urbanization and lack of economic opportunities in rural areas, many people have moved to the Kabul city and settled in informal areas where they have been able to acquire land and get a place of their own at a cheaper price.

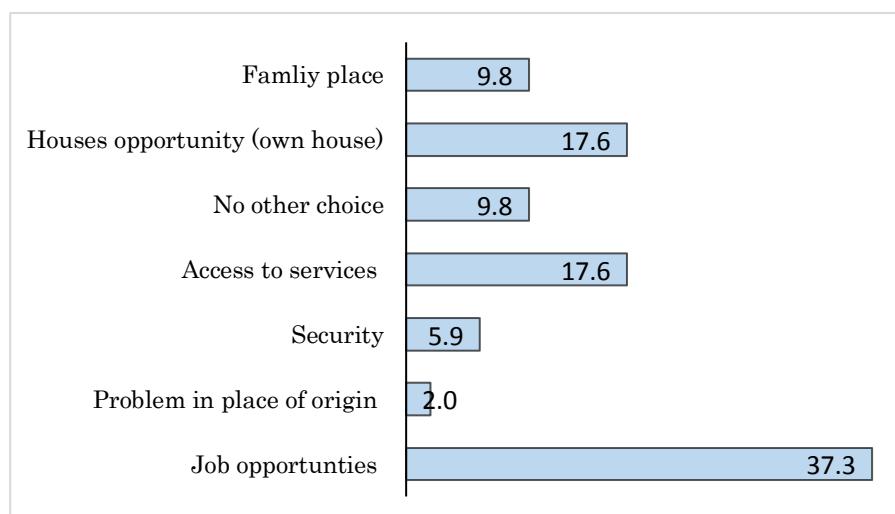


Figure 27. Factors causes migration at informal settlement (Field survey)

### 4.3 Modes of Informal Plot Acquisition and Tenure Issues

Residents in the study areas have been using different ways or modes of acquiring a plot of land from the informal market. However, a vacant plot was the major means of informal land acquisition.

According to the interview with the governmental officials, it shows those vacant plots in the undeveloped land (mostly government land which has preserved for recreations or public facilities) were grabbed by powerful individual and sold to the people at a very low price. This shows how most of the informal settlers have turned owners of their land rather than tenants, it also shows the impact of the informal development of land and housing development in Kabul city that, how residents provide themselves shelter.

The mode of land acquisition in the study areas in (Table 9) shows that buying land was the highest mode of land acquisition, however, this land was bought from other individuals who had grabbed the land without permission and selling it to the local people.

It also shows that occupied land by landowners happened only on mountains slope since that land location is not appropriate for living and those powerful people might had no interest to grab the land and some local people themselves occupied the land.

Table 9. Ways of plot acquisition (Source: Field survey)

Way of Plot Acquisition	Percent %	Surveyed area by Districts (%)			
		D15	D11	D8	D7
Bought the land from local land holder	36.4	60.0	60.0	80.0	
Bought the house and land from previous informal buyer	45.5	6.7	30.0	13.3	
Tenants (by rent)	18.2	13.3	10.0	6.7	
Occupied by themselves with no permission	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	

In general, all of the informal settler in studied areas suffer from insecurity or lack of tenure which they face a number of issues that sometimes limit their ability to improve their houses. As seen in FIG (1995), and the German international technical cooperation agency GTZ (1998), define land tenure as the

relationship between people and land that embodied in land rights and restrictions. Rakodi (2003), also defines tenure in common law terms as a collection of rights, which is a relationship between persons and organizations as to land. Therefore, land tenure is an important part of the social, political and economic structure which define the right to use, control and transfer land.

#### **4.4 Income Status of Residents**

All the respondents in the surveyed areas were male. This is due to the fact that in Muslim societies, men are head of household and women are unwilling to provide any information apart from their husbands. Most of the adult interviewed are in the age cohort of 25 years and above. The majority of the respondents were educated and employed (Table 10). It can, therefore, be concluded that it will be an advantage in case of any attempt at improving the environmental conditions of their settlement

Typical of any other formal or informal settlements, residents of 4 studied area were not willing to talk about their amount of income which they earn per month. There were 2 ways to identifying the low, mid and high-income group. a) Based on the resident's occupations (Table 10), for instance, people who categorized to labor were defined as low-income people, Those people who are categorized to government employee (based on their position) were defined as Mid-income people while engineers, doctors, NGO staff etc. ( based on organization they work for) were defined as high-income people. b) Based on the physical condition of the houses which noticed during the observation of site. However, (a) and (b) has checked and compared and there was no case that high-income household had bad condition houses.

The study areas reveals that 55.1% of the respondents are low-income, 28.5% are medium income while 16.4% are high-income.

This shows one the features of Kabul's informal settlements that accommodated a wide range of social and economic groups of people from low to high income.

