HOUSING OPTIONS IN TASHKENT:
JOURNEYS OF YOUNG PEOPLE
IN ESTABLISHING THEIR HOUSEHOLDS
IN INDEPENDENT UZBEKISTAN
A THESIS
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FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING
BY
HIKOYAT K. SALIMOVA
CHAIRPERSON: DR. NIHAL PERERA
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
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This thesis was a long journey that I could not possibly complete without support and assistance from several important people, to whom I would like to express my deep appreciation. Among these people I thank, at first, my committee chairperson and academic advisor, Dr. Nihal Perera. His input in my academic growth and this particular thesis is tremendous. I also thank my other committee members, Dr. Wes Janz and Professor Paul Mitchell, for their academic advising and their insights and questions that allowed me to view my topic from different perspective. I am also thankful for Ball State University librarians, especially the Interlibrary Loan division. They have been most helpful in searching and getting me the books and theses from different libraries that I needed for this research.

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Finally, I should admit that this thesis would be impossible to complete without ever lasting support, both moral and informative, from my family and friends. I thank my parents for their insights on the Soviet and traditional Uzbek housing, their support in finding materials from Uzbekistan, since I could not travel there as often as I needed, and most importantly, their belief in me and blessings for this long journey. I would like to express my deepest gratefulness to my sister, Lola Salimova, who not only supported me morally and financially, but she also commented and proofread significant part of this thesis. A special note of thanks should also go to my professor-friends Mark Messer, Barbara Alvarez, and Dr. John Vann for their comments and proofreading the final thesis. At last, I thank all my friends who supported me and were patient with me during this research. Although they are all over the world, I constantly felt their moral support and received their assistance on parts of this research.

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Hikoyat Salimova

Muncie, Indiana,

August 2010
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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AGV – gas-based heating device
CAR – Central Asian Republics
CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States
NIS – Newly Independent States
SAMPI – Central Asian Medical Pediatric Institute
TSJs – housing partnership in apartment complex
TFI – Tashkent Financial Institute
TIIM – Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration
TTZ – Tashkent Tractor Plant
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
USAID – United States of America International Development
U.S.S.R – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
U.S., or USA – the United States of America
WB – World Bank
ZhEK – house-management association

Soum – (UZS) Uzbekistan’s currency
$ - (USD) US Dollar
GLOSSARY

_Babushka/ babulya/ babka_ – a common title for Russian old lady

_Bankovkie doma_ – luxury apartments, built by banks

_Gap_ – a community gathering in mahalla, used in Tashkent.

_Dacha_ – Russian summerhouse outside the city boundaries.

_Dasturhon_ – a part of traditional interior, a tablecloth that is also laid on the floor, and surrounded by _kurschas._

_Dom_ – the Soviet and modern types of apartment complexes, that usually have two or more entrances for different apartment units, with either common or separate utility units located on the underground floor, but with typically common roof.

_Domkom_ – a head of the apartment block committee.

_Euroremont_ – major repair or renovation of apartment using imported decorative and interior design materials, according to Western style, but in local manner.

_Gallereyniy_ - a type of Soviet apartment block, where neighbors on the same floor share one long balcony.

_Hashar_ – a traditional collective work in a community

_Hokim_ – a local governor

_Hokimiyat_ – the local authorities on province, city and town levels

_Hovli_ – traditional Uzbek courtyard house, typically located either in rural or urban mahallas.

_Homtakhta_ – a low dining table

_Kishlak_ – an Uzbek village

_Kosmeticheskiy remont_ – decorating repair, such as painting walls, window frames, doors and floors, or only selected parts; or renewing wallpapers.

_Kurpacha_ – a long and narrow padded quilt.
Kushan – a share into community self-help commonly used among extended family or close neighbors for large celebration events or other major financial affairs.

Mahalla – a traditional residential neighborhood with between 150-2,000 households.

Madrasa – an institution for Islamic education.

Microrayon – a city micro-district or neighborhood.

Novostroyki – newly built apartment complexes.

Oblastnie – people from provinces

Oksakol – an elderly and respected person in Uzbek community, or mahalla.


Ottepel’ – the Khrushchev Thaw, a period of de-Stalinization and peaceful co-existence with other nations in the U.S.S.R., when repressions and censorships were partially reversed.

Pod’ezd – a common entrance for a number of apartments in apartment complex.

Prihojaya - a piece of furniture in the entrance hall for outdoor cloth and shoes.

Propiska – residence registration, temporary or permanent.

Rais – a head of mahalla committee

Somsa – an Uzbek fast-rood, a pastry filled in with ground beef, potatoes or pumpkin, and chopped onions with spices.

Stenka – a furniture set from the Soviet times, that consists of bookshelves, cupboard, television stand, wardrobe, and other uses.

Viloyat – a province in Uzbekistan

Visotka – a high-rise building (apartment complex)

Vtorichniy rinok jil’ya (vtorichka) – a housing market of apartments that were built during the Soviet times.

Zal, or gostinnaya – a living room, equivalent to parlor, enclosed room for guests

Zhurnal’niy stolik – a small low table for journals, newspapers, usually in a living room.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.

“But, Hikoyat, we don’t want just any apartment! The ones that we have seen are either in not good districts, or too far from the center, or in a very bad shape. We cannot afford a good apartment right now...” (Kseniya, 2005).

In a random conversation, my friend shared her frustrations looking for an apartment in Tashkent. This was the first time I realized that it is difficult to find a place to live in the city. Kseniya had recently gotten married, and she and her husband lived with her parents-in-law. Along with their desire to have a baby, the young couple wanted to establish their own home, where they could raise children and have a decent life. Yet, even with two incomes, Kseniya and her husband were unable to find a suitable apartment at a price they could afford in an appropriate location.

Unlike Kseniya, I was not looking to establish my own place. I lived with my parents; so the full range of complexities involved in housing was not evident to me. Most unmarried young people in Uzbekistan, like myself, live with their parents due to tradition, close family bonds and practical reasons such as finances and comfort. As one
leaves their parents’ home, housing becomes a dilemma, a situation almost impossible to
deal with individually.

My graduate studies in urban development and planning equipped me with better
tools to understand the housing issue. Life in the USA has also provided me with both the
experience of looking for housing and a critical intellectual distance from this particular
issue in Tashkent. This thesis focuses on the newly independent youth who are looking
for housing in Tashkent, which is both Uzbekistan’s administrative and economic capital.

The housing conditions and the issue

The current housing situation in Uzbekistan is new. Independence in 1991
brought the old Soviet system of distribution of city housing for the workforce, including
the youth, to a halt. An alternative housing market has yet to emerge. It is slowly
developing through the supply and demand created by the people, but without proper
legal and administrative systems. The lack of a housing market forces young people to
continue to live with their parents for longer periods than they wish. The revival of
certain cultural values, according to which it is good for young Uzbek families to live
with their parents, has camouflaged the situation. I became curious to learn more about
this new housing situation; hence this is new in Tashkent.

In the Soviet past the organization where a person worked provided a free housing
after a number of years of service. After independence the majority of institutions, both
state and private, struggled to survive in the transitional political economy and only a few
organizations have been able to continue to build and provide housing for their
employees. A larger share of house construction was transferred to individuals. People
have built their houses piece by piece for more than a decade. In a situation where they have to create their own housing, Uzbeks have seemingly revived the old traditional practice of getting the support from the entire family, including the extended family, neighbors and close friends. Such practices include hashar, collective work on house construction, or kushan\(^1\), a substitute of labor for money.

The experience of my parents’ generation who lived through the last two decades of the Soviet Union was rather different. Then the state provided education, employment and housing in this order. Thus, the government used a housing incentive to compensate workers for a lifetime commitment to their jobs. This was both a measure to keep them at a particular place and the way in which the state looked after people’s housing needs. The situation changed drastically after Uzbekistan proclaimed independence on August 31, 1991. The separation from the Soviet Union meant that the country was completely on its own in regard to dealing with its own economic, political, social and cultural issues, but without the necessary resources. In the context of many urgent issues, housing was not considered a priority by the government. Since the majority of the population in Uzbekistan, as in the other former Soviet republics, had received housing accommodation during the Soviet period, homelessness was not a significant issue.

The housing “market” in Tashkent began to develop out of the emptying of apartments and houses by the people who migrated out of Tashkent and Uzbekistan. As Table 1.1 demonstrates the larger percentage of out-migration from Uzbekistan was during the period of 1990-1995, but it gradually drops by 2010:

\(^1\) This term is used in Bukhara city. In other regions of Uzbekistan they use different terms.
Table 1.1. Population of Uzbekistan, 1990-2010.

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<tr>
<td>Population at mid-year</td>
<td>20,515,000</td>
<td>22,919,000</td>
<td>24,776,000</td>
<td>26,320,000</td>
<td>27,794,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number of international migrants at mid-year</td>
<td>1,653,000</td>
<td>1,473,700</td>
<td>1,366,900</td>
<td>1,267,839</td>
<td>1,175,935</td>
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<td>International migrants as a percentage of the population</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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These emigrants were mostly Russians and the other ethnic minorities who came voluntarily or were forcefully relocated to Uzbekistan during the Soviet regime. This first wave of emigrants, consisting mostly of the Slavs (Russians and other Russian-speaking population), generally moved back to their relatives or to new places in Russia and other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The out-migration provided rapidly growing number of empty dwellings in the city that became a “secondary housing market” (*vtorichka*).

Nevertheless, the population of Tashkent continued to grow due to an influx of newcomers from the other regions of Uzbekistan seeking the relatively better employment opportunities in the city. Tashkent’s population was officially estimated in 2009 as 2.2 million (State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2010). This does not include a large number of unregistered temporary residents, or the floating population, to use a recent Chinese term (Zhang, 2001). Although the local government

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2 The CIS includes all of the former Soviet Union republics, except for Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Turkmenistan and Ukraine are unofficial members.
tries to control the Tashkent population through the old Soviet system of passport regulation and residence registration of citizens, internal migration in Uzbekistan, especially to Tashkent city, has gradually increased since 1995 (see Figure 1.1).

![Figure 1.1. The average population of Tashkent, permanent residents, in thousands. Chart created by the author. Source: State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2010.](image-url)

The situation changed slightly after the Tashkent bombings of 1999. As the *hokimiyat* (the city municipality) imposed severe restrictions on the registration of new residents, it became even harder for people to move to the capital. Even so, the regional migration from surrounding and remote regions continued, although at a slower pace. The total population of Tashkent continued to grow, but at a slower rate (see Figure 1.2).
Yet the housing supply did not increase to accommodate the demand of young people who wanted to live separately once they become adults. The increasing internal migration to the city and the rise in world housing prices led to more than usual increases in the housing prices and rents in Tashkent from 2002-2008. The average purchase price for a two-room apartment increased approximately twice from $2,000 to $4,000 between 1999 and 2002, and from $11,000 to $40,000 between 2005-2008 (See Table 1.2).

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<td>Average 2-room apartment</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth rate</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
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Table 1.2. Estimated average purchase price for a two-room apartment in Tashkent. Sources: www.UZRE.uz, www.shahar.uz, “Lebel Kapital Invest” Real Estate Agency (analytical review, 2009), World Bank, 2007, Ansher Capital Research Report, 2004 Note: The prices are the author’s estimates based on the review of a number of real estate websites and online articles on housing in Tashkent, and informal conversations with citizens who sold and purchased two-room apartment during these years.
Ordinary people have to save over many decades to accumulate the required amount of money to purchase a small apartment in Tashkent. But most of the times, they have to borrow from friends and relatives, sell their houses and apartments in their hometowns, and collect all the savings to buy an apartment or a house in the capital. They believe the higher incomes that they hope to earn in the city would enable them to repay debts relatively fast. The residential property in the capital is not affordable for the average Uzbek. Even for those who work in private sector the average monthly salaries in Tashkent were about $100 in 2003 and saving for housing was impossible. For comparison, the average monthly salary of an engineer in a state enterprise in 1999 and 2002 was about $20 and $40, respectively. Although the average monthly salary grew up to $296 in 2010, most of it is spent on basic daily needs, such as food, rent, transportation costs; this salary is not enough to save to buy an apartment.

The housing prices steadily grew between 50% and 200% every year from 2000 to 2004. But a drastic change occurred in the Tashkent housing market in January 2006; due to various reasons the prices for housing had risen sharply. Experts anticipate that foreign investments and remittances from Uzbekistani citizens working abroad triggered such rapid increase in housing prices (Murad Abduhakimov, Director of SKS Consulting; Analytical Center “Avesta Research”). In particular, Russian and Kazakh investors with a

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larger purchasing power seized the opportunity with the object of making profit. These investments initiated the sudden jump in housing prices in Tashkent, further diminishing the buying power of local people. The period of 2006–2008 was marked with soaring housing prices, increasing by about 100% each quarter, until it reached its peak in mid 2008: an average two-room apartment cost more than $40,000, which is 20 times greater than that in 1999. Although new housing was supplied to the market, it was mostly luxury high-end apartments with prices incompatible with an average citizen’s income; therefore, the ability of ordinary people to house themselves was drastically reduced.

The 2009 global economic crisis somewhat stabilized the housing market in Tashkent and the average apartment prices even dropped twice, but still did not get to the pre-2005 levels. During this period local citizens became more insecure, doubting whether they could ever collect enough money even for a very small dwelling, or to repay the debts they incurred.

In short, the housing costs went up sharply, and the housing stock increase was marginal. Those who needed housing could not purchase whatever was available in the market because their savings were not enough to match the new housing prices. Yet, none of these conditions curtailed the growth of population in Tashkent. Both the natural process of children entering the adult life and leaving parents’ homes, and in-migration to Tashkent continued. Although the demand for housing went up, the increase in the supply was insignificant and only a small percentage of high-income earners could afford these apartments. Hence, the central question is how did the young people who were on their own, i.e. left their parents’ homes or migrated to the capital, house themselves in Tashkent?
The investigation questions

The thesis questions are in a larger sense: How have these changes in the housing market affected ordinary people of Uzbekistan? How have they created their own housing? Do they buy, rent, or squat? What is the larger picture of their livelihoods in the city, including places to sleep, eat, study and work? What is the shape of the journey of the youth in establishing themselves in Tashkent and achieving a dwelling that satisfies their needs?

I premise my work on the idea that people are not passive recipients of external ideas; they have agency, see alternatives, and create their own options (Appadurai, 2003; Goh, 2002; Perera, 2009). I critically build on Perera’s (2009) argument about “familiarizing space” by ordinary people and the “people’s processes” of space making. This thesis intends to map out and investigate how young people cope or negotiate the existing housing conditions and develop opportunities to fulfill their own housing needs. In this, I approach it from the standpoint of social productions of space, i.e. space is produced by actors though negotiations. More importantly, I focus on how they find suitable accommodation in the cracks, the interstices and the margins of the existing housing system, and within newly emerging and, therefore, not completely regulated housing market, using informal and unofficial means and social capital. Getting to the level of individuals I develop my story based on the stories of my subjects. More than my “story”, my attempt is to reveal their stories of creativity in creating their own housing.
The target group

This research focuses on the generation of Uzbek citizens who did not receive housing during the Soviet period, but are now at the age of establishing their own lives as singles or families. The young rich have little difficulty in housing themselves, not least because most of the new housing constructions are on high end – luxury apartments. Due to the inability to find informants I also excluded the lower end. The target group is educated people belonging to middle income groups in the ages of 22 to 30 who are establishing their lives as independent members or families. I focus on those who have been looking for desirable housing at affordable prices during the last decade. The target group consists of both Tashkent natives and migrants from the provinces of Uzbekistan.

The migrants belonging to this category usually come to Tashkent to study and thereafter they stay with the hope of achieving a better life defined by higher salaries, richer social life, and better living conditions. My sample also includes the youth from Tashkent itself, i.e., those who have lived or still live with their parents, as they do not have the means to buy their own apartment. There are many young people, who are also returning to Tashkent (and Uzbekistan) after long- and short-term stays in other countries, either for study, business, or labor. They wish to settle in the capital city, which they see as the most modern and developed city in the country. Some young people who have earned enough are able to purchase their own dwelling immediately upon arrival, while most others struggle through a lot of obstacles. While some of them achieve this goal and stay in Tashkent, some others who find the circumstances completely unfavorable in the city go back to their hometowns. There is another group of young
people who were not satisfied with the life in the city of Tashkent, and chose to leave for more developed countries. They include both those who established a relatively “normal” livelihood in the capital and those who failed. They primarily leave for the former Soviet republics such as Russia and Kazakhstan, while others leave for Arabic countries, South Korea, Japan, Europe, and the USA.

This thesis focuses on the ways in which the newly independent youth of middle-income families who opt to find accommodation in Tashkent and will map out their journeys in creating their own individual homes. It will concentrate on how they acquired a physical space, a dwelling, an apartment or a house, but within the larger idea of social production of space. Through this research I intend to discover the young people’s stories of building their lives in Tashkent and alternatives to this, in case they are unable to achieve the goal.

Through a review of relevant literature I will first develop an analytical framework for the study. This involves two kind of literature: contextual and theoretical. First, I will develop a context for the study. A foundational source of information are previous studies of Tashkent’s urban development, i.e. about its emergence as a regional center and its transition from the medieval Central Asian city into today’s more “Europeanized” Tashkent. I will also draw upon other secondary sources, especially United Nations, World Bank and USAID reports and analytical articles on the housing issue from a number of real estate agencies and research organizations in Uzbekistan. Although these reflect the authors’ points of view, they offer general observations of

\[7\] In almost all former Soviet republics there is a significant Russian-speaking population; in fact, in all the republics Russian can be used as a second language, even where it has not such official status. Hence it is easier for the citizens of CIS to operate in the former Soviet empire.
contemporary housing conditions. Moreover, I will also use my own experience of living in Tashkent to bridge any gaps in data and clarify their discrepancies. The legislative acts on housing in Uzbekistan will be reviewed and used as points of reference. The statistical data from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Goskomstat) on housing in Uzbekistan in period of 2003-2006 provides the background housing conditions in Tashkent from an official standpoint. I will then spell out the issues, the objectives of the project in detail and develop an intellectual framework for the analysis of data and map out methods of investigation.

The original data for this thesis derives in two forms – a survey of a sample of Tashkent residents, and detailed interviews with selected group of young people who have experienced living in Tashkent for at least four years and have confronted the housing issue one way or another. In order to cover the gaps and better understand the housing condition in Tashkent, I have conducted a survey of housing conditions among Tashkent residents. It resulted in 112 responses. The low number of survey sample does not provide any statistical value; therefore, it was not included in the final product of this study. However it helped me to understand general public views, consisting of current and former residents of Tashkent, and develop focused interview questions.

The crucial moment in this thesis is to map out the young people’s journeys in their ways of establishing their own lives and their means to overcome the obstacles along these processes. For this purpose, I interviewed in detail 21 young people, a sample I chose from the survey. Their life stories in Tashkent provide the core of my investigation on housing of the youth in the city.
The research demonstrated that the young people are indeed creative in developing their own housing options. Despite heavy constraints and stagnation in the supply of dwellings, they have contributed to the creation of a new housing market. I have also learned the diversities and complexities of the housing issue from different physical and social perspectives, including hybrid uses and methods in housing, physical and spatial transformations within dwellings, informal and unofficial means composing social capital for local people, gender discrepancies at homes and work places. These will be detailed in the conclusion.
CHAPTER II: ESTABLISHMENT OF TASHKENT AS A REGIONAL CENTER AND ITS HOUSING.

Pre-colonial and colonial Tashkent

Ever since the medieval period Tashkent was a regional center in Chirchik Valley, northern Uzbekistan, but it was not a major city yet in the greater region. The other ancient cities in Central Asia, such as Bukhara and Samarkand were much larger and important due to their advantageous location on the Great Silk Road. By the end of the 19th century Tashkent became more powerful than all other cities in the region and by 1910 it was the most populous city in Central Asia.

The 1865 plan of Tashkent shows that it was mostly comprised of residential districts, rabads, with the ruler’s fortress and market in the center. (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. The plan of Tashkent in 1865. Source: New World Encyclopedia, 2010.
After the annexation of Tashkent and its surrounding regions to the Russian Empire in 1865, the city was transformed into a regional center of the Turkestan region. Within the great plan of General K.P. von Kaufman Tashkent became the main city of the southern part of the Russian Empire, and its population surpassed 200,000 residents by 1910. The population of the former largest city in this region, Bukhara, in 1911 was 70,000 (Gangler, Gaube, & Petruccioli, 2004). The Russians also transformed it into a “European” city with new constructions and additions that would suit its new status of provincial capital. “European” here largely refers to the Russianization. As the “Russian town” was built across the bridge over a channel that run through the city, the Russians did not intervene much into the old part of the city. Thus, Tashkent was a divided colonial city with “Asian” (Uzbek) and “European” (Russian) parts (MacKenzie, 1969).

At the time of the Russian conquest many rural inhabitants in Central Asia were impoverished because of endless internecine warfare among local feudal rulers, and they began moving to urban areas with the hope of finding employment at the plants and factories of the Russian capitalists. The imperial Russia decided to transform Central Asia into a raw materials appendage, where Tashkent became a regional center for collecting and initial processing of cotton and its sub-products. These newly introduced industries provided employment, which was filled by the poor rural migrants in the city (Tokhtakhodzhaeva, 2007).
The urbanization of Tashkent accelerated during the Soviet period, i.e. from 1917 to 1990. The Soviet authorities continued the Tsarist policy, focusing on the production and processing of cotton, in particular in Uzbekistan, but on a larger scale: they built more factories and plants related to cotton processing industry, including those producing machineries, fertilizers for agriculture, refining cotton oil, and cotton mills. The Soviets also expanded the city incorporating the surrounding lands. They established new residential districts adjacent to industrial complexes to accommodate the rapidly growing population. Thus, Tashkent became a major industrial city in the republic, concentrating all the institutions serving these industries (MacKenzie, 1969).

During the firm rule of Joseph Stalin, many people were forcefully dislocated to the outskirts of the U.S.S.R., including the Central Asian Republics (CARs). Thus, Uzbekistan became home for peoples who did not historically inhabit this land. Among them were Crimean Tatars, Koreans, Meskhetian Turks, and people of other ethnic groups who were exiled here (Radnitz, 2006). Most of them settled in Tashkent province and some in Tashkent city. The city grew even faster, from 323,000 people in 1926 to 1,090,000 in 1966 (Bol’shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia, 1956, World Almanac, 1966). The urban development in this period followed Stalinist Constructivist style with massive buildings that were considered relatively expensive. The state housing at this time was not built in sufficient quantities for the growing population; high-rank officials mainly received luxury apartments in newly constructed houses, colloquially known as stalinki. Today, these houses are famous for their solid walls, high ceilings, large rooms and impressive architecture.
The Soviet authorities under Nikita Khrushchev’s leadership recognized the housing shortage in cities all over the Soviet Union in 1956\(^8\). They launched a new housing reform that promoted the construction of cheap houses with a life time of about 20 years in a 5 years span (Chernik, 1957). This program was implemented on a massive scale in all major urban areas of the U.S.S.R. In the 1960s they produced new housing plan, high-rise multi-apartment blocks that the Soviet people colloquially named \textit{khrushchevki}. Although initially designed as a temporary solution, i.e. until communism arrived, these dwellings still make up a significant part of the housing stock in many former Soviet cities, including Tashkent.

