

# Capital Transfer through Transmitting Towns Consistent with the Talibanism View in Architecture and Urban Planning

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## Abstract

The concentration of facilities, services and activities in an area leads to massive migration in the territory and neglect of existing capacities and resources in the territory, which is a critical situation in the long run. If the location of the capital is not correct, it will cause problems whether in terms of defense and security or in terms of natural resources and urban infrastructure, not only for the capital but also for the whole country. In this study, we seek to examine the situation of Kabul as a capital city and provide proposed solutions to improve the current situation and the possibility of moving the capital. For this purpose, the required information was collected using a documentary study, available information, and the latest master plan of Kabul city, which was carried out by Russia in 1964. Due to the lack of financial resources and the political situation in Afghanistan, it is suggested to transfer the capital to Parwan by planning new cities with a limited population. The new towns, are designed according to the culture of the citizens of Afghanistan and with the thinking of Talibanism in architecture and urban planning. These new towns are at certain distances from each other, next to the main road and fruitful arteries between Kabul and Parwan city, and finally, the capital will be transferred to Parwan. In that case, we will have the capital with a limited population that will reduce any risk and enable political control.

**Keywords:** capital city, regional planning, Talibanism in urban planning and architecture, Kabul, political socialization, Afghanistan, Islamic Radicalism, Islamic countries, religious identity

## 1. Introduction

Capitals as the population and governmental centers of gravity of countries always play a key role in the progress or development or decline of countries. This is so important, for example, in negotiations between two countries, the names of the capitals of the two countries are sometimes mentioned instead of the name of the countries. If the location of the capital is not correct and proper, it will cause problems whether in terms of defense and security or in terms of natural resources and urban infrastructure, not only for the capital but also for the whole country. This problem seems to exist in Afghanistan and its capital. In this study, we seek to examine the situation of Kabul as the capital of Afghanistan. For this purpose, first, the theoretical foundations and practical experiences of the subject have been studied and in the next stage, Afghanistan, and the city of Kabul as well as Talibanism in urban design and architecture have been evaluated. Finally, according to the evaluations made and the theoretical basics and practical experiences reviewed, suggestions for improving the current situation are presented.

## 2. Method

A survey was conducted with different groups of people of different ages and of course different social classes, as well as immigrants who had chosen Islamic countries such as Iran and Pakistan for migration and now returned, and William Cochran's (Note 1) method was conducted with 380 questionnaires in the city of Kabul with a population of approx. 4,500,000 people, 51% male and 49% female, were selected for the active community aged 25 to 60. Statistical samples were selected from groups of 20 people over 25 years of age with an equal number of men and women. In this survey, 80% agreed with the architectural design and urban planning considering the Islamic guidelines and taking into account the maharim and non-maharim, which was actually the Taliban's thinking. According to this survey, family spaces in urban spaces were less requested by people and the presence

of families in considered urban spaces was not common. Most views have been about assigning urban spaces to women which means parks should have separate spaces for women, sidewalks should be designed so that one side is for women. If it was necessary to cross the sidewalk to enter a house or shop, women had to cross the street directly and return to their own specific side after shopping. Fruit and vegetable markets should be designed for women only. Schools, universities at all levels as well as hospitals should be designed separately. Although there was no demand for separate spaces for women in restaurants and places of entertainment.

### 3. Theoretical Basics

#### 3.1 Capital City

The capital is the governmental, political, administrative and economic center of the country which has been used in the same sense with terms such as Dar al-Mulk, Dar al-Saltanah, Takhtgah, Dar al-Amara and Dar al-Khalafah; But not all of these words have always had the same meaning, as in the "Urdu" dictionaries, the capital is equivalent to Dar al-Saltanah, Dar al-Mulk, Dar al-Khalafah, Dar al-Hukuma and the meeting is considered equal to the court (Heidari Sur Shajani, 2015). The convergence of political and economic or cultural power is by no means universal. Provincial rivals may economically eclipse traditional capitals, e.g., Nanking by Shanghai, Quebec City by Montreal, and numerous US state capitals. The decline of a dynasty or culture could also mean the extinction of its capital city, as occurred in Babylon and Cahokia (Seymour, 2014). The capital is first and foremost a center of territorial control and a place for political and symbolic government decisions. (Taylor, 1989, 147). This place includes the central executive organization of a political unit including other judicial, legal, educational, and cultural organizations. In fact, this place is a geographical center, and with a spatial-geographical function (Hatami Nejad et al., 2016:3) and perhaps fundamental changes are needed for the people as well as the body of the government, which always has consisted of the people, the relocation of the capital will play an important role and this method has existed in the region for a long time.

#### 3.2 Regional Planning

Regional planning deals with the efficient placement of land-use activities, infrastructure, and settlement growth across a larger area of land than an individual city or town. Regional planning is related to urban planning as it relates to land use practices on a broader scale. It also includes formulating laws that will guide the efficient planning and management of such said regions (APA, 2017). Regional planning can be comprehensive by covering various subjects, but it more often specifies a particular subject, which requires region-wide consideration (Caves, 2004).

The definition of regional planning varies according to countries and regional issues. The main discussion in regional planning is to regulate regional places. This planning is more about relieving the focus that has arisen in space and it has caused the backwardness of some areas in the face of the excessive development of some other areas (Sheikhi, 2009: 4).

Regional planning is a process for organizing and coordinating economic and social programs with local and regional needs and facilities. Global experience indicates that regional planning and territorial spatial arrangement should be together, and it is better to do regional planning within the framework of territorial spatial arrangement. The concept of spatial planning includes two specific concepts as follows:

- Inter-regional planning, in which the planning organization with a coherent view of the facilities of the regions, tries to make optimal use of the facilities and places of the regions (national place) in response to national needs and goals.
- Intra-regional planning, in which location and physical design issues, local, urban, and rural architecture play a significant role, and is closer to executive issues (Kalantari and Abdullahzadeh, 2012:22).

#### 3.3 Factors Affecting the Capital's Site Selection

In the past, defending the city against enemy attacks was the main factor in selecting or transferring capital but today, due to the advancement of technology, especially in the field of security and changing methods of warfare, as well as the importance of the flow of information and communication in this field, this factor has diminished. In contrast, the centrality of economic weight has become important. These days, if capital is chosen or moved, the reason for the chosen place is not mainly because of protecting the city from enemies. Decentralization is the solution to the problems in a capital city, the proper control of the country's economy, or the proper top for the urban hierarchy pyramid. In general, the main and influential factors in the process of locating capitals are (Mireie et al., 2016: 50):

- Central Capability:

The city that has the highest population and the highest density of economic and cultural functions. Since these regions are among the strategic regions of each country and have a significant geopolitical weight, are the connecting links and vital points of the political geography of the country and also as an organic organ of political-geographical units throughout history are the main factor in the formation of any state; therefore, they are considered as the most important reasons for locating capitals (Ahmadipour Vali Gholizadeh, 2009: 128).

- Natural Capabilities Such as Rivers, Water Access, and Fertile Lands:

Access to water in ancient times and also in the last decade was one of the most important factors in locating cities, which was also important as a defense factor. Of course, the presence of water in all parts of the country is important and popular economic issues are based on the fertility of the land.

- Location of the Center of Gravity:

The best idea about capitals is the central location. The closer the place is to the geographical center of the country, the easier it is to manage affairs, as the distance between the capital and the borders is minimized and the presence of the central government in the corners of the country is implemented faster. Also, the presence of the capital in the position of the geographical center of gravity affects the population and wealth of the country; therefore, the location has special economic and social values (Hatami Nejad et al., 2016: 10).

- Dominant National Group or Ethnic Origin of a Government:

In some multinational countries, such as Russia, the capital is located in the geographical center of the dominant group. As an example, if Istanbul, with its long history and greatness, could not maintain its position as capital forever, firstly because it was not in the center of Turkey and secondly, Ankara was the seat of Atatürk's<sup>1</sup> great reliance, which was strengthened by the broad support of its people and for these reasons, this city was chosen as the seat of the Turkish government (Farid, 2003: 318). In fact, the presence of the capital at the center of the dominant national group increases the power, efficiency and maneuverability of the central government. Of course, choosing this place in multi-ethnic countries will increase the distance between the central government and other ethnic groups living on the outskirts of the country.