Table 10. The income status of the residents based on their occupation in the 4 surveyed areas (Field survey)

Study areas	High-income	Mid-income	Low-income	Total
Taimani (D-15)	NGO. staff (1), Engineer (1)	Gov. Emp (2), Pri. Worker (1)	Shopkeeper (2), Labor (2), Driver(1), Guard (1)	11
Tap-e Panjsad Family (D-11)	Currency Exc (1)	Gov. Emp (2), Pri. Worker (1)	Driver (2), Jobless (1), Labor (4), Teacher (1), Shopkeeper (2), Mechanic (1)	15
Shah Shahid (D-8)	Businessman (1), Doctor (1), Engineer (1)	Gov. Emp (3)	Teacher (1), Shopkeeper (1)Labor (1), Carpenter (1)	10
Chihil Sotun (D-7)	Businessman (1), Engineer (1), Doctor (1)	Gov. Emp (5)	Teacher (1), Mechanic (1), Painter (1), Shopkeeper(1), Labor (1), Guard (1), Butcher (1)	15

#### 4.5 Quality of Housing and its Typology

The quality of housing consists of many factors including the physical condition of the building and other social and public facilities in an area. However, our focus is particularly just about the physical condition of buildings, which observed during the survey. The residential housing stock of Kabul has been divided into five types depending on the dwelling design: apartments, townhouses, detached houses, courtyard houses, and houses built on slopes. However, there are two types of housing existing across the surveyed areas: detached-based and courtyard-based. Courtyard houses are the most dominant and preferred typology in surveyed areas, which cover 92% of the houses. The structure of the houses built by the house owner, are made of basic construction materials (raw and cheap materials) however they are mostly sturdy, in rare cases, only (8%) detached-based housed were also found, which were made of modern materials like concrete structure consists of two or three floors (Figure 26).

The World Bank (2005) conducted a study on Kabul urban land crisis and informal settlements, the study compares the use of land on two plots of identical size (390m<sup>2</sup>) (figure 27) “the first plot consists a typical detached house on plot (15m×26m) commonly found in a formal subdivision; the second plot is nearly square (20m×26m), typical of courtyard houses found in a formal subdivisions. The detached house leaves only two small front and back yards for the ground

floor area of 165m<sup>2</sup>. By contrast, the courtyard of 10mx14m and much larger built area of 250m<sup>2</sup>".



Figure 28. Physical condition of house in studied areas (Author's own pictures)

The above explanation shows that courtyard houses reflects demand and is efficient in term of land use where the land could be subdivided and fully utilized for a new program without wasting space (compared to a detached house) as well as it is more efficient.

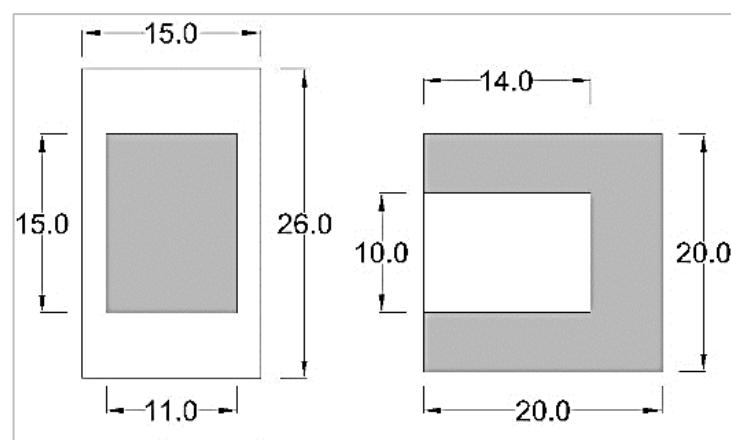


Figure 29. Comparison the use of land on detached and courtyard based house  
(Source: World Bank report, 2005)

it was mentioned above that detached-based house also found at surveyed areas, which were made of modern materials, basically, those are new houses that the owners rebuilt their houses, and mostly found in *Shah Shahid* and *Chihil Sotun* areas which are upgraded areas. Therefore, the rebuilt houses that are only 8% found in upgraded areas, may be due to the upgrading of the areas, which encouraged the land owner to rebuilt/improve the houses. It is important to mention that housing was not considered in the government upgrading plan. (Figure 28 shows the typical plan of courtyard and detached houses which found in survey areas)



Figure 30. Typical plan of courtyard and detached based house at surveyed areas Source: Author's Illustration, 2016

The study conducted reveals that 63.2% of the physical condition of the houses at studied areas were in poor condition, 25% are in moderate condition and only 14.7% are in good condition (Table11).

Table 11. Comparison of income status of residents and its housing quality (Field survey)

Income	(%)	Quality of housing (%)		
		Good	Moderate	Poor
High-income	16.4	10.3	6.3	0.0
Mid-income	28.5	4.4	11.2	10.6
Low-income	55.1	0.0	4.6	52.6
Total	100	14.7	22.1	63.2
Grand total		100	N=51	

It is mentionable that criteria for good and poor house building are based on material, paint, wall and appearance of the houses, and also the study reveals that it's the income of the household that determine the quality of the house; most of the houses with poor condition are belonging to the low-income category (Table.11). Therefore, the income has a great impact on the quality of house being constructed.

## Chapter 5

### Overview of the Informal Settlement Upgrading in Kabul City

#### 5.1 Informal Settlement Upgrading in Kabul City

Following the discussion of the characteristics of informal settlements in Kabul, the chapter empirically analyses the effect of upgrading, as a mechanism to improve informal settlement conditions. Specifically, house improvement, accessibility and local economic are considered in the analyses of effects of upgrading.

Generally, given the fact the informal settlement areas are significantly larger, it is not realistic to redevelop informal areas through total clearance of informal houses as sometimes practiced before. Thus, in an attempt to confront the growing expanse of informal settlements in Kabul, the government of Afghanistan with support from international aid agencies (UN Habitat, World Bank, etc.) has been executing upgrading program in various distract of Kabul city. The definition of upgrading in Kabul has been crucial however the tentative definitions was developed which encompassed six components of an upgrading program: enhanced access to and quality of basic services, community participation, improved local infrastructures, security of land tenure, economic and social development, and political recognition (KURP, 2010). The program have focused on community planning and mobilization coupled with improving elements of the physical infrastructure, such as (paving the streets and footpaths, improving drains and sanitation and providing electricity and water) (figure 29), securing land tenure and preserving historical districts. The programs has several underlying principles of which according to KURP 2010, identifies five elements of urban upgrading: improved access to urban services, integration into urban development plans, recognition of occupancy rights, strengthening social capital among residents, and boost to municipal revenues.