After the devastating earthquake in April 26\(^{th}\), 1966 most of the old structures were destroyed and Tashkent was rebuilt from ground up. The Soviet planners and architects seized the opportunity to create a new modern city with wide streets, green parks, and large housing estates enough for each nuclear family, dedicated to creating socialism in the Uzbek Republic. At present, Tashkent functions significantly better compared to other Central Asian cities built during the Soviet period. A Korean American architect and artist Kyong Park points this envisioning by the Soviet architects out, while traveling to Central Asia\(^9\). The vast housing construction also led to rapid

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\(^8\) After the death of Stalin, Khrushchev announced the era of \textit{ottepel’}, when the shortcomings of the Soviet Union were allowed to discuss openly and immediate counter measures were proposed and implemented.


Yet the housing issue continued. As the government was unable to provide housing for everybody who lost a house in the earthquake, it allowed individual construction of traditional courtyard houses, which was banned in the 1980s due to scarcity of land in the city. Since then the state has become the sole builder of housing; thus, it took back the responsibility to provide a dwelling for each household by building multi-story apartment blocks. Despite the constant construction, the waiting list for housing never ended. People had to wait an average of five to ten years to receive an apartment from the state. Not being able to handle the housing issue, the state allowed private housing construction again in 1989 (Tokhtakhodzhaeva, 2007). This policy intended to release some pressure in regards to the housing problem. A few years later, the independent state of Uzbekistan almost entirely relied on private housing construction, essentially continuing the same housing policy.

Demographics of Tashkent

The population of Tashkent grew steadily throughout the Russian period. This trend is expected to continue as long as the city holds the economic dominance in the country. Tashkent is the most populated city not only in Uzbekistan, but in the region of Central Asia as well. It has officially registered a permanent population of 2.2 million people in 2009, but the does not include temporary and unregistered residents. Tashkent was the third most populated city in the Soviet Union after Moscow and Leningrad (now
Saint Petersburg. Even during the Soviet time the actual growth of the population in Tashkent exceeded all projections. Therefore, housing shortage was an acute problem since the Russian colonization of Turkestan (Tokhtakhodzáeva, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Size of city (hectares, ‘000)</th>
<th>Population (‘000)</th>
<th>Density* (person/ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>116.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>9.0</td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<td>1957</td>
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<td>1965</td>
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<td>1,090</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>2,120</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>2,088</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 (projection)</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1. Tashkent’s area and the population, 1877-2015.
Note: *Density added by the author.

The Russification of Tashkent and naming places

In addition to major re-building effort and the expansion of the city, the earthquake was also followed by a significant in-migration of young specialists from all over the U.S.S.R., who wanted to help restore the city. Although a considerable Russian-speaking population from the western part of Russia was evacuated to Tashkent during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945). This new in-flow of other ethnic groups from various parts of the U.S.S.R. added to Russification of the city as they used Russian as communication language. Most new and old districts, streets, parks, landmarks and other city elements were given Russian or Soviet symbolic names, along with some Uzbek
names derived either from local village names or significant local scientists
(Tokhtakhodzhaeva, 2007). Local people recognized newly built city components by
their new names, however, the old places they kept referring to the original names.

After the independence, the new government renamed districts, streets, parks, and
stations back to names of Uzbek heritage, including the sites that were originally
constructed by the Soviets. However, after two decades the new names are not used by
the local people who are used to the old names. The common practice is to use the names
of local landmarks to describe particular sections of the city, but these do not fit within
official district boundaries. So, a street name, bazaar or specific institution located in that
section serves as a name for it (Alayskiy Bazaar, Darkhan, Hadra, Literaturniy Institut,
Rabochiy Poselok, Tizyakovka, Urda). People use these informal names as a habit,
because they are more familiar to majority of population rather than new official names.
The Independence Period (1991-2010)

The new state essentially kept the old territorial divisions, but with a few changes to support the new status quo that appeared after August 31, 1991. Tashkent became the capital city of the sovereign state, and the twelve provinces, viloyats, as well as the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic, or Karakalpakstan (Figure 2.3.). As a result of the century-long development, discussed above, Tashkent had not only become the major
The city of Uzbekistan, i.e. by official status, but it is also the city with the largest population and the economic center of the country.

Figure 2.3. The map of Uzbekistan with provinces and major cities. Source: www.geology.com Retrieved on 06.10.2010.

The independent Uzbekistan continued the policy of individual housing construction. Following this policy the new government began to privatize the formerly state-owned apartments and houses. The existing housing stock was handed over to the
occupants living in them. Due to the lack of resources many state enterprises either stopped or slowed down the housing construction for their employees. This transferred the responsibility of finding housing to individual citizens. People without a dwelling had to rely on their own capabilities to create their own housing, whether it was building their own house on the state land\textsuperscript{10}, or purchasing an old apartment on \textit{vtorichnyi rinok}, a housing market.

While the stagnant house stock raised the real estate prices, there was no mortgage system to finance them. People collected, borrowed or made money through entrepreneurial means to purchase their dwellings. According to the Uzbek custom, it was parents’ obligation to provide housing for their children, especially for their sons (Sievers, 2002). However, by the 2000s young people had begun to earn more than their parents. As parent’s earnings depreciated significantly, they were unable to provide as much support to their children as a generation before. Today’s young people who worked either for international organizations, foreign companies or went abroad as labor migrants earned decent wages, which allowed them to purchase a cheap apartment on their own.

\textit{Privatization of housing}

One of the first reforms in most of Newly Independent States (NIS), including Uzbekistan, was privatization. During the Soviet period very few citizens owned their residential property. Those were mainly detached traditional courtyard houses the owners

\textsuperscript{10} The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states the land and its internal resources belong to the state. (Article 55). Under the Land Law, the land belongs to the state. The citizens of Uzbekistan are allowed to use the surface of the land for their needs. The Civil Code also has regulations on land tenure. Törhönen, Mika-Petteri. \textit{Land Tenure in Transition: Case Uzbekistan.} (p.2)
had built themselves. Those who lived in apartments had no legal ownership of their residence as these were provided by the state and, therefore, were state owned. There were semi-private apartment blocks that were built on cooperative basis, the owners still did not exercise full ownership because the loan was given by the state (Andrusz, 1984). Immediately after the independence the legislature passed the Law on Destatization and Privatization and, later, the Law on privatization of the State Housing Fund in 1993. Taking a major step in regards to housing in 1992, the government of Uzbekistan transferred ownership of the housing stock from the state to the tenants.

According to the International City/County Management Association Report Uzbekistan led the privatization among CARs with 45% of the state housing stock privatized within two years after the independence (ICCMA, 1993). The State Agency for Housing and Communal Services (Uzkommunhizmat), responsible for proving utilities, states that, in 2002, 98.2% of the housing stock, including single-family houses and apartments, was in private hands (USAID, 2002). In comparison Russia has privatized only 70% of the housing stock (Shomina, 2007). According to the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Goskomstat) reports, as of 2006, 34% of newly built privatized apartments were distributed gratis. The state still provides free housing for certain governmental bodies such as the military and the ministry employees.

*The Old City of Tashkent*

The earthquake of 1966 destroyed much of the Old City, but some building remained in poor state. These city elements, such as bazaars (Chorsu), mosques (Juma),
madrasas (Kukaldosh), hammoms (baths), and mahallas (traditional Uzbek neighborhoods) were re-built after the earthquake in local tradition. The presence of mosques and madrasas in the Old City makes this area more attractive for devout Muslims, who openly started praying five times a day, something they had to hide during the 70 years under the Soviet rule. The adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On Freedom of Worship and Religious Organizations (1991) removed this ban and restored religious institutions, including mosques, churches, and synagogues. One of the survey respondents referred to this aspect indicating that his dream house should be close to the old mosque and the community of Muslims with strict religious practice. This part of the city also preserved the old names for its sub-districts, Beshagach, Kukcha, Harda, Sebzar, Shaykhantaur, Urda (Tokhtakhodzhaeva, 2007). The local people in the Old City never familiarized the Soviet renaming policy, and the native names were officially restored after the independence in 1991.

The Old City area is very diverse; it has some of the luxury detached houses and some almost deteriorating old houses. Thus, the real estate prices (mostly because of land value) in the area range from $200,000 to over $1 million. Modern houses with the Western amenities, including a garage, indoor or outdoor swimming pool, and basement with entertainment facilities are on the upper range of the price bracket (for examples see housing offers from “Lebed Kapital Invest” and “Toshkent Rielt” real estate agencies).

In recent years with the increase in land prices in the capital, especially in the city center, the old residential neighborhoods became the target of big redevelopment plans. Uzbek planners and city officials view the future of Tashkent as a modern city following Western standards with wide and paved streets, landscaped green parks and “modern”
buildings. As the result, many old houses located in the areas designated for redevelopment are allotted to be demolished and the current dwellers are relocated to newly built apartment blocks on the outskirts of the city. Consequently, under these transformations the *mahallas* lose their territories, their context and identity, and often the interests of the residents are ignored by the authorities and developers.

*Mahalla and other residential associations*

The traditional neighborhood, *mahalla*, is a special residential community that follows its own social norms and consists of a number of courtyard houses sharing common open space and boundaries. *Mahalla* is like an urban village in which the community is well bonded; quite often *mahalla* networking is even stronger than family support. The neighbors have lived next to each other for decades – the children have grown up in the “care” of the entire neighborhood. As adults, these children continue to live in the same *mahalla*. As Jane Jacobs (1961) stresses, such urban communities provide uniqueness to cities and make up a vital part of city’s organism. So, *mahallas* are the inclusive component of any old Uzbek city.

While living in Tashkent, I have witnessed myself and heard from random people about the activities that are held in certain *mahallas*; or stories such as one man, buying melons for his family and a couple more for his neighboring family that had recently lost

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11 Similar practices are happening in other post-Soviet cities that still have remnants of harsh planning methods. In Moscow too, the officials relocated the residents of demolished old houses from the center to the edges of the city, where new residential neighborhoods are established (Badyina and Golubchikov, 2005).
their breadwinner. Such strong community ties make this place more desirable for living to people who value the sense of community.

A few apartment *mahallas* had also been established, although they do not exercise the same practices as traditional *mahallas*. There are more common ZhEK and TSJ (Russian acronyms) housing associations within apartment complexes. These organizations maintain the building in general, in terms of appearance, roofing, basement, and utilities pipelines. However, ZhEK and TJS are formal organizations that are usually located outside of the residential community, while *mahalla* exists within the community and is involved in social lives of its residents.

In apartment complexes people are more segregated and individualistic with each family living within their compartment. Although the apartments are physically attached to each other, the social connections between the occupants are significantly weaker unlike those in the traditional *mahallas*. The apartment dwellers themselves tend to move more often than the house owners. The frequent change of neighbors also makes the residents more concerned about their security and they try not to get too involved with others. Hence they tend to keep their entrance doors locked and do not open to unfamiliar people. On the contrary, the traditional *mahalla* residents might lock the house only at nights, and during the daytime any neighbor can visit without prior notification (Sievers, 2002).

New homebuyers in the *mahallas* are recommended to get the permission and/or blessing from the *oksakol*, the elderly person of the *mahalla* community and its head, the *rais*. Due to respect that the residents hold for the *oksakol* and *rais* the community is

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12 This might be also because in the city it is easier to sell an apartment than a house.
more likely to accept the new members easily and the adaptation to the new place is usually smoother. As *mahalla* is a tightly bonded community, it is also harder for outsiders to enter it.

During Soviet times the traditional *mahalla* was not abolished, but it lost its pre-Soviet status. As the state began to provide social benefits, the role of *mahallas* in daily lives of its residents diminished. In 1993, the new government of Uzbekistan established the Mahalla Foundation with the aim of reviving the former status of mahallas as a community unifier and supporter. Once the state was unable to provide sufficient social support for low-income and needed families due to budget shortages, *mahallas* began to fill the gap. These residential associations organized community self-help (*gap, hashar, kushan*), recreating mutual bonds within the communities.

With the adoption of Law on Mahallas in 1999 the role of *mahallas* in citizens’ lives has increased tremendously. The state transferred the function of welfare distribution to *mahallas*, and now, the *mahalla* committee, including *oksakol* and *rais*, decides on a range of administrative and financial issues, such as support for low-income and large families, membership fees, permission for potential residents to move into the *mahalla*, permission to sell houses, and reference to any *mahalla* member if some institution requires one. Unlike *oksakol* who is chosen by *mahalla* members, *rais* is appointed by the governor, *hokim*. Thus, from previously independent community self-supportive organization, *mahalla* has been transformed into a state institution, becoming a part of the administrative system. While its new status as a community or a state organization is not clear yet; nonetheless, the *mahalla’s* agency is still perceived by the
residents as primarily a community resource, rather than state agent, and people use its advantages as a source of social capital and a tool to negotiate with the state.

**Kvartirniy Bazaar**

There was no housing market during the Soviet era. Houses were not fully commodified and were either passed down through generations or on a lifetime lease from the state as a part of remuneration for work performed. In fact, the new comers to the “housing market” were basically deprived of the opportunity to buy an apartment even if they had money (Stronski, 2003). After the independence, due to privatization reform, citizens of Uzbekistan obtained the full ownership of their residences, and the houses were commodified; they obtained the legal right to sell and to purchase dwellings. Yet there were hardly any addition to the housing stock and a housing market or such was yet to evolve.

As emigration increased, of the Russian-speaking population in particular, many people left Uzbekistan for Russia\(^{13}\) and other former Soviet Union republics, many of them opted to sell their apartments and houses, thus, creating most of the housing supply. While, rural and provincial population, migrating to Tashkent, provided potential buyers, creating demand for housing. Since there was no formal housing market, people interested in selling, buying or renting dwellings began to gather near Hotel Uzbekistan, on A. Temur Street in 1999-mid 2002. Later, in fall 2002, the city authorities assigned them a nearby place, behind the main bus stop near Amir Temur Park, where potential

\(^{13}\) According to Scott Radnitz (2006) the first wave of out-migration in Uzbekistan immediately after the independence was primarily determined by the ethnic tension between the native Uzbek population and Russians (Slavs). A decade later, the economic decline became a more significant reason for leaving the country.
sellers and buyers of housing properties could meet for a small fee. This market also attracted real estate agents (a newly emerged profession in Uzbekistan) and renters. This institution was colloquially called *Kvartirniy Bazaar*, which in Russian literally means the apartment market. It was a housing bazaar in its true meaning: a fenced area with open space in the middle and a few stands with covers. People offering (to sell or rent) dwellings stand or sit on chairs they bring and their advertisements were written on sheets of a school notebook. Usually an advertisement includes a short description of the property that the potential buyers can read and, if interested, negotiate a time when the buyers could see the dwelling. Among these there also mingled middle-persons who tried to enter into the deal between a seller and a buyer, or property owner and renter, and profit from the deal – small percentage of the property sale price or a fixed fee from renters. These self-taught middle people eventually became realtors.

The system gradually became more sophisticated with special codes and abbreviations for common elements of the property. Self-declared realtors and agents began collating the advertisements into booklets and selling them to prospective clients. They also included services such as organizing meetings of sellers and buyers, negotiating the price and sealing the agreement with the notary. Since the real estate agents’ activities were not regulated in the beginning of housing market operation, there were many cases of fraud and ordinary people lost faith in the realtors.

Although *Kvartirniy Bazaar* is always busy, house hunters prefer first to ask friends and acquaintances on properties for sales. They want to avoid fraud, hassle with realtors and extra fees for their service (unlike in the US buyer pays a fee to the realtor as well as the seller). However, the rural and provincial residents who intend to move to
Tashkent have to go to *Kvartirniy Bazaar*, trust their intuition and hope to get a good deal. Usually they are a target of fraud and there are many cases when people from the provinces loose their life savings in such operations. Frequent cases of fraud and rapid real estate price increases, led to stricter regulations and the enactment of laws on real estate. After 2007 *Kvartirniy Bazaar* was subject to state supervision. It now operates under the State Committee for the Management of State Property (*Goskomimushchestvo*).

*Types of housing in Tashkent*

The Housing Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan states that the “housing stock is a reserve of dwelling rooms, suitable for human’s living, which includes dwelling houses, apartments, dwelling units at office/work premises, specialized houses, such as hostels (dormitories), shunting yards, boarding-schools, homes for invalids, veterans, elderly people, and orphanages, and other housing for special use” (*Housing Code*, Article 7, 1998). The Code further divides the housing stock between private and state reserves. The private housing includes those under individual and collective ownerships, while municipal, communal and departmental housing are considered state property.

The housing stock in Tashkent comprises of three major types: houses, apartments, and specialized housing. While each of these has subcategories, apartment is the most complex type with several of them. The houses in Uzbekistan are mainly traditional courtyard houses, detached houses in Russian style, known as cottages, and recently emerged luxury houses built following the Western models. The number of
traditional houses decreases in Tashkent because some are deteriorating and some are demolished due to urban renewal projects.

However, the more modern houses have a strong Western influence. These were first introduced by the Russians during the Tsarist and Soviet periods. In particular, Jyoti Hosagrahar (2005) describes the modifications made by the locals to older havelis in New Delhi. Similar practices – in regard to Uzbek hovlis – are also noticeable in today’s Tashkent. New types of houses are also as hybrid living quarters. These are traditional houses with modern elements, and western type of houses with traditional elements. The latter type emerged recently, after independence, especially between 2005-2008. The images of these transformed spaces are presented later in the analysis chapter under the transformations section (p. 135-145).

Most of residential space in Tashkent currently belongs to apartment complexes. An apartment complex in Uzbekistan implies a mid-rise or high-rise house between 5 to 16 floors of which the individual apartments are connected through a common entrance [pod’ezd] and shares the same roof, basement and major utility pipelines. Usually, such houses have several entrances for separate sets of apartments. The number of entrances depends on the series of houses and particular plans and topology of the area. The individual apartments in a house are not identical; depending on location (rear or middle) these apartments differ in the number of living rooms and floor plans.

The Soviet classification of housing differentiates between the living area, that is sum of areas of all living rooms, and common useful area, that is sum of auxiliary rooms (See Table 2.2. Typical Tashkent apartments and Figure 2.4. Examples of floor plans of typical Tashkent apartments). The living area includes only bedrooms and a living-room
The auxiliary rooms make up the common useful area, which includes a hall, corridors, kitchen, toilet facilities, balcony, loggia, and closets.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>K-7</td>
<td>panel 5-story house, 1-2-3- room apartments</td>
<td>II-18</td>
<td>block 12-story building (tower), 1-2-3- room apartments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II-29</td>
<td>brick 9-story building, 1-2-3- room apartments</td>
<td>II-32</td>
<td>panel 5-story building, 1-2-3- room apartments</td>
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<tr>
<td>II-49</td>
<td>panel 9-story building, 1-2-3-4- room apartments</td>
<td>II-57</td>
<td>panel 12-story building, 1-2-3- room apartments</td>
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<td>И(522)A</td>
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<td>panel 16-story building (tower), 2-3-4- room apartments</td>
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<td>panel 14, 17-story building, 1-2-3- room apartments</td>
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<td>panel 7, 9, 11, 16-story building, 1-2-3-4- room apartments</td>
<td>ПД-4</td>
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<td>panel 5-story building, 1-2-3- room apartments</td>
<td>1-515/9</td>
<td>panel 9-story building, 2-3-4- room apartments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2. Typical Tashkent apartments.
Source: Real Estate Agency “Toshkent Rielt” (http://www.shahar.uz/)
The examples of floor plans for one-, two-, three- and four- room apartments are presented below:

Figure 2.4. Examples of floor plans of typical Tashkent apartments. Source: Real Estate Agency “Toshkent Riet” (http://www.shahar.uz/)

The types and plans of apartment complexes also changed with different Soviet leaderships. Different types of housing were colloquially named after the particular Soviet leader under whose rule it was initiated: “stalinki”, “khruschevki”, “brejnevki”. By naming it a “complex” I do not want to give impression of a modern western apartment complex with numerous amenities, such as a swimming pool, a sports gym, and a business center. “Complex” refers to a set of buildings with basic apartments, which are served by several entrances and basic common amenities.
In addition to the year of construction ("stalinki", "khrushchevki", "brejnevki"), apartment houses are also categorized by the construction material (brick, panel, block, concrete), the number of floors, the number of rooms in apartment, the floor plan, and the ownerships (state and cooperative). These parameters have a significant influence on residents' choices while searching for housing.
Figure 2.6. Typology of Tashkent housing stock.
Created by the author.

Tashkent Housing Stock.

The majority of apartments in Tashkent comprise of one to four rooms. A few luxury apartment complexes have units with more than five living rooms. They are not
within the scope of this research, because they are far from affordable for the young people of middle-income families, although these might qualify for “dream home” that many respondents desire to have one day. Those are, therefore, not included in the statistical data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of apartment</th>
<th>Number of apartments by year and percentage to total number of apartments in that year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in thousands or %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-room</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In percent to total</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-rooms</td>
<td>214.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In percent to total</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-rooms</td>
<td>229.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In percent to total</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-rooms</td>
<td>118.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In percent to total</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total apartments</td>
<td>641.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3. Composition of housing fund by the type of apartment in city of Tashkent. Source: The State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Table 2.3. demonstrates the prevalence of the two- and three- room type of apartments. Noticeably, in the period from 2003 to 2006, the two- and three-room apartments decreased by 2% each. At the same time, four-room apartments increased more than any other type. From 2003 to 2005 they were stable at 18%, then in 2006 they rapidly gained a 4% increase and became 22% of the total housing stock of Tashkent apartments. This increase demonstrates the new trend in the market where developers are investing in condominiums. It is also important to note that it is customary for Uzbek families to live with parents-in-law; therefore, an additional room is always desirable.
The fact that about one fifth of the stock is four-room apartment reflects this. It is also important to note that more than one nuclear family lives in these.

Individual space and privacy for each nuclear family is a trend of modernity, which was first introduced under Khrushchev’s housing reform. Nevertheless, the traditional way of extended families living closer to each other, basically neighboring, has not disappeared. In addition, Uzbek families used to have six or more children, and even the nuclear family was large by size and required rather larger dwellings than what the state was providing. Such families usually built their own detached home on the outskirts of the city, where the state allocated land for summer houses (dačas, hovlis). This process usually takes several decades, so many of those who build houses now, have started the process as soon as they received the new apartments under the Soviets.

With the recent slight increase of incomes of Tashkent urban population, people in the capital got to demonstrate their aspiration for the Western-modern living style. They not only changed the interior design of their homes in “Euro-style”\textsuperscript{14}, but have also desired more privacy, more space, and many other comforts of the West, as well.

\textsuperscript{14} Various construction companies offer the repair in “Euro-style”, and real estate agencies sell houses and apartment for higher prices if they are remodeled in “Euro-style.”
CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW, ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK, RESEARCH METHODS AND LIMITATIONS.

Literature Review and Analytical Framework

The housing situation discussed in the previous chapter reveals a large-scale deficiency for those seeking affordable housing in Tashkent. Housing is a basic need. According to Amartya Sen (1999), the lack of housing is an obstacle to development. He defines development as people being able to live as long as they want and the way they want. Inspired by Sen’s work, I wondered how professional planners and policy makers engage in development? How do they get to know the people they serve? Do they know how they live? What are the major components of their livelihood? What do they do while the authorities make decisions and execute them? Looking beyond deprivations, I opted to investigate how the young people searching for housing in Tashkent overcame obstacles.

Discussing the notion of modernity, Arjun Appadurai builds on what he calls the “work of imagination”, which implies that “all human beings extend and struggle to extend their chances of survival, to improve their horizons of possibility and to enhance their wealth and security” (Appadurai, 1996, p.3). Furthermore, he argues that people
produce their environments through “exercising their social, technical and imaginative capacities” (Appadurai, 2007). As I have learned from the stories of the young people I surveyed, they struggle to improve their livelihoods, particularly enhance their income and security by deploying their social, technical and imaginative capacities. They find the means within their surroundings, both physical and social. Their hometown connections, families and friends help them to establish their homes.

