Remont: the Social Production of Space

in Central Asia

Dissertation

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Notes on transcription

The transliteration largely follows the ISO 9 norms for Tajik and Russian. Since in the interviews Russian and Tajik languages were constantly mixed, for the sake of convenience, *ķ* is substituted by *q*. The Cyrillic letter *x* is rendered as *x* for Tajik-language contexts and as *h* in the Russian one. Yet in Tajik-langage transcription, *h* is meant to replace *ḩ*. Transliteration is mostly used for quoting excerpts from interviews, and in bibliographic data. In most other cases, a simplified spelling is being used.

1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome to Khujand

The city of Khujand in northern Tajikistan is both the setting and the object of my research. Before going into the tedious details of theory and methods, I invite the reader to open an atlas – or to use the maps in the annex – and to locate Khujand on a map. If it's an older map, you might have to look for Leninabad, which was the city's name from 1936 to 1992. Looking on the map is already a good way to attune yourself to the city and my work on the city of Khujand. You see the sinuous state borders which criss-cross the Ferghana valley, and you see the Syrdarya River, running from the Tian-Shan Mountains towards the west. The river irrigates the densely-populated Ferghana valley, until the Qayraqqum dam impounds its course and forms a large reservoir shortly before the river arrives in Khujand. If the map is detailed enough, you see the river bend, inside of which the city of Khujand is located, and you see the fertile plain to the south of it. The river continues its course, crosses the border to Uzbekistan without a visa, and flows on towards the Aral Sea. North and south of Khujand, you see a couple of mountain ranges: to the south, the Turkestan range cuts off the Tajik Ferghana valley from the rest of the country. Just one road across the Shahristan pass connects the two parts. To the north, the Kurama range forms the border to Uzbekistan. One of its spurs – the Mogol-Tau – thrones over the city of Khujand.

To focus in more closely, you should turn to a more detailed map of Khujand. If you don't have one at hand, there is one in the annex, or you might want to use Wikimapia's fairly detailed portrait of the area (Wikimapia 2012). The first thing to note is that there are a number of towns lying in Khujand's immediate neighbourhood – Chkalovsk, Qayroqqum, Taboshar, Ghafurov and Nov[1]. Together with dozens of smaller settlements they form a quite dense and well-connected agglomeration of a half million inhabitants. Khujand itself has roughly 160000 inhabitants, which makes it the second-largest city in Tajikistan. Like many cities in Central Asia, Khujand is ethnically diverse. The majority of the population is Tajik. A sizeable part of

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[1]	In the course of the work, I will refer to the toponymics in use in time of the fieldwork in 2009-2010. They may not reflect the most recent official name changes (Chkalovsk – Buston, Qayroqqum – Guliston, Taboshar – Istiqlol, just to name a few).

the population is Uzbek – estimates vary from a tenth to a half, according to the interlocutors, with the official figures reaching some 15% (corresponding to my own calculation on the basis of the 2010 census data (Agentii Omori 2012). Both languages are present in the city – to the extent that the traditional *yor-yor* wedding song is performed in both Tajik and Uzbek (Išankulov, 1972, pp. 72–73). At a time when it was called Leninabad, Khujand used to have a large number of Russian speakers. Unlike other cities in the region, it never did have a Russian/European majority[2].

Now, take a look at the Syrdarya River which runs right through Khujand. This makes the place rather special, as there are few Central Asian cities which are directly situated on a major river. While the river forms the dominant east-west axis of Khujand's morphology, one large street – Lenin Street – runs from the south-east all the way northwards through the city right to the foot of the Mogol-Tau range. The city's main institutions are located on both sides of Lenin street – the large Panjshanbe bazaar and the city's main mosque with the shrine of Shaykh Maslihiddin; the central stadium; the administrative buildings close to the bridge. Not far off Lenin Street you find the theatre, the post office, and the reconstructed old fortress with the regional museum inside. Right behind the fortress, the central park spreads out northward towards the river.

On the southern shore of the Syrdarya River, that is on the left bank, looking downstream, you see densely built-up quarters with an irregular street layout. This is Khujand's old town. After crossing the Syrdarya bridge, Lenin street runs uphill to the university campus, past the Ismoil Somoni statue which came to replace the Lenin statue in 2011. We are now on the right bank, and the city looks very different here. No more detached houses, no more crooked streets. Here, the Soviet Union has left behind its most lasting built heritage – the *microraions* – large housing estates consisting of pre-fabricated multi-storey houses. On the fringes of the microraions, rusting industrial estates recall another Soviet heritage: the large-scale industrialisation of Central Asia followed by the collapse of industry after the breakdown of the Soviet Union.

Now, you might want to close the atlas and think of images of the Central Asian city that come to your mind –in some way between the winterly grey microraions of Kharkiv and the dusty heat of an Afghan village. You might imagine the madrasas of Samarkand or the Emir's fortress in Bukhara, the industrial estates of Karaganda, the green courtyards of Osh, the Globe of Uzbekistan on Tashkent's main square, sheep grazing in Dushanbe's Victory Park, the Eurasian skyscrapers of Astana or the ramshackle migrant suburbs behind Bishkek's northern ring road.

