

Recent Developments in Kabul's Shar-e-Naw and Central Bazaar Districts

Andreas Dittmann¹

Summary

This paper focuses on recent infrastructural and functional changes in two central areas of Kabul, namely, Shar-e-Naw and the bazaar area. While the latter got the impetus for its reconstruction from the fact that it was one of Kabul's most severely destroyed areas, the opposite holds true for Shar-e-Naw which recently suffered from a more functional change due to the fact that there was hardly any destruction in this area. As a result of a growing urban economy and population in combination with a multitude of international activities connected with the so-called reconstruction of Afghanistan, Kabul is characterized by quite important functional changes in certain areas. The recent reconstruction of Kabul is dominated by challenges and opportunities, among which we can identify two major processes as changing the face of Kabul significantly. One is the growing influence of international organizations as a dominant factor in reshaping the city in certain parts and the second focus is the changing functions of Kabul's central bazaar as a result of it becoming more and more a playfield of local forces struggling for influence and power in Kabul.

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1 Shar-e-Naw being re-shaped by international organizations

The political pre-considerations for the reconstruction of Afghanistan included the implementation of a multitude of programmes of national security and development at the same time. The National Development Plan (NDP) results in a huge number of international development agencies being concentrated in Kabul (Dittmann 2004). There is an uncharted jungle of national and international organizations. Overlapping interests amongst them cause sometimes severe competition which is further been fuelled by the fact that most aid institutions gather in Kabul due to security reasons. This struggle for development related resources is proving to be a serious obstacle for development.

¹ Dr. Andreas Dittmann is Geographer and Social Anthropologist. He is professor of Geography at the Justus Liebig University Giessen and specialized in the fields of Human Geography and Transitional Economies. Recent activities concentrate in the field of establishing University partnerships with Afghanistan (Herat, Kabul), Iran (Tehran, Rasht) and Pakistan (Lahore).