The idea of “weapons of the weak”, introduced by James Scott (1985) provides a new perspective on the means the “relatively powerless” citizens use in order to achieve their goals. It sheds light on small-scale struggles based on non-confrontational approach, where they keep a low profile and that helps the underprivileged to obtain basic necessities. Especially since the 1980s, scholars in various fields, including sociology, anthropology, development studies and planning theory, have been paying more attention to the agency of the actors (Giddens, 1984). Scholars in cultural studies have employed the notion of people’s agency to study activities that fall beyond simple oppositional struggles that privilege the power centers.

Goh Beng-Lan’s critical idea of people’s role, i.e., they are “not passive recipients” of the existing situation, sheds some light on this issue (Goh, 2002, p. 202). They might choose to cope with the status quo, but many, indeed, try to transform it for their benefit. At least, they try to diminish the negatives. As she discusses Malaysian modernity, Goh demonstrates how the active response to transforming their land into a heritage site while building luxury condominiums in the Malaysian village of Kampung Serani fostered new contested spaces. Further, she spells out that, “local identities, aspirations, notions of place, and lived experiences … can rework and resist the state’s
vision of development and its interpretations of ethnicity, class and urban modernization.” (Goh, 2002, p.201) She focuses on the ordinary people’s struggles and emphasizes the ways in which they empower themselves by using “the existing social-structural and cultural orders”. Tashkent too is a contested space where the interests of various ordinary people, both natives and migrants, differ with the state and/or the private builders. The former need affordable housing, which the state cannot provide. Construction companies are not interested in serving these people but in reaping higher profits from luxury housing.

Thus, the ordinary people are exercising their creativity in finding suitable housing options for themselves. Drawing from Nihal Perera’s (2009) notion on “people’s processes,” in this thesis, I map out the “processes” through which the young educated middle-class people search for suitable housing in Tashkent, in result creating housing options and dwelling spaces. They are not absolutely poor to become squatters, nor are they financially capable of purchasing luxury apartments and houses that are built by private capital. Nonetheless, they are finding ways to house themselves using a secondary housing market (vtorichka), living with parents until they can afford their own place, or renting from friends or acquaintances that offer reasonable prices within their means.

Useful here is the concept of “people’s spaces” developed by Perera (2009). In order to understand the process of creating these, he builds upon the notion of familiarization employed in James Holston’s work on Brasilia (1989). Holston emphasizes people’s own values that they integrate into given new spaces, making these familiar to them through alterations and modifications in their surroundings. The people of Uzbekistan exercise their creativity in making their houses ‘familiar’ as well, i.e. they
employ transformations that are suited for their lives and “produce new ‘hybrid’ spaces through daily practices” (Perera, 2009, pp. 53-54).

Furthermore, Perera stresses on the need for planners to focus on this process:

“This process of familiarization of space directly affects and is affected by formal planning: planners react to the people’s use and change of space and the subjects familiarize the spaces provided by planners and authorities. In this, ordinary people produce more quantity and variety of spaces than the authorities and professionals; most crucially, they produce living spaces out of abstract space. Yet we know very little about these basic space-making processes; they take place behind the scenes.” (Perera, 2009, p.50-51).

Hereby, he iterates that the ordinary people do carry out their own adapted agenda within provided spaces and transform these in the process. The Soviet architects intended to create separate uses, for example, for living, dining, and sleeping, in modern apartments that they built between the 1960s and the 1980s. As demonstrated in the following chapters, Uzbek people found their ways to transform and adjust the new living quarters into their own places by bringing in the elements from their traditional interiors that are more familiar and more comfortable, i.e. they produce living spaces out of abstract space (Lefebvre, 1991).

We know very little about the basic housing processes that take place behind the scenes. Leonie Sandercock (1998) points out the importance of making the invisible people’s processes visible. In Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History, she emphasizes, “[in] histories of insurgent planning practices, stories of marginalized … groups excluded from … to state-directed, modernist planning” (1998, p.21). The stories of Tashkent youth reveal that they are indeed marginalized; they cannot afford to buy their own place at market prices, at the same time, they are not considered a socially vulnerable group that is in need of affordable housing because they are not on the
streets yet. Simultaneously, the Uzbek cultural practice of large extended families of three generations living together hides the realities of housing deficiency in the city. The middle-class youth has not yet seen the overcrowded and “filthy” conditions of the urban poor; however, many have already experienced discomforts of several adults sharing small living quarters.

Within the migrant group, it is also important to note the hidden ways they utilize to establish themselves in Tashkent. The city still uses the old Soviet technique of regulating the population movement through the system of *propiska* - residence registration. Although these young people follow and abide the law, they still experience hardship from ambiguous regulations. The notion of ‘floating population’ explained by Li Zhang (2001) in regard to the provincial population in Beijing raises more relevant issues, such as clientelism, homogenizing, regionalism, and dehumanizing of migrants. These are also observed in Tashkent, especially among the migrants from the periphery.

Karen Umemoto (2005) urges to learn the culture-determined language of the subjects, in order to “capture a wider diversity of voices”. Although she refers to the Hawaiian concept of “mana ’o” (talk story) to emphasize the importance of storytelling in culture-based planning, I have also used this method extensively in my investigation, because it is the only way of “sharing an understanding of self or a place and time” (2005; p.191).

With a focus on culture, Umemoto stresses that “trust is a critical component of the creation of a safe environment for the articulation of cultural values.” (2005; p.190) The young people usually seek help from those whom they trust. Even though it might not be a unique quality of Uzbek people, in most cases they reach out only to the people
from their own circle of acquaintance. It is fair to assume that their cultural values
determine the level of trust they have in certain people. They, thus, rely on culture and
social capital.

Robert Putnam’s (2000) research on social capital highlights its major principles
reciprocity, honesty and trust for building strong social bonds. I take his notion of “social
trust” as the basis for establishing social capital by young adults in Tashkent. They trust
not the government or other official organization when seeking for housing, but the
networks that they have through families, school, work or hometowns. In the territories of
uncertainty and danger of the big city, as a norm they choose to follow a path they trust,
i.e. use the network of family and friends.

The notion of friendships has been explicitly described by Norman Uphoff within
the context of social energy. As he noticed, friendship bonds are usually ignored or
underestimated: “The neglect is surprising considering how ubiquitous we all know
friendship to be as a social force, seen for example in ’old school ties’ or in ’connections’
that arise from shared experience and mutual trust.” (Uphoff, 1996, p.366). Since these
bonds could not be measured and are formally considered as “particularistic”, such
attitude to friendship links is understated. However, as it will be demonstrated in stories
of these young people, many of them have extensively used this source of assistance.
They either share a rental apartment with friends, or rent one from a friend, or find a
rental room through friends. In the modern world of high technologies these connections
are even more valuable and extend across the different countries and continents. Friends
help with advice or reference to go beyond Tashkent, finding potential employment and
places to live abroad.
Conventionally, architects, planners and policy makers understand the housing issue in terms of a housing deficit from a quantitative standpoint and try to find the resources and the means to solve this problem. While this may be important, historically, no one has yet solved a housing problem, neither Khrushchev, whose housing reform might be considered as one that came the closest to fulfilling its aim. The government is usually slow to implement its programs due to multiple reasons, and people, therefore, have to create their own living places within existing conditions and from available resources. Even if the government succeeds, ordinary people need to live somewhere until the “solution-from-outside” arrives. Perera (2009) argues that they create spaces for their own cultural practices and daily activities, modifying and adjusting their social and physical contexts. In Henri Lefebvre’s terms (1991), I refer to the people’s conversion of abstract space into lived spaces; dwellings that these youths obtain or temporary live in are not merely physical spaces, but are their living environments where various activities are taking place without specific and only one use, these activities, sleeping, eating, resting, studying or working, often overlap in the presented stories.

In economics we are taught that everything has a price and one can buy whatever s/he wishes as long as s/he is capable to pay the price. Usually, not many people can afford or are able to purchase their desired dwellings within the legal and market constrains. Common people who face such situation create opportunities within their limits; depending on their incomes, they rent a room, an apartment or a house, or they live temporarily with friends or relatives. As it is demonstrated in other parts of the world, most of the time people themselves find better suited solutions for their own housing problems. In Housing By People, John Turner highlights this ‘bottom-up’
processes carried out by self-builders and suggests that common people make better choices in regard to housing than the designers since they know their needs the best. Further, he recommends that authorities support people’s choices and assist in people’s “access to essential resources” (Turner, 1976, p.158).

The object of the thesis is to find out how the young people have perceived their housing needs, the housing environment in Tashkent, and, finally, how they have housed themselves.

Research Methods and Limitations

This study is based on literary searches, survey, and interviews. In conducting this particular research several academic and practical planning tools and techniques were used. The background of the issue and methodology was explored through literature review and internet-based articles on housing in Tashkent. The overall legislative and statistical review provided insights on official mechanisms on housing in Uzbekistan. Unfortunately, due to the distance and absence of necessary connections, it was not possible to get a perspective from Tashkent housing authorities. However, the focus of this research is young people, currently living or those who have lived in Tashkent, and their experience in dealing with the existing housing conditions.

Therefore, it was essential to learn about their experience, get their opinion and understand the housing issue from their viewpoint. For this purpose, I have conducted a survey to get an overall view on Tashkent housing and interviewed a number of young professionals with post secondary education and some work experience in detail about
how they searched for and found or created their own housing in the city. However, the survey was not included in the final product due to its low rate of responses. The results of this method neither add more information than that produced from the interviews, nor are scientifically significant enough to make larger conclusions.

The survey was useful as it helped me identify candidates for interviews. The questionnaire on housing searches was distributed among current and former residents of Tashkent. Then individual cases were chosen for the detailed interviews in order to learn the detailed picture of how young people manage to establish their lives in Tashkent. These are broader than the survey and focus on particulars of personal stories. This is the cornerstone of the investigation of how common people create their own space in the new place. Through these open dialogues with young people, who either managed to stay in the capital and acquire their own housing, or who had to leave the city due to inability to adjust to life in Tashkent.

The first impulse to write this thesis was the story of my friend, Kseniya, who struggled to establish her own home with a new family. However, Sandercock’s teaching practice provides a strong point of departure for this method. The exercise ‘housing autobiography’, where she asked the students to describe their own housing conditions and imagine their ideal house, revealed many housing issues from the subjects’ perspectives, particularly related to their personal experiences.

Furthermore, since the interviews were conducted in several languages, English, Russian, Tajik and Uzbek, I worked through cultural and linguistic barriers to bring up the essential concepts and complexities of social order in Uzbekistan to the Western academic standards. Therefore, this thesis uses a number of local Uzbek terms, including
some Russian and Soviet words that make more sense to understand the journeys of these young people. This obstacle, or perhaps, opportunity, is related to the planning tool “code-switching” (Umemoto 2005). Umemoto stresses the importance of relating people’s voices through correct translation and interpretation that are conducted within a set of culturally determined codes. A glossary of these foreign words is included for the convenience of the reader.

As for the analysis of interviews, I used ethnographic and anthropological methods that have been elaborated by William F. Owen (1984) and John Seidel (1998). In his relational discourse, Owen identifies three criteria for analysis: recurrence, repetition and forcefulness. I used these criteria to build a matrix of elements of housing that most of my interviewees pointed out. Recurrence, unlike repetition, allows bringing up the salient moments.

I use Seidel’s (1998) approach in the analysis of detailed interviews, in order to transform them into stories. As he points out, the analysis takes place not at the very end of the research, but during the interview process and through personal observations of the researcher. Thus, I modified the questions I asked from my respondents during the interviews, adjusting them to specific cases and not using irrelevant questions.

Initially, not every respondent explained the housing conditions in details; they assumed that I, as a person who have experienced life in Tashkent, should know conditions in different types of buildings. After adapting questions that directed them to provide details, peculiarities and interesting facts of their lives in different places poured out.
While living in Uzbekistan, I haven’t paid much attention to people’s processes in modifications of their dwellings and exercising their creativity in different *remonts* (repairs) they make in their homes. In the context of my studies in urban and regional planning in the U.S.A. and, especially at CapAsia V trip to South Asia, where students were exposed to ordinary people’s housing efforts, I saw the transformations by the Uzbek people from a new perspective\(^\text{15}\). These changes will be further elaborated in analysis of housing transformations.

\(^{15}\) See www.capasia.net
CHAPTER IV: STORIES OF ORDINARY PEOPLE HOUSING THEMSELVES IN TASHKENT.

Young people use a variety of ways to establish themselves in Tashkent, especially to find an appropriate dwelling, in a desired locality, at an affordable price. Housing themselves in Tashkent is a distinct experience for young people and each of them begins in his/her particular journey of settling into the city differently. Even so, these processes have strong commonalities and patterns too. While the repetition in the stories and some common strategies used by the house seekers make them look alike and lead to larger conclusions about the issue of finding housing in the Uzbek capital, the individual journeys reveal the complexities involved in finding and/or making a living space in Tashkent.

Through interviews of 21 respondents aged between 22 and 30, I discovered a multitude of ways in which today’s young people make Tashkent their home. To understand the broad range of strategies and tactics used by them, I have paid special attention to the variety of informal means employed in obtaining housing. Here, housing is not limited to separate fully functioning houses or apartments with standard Western amenities, but also includes other types of dwellings such as shared rental apartments, rental rooms in houses, even beds in dormitories, or simply spaces in family members’ dwellings. The stories presented in this chapter will expose the realities of youths housing
themselves in Tashkent, including the difficulties and some success stories, from their perspectives.

The young people I interviewed were classified according to three major categories:

A. The way they came to the city:
   1. “Natives:” those who were born and raised in Tashkent,
   2. “Locals:” those who were born in different places, but grew up in Tashkent,
   3. “Short-term residents:” those who migrated to the city as young adults;

B. Homeownership status:
   1. “Family residents:” those who live with their parents, extended family, or separately, but in place that belongs to their immediate or extended family,
   2. “Homeowners:” those who managed to buy their own dwellings,
   3. “Renters”: those who rent their dwelling;

C. Present location:
   1. “Former residents:” those who lived in Tashkent at some point in their lives, but presently living outside of the city,
   2. “Current residents:” those who lived in Tashkent when interviewed.

These classifications have no direct correlation with official titles used in the legal system of Uzbekistan. They were created for the purpose of understanding the process of obtaining a dwelling in Tashkent, although some respondents may fit into official classifications.
The respondents belong to a combination of several categories. A simplified version of the complex categories to which each respondent belongs is given in the following matrix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B1 – Family residents</th>
<th>B2 – Homeowners</th>
<th>B3 – Renters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C1 – Former residents</td>
<td>C2 – Current residents</td>
<td>C1 – Former residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 – Natives</td>
<td></td>
<td>Albina Alexander Kseniya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 – Locals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aliyar Saodat Shakhzod Tatyana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 – Short-term residents</td>
<td>Pavel Anastasiya * Hurshid* Kamila*</td>
<td>Nadejda Ravshan Sobir Hamida*</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. The categories of young residents of Tashkent city.
Note: * - the respondents’ shorter experience in overall housing journey.

According to the proposed classification there are in 18 potential categories (see Table 4.1). As the focus is on the stories of how young people established dwellings in Tashkent, a few categories have heavy representations. Some of these categories are not filled in because none of my interviewees fit into the characteristics of those categories, but they provide more possibilities that might occur in regards to housing in Tashkent.

To me, the inability to house themselves in Tashkent at first appeared to be a situation faced only by newcomers. In Tashkent those who are not originally from the city are known as oblastnie, the provincials. Among my respondents, the migrants came
from provinces of Bukhara, Fergana, Namangan, Navoi, Samarkand, Tashkent and Karakalpakstan. However, in reality a different picture appeared.

“Natives”

As it is revealed in cases of Kseniya and Alexander, finding a dwelling in the almost stagnant housing stock is an obstacle for “natives” of Tashkent as well. Both Kseniya (28) and Alexander (28) were born and raised in Tashkent, but up to now they have lived with their parents and parents-in-law. In contrast, Albina (28), a Tashkent native, did not look for housing. She enjoyed quite a comfortable life at her grandmother’s apartment, and therefore provides a different perspective.

Kseniya got married at 24, and after the wedding, she and her husband moved to a separate dwelling. They rented an apartment that belonged to a friend who left for Russia. Despite both her and her husband working for foreign companies for a number of years, they could not afford to purchase their own dwelling immediately after the wedding. At first they were lucky to be able to rent a friend’s apartment, but they could not stay there for a long time. Unexpectedly, the owner returned from Russia, and they had to move out. After changing apartments several times, they had to return to the parents’ apartment. They still live with Kseniya’s parents-in-law, even though they have a child now.

Kseniya continues to dream of a separate dwelling for her nuclear family, where she will be the host and have her own rules. However, neither she, nor her husband has solicited help from anybody; they are relying completely on their own abilities and incomes to save to acquire a house or an apartment. The government’s mortgage program
of the state “Ipoteka Bank” is not useful for them, as Kseniya’s husband is over 30 and, therefore, their family does not qualify for this loan.

The couple is thinking of migrating to another country, but only if both of them find jobs based on their educational level and professional experience; otherwise, they feel quite content in Tashkent. In the coming years, they believe that they will collect enough money to purchase a suitable apartment for their own family and have the desired privacy.

Alexander, on the other hand, is not married. He lives in a one-room apartment\textsuperscript{16} with his mother, who owns it. As an adult, Alexander tried to live separately, “independently” as he says, but he could not afford this for long. In about a year, however, he had to return to his mother’s residence because he could not afford to pay the rent. Alexander believes that if he works hard he could eventually collect enough money for his own dwelling. But this might take more than a decade, because he needs to get more education and then build a career. If he is fortunate to get a government position, he should then prove to the supervisors that he is a hard-working and responsible employee who deserves a high rank. Only then, Alexander thinks, he might afford to buy himself an apartment. If he makes a career in private business, then again hard work should enable him to collect the required sum to acquire his own place. Besides hard work, he places a strong emphasis on luckiness: “I should be very, very lucky [to buy an apartment]”. Although, in fact, he meant, that he should be lucky to get a good job that will allow him to obtain his own dwelling. In the context of fluctuating

\textsuperscript{16} One-room apartment refers to an apartment that has one living room, which is also a bedroom, a separate kitchen, a separate bathroom, and sometimes balcony. The example of one-room apartment is presented in the following chapter (p.145).
housing prices during the period of 2006-2008, when none of the experts could predict such rapid growth in housing prices in Tashkent, the factor of “luckiness” that Alexander stressed in his conversation is understandable.

When Alexander needed a separate room, they transformed the kitchen into a bedroom. The kitchen was moved to the balcony [loggia]. In fact, it is more convenient to cook and dine there because the kitchen is usually connected to the outside through the balcony. After remodeling, it became a two-room apartment. People in need of extra space for grown-up children find their own solutions by creating spaces within their financial and residential limits. The law in Uzbekistan allows some transformations in apartments, as long as they do not disrupt the major functions of the entire building. A popular strategy is to transform auxiliary rooms into living rooms. Here I refer to the classification of the living room and bedrooms as dwelling rooms, and the kitchen, bathroom, toilet, balcony/loggia, and hallways, as auxiliary rooms. Another common strategy is to use a particular space for multiple purposes. The kitchen usually serves also as a dining room for a small family. As it will be seen further in this chapter, many other respondents had also transformed their houses and apartment to better suit their needs.

Another Tashkent native, Albina, has what she calls a good life in this city. She lives comfortably with her grandmother, in her separate room. They had renovated this apartment in what is called Evroremont, meaning luxury repair with the best upgrades possible at that moment. In short, it is great to live there. She has a good job at foreign company, and her family and friends also live in Tashkent.

She does not want to think too far into the future and prefers to live within the present moment. Albina’s housing needs were always satisfied by her family. When she
was growing up, she lived with her mother, and her grandmother currently provides with her comfortable housing. Never having faced the harshness of the housing market by herself, Albina appears somewhat ignorant of the realities of her peers. She does not see the full range of complexities within the housing issue in Tashkent, since it has never yet appeared as a dilemma personally to her.

Yet, Albina is not sure whether she will continue to live in Tashkent. She has traveled extensively in Europe and enjoyed the life there. Her dream house definitely is not located in Uzbekistan. At present, Albina plans to go to the United Kingdom for graduate studies.

The second group consists of one respondent, Igor (28), who is a homeowner. He is also a Tashkent native, and managed to buy his own two-room apartment in a desirable neighborhood, where he resides currently with his wife and little daughter. Although his parents and friends loaned him money to purchase the apartment he had already repaid them back. According to Igor, he was lucky to purchase apartment just before the housing prices suddenly went up in the end of 2005. At the current level of prices, his savings would not be enough even for a small one-room apartment on the outskirts of the city.

His apartment is also close to his parents’ apartment and near the Gorky (Buyuk Ipak Yo’li) metro station. The location is convenient in most ways: it is easy to get to any major places (work, school, recreation) in the city by metro; it is easy to visit his parents any time since they live within walking distance; and most people living in this district are Russian-speaking or Europeanized citizens, similar to Igor’s family culture.

The only complaint that he has is regarding ZhEK, the housing association, that it does not fulfill its obligations on general building maintenance, such as roof repairs.
Igor’s apartment is located on the top floor of the building. As the roof is leaking, water penetrates into his rooms from the ceilings every time it rains. Before moving, Igor decorated all the rooms in the apartment, but they were ruined in the first winter, as the rains started. The roof of the building was not maintained properly by ZhEK, even though they regularly collect money for such purposes.

Igor bought the apartment during the summer time. He, therefore, was unaware of the roof leaks in this building. Leaking roofs is also one of the reasons why the top floor apartments in multi-story buildings are not favorable in Tashkent. People know or hear from friends and acquaintances about this potential problem, because most apartment complexes are outdated and need capital repairs.

In Igor’s case, although he anticipated such a possibility, he had to purchase the apartment within his financial limits. Hence he had to compromise in this negative aspect, i.e., an apartment on the top floor. This is not definitely his dream house, but he hopes to move to a better apartment once he is able to collect more money and sell this apartment. Although this apartment is currently regarded as a temporary dwelling, it is hard to say when Igor will be able to upgrade it for a better one. This process might even take decades.

The third group includes the Tashkent natives who have rented apartments at some point of their lives. These are Kseniya and Alexander, whose stories have been presented above.
“Locals”

The fourth group consists of respondents who were born in different cities of Uzbekistan; the interviewees are from the provinces of Namangan, Samarkand, and Tashkent. Their parents moved to Tashkent (city) when they were still children. They grew up in established homes in the capital, but they do not have most of their extended families in the city. They, therefore, rely only on their immediate families and friends. Shakhzod (26), Aliyar (27) and Saodat (25) had lived in the city under their parents’ warm guardianship. None of them have their own families, and they still live at “home” with their parents.

Their parents’ homes are their homes. The parents have never forced them to face the dilemma of where to live. They will continue to live in their parents’ houses until they get married and establish their own families because it is more convenient and comfortable, and due to Uzbek customs (all three are ethnic Uzbeks). The current housing situation in Tashkent has not affected them directly, and they do not think about it critically, yet. Their opinions about the hardships in finding housing in the city are based on outside views they have heard from their friends and acquaintances.

They are, however, not as disillusioned on this matter as Albina from the first group. Their stories provide the better understanding of what kind of changes the Uzbek families have made to their apartments. As many Uzbeks their age, they have most likely seen the same pattern: their grandparents used to live in traditional houses, then their parents moved to apartments, and now the young people are used to living in apartments.