- Strategic and Defensive Capabilities and Possibilities of Active and Passive Defense:

Defensive capability in locating the capital is one of the most important locating features. The capital of a country which is the main seat of political-governmental and governmental power is considered the most important city of a country and the need to observe defense and strategic points is particularly important. In ancient times, due to the large population of the capital, this city was used both as a defensive city and as an offensive city. This factor has disappeared in modern times with the symmetrical distribution of the population of countries in the border strip. Even capitals that were first formed on the coast of rivers or seas or along land borders have been transferred to the interior of the country to gain strategic depth and create an active and passive defense.

Indeed, the strategic value of capital is not only due to its external defensive or offensive position or the control of its internal insurgencies, but also a demonstration of its political power in the country and the region. Currently, metropolises do not have much potential to be the capital. However, due to their historical background, they have remained capitals, such as Tehran, Rome, and Paris, which created exclusive problems for these city managers in terms of active and passive defense. Examples include the problems created by Covid 19, for densely populated cities or from a political point of view, the riots in Paris created by residents of towns created on the outskirts of Paris.

- Political Compromise:

Some states have a social structure that is sectarian or even religious in this kind of counties to avoid disputes between two or more rival cities, which have the necessary conditions to become the capital, a neutral zone has been chosen to create the capital. For example, Canberra, the capital of Australia, with a population of about 250,000, was chosen as the capital to prevent competition between Sydney and Melbourne. Other systems, such as the federalism system, can be chosen to solve this problem and, of course, it should be borne in mind that this system is problematic in countries that do not have a powerful central government. As an example, we can name Iraq, which has a strong religious and tribal division, and they tried to divide it federally; Iraqi Kurdistan, even today after more than 10 years, is still in trouble.

- Access to Internal Communication and Transportation Channels:

A central region, as a region in which the political power of a state is concentrated, needs methods to extend its

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<sup>1</sup> Founder of the Republic of Turkey (1881-1938)

influence on other parts of the political structure. In fact, the capital needs a fully developed communication network; this means that the political core has the power of influence only when it can provide the necessary services through adequate communication. Paris in France, Madrid in Spain and Ankara in Turkey are at the center of the pattern of forks, railways, telegraph, and telephone lines. This issue is so important that the consolidation and stabilization of the central position in the urban and residential network of the country will be enjoyed only in the shadow of having an advanced and equipped communication and communication network. In fact, the lack of an advanced communication network for the capital reduces the power of control and authority in it within the political organization of space and urban network of the country. With the advancement of technology, this issue may have lost its former importance in developed countries, but in developing countries or the third world, it is still an important issue.

- External Communication:

Throughout history and all around the world wherever there have been big and grown cities, each of them has tried to use their capacities to develop trade, political and cultural relations, as well as other relationships, with a large number of big and small cities, as much as possible (Mojtahedzadeh 2002:56). This is more geographical in the case of capital cities than in other cities. Sometimes external relations have particular importance in government policy. The most important advantage of this choice is to take a country out of geopolitical isolation. Especially in the new governments that have come to power in countries where changes have taken place due to popular revolutions or military coups or the military power of other countries.

- Tradition - History:

Some capitals earn their role throughout their country's political history and over time, they have achieved one of the national symbols. In this way, they have created a special right to be the capital in the minds of the people. The best example is London.

The role of capital of London was formed during the Norman<sup>2</sup> period in 1066 AD. The city of Paris, the capital of France, originally called Lutetia Parisiorum, dates back to the first century BC in the fourth century AD, its name was changed to Paris and over time it became one of the world's great powers in terms of military power, especially in World War I, as well as the center of art and architecture. Relative economic security, the cultural tradition of the emperor's first seat of power, long-term climate change, political unity, etc. mattered in the choice of Chinese capital location.

#### 4. Recognition of the Study Area

##### 4.1 Geographical Location

Afghanistan's special geographical location plays an important role in defining the geopolitics of the region and has been referred to by terms such as "Asia Crossroads" or "Heartland Asia". Mackinder<sup>3</sup> believed that there were points on each continent that countries were trying to control and that domination of them was seen as the heart and center of the continent. Afghanistan is also one of the regions that various empires have tried to dominate (Hekmatnia, 2004: 100). Afghanistan is a landlocked country whose northern, southern, eastern, and western regions are separated by the Hindu Kush Mountains. To the east is Pakistan, and to the north is the relatively flat Central Asia and the Sihon<sup>4</sup> and Jeyhun<sup>5</sup> rivers, and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan are Afghanistan's northern neighbours. The short, impassable, mountainous border between Afghanistan and China has made the country a link between China's nuclear powers and Pakistan and India. In western Afghanistan, the Iranian plateau has the largest Shia population and connects Afghanistan to the Middle East (Martin, 4: 2011).

<sup>2</sup> They are an ethnic group formed by contact between Norse Viking immigrants, native Franks, and Gallo-Roman tribes and lived in an area of France called Normandy

<sup>3</sup> Sir Halford John Mackinder; February 15, 1861 - March 6, 1947. He was a geographer, university professor, and English politician known as one of the founders of geopolitics and geostrategic.

<sup>4</sup> The Syr Darya is a river in Central Asia.

<sup>5</sup> The Amu Darya[a] (also called the Amu, Amo River is a major river in Central Asia and Afghanistan

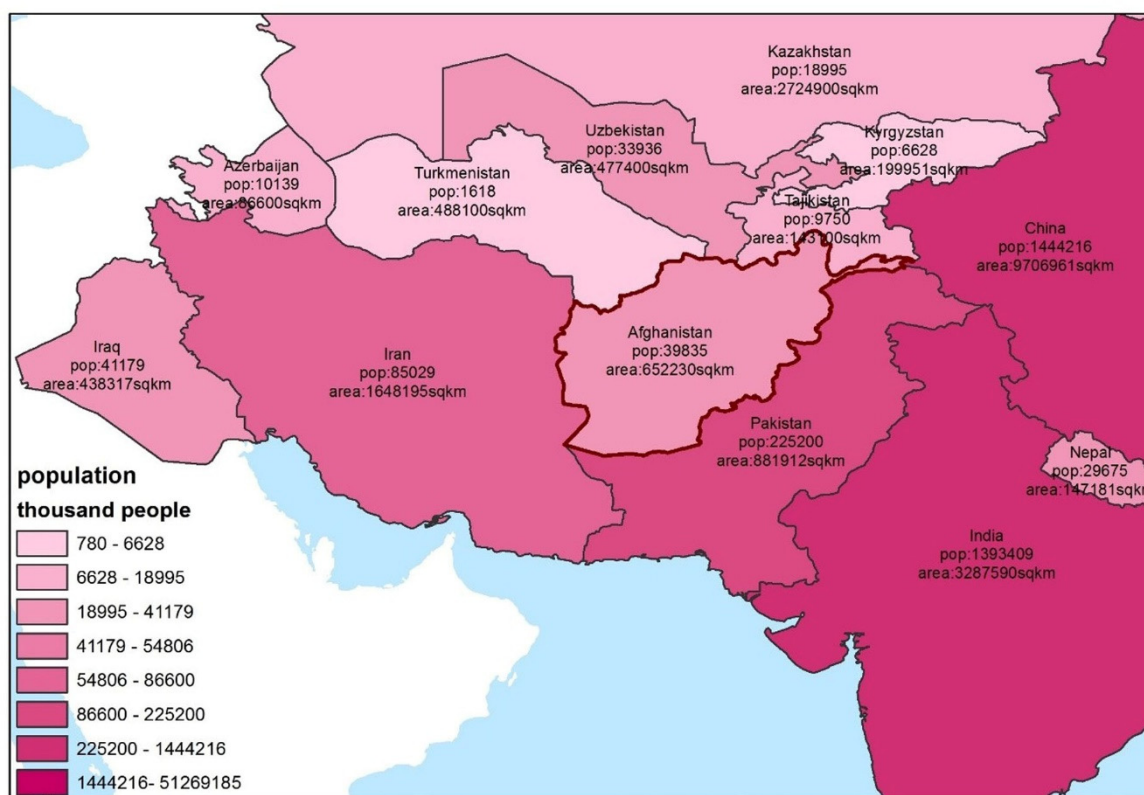


Figure 1. Population and Size of Afghanistan's Neighboring Countries (Source: UNESCO 2021 population)