The program is organized at three main levels UN-Habitat (2009): community, municipal and national levels. At the community level, families and residents form 'community development councils' (CDC) are responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of projects (e.g. roads, drainages, and open spaces). Cities, such as Kabul, at the municipal level design development strategies and train their staff to work with local residents. The national level involves strategies, laws, and policies that support and strengthen upgrading processes at the local level. Moreover, this program is organized in five phases, involving fifteen strategic steps (Figure 30). Since its introduction in 2005, and some districts have been upgraded. It involved community consultations (mostly composed of men) to discuss neighborhood priorities. Communities, in the form of the CDC, contributed 10-15 percent of the project cost. The program also recognized each household right to security of tenure, access to public services and participation (UN-Habitat, 2009).



Figure 31. Process of streets and drainage improvement (Author's own pictures)

Most of existing informal areas in Kabul city are subject for upgrading except, areas not suitable for living, such as mountain slopes area and flood prone areas, and areas where public interest need to pursued, including such cases as groundwater recharges area (JICA, 2011). However, for the government, there is no other way but proceed upgrading in a gradual manner. Therefore, the municipality present some criteria for selection of target settlement. Following conditions are the criteria to set the priority for upgrading.

- Land not belonging to the state or other public entity, without litigation or legal obstacles
- Well located or proximity to the city center: Distance from the city center is good indicator for setting the priority. As traffic is concentrated around the city center improvement of community roads will help distributing the traffic. Although this will result in mixture of passing through traffic to the residential area, the area close to the city center is more or less commercial.
- Preparation of neighborhood plan by residents: full understanding and agreement of land preservation and acquisition. A key for this to happen is to set the preparation of the community level land use plans as a condition for implementation of upgrading project by the municipality. Because these settlements are not developed according to plan, some part of resident's plot may need to use for public facilities particularly widening the width of the roads.

According to program is organized at three main levels:

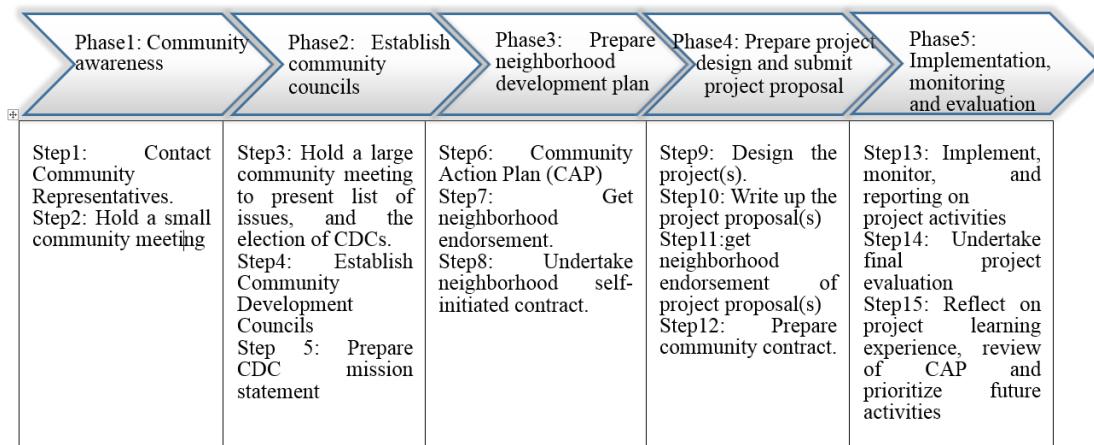


Figure 32. Community mobilization process (Source: UN-HABITAT, 2009)

## 5.2 Effect of Upgrading in the Studied Area

The study revealed that the main upgrading interventions in the studied area have been paving the streets and construction of drainage facilities aimed at improving the physical condition of the area. Additionally, electricity has been provided to all houses in the area. Thus, the upgrading program in the area has been minimal and physically oriented. The reason for this, as revealed during the institutional interviews, is due to financial constraints and the incremental nature of the upgrading program. In other words, the city has adopted a 'piecemeal approach' in the implementation. In view of the evolution of upgrading programs to adopt an integrated approach which considers physical, social, recreational, environmental, economic, and institutional dimensions, it can be argued that the *Afshar* case is basic, lacks integration and fails to take a composite view of informal settlement improvement.

This stands in marked contrast to Hasan's (2006) findings of a more holistic implementation of upgrading in Karachi, Pakistan, which includes economic, social and physical considerations. Thus, residents were quick to identify the limited upgrading interventions, with majority mentioning the need for playgrounds and parks in the settlement as a recreational and socializing facility for both kids and adults. The municipality, on the other hand, indicated that aside from the constraints mentioned earlier, there was no land available for facilities like parks and playgrounds, as residents tend to build in an uncontrolled manner, grabbing land without any reservation for public facilities.