Originally from Namangan, Shakhzod’s father decided to move the family to Tashkent, where he expected better employment within his profession. He is an artist, and
he assumed that in the capital city the demand for his artwork would be higher than in the province where they lived before. Indeed, in Tashkent his earnings increased and this enabled him to provide for most of his family’s needs, including housing.

By 1990, Shakhzod’s father had collected enough money for a spacious four-room apartment, with three bedrooms and the living room. The Akmal-Ikrom District where they live is far from the center and, therefore, the apartment is relatively cheap. Shakhzod’s family consists of his father, mother, younger sister and him. Due to the different genders of their children Shakhzod’s parents had to get an apartment with two separate bedrooms for their children. According to the Muslim tradition, different genders should live in separate sections of the house, but in apartment settings, the most a Muslim family could afford is to have separate rooms for boys and girls.

They have minimal standard Soviet furnishing, beds and wardrobes in the bedrooms, a few chairs and a table in the kitchen. For dining, they use the balcony (loggia), which they transformed into a traditional style living room with topchon (a large traditional platform), homtakhta (a low table), dasturhon (a table cloth that is also laid on the floor, if there is no table), kurpachas (long and narrow traditional padded quilts), and yostiks (traditional prolonged and rounded pillows). It is quite common practice among Uzbek families living in apartments to have at least one room in the traditional style. Usually, this is the room where the family spends most of its time together, especially for morning and evening meals and tea conversations. None of other rooms in Shakhboz’s apartment have been transformed, because there was no need for that. Unlike many families, Shakhzod’s parents did not need to increase the living area in the apartment; they had enough room for their requirements. The major reason for transforming one
room was the desire for a traditional Uzbek room, which brings the comforts they have been used to since their childhood into the new apartment space.

Later, in 2001 they decided to give a new look to their apartment; they made *Evroremont*, with new wallpapers and paintings on the walls. The latter was done by Shakhzod’s father. By the end of this grand renovation they ran out of money and could not afford to buy new furniture for this modified apartment. The solution, according to Shakhzod, will come when he gets married. As per Uzbek contemporary customs, a bride is supposed to bring some furniture as a part of her dowry to her husband’s house. This is usually a *stenka*¹⁷, a relatively large piece of furniture for a living room; if the bride’s family cannot afford such expensive dowry, then they give bedroom furniture, for example, a bed and a wardrobe. The dowry is negotiated between the families before the wedding, depending on what exactly is needed. According to Tashkent customs, the groom’s family is supposed to allocate the living quarter for the young couple, whether it is a separate room, an apartment, or even a house; while the bride’s side provides the interior furnishing. In Shakhzod’s case, they expect a *stenka*, since they have bedroom furniture.

As the only son in his family, Shakhzod will never leave his parents; his future wife and children are supposed to live together with his parents, as they will get older and will need assistance. Moreover, he will inherit his parent’s dwelling, but will give his sister her share in money or its equivalent. As a devoted Muslim, Shakhzod acts and makes decisions based on the religion.

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¹⁷ The image of typical *stenka* is given in the section on housing transformations (p. 144).
His dream is to buy a traditional courtyard house (hovli) in the old part of Tashkent, in some mahalla, where the community strongly adheres to the faith of Muslim. “I want to be closer to land [not on a floor above the ground],” he says, “I want to pray on the ground.” These hovli houses are relatively expensive, due to their location in the center of the city and, consequently, the high land value. Shakhzod has his own plan: he expects to collect a certain amount of money in the coming five years and raise the rest by selling or exchanging his parents’ apartment. If his current salary increases twice, Shakhzod anticipates getting the house sooner. Then both his own family (after marriage) and his parents will live as one family, as in Uzbek traditions, in his dream house in mahalla.

Shakhzod is a realist, he cannot tell exactly when his plan will be implemented; however, he says, “You never know… [what will happen in the future]”. He also anticipates certain large expenses in the family, such as a wedding. Due to such events he might have to postpone purchasing his dream house.

Recently, Shakhzod came back from Sweden, where he obtained his master’s degree, and this was also an additional expense, which drained off much of his savings. Nowadays, most young citizens of Uzbekistan are more flexible and are prepared to face sudden changes in life and adapt their initial plans constantly. The older generation are more single-minded and find it harder to accommodate rapid changes to their plans; during the Soviet era, they were trained well to achieve the initial goals within the given timeframe.

Aliyar, on the other hand, described himself and his family as Europeanized, implying that he will have his own separate residence after marriage for his nuclear
family, without the extended family. According to Uzbek customs, the older siblings usually get their separate dwelling, bought or provided by the parents. Aliyar is the oldest male in his family; for this reason, he is likely to leave his parents’ home once he decides to establish his own family.

Currently, Aliyar lives with his mother and younger brother in, what he calls, a three-room apartment. Initially this was a two-room apartment that his father got from his work organization after eight years of employment, as it was practiced during Soviet times. Later, as the boys were growing up, the parents saw the need for a separate bedroom for them. The apartment had only one bedroom for the parents and a living room; the other rooms are considered auxiliary rooms, such as the kitchen, bathroom, balcony, and hall. Aliyar’s parents decided to transform the kitchen into a bedroom and move the kitchen functions to the spacious balcony, which now combines both kitchen and dining room.

Having experienced life in Europe, Aliyar returned to his homeland with the desire to establish his own house in Tashkent. The Western influence is noticeable in his housing aspirations: Aliyar wants a large estate on the edge of the city, where he will have a lake, a lawn, a garden, a driveway and other features of a European house. Off all the interviewees, Aliyar was the only one able to describe his dream house in detail, which also indicates the confidence he has in his own ability to achieve this.

Having a private business allows him to be financially independent and more able to purchase his own apartment in the near future, and the dream house in the long run. Moreover, Aliyar had already selected several houses in desirable districts where he wishes to live. At the same time, he returns to his initial idea of a huge property outside
the city and comes to the conclusion that he will have to choose between the house of his dreams and the desirable districts.

His preferred locations are largely in the center of the city. It appears that Aliyar’s dream house is made up of an American suburban house in the middle of Paris, two contradicting ideas. The dream house that Aliyar has in mind will not fit in any central district of Tashkent that he names, and he himself realizes this. Therefore, he says, most probably his house will be located outside the city limits. Yet, his preferred locations are still in the center of Tashkent, where he has already noticed a few houses that would roughly satisfy his desires.

Saodat’s case highlights the other side of some typical housing decisions in Tashkent. As an Uzbek girl, she is expected to live in her husband’s house after marriage. Therefore, she has no strong desire to get her own place at this stage of her life. Originally from Samarkand, she arrived in Tashkent at the age of 10, a couple of years after her father began his doctoral studies in the capital city. Unlike Aliyar and Shakhzod, who came to Tashkent when they were below school age, Saodat says that she grew up in Samarkand, where the rest of her relatives, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, live.

At first, life in Tashkent was not easy for her family; Saodat remembers the times when the four members of their family, her parents, younger sister and her, had to share one room in the dormitory allocated for her father. The parents slept on beds and children on the floor on mattresses. During the daytime they put away mattresses and mounted a table in the middle of the room. They used to dine, study, and do other household activities on the same table. The space limitations forced them to use the same space for multiple purposes.
In order to support the family, while he was a student, Saodat’s father worked at several places, including the Ministry of Justice. Later, the ministry allocated a certain amount of money for an apartment for his family. Within half a year of communal life in the dormitory, Saodat’s father moved the family to the apartment that he bought using the money from his office. Thus, the apartment actually belonged to the Ministry of Justice, although Saodat’s family lived there for nine years. In 2004 they filed the documentation for the privatization of the apartment, and now it belongs to them.

Tatyana also belongs to this group. She was born in Toytepa, a small town 39 kilometers south-southeast of Tashkent. Tatyana moved to the city with her family when she was a young child. However, she considers herself almost a native Tashkent resident; in the beginning of the conversation she stated that she is from Tashkent, and then corrected herself that she meant the province, not the city of Tashkent and that she was born in another city. Her family moved to an apartment in Bektemir, in the district in the southeastern outskirts of the city and on the way to her birth town. Ten years later her family moved to a newer house right next to the old one. Tatyana likes this place, but she also finds some negative aspects like being close to the golf course, a new entertainment area for rich people. “They sometimes have parties that get too loud,” she says. As a mother with a small child, Tatyana is definitely concerned with the noise.

Due to her Korean ethnicity she brings a new perspective to the group. Tatyana is the only respondent who expressed the desire to live closer to other people of her own ethnicity. Koreans are a minority group in Uzbekistan; about 75,000 Koreans were forcefully relocated to this area during Stalin’s repressions of 1937-39 (Yalçin, 1999). Treated as social outcasts by the Soviet authorities, they learned to rely on each other and
their community. They hold on to their own customs and habits, although adaptation to local conditions has been unavoidable. They changed their first names to Russian ones, but kept their Korean family names\(^{18}\). The younger generation barely knows (or does not know at all) their native Korean language. They cook their own food using local ingredients that has also been modified over time and now significantly differs from what people eat in Korea. Until the recent decades there were very few interethnic marriages involving non-Koreans.

Noticeably, two other Koreans respondents, Pavel and Anna, never expressed their ethnic attachment as vividly as Tatyana did, although a couple of times they also mentioned that they [their families] got help from their community, meaning the Korean one. This might be considered as the development of “third culture,” (cf. King, 1976: 58-66) a Korean culture adapted to Soviet and Uzbek conditions. These Koreans are not pure Koreans any more; neither are they Russians, nor Uzbeks. They have developed their own unique and hybrid identity in their new home, Uzbekistan.

Currently, Tatyana lives with her parents, although she has her own nuclear family. Tatyana dreams of her own dwelling; at first a separate two-room apartment would be enough, but gradually she plans to upgrade to a house. In her estimations, with the doubling or tripling of her current salary, she would manage to collect the required sum of money within a couple of years.

\(^{18}\) This is a way to distinguish Korean descendant without image or actually seeing them.
“Short-term residents”

The fifth group consists of short-term former residents, who no longer live in Tashkent. They were renters for most of the time, but eventually they ended up living in their relatives’ apartments. These respondents are more specifically described in the eighth group, as their housing journeys in the city were mostly in rental dwellings. The only respondent in this group who lived most of his life in Tashkent as a family resident, either with his own family or his extended family, is Pavel (28).

Pavel arrived in Tashkent from Nukus, a capital of the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic, located in the far northwest of Uzbekistan, in 1996 when he was 14. His parents and he together decided that schools in Tashkent provide better education. Pavel, therefore, was sent off to Tashkent under his uncle’s guardianship. In Pavel’s words, his uncle had a “nice, spacious” four-room apartment in a house of 77 series19 in Yunusabad District, of about 80 sq.m. (860 sq.ft.) size. These apartments are considered as having improved plan: all rooms, including auxiliary ones, are relatively large for an apartment in the city. Pavel says: “The rooms were so spacious that it was possible to play football there.” They had remodeled the kitchen into a bedroom for Pavel. The kitchen was moved to the balcony (loggia), which was as large as a medium-size bedroom [8 sq. m. (86 sq.ft.)]; therefore it was used both for cooking and dining. Now with an extra bedroom, this was turned into a five-room apartment. However, Pavel’s room was linked to the balcony and, therefore, he had little privacy. As a teenager, Pavel did not like this

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19 The example of the floor plan for similar apartment and possible transformations are demonstrated in the analysis chapter (p.145).
aspect, particularly when combined with the constant control of his uncle. He wanted to have some freedom and, as it happened, he did not have to stay there for a long time.

Two years later Pavel’s entire family moved to Tashkent. They sold their apartment in Nukus and bought a three-room apartment near the uncle’s residence. This apartment was not as good as uncle’s, but they did a kosmeticheskiy remont [minimal, refreshing repair] before moving in. So, now Pavel could live with his own family, which he liked much more because he had more freedom with his parents. “They did not control me, because they trusted me,” says Pavel. Yet he lived with the family for only two years. In 2000 Pavel’s parents decided to move to Almaty, in neighboring Kazakhstan, so they sold this apartment, and Pavel had to move again.

At this time, he was in his second year in university, but lived on financial support from his parents. Pavel moved in with his cousin, who rented a one-room apartment in Sergeli District, and shared the rent in the amount of 35,000 Soums ($35) per month. This was also a spacious apartment of about 45 sq.m (484 sq.ft.). It had a large living room, big balcony and big kitchen, and separate toilet facilities. The only disadvantage was the location; it was quite far from the center of the city.

In 2003, after graduating from the university, Pavel got a job. He was hired by the bank where he had done a summer internship the year before, and he decided to live separately. Together with his girlfriend, they rented a one-room apartment in Chilanzar District, closer to the center and near a metro station. The apartment was bad, according to Pavel. It was tiny, about 20 sq.m. (215 sq.ft.) in total area, and in regard to the height,

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20 The example of one-room apartment’s floor plan is presented in the context chapter, section on types of housing in Tashkent (p.44).
he says, “I even could reach the ceiling with my stretched arm if I stand up.” It had an average-size living room, combined toilet and bathroom, a tiny kitchen, which “was enough for cooking only, and could not eat there,” in Pavel’s words. As it had only one living room, it also served as the bedroom for them. They could not invite guests there, and they tried to spend their evenings out somewhere. The only good thing about this apartment was the location close to the center. But the area was not good either; there were a lot of drug and alcohol addicts hanging out. Besides, the rent of this apartment was 40% of Pavel’s salary at that time, the largest housing expense so far during his journey in Tashkent. As such, it was difficult for him to move to a better place, which might cost more.

A year later, Pavel and his girlfriend got married and they moved to a two-room apartment near Victory Park. It belonged to his wife’s relatives, who did not live there. They did not have to pay the rent, but had to take care of the apartment and pay utility bills. Pavel liked everything about this dwelling; the large rooms, high ceilings, separate toilet and bathroom, good neighborhood in mahalla, and convenient location near the metro station. If he still lived in Tashkent, he would definitely purchase this apartment. However, they decided to move closer to Pavel’s parents, to Almaty, Kazakhstan, and thus, left Tashkent altogether. Almaty offers higher salaries compared to Tashkent, therefore, those who find the means and ways to move there, usually do so. Besides, Pavel pointed out that Tashkent does not have as many novostroiki [new apartment blocks] that would be comparable with the earnings in this city.

The sixth group consists of short-term residents, who still live in Tashkent. They arrived from different provinces, Bukhara and Fergana, to Tashkent, as adults to study
and work. They had some family members in Tashkent, who provided them housing.

After some moving around the city, Nadejda (24) settled down at her relatives’ apartment in Tashkent. Ravshan (28) is the only respondent who lives with his parents in a traditional detached courtyard house, hovli, in mahalla. Still too young, Sobir (21) lives in an apartment with his family and has no prospect of moving out yet, even if he has such desire. The young people from this category live in family-owned housing and technically do not “own” the places where they live. They have dreams to get their “own” places sometime in their lives, especially after they establish their own nuclear families.

A native of Fergana, Nadejda says, “I wanted to study in a university in Tashkent from the get-go”, although she was not sure about the particular field of studies or even in which university. In Spring 2004, she graduated from a high school in Kansas, USA, where she was an exchange student for a year. Two months after returning to Uzbekistan, she went to Tashkent for the first time for entrance exams. At first, Nadejda stayed with her brother, who had already been living there for two years. The respondent got admission, and as school started, Nadejda had to decide where to live. She did not want to continue living with her brother, so instead her mother found a rental room in some lady’s house near Alayskiy Bazaar (in the city center). This was an old apartment building, which had only two stories. The apartment had two rooms and a kitchen, and the owner rented one room while also living there. This was a temporary solution and Nadejda stayed there only a couple of months.

Soon, some of her relatives who had an apartment in Tashkent near the Hamza metro station (Mirzo-Ulugbek District) offered to let Nadejda to stay there. She did not have to pay rent, but had to pay the utility bills. However, she had to move out of the
apartment a year later because those relatives decided to sell it. Nadejda then moved to her grandmother’s apartment, which was located much further away, almost on the outskirts of the city, near SAMPI (Yunusabad District). Nadejda did not live there for long either. It was far from her school and inconvenient for the young girl to commute long distances. Public transportation could sometimes be not safe for a young girl. Another relative of hers bought an apartment in Beshagach District, which is in the center of Tashkent, and they offered to let Nadejda live there. The respondent has lived in this apartment ever since; she had already graduated from the university and is currently employed in a foreign company, but she still has no need to search for housing for herself.

In the case of Nadejda, her parents looked after her housing needs in Tashkent all the time. They searched for a rental room for her, found relatives who had apartments and arranged for their daughter to stay in known places. The factors of familiarity, security, and probably, control of young girl by her family prompted them to take the responsibility to find an appropriate dwelling for the respondent in the unfamiliar Tashkent. Due to her young age and gender, elderly members of the family, both immediate and extended, felt that it was their responsibility to help her to mitigate the harshness of migrating to a new city. Therefore, Nadejda has never faced the grim and unpalatable realities of housing in Tashkent. Since her family was able to take care of this aspect, she lives in her idealized world, where it is relatively easy to find housing in Tashkent. Her perspective on the future house is even further from reality: it will be arranged by somebody somehow, as it has been done so far.
At present, she only worries about her conveniences. The apartment block is located near the major road and it creates too much noise for her. If there are some official meetings in Oksaroy, the Uzbek Government House, which is located nearby, the roads are blocked and she cannot get into her apartment for some time. The environment is not as clean as she would like it to be; for example, there is trash on the streets and in nearby parks, and bugs bother her during summer. However, these are situations that she can do nothing about, she only complains.

Nadejda does feel responsible for the apartment where she lives. Her uncle entrusted it to her; she should arrange the repair if something gets broken and pay the utility bills on time. Her current job allows her to be financially independent from her family and relatives, but not completely. If she needs to obtain her own dwelling in the future, her family will definitely help her financially; housing is too heavy an expense for her. Nadejda has never thought of living in a rental dwelling on her own, without the family support. Indeed, if housing is provided, why bother? She has relative freedom, neither her parents, nor her brother, nor her uncle intrude much into her life. But still living in their social vicinity (in the family apartment) provides both parties the assurance of security and connectivity; Nadejda knows that her family is close in case of an emergency, and her family is aware of where she is and in what conditions she lives.

Unlike Nadejda, Ravshan arrived in Tashkent after completing his bachelor’s degree in Bukhara, his hometown. In fact, the move was not totally his decision, his father had already moved to Tashkent a year before, in 2002. According to the family plan, his mother and younger brother also moved after the latter completed his undergraduate studies by 2005. During this time Ravshan and his father prepared a house
for the family. The house they bought is a detached courtyard house in a *mahalla.*

Because it was an old structure, it was not good for living. Ravshan’s father destroyed the old building and built a new house in its place. Since he worked in a construction company, the building process took a fairly short period, i.e. three years.

The new house was built in Europeanized style; all the auxiliary rooms, such as the kitchen, bathroom and toilet, were incorporated within the main building, where living rooms were located. In a traditional Uzbek house, usually the kitchen and bathroom facilities are separate from the main house. Historically firewood was used for cooking, which produced smoke, eventually turning the kitchen black. People do not want their living rooms to get exposed to smoke and the smells of cooking food. Hence, they locate kitchen in the back of the courtyard. A traditional toilet is a squatter toilet and it is usually arranged at the remote corner of the courtyard. Next to it, or in the other corner is a *hammom,* a traditional sauna-type bathroom. However, not every household can afford a *hammom.* If they cannot, they usually use either the common facility of the community, or go to neighbors or relatives, who have *hammom.*

In Ravshan’s house, they wanted modern facilities that offer more comforts. They have a gas-stove, therefore, there is no need for a separate kitchen. The bathroom and the toilet are also in Europeanized style, with bathtub, shower and toilet seat, which are located within the house. The new house has three large bedrooms, each about 15-20 sq.m. (162-215 sq.ft.), a living room, an entrance hall, and a big kitchen that also serves as the dining room. They were able to build the new house in such way because the site is located within the city and is connected to all the necessary utilities that are provided by the city, such as cold water, sewage, electricity and gas. The AGV, a heating device
based on gas, provides heating inside the house during the cold season and hot water any time.

Ravshan lives in one of Tashkent’s urban mahallas. This mahalla consists of about 200 courtyard houses and 10 apartment buildings, ranging from two to five storeys, constructed during the Stalin era or after the 1966 Tashkent Earthquake. Mahalla, as a community organization, is usually involved in the lives of all its residents at some level. In case of Ravshan’s family, only his grandmother actively participates in their mahalla’s communal life. In fact, she is the representative of the entire family and the one who is informed about the current news in the neighborhood and delivers it to the family. In a contemporary mahalla, women who stay at home usually carry the role of informants, while other members of the family spend their daytime at work. Mahalla has a committee, which gathers at least three times per week to discuss neighborhood issues.

Ravshan does not get involved a lot in mahalla affairs. First, he is young and without his own family, therefore he does not need mahalla’s support. Second, Ravshan spends most of his time at work, and after a long day, he usually has no energy for social gatherings. Third, it is not customary for younger members of family to make decisions at mahalla committees; they simply follow the decisions that were made by the elders. Aptly, his grandmother represents their family in the mahalla.

Originally from Bukhara, Sobir also came to Tashkent, like Nadejda, directly after high school, to get a higher education. He majored in finance and auditing at the International Business School, “Kelajak Ilmi”, which offers a University of Michigan-based curriculum and instruction in English. Yet, he could not find a decent job in Tashkent for four months after graduation. Therefore, following his friend’s suggestion
he went to Moscow to find decent employment. Within a month Sobir found a job as Accountant Assistant in an internationally operating company.

Although salary was four times higher than what he could earn in Tashkent, it was not enough for living; he spent up to 40% of his monthly income on housing. Moreover, the Moscow environment was hostile in his personal experience. As an Asian-looking young man, he was subjected to a constant discrimination by the Russian militsia (police) and the employer. The former demanded monthly bribes from him, despite the fact that he worked legally, and the latter paid significantly less salary because he was not a Russian citizen. These factors led him to return to Tashkent after eight months in Moscow, and the rest of his family also moved there. After some struggles in seeking employment he was hired as a financial analyst in a Turkish company. Although the position was flattering for a young man, the salary was one-third that of his salary in Moscow. Nevertheless, Sobir prefers this job since it is more satisfying from a quality perspective, and he is in a favorable environment, close to his parents and friends.

In Tashkent, Sobir resides with his family in a two-room apartment. Since there were three adults, i.e. his mother, sister and himself, they had to make certain adjustments to live in the 45 sq.m. (484 sq.ft.)-apartment. There were two small balconies of 1.5x3 m. (48 sq.ft.) each, attached to the kitchen and the living room. These could serve as separate rooms as well, but only during summer. During winter, these rooms were too cold to live in. Sobir’s family decided to do repairs inside the apartment by themselves. Room by room they changed old wallpapers for plaster, and simply colored the walls in different pale colors, providing a sort of Europeanized-Uzbek mixed style. This is another demonstration of the hybridity and creativity of the local people; they want to have
Euroremont, but do not have enough money for this. They, therefore, imitate something similar within their financial constrains.

One of the balconies was transformed into a bedroom for his sister by locating a bed there; winterizing it, they sealed the crevices of the window frame with cotton and tape and they removed the window and the door of the living room to get (borrowed) heating to this new room. The original bedroom was transformed into a study-room/bedroom: they put a study table and an armchair next to one wall, and a bed with a wardrobe alongside another wall. This was the room for Sobir since he was a student and needed to study late; the home computer was also in his room. The mother slept in the living room and would remove her bedding during the daytime and evenings for common use of the room. In fact, only his mother used the room during the day because he was at school for most of this time, and his sister was at work for the whole day. So, the entire family gathered usually in late evenings or weekends.