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2   Official population statistics in the annex, charts 1, 2, 3.

All this is also a part of Khujand. The following account is therefore torn between two intransigent poles: to present the multitude of facets of a unique, an incomparable city; and at the same time to assemble pieces of a larger a story happening elsewhere in Central Asian cities and beyond.

1.2 Ambition and outline

Khujand is located at the periphery of Tajikistan, which itself is located at the periphery of the post-Soviet world, which in its turn, is located at the periphery of post-socialist urban studies. Consequently, as of today, northern Tajikistan is a blank spot in the geographies of academic research. Following the rather descriptive Soviet works on urban archaeology, crafts and traditions, urban life in the peripheries of the former Soviet Union has received very few, but nevertheless very important studies, such as "Urban life in Post-Soviet Asia" by Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey (2007), "Urban Spaces after Socialism" by Darieva, Kaschuba and Krebs (2011), and "Die postsowjetsche Stadt" by Kaschuba, Krebs and Pilz (2012). Also the recent publications on Tashkent's urban history by Stronsky (2010) and Sahadeo (2007) have drawn increased attention to urban studies in a Central Asian setting[3]. The endeavour of this work has been inspired by these studies. I strive to expand this inspiration onto contemporary Central Asia, in order to provide a detailed and anthropologically informed account of the region's urban phenomena. In this regard, my research project draws from geography, anthropology and sociology at the intersection between urban studies and Central Asian regional studies.

Which forces have shaped, and are reshaping the Central Asian city as we see it today? What is being built, why and how? What is the inhabitants' perception of their built environment? And what is their idea of a city they would like to live in? And how does this attitude manifest itself in new construction? This circle of questions guided me through my research.

At the onset of the research project, I stood overwhelmed and fascinated in front of the multifaceted living organism which is the city. How to connect the built environment with the perception of it, with urban planning, culture, politics and religion – in other words, how to connect morphology and society? I willingly risk confusing the reader through an exploration

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3   The relevant literature will be discussed in detail in the chapter on conceptions of space.

of the complexity of the urban phenomenon right at the beginning of the theory chapter. I will thus respond to the call of "taking cities seriously," and will also elaborate on possible ways of grasping this phenomenon analytically.

The theory of the production of space, as proposed by the French author Henri Lefebvre, helps me develop solutions to grasp the complexity of the Central Asian city. Lefebvre's central stance is that space is a social product (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 26). I will build upon Lefebvre's argument that space and society can only be understood in connection with each other (Schmid, 2010, p. 30), and propose an application of his theory to my research of the city of Khujand. I will propose using Lefebvre's theory as a toolbox, and as a method for a structured approach to the complexity of the urban phenomenon. Lefebvre proposed a three-piece model of the social production of space. Space, he argues, can be apprehended via three fields – the mental, physical, and social one (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 11). In this work, I will adapt this threefold structure.

After delving into theory and methodology, I will address in a first part the production of mental space in Khujand. In this chapter, I will present different ideologies of space and urbanity which were at work in Khujand, and have influenced the conceptions of what the city is – and how it should be. I will, *inter alia,* examine the 'Islamic-Oriental' city, the 'Soviet' city and 'Western' ideologies of urbanity and assess their relevance to Khujand today. I will argue that academic knowledge production has shaped the ideologies of space, in parallel with state authorities and popular beliefs. In a next step, I will present the main features of a contemporary Khujandi conception of space: how the 'Islamic-Oriental' city is still – and once again – active, looking at the renewed importance of the bazaar; how Soviet urban ideology is still deeply embedded, which is reflected through examples of the urban-rural divide and the musealisation of the old town heritage; and, finally, how communication and communicativeness stand out as attributes of a Khujandi urban self-understanding.

In the second part, the physical space – that is the urban morphology – will stand at the centre of attention. Through an analysis of the perception of space, I will work out the defining elements of Khujand's physical space. I first will examine in detail urban mobility, which is, to my eyes, a central feature shaping the perception of space. I will then present four case studies which provide (however unrepresentatively) a cross-section of Khujand's physical space, covering a wide range of urban experiences. Each one gives a particular and individual glimpse into the perception of Khujand by its inhabitants. A group of students, a group of female hospital employees, a young unemployed, and a female Russian flea market vendor will have their say.

In the third part I will show how production of social space can be seen through the lens of adaptations. I will analyse them with regard to Lefebvre's concept of transduction, that is, action taken within a framework of constraints and desire. Adaptations of space take place at different levels. I will argue that the actions of state authorities can be conceptualised similarly to those of any other actor present in the field, using the cases of planning practice and monument construction. At the neighbourhood level, I will analyse two community-building and community-destroying spatial phenomena: urban agriculture and celebration halls *(tuykhona)*. Finally, at the level of the household, I will look at intimate practices of adaptation of space via the examples of building extensions and apartment renovations.