Even though upgrading interventions have been minimal, respondents have access to sanitation and water. Piped water did not exist in the settlement; rather all residents rely on privately dug wells and hand-pumps, which is not uncommon in several parts of Kabul city. Again, even four years after upgrading, local schools, and clinics are not available in the settlement. Respondents cover an average of 20 minutes by car to access such facilities outside the settlement

The study therefore, sought to understand the effects of the upgrading program in the *Afshar* informal area. This was considered in terms of housing improvement, accessibility, and local economy (small business and stores). In order to identify the effects of the upgrading program, respondents were given

two-time frames: 2002 to 2012 and 2012 to 2016. The year 2012 was the reference point since the settlement was upgraded in 2012. These two-time frames provided a reference to understand the before and after situation and thus, analyze effects.

Though minimal in its implementation, residents alluded to some positive effects of the upgrading program in their settlement. Consequently, this section is dedicated to understanding these effects in light of results from the survey.

### 5.2.1 Effect on Houses Improvement

One of the critical initiatives in informal settlement upgrading is housing, especially in terms of quality. Interview with residents indicated that the city upgrading program did not provide any specific housing improvement support. Housing improvements were done by residents themselves. As indicated in Figure 31, before upgrading (2002-2012), no significant activities had been done to improve the quality of housing. There were occasional repair and extension works to fix minor problems such as cracks and damages and house extensions for increasing household size. On the other hand, after the upgrading the areas (2012-2016), there appeared significant changes in house improvement (Figure 32). The proportion of residents who had made improvements to their houses had increased from 22 percent to 60 percent. Out of this, majority repaired their houses (36%) or repaired and extended through additional floors to the existing house (8%). Others have completely reconstructed their houses (16%).

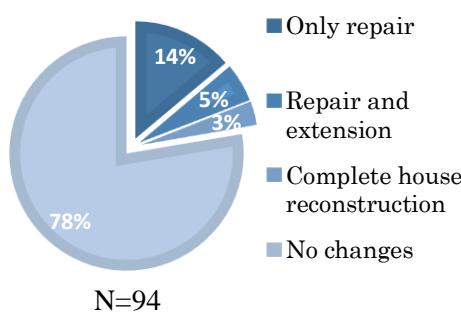


Figure 33. Houses improvement before upgrading (2002-2012) (Source: Field survey)

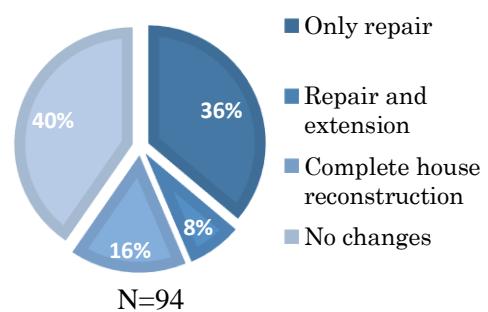


Figure 34. Houses improvement after upgrading (2012-2016) (Source: Field survey)

Contrary to house improvements before upgrading, residents indicated that upgrading had improved the appearance of their settlement. They explained that were self-motivated to improve the conditions of their houses to match the ‘new’ neighborhood improvements. Thus, modernizing the house—in terms of aesthetics, use of modern material like tiles, glass and concrete and facilities like flush toilets—increased from 10 (before upgrading) to 25 percent (Figure 33& Figure 34). Again, residents intimated that these attracted new residents into the neighborhood. They consequently were taking advantage of the opportunity to extend their houses to rent to these new residents. This explains why after the upgrading, 13 percent of interviewed residents had extended their houses. Together, these factors are leading to the gradual disappearance of traditional, single-storey, low-quality houses in the settlement to ‘modernized’ houses (See Figure 35).

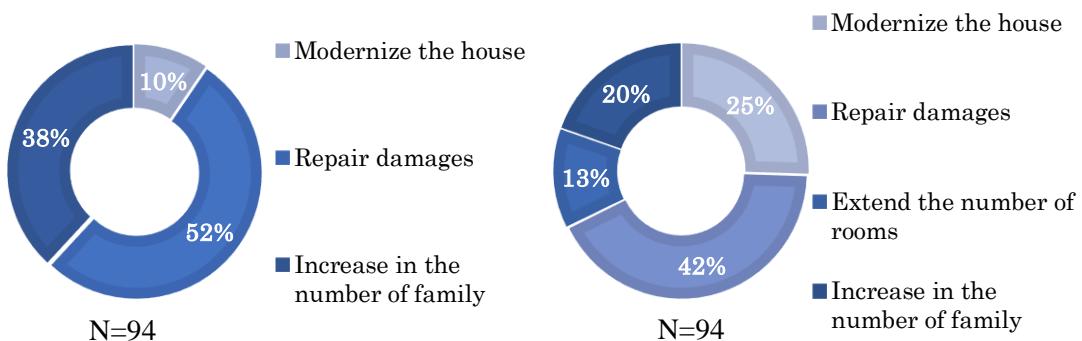


Figure 35. Reason for changes before upgrading (2002-2012) (Source: Field survey)

Figure 36. Reason for changes after upgrading (2012-2016) (Source: Field survey)

This suggests settlement upgrading can have a positive influence on resident’s house improvement practices. It points to Turner’s (1974) ‘self-help’ initiatives in housing and neighborhood improvement, and that residents possess the ability to foster meaningful changes in improving the deplorable housing conditions common in informal settlements in developing countries. It also confirms research findings in other cities in Afghanistan like Kandahar (Turkstra and Popal, 2010) that settlement upgrading contributes to self-build improvement activities in housing.



Figure 37. Houses improvement in the study area (Author's own pictures)

### 5.2.2 Effect of Upgrading on the Accessibility of the Area

Surface accessibility is very important in informal settlements as there are often times limited alternative modes of transport to different parts of the settlement or the larger city.