Although Sobir is the only son in the family, and according to Uzbek customs, he should live with parents even after establishing his own family, he does not want to follow the traditions directly. His ideal solution would be to purchase the apartment adjacent to his family apartment and live there with his own family. This way, he could take care of his parents at the same time. Indeed, many young Uzbek men find this as the optimal solution to please both their wives and mothers.

The eighth group consists of short-term residents, those who came to Tashkent as adults for different purposes, such as study and work, and left the city eventually. This is the most diverse and broad group that I interviewed, and they provided varied stories about getting around Tashkent. Akmal (28), Nargiza (28), Hurshid (28), Kamila (29), and
Anastasiya (29) came to the city from different cities of Uzbekistan: Bukhara, Gazalkent, Samarkand, Zarafshan, but all for the purpose of studying. They all wanted to get better educations in the capital city, which has the best and the majority of universities in the country. All of them have another characteristic in common; they all left the country because they were incapable of achieving their life goals in Uzbekistan. Some of them (Akmal, Anastasiya, Hurshid) are not certain whether they will come back or not, while others (Kamila, Nargiza) have already established their new homes in the destination countries.

Akmal’s journey to Tashkent began when he arrived from Samarkand for his studies in 1999. He entered the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, the most prestigious and competitive university in Uzbekistan. During the first two years, he lived in a university dormitory, which has better standards than most dormitories in Tashkent. Usually students strive to live there. “It was quite cheap and affordable”, he said.

Akmal describes the living conditions in the dormitory as “normal.” Four students lived in two adjacent rooms and shared one toilet and bathroom. They had hot and cold water, electricity, and sewage, but no heating. The university dormitory is within five minutes of walking distance to the Gorky (Buyuk Ipak Yo’li) metro station. The area has enough markets, entertainment, green spaces and parks.

On the fourth year Akmal left the dormitory and moved to a rental apartment with a friend. It was a two-room fully furnished apartment, with gas, hot and cold water, sewage, and heating. The district, further inside the residential area near the Gorky metro station, had more recreational areas, parks and greens spaces, but it was 25 minutes walking from the metro. His reasons for moving, as Akmal states, were based on the need
for “some comfort for philosophical thoughts and personal life”. He viewed this move as a progressive step.

Akmal was not disillusioned about Tashkent life; he was prepared for hardships, but overcame them with the help from family and friends. According to him, “the housing market in Tashkent is quite good and can satisfy a variety of needs.” And if he had an income of $1,500 per month, he would be totally satisfied with his life in Tashkent, and eventually purchase his own dwelling. In this, the main issue is affordability; with his current income in Tashkent, the higher prices of housing make it impossible for Akmal to get his own place in the near future. Even so, he does not rely on government’s help; he says, “even if it [state] could [help] I would not take it.” The respondent does not reveal his motives for such statement; however, based on his background, I presume that this is a matter of pride.

In the male-dominated society of Uzbekistan, a man should be provider for the family, and he should be able to earn for a dwelling for his family, or his family should provide it. However, since the Soviet era females are actively included into the workforce, and they also contribute to the family budget. Since independence, many households have experienced a drastic transformation; women became breadwinners for their families because they managed to find more creative ways for earning higher incomes, demonstrating their entrepreneurial skills.

Akmal found his latest rental apartment through a friend. His advice for house-seekers is “never say ‘yes’ to a real estate agent in Tashkent for the first three times. Whether buying or renting, try to find a house from domkoms [head of apartment complex], babushkas [elderly Russian ladies] and other gossip tellers residing in the area
of your interest.” Hereby, the respondent demonstrates that informal means of searching for housing work better than the formal ones. This represents a widespread opinion that real estate agents cheat sometimes and does not fulfill their obligations. In fact, such cases were common when the housing market was just beginning in Tashkent. Now, since the state has implemented stricter regulations and controls over the real estate agents’ activities, fraud cases in Tashkent housing market have decreased. Furthermore, the other two respondents who purchased apartments with the help of realtors expressed their satisfaction with their services.

Having travelled and studied for several years in different countries in Europe and Asia, Akmal is not sure if he is going to continue to live in Tashkent, or will move somewhere else in the future; he says, “The life will show”. Currently, he is abroad for studies. Definitely, Akmal sounds confident in his capabilities. Due to his age and social status as a married man Akmal has more respect, social rights and responsibilities in Uzbek society. He firmly marches towards his goal of achieving his dream house and dream life in Tashkent or any other place.

In the case of this respondent, he did not seem to have a hard time with housing upon first arrival to the city; the university dormitory provided the minimum necessary conditions for living. His move to a rental apartment was also supported by friends. He has already established connections in Tashkent, and this smoothened his housing hardships, although he was prepared for obstacles from the beginning. Akmal has already become familiar with the capital city and he knows the “Do’s and Don’ts” in regard to housing. In fact, he gives a practical suggestion on informal ways of searching for

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21 From internet article by a real estate agent in Tashkent.
housing that means he went through the process and have chosen a solution of how to find housing in Tashkent.

A native of Bukhara, Nargiza also came to Tashkent for higher education. She first entered the State University of World Languages to study English philology, and after the first year, she transferred to the State Technical University to become a business major. Both universities provided dormitories for students from provinces. The rental apartments were too expensive for her, nor could her family provide financial support to live off campus. In comparison to $30-40 per month for an average rental apartment, Nargiza paid 100 Soums (about $0.1) annually; therefore, it was the only feasible option for her, as for other students from the province. Thus, Nargiza lived the entire four years in dormitories.

As it is almost free housing, the demand for dormitory rooms is very high. She had to renew the contract early in the year to secure her place for the next year. However, the living conditions were far from ideal. In her words, Nargiza described the dorms as “horrible”; no proper heating in winter, not enough shower-rooms, shared kitchens and, even, toilet facilities. Nargiza recalls that, in winters, she had to stick cotton and tape the frames of the windows to stop letting the cold air inside. The walls had cracks and this made their living room even colder. This was the quality of nearly free housing.

There were three or four girls per 4x5 m. (215 sq.ft.) room. Six toilets and one shower-room with six showerheads were shared by 60 girls who lived in that dormitory. Noticeably, the respondent points out that in the first university dormitory shower-room operated only three times a week. Therefore, she had to refresh in the toilet facilities, which also had a sink. In the second dormitory, where she resided from the second year
on, the shower-room operated every day, but the line was still long and the girls had to wait for hours just to take a daily shower. In both dormitories, there was a shared kitchen. A couple of times the food prepared by Nargiza and her roommates was stolen, and they had to go to sleep on empty stomachs.

Despite these “horrible” conditions, Nargiza loved living in the dormitory. It provided the greatest bonding time where she met her best friends who supported her in every possible way. They studied, cooked, shopped together, gossiped and laughed, and had a great time. Thus, the social life for Nargiza and her friends was so rich and intense that it overcame all the negativities that came with the physical conditions of the outdated building. Besides, as the respondent noticed, they [students from provinces] were a minority in a big city and that also made them come closer to each other. Their commonalities stood out once they all turned out to be in an unfamiliar environment, so they naturally stuck together. This generated “great friends, greatest relationships” as the respondent repeats over and over. As these friendship bonds will be carried throughout their lives, they will never forget their life in the dormitory.

While studying in Tashkent, Nargiza had a part-time job to supplement the state stipend and be less dependent on her parents’ help. Within three months after graduation, she left the country for Denmark to continue her studies. Nargiza received a tuition scholarship from the university, but needed $2,000 more for living expenses. This was a rather large amount of money by Uzbekistan standards in 2003. In comparison, an average monthly salary for state employees was less than $50. Nargiza’s parents decided to sell their apartment in Bukhara in order to collect the required amount; however, it was not needed at last.
Fortunately, a foreign couple that Nargiza helped as a guide and translator during their visit to Uzbekistan gave her this sum of money as a graduation present. Upon finishing school in Denmark, she visited the United States with her husband, who got a job offer. Later, she managed to obtain permanent residency. Now she is planning to obtain U.S. citizenship and has no plans to return to Uzbekistan. Instead, Nargiza hopes to bring her younger sister to the United States as well. Currently, her sister is in Germany, where she is attending college; her father is a labor migrant who spends most of the year in Russia and once in a while visits Bukhara for short vacations; only her mother remains in Bukhara, where she teaches in a community college. The entire family has separated due to the inability of the three members to find employment with adequate income in Uzbekistan.

During her studies, Nargiza had already realized that her future was not in Tashkent. Along with friends, she was searching for opportunities to go abroad, preferably to study. As she states, the ambitions of her friends were a strong motivation for her to pursue her dream to study in a Western university. Tashkent was a temporary location that opened up more options for Nargiza. Moreover, the uncertainty and inability to establish a proper livelihood in the capital city served as an additional incentive to go abroad, which she already planned half a year before. After graduation, Nargiza had neither full-time employment, nor a place to live in Tashkent. These uncertainties in the city directed her to go abroad in search of a better life.

Until 17 years of age, Hurshid lived in Bukhara with his parents. He came to Tashkent to study finance and accounting at the Tashkent Financial Institute (TFI). For his first month in Tashkent he stayed at a rental room in a house where the homeowners
also lived. Soon he realized that this was inconvenient for him for a couple of reasons: it was too far from his school, and most of his new friends, other students from the provinces, lived in the dormitory, besides it was less than one-hundredth what he paid for the room\textsuperscript{22}. Despite being inexpensive, the living conditions were horrible to the degree that many students, especially girls\textsuperscript{23}, preferred to stay in rental apartments or rooms. Hurshid, however, decided to move to the university dormitory. For a new student, this was not so simple. Since there were not enough places for all students, he had to negotiate with the superintendent of the dormitory to get a place\textsuperscript{24}. The scarcity of spots and the extremely cheap price made the university dormitory the top housing choice for most students from out of the city.

Of two adjacent rooms, Hurshid shared a larger room of about 3x4m. (129 sq.ft.) size with two other fellows, and two other students lived in the smaller one. All five of them shared one toilet. However, there was only one shower-room for the entire building, and it had 3-4 shower stalls for 80 students that lived in that dormitory. Nevertheless, Hurshid never saw a long line to the shower-room; he guessed that not everyone took a shower every day. Besides, near the dormitory there was a private \textit{hammom}; for a small fee students usually could clean themselves properly there. In the dormitory nobody was allowed to choose their roommates, but since it was a community of relatively similar people, most were willing to trade places, if anybody asked.

\textsuperscript{22} Hurshed paid about 1,000-2,000 Soums in a month for his rental room in detached house, while the dormitory cost about 100 Soums per year.
\textsuperscript{23} Later, another female respondent, who also attended TFI, states that she could not live in the dormitory at all, because of its inadequate living conditions.
\textsuperscript{24} Since the TFI was a newly established university, its dormitory could accommodate at most 10\% of the total student body.
The bedrooms were usually simple, with a bed for each student, built-in closets for their belongings and occasionally a table with chairs. Apparently, not everyone got a table and a chair in the dormitory. Hurshid jokes, “if you are lucky, you get one, if not, you use your own bed [to eat and study].” In his room, they had a common table that they moved towards the beds and used the beds to sit on instead of chairs. These were limited “luxuries” that could be obtained, if one could negotiate with the superintendent in advance. Usually, upper-level students who are more familiar with these informal rules have privileged positions.

Luckily for Hurshid, he was hired by a local bank even before graduation, and his position lasted for more than three years. It proved to be good employment, both in regard to the salary and the responsibilities. No longer a student, Hurshid could not stay in the dormitory anymore; therefore, he and three other friends found a rental apartment in the Chilanzar District. This was a two-room apartment which was in quite bad condition, but they had no choice because they had only one day to move. It had furniture, but it was old and barely usable. Besides, the landlord used to visit them frequently to check on the apartment and tenants. Hurshid and his friends disliked such an attitude and the apartment’s conditions; so within a month they found a new apartment for rent in the same district through a realtor from Kvartirniy Bazaar. This two-room apartment had a refreshing kosmetichekiy remont and cost about 30% more than the previous one, but was much nicer and calmer in terms of the living conditions and social environment.

However, several months later one of Hurshid’s roommates found an apartment at half the rent and decided to move out. He also invited Hurshid, and they found another
roommate. Thus, it was cheaper for three of them. This was an average one-room apartment not as good as the previous one, but there were more reasons for Hurshid to switch apartments. The roommate who moved out was a close friend from his hometown, while the other two were from a different city, Khorazm, and Hurshid did not like their household habits that much. Although there was no open confrontation among them, the latter factor helped Hurshid decide to move out.

A year later, Hurshid’s cousin bought an apartment in Tashkent, but was not planning to live there. It was an investment, in case her children needed it in the future. Hurshid helped her to find this apartment, therefore, she offered to let him live there without any rent. In this way, she made sure that the apartment was looked after and the utility bills were covered by Hurshid. This is another example of two parties who benefitted from social bonds.

At the end of 2006, Hurshid found a new job in a foreign company with a higher salary. However, due to internal restructuring within the company, he was fired in less than a year. Unable to find a job at the same level, he decided to go abroad. His friend suggested to him a program that finds employment in the United States. Soon after receiving a visa, Hurshid left the country. However, he considers this move temporary. In January 2010 he began graduate school. As soon as he completes this advanced degree and earns some capital in the U.S., Hurshid is planning to go back to Tashkent. But he cannot define the exact period of his stay in America.

Another respondent in this group made her way to the United States after failing to establish herself in Tashkent and Moscow. The hardships she experienced in her native country served as a major “push-factor” for her to emigrate to more developed countries.
Kamila was born and raised in Gazalkent, a small town to the northeast of Tashkent; it takes about two hours on the electric train to get there from the city. She first came to Tashkent when she was 14 years old, after completing basic secondary education. She entered a specialized lyceum at the Tashkent State Irrigation Institute. Under the 1996 basic education reform, the new types of high schools, such as specialized lyceums and professional colleges, were established all over the republic. This was one of those first brand-new lyceums. Attached to the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration (TIIM) this lyceum specialized in physics and mathematics, which are the core sciences for TIIM. As an out-of-city student, Kamila moved into the lyceum dormitory. The respondent believes that the lyceum building is a former secondary school. A four-story building, it had classrooms on the first and second floors, and the third- and fourth- floors classrooms were transformed into dormitory rooms.

On the dormitory floors, the previous classrooms were each divided into a bedroom and a study-room. The rooms were wide and spacious, unlike the ones in standard university dormitories. The school allocated one such unit for three girls. They shared a bedroom and a study-room. Each girl had a bed and a closet in the bedroom and a desk with a chair in the study-room. They also had a shower room and a toilet on their floor; the other floor had the same facilities for boys.

In fact, they were the only three girls in the entire dormitory. The rest of 100 students in that dormitory were boys. This aspect turned out to be unpleasant for Kamila. Most boys were oblastnie, from the provinces. Although Kamila is also from a province (Tashkent), she was raised in a “Europeanized” Uzbek family, and she barely speaks the Uzbek language. They soon began to have conflicts. The boys, as the dominating group
in the resident student community, tried to dictate to Kamila and the other girls proper female behavior and manners, according to their own mindsets. The other two girls apparently did not mind this attitude, but Kamila immediately resisted such pressure. As a result, she was forced out of the dormitory within two months.

The family hastily found a solution; they sent Kamila to her aunt, who had a small cottage. There were three main rooms at her aunt’s house: a living room and two bedrooms, one for the aunt and one for her children. Kamila was given a small storage room in which they freed some space to fit a bed that was too small for her and other things. This was Kamila’s sleeping area, and she spent only four nights a week there; on Fridays, she used to take an evening train to Gazalkent to spend the weekends at home with her family. She would then return early in the morning on Mondays to get to classes. She could not commute from home every day, because it was a long trip for a teenager.

Her aunt’s house was located within 15-20 minutes-walking distance from her lyceum. This was one of the advantages of this place. Although Kamila did not have to pay rent since it was her aunt’s house, Kamila’s mother sent a bag of food every week as her daughter’s share of food at her aunt’s table. However, there was no division between her or her aunt’s family’s food; everybody ate together.

Kamila recalls that she was quite unwelcome there, but as a relative, they had to host her upon the request of Kamila’s father. At the same time, it was very hard for a teenager to travel four hours each day on an overcrowded electric train, which also was old and in bad shape. It was cold and there were not enough seats for the passengers. Thus, Kamila spent her first academic year in constant travel between different places: the dormitory, her aunt’s house, and her home in Gazalkent.
After spending the summer at home, Kamila did not return to her aunt’s house for the next academic year. Her younger sister also entered the music college in Tashkent, and now they needed accommodation for two girls. Through a colleague, their father found an old Russian lady, a babushka, who had a traditional courtyard house in the Darkhan District, near Kamila’s lyceum. It was a full house with a large yard where she had a hen house and a garden with many fruit trees. The house consisted of a master bedroom, a large living room, and a small room that could accommodate a bed and a desk. This room was rented to the sisters, and the two of them shared that one bed. As a traditional house, it had a bathroom and toilet in a separate structure in the back of the yard, but all the amenities, such as hot and cold water, gas and heating (AGV), were there.

The old lady had two adult children, and both of them are in Moscow, where they have established their own households. Now, the lady was left alone in a huge house; therefore, she rented an empty room for Kamila and her sister, more for company than for money. In fact, Kamila cannot recall the exact rent, but remembers that it was a trivial amount, about one-fifth the usual market price at that time. The two sisters lived there for three academic years; Kamila’s second year in the lyceum and first two years at university.

The sisters had to move out because the house was in an area designated for an urban renewal project. With the redevelopment of the city center, the Darkhan area’s old houses, including the one where they lived at that moment, were to be demolished. Those houses were replaced with a brand new building for the Tashkent Branch of Westminster University. The old lady was entitled to receive a one-room apartment near the TTZ.
District (a Russian acronym for the Tashkent Tractor Plant), in a district quite far from the center. The girls, therefore, had to find another dwelling.

That summer, Kamila did not go home; she took additional summer courses outside of her curriculum and she stayed at her friend’s apartment. Kamila informed all her friends and acquaintances that she was looking for housing for the next academic year. Although Kamila had started earning some money of her own, the sisters were still dependent on their parents’ financial assistance. She took various part-time jobs, including babysitting and working as a librarian in an American library. However, her earnings were enough only for her own expenses; she could not afford to rent an apartment at market price. Despite this fact, Kamila never considered living in a dormitory again; in her opinion it was the worst option and she strived not to go there by all means. Besides, she never looked at affordable housing far from the center, like other respondents (Pavel, Hurshed); location was very important for her so she would be able to get to most of her destinations in a short time. She chose apartments or houses that rented a room only near metro stations.

Soon, one of Kamila’s friends offered to rent her a room at her grandmother’s apartment. This was a two-room apartment with a living room, where the owner slept, a bedroom, where Kamila and her sister lived, a relatively winterized loggia and a kitchen, where all of them gathered for dinners. Kamila recalls this babulya as a very nice Russian lady who would treat the girls by occasionally preparing meals for them upon their arrival from school. In turn, the sisters also cooked for their landlady as well.

This tranquil living was suddenly interrupted. Upon their return after school vacation in Gazalkent, they discovered that babulya’s granddaughter, Kamila’s friend,
had decided to live in the apartment and had occupied the bedroom. The sisters had to move to the loggia. At that time, babulya started to complain that the apartment had become overcrowded, noisy, lacked space, and that she no longer felt comfortable there. She implied that she would like her renters to move out, but she did not impose a strict deadline. Kamila urgently searched for housing, and another friend offered to let her live in an empty apartment that belonged to her uncle, who lived in Navoi, the regional center of Navoi province. This is another example of investment in real estate.

This was a three-room apartment located near the Drujba Narodov (Halklar Dustligi) metro station, the area that is considered the city center. The apartment looks like it was abandoned; the old and dusty furniture consisted of a sofa in the living room, a bed in bedroom, and a table with a couple of chairs in the kitchen. They did not even have a refrigerator or a television. Luckily for the girls, it was late fall, closer to wintertime and they managed to live without a refrigerator; they kept produce in the balcony, which was cold enough. Besides, they rarely cooked and tended to buy local fast-food of the streets, such as samsa, a pastry filled with ground meat and chopped onions.

Due to its relative emptiness the apartment seemed very large. Soon another friend of Kamila moved in and the three girls had a fun time together despite the downsides of this dwelling. They had some conflicts with neighbors because of the noise they made. More classmates would come to their apartment to study together or to hang out; the bigger the crowd, the noisier they got. With excitement in her voice, Kamila remembers her student life-style: “it was joyous, but half-starving year!” Eventually, after six months of constant fights, the neighbors complained to the apartment owner and girls
had to move out. It was almost the end of the academic year, and Kamila’s sister went home, to Gazalkent. Kamila had a full-time job by that time, and she had to find another dwelling.

Kamila’s father found the next rental room through an acquaintance, a teacher from his school. It was in the Kukcha District, which is also in the city center, and it was in an old two-story barrack-type apartment complex. A middle-aged Russian lady owned the two-room apartment on the second floor. It had a living room, a bedroom with a large double-size bed that Kamila and her sister shared, and a balcony where the owner put an extra bed for herself. The lady had two grown-up children who had both migrated to Saint Petersburg a while ago, so she lived there alone. In fact, the lady had a boyfriend, and she spent most of her time at his apartment; he rarely came to visit her, especially if the sisters were there. Thus, the girls could use almost the entire apartment for themselves. They faced a minor inconvenience: there was no desk in their room. Kamila and her sister had to do their homework on the kitchen table. Besides, although Kukcha is in the city center, the location of the apartment complex was not very convenient: it was far inside the residential area and the girls had to take a tram to get to the nearest metro station. Nevertheless, Kamila finished her studies in May 2002, living in this apartment.

During the summer, Kamila’s sister went back home to Gazalkent, while Kamila stayed in Tashkent. She moved back to her Russian friend’s grandmother’s apartment on Darkhan because it was a better location. Kamila lived in the same balcony, but without her sister, so the old lady did not complain about overcrowding in her apartment.

During her last year in the university, Kamila worked full-time as an accountant in a hotel owned by a group of Indonesian businessmen. As a young and attractive girl,
she drew undue attention from one of her bosses, and this created an unpleasant situation for her. Years later, Kamila could see that his behavior was basically sexual harassment at the workplace. Back then, she tried to avoid him and find another job as soon as possible; she could not quit immediately because it was hard to employment at a similar level and salary at that time. By October 2002, in a little over a year of her work in that hotel, Kamila’s frustration with the atmosphere exceeded what she could bear, and she quit her job.

Kamila decided to go to Moscow to seek for employment there. With the little savings that she had managed to collect over a year, she bought an airplane ticket to the Russian capital. At that moment she knew nobody there; she only had the address of a daughter of the babulya at whose house she had lived at first in Darkhan. This girl, together with her friends, rented an apartment on the outskirts of Moscow, and she hosted Kamila for a couple of months until the latter could find some place to live on her own. For what remained of her savings, Kamila bought a laptop and a set of proper business attire. It was impossible to find employment in Moscow without these assets because everybody there posted advertisements of employment online, and for an office job, one had to wear a business suit.