It is also in the third part of my research that I will emphasise two particular notions which permeate the social production of space in Khujand: *remont* and *obodi.* Due to the multiple facets of the notion of remont, I am going to briefly introduce its main features. In the course of my fieldwork in Khujand, I have stumbled upon this word on dozens of occasions. This word came to the Russian language from French, where it originally meant the provisioning of horses to the cavalry. Understood as a completion of losses, remont began to mean in the Russian language all sorts of repair and upkeep activities. The notion of *remont* encompassed the repair of watches and cars, as well as renovation works in offices and apartments. In the Tajik language, *remont* has come to signify construction-related activities only. For petty repair work, the word *ta'mir* is used, such as in *ta'miri pojafzol* – shoe repair. Yet within the construction and renovation nexus, at least in Khujand, *remont* has acquired a number of meanings its Russian predecessor did not have.

First of all, remont signifies a status, a condition. This can be a positive one and a negative one, too. With a friend, I passed by a long-abandoned building, and asking what it is, I got "In remont ast" (That's a remont) as an answer (Interview Khurshed, 2010). Yet in most cases, remont refers to the condition of good upkeep, past and present: "The remont (in that room) is already broken" *(Remont tam uže isportilsâ)* (Interview Parviza, 2010).

The understanding of a broken *remont* leads to the desire to reach the wished status of *remont.* The activity to reach it, is called: to make *remont* – Tajik: *remont kardan;* Russian: *delat' remont: "You have to do* remont *everywhere"* (Interview Sherzod), *"We will have to do a fundamental* remont" (Interview Parviza, 2010).

Basically, *remont* is the activity which transforms *remont* into *remont:*

> We had an old house but we made remont there. It's a normal Tajik house, but now
> there is a remont like in Europe. […] We have done all the remont already, it looks

like new. But [...] we will do another remont when we have a wedding. Then we will renew the remont (magar tui nav mekunand, remonta nav mekunand) *(Interview Khurshed, 2010).*

Remont runs in some way parallel to the three-piece understanding of production of space: *Remont* as perception refers to a good or a bad state of upkeep. *Remont* as conception refers to the desire to attain a certain *remont* status. *Remont* as adaptation refers to the activity being undertaken to reach this status. In this regard, remont is not only about attending to shortcomings, nor about mending something broken, but is a culturally embedded creative practice. These multiple facets of the term characterise very well the production of space in Khujand – even if taken together, they are too disparate to possess an explanatory value. In the following, I will argue that the measure against which the need for remont is weighted, is, *obodi* – beauty and habitability created by men's hands, understood as a set of norms of a spatial morality. By means of *remont* – among others – *obodi* is being enacted in Khujand's urban space.

The three parts of a social production of space – conceptions, perceptions, and adaptations of space – are not isolated from each other. In the process of their interaction, space is being produced. The three chapters should not be understood as stand-alone segments, but as interwoven entities which re-enact the production of urban space in Khujand. In this regard, the present work is the first monograph which delves into the intertwined contemporary urban space in a regional city of Central Asia.

2 Theory: Lefebvre, space and the city

2.1 Space and the city: a history of turns

The social sciences have seen many turns in the course of the last decades, just to name a few: the linguistic turn, the iconic turn, the performative turn, and the praxeological turn of Bourdieu, Schatzki and Reckwitz. One trend succeeds another, yet even when it comes down to science, there is no vice in this development in my view. Here we come to the turn which lays the foundation for my research on urban space in Central Asia – the spatial turn of the 1980s. This present research takes the spatial turn very seriously, and particularly the person considered as its founding father – the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Following the spatial turn, space has evolved into the "everywhere of modern thought" (Crang & Thrift, 2000, p. 1). As a matter of fact, the spatial turn is a very powerful movement at the moment – so powerful as to give birth to counter-movements which urge paying more attention to the neglected dimension of time; or proposing, as Castells did, a space-less society, characterised by virtuality and communication. Clearly, the discussion on space is on-going.

The mobility turn is the next trend-in-the-making, either as wishful thinking by its main proponents – Urry, D'Andrea and the like – or truly as an emerging direction of future research. Although the theories of the spatial turn form the backbone of my research, I cannot deny the attractiveness of the recent research of the 'mobility turn era'. The interest which my work takes in questions of walking, public transport and moving goods comes from that direction.

In this chapter, I will first develop the object of research – the city – and its different conceptions. In particular, the notion of 'urbanity' will play a role. In a second step, I will explore the notion of 'space' and its conceptual trajectory from a physical 'container space' to the 'social production of space', as proposed by Lefebvre. In a final step, I will combine both the theoretical milestones of *city* and *space* and propose a theoretical framework for the research of urban space in post-Soviet[4] Central Asia.