#### 4.2 Historical Background

The history of Afghanistan begins in the distant past and has recorded many bitter and sweet events in its pages. In ancient times, it was called Ariana, Iriana, Iran, Iranwijeh and the like of it. Over time, the western part of the Iranian plateau was called Parth and the eastern part was called Khorasan, which means the dawn of the sun, which was known as "Khorasan" in the Islamic period. It has been around a hundred years since the name "Afghanistan" has been present in the political geography of the world. (Ghobar, 1996; Bahmani Qajar, 2006; Mori, 2001).

The history of Afghan/Pashtun presence in Khorasan dates back to the 15th century, before that they lived in the areas of the Suleiman mountains around Peshawar, Pakistan. After the devastation and massacres of Genghis Khan<sup>6</sup> and Timur<sup>7</sup> after him, with the migration of the native people of eastern Khorasan and Sistan (Helmand, Nimroz, Kandahar, etc.), many of the fertile lands of these areas were left uninhabited. During the Mongol period, we see the formation of nomadic ideology under the influence of Genghis ideology and finally the formation of Mamluk ideology.

The ideology of the Mamluks first appeared at the beginning of their reign and despite some necessary changes, it was imitated by the later sultans for years, however, this ideology, Contrary to the later Genghis or Turko-Mongol concepts in the field of rulership, is always and especially dependent on the ancient Islamic concepts based on It was based on the attitude towards the Sultan and the Mamluk as a warrior guard for Islam and the Islamic society.

Lush pastures, fertile lands and desolate villages without owners or inhabitants attracted the Pashtun tribes from their places of residence to these areas (Farhang, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41; Ghbar, 1996, vol. 1, pp. 518-520). After a century or two, Afghans became one of the powers in the region, and by providing soldiers and military forces for local governments, they played a role in the history of Khorasan.

After the murder of Nader Qulikhan Afshar<sup>8</sup> in 1747 in the Qochan areas of Khorasan, Ahmad Shah Abdali, who

<sup>6</sup> Genghis Khan was the founder and first Great Khan (Emperor) of the Mongol.

<sup>7</sup> Timur, later Timūr Gürkāni, was a Turco-Mongol conqueror who founded the Timurid Empire.

<sup>8</sup> Nader Shah Afshar (August 1688[6] – 19 June 1747) was the founder of the Afsharid dynasty of Iran.

was considered one of his prominent commanders, reached Herat and Kandahar as soon as possible to provide the basis for the establishment of an independent ethnic government in eastern Khorasan. Adhering to the tribal tradition of the meeting of the heads of tribes, which is called "Loya Jirga" among the Pashtuns (Kashkaki, 1986, p. 33), he held this meeting in the same year and was elected king by the Jirga (Farhang, *ibid.* pp. 105-107).

To consolidate his power, Ahmad Shah Abdali<sup>9</sup> created a system based on four pillars: 1. the tribal nature of the government, 2. Racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination; 3. military (opening the country and looting); 4. The ethnic monopoly of political power (Farhang, *ibid.*, pp. 145-110). Thereafter, the political power of Afghanistan has always been the monopoly of the Pashtun people, and other ethnic groups, especially the Shiites, have been far from power and politics and have been subjected to all kinds of discrimination and injustice (Rova, 2012, p. 82).

In this way, the establishment of the first Afghan government in Khorasan, due to its fundamental inconsistencies with the objective realities of the society under its rule in Khorasan and India, was ill from the very beginning of its birth and the continuation of its life and health required modern corrective measures, which unfortunately never took place, neither during Ahmad Shah's time nor in the times after him. With the emergence of the model of the state of modern nations in the West and the expansion and contagion of this model to third-world countries through colonialism and other communication channels, these countries were also included in the process of global development and were forced to face personal and social crises and problems arising from it.

Although it was rationally expected that the rulers of Afghanistan, taking into account the situation of the new world, would move along with the developments of the time and take measures to establish a national government in Afghanistan, unfortunately, the heirs of Ahmad Shah, due to their tribal personality traits, they were not able to understand the changes of time, and during the nearly 300-year history of Afghanistan's rule over this land, there was not much change in the tribal nature of the social-political structure of Afghanistan. During this period, there were no positive changes in Afghanistan. It was not revealed to create a single nation from different ethnic groups.

The result of this incident was nothing but a wide national divide and fragmentation, because of which, the social aspects of the formation of the national system and government were completely eliminated and the crisis of identity, like a silent volcanic source, but destructive and ready to explode, continued in the lower layers and levels of the Afghan society. Until 1987, pro-Soviet (former) communist parties took control of political power by conducting a military coup. This coup was the beginning of the eruption of the volcano that engulfed the country of Afghanistan and destroyed everything since that day.

The introduction of the current establishment of the country of Afghanistan appeared in the middle of the 18th century at the same time as the death of Nadir Shah Afshar and extensive changes in the territory of Iran. In 1747, Ahmad Khan Abdali founded the government of Afghans consisting of several Pashtun tribes in Kandahar. From the second half of the 19th century and in the 1860s and 1870s, the expansion of the borders of the Russian Empire towards the south in Central Asia caused the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanates of Khujand and Khiva to come under the control of Moscow. These advances brought the territory of Russia close to the British colonial lands in India (Toriya, 2014:49). At that time, Iran was a buffer zone between the lands under Russian rule in Central Asia and India, which was a British colony. Due to Iran's military defeats from the tsarist army in the Caucasus and the signing of the Treaty of Turkmanchai<sup>10</sup> in 1828, Russia found the right to have a military and commercial presence in Iran. As a result, the British government in India thought of creating a new buffer zone and caused the secession of the sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf in the south and Herat in the east of Iran. This issue and subsequent developments in the 19th century became a prelude to the emergence and eventual independence of Afghanistan in 1919. (Mojtahed-Zadeh, 2004: 123)

In the security structure of the Cold War era, Afghanistan was at the center of competition between the two superpowers, the United States, and the Soviet Union. With the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, the priority he attached to the Soviet Union also changed. The strategy of the Soviet Union during the post-Stalin Cold War was to support communist movements and regimes in many parts of the third world, and such an approach meant distancing from Stalin's vision. The invasion of the Red Army to Afghanistan in support of the communist government of Afghanistan in 1979 is evaluated in this context (Cohen, 2003:6). This invasion clearly changed the status of semi-independent Afghanistan. In response to this situation, America started supporting Afghan Mojahedin against Russia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan returned to its previous semi-independent status.

9 Ahmad Shāh Durrānī also known as Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, was the founder of the Durrani Empire.

<sup>10</sup> Agreement between Iran and Russian Empire which concluded the war (1826-28).