After two months or more, having passed through as many as twenty interviews, Kamila got a good offer for an accountant position in the Moscow branch of an American company. She was considered a highly desirable specialist due to her knowledge of Russian and English, as well as international accounting standards (GAAP). However, not many employers wanted to hire a citizen of Uzbekistan due to the additional hassle with permissions and immigration documentation. This factor caused some
inconvenience for Kamila in the future; even after three years of work in that company, she did not get a promotion, and there were no such prospects in the future. There was an invisible ceiling through which Kamila, as well as Sobir, Anastasiya and many other specialists from Central Asia, could not go, unless they obtained Russian citizenship. Without a promotion, Kamila would never be able to get her own place and fully establish herself in Moscow. She tried to find employment in other companies, but it seemed that all employers had an ‘unwritten’ agreement about this matter.

Not seeing her future in Moscow either, Kamila applied to graduate school in the United States. After being accepted, she left her position in Moscow, visited her family and friends in Uzbekistan, and went to the U.S.A. Kamila was a diligent student: she successfully finished her studies and immediately got employed. After four year, she was able to purchase a townhouse and is finally settled. As for now, Kamila considers this as a temporary house, until she can afford a full house. It appears that she has assimilated quite well into the local environment and now has similar aspirations to those of an average American citizen.

Anastasiya, unlike the previous respondent, is still struggling to find her place in the world. She has been to many countries through study, work and vacation travels, but she could not establish her own home in any of these places.

A native of Zarafshan, a major industrial city in the Navoi province, Anastasiya came to Tashkent in 1998 immediately after graduating from gymnasium (high school), having specialized in mathematics and physics. She decided to study accounting and auditing at the Tashkent Financial Institute (TFI). Her mother had friends in the city, with whom Anastasiya and her sister stayed during the examination period.
Hearing the news of her acceptance, Anastasiya’s mother started to think about the girls’ accommodation in Tashkent. At first, they visited the university dormitory, which was the cheapest housing option. The mother immediately realized that the living conditions would be unbearable for her daughters. She had good employment that allowed her to finance the girls’ studies and accommodation in better conditions. Soon she found out that some of her friends from Zarafshan had an empty apartment in Tashkent; they agreed to rent it for the girls. The apartment was on the ninth floor of a high-rise apartment block from the Soviet era in the Yunusabad District. It had been uninhabited for a number of years, and therefore, was not in good condition. Planning to stay there for a while, Anastasiya’s family did kosmeticheskii remont [decorative repair] at their own expense.

Since the Accounting and Audit Department of TFI was located far away in the Chilanzar District, Anastasiya had to take three modes of transportations (bus, metro and tram) every day to get to school, spending more than an hour each way. However, they could live there only the first year of schooling; in June, the apartment owner announced that she urgently needed the apartment and asked them to leave. Luckily for the girls, this was after finals, and they could go home to Zarafshan for the summer.

In late August of 1999, they had to look for housing again. After a lot of struggle, Anastasiya’s mother, through her friends, found them a room in the apartment of some old lady, a babka, who lived near the Hotel Russia [currently the Grand-Mir Hotel]. This was a good old apartment in a stalinki-house (of Stalin’s period) with all the furnishing and appliances available there, though old ones. Nonetheless, the girls could not stay there for more than four months, i.e., an academic semester. During this period the
apartment owner constantly annoyed the girls and their mother; as Anastasiya describes: “She was watching what we ate, how we ate, wondering why we ate *sgushchenka* [sweeten condensed milk] so fast, and kept telling all of this to mom.” Apparently, the mother herself said then, “*A nu eyo v banyu!*” [a very mild Russian expression of annoyance with somebody], and they began to search for rentals again.

They had only two weeks during the winter break to find and move to another apartment. Again, through their Zarafshan acquaintances, they found an apartment located on *Risoviy Bazaar* [in Bektermir District]. It was an empty apartment on the ninth floor where Anastasiya had to live by herself. Around the same time, her sister decided to have her own life and separated from Anastasiya. Nor did Anastasiya stay there for long, only two months.

Her friend from Navoi told her about a nice old lady, a *babushka*, who rented a room in her own apartment in the Yakkasaray District. Anastasiya met this lady and liked her very much, so she moved to her rental room. This was an old two-story apartment house with all the necessary living conditions. They lived quite peacefully together; the lady was very elegant and well educated, according to Anastasiya. So, she finished her second academic year in this apartment, and for the summertime, she went back home to Zarafshan.

In September Anastasiya had to search for a new apartment because that old lady decided to move back to Russia. Apparently she had been born in Russia, and although she had spent most of her life in Central Asia, then she decided to return to her birthland. According to the Russian Federation immigration policy, Russian nationals who had been born on the territory of the present Russian Federation, but had moved to other republics
of the former Soviet Union, had the privilege of going through a simplified procedure to obtain Russian citizenship.

The neighbor of this old lady, where Anastasiya lived the last time, had a one-room apartment in the Yunusabad District. A while before, she had had an opportunity to purchase this apartment, but this became problematic because of the neighbors, the two sisters, babki. As it happened, they also wanted to purchase this apartment, but could not at that time; therefore, they were constantly doing something dirty to all the renters who lived there. The apartment owner warned Anastasiya about this situation in advance, but Anastasiya did not have many options, especially since the school had begun and she had no time for further searches. So, she moved to that apartment. Anastasiya managed to live there four months, until the babki-sisters totally spoiled her life. As an out-of-town student, Anastasiya was temporarily registered at the university dormitory, but, in fact, she lived at different apartments. Besides, as another TFI student, Hurshid, said, the dormitory did not have enough slots to accommodate all out-of-town students. Therefore, many of those students found themselves in a paradoxical situation where they could neither stay at the assigned place, nor had an opportunity to register in the place where they actually lived.

Soon, Anastasiya found an apartment on Bobur Street [Yakkasaray District], and spent the rest of the third academic year there. Then she made arrangements with one of her acquaintances, a lady that had a three-room apartment on the same Bobur Street. The lady rented one room to Anastasiya, even though she had never rented a room before. Anastasiya lived for two and a half years there. She finished the last year in her university and lived in this same apartment another year and a half, while working.
After graduating in 2002 she stayed in Tashkent accepting a job offer from her university. However, the state salary that she was receiving was not enough for living in the capital. Soon, Anastasiya found a new job at a foreign company representative office. The new position was quite challenging, but the compensation was quite a bit better. After a year of work with this company, Anastasiya moved out of the lady’s rental room to a separate apartment in the Chilanzar District. This was a distant relative’s apartment, therefore she did not have to pay any rent, only utility bills. This apartment belonged to the wife of the brother of Anastasiya’s brother-in-law. After this family moved to Russia, Anastasiya’s sister’s family lived in their apartment. Later, they also moved out, because Anastasiya’s sister decided to move back to Zarafshan, where her husband might find better employment, and they could live under Anastasiya’s mother’s guardianship. So, this apartment was empty, and they offered it to Anastasiya.

Anastasiya lived only a year in this apartment. As she describes, it was not a great place; there was no television, and the entrance door was ramshackle, so once thieves robbed a few valuable possessions that Anastasiya had there. Then the apartment owners came back from Russia to sell the apartment, so Anastasiya had to move out again. Within a month Anastasiya found another two-room apartment in same district, but further away from the center. This apartment belonged to her acquaintances, but she had to pay rent. However, she lived alone and used the entire apartment for herself. By this time, Anastasiya had worked for almost three years in the foreign company and gained a high position. She was, therefore, able to afford to live in a separate apartment.

In August 2005 Anastasiya went to study abroad. She completed a non-degree graduate certificate program in the United States that lasted nine months, and spent all
her savings for this opportunity. Upon completion, Anastasiya came back to Uzbekistan where she wanted to apply her improved professional skills. However, there were no employment opportunities that would pay even half of her previous salary level. She was, therefore, unable to make enough to live. This was a “push-factor” for Anastasiya to migrate to Moscow, Russia. Encouraged by her friend, she thought of finding suitable employment there. Although it took more than two months, eventually Anastasiya found good employment. At the beginning, the responsibilities and the salary were comparable and appropriate for Anastasiya’s qualifications. However, over four years this situation has changed; now, Anastasiya’s salary is not enough to live on, and the amount of her responsibilities increases every quarter. She, as Kamila and Sobir, faces the same issue as other Central Asians in Moscow: a barrier to her career growth and, consequently, a raise in salary.

Since 2005 Anastasiya has been mostly out of Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, officially she is still registered in her hometown, which demonstrates the inaccuracy of records that do not reflect the actual location of citizens of Uzbekistan. Although she would like to go back home, Anastasiya points out: “if there were normal housing conditions, it would be hard for a person to move to somewhere. Either family or [a] dwelling of your own should be there to hold you in the place.” Apparently, she had none of these and no sense of place and belonging in Uzbekistan. Her decision to emigrate was fully justified in her mind.

The seventh group consists of those who managed to establish their own homes in Tashkent. Hamida (26), Farida (30), and Anna (28) have their own apartments in the city; Anna and Hamida live with their own nuclear families, while Farida shares an apartment
with her sister. In this group the respondents live with their own families also have or are planning to have children. All the interviewees living with their own families strive to have their own dwellings, and also to provide as much comfort as possible for their children. Unmarried Farida is also planning to have her own family in the future; unlike most of the previous respondents, she is already financially stable and appears to be prepared for a life separate from her initial family.

Anna and Farida were also renters for certain periods of their lives, but since it was not a significant part of their journey, they will be presented within this group. Hamida, in her turn, also belongs to the category of family residents; she used to live with her two sisters in an apartment purchased by their father. When the three girls entered various universities in Tashkent, the latter saw the need to provide his daughters comfortable conditions for study, and neither university dormitories, nor rental apartments, were desirable lodging for them, in his opinion. Therefore, he bought an apartment, since this was within his financial capacity. However, in this section the focus is on their ability to obtain apartments in Tashkent.

Farida was born and raised in Bukhara, where she also did all levels of formal education. Upon completion of her master’s degree, Farida decided to continue her education and applied for doctoral studies in Tashkent. After securing admission in Fall 2003, Farida moved to the capital city. However, as an ambitious young professional she wanted more from life, and she was capable of achieving more. So, besides studying, she also found employment and continued the professional career that she had already started in her hometown while studying for her master’s degree.
Her sister had already been living there for several years. Farida lived with her sister in a rental room in the Chilanzar District; thus, she had no difficulties with housing upon her arrival. Later, they changed rental room, but in both cases they lived with homeowners. Then, the sisters found a rental apartment on Usmon Nosir Street (the Yakkasaray District), where they spent two years.

By this time, both sisters had good jobs, and by the end of 2005, they had managed to collect enough money to buy their own apartment in the Mirzo-Ulugbek District, near the Gorky (Buyuk Ipak Yo’li) metro station. Although the apartment officially belongs to her sister, Farida and her sister share it together since it was their combined project. In 2008, their parents decided to move closer to their daughters; so they sold their apartment in Bukhara and bought one in Tashkent in the same district where the sisters had theirs. Thus the entire family had moved to the city.

Farida says, “I live in a good apartment in a good district.” Although she likes her current dwelling, her dream is to “buy a house with a garden.” Then she adds, “When I have my own family, I will do it.” Farida has travelled extensively to different countries, including Netherlands, France, Germany, China, and Russia. She had seen life abroad and returned to Tashkent, as it is the place where she feels at home. Experienced and educated, Farida is confident in her capabilities. For instance, she states that she needs her salary to increase three times to purchase a dream house soon. Eventually, she intends to get the desired salary increase and be able to purchase her dream house.

Hamida represents a young person who has been looked after during most of her living in Tashkent. She arrived in the capital in 2001 as a transfer student from Bukhara Technological Institute to Tashkent State Technical University. During the same period,
two of her sisters also entered various universities in Tashkent, so the three girls needed housing in Tashkent. Their father bought an apartment in the C-4 central district for his daughters to live in together. This was a small two-room apartment in a gallerenyi typ of apartment complex. Such a house has a common, long, open balcony for all apartments on one floor. Hamida says, “There was a feeling that you are not entering home from the pod’ezd [entrance], but directly from the street.” She did not like this apartment because it was small, although it had a bedroom, a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom with toilet, a corridor and a common balcony shared with neighbors who lived on the same floor. This building was an old structure; perhaps one of those built right after the earthquake. Besides, it was damp around the house, which attracted a lot of mosquitoes during summer. They did not know all these details before they moved in there; however, this experience gave Hamida the idea of what to pay attention to when looking for her own apartment.

During their studies the parents fully financed all three sisters’ expenses in Tashkent. They never insisted on the girls getting employment; most important for them was that the girls studied well. However, three months after arriving, Hamida decided to tutor one or two students in English, and thus supplement the monthly allowance that she received from her parents. Later, she found more stable employment and became partially financially-independent from her parents.

Once Hamida got married, she and her husband moved into a two-room apartment on the fifth floor of nine-story apartment complex in the Yunusabad District, near “Universam” store. In 2008, when Hamida was expecting a baby, they bought their current apartment in the Mirzo-Ulubek District. They saw the need for a bigger
apartment. It took about half a year to make capital repairs in the apartment, and three
more months to furnish and install all necessary appliances. Hamida likes her current
residence a lot; it is a big and cozy apartment in a great location and a better environment,
especially with no bugs. She says that each of them has his/her “private space.” The term
is used directly from Western culture, which implies that this respondent has
“Europeanized” aspirations in regards to housing.

The only negative aspects are the common *pod’ezd* [entrance] to the house and the
elevator, where Hamida got stuck twice during her one-and-a-half years of living there. These are ordinary problems that her family cannot solve unless they decide to
move to a single-family detached house, which is her husband’s desire. He dreams of a
modernized *hovli*, but with Western amenities, including a swimming pool, a sauna and
more. Yet, Hamida says that she needs no more in regards to housing; she likes what she
has and explicitly states that she is content with her current residence.

The “fear” factor was strong for Hamida before she came to Tashkent; she liked
the city, but as she says, “I was afraid that I would not be able to realize myself.” Here
she implies the realization of her potential in terms of achievements. She was particularly
concerned about getting employment. Many migrants experience the fear of the unknown
and the anxiety about making a new place familiar. Afterwards Hamida happily adds,
“But, thanks God, that everything turned out much better than I expected! I am so happy
that I got out of Bukhara!” She states that she has changed a lot now. At the time of the
interview, Hamida had planned to go to England to study in two months, and now she is
quite confident that she will successfully finish her studies and find better employment.
“After Tashkent,” she says, “I have no fear at all!” The respondent further said that her
husband would not go with her, but he usually has business trips to England at least once a month, so he was going to visit her and their child quite often. This might be a significant factor in reducing her fear of going to a foreign country and living away from her family, who have constantly supported her. She feels that her husband is very supportive, and his frequent visits will increase her confidence.

In the conversation, Hamida used the phrase: “If I am to live here [Tashkent] in the future…” Stressing the word “if” implies that she might not exclude the possibility of migrating to another country. Further, she also expects better employment after getting a degree from England. She expresses her hidden frustration: “I always earned little… I want to have my own money.” In fact, such an opinion is widespread among Uzbek women. Further discussion on this topic is in gender section of the analysis chapter.

Anna is also native of Bukhara, but now she is a permanent resident of Tashkent. She moved to Tashkent after graduating from Bukhara Technological Institute, with a major in business in the Fall of 2002. As she states, the main reasons to move were better opportunities and higher salaries. She worked for several months in Bukhara and was not satisfied with her income there. In her mind Tashkent offers, “more opportunities; it has more foreign companies, and the money turnover is larger here.” Unlike most of the interviewees, but like many migrants from provinces, she came to the capital after completing her higher education in her hometown.

At first, Anna was invited by her friend from Bukhara to share a rented apartment. There lived three other girls, students of various universities in Tashkent, who did not want to stay in dormitories, and rented an apartment together. Anna was the only non-student among them; nonetheless, she also had limited finances and could not afford to
rent a separate apartment for herself. This was a three-room apartment, located near the Oybek metro station in a 16-story building, colloquially known as a visotka [high-rise building]. Since it was unfurnished, the girls brought their own mattresses from homes and laid them on the floor. With limited budgets, they were not able to buy furniture on their own. New furniture is so expensive that even people who work, like Shakhzod’s family, cannot afford it. Besides, the rental apartments in Uzbekistan bring in some uncertainty in general, especially in regards to the length of stay and costs. Lease contracts are not widely used, especially in the case of students.

In Anna’s understanding, gas was not planned in that 16-story building to avoid accidental explosions. Therefore, they had an electric stove for cooking. Both cold and hot water were pumped up using electricity. They lived on the seventh floor and used an elevator to get to the apartment. Thus, most amenities in this building relied on electricity. Power outages happened regularly in that district, at least once in two months, but they would not last for more than 24 hours. Overall, she thinks the living conditions in Tashkent are much better than in Bukhara, where tap water is supplied only during certain hours, and hot water is usually not available.

The girls lived in this apartment for about one and a half years until one-by-one they got married and moved out (except for Anna). They shared all the living costs, including rent, which was 12,000-14,000 Soums (about $12-14) for each girl. Once the roommates were gone, Anna could not afford to stay in that “Oybek”25 apartment alone. At that time her salary was around $50 and the total rent for this apartment had also

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25 The respondent names of the apartments after the districts or the metro stations near which they were located.
increased. She still received financial and provisional support from her family in Bukhara. Each month her mother visited her and brought groceries from home, usually meat because it was five times more expensive in Tashkent. All of Anna’s previous savings from Bukhara were gone in the first months while she was looking for employment. In fact, it took about three months for her to find suitable employment. It became obvious that Anna could not stay in that apartment any longer, and she looked for different options.

A friend of Anna from Bukhara, who shared similar circumstances, rented an apartment in the residential area near the Gorky [Buyuk Ipak Yoli] metro station. This area is known as “Europeanized,” because many Russians and Russified population live there. This was a three-room apartment that belonged to the girl who lived there, and who rented a separate room to Anna for roughly 40,000 Soums ($40). Unlike the previous apartment, this one was fully furnished, with a television, a telephone and a computer that Anna could use, and was comfortable. It was also cheaper than staying in the previous apartment alone.

Although the “Gorky” apartment was much better in regards to furnishings and amenities, especially the Internet, which was a rare service at that time, the location was not as good as the previous one. It was inside the residential area, about 15 minutes walking-distance from the main road and the nearest public transportation. Besides, it was a poorly lighted area and it was relatively dangerous for a young girl to walk alone after dark.

Due to the inconvenient location, Anna decided to move to a better location. She went to the Kvartirnıy Bazaar and, through realtors, found another rental apartment with
“relatively normal” conditions. It was a one-room furnished apartment on the first floor of the old apartment complex near Central Universal Magazine (CUM), a Soviet type department store equivalent to an American supermarket, but located in the center of the city. The apartment had one large room, a big balcony, a kitchen and a bathroom with a toilet. The furniture was old, from Soviet times. There were a telephone and a television, but no cable. If they want to watch Russian channels, Tashkent residents have to connect to a separate cable company; otherwise, only Uzbek channels can be received through an ordinary antenna, but they are free.

This was a corner-apartment, and it was cold in winter; but there was only one electric spiral heater. Since the apartment was on the first floor, the dampness from the basement penetrated through the floor. Besides, the above apartment had regular leaks, which dripped into Anna’s apartment through the ceiling. The moisture from the ceilings dropped directly on her and her belongings. Anna had to keep basins all over the apartment not to let the water spread to other areas. Such conditions eventually caused Anna to develop pneumonia.

The initial rent was 50,000 Soums (about $50), and Anna’s salary was 90,000 Soums (about $90). Soon the apartment owner increased the rent to 70,000 Soums (about $70), which put her in a situation where she could barely cover her own living expenses in Tashkent. Then Anna decided that the constant sickness and high rent outweighed the great location, and that it was not worth continuing to live in that apartment, so she looked for another.

26 The term magazine was used in the Soviet Union for any type of stores or shops, according to the original meaning of this word.
Her next rental apartment was located in the city center, the Darkhan area, and close to the Hamid Olimjon metro station. This was a recently renovated two-room fully furnished apartment with all the amenities. The only downside of this apartment was that the rent was $110. Very soon, Anna realized that she had overestimated her capacities and invited a friend to live with her, so they could share the rent. Instead of accepting the invitation, this friend offered Anna another rental apartment, located near the Drujba Narodov [in Uzbek Halklar Dustligi] metro station, which was cheaper and cost $90 per month. Thus, after living in the Darkhan apartment for a month, Anna moved to the Drujba Narodov apartment with her friend. However, Anna stayed there only for two months. Apparently the other girl did not pay her share of rent, and the apartment owner demanded this part from Anna. The girls got into a big quarrel and Anna moved out to another apartment, which she found through realtors from Kvartirniy Bazaar.

This apartment had all the necessary amenities – furniture, telephone, cable television – and the rent was relatively low, only $50 per month. Even though the apartment and its furnishings were old (krushchevskoe as Anna labeled it), everything worked well and there were no leaks to bother her. The apartment was located on Esenin Street, in Oktepa District, which is further inside the residential area. It took about 15-20 minutes to walk to the main road and public transportation. Besides, this district was quite far from Anna’s work place, and she had to take both the metro and buses to get to work, which took over an hour each way. Again, as in the “Gorky” apartment, the surrounding area was very dark, and Anna lived there alone. Although the respondent did not openly say that she was scared, the description she used implies that she had concerns about her safety in that area.
Soon, for some company, Anna invited an acquaintance to live with her, but this girl was in a troubled financial situation and could not help Anna with the rent. Besides, she only stayed with Anna for two months. After the girl got married and moved out, Anna continued to live alone. She could not remember for how long she lived in the “Oktepa” apartment, but estimated for less than a year.

Randomly, Anna met a friend from Bukhara who also worked in Tashkent and was looking for rental apartments. This friend thought of living in the apartment that her classmate from Bukhara rented. The classmate was a male, and she was concerned as under the social norms in Uzbekistan it is inappropriate for non-blood-related unmarried young people of different genders to live in the same apartment. Since this girl accidentally found Anna, she offered to move in together with her, so there would be less tension on the gender issue. Anna agreed and moved in together with her friend and her male classmate.

This was a three-room apartment, and each of them had their own room. It had all the necessary amenities, and was in a good location in the Chilanzar District: three minutes to the main road and seven minutes to the nearest metro station. All three roommates knew each other from their university times in Bukhara, and they had no problems living together. Although these three young people were from different ethnic backgrounds, Anna – Korean, her friend – Tatar, and her classmate – Russian, they all went through the same education in Russian and were brought up in similar environments. Thus, they lived together for about ten months before a new option emerged before Anna.
In 2006 her family bought an apartment in Tashkent, near the Gorky metro station and Anna moved there. It was an empty apartment, not well maintained. Her parents brought some furniture from Bukhara to make the apartment livable. She also invited her friend to live with her for the company, and they shared living expenses, such as groceries and utility bills, but Anna did not charge her rent. The girls got along very well with each other, and they lived together for a while. However, eventually Anna’s friend decided to move closer to her work because the cost of rent there was not so high compared to her transportation costs from Anna’s apartment.

In 2008 Anna got married to a friend from Bukhara who also came to Tashkent for better employment. Now, she lives in her apartment with her husband. Both, Anna and her husband have relatively high incomes (up to three times the average income in Tashkent). Nonetheless, she plans to apply for jobs in the United Kingdom, because she considers her professional qualities to be undervalued in Uzbekistan. Anna thinks that in a developed country, she and her husband will have more opportunities to get higher wages and more professional growth, and she wants to provide a better future for her children.