Another effect of settlement upgrading that emerged from the interviews is the issue of road accessibility in the *Afshar* area. Before upgrading, household's mentioned that their area was highly inaccessibility in the rainy seasons. During the period of heavy rains, which occur annually, roads were flooded and not accessible. Again, the lack of roads on main access routes implied that both walking and vehicular access was a huge challenge in the rainy days (Figure 36). As indicated earlier, most facilities like schools, clinic/hospital, and other economic facilities were located outside the settlement. Before upgrading, it took local residents an average distance of approximately 20 minutes by car to access such basic facilities in a nearby settlement. The fare cost for this is about 80 AFN (1.2US\$ October 2016).

The construction of drainage facilities and the paving of all streets in the *Afshar* areas has greatly impacted accessibility after upgrading. Interviews revealed that roads are accessible at all times of the year. The majority of residents mentioned that, average distance to access facilities in the nearby

settlement has reduced from 20 to 10 minutes. The cost of vehicle transport (usually taxi service) has also reduced 80AFN (1.2US\$) to 50AFN (0.8US\$). Observations during the survey showed children playing on the streets, adult residents chatting across and more residents walking, even during the rainy days.

This finding corresponds to Gouverneur's (2015) claim that informal settlement upgrading has proven to improve mobility and accessibility and enhanced informal settlements access to critical services and facilities—both internally and externally. It also implies that settlement upgrading has the possibility to alter human behavior, in this case encouraging walking and increasing social use of paved roads within the neighborhoods.



Figure 38. Streets and drainage improvement (Source: KMDP, 2016)

### 5.2.3 Effect of Upgrading on Local Economy

It has become quite clear that small-scale non-formalized economic activities (informal sector) are inseparable from the socio-spatial organization of residents in informal settlements. This study found the existence of commercial activities like home-based shops in informal settlements in Kabul, including the *Afshar* area.

The survey revealed that local economic activities have intensified in the area following the upgrading of the settlement. Before the upgrading, there were few shops and most of them were home-based economic activities. However, during the survey, there were several mixed-used developments in the area. Out of the 46 percent of households who were living in more than one storey dwellings, about 10.5 percent have turned the first floor into stores. These stores usually trade in domestic goods, grocery and a limited amount of electrical goods serve two important purposes: providing a source of income for the owners and renters and helping to improve residents' access to basic goods in the neighborhood. Such mixed-use (commercial and residence) activities exists in several parts of the *Afshar* area, especially in multi-story housing transformations (Fig.9 and 10). The motivation for such new 'developments', according to residents is to take advantage of the new improvements in the area and the increase in residents due to the upgrading program.

Again, 68% of interviewees also indicated that before, the condition of roads did not make such local economic activities feasible. Prior to the upgrading program, shop owners indicated that the dusty road meant they had to clean their products frequently or close the shops during the rainy season. However, with improved road conditions and improved accessibility, local residents were patronizing such shops and commercial centers. These shops and small economic activities have become vital to the local economic base of the *Afshar* area. It points to the fact that settlement upgrading does not only encourage resident investment in their house but also into small scale commercial activities that can have a positive effect on the local economy in the long run. As Horen (2004) has revealed in a number of case studies in Asia, upgrading programs have had the long effect on local economic basis of informal settlements. The case of *Afshar*, thus, affirms

that settlement improvement encourages house owners to make investments that support the local economy.



Figure 39. New shops in new Multi-story housing (Author's own picture)



Figure 40. New shops along improved roads (Author's own picture)

#### 5.2.4 Satisfaction and Perception of Changes within the Neighborhood

This part of the paper focuses on the composite effect of house improvement, surface accessibility, and local economic activities on resident's satisfaction with the settlement upgrading. Residents were asked to choose satisfied or dissatisfied based on the physical improvements, accessibility, and introduction of shops and other commercial services. From the results, 91 percent of interviewed residents were satisfied with improvements and current conditions in the settlement (Figure 37).

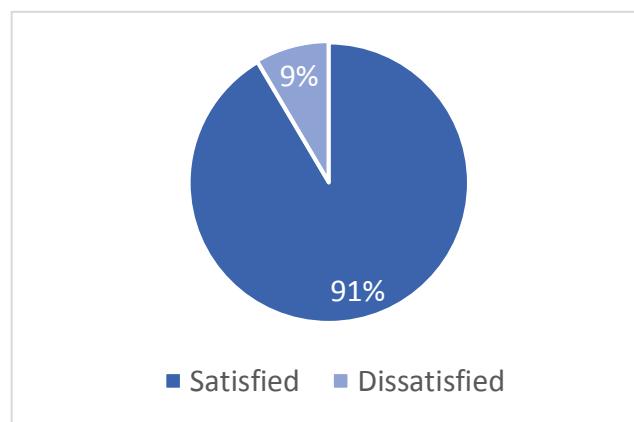


Figure41. Resident's satisfaction (Field survey)

For those who were satisfied, they assert that the physical appearance of the settlement has greatly improved with the introduction of drainage facilities, sewer, road pavement, and individual efforts to improve the physical condition of their houses. The reasons for this positive experience is due to improved accessibility and decrease in cost of taxi fares (55.3%), improved environment (21.3%), available new social space for kids to play and adults to chat (17%), and the new shops and commercial activities that has improved access to basic goods and services (6.4%) (Table 2).