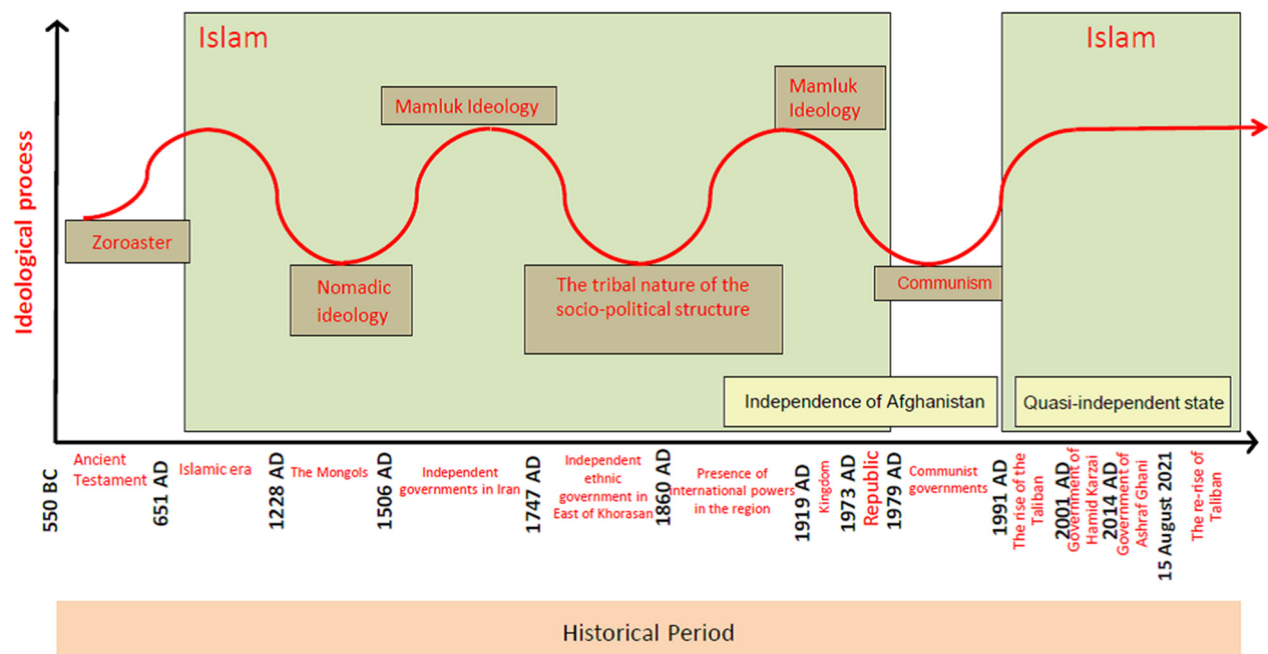


Figure 2. The historical period of Afghanistan

In a historical study of the ideological process in current Afghanistan, which has been influential in the urban planning and architecture culture of this land, it has been determined that in most of its historical periods except the periods of antiquity (550 BC to 651 AD) and the period of communist governments (1991-1979) in general, it has been influenced by Islamic ideology and traditions of Islamic architecture and urban planning. Throughout history, various monarchies, republics, ethnicities, and tribes have ruled Afghanistan under the banner of Islamic ideology and based on their own vision<sup>11</sup>. Now, after the withdrawal of US forces, the Taliban have regained control of affairs and announced the formation of the Islamic Emirate in a statement.

#### 4.3 The Ethnic Composition

Afghanistan is a country with ethnic diversity, which is part of its geographical identity. Although this diversity has existed in many countries of the world, these countries are not in crisis and instability like Afghanistan. Another distinguishing point of this country is the continuous domination and conquest of the nation, which has shaped a different history and nature compared to other countries; It may be because the general or specific context of Afghan society is the cause of these distinctions and it has caused ethnic relations and ethnic conflicts in this country to find a different trend from other countries. This has enabled the formation of ethnic identities. At present, the communication bridge between the tribes is shaped by the symbols and tribal values, nation, and relatives, which has made the political-national structure very sick. Tribal culture has still kept its shadow on the people of this land, and even in the most normal conditions, it occurs in crucial issues, as a result of which it has created a crisis and instability in relations among ethnic groups.

According to some, the formation of the current political system in Afghanistan is considered the definitive end point of the ethnic wars, but in the current situation and with the establishment of the current political system, we are only witnessing the subsidence of intense ethnic clashes. We are only witnessing the subsidence of severe ethnic clashes only in the military dimensions, while the various strong tensions of this country will continue in its political, social, and cultural aspects, obvious and non-obvious. Afghan society is made up of different ethnic groups and tribes with different languages and religions. Each of the tribes is divided into various branches that sometimes compete with each other (such as Abdalians and Ghalzaians) (Bagheri, 2017: 161); as far as the country of Afghanistan is mentioned with titles such as "Museum of Nations", "Treasure of Nations" and "Mosaic of Ethnicities". In terms of diversity and ethnic heterogeneity, this land is considered the fourth country in Asia (after India, China, and Malaysia) and ranks thirty-seventh in the world (Aruzgani, 2010: 36) and according to Rahimi,

<sup>11</sup> The era of Russian domination does not follow this.



about fifty-seven ethnic groups, forty to fifty languages and dialects that belong to several specific linguistic families live in Afghanistan (Rahimi, 2008: 100). Sajadi, named the following ethnic groups in Afghanistan: "Arab, Imaq, Baluch, Brahui, Ashkashmi, Farsiwan, Firouzkohi, Gaurbati Gharabt, Gujar, Hazara, Hindu, Jalali, Jamshidi, Jet, Jogi, Kyrgyz, Kotana, Maliki, Maori, Mish Mast, Mongol, Tajik, Monjani, Nuristani, Orsuri, Parchi, Peshai, Pashtun, Qarlak, Pikraj, Kazakh, Qabchag, Qazalbash, Roshani, Sanglichi, Sikh, Tatar, Taimni, Timuri, Tirehi, Turkmen, Uzbek, Vakhi, Jewish and Vazuri" (Sajadi, 2016: 77). In the constitution and the national anthem of Afghanistan, the names of 14 ethnic groups are mentioned as the nation of Afghanistan, and the nation is introduced as consisting of the following ethnic groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, and Baluch, Pashyi, Nuristani, Imaq, Arab, Kyrgyz, Qazalbash, Gujjar, Brahui, and other ethnic groups (Constitution of Afghanistan, 2003: 4). From the combination of all the mentioned statements, it can be concluded that at least 14 and at most 57 independent ethnic groups live in the geography called Afghanistan, who speak more than 30 different languages. Among the ethnic groups in Afghanistan, four major ethnic groups, Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek, constitute the largest population of Afghanistan (Javadi, 2016: 30). The picture below shows the approximate ethnic composition of Afghanistan's population.