The ninth group consists of youth-renters who also came to Tashkent after graduating from high school for higher education, completed university education, and are currently employed full-time. Bekzod (24), native of Zarafshan, is the only participant who does not belong to other categories; the others, Anna, Nadejda, Farida from previous groups also fit into this category based on their journeys in establishing themselves in Tashkent. Unlike Bekzod, they have managed to obtain housing, or currently live in their relatives’ premises; therefore, they are not discussed again within this group.
In 2004, Bekzod received a prestigious scholarship from a foreign joint-venture located in his hometown to study at the International Business School “Kelajak Ilmi” in Tashkent. He and a number of other selected students signed contracts to work for this company-sponsor after graduation. However, in 2006, the foreign company sold its shares to another company, which eliminated the previous contracts, including scholarships and potential jobs for the recipients. So, Bekzod and other Zarafshan students not only lost their prospects of good employment, but also their scholarship money starting from the third year. Combined financial support from his family and a partial tuition waiver from the school allowed Bekzod to finish his last two years and get a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration. In 2008 Bekzod returned to his hometown, but there was no job waiting for him. After a four-month unsuccessful search for employment in his hometown, Bekzod decided to go back to Tashkent, where his former internship supervisor offered him a full-time position doing the same job that he had done during his internship. Currently, Bekzod does not plan to return to Zarafshan to live permanently, though he often visits his family and still considers their house as his home. Unsure about the future, he hoped to get permanent residency in Tashkent. Although he does not exclude the option of continuing his studies in some other country, Bekzod will definitely return and live in Uzbekistan. Brought up in a traditional Uzbek family, he feels a strong connection to his family, and he will abide by his parents’ decisions.

His housing journey in Tashkent began at his classmate’s apartment; the latter arrived earlier and rented an apartment that belonged to an acquaintance. Since the entrance examinations were conducted in Zarafshan, Bekzod arrived just before school
started. Although he received a decent stipend from his scholarship (equivalent to the average monthly salary in Tashkent), Bekzod preferred to live with his friend who was from the same town because it was cheaper, and Bekzod knew him. Bekzod lived there the entire academic year, until May 2005, when he went back home for the summer.

This was a one-room apartment in the Chilazar District. Bekzod says that it was a little bit far from his school, approximately half an hour away on public transportation; he walked 10 minutes to the nearest metro station, then rode the metro for 15 minutes, and walked 5 minutes to the school building. The apartment was furnished, but minimally; there were two beds, a wardrobe, a table with chairs, and a refrigerator. Although they had no television, Bekzod’s friend had his own desktop computer, which he allowed Bekzod to use. They had a slow dial-up internet connection and a telephone. The apartment was warm in the winter and slightly hot in the summer, but “bearable,” according to him. However, it appears that size was the major concern for Bekzod; he says, “It was small, a very small apartment.” The only room included the combined living room and bedroom, and it was approximately 3.5x5 m. (188 sq. ft.); the kitchen was about 2x2.5 m. (54 sq.ft.); and the balcony was about 1x1.5 m (16 sq.ft.). In contrast to many previous dwellings, this apartment had an open balcony, meaning it was not winterized, no windows or any insulation. Therefore, it was not usable during cold periods, but only for storage and miscellaneous uses during warm periods.

Bekzod and his friend shared the rent, which was 30,000 Soums ($30) per month. This was less than one third of his monthly stipend, and Bekzod did not ask for any financial support from his parents. Besides, the stipend allowed Bekzod not to worry
about his living expenses and concentrate on his studies. He was one of the top students in his school.

The second year Bekzod decided to move to a separate dwelling. There were a number of reasons, some related to his own plans and some – not. Through some acquaintances from Zarafshan, Bekzod found a lady who wanted to rent a spare apartment. So, from September 2005 to June 2006 he lived in this one-room apartment located in the Yunusabad District. He was totally fond of it, both in terms of location and conditions. The apartment was renovated a bit and this made it more convenient. It had one big living room and a balcony of modest size that had been remodeled into a bedroom; the open side was framed with windows and was well-insulated. The owner fit a bed and a wardrobe there and there was still more space for circulation. In the living room, she had a standard set of Soviet furniture, a stenka, two armchairs, a couch, a small coffee table [zhurnal’niy stolik], a small night-table, and an ironing board. The last item is not usually found in households because people use an ordinary table for ironing, but if an ironing board was available, they would use it. In the kitchen there was a dining table, a couple of chairs, some pieces of a set of kitchen furniture. Usually Soviet apartments did not have installed kitchen cabinets; therefore people had to buy a separate kitchen set or some of the components and a refrigerator. In the hall there was another standard Soviet piece of furniture, called a prihojaya [antechamber]. The apartment was much better in terms of comfort. The rent was about 50% more than the previous apartment, but for Bekzod, it was feasible under his generous stipend.

The situation suddenly changed for Bekzod. In Fall 2006, the company’s new management decided to stop financing him and other Zarafshan students. Although his
parents were not rich, they managed to pool family resources to pay for about 40% of Bekzod’s tuition, and the school covered the rest from a Eurasia Foundation contribution. His parents also gave him some money for living expenses, but it was not nearly comparable with the stipend that Bekzod used to get. Thus, he had to cut down his expenses significantly, and he moved back to his classmate’s apartment where he had lived during the first year. Bekzod also found a part-time job basically to make ends meet. However, his studies at school were quite intense and he could not afford to shift his focus from studies. In addition to being a good student, he could not afford to get lower grades; otherwise he would lose the tuition waiver and his parents would have to find more money. He did not want to jeopardize his academic career. During the last two years of school Bekzod shared the one-room apartment with the same friend. Upon the completion of his studies he went back to Zarafshan.

Unable to find suitable employment in his hometown, Bekzod returned to Tashkent. Since he came for the job offer from his previous supervisor, he got employed immediately in the city. Upon arriving, Bekzod contacted his landlord from his second apartment, and she rented the same apartment to him again. However, this time the rent was higher, twice as much, because she had made a *kosmeticheskiy remont* [decorative repair]; changed the wallpaper and repainted the apartment. Nevertheless, this was the best option for Bekzod because it was not too far from the city center and was within his budget. In the future he hopes to be able to purchase his own apartment in Tashkent.

Bekzod anticipates going abroad to pursue a master’s degree. In this way, many young people eventually left in foreign countries. At the same time, his parents
discourage him from emigrating from Uzbekistan, they want him to stay in his homeland; therefore, he does not consider the option of emigrating.

Thus, the presented are a few scenarios young people undergo while searching for housing in Tashkent. The following chapter will analyze these stories.
CHAPTER VI: THE IMPLICATIONS OF PEOPLE’S HOUSING JOURNEYS.

Throughout these interviews I attempt to capture a glimpse of the housing question as it is experienced by educated youth in Tashkent and their journeys in creating their own housing. The respondents are not the poorest people who live in slums or on streets, nor are they the richest people who are able to obtain their desired housing through their strong purchasing power. These are people from the middle class, children of teachers, doctors, engineers and other similar professionals. Many became relatively impoverished after the collapse of the Soviet Union and made up the pool of what is known as the “poor intelligentsia” in the post-Soviet region.

The stories presented in the previous chapter reveal the incongruence between the official perception of the housing situation and how it is perceived and practiced by young people. During my travels with the CapAsia V field study program, I myself observed a similar situation in housing in South Asia, where people’s agency was ignored by the housing providers. In Kalametiya, Sri Lanka, all the families affected by the tsunami of 2004 received the same type of houses from the donors. The villagers, at first, complained saying that this was not the housing they needed or wanted. Shortly after, the occupants began to modify the houses according to their needs and familiarize their new dwelling spaces.
The analysis presented in this chapter is carried out across a set of “themes” ranging from the physical living space to the social context. The social aspects relate to migration, environmental considerations, ethnicity, social capital and gender. The physical aspects include location, housing options, living conditions, and transformations made within available dwelling to better accommodate the needs of inhabitants. As the focus is on the production of social space these “themes” do not stand out separately, but are intertwined and connected with each other. I will discuss the various aspects of each theme separately, although there will be overlaps and cross-references among them. Each aspect to be discussed will relate to the focus of this thesis which is the production of social space.

*Natives and migrants*

There is a clear distinction between the natives of Tashkent and those who have moved there from provinces in search of educational or work opportunities. The two groups have different experiences; the natives have less cumbersome journeys because they have the ongoing support of their parents, whose dwellings are located in Tashkent. Moreover, they have grown up in the city and the territory is more familiar to them. The migrants have to struggle through various obstacles, including administrative and other forms of discrimination, unfamiliarity with a new city, and distance from “home”. Without Tashkent registration they are not eligible to work or even live in the city; they also cannot purchase any dwelling if they have no permanent registration. However, these barriers do not totally block all the options for migrants – they find ways around these barriers. Although vastly marginalized, people who belong to this group manage to find
temporary or even permanent housing in Tashkent. As Ashcroft (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2002, p. 12) suggests, “marginality thus became an unprecedented source of creative energy.” This creative energy used in the search for housing is the focus of this thesis.

In contrast to the natives, the young people from provinces have different and somewhat more complex journeys. They come to Tashkent through two main routes: alone or with families. Usually, they come alone after high school, as adults for higher education, or for work. Those who come with families typically come as children because of their parents’ decision to move to Tashkent. They eventually consider themselves as Tashkent natives, although they might not be considered as such by the natives of the city. Nevertheless, they are locals now and they share a lot of commonalities with the natives, especially with the younger ones who are looking for housing themselves. For example, Tatyana who stated at first that she was from Tashkent, later corrected that she was from a smaller town in Tashkent province. As a Tashkent local, her journey was not too different – from the Tashkent natives (Kseniya, Alexander).

The migrants are driven by a series of “push-and-pull” factors (Lee, 1966). This is the most mobile group of the society. They left homes in search of a ‘greener grass’, they will continue their journeys until they get somewhere and, hopefully, find a place that sufficiently satisfies them in terms of significant aspects of life.

This research pays special attention to young people who come to Tashkent alone or as adults. Their experiences reveal the housing situation more vividly due to the hardships they face and the various housing options they go through before they finally establish themselves in the city or when they leave it. They are the most creative in
regards to finding housing. Their journeys draw a richer picture of young people’s search for housing in contemporary Tashkent in regard to what options they find, where they live, how they find these dwellings, how they modify their living space to accommodate their needs and wants, and what drives their choices. In the following sections I will elaborate on peculiarities of the housing issue for each of these groups.

**Location**

The most crucial aspect for planners and developers, location, stands out as a major aspect in most of these young people’s housing choices. Hence, location is considered from two standpoints: first, Tashkent in relation to the provinces of Uzbekistan and, second, the districts within Tashkent city. The location relationship between Tashkent and provinces is difficult for migrants if they are far from their families. There are also social divergences between the natives and them. Clearly, those who decided to move to Tashkent sought better opportunities in the capital city based on their information from friends and relatives who were already there. Once they arrive, they begin to reconcile the differences between their image and the reality. Those who eventually migrated, like Anna, Farida, Hamida, and Ravshan, usually had a positive image of the city in their minds.

In regards to the districts, most respondents preferred central districts of Tashkent due to convenience – closer to work or school, less time for commuting, better amenities, green spaces and leisure. However, since apartments and houses in the central districts are quite expensive for young people, most could not afford prices for rent or purchase
and many had to settle in the edges of Tashkent. This factor, i.e. housing prices for central locations, has equally affected both natives and migrants.

The journeys of the natives are not as simple and easy as they might appear at first. Once they grow up and establish their own families, they also want to live in a dwelling separate from their parents. This urge is greater among the urbanities of Tashkent than those from the provinces and is frequently observed among more Europeanized residents, for example Kseniya and Igor. The former is still struggling to get a separate dwelling, while the latter managed to purchase an average apartment for his family.

As they attempt to live on their own, the natives have discovered a whole range of issues that they had not perceived nor observed while living in parents’ houses. These include that rents and home prices are too high compared to what they can afford based on their incomes, living conditions of what they can afford are not the same as what they are used to, their household necessities have increased due to new technology and now they have to get everything of their own. The new location has caused changes in traveling routes and extended and complicated commuting now includes several routes and modes of transportation. So, Kseniya, who moved to a much farther district than the one where she used to live with her mother, complained about the extra hassle with transportation at her new living place. On the other hand, Igor deliberately purchased an apartment in the same district as his parents’ in order not to change his transportation habits and to be close to his parents’ and grandparents’ homes. Unlike Kseniya, his family already lived in a district farther from the city center so it was not hard for him to make the decision to purchase an apartment in the same district.
The location decision for the migrants will be considered from two perspectives: upon their first arrival to the city and after familiarization. Additionally, the migrants’ overall perspectives on housing will be discussed in the following categories: first, availability of a place to stay at the beginning of their arrival in Tashkent; second, affordable pricing; third, stability in terms of the length of their stay in a particular dwelling; fourth, distance to work or school and the time consumed in the commute; and finally, the social environment of their location.

The first factor is usually considered before arrival; the young people found family, friends, or acquaintances in Tashkent, with whom they could initially stay. For example, Anna, Anastasiya, Bekzod and Hurshid stayed with friends or acquaintances, while Farida, Hamida, Nadejda, Pavel and Sobir shared housing with some family members who lived already in Tashkent. For these young people location of their hosts’ dwelling was the choice that they did not make; they had to accept whatever location was available.

However, everyone in the interview group was not able to find a host in the city; Akmal, Kamila and Nargiza entered educational institutions that provide for nonresidents of Tashkent and went directly to live in the dormitories located near their schools. Thus, their housing situation was cleared upon arrival to the city. Compared to the others, these also had advantage of being close to their primary use.

The second major factor, pricing, is a very important one and it is tied up with the location decision-making process. The high housing costs caused these young people to be more creative in searching for the most affordable and suitable dwelling in the best location. Some of them tolerate the “horrible” living conditions of the dormitories, others
live on the edges of the city and spend much time in commuting, and some cope with annoying house-owners, especially if they rent a room. The financial limitations of the young people force them to choose the location of their dwelling carefully. They have to sacrifice either living conditions, distance, or they have to pay high prices for central location and/or comfortable apartments. All those interviewed made choices that were considered the best at that moment, or, in some cases, the least worst choice.

The third factor, stability, is related to the location as it also influences the young people’s housing choices. Because of unstable situations with homeowners, Anastasiya, Anna, Hurshid and Kamila had to move several times to different districts of Tashkent. If there were stable housing arrangements, they would not have had to move. However, for some of them housing has been stabilized only after six years of living and a number of moves in the city; while the others who did not obtain acceptable housing, left the country, temporarily or permanently.

The social environment is also important, because it relates to the human’s need in rest after school or work. The location that provides satisfaction and leisure is also preferable. The interviewees note whether there are bazaars, small shops and other service-providers near their houses. Since people usually spend most of their time at school or work in large cities they prefer to spend less time for shopping and other required daily activities; therefore, they want to have shopping and services nearby their houses. Most of respondents are young adults and so they also look for entertainment. They want to live in central districts because many points of entertainment are located there.
A central location is also important because long distances with several routes and modes of transportation are costly in terms of both money and time. Although Tashkent has well-established, diverse public transportation, it is still not enough to accommodate the growing population of the city. Most residents do not own a personal vehicle; therefore, they heavily rely on the public transportation. Kseniya in her interview emphasized this factor; she says, “One has to have a car to live on the edge of the city, because, otherwise, it is too far to get to work and it takes a lot of time to ride public transportation.” Thus, even married couples prefer to live in the city center.

**Housing conditions**

Another major aspect of housing is the physical living conditions. Here I refer to the number of rooms and dwelling sizes; utilities such as cold and hot water, gas, heating, sewage and garbage disposal; the type of building, for example, materials, year of construction, number of stories, and, if it is a multi-story apartment complex, the ordinal number of their apartment.

These young people are used to certain housing conditions that they have experienced growing up in their parents’ middle-class homes. Their expectations are, therefore, dependent on this experience, perhaps the only one they have had before coming to Tashkent. Instinctively, they seek for either similar or better housing conditions. However, those interviewed had different perspectives on housing in Tashkent. A few migrants noted that the living conditions were worse than at their parents’ homes, but some stated that certain living conditions in Tashkent were better than in their hometowns. For example, Anna remembers that hot water and heating were
not available in Bukhara in most residential apartments and, therefore, appreciated having them in Tashkent.

Many respondents are not good at describing the physical aspects of their dwellings, and more details came from those who had moved extensively. Through bad experiences they learned to pay more attention to the housing conditions and look for these before moving to a new residence. In one case, Anna developed severe health problems due to inadequate housing conditions in the rental apartment near GUM, although as a migrant she did not have parents’ home in Tashkent where she could go in the interim, so she had to continue to live in that place until she found a different rental apartment. These limitations required the young people to be flexible and ready to tolerate certain discomforts and negative aspects of their new residence as compared to their parents’ homes.

This also led to changes in their housing perceptions. Most significantly, their parent’s homes no longer continued to be the frame of reference that defined proper housing. They have seen in reality better or worse cases. Independent life widened their perspectives on realistic housing options and limitations, and helped them to develop a more realistic idea of the “ideal” house they would like to have in the future.

Transformations

Transformation in this study refers to both cultural and physical aspects, which are mutually interdependent and interactive. Under cultural transformation I refer to the “modernization” of the Uzbek society under the Tsarist Russia and, later, the Soviet rule. As Jeff Sahadeo (2010) discusses, General Kaufman carried out a grandiose plan to
transform Tashkent into an exemplar of western high culture, which would serve as a ‘model city’. This resulted in not only attracting westerners to the New City of Tashkent, but also changed the attitudes among rich local Uzbeks who since have strived to live in this “Russian Tashkent”. Some of them even abandoned their traditional courtyard houses, which were both culturally and climatically comfortable, and moved to new houses introduced by the Russians. Eventually, through ideological pressing and incentives, the Soviets managed to get the majority of population into apartments. These new dwellings were much smaller than an average traditional Uzbek courtyard house, but they were more advantageous in regard to providing better amenities than old houses, including running tap water, hot water, heating, gas and central sewage. More significantly, they represented the contemporary hegemonic notion of modernity.

Although Uzbeks agreed to move to the apartments, they did not and could not fully comply with the lifestyle imposed by the Soviets and created their own hybrid spaces within the “Soviet housing”. In *Post-Colonial Transformation*, Bill Ashcroft (2001, p.5) argues, that through representation, ‘imitation’ and, most importantly, cultural identity “colonized peoples […] transformed those [external] processes into culturally appropriate vehicles.” Modern Uzbeks, too, who moved to apartments, transformed the given spaces: they brought ‘pieces’ of their old lifestyle (*topchon, homtakhta, kurpacha*) and created rooms in so-called “national” style. The furniture and appliances cost significant amounts and families collected money over years or a decade to purchase a

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27 Uzbek movie “*Mahallada Duv-Duv Gap*” (1960) directed by Shukhrat Abbosov demonstrates the deteriorating conditions of the traditional courtyard houses in the old city of Tashkent and the brand new apartment complexes built next to these houses with all the necessary amenities. Moreover, the young people in the movie who built them eventually moved in these apartments, and some also invited their elderly parents to live with them.
television, a refrigerator, a *stenka*, or even bedroom furniture. This cost is seen by some as a reason for furnishing apartments in traditional style.

However, even those who could afford the hegemonic Soviet lifestyle, i.e. the relatively richer citizens who purchased such furniture, had one room furnished in “national” style. This room was usually the logia, the most underutilized space in most of apartments. In rich people’s apartments the traditional room served for daily uses and family gatherings. As practice demonstrates among Uzbek families this is the most frequently used space, where the entire family has meals and spends free time, while the “Western” living room is used for accepting guests only. Thus, cultural transformation accompanied physical transformation of place and space. Although the Uzbek people and their dwellings “Europeanized”, this was never complete; this modernization established a new combination of European and traditional Uzbek social traits and spaces, creating new hybrid Uzbek modernity.

In addition, they also transformed these given apartments to better serve their needs. Physical transformation included the increase of livable space through the full utilization of what are known as auxiliary rooms, i.e. balcony, logia and kitchen. These rooms were often transformed into more functional, daily living spaces. For example, in order to create additional bedrooms for growing children, many households transformed their kitchen into a bedroom, while the functions and appliances of kitchen were moved to the balcony or the logia. As Uzbeks “Europeanized” themselves to live in these apartments, they also adapted the apartments to fit their daily practices, needs, requirements and culture.
The transformations took place not only in the apartment complexes, but also in more traditional Uzbek neighborhoods, *mahallas*. Although there were not many visible changes in the common areas, the major transformations occurred inside the courtyard houses. They wanted to fully enjoy the pleasures and conveniences of modern life using, for example, electricity, gas, constant running tap water, centralized sewage connections and in-house bathrooms and toilets, heating devices, air conditioners, and even additional space for a vehicle.

The following examples demonstrate how people have been transforming housing in Tashkent. These are not the exact dwellings that I discuss in the text, but are similar dwellings that can represent the changes very closely.

![Figure 5.1. New apartment block in Tashkent and transformation of balconies.](image)
The above images are of relatively new apartment blocks built within the last decade. The modifications observed here include how people fill in the balconies and create additional rooms that could be used year-around. These are examples of winterized balconies.

Figure 5.2. Balconies transformed into living rooms in an apartment complex.
This second-floor balcony is an example of *Evroremont*. The owners have used imported materials for window frames and curtains, for better look and insulation. This can be compared with the balcony above which is not modified. The following images show more filled in balconies, with a few winterized ones, as well.

Figure 5.3. A balcony with *Evroremont*.
Figures 5.4 & 5.5. More transformed balconies in Tashkent.
The above image shows several modifications. First, an additional room has been built on second floor as an attachment to the balcony. The small smoke pipe suggests that this room is a kitchen. This indicates that the original kitchen has been transformed into another room. Second, the apartment owners on third floor have enclosed a balcony using a brick wall, another common practice in winterizing the balcony. Third, the corner apartment on the first floor is expanded into the yard; the sticks are to set up a fence around the future courtyard for this apartment. The door and stairs suggest that the owners have built a new entrance separate from the main entrance to the apartment. They also built a small private driveway for their car, which is on the right hand side. These people try to imitate hovli within their apartment and surrounding area by encroaching into common neighborhood space.

Figure 5.6. People’s transformations in an apartment building in Tashkent.
Below is another encroachment by the first floor apartment owners; these people have surrounded their external walls with garden, creating an imitation of hovli.

Figure 5.7. A garden outside a first-floor apartment.

The following image shows another use of the first floor apartment; it has been transformed into a private clinic, as the sign above the entrance door suggests.

Figure 5.8. Clinic on the first floor of an apartment building.
The house on the left demonstrates another example of multi-use building where the first floor is allocated for a store. It might not be totally new creation by people; however, it is obvious that the owners have expanded the store significantly out of the building’s original footprint.

The image to the right is a typical dormitory building. This particular one is a family dormitory, where people live permanently now. Originally dormitories were considered a temporary residence, until its occupants will be provided with apartments in newly built apartment complexes. However, dormitories are still occupied and they have become a part of the permanent housing stock.
The following images demonstrate the new Uzbek houses of Europeanized style:

The image below shows the traditional-style room in the Europeanized Uzbek house:

Figure 5.14. Traditional interior in a modern Uzbek house.
The above images are examples of *stenka* and *prihojaya*. They are not identical to what the respondents describe, but provide a general understanding of a new type of furniture that the Uzbeks began to use with the arrival of the Soviets.