Table 12. Reasons for Satisfaction (Field Survey)

Reasons for satisfaction with the neighborhood	Valid (%)
Supported social gathering	2.1
Improved local economy	6.4
Taxi cost cheaper	11.7
Created space for children to play	14.9
The physical condition of the area has improved	21.3
Improved accessibility	43.6

On the other hand, a few of the residents were unsatisfied (8%) with the upgrading for a couple of reasons. The two main reasons were the lack of public or open spaces for recreation and social facilities such as, park and playground clinics, schools, and among others. Residents lamented the lack of open spaces for recreation, which they underlined as important in improving social connections and enhancing security in the area. Even though accessibility has improved, respondents maintained that the lack of improved water and facilities affected their overall experience and comfort in the area. This is so because the majority of the residents continue to depend on hand-dug wells which are not always reliable. The rationale for respondent's dissatisfaction points to the limited nature of the upgrading program, which focused on physical improvements without adequate interventions to public facilities that can foster social and environmental improvements in the *Afshar* area.

It defeats the general government policy of integrated informal settlement upgrading, which in the case of *Afshar*, is non-existent.

## Chapter 6

### Completion

This chapter contains the summary of the study, the major finding and the conclusions which are organized in relation to the objective and aim of the research.

#### 6.1 Conclusion

The informal growth of urban settlements has become a phenomenon characteristic of developing countries where planning and law implementation are deficient and government agencies are unequipped to deal with rapid urbanization. Kabul one of those fast growing cities which has experienced a major population growth in the last decades, with many challenges including informal settlements, which have become an inevitable manifestation. A rapid increase in the urban population of Kabul and its related consequences have been difficult to handle and manage, and also, the limited capacity of the government to meet the high demand for building plots has led to the growth of informal settlements. Today informal settlements represent about 69% of all residential areas in Kabul city and provide shelter to about 80% of its inhabitants. These settlements mainly characterized by informal land tenure, inadequate access to basic public services, and lack of physical infrastructure like paved roads, drainage, and sanitation.

In response, the Afghan government with support from international development agencies has been implementing upgrading program in various distract of Kabul city. The program has focused on community planning and mobilization coupled with improving elements of the physical infrastructure, such as (paving the streets and footpaths, improving drains and sanitation and providing electricity and water), securing land tenure and preserving historical districts.

This research therefore has attempted to analyze the comprehensive characteristics and conditions of informal settlements in Kabul city including, characteristics and conditions of houses, cause for its appearance, housing typology, the income of residents and perception, and the process of land acquisition. Furthermore, this study trying to understand the effect of upgrading program in Kabul city's informal settlements as a form of government intervention, by exploring how upgrading of informal areas effect on house improving, local economy and accessibility. Moreover, to explore satisfaction of resident's in the settlement after upgrading and identity lesson for their improving. The main finding is summarized as following.

- ❖ Informal settlements are mainly characterized by insecure residential status, inadequate access to infrastructure and public services, substandard housing, and building structure.
- ❖ Most of the residents are private owners rather than tenants. This demonstrates the mechanism through which several low-income people gain access to housing and contribute to the formation of informal settlements.
- ❖ There are many factors contributed to the growth of informal settlements, however the most critical factors include; migration of people from rural areas to the Kabul city for looking job opportunities, opportunity for the people to own their house in a cheap way and also limited capacity of the government to meet the high demand for building plots has helped to this growth.
- ❖ Various kind of houses could be found in informal settlements from low-quality houses, constructed by the use of raw materials to high-quality houses, constructed by the use of modern building materials and in a great condition. By implication, one can argue that some households in informal settlements have the economic and technical ability to build modern and advanced structures; contrary to the dominant perspectives of informal residents in Kabul and other developing cities are generally poor people. This is one of the features of informal settlements in Kabul that accommodated a diverse mix of social and economic groups of people. The study also revealed that income has a great impact on the quality of

housing or depending on the financial status of the owner, most of the houses with the good condition are belonging to the high-income category.

- ❖ The courtyard base houses are the most used (about 92% of informal household), but new houses are mainly detached.
- ❖ Residents in the study areas have been using different ways or modes of acquiring a plot of land from the informal market. However buying land was the highest mode of land acquisition, and this land was bought from other individuals, who had grabbed the land without permission and selling it to the local people.
- ❖ The upgrading program in Kabul is limited, piecemeal and concentrated on physical improvements. Thus, drainage, pavement, sewer among others have been the main interventions. The project thus lacks the needed integration that has characterized recent innovations in upgrading in neighboring countries.
- ❖ The upgrading programs have encouraged individual house improvements, investment in local economic activities and enhanced vehicular accessibility and the social use of the street. This shows that in spite of its limitations, upgrading is still useful as a strategy for improving informal settlements.

## 6.2 Recommendation

Based on the finding of the research and conclusion of the study some of the recommendations are as follow:

- The issue of land tenure must be looked into as the first priority for the legalization of informal areas. It becomes very difficult to provide decent housing and basic services where title on the land is uncertain. Furthermore, informal settlements dwellers can be encouraged to investigate more on their houses and be active on the improvement of their neighborhood.
- Taking into account, that every districts and neighborhood has distinct characteristics. It needs to take into consideration the distinctiveness and peculiarities of each of the areas to promote planning and design strategies that correspond to existing conditions and characteristics.
- The social mix of residents (different income groups), is important and positive. The city authorities should maintain and promote this social mix of different income groups to ensure that the situation of segregation of poor or low-income people, common in traditional informal settlements is prevented. It's recommended that the city authorities promote such diversity and mix in future development plans.
- Most of the city expansion and growth is occurring in informal areas. Urban development strategies should pay particular attention to these areas through proactive plans and provide the necessary urban services and facilities which will consequently ensure the better living experience for residents.
- Upgrading programs have encouraged individual house improvements, investment in local economic activities and enhanced vehicular accessibility and the social use of the street, therefore, upgrading is considered as a useful strategy for improving informal settlements the city authorities should work more on it. The study suggests a need to critically rethink the upgrading interventions in Kabul city and other cities in Afghanistan