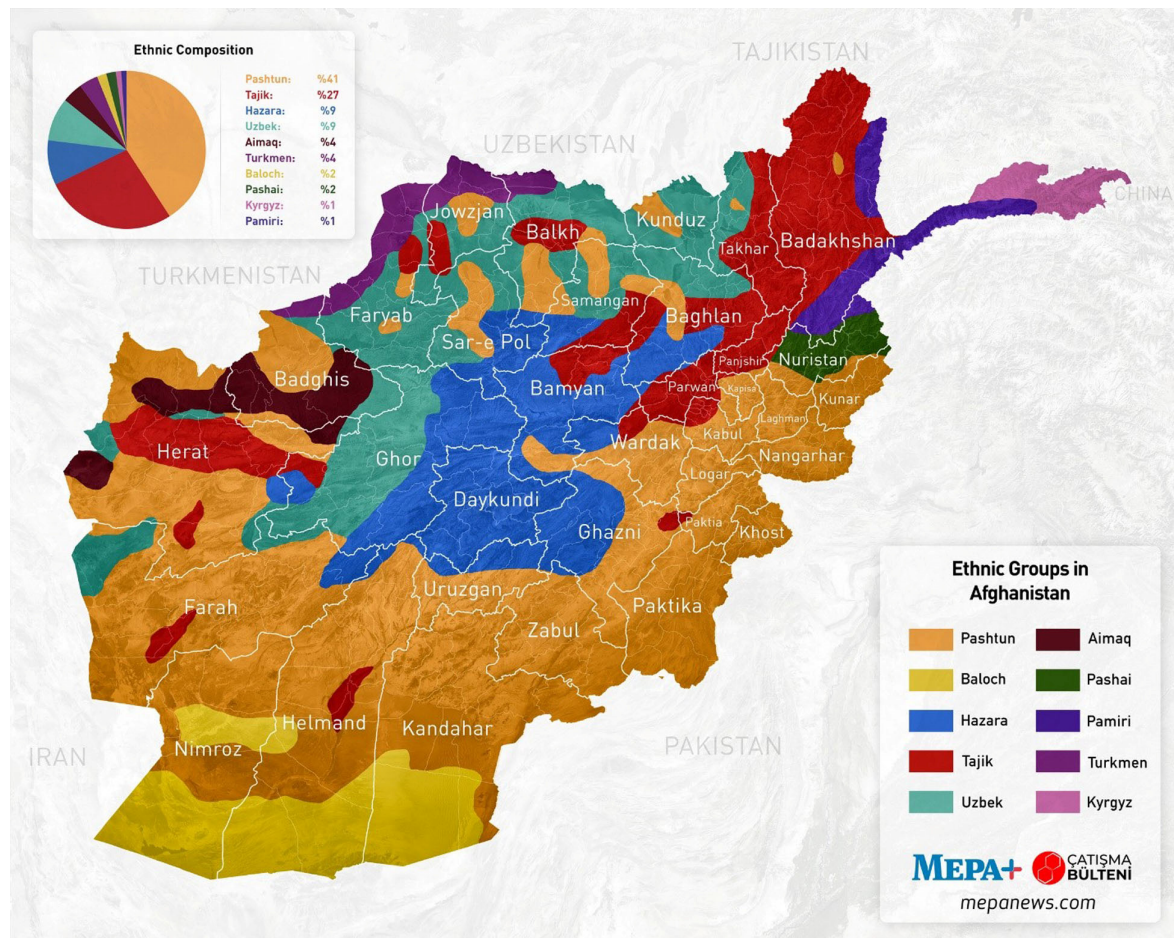


Figure 3. The ethnic composition of the population of Afghanistan (Source: Education of Afghanistan)

The ethnocentric structure of power in the past, backed by the ideology of ethnic nationalism, has also fueled tribalism and ethnocentrism among non-ruling ethnic groups and it has turned ethnicity into a natural phenomenon in all parts of society and has caused a crisis of national identity in Afghanistan. Prolonged ethnic domination has led society to a state in which ethnic norms and interests determine the political behaviour of individuals and socio-political groups. Afghanistan, on the other hand, has been described as a large museum of different races and nations due to the multiplicity and diversity of ethnicities and tribes. People of Pashtun, Hazaras, Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Kyrgyz, Ghezelbash, Aimak, Noorstani, Kashmiri, Hindu, Sikh, and other ethnic groups live in this country. Since Afghanistan has an ethnic structure, it is normal that interactions, political structure, and the exercise of political power to take place only within a particular ethnic group and tribe. Accordingly, the political



system has been linked to demographic subsystems in terms of ethnicity and tribe.

Afghanistan has had different structures in the past few decades. It has experienced monarchical governments, the People's Democratic Republic (Communist), Taliban Emirate to the ruling government system that came to power after the Bonn Summit in December 2001, and the new government in Afghanistan, which is the Islamic Republic (Department of Political Studies and International, 2010: 224). The ruling political structure in Afghanistan consists of two permanent assemblies (Meshrano Jirga of the Senate, Wolesi Jirga of the Parliament), a temporary assembly (Loye Jirga, Executive Power), and the Judicial Power (Supreme Court) and the Executive Power.

✓ Meshrano Jirga: (the Council of Elders and White Beards), which is the same as the Senate, has 102 members.

✓ Wolesi Jirga: which is the parliament and has 249 representatives who are elected for five years in proportion to the population of each province (Bilal, 2012: 46).

The National Assembly of Afghanistan consists of two assemblies (the Assembly of Elders and the Wolesi Jirga). It has the highest representation of people in terms of special work from the point of view of the regional, ethnic and gender spectrum, which this country had never experienced before (Lindh, 2003:253).

✓ Loye Jirga: Loye Jirga is formed on important issues such as the independence of the country, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, amending the provisions of the constitution, and the trial of the president (Constitution of Afghanistan, 2004: 57-56).

✓ Executive power: The executive power is the body of ministers or the government, at the head of which the president is responsible for the implementation of the law as the first person in the government (Bilal, 2012: 46).

✓ Judiciary: The judiciary is an independent pillar of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This branch is composed of a Supreme Court, appellate and primary courts (Constitution of Afghanistan, 2004:58)

#### 4.4 Kabul City

Kabul is one of the eastern provinces of Afghanistan with several population and urban centers. Meanwhile, Kabul, with its special geopolitical features, is considered an important domestic and international center. Kabul city has a long history and is considered one of the oldest cities in the world. The city is located at an altitude of 1800 meters above sea level and in the southern part of the Kabul-Panjshir waterway. The current area of Kabul city is 103051 hectares (1030 square kilometres).



Figure 4. Kabul province

The city of Kabul has always faced problems and obstacles in terms of urban services in all aspects, and today, after the devastating civil wars, many of these problems still exist. Now, after three decades of war, this historic and famous city has become a ruin that is in urgent need of improvement and renovation in the current situation.

In practice, this process may take a long time, because the issues of legal, property and short-term and medium-term residence of citizens are seriously discussed.

Therefore, it can be said that various levels of urban management in Kabul face many problems and challenges. The most important elements of Kabul urban management include the Kabul Municipality, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Interior and other ministries, and governmental and non-governmental organizations in Kabul.

Some of the most important challenges of Kabul urban management are:

- A. Intra-Organizational:** This category of challenges is related to the organization of urban management, this research is based on this category of problems, which includes the following: Weak financial management and lack of necessary financial management capacity in the municipality to use local resources, weakness of urban laws and regulations, weak organizational structure and lack of specialized staff, weakness of the ability of urban management institutions to benefit from citizen participation, the appointive mayor and the lack of a public institution to monitor, control and direct the activities of the municipality as the most important local organization, administrative corruption, weaknesses in inter-organizational cooperation, lack of urban information system, etc.
- B. Extra-Organizational:** These problems are common in most major cities in the world, which differ in different cities in terms of prioritization. Currently, the city of Kabul is also severely affected by these challenges, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

At the Mayor's Conference in 1997, the most important of these problems were mentioned by the mayors as follows: unemployment, inadequate waste collection and disposal, urban poverty, lack of housing, sanitary drinking water, weakness of public transportation system, Traffic congestion, Poor treatment service, poor citizen participation, lack of educational services, urban violence, crimes, air pollution, urban environmental pollution, individual and social security, discrimination (women, ethnicities, urban classes).

Kabul is the capital of Afghanistan, based on field surveys it has problems with being the capital in two key ways:

- 1- In terms of location according to defense criteria, Kabul city is very dangerous and cannot be defended in times of crisis.
- 2- From another point of view, Kabul city is currently facing problems in terms of urban infrastructure and does not have any urban facilities. In fact, it does not make sense to invest in an area where the urban context has been created, but no supported urban structures have been forecasted for it. (Kabul city has a problem in terms of electricity, water, sewage, telephone, etc.).

Lack of coordination of the current situation (old context of Kabul city) with the existing urban structural system in its new contexts and also, the inability to change the current system of Kabul or the advanced system of the future of Kabul will cause it to be destroyed by any change in the old context of the city. Since the old context of Kabul city is the heart and roots and culture of the people of this region, its destruction and construction of a new urban system can harm the growth of the urban culture of the people.

To avoid any steps taken to destroy the old structure of Kabul and to avoid its negative consequences, part of the old heart of the city can be saved to preserve the roots of the people by following the example of urban systems and their historical urban culture so that we can maintain its urban and historical model and can introduce it as an urban model in the region.