Yet before going into a discussion of the main concepts, I would like to introduce the origins of Lefebvre's thought and its role in my research. One thing remains to be said beforehand: for

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4   Some authors prefer the term "post-communist" instead of post-socialist (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 95) or post-Soviet, as it refers to the political goals of the then-ruling party. Others propose the term "post-collective" as alternative (Pickles, 2010, pp. 131–132) and seek to replace the geographical scope by an analysis of the phenomenon of de-collectivisation. With these limitations in mind, through the course of the present work I will keep the term 'post-socialism' to speak of the former Eastern Block in its geographical scope (excluding the Popular Democracies of Africa and Asia) to simplify matters; and to employ the term 'post-Soviet' as a reference to the former Soviet Union. On the insertion of Central Asia into the academic post-socialist realm see Kandiyoti (2002).

the purpose of this work, I will rely both on Lefebvre's original works – some in the original French versions, some translated – and on secondary literature about his work which is readily available. Still, I do not attempt to propose a new and original reading of Lefebvre's theory. By now, dozens of scholars have delved into Lefebvre's writings and have produced a substantial amount of works on Lefebvre's thought, its origins and implications. As far as the social production of space is concerned, Schmid has produced its most widely acknowledged German-language appraisal, to which I am heavily indebted.

2.2 Origins and implications of Lefebvre's thought

2.2.1 Lost in translation

In his lifetime, Lefebvre (1901-1991) already enjoyed wide-spread attention in the 1960s and 1970s – less for his theories than for his role as one of the major public intellectuals in France, regularly appearing in press and on TV. He was prominent, for instance, for linking the 1968 student protests to faults of post-war urbanism. Today, Lefebvre is applauded as "the ecophilosopher of the 21st century" (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 133), or the person who "almost single-handedly rescues Marxism from its obsession with the temporal" (Parker, 2004, pp. 4–5). To sum up Lefebvre's achievements, we can turn to the announcement of a 2009 conference on Lefebvre, which reads:

> *Lefebvre's theory opened up new ways of understanding of processes of urbanization, their conditions and consequences at any scale of social reality: from the practices of everyday life, through the urban scale, to the global flows of people, capital, information and ideas. At the same time, this theory has the potential to relate urban research and design practices because of its programmatic questioning of the links between urban analysis, the critique of urbanism, and the vision of a new type of social space in the contemporary city* {Rethinking Theory #280}.

The recent popularity of Lefebvre and his theories of society and space has brought about a number of difficulties. Schmid takes up the term of a "Lefebvrian industry", which spread in Anglo-American academia since the publication of an English translation of *La production de l'espace* (Schmid, 2010, p. 67). In many disciplines, mostly geography and ethnology, a reference to Lefebvre is *en vogue,* such as the famous slogan of the 'right to the city', the call for *auto-gestion,* or the affirmation that space is a social product. Yet this has led the emergence of "multiple Lefebvres" (Kipfer, Saberi, & Wieditz, 2012, p. 2), to a cherry-picking of Lefebvre's copious legacy, and a dilution of his Marxist construct of thought. More than that, Lefebvre's catchphrases were all too easily appropriated to ends contrary to his intention, with his "demands of autonomy, creativity, authenticity exploited and incorporated into mainstream capitalist discourse" (Stanek, 2011, p. 2).

Due to a truncated reception of Lefebvre's work the overwhelming interest in Lefebvre and the numerous translations of recent years have led to Lefebvre's being "lost in translation" (Schmid, 2010, p. 14). Schmid argues that Lefebvre – a victim of his own success – has been repeatedly misunderstood, and on purpose. Lefebvre's works did not circulate outside of France until the end of the 1980s, until his 'rediscovery' amidst debates on the "postmodern condition" (Zijderveld, 1998, p. 10). His 're-discoverers', Jameson and Harvey among them, exploited Lefebvre to elaborate on a materialistic critique of post-modernity. Others, such as Soja or Gregory, made use of Lefebvre to establish space-sensitive postmodern geographies. Although both groups had contradictory perspectives on the nature of post-modernity, both referenced Lefebvre (Schmid, 2010, p. 65), lacerating his thought with eclectic and "arbitrary proximities", while placing him in the "gallery of post-modern ancestors" (Schmid, 2010, p. 13). Schmid addresses a particular group of critiques to Soja's theory-building. He castigates *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) for using a "reifying, undynamic and undialectic understanding" of Lefebvre's theory of space, and does not spare *Thirdspace* (1996), which he sees as being based on a "creative misunderstanding" of Lefebvre (Schmid, 2010, p. 65).

2.2.2 Opening up thinking: towards transduction

The dilution of his Marxist legacy as a consequence of over-utilisation has opened the door to yet another set of problems: Henri Lefebvre's concepts and slogans were all too easily appropriated by "mainstream capitalist discourse" (Stanek, 2011, p. 2). His calls for autonomy,

creativity and authenticity emerge more and more as advertisements for global creative hubs, promoting both cozy urban uniformity and gentrification. At this point, some words should be said on Henri Lefebvre's relation to Marxism. He surely was a self-declared Marxist, and as Elden proposed, Lefebvre's "work on philosophy and Marxism, and the philosophy of Marxism, is the key to his writings" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1285). The dialectical method in particular is crucial to the development of Lefebvre's thought, for it

> *does not proceed to its object from outside but from inside as it attempts to appropriate conceptually social reality in its proper motion. Dialectical thinking conceptualises itself within, and as a moment of, its object. Such a conceptualisation of social existence seeks an understanding of the apparently isolated facts of life as comprising a mode of existence of social relations (Charnock, 2010, p. 1281).*

The dialectical method enabled Lefebvre to provide a theory for a scattered and heterogeneous social reality, one which would accommodate contradictions from within the phenomena and not from a bird's perspective – a theory which has become very valuable for research of the urban phenomenon.