The following drawings demonstrate the transformations within apartments. The first one is a one-room apartment that is transformed into two-room apartment, either by moving the kitchen to the balcony and, thus, transforming the kitchen into the bedroom, or transforming the balcony into the bedroom. On this drawing, the balcony is rather smaller; therefore, this one cannot become a bedroom. However, if the balcony is 1.5x3 m., then it could serve as a bedroom. The second drawing shows how the four-room apartment in 77 series house is transformed into five-room apartment. The kitchen is moved to the balcony, and thus, it became another bedroom. Additionally, the living
room can be extended into balcony, as well, and part of living room separated for corridor, to make the living room enclosed. The possible changes are marked in red.
House “hunting”

The most diverse responses from the migrants were given in regards to their search for housing. Because they were relocating from their hometowns, they required immediate housing even if many choices ended up being - temporary. These young people, to a greater extent than the natives, lived in multiple dwellings before they settled in their own place or in some cases, left the city altogether. Some began their housing journeys in dormitories, as this is the cheapest housing option available in Tashkent for the financially limited young people from the provinces. However, they must be students of affiliated institutions, like Kamila, Nargiza, Hurshed, and Akmal. The living conditions in dormitories varied within each institution: Kamila and Akmal noted that their dormitories were decent for living, even though they both eventually left their dorms due to different reasons. Nargiza and Hurshed both openly declared from the beginning that the living conditions were “horrible” in their dormitories, but they considered that the advantages, such as pricing and friends, had outweighed the negative aspects of the dorms and these young people chose to stay until the end of their studies.

As there was no formally established housing market until recently and self-declared real estate agents operated on freelance basis, the young people had no full access to information on rental rooms, apartments or houses. Most of the times the offers that they found in Kvartriniy Bazaar were much higher than their financial capacities. Therefore, they relied on the “word of mouth”, relatives, friends and acquaintances in search for the available rental dwellings. Out of 21 respondents, 10 indicated that they have used the services of realtors at Kvartriniy Bazaar. While some of them had satisfactory experiences, a number of the interviewees expressed their concerns with the
operation of this housing ‘market.’ Akmal, in particular, stated that there is no trust in realtors, and if one needs a house, s/he should firstly ask for information from babushkas, domkoms and “other gossip-tellers” of the desired district and, as the last resort, turn to real estate agents and even then carefully consider their offers. Such an attitude is not uncommon as many people got burned in the beginning of establishment of Kvartirniy Bazaar. However, as practice demonstrates, those who recently used the services of realtors from this market (Farida and Hamida) indicate that the real estate agents were quite helpful in finding their current dwellings. Moreover, Hamida happened to meet a former classmate at Kvartirniy Bazaar, who now works as a realtor. Thus, she had more trust and used her social connections to get the apartment she liked.

Social capital and social energy.

Informal means in any process is usually referred to as social capital. Although Putnam is extensively cited for his ideas on social capital which he defines as “connections among individuals” (Putnam, 2000, p. 19), he himself bases his premises on Lyda Hanifan’s definition of social capital that includes “tangible substances […]”: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among individuals and families that make up a social unit…” (Hanifan, 1916, p. 130; in Putnam, 2000, p. 19). I refer to this term from a slightly different perspective, and from the context of Uzbekistan’s society. This study has not employed quantitative measures of the usefulness of social bonds, as Putnam (2000) did in his research on political activity of the Americans but social capital has been quite central to my respondents in their search for housing. Nonetheless, from a qualitative standpoint, there is no precise count on how
much the social networks of these young people benefited them in their struggles to find their own housing in Tashkent.

Every interviewee has indicated some sort of help from family and friendship bonds and they have relied on their social networks more than on the formal structures. Through the networks of friends and family, these respondents found rental rooms, apartments and houses in time when a formal housing market did not exist and the services of real estate agents were beyond their financial capacities. Kamila’s father, for example, got the help of a colleague to find a babushka who was willing to share her home with Kamila and her sister. When she lived at her aunt’s house, Kamila was not welcomed there; but it was still the most feasible housing option for her. It was not only the most affordable option for Kamila’s father who is a school teacher, but was also the safest option because Kamila was still too young to live alone and her aunt’s house was within 15-20 minutes of walking to her lyceum.

Most of the respondents looked for housing through their network of friends, family and acquaintances and this reflects the wide use of social capital. This was at a time when the official housing market was not yet functional, and the prices that it offered were beyond what these young people could afford. They lived with relatives, even though they did not like it; they lived with friends, whether they went along well or not; they lived with homeowners, who rented a room to generate additional income or have some company; or they rented an apartment out of their income limits and got furthermore financial support from parents, even though they were already out of college and worked as professionals.
Such social interactions are not only beneficial to the young people seeking housing. The other party who provides housing for them also benefits from this flow of “social energy” (Uphoff, 1999). As her contribution to aunt’s household Kamila brought groceries from home each week. While living with babushkas the sisters provided company for the lonely old ladies left behind by their own grownup children. The poor students got cheaper housing while old ladies got human communication that they were lacking.

The cases of Aliyar, Anastasiya, Hurshed and Nadejda reveal other uses of social capital that reflect mutually beneficial relationships. Their friends and relatives had owned apartments in Tashkent, but did not currently live there. They wanted someone to take care of their property, so they offered to let these young people live there in their absence. This type of “house-sitters” in Tashkent usually includes immediate and extended family members, and, more rarely, friends, but never strangers. A main advantage of such practice is the reduction of crime, although it does not eliminate it completely. The house-sitters pay the utility bills that otherwise is a burden on the homeowners. For some utilities Tashkent utilities agency charges per person registered in the apartment, i.e. even if nobody actually lives there, they still have to pay for certain utilities.

In regard to the cases discussed above, social capital worked both ways. From “supply” side, the people who bought apartments and houses as investments wanted someone to take care of them, the older ladies with no children preferred the company of young students and the relatives who hosted the out-of-town youth got extra help at home. What is observed here is a great combination of matching needs from both sides,
“supply” and “demand” that create an informal market and provides unofficial housing solutions.

*Ethnicity*

The Soviet ideology and policy created favorable conditions for a multiethnic society in Uzbekistan and in other minor republics as well. While Uzbeks are the majority, many ethnic groups live in Uzbekistan (See Table 5.1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uzbek</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajik</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakh</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakalpak</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Ethnic Composition of Uzbekistan, in percent.

Not all ethnic groups came to Uzbekistan voluntarily or as cheerfully as the Soviets tried to portray it. Some groups such as Crimean Tatars, Meskhetin Turks, Koreans, were forcefully relocated under Stalin’s authority. Many Russians came to Uzbekistan during the colonial period, which proceeded the Soviet period. The situation was similar to any other colonial context. As they were from the more developed nation, the Russians were considered as Europeanized, modernized and advanced people, and they directly and indirectly imposed the Russian supremacy. The term “big brother” has been promoted throughout the Soviet Union in regards to the Russians relating to all other ethnic nationalities of the U.S.S.R. The policy of total *Russification* through imposing the Russian language and culture in minor republics added to this notion. The eventual hegemonization of the Russian superiority encouraged the Uzbeks to follow Russian models of living. They strived for such living, as they also wanted to become a
modernized nation. This attitude is developed from kindergarten, through the school years, and prevails in universities and work places.

In my interviews I noticed many open but also hidden dimensions of ethnicity related to housing. The voices of the young people are colored with their ethnic backgrounds; the terms they use, the situations they describe, all demonstrate the environment where they grew up, and they apply their cultural peculiarities to any housing they occupy. Some had even engaged in open confrontation based on this notion of “Europeanized” (Russified). When Kamila directly clashed with boys from her lyceum and her neighbors of the rental apartment, she described them as “haripi”28, a colloquial name for ‘less developed’ people, mostly used in Tashkent for uneducated Uzbeks. Although Kamila is also partially Uzbek from an ethnically mixed family, she highlights her Russian upbringing and refuses to associate herself with these Uzbeks--. This eventually, led to her expulsion from the dormitory.

On the contrary, many Uzbeks began to spread nationalistic views after the independence, and even demonstrated open hostility towards Russians and the Russian-speaking population. For example, the fact that ethnic Uzbek Kamila could not speak her native language was very annoying to the boys from her dormitory. Such ethnic clashes were observed not only between Uzbeks and Russians and Russian-speakers, but also among other ethnic groups.

In relation to housing, ethnicity plays a significant role; neighbors of different ethnic groups have to learn to co-exist peacefully to curtail these clashes. Moreover, the

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social bonds within one ethnic group, especially minorities, provide a strong assistance to their members in search of, or providing housing.

After independence, the “Europeanized” notion expanded beyond the Slavic ethnic groups. Now, the young people of Uzbekistan get their inspiration from the West, as well. The other young Uzbek, Aliyar, while explaining his views on housing, described his ideal modern house as one that incorporates almost all the basic elements of a standard western house, including a lawn, a pond, and a private driveway. There is a strong duality between these two notions of “Europeanized” and “traditional”, and each of them implies a certain set of stereotypes, which also relate to housing.

People in Uzbekistan refer to such “modern” houses as “Euro-style” or “Euro-standard”. However, as discussed in the previous section, the transformations to housing go both ways, such as having a traditional room in the apartment or adding modern amenities to a hovli. This reflects the hybridity of the people’s mindsets. Jyoti Hosagrah (2005, p.15, pp. 6-8) argues that in current “havelis” in New Delhi, their inhabitants have created “indigenous modernities”. The ‘modern’ houses in Tashkent also represent such indigenous modernities. Thus, I understand that the Uzbek notion “Europeanized” is not pure European in a sense; it is a hybrid mixture of some practices from Europe, North America and Russia and includes the local methods of construction. For example, suburban houses or luxury apartment complexes are built in the Western manner, but use local building materials and incorporate some traditional elements, as well.

Noticeably, the ethnic Russian respondents never mentioned the word “Europeanized”, and rather employed the “modern”-“traditional” duality. I consider this
as indirect oppositional view; but rooted in the same discourse, “Europeanized” modern vs. “traditional” Uzbek. However, it is evident from the conversations that the Russian respondents have had less tension than the “Europeanized” Uzbeks with ethnic Uzbeks who hold more traditional views. Unlike the Russians, the latter tries to impose their own views of the authentic Uzbek attire, behavior and attitude, while they do not act in the same manner with the ethnic Russians and other minorities. Both modernized and traditional Uzbeks are trying to prove to each other that their way is better and should represent a “real” Uzbek.

Ethnic groups appear to be grouped in specific locations within the city. For example, Tatyana stated that she likes the district where she lives because there are more people of her ethnicity, Koreans. This indicates that the ethnic identity has a strong influence on people’s housing choices. Also, Pavel, another Korean young man, noted that his ethnic group helped his parents with employment in Tashkent that made the transition to the new city easier for his family.

*Environmental concerns*

Environmental concerns were expressed by several respondents as influencing factors in their choices of houses. Whether the district’s environment is suitable for them is based on their levels of comfort, depending on both the natural and social environments. For instance, Nadejda complained about bugs that bothered her. She did not like that, but had to walk through that area every day to and from the metro station. It was easier for her to cope with the situation than to move to a new place, which would be much more complicated. Kseniya and Nadejda pointed out that certain parts of Tashkent have somewhat unpleasant vistas because of trash on the public areas, especially in parks,
along the streets and at bus stops. They also suggest that the city authorities should simply provide more trash bins around public spaces, so people will dispose of trash in those bins instead of streets and parks. In fact, many residents of Tashkent noticed that the city became untidier with the wave of rural migrants (in Uzbek online forums). That partially explains the negative attitude to the latter, and the labeling of them as haripi. Although the garbage in public spaces might not be always the responsibility of migrants, conventionally, they are blamed for the ills of the city.

A few respondents indicated they think that Tashkent’s air pollution has increased in recent years. They would prefer to have cleaner air, but at the same time they are not willing to trade their central locations for cleaner air on the edges of the city. Although their dream houses might be located on the outskirts of Tashkent, it is not because of the clean air, but more because of the larger lots that they could get, compared to the land lots within the city center. Hypothetically, they wish that someone took care of the pollution in the central districts of Tashkent; however, they do not want to give up the major cause of pollution, the cars. Only a few of my respondents have a personal vehicle, but many dream to have one. It seems that they want both clean air and the advantages of the urban core.

The social environment is affected by the proximity to family, friends, work places, schools, entertainment, and safety. Many respondents expressed their desire to live close to or with their parents and grandparents. The “Europeanized” Uzbek, Sobir wants to live close to his parents, but not in the same apartment. This shows the hybridity of the mentality of young people; they take some aspects of the ‘modern’ life and keep certain aspects of the ‘traditional’ lifestyle. As the only son, he wants to continue the
tradition of caring for his parents, but at the same time, he wants to enjoy the privacy of life with his wife and children.

All participants also like to be close to their friends, so they can socialize with them more. Nadejda who experienced life in the United States regrets that in Tashkent there is not a single mall, a typical American entertainment center. For her, the social life in Tashkent is only average due to this latter factor, despite the numerous theaters, cinemas, parks, and other recreational areas available in the city.

The social environment also includes the environment at home. As Anastasiya mentioned, it is impossible to live a normal life, when somebody over-watches your every movement. The gossips of the babushka, with whom she and her sister stayed the second year in Tashkent annoyed not only the girls, but also their mother in Zarafshan. People have to be able to relax and regenerate their energy after a long day in school or at work. If there are no proper conditions to have a rest, after a while this leads to conflicts at home, and beyond, at school, work or even on the streets.

The safety issue does not come across in this study openly; not many talk about this aspect. Only those who experienced certain discomfort based on the safety issue raised this question. For example, Anna learned about safety, when she had to walk in the dark alone in the districts near the Gorky metro station and in Oktepa District. Kamila saw the reason why very few girls from the regions came to study in Tashkent lyceum – many parents were concerned about the safety of their girls in a big city.

**Gender and space in Tashkent**

There is a trace of gender relations that emerges through the above stories, although it is not obvious to the respondents sometimes. From the stories it is apparent in
student dormitories, shared rental apartments, and even established households that the impact of gender has several dimensions. A strong sense of gender equality in the Soviet thinking has been carried into the post-independence period in Uzbekistan by the authorities. Independence also opened the ways for creeping in of archaic Uzbek traditions, which were used to increase the gender inequalities. Moreover, there is also incongruence between gender perceptions and practices.

In case of lyceum and universities, for example, both male and female students were provided the same facilities in terms of housing. Based on the Soviet type equality, boys and girls had equal allocation of space, on separate floors. In reality, however, a significantly lower number of girls live in dorms, especially in lyceum, as teenage girls are not sent to live by themselves in the big city. This aspect, determined by the Uzbek culture, implies that a young girl is an easy target. Here the safety of the girl is prioritized and only parents or a close older relative could provide the necessary level of safety.

The housing issue was exacerbated by the mismatch between the preliminary estimates and the real numbers of students who live in dormitories. In 1996 the approximate ratio of girls and boys living in lyceum dormitory was 3:97, according to the respondent who lived there. Due to such a huge disparity, boys became the dominant group and seized the power in the dormitory. In the case of Kamila, there was only one room occupied by the girls and soon the boys began to dictate their own "rules". Anybody who rebelled against this imposed structure was expelled from “their territory". They arranged the situation in such a way, that the dormitory authorities dismissed Kamila after a couple of months living there.
Gender plays out in different settings as well, although it does not stand out as explicitly as one could imagine in a predominantly Muslim society (Spain, 1992). Under the Soviet Union the society in Uzbekistan has changed dramatically (Stronski, 2003). It was Europeanized and Russified, among others. In regards to housing, newer apartments are small in size compared to the traditional courtyard house, which had a physical border between the male and female quarters. This separation has disappeared and both men and women are allowed to use the entire apartment together. Here one can see a combination of lack of room and modernization working together in transforming the society.

However, under the social context and/or the common family order, the border still exists: women’s main place is in the kitchen, whereas men’s is the living room. Although none of my respondents, including the married ones, do not talk about such border obviously, the “kitchen” space is mostly pointed by the female respondents. While they well observe and make insignificant comments about it, the male respondents’ mention of the kitchen relate to their “unmarried” life: living away from their families they have to cook for themselves. Hurshed mentioned kitchen only to point out that his other roommates did not cook in the same way he did, therefore, some tension appeared among them. It was not a huge aspect, but the respondent used this as an example to explain why he left the rental apartment that he shared with those fellows.

While the law explicitly states that men and women are equal in their rights for employment, the gender role in Uzbekistan implies that women are to earn less than men who are the primary breadwinners of the family. However, as it is seen in Hamida’s case, women also would like to be financially independent, at least partially from their husbands. Although since the Soviet Period females also were included in the workforce
that contributes to the family budget, in many cases women still are underpaid compared to men for similar job, or they are given less-paid jobs, based on the reason that their husbands are to provide more. Besides, the maternity leave that women take when they have children disrupts their working career and puts them into financial dependence on their husbands. As at the moment of interview Hamida was on the maternity leave, she says that she is totally dependent on her husband’s income. Unlike in most other countries, in Uzbekistan the law requires the employer to provide a fully paid maternity leave for the first year and unpaid leave for two more - years. In this case new mothers still bring in their share of income to the family, and then they have a choice whether to continue to raise a child fully on their own, or to return to work and take assistance in childcare.

It appears that this part of a woman’s job as mother and household-keeper is underestimated from financial aspect of the family not only by the husbands, but by the wives as well. Even though there are men who value their wives’ role in the house and would prefer their wives to stay at home, women themselves consider the financial aspect that comes from outside as the main contribution to the family budget; so who brings money from outside, contributes to it, but who saves inside the family by cutting expenses, is not considered as such. As my own mother said after quitting her job, “You can spend your own money without anybody questioning you how much you spent and for what purposes; while you should be able to report to every coin when the money is from your husband or children.” This lack of freedom deprives women who are financially dependent on somebody in their family from choices and wishes of their own. The salary or allowance, including pension or maternity leave compensation, that they get
from the employer, whether the government, private company or non-private non-
government organization, they consider as their “own” money that they have the right to
choose how to spend.

The gender separation at home is not new or unique to Uzbekistan. As Spain
highlights in her book *Gendered Spaces* (1992), such division is common in many
countries, including the developed Western ones. However, the distinguishing feature of
many Uzbek homes is that due to lack of inhabitable area (the Soviet apartments are
designed in small areas, ranging from 20 sq. m. to 50 sq. m. on average) there are overlaps
of “spaces” within the apartment: kitchen is usually served as a dining room as well,
living room turns into bedroom at nights, logia, an auxiliary room, now is fully utilized
either as a bedroom or kitchen and dining room. Thus, it is reconfirmed again that
physical boundaries disappear, while the social ones still persist.

The housing situation discussed in this thesis also suggests there have been
changes in some gender aspects. In regards to housing decisions, gender regulates
acceptable social norms that might limit certain housing options. Anna and her female
friend did not feel comfortable at first to live with their male friend, because young
people of different genders are not supposed to live in the same household if they are not
related by blood. However, in this case the girls who saw that they had no other viable
choice opted to disregard this conventional opinion and take the option that was available
at that moment. Later, it demonstrated that these three young people got along much
better than some random roommates of the same gender. These lack of space and existing
realities have also enabled the young people to further “modernize” the gender relations
in the sense of hybrid modernities.
CONCLUSION

The new study of society from ordinary people’s perspectives is yet to receive broad attention. Only a few of scholars engage in this subject. If professional planners serve the people, as they usually claim, then it would seem appropriate to produce a product that will not only satisfy the needs of their clients, but also leaves enough flexibility for the subjects of the spaces to modify these according to their needs and desires. As Goh (2002) and Perera (2009) argue, people actually do change their given environment over time, even if they are in a minor scale. This study very much confirms this.

The spaces these young people create in Tashkent cannot be categorized as pure traditional “Uzbek”, or modern “Western” – they are hybrids. Their producers, i.e. young people of Uzbekistan, are also hybrids in the way they were brought up, in a mixture of local traditions, under strong influence of the Soviet Union, and the Western culture to which they have become widely exposed after independence. Today’s young people have completely different needs and aspirations. Thus, they modify their spaces accordingly; whether the location in a larger setting or the interiors of the dwelling to suit their new requirements and desires.
This process is well highlighted by Perera (2009) in regards to the transformations that people undergo through familiarization in their space-making processes. Through the emphasis on ‘inside-out’ transformations, he stresses that “familiarization is guided by passions and aspirations, [and affected by tactics more than strategies], but not necessarily driven by larger goals in a formal sense” (2009, p. 54). This is also true in case of the young people’s processes highlighted above. The young people who come to Tashkent first familiarize themselves with the new place. They live in any acceptable dwelling that they can find through formal (university dormitories) or informal (friends and relatives’ houses or apartments) means. Eventually, they find their own ways to establish a “better life” in Tashkent, or, if unachieved, move further to other places that they assume might provide better opportunities. Such transformation is carried out based on these young people’s needs and desires, in regard to education, employment, entertainment and the general quality of the environment.

My interviewees’ personal stories helped me build a general picture of housing issue in Tashkent from their point of view. It revealed that various provisions, such as Soviet apartments, family support, especially financial, that Uzbek people used to take for granted, are now regarded as a strong social capital, on which they build their own “people’s solutions.”

It has been evident that many young people value education and decide to move to Tashkent for higher level or quality education. Even those who received formal college education in their hometowns do not stop their educational process in the city; on the contrary, they see a fierce competition for jobs and take additional courses to build up the
skills needed for their desired employment. Within this context, many sacrifice their necessities in regard to accommodation and choose relatively cheaper options. They are staying with homeowners, friends or relatives, even if the living conditions are far from considering them as decent.

As most stories revealed some of the major factors in housing choices are prices, conditions and location, especially the distance from homes to work place, school, and/or to the center of the city. Both the living conditions and location have a strong influence on housing prices, and the latter acts as a decisive measurement for the choices the youth make.

Another major finding of this thesis is that renting is the least favorable housing option and homeownership is the most desirable. Among the reasons for this are not well-functioning leasing mechanisms, since it is a relatively new practice in independent Uzbekistan, and consequently, insecurity and instability of renters’ position. As it has become evident from several narratives, the homeowners felt free to ask their renters to leave any time they wished. This is also due to the fact that lease contracts are not widely practiced among the local population of Uzbekistan; people rely more on oral agreements. However, not everybody feels bonded by such terms; both parties might breach the initial conditions.

One of the main aspects within this study is migration. These youth’s migration patterns usually follow a pattern moving from the periphery (provinces), to center (Tashkent), to abroad (foreign countries), unless they are Tashkent “natives”. The stories demonstrate that the conventional opinion that the home-seeking processes are harder for the migrants than for the natives is not always true. Among the interviewees there are
natives of Tashkent who still struggle to establish their own home in Tashkent itself, while some of migrants from provinces have managed to obtain theirs that fulfills their desires. Such evidence shows that the cases are individual and, even though some generalization could be made, there are no standard rules, which everybody follows strictly. Therefore, it is not recommended for authorities to set up rigid regulations.

The study also raised other strong aspects such as gender and modernity. The present society of Uzbekistan is, in fact, hybrid in every sense. There are traditions and customs that are still followed, but at the same time many Western-‘modern’ patterns are weaved into present lives of the citizens of Uzbekistan. Females gain more respect and ‘voice’ within the family and society if they work and have significant contribution to the family budget. Nevertheless, traditional social norms are still strong in the community, especially in mahallas. People, in their turn, fully exercise the benefits of local community self-help practices; they tap into this source of ‘social energy’ and use it to address their housing issues, as well. Although the most relevant practice of building houses together, hashar, has been diminished in the large city, the remnants of this practice are still present in enclosed communities and among extended families.

In short, lack of supply of housing affordable for the young professionals creates major hardships in Tashkent, but this has not stopped the youth from establishing new families and homes in the city. They have been extremely creative in making room for this in a context where the state and the market could not respond adequately.
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