## 5. Moving the Capital of Afghanistan

As mentioned above, with the transfer of power in September 2001 and the coming to power of the Mojahedin with US support, construction began in all parts and different companies from different countries flocked to Afghanistan. One of the key issues in announcing a fundamental change in Afghanistan's system of government was the relocation of the capital. This was also considered by the support forces as well as the United Nations due to the huge problems of Kabul's infrastructure for urban development.

As stated in the above reviews, Paris had to pay a lot of money to provide housing due to population growth as well as the provision of urban infrastructure to prevent infectious diseases or urban health in general. Kabul and Afghanistan did not have the economic power to do so after the change of government. Considering the return of the migrant population who had left the country during the Taliban era, providing affordable housing at a reasonable price was also on the government's agenda.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The proposal to relocate Kabul to the residence of Martyr Ahmad Shah Massoud was made by the government.

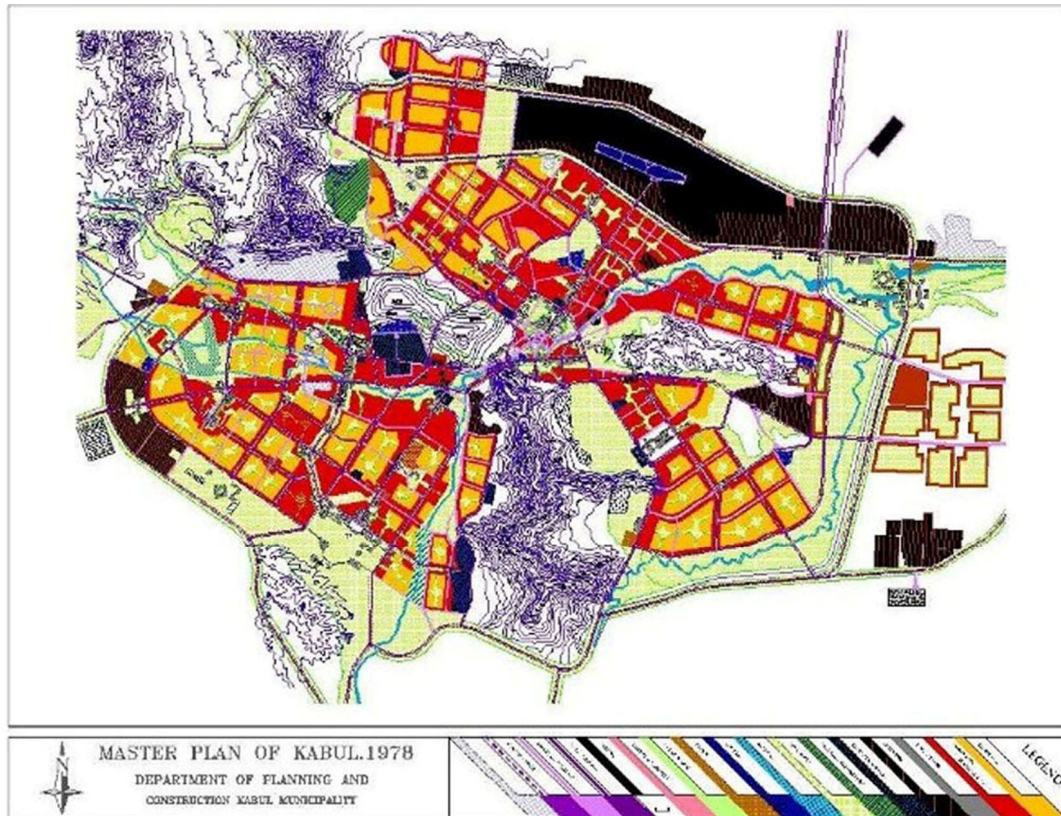


Figure 5. Master plan of Kabul in 1964 by Russia (The map was taken from the basement of Kabul Municipality, which was fragmented)

Given the strategic issues and problems mentioned, the need to change the capital is felt. Now the question is how this change of capital should be done.

Due to the rise of the Mojahedin, whose leader was the martyr Ahmad Shah Massoud, the authorities wanted the place of his struggle and birthplace, namely the PanjShir Valley, to be considered for this relocation.

Due to financial resources and political conditions in Afghanistan, it is not possible to move the capital all at once. Based on this, it is suggested that while considering the financial capacities, steadily and calmly establish towns along the Kabul-Talaghan route so that we can witness the slow transfer of population, services, and activities from Kabul to Parwan<sup>13</sup>.

Parwan is recommended because it does not have the strategic security and defense problems of Kabul. On the other hand, it has not been as under pressure from population and construction as Kabul, it could also reach Parwan from Panjshir Valley, which is one of the best areas in Afghanistan in terms of nature, water, and fertility. Based on this, it is suggested that the northeast be considered for the growth of Kabul city since this direction has flat lands (low slope), an altitude of 1800 meters above sea level and is adjacent to the Kabul International Airport, is located in the north of Kabul River, and also is in the direction of energy transmission lines and close to railways. On the other hand, the existence of water resources and fertile agricultural lands has made this area an attractive place to attract the population (figure below).

<sup>13</sup> Studies obtained from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development before the capture of Kabul by the Taliban and completing them.

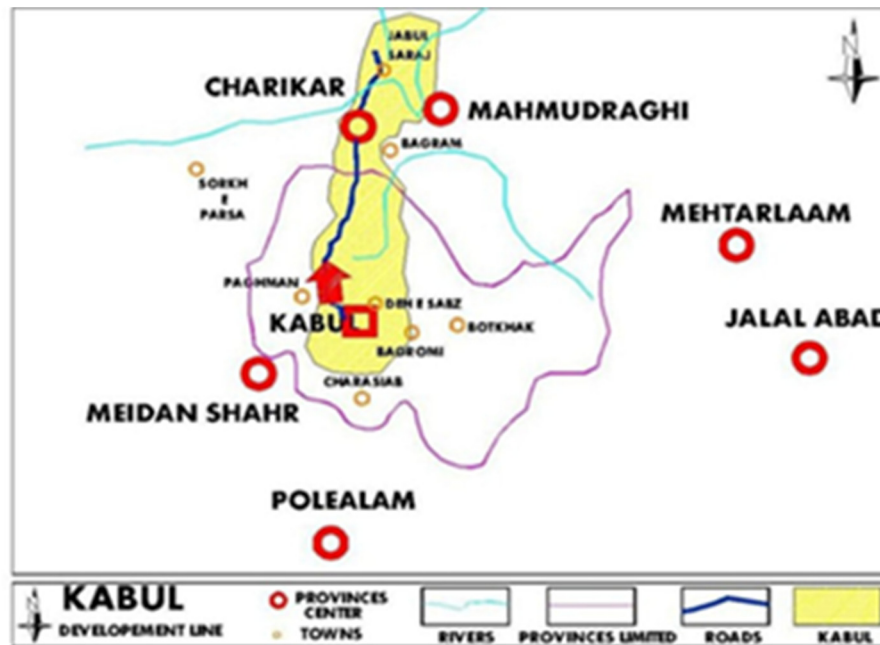


Figure 6. The direction of the proposed short-term development of Kabul

In the long term, due to having the best land and natural resources such as drinking water, being on the route of energy transfer to Tajikistan, and having access to municipal services and roads, it is recommended for development to the north. If this proposal is implemented in a time of about 60 years, we will see an imperceptible transfer of capital, which will pave the way for decentralization and balanced distribution of facilities and services to achieve social justice.

Based on the studies conducted in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development of Afghanistan by Dr. Majid Nikjooy and the cooperation of United Nations experts, towns were located on Bagram- Kabul Road. In designing and locating satellite towns, one of the most important factors was the possibility of faster access to the surrounding urban centers and ease of using Kabul urban services. For this reason, studying the main road network in Kabul and the exit routes of the city in locating the mentioned towns was very helpful. Kabul-Bagram road has always been considered one of the location factors.

The first step was the gradual relocation of people by these towns so that the new population (immigrants who returned) can have access to suitable housing with all urban infrastructures and also the city of Kabul can handle its population overflow in this way. This was a way to control the population and eventually reduce the population in Kabul. When the balanced distribution was done, and the process of transferring the industrial and residential capital took place, decisions can be made about the transfer of political and decision-making institutions, and indeed the political capital.