Although deeply influenced by Marxist thought, Lefebvre's Marxism is best characterised as an open one (Charnock, 2010, p. 1281), for he pronouncedly argued in favour of anti-dogmatism:

> *Every system tends to close up reflection, to close the horizon. This writing wants to break the systems, not to supplant them by other systems, but to <u>open up</u> thinking and action towards <u>possibilities,</u> showing the horizon and the route. A thought which tends towards openness wages the fight against a form of reflection which tends towards formalism. (*Lefebvre, 1972, p. viii, emphasis in the original).

Lefebvre's open Marxism laid the ground for his conviction in the "'unfixity' of social forms" and their "openness to a future" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1282) – which prefigures his theory of a social production of space and his affirmation of a possible resistance. Yet Lefebvre's heterodox approach brought him towards the end of the 1950s into conflict with the French Communist Party which he joined in 1928. The PCF still was staunchly Stalinist at the time and excluded Lefebvre in 1958[5]. This did not prevent him from continuing his line of thought as a Marxist

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5   He notably identified the "three crises of Marxism", which led to some harsh criticism. Namely: the first at the end of the 19th century, when the proletariat did not bring the capitalist society to an end, and became divided between the reformist and the revolutionary current; the second after the 1917 revolution, when the centre of the socialist world shifted to underdeveloped countries, undermining Marx's argument about the industrial proletariat as the locomotive of the Revolution; and the third when the advent of Stalinism contrasted with Marx's understanding of socialism as the whithering of the state Stanek, 2011, pp. 49–50.

critic of a dogmatic Marxism, nor from developing at the same time his thought towards a "(Marxian) meta-theory of the Urban process" (Harvey, 1989, pp. 2–3).

Lefebvre's openness of thought must not only be understood as a conviction, but also as a method. This leads him to a method of reasoning which he calls transduction: "the construction of virtual objects, the exploration of the possible" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1288). This method is linked to his particular understanding of dialectics. Bertuzzo advances the interpretation that "instead of the 'perfect' synthesis, he (…) stresses the fact that the negation carried by the second term must be contained, and not solved, in [a] transformed and more complex form in the third [term]. In his eyes, such a view offers the premises for a *promise,* for a project instead of reality, i.e. a possibility that can be realised through action" (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 25).

Lefebvre embraced this process of a dialectic transformation of terms towards possibilities, and employed it throughout his own writings. He introduces concepts and definitions first of all as "approximations, as 'strategic hypotheses', and explores their scope and ambitions in the course of his analysis" (Schmid, 2010, p. 15). This means that his concepts are constantly floating, in the process of being sharpened, developed and discarded in a dialectical interaction between empirical findings and theory, between practice and thought, and with a *virtual object* as their goal (Lefebvre, 2009c, pp. 197–198) – which does not make the reading of his works any easier. Yet Schmid insists, this "rambling" is not arbitrary: we are able – and we are encouraged – to reconstruct the movements of his thoughts (Schmid, 2010, p. 15).

2.2.3 Role of the theory within the research

Finally, another delicate question arises as to the validity and applicability of Lefebvre's research. Chombart de Lauwe and Castells both pointed at the lack of fieldwork as the main weakness of Lefebvre. They credited him as an *inspiring* philosopher, but denied his works scientific value beyond this point. But Stanek stresses the empirical studies he carried out and his extensive exchanges with architects, planners and researchers. (Stanek, 2011, pp. vii–viii). Lefebvre surely was Paris-centered in the course of his life, but he was by no means confined to the intellectual circles of *intra-muros* Paris. He spent his childhood in the South-West, studied in Aix-en-Provence, taught in Toulouse and Strasbourg and carried out research in his home region of the Pyrenees. Lefebvre's interest in space originated in his fieldwork in the

Pyrenees on agrarian sociology. The sociological research on rural communities brought him to dismiss the phenomenological approach to the rural-urban divide and to pay attention to processes instead, namely the processes of urbanisation. Moving between the French capital and the provinces, he constantly experienced power and space relations between centre and periphery. It seems that Lefebvre's thought developed out of these "lived contradictions" (Entrikin & Berdoulay, 2005, p. 133). The concept of a social production of space developed out of his preoccupation with the intertwined connections between land economies and social relationships (Stanek, 2011, p. 16) – the role of fieldwork in Lefebvre's thought must therefore not be neglected.

Returning to Chombart de Lauwe's and Castells' criticism of Lefebvre, a very practical question arises for my research of urban space production in Khujand, namely: what is the role of his theory in the framework of this study? The ambition is to go beyond the use of Lefebvre as inspiration and slogan provider – and therefore an attempt to avoid the reductionist and superficial reception of the 'Lefebvre industry'. Neither is this work an attempt to rigorously apply Lefebvre's theory of the production of space on the ground – as is Bertuzzo's study of Dhaka. Rather, I seek the in-between path and intend to use the theory as a tool: a tool to structure thoughts and data on such a disparate topic as 'the city'. Lefebvre's theory is to me therefore a prism for grasping complexity.