- There is also the need to build the capacity of local government institutions to foster the effectiveness of these interventions. It also requires the need to promote community based strategy (CBS) through NGOs and government and civil society collaboration to promoting peace and harmony.
- Aside from NGOs considered in the previous point, the study suggests the potential for building on community-led planning and development initiatives. Several of the informal communities studied have an existing social structure based on religions or community-based social systems. In light of this, local leaders can organize residents within their areas for simple, incremental, improvement activities beginning from commons spaces to other public areas. In the absence of effective local government support for informal communities, such collective improvement and local management activities have the prospect of promoting better living conditions for the urban environment and the people as a whole.
- In view of scholarly research evidence that open spaces contribute to an effective public realm, and the sustaining community life, the problem of limited space for open spaces in the settlement is a very critical urban problem. It therefore points to the need for land readjustment experimentation in the area and the subsequent need for conversion of existing structures to the public spaces like park and playground. There are on-going discussions to employ land readjustment and the findings from this study further reinforce its significance.
- The community based upgrading recommended, especially by effort of religious or community leader particularly, in slope areas where the government is not focusing much (by giving the priority for common spaces like mosque

### **6.3 Further research needs**

This study—including its limitations and main findings—serve as an important premise for future research into informal settlement research in Kabul. Firstly, the area of community organizing and community based improvement practices is a formidable area of research, especially in terms of improving existing conditions. Thus, further research could investigate the potential of existing community socio-religious structure for collective improvement exercises. Such a study will be useful for understanding the factors which can support and the challenges that limit community-based improvement.

Another area of important research could be on the spatial structure of informal settlements in Kabul. Focusing on space, human behavior and management of common facilities will provide a significant input into the intersections of space, society and culture and how these can be framed to promote local improvement in informal settlements in Kabul. It is a useful area of research which has proven important to disadvantaged communities and potentially relevant in informal settlements in Kabul. Since statistical and other important spatial data are inadequate within the institutional setting, this kind of socio-spatial research, with its eventual findings, can contribute to research-based evidence to guide future planning and development of informal settlements in Kabul city.

## **Appendix A: Land Policies Regarding Informal Settlements**

### **Government of Afghanistan and Ministry of Urban Development Policies Regarding Land Tenure Security, Informal Settlements and Upgrading Government Land Policy**

#### **—2.2.1 Policies:**

It is national policy that the government draws clear distinctions between types of tenure insecurity and provides appropriate legal and administrative solutions for the various forms of insecurities.

It is national policy that the constitutional guarantees for security of tenure are observed ...

It is national policy that alternative forms of tenure together with sufficient safeguards ... be available to ... urban dwellers.

#### **—2.2.3 Policies:**

It is a national policy that a management system be built upon the legal and institutional frameworks with the objective to prevent land grabbing in the future and deal with the acts of grab that have happened in the past.

It is a national policy that legislation should be enacted or existing law modified to clearly establish that as of the effective date of this policy no person who occupies public land can obtain any kind of right to the land or any real property erected on the land.

It is a national policy that the law on land grabbing distinguishes the instances of individuals who have acquired appropriated land in good faith, and squatters who occupy public land in order to accommodate themselves and their immediate household from cases in which land has been grabbed by individuals for distribute [sic] to followers or sold off for profit. In the case of the former categories, there shall be a formalization law that provides for a standard by which the government will grant secure tenure of real property.

#### **—2.2.4 Policies**

It is national policy that all land development be carried out in accordance with approved plans developed by competent authorities in consultation with local

communities. Such plans shall consider both the current and future needs of communities. The government shall promote the upgrading of informal settlements in tandem with progressive housing development.

It is national policy that residential areas formed on public or government land grabbed by powerful people shall not be covered by upgrading programs promoted by the government and the government shall take appropriate legal measures to deal with the unlawful occupation in accordance with the law.<sup>47</sup>

It is national policy that the government shall endeavor to upgrade the basic services of residential areas formed on public land occupied by homeless squatters on habitable land. The relevant municipality in consultation with the Ministry of Urban Development shall determine the habitability of an area taking into account clearly defined environmental and planning criteria ....

Eligible households will be granted residence permit based on status of property right clarification process to be launched by the government.

It is national policy that the Government gradually upgrades informal settlements formed on privately owned and environmentally tenable land as certified by the Ministry of Urban Development and relevant municipality ... The government shall promote land tenure regularization in these areas in collaboration with relevant communities based on standards to be established by law. ....

#### —2.2.5 Policy

It is a national policy that the national and provincial governments take measures to protect citizens including residents of informal settlements from arbitrary and forcible eviction. Eviction and relocation of unplanned settlement residents shall be undertaken with community involvement only for necessary spatial rearrangement which should take effect in accordance with the public's interest.<sup>48</sup>

#### —2.2.7 Policy

It is a national policy that land ownership may be documented through a process of property clarification and certification process [sic] conducted at the community level.

It is a national policy that recognition be given, in accordance with a law to be issued to government the regularization of property rights, to customary

documentation and legitimate traditional property rights affirmed by local knowledge.

#### —3.1.8 Policy

It is a national policy to restore stability of land ownership through the promotion of alternative dispute resolution processes such as arbitration, mediation and conciliation at a district or community level. ...