Deh Sabz area, located in the northeastern part of Kabul, is one of the best locations for short-term development of Kabul with flat lands (low slope) and an altitude of about 1800 meters above sea level, also close to Kabul International Airport and located on the northern part of the Kabul River and the transmission line, also close to the railway line. (This railway was located on the eastern front of Kabul in the master plan of Kabul, which was prepared by the Russians in 1974.) Other existing infrastructure potentials can be considered as one of the best points in the direction of cable expansion, because of the lack of impassable heights such as what is seen in the south and west of Kabul adding gentle slope of lands as well as water resources and good agricultural lands have made it desirable for population attraction. Considering that the urban structure does not allow urban development in the city, the best proposal for the development of Kabul is outside the current city limits.

For the development of Kabul, taking into account the existence of the Tajik-Afghan power line, which is being run by the Koreans as well as the transfer of the Panjshir-Kabul water pipeline, which is currently being carried out by the Chinese. Pay Minar area, which is a short distance from the center of Kabul and has a population capacity of up to 1500,000 people, is introduced as a short-term development area and the Parwan-Kabul line, which is in fact the route of power and water lines, is considered as a long-term stage of urban development.



The projects conducted under the two names of Green Town and Azadi Town in the two areas at the Payminar and Jabal al-Saraj were started as short-term programs, which have been briefly introduced as "Green Town".



Figure 7. Map of primary towns

In the design of this city, a point needed more attention. Based on the history of Afghanistan, Islamic identity should be considered in it and the form, spatial organization, body, and architecture of the city are important in expressing this identity. In this way, the desire of immigrants returning to the country as well as those living in the suburbs of Kabul, who are deprived of urban infrastructure, to settle in cities increases.

## 6. Talibanism in Architecture and Urban Planning

### 6.1 Talibanism in the Form and Spatial Organization

The circular form has been one of the sacred forms because it is taken from nature (sun, moon, and earth). As mentioned in previous discussions, this form has been revived and forgotten in different periods and is not considered in the design of cities now. The Real City has a circular shape, and one of the most important reasons why this form has been chosen, regardless of its history and originality, is to invite the inhabitants of the city to unite. In religious ceremonies of Islam, the role of congregational prayers is essential. In this ritual, people gather from all corners in a central area and pray in groups. In this ritual, unity and oneness are emphasized, on the other hand, in the rituals of Hajj<sup>14</sup> in Mecca, a circular rotation is seen and a circular form in the city helps the urban identity.

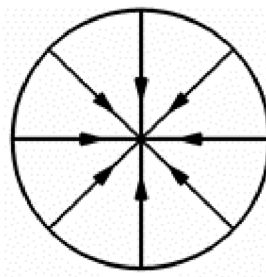


Figure 8. City form

The circular form is one of the main forms of Islamic cities where their growth was also in the form of a ring and was usually due to the arrival of unstable markets around the cities. The plans of new cities and towns, following the architecture and urban planning of the early Islamic period, will be circular and centred on mosques and government centers. Of course, at that time it was the best way to defend the city against the invasion of enemies.

<sup>14</sup> Hajj is a set of deeds performed in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah, in the city of Mecca and its surroundings

The center of the city circle is the location of services and power, and in fact, the shape of the circle gives a special religious status to the city and also creates more comfort. In cities with a circular shape, a person with Islamic ideology and his life is oriented and there is a center for support and integration (unification).

In urban design, different models were used, and the main basis of design is based on creating different parts of the city, each part of which has neighbourhood and district centers and the control of urban movements in each section is self-sufficiently designed.



Figure 9. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development of Afghanistan, preliminary plan of the city (Green City)

The connection between urban spaces is very important. These communications must be uniform and homogeneous.

### 6.2 Talibanism in Architecture and Urban Planning

As mentioned above, in the designs made for the transfer of the capital by the new towns, it was important to consider the ideology, culture and tradition of the new cities. In the studies conducted, radical Islamic thinking is still quite visible despite the change of government in Kabul. Months of travelling and living with local people were done to establish rules for architecture and urban planning.

What should be considered in the design of new towns is the impact of culture, tradition and beliefs on the architecture and urban planning system, and actually the citizens' wishes and their expectations of public and private spaces in the city. Based on this, in the present section, this issue has been investigated from the scale of the residential unit to the whole city based on the field observations made in Afghanistan.

According to the intended model, the residential part had to be built as an apartment to provide maximum services to them at the lowest cost. In this case, for example, by building a primary school and considering its access radius, which was a maximum of 250 meters, more children could benefit from it.

During the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, a neighbourhood called Makroyan was built by the Russians in Kabul, which was mostly used by them or by the Afghans who were associated with them. Now, with their departure from Kabul, there was not much competition from the people to live there, even considering its reasonable price.

In Talibanism, a woman is the head and commander of the house, the two concepts of "house" and "woman" are so close, that sometimes we see the use of these two words instead of each other, of course, the man is the absolute decision maker for the wife and the house. Accordingly, the goal is to design the house in such a way that the woman feels comfortable in it. That is, she can work and live in that house according to the man's command on how to move, work, sleep, and other things. In fact, in the design of the building and the city, the maintenance of Maharim<sup>15</sup> is considered, starting from the idea that in addition to the housing units in which the maharim and non-maharim spaces are separated, the entrance to the residence must also be taken into account, and there must be only one unit per floor with two doors; one is for the maharim that has access to the family maharim space and the other is for non-maharim who have access to the guest space. Outside the unit, the staircase should be as visible as possible. That is, it should be built outside the building and be under social supervision. Of course, this was not consistent with Afghanistan's climate and cold winters, and due to the high cost of energy to keep the unit's interior warm, this was overlooked and instead tried to be designed to observe maximum maharim. The width of the stairs

<sup>15</sup> Blood relations and extremely near relatives those with whom marriage is prohibited



is also important because, in the event of the death of a person to move the body on the stairs, the landing had to be large enough so that the body did not bend during the movement. Another challenging point is the courtyard because it overlooks the upper floors and even more, families could not use it at the same time, so the only solution was to divide the courtyard so that each unit has a part of it. After examining the design of residential units and stairs, the design of the public space of the towns and then the design of the urban space have been studied. For this purpose, the design team conducted a field survey of urban spaces. As mentioned above, the ideology of the Taliban is evident and accepted by the people despite the change of government and the omnipresence of the United States of America.

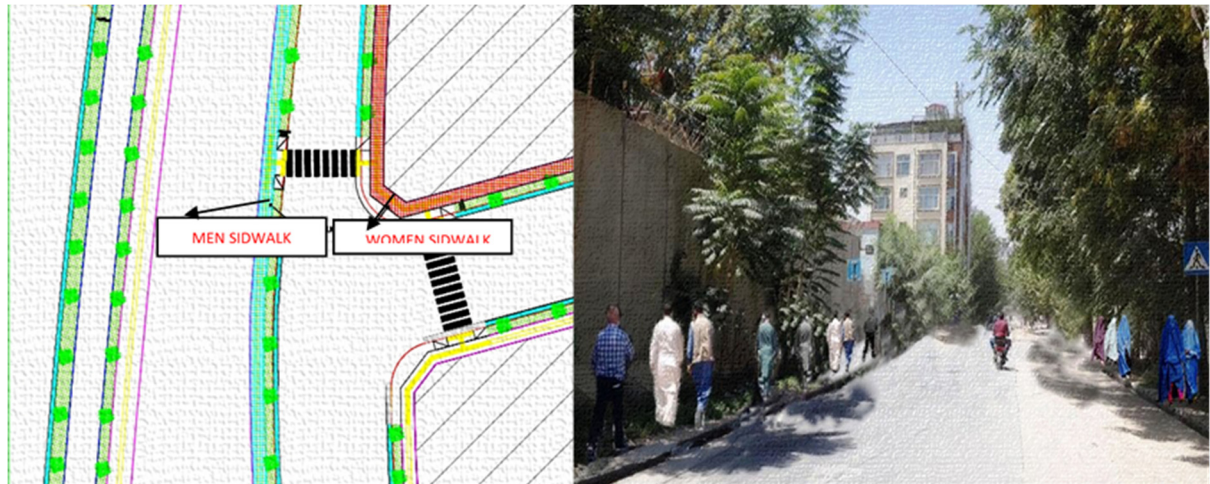


Figure 10. Women's Sidewalk



Figure 11. A park with a specific place for women

Taxi and bus stands should be designed separately and also there should be a different color for women's buses and taxis. Public and private office and service spaces should also be designed in this way. Services used by women should be designed just for them, women are used as administrative personnel and men are not allowed in, such as financial aid offices, etc.