My use of Lefebvre's thought is in keeping with my conviction about what a theory is good for: a theory which provides an answer to any question in the field is probably lacking analytical value; while too restrained a theory diverts attention from the complexity of the phenomenon under scrutiny. I surely do not want to hyperbolise the father of the Theory, yet this conviction seems to me congruent with Lefebvre's own goals for writing, which shall "open up thinking, […] showing the horizon and the route" (Lefebvre, 1972, p. viii). The scope and the ambition of this work do not allow it to contribute to a thoroughgoing critique of Henri Lefebvre's theory. Still, I hope to avoid the "creative misunderstandings", which Schmid diagnosed in Soja and Harvey – and at the same time I do not pursue the servile agenda of a 'you see, Lefebvre was right after all'.

In the following sections, I will elaborate upon the major notions of "city" and "space", and clarify their relevance for the present study – within and beyond the concepts proposed by Henri Lefebvre.

2.3 Taking cities seriously

2.3.1 Name-dropping in lieu of an introduction

The city as field of research has drawn considerable attention in the humanities. Engels, Simmel, Benjamin, Mumford and Lefebvre were preoccupied with research in and of the city – just to cite a few famous white men of the 19th and 20th centuries. Engels produced a ground-breaking account on the "Condition of the working class in England in 1844" and proposed a reading of the city as the site of exploitation of workers by Capital (Engels, 1950). The ensuing conflicts do therefore explicitly make the city "the site of the revolution, the focus and laboratory for the progression of history" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 7). The Marxist understanding of cities for which Engels' essay laid out the foundation, is essential to comprehend Lefebvre's line of thought.

Simmel – with his essay on "The metropolis and mental life" – has laid the foundation of urban sociology, forging the academic topos of the city as the cradle of modernity and progress, of individualism and alienation (Simmel, 2006). Benjamin proposed that conflict in cities does not only take the form of workplace struggles, but exists in everyday life, too. He furthermore pioneered in analysing the value of personal encounters for exploring the essence of urban life (Benjamin, 2002). Both Simmel and Benjamin have underlined the *specificity* of the urban way of life compared to others – a concept which will be debated later on.

For Mumford, cities were, above all, places of commerce. With his "What is a city?", he voiced a critique of Western capitalist urbanism, with particular regard to suburbanisation – without following a Marxist view of the city as part of a capitalist system of exploitation. He furthermore insisted on the importance of everyday life in order to understand social processes – in and outside of cities (Mumford, 1960). Important to note, here: he proposed to read the city not as a counterpart of the rural world, nor through research of its attributes and functions, but by looking at the process of urbanisation through an analysis of the production of social space – and this is the stance which the present work aspires to adopt (or adapt?).

Neither of these major figures of urban research paid exclusive or even extensive attention to settings outside of Western capitalist settings. This might be a bias in urban studies in general and recent research has strived to overcome it. For this reason, it will also be my aspiration to

contribute to an urban theory outside the Western world, and – more specifically – to contribute to an urban theory in the framework of Central Asia studies which still lacks debate on the region's urban condition.

Why is it important to study cities? Cities are special settings, but still there is, no doubt, also life outside of cities which is not less interesting. The point I would like to stress at the end is that a definition of the city is impossible to obtain, neither by establishing a set of positive categories, nor by means of a dichotomy between the city and the countryside. I therefore argue for an understanding of the city both as a process and as an ideology. It is therefore the study of the process of *urbanisation,* and of the *urban ideology,* which legitimates the particular standing of "the city" in the present work.

2.3.2 An idealtypic attempt to describe the city

There are two possible ways to think of the city, argues Schmid (2010, p. 159): The first one is to define it in a distinct, idealtypic, way, as I will develop in the course of this chapter. This is what Weber, but also Harvey and Castells attempted to do; and Henri Lefebvre, too, has engaged himself on this path. The second, comparative, approach, will be dealt with in the following chapter.

On a methodological level, cities stand out as places of *interaction between the macro and the micro levels* – a heritage of the Chicago school's understanding of the city. They are repeatedly described as "mirrors" or "microcosms" of society (Barth & Apolinarski, 2001, p. 69), where everyday life, networks and power structures can be analysed at different levels. Low argued that "the city as a site of everyday practice provides valuable insights into the linkage of macroprocesses with the texture and fabric of human experience" (Low, 1996, p. 384). Gellert formulated this idea in regard to Central Asian cities, saying that their "historic, economic and geographic structure mirrors in a concentrated form the societal, economic and political development of Central Asia" (Gellert & Engelmann, 1967, p. 175). Lefebvre also embraced this line of thought. In "The Right to the City", Lefebvre proposes a definition of the city as he sees it (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 64). The first point he makes is that the city is "a projection of the society on the terrain" and the site where conflicts and structures become apparent. He sees therefore the city as a concentrated microcosm of society, as many have done before him.