Disputes resolved through a community-based dispute resolution process which are not in contravention of the law shall be given full faith and credit by the formal justice sector.

## Appendix B: The Questionnaires

### The Questionnaire for the residents (Characteristics of Informal Settlements)

No	District		No of story	
	House No		No of Rooms	
	Occupation	Gov. employee	No of family past/present	
1	What is your occupancy status	Own		
		Rent		
		If own, do you have any document?		
		If rent, how much do you pay per month?		
2	How you acquire the land/house ( if its own)			
3	When did you buy or rent the house?			
4	How the land distributed in the area? Any idea			
5	What is the approximate size of the land you use?			
6	Type of quality of housing	Concrete roof + burned brick walls		
		Timber roof + sun dried brick walls		
		Mud house + roof timbers		
7	Are you satisfied from the spaces of your house?	The houses space is acceptable for living		
		The house has enough privacy		
		The height of the houses acceptable		
		Natural light		
		others		
		If no, what is required?		
8	Have you made changes to number of rooms/floor or anything for improvement/ repairing the condition of your house?			
9	If yes, which parts of the housing did you change, and what promoted you to make these changes			
10	How long have you lived in this area?			
11	Where did you live before?			

12	Can you describe the reason of moving in this area	
13	What do you like most in this area	
14	What do you consider bad in this area	
15	Do you have other members of your family/relatives in this community	
16	Do you have any social relationship with your neighbors	Visiting each other at house for chatting Cooking and eating Spending time outside(planned in advance) Communication or chatting on the street Helping out (take care of each other child, etc) Participation in the parties Others
17	How often do you pray at mosque together with other people in the neighborhood	(1-2) times per day (2-3) time per day (4-5) time per day Only on Friday
18	What kinds of facility exist in the area?	School Park Hospital/clinic Mosque Water and electricity
19	What are the challenges you face in accessing these facilities? If any	
20	What do you think should be the main priority for improving your neighborhood?	School Kindergarten Street improvement Electricity and water Park/playground Infrastructure Medical service/hospital/drug store Bank Gym Public transportation Mosque Market Other

21	'What kinds of upgrading have done in the area by government or another international organization?	Paving the street	
		Construction of drainage/culverts	
		Supply clean water	
		Supply of power	
		Waste management	
		Others	
22	What is the level of participation from community members?		
23	How you are satisfy with upgrading project which have already done?		
24	What is the problem after upgrading if any?		
25	Do you participate and cooperate in maintenance, gardening, cleaning or any other activities in order to have a better environment?	If yes, how often	(1-2)times per week
			(2-3)times per week
			Almost everyday
		If No, whose responsible	Governme nt
			Internatio nal organizati on
			Others

**The Questionnaire for the residents (Effect of Upgrading)**

No	District	No of story	
	House No	No of Rooms	
	Occupation	No of family past/present	
1	What is your occupancy status	Own	
		Rent	
		If own, do you have a registration ownership?	
2	How long have you been living in this area?		
4	What is the approximate size of the land you use?		
5	Type of quality of housing? (Observation)	Concrete roof + burned brick walls	
		Timber roof + sun dried brick walls	
		Mud house + roof timbers	
6	Have you made changes to the number of rooms/floor or anything for improvement/ repairing the condition of your house from 2012-2016 and from 2002-2012? (Year)?	2002-2012	
		2012-2016	
7	If yes, which parts of the housing did you change, and what promoted you to make these changes? (Year)?	2002-2012	
		2012-2016	
8	What kind of upgrading has been done in this area and when (year)?	Paving the street	
		Construction of drainage/culverts	
		Supply clean water	
		Supply of power	
		Other	
9	Have you participated in discussion regarding upgrading of the area? If yes, what was your role? If no, do you know anyone in the settlement whom was involved?		
10	What is the level of your satisfaction with the physical environment and quality of life in the settlement now?	A: Very satisfied      B: Satisfied      C: Dissatisfied Please explain:	
11	What was the level of your satisfaction before upgrading of the area?	A: Very satisfied      B: Satisfied      C: Dissatisfied Please explain:	

12	How the upgrading project have improved the area?	A, local economy B, Service and accessibility C, Recreation D, Other Explain:
13	Has the upgrading brought any affect to your houses?	
14	What kinds of public facilities exist in the area? Walking distance (minutes)	School Park Hospital/clinic Mosque Water and electricity
15	Has the upgrading improved the use of these facilities?	
16	What do you think should be the main priority for improving your neighborhood?	

## **Questionnaire for Ministry of urban development and Kabul municipality**

- 1) How would you summarize the situation of informal settlements in Kabul?
- 2) What are the main positive elements/value of informal settlements?
- 3) What factors are contributing to the growth of informal settlements in Kabul?
- 4) How does the presence and growth of informal settlements affect the city of Kabul?
- 5) What is the Strategy and approach of your organization to informal settlement?
- 6) What major projects have you done to improve condition of informal settlements?
- 7) What have been the benefit of such project in informal communities?
- 8) Have you done some activities/project to reduce vulnerability to disaster (such as flooding, etc?)  
If no, why?  
If yes, can you please specify such activities?
- 9) How do you involve the community members in the planning and
- 10) What are the role/benefit of community organization in the upgrading projects?
- 11) What challenges do you face in implementation of the upgrading project?
- 12) What are the main focus areas of your work in Kabul?
- 13) What is the reason for selection of specific areas for upgrading/ or base on what criteria do you chose the areas?
- 14) What is the future plan of government about informal settlement?
- 15) What is the role and importance of land tenure security?
- 16) Does the government is trying to provide ownership besides upgrading?

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