In conclusion, it can be said that urban spaces should be designed carefully and creatively so that culture, tradition, and religion are not harmed on the one hand, and on the other hand, life in these towns should be welcomed by the public. All experts should be considered so that perhaps architecture slowly helps people to optimize their way of thinking and then the new and optimized culture influences architecture and the cycle continues.

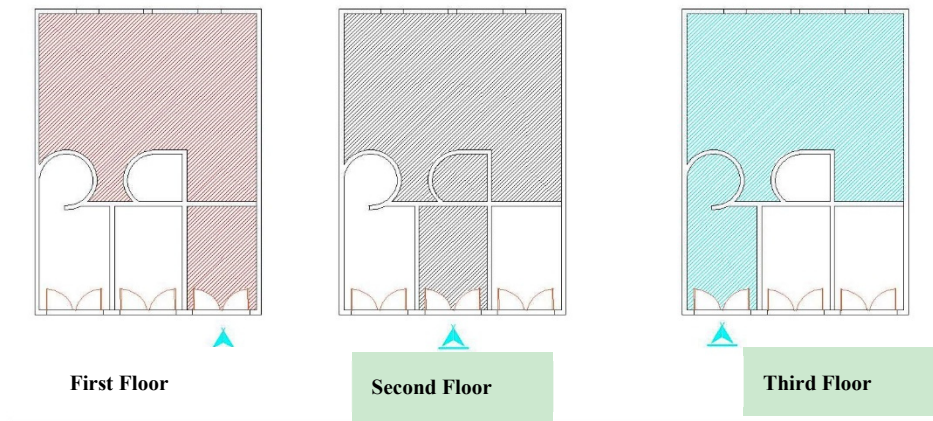


Figure 12. Plan of Residential Building with 3 Separate Yard and 3 Separate Entrance



Figure 13. Plan of Residential Building with the Separation of Maharim and Non-maharim

## 7. Conclusion

In the present study, considering theoretical principles and practical experience of capital transfer in countries around the world, it has been concluded that capital transfer is one of the territorial spatial arrangements at the regional level that, if it is not done gradually and is not part of the medium or long term plans of the government, in addition to incurring huge costs for the country, it will lead to massive population displacements due to massive migration. As it turned out, Kabul, as the capital of Afghanistan, has faced many infrastructural problems and also has many weaknesses in terms of defense and security. If the relocation of the capital, which began about twenty years ago, continued, perhaps Talibanism could not dominate Afghanistan so quickly.

According to studies, Kabul, as the capital of Afghanistan, is facing many problems. Urban infrastructure such as electricity, water, sewage, transportation, as well as service spaces are currently not suitable for city residents. On the other hand, one of the main problems at the moment is being ethnic and tribal. The country needs to change so that both the people and the government may change their approach.

In the recent forty years, there was fratricide and house-to-house civil war, and the sense of belonging was taken from this city. Of course, in all the countries where there is a civil war, such as Syria, this huge problem can be seen and urban identity, part of which is based on urban memories, becomes the scariest memories. Afghanistan

has not seen peace for years and has suffered from civil wars or foreign domination. By moving the capital, in fact, desirable results can be achieved from three psychological, technical, and political perspectives.

- **Technical View:** Urban infrastructure is not responsive at the moment and this problem will increase with the increase in population. By moving the capital, the required infrastructure can be designed based on modern technology from the beginning.
- **Political View:** Given the country's ethnic and sectarian nature, each ethnic group is currently making every effort to dominate Kabul. With the gradual relocation of the capital, this attempt to dominate the capital (Kabul) will disappear. On the other hand, the government may be able to change the system of government more easily. The change and relocation of the capital can also affect the views of other countries, especially neighbouring countries.
- **Psychological View:** This view actually reduces the bitter memories of civil wars and fratricide by moving the capital and it can even affect government officials and create a new perspective in the process of their administrative and legal work

It is therefore proposed that the relocation project, which began in 2002, be continued. This relocation can be done gradually and with the benefit of new towns with a population of between 5000 and 50 thousand people on the northern route from Kabul to Charikar. These towns start at a short distance from the current capital and gradually move north. All these towns should be located on the main transportation system of the country and their geographical and natural location should also be considered.

The construction costs of these settlements will be covered by the revenues from the sale of their units and commercial centers. As with the first new city built in Kabul called the Green Town, the total cost of the town was obtained this way. In this way, we will be safe from the shocks of immigration and population over the years.

According to this plan, it is necessary to carry out the capital relocation plan with the cooperation of the United Nations, considering all the issues announced above. This plan can include three short, medium, and long-term plans for a maximum of 15 years. One of the biggest features of this plan is the creation of job opportunities. The relocation of the capital can benefit from international assistance and on the other hand, it can activate the private sector, which will lead to economic prosperity.

- **Urban Design and Architecture for the Settlement of Afghans (Talibanism in Architecture and Urban Planning)**

Another important issue is architectural design and urban planning. Will the architecture and urban planning in these proposed towns be in the style of "Talibanism"? In other words, in the future of Afghanistan, we will see the flourishing of Talibanism in architecture and urban planning; thinking in which maintaining maharim and gender segregation will be among the basic principles influencing architecture and urban planning.

The thoughts of an architect or urban designer will have an important effect at this time. This means that if the appropriate architectural or urban spaces are not designed in this pattern, there will be many problems for people, especially women. Men in the Taliban system are at the top of the family power and decision-making pyramid, and the laws and government support this system. Now, if this mindset is not taken into account in the design, it may eliminate the presence of women in society or diminish their presence.

In recent months, with the re-emergence of the Taliban, girls in the community have been banned from going to school. Due to the lack of separation of urban spaces, no woman can leave the house alone to shop and must be accompanied by a mahram male, even if he is her 3-year-old boy.

Some of these have been rooted in the culture and beliefs of Taliban thought and if ignored, architecture and urban planning projects will fail to achieve their goals, which is to provide desirable services to citizens. Many cases of failure of modern thinking architecture and urban planning projects that have been formed regardless of the culture and beliefs of citizens can be named, the most important of which is the new city of Chandigarh in India, created by the greatest architect of modern thought, Le Corbusier.

Therefore, these designs should be done in a way that in the first stage is based on the needs and culture of the people, and in the second stage with a subtle perspective, can create the basis for changing the type of thinking. Urban rules and regulations must be such that they can accommodate changes and the body of the city must be able to receive changes in the shortest possible time.

Towns can each make these changes in some way. Thus, over time and with the increase in the number of these settlements to reach the capital, many cultural changes can be made.

In this kind of displacement, we will no longer have a population concentration in the capital. By preparing the

required urban infrastructure in the new capital, the political and, in fact, the governmental sector will be transferred. In this case, considering the minimum percentage allocated to service, residential and industrial use in the new capital due to the transfer of population to the transitional towns, security control and also the safety of the capital will increase due to the lack of population concentration in it. Admittedly, it will eliminate the tremendous terrorist movements that countries like Afghanistan are currently facing.

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## Note

Note 1. William Gemmell Cochran (15 July 1909 – 29 March 1980) was a prominent statistician.

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