Density is the keyword to understand why the city can serve as microcosm and mirror for the society. Intense concentration and confrontation of individuals in spaces and time are arguably the main features of cities. Bertuzzo advanced the *"simultaneity* of communication and interaction, the *heterogeneity* of lifestyles, ethnicities and languages as well as the *hybridity* of forms – medieval, rural-urban, pre-urban, post-modern" as characteristic to cities. (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 23).

Furthermore, *interaction and communication* act as characteristic features of cities and as their primordial leverage. Taylor advanced that spatial proximity of individuals within a city led to "frequent face-to-face contact" and "cooperative and competitive interactions" (Taylor, 2012, p. 2). Cities thus developed as centres of invention and motors of change, "astonishing in their growth potential and amazing in their resilience" (Taylor, 2012, p. 1). For this reason, Taylor calls for understanding cities "as qualitatively new social world enabling world-changing processes" which "should be taken extremely seriously[6]" (Taylor, 2012, p. 1). Lefebvre took the city not less seriously indeed, and divided the history of mankind into three large eras: the agricultural period, the industrial one, and finally the urban period, the onset of which we are about to witness. However, to his eyes, the rules of conduct of this urban age are not yetset; the 'urban revolution' is still to come.

Indeed, *conflicts* are yet another topos for understanding the city: The urban complexity produces "a number of contrasting but interlinking modes of managing meaning" (Wildner, 1995, p. 2). From a Marxist perspective, "urban space replaces the factory as the privileged site of urban conflict" (Stanek, 2011, p. 68). Out of the intensity of its often conflicting interactions, the city can be understood as an *"engine of modernisation"* (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 1) and progress, as a testing ground for new ways of life. Looking at the city from this point of view is crucial in order to observe societal change.

After presenting the city as the "projection of society on the terrain", Lefebvre relativises his claim and takes a step backwards: the society which "projects itself" is thought of as "a social globality, a mode of production, a general code." But this definition lacks the temporal dimension, the rhythms. The "projection of society", according to Lefebvre, would also neglect

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6   Very seriously indeed: He develops his argument looking at early cities and proposes what he calls a "communication-based" model of urbanisation. He argues that cities did not develop out of villages, like the "'common-sense' evolutionary sequence of increasing size" might suggest – brushing aside V. Gordon Childe's urban revolution thesis (Taylor, 2012, p. 6). To the contrary, villages developed as supply colonies of towns, which led to the emergence of sedentary agriculture; while smaller towns developed as trade outposts (Taylor, 2012, p. 7).

the historical differences between cities, like differences in the division of labour. From here on, he develops a second definition of the city, namely, "the sum of differences between the cities". This definition is subjected to his own backtracking in due course: it neglects what cities have in common, the specificities of urban life. This leads him to propose a third definition – namely, the city as the site of plurality, simultaneity and coexistence (Lefebvre, 1972, pp. 64ff).

The search for specificities of urban life enjoys large popularity. The interactive density of cities arguably produces a distinct urban culture in a distinct urban spatial form, summed up under the rather blurry term of "urbanity". The term of urbanity can suggest skyscrapers or futuristic flying saucers, directly imported from Metropolis and "The Fifth Element". At the same time, following the critique of post-war automobilisation and suburbanisation – but also the recent critiques of the construction boom fuelled by unlimited faith in the future and equally unlimited greed for profit in China or elsewhere – "urbanity" has developed into the battle cry for a green-washed pedestrianised creative sociality. Wüst was therefore right in claiming that urbanity is undefinable, and expressly so: it "is loaded up with every possible content. Its elasticity and resilience seems to be unlimited" (Wüst, 2004, p. 61). Urbanity is above all a myth which conveys a particular ideology of what a city has to be, and can therefore be employed and misused for particular needs. Arguing for the resurrection of "the European city", the battle cry of urbanity opens the door to an economisation of urban policy and culture (Wüst, 2004, p. 9).

The complexity of the urban phenomenon easily leads to ascribing to "the city" some active power, as for instance advanced by Rogers: "The town was not simply the theatre; it was an actor, too" (Barth & Apolinarski, 2001, p. 69). This 'intrinsic logic of cities' has gained significant scholarly attention, with Berking and Löw as its main representatives in the German academic landscape, arguing for a "Sociology *of* the city" (Berking & Löw, 2008, p. 29). This approach seems appealing for comparative studies of 'city-ness', but it is not a practicable path in my eyes, not only because 'city-ness' or 'urbanity' are impossible to define. "Essentialising" the city (Low, 1996, p. 384) would shift the attention from power relations to 'the city' as an actor. The argument of an 'intrinsic logic of cities' seems, moreover, deterministic – in the same way as the city was understood by the American City Beautiful Movement in the 1890s[7], and

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[7]   This architecture movement aimed to resolve overcrowding and high crime rates in city centres of the USA in the early 20th century, through the creation of landscape parks and monumental public buildings. The neoclassical style was deemed the most appropriate for this kind of social engineering, as it symbolised both strength and harmony.

later by Soviet and post-Soviet authorities as a tool for ideologically shaping its dwellers.

In a final step, Lefebvre stresses that the city might as well be seen as a centre of decision-making which intensifies and organises exploitation. At this point, it is worthwhile to make a small detour in order to see how Lefebvre came to his definition of centrality. Lefebvre sees social processes taking place on three levels: the private level (P), the "total" level (G), and the intermediate level (M). (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 28). These levels are not pre-existent, but result from social interaction, being characterised by some particular processes. As Schmid argues, Lefebvre sees the "total" level (G) tending towards the global scale – what we call the process of globalisation today. He sees the private level (P) as "increasingly dominated by industrialised rationality". The city is thus situated on the intermediate level (M) and seems to disappear between the two other levels (Schmid, 2010, p. 157). This seeming disappearance leads Lefebvre to his definition of the city: its capacity to "connect the disparate elements of society". The city is thus characterised by centrality (Schmid, 2010, p. 157), being situated between the state on the total and globalising level G, and the everyday life on the private level P (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 29). In Lefebvre's words, there is "no urban reality without a centre, without a gathering together of all that can be born into space and that can be produced in it, without an encounter, actual or possible, of all 'objects' and 'subjects'" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1292)[8].

Let us recall the aforementioned definitions: the city as microcosm of society; the city as engine of modernisation; the city as a site of densfication; the city as site of interaction and communication; and finally the city as centre of decision. Yet – these definitions are not mutually exclusive. As Lefebvre argues, they complement each other, and still might be joined by additional definitions according to the needs of theorisation. Therefore, to answer the question "What is the city?"; the idealtypic description of a city fails, as it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of features of "urbanity".

2.3.3 Bridging the urban-rural divide

After the ideal-typic attempt, the second way to define the city is through a comparison with its

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8   At the same time, the citizens are being excluded from this sociality which they themselves have produced living in cities, argues Lefebvre. They are forced to live "segregated and alienated everyday lives" – and the most constraining and alienating experience is to be found in large-scale housing estates, says Lefebvre Charnock, 2010, p. 1292.

presumed counterpart: the countryside. This is the way how Engels approached the phenomenon of the city, where industrial labourers are herded in most dire conditions, as he described in the "Condition of the working class in England in 1844". Lefebvre has devoted a lot of attention to the urban-rural antagonism, ever since the beginning of his scientific career and the research he undertook in the Pyrenées. He saw the antagonism as a major historic feature, in particular for the European Middle Ages, where conflicts between the town and the landed seigneur were common (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 77). For his own period of time he observed a city which "attacks the countryside, corrodes and dissolves it" (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 78). He argued that the urban way of life leads to the disappearance of traditional rural features of centrality in the countryside, such as crafts and trade. This accrues to the benefit of an urban centrality, while villages "align themselves to the city". At the same time, the city itself is losing its autonomy and its clear form (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 27). The distinction between the city and the countryside is about to disappear. The description of city by comparison with the countryside fails therefore because of the ultimate impossibility to draw a line between both.

Although the city is encroaching upon the countryside, this does not mean that the distinction between urbanity and rurality would disappear as well. (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 79). There is no reason to think, says Lefebvre, that centrality will cease to be a factor of the spatial organisation of society. Mankind might see new urban forms – with multiple, differentiated or shifting centres, but none without centrality (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 79). What happens in the Western world, says Lefebvre, is an *urbanisation* of the entire society as a consequence of industrialisation (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 83). Lefebvre thus proposes to look at the city as a process, namely as a dialectical process of urbanisation: "a process of Becoming in which 'centrality' (homogeneity) and 'polycentrality' (fragmentation, difference) are mediated in a relation of determinate existence (un-)fixed within the urban form" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1292). The endeavour of social sciences should therefore be situated in the analysis of the process of urbanisation understood as centralisation – that of a mediation between different levels, rather than in a search of the 'urban'.

2.3.4 The city as ideology

On the last pages we have seen that the city is undefinable, in the same way as the intertwined phenomenon of urban culture and form, understood as urbanity. How then can we continue to

work with the term "city"? The city is an important man-made phenomenon which we might take for granted. Still, the city is being ascribed particular features and functions: urbanity as ideology is here to stay. Even if it is not a reliable scientific category, the normative dimension of the city is a persistent emic perception and will appear as such throughout this research. In the same way, the distinction between the rural and the urban cannot possibly be perfectly qualified, but yet it continues to define urban identity – not least in Khujand. I would therefore not dare an ultimate definition of the city and/or urbanity, which in the end could only remain descriptive and incomplete. Instead, I refer to Zijderveld who proposes to analyse "the axiological and qualitative aspects of organizations", and to grasp urbanism as an "organizational or corporate culture" (Zijderveld, 1998, p. 10). The city can therefore be understood "not only as a place but a state of mind" (Zijderveld, 1998, p. 20). Taking the city seriously without attempting to define the undefinable means seeingthe city in terms of the 'corporate culture' of its inhabitants. This links up with Lefebvre's idea of the city disappearing in the course of urbanisation. Still, he argues, the city remains as "image, ideology and built form". The ideology of the city and not the city itself is thus the "'real' sociological *object*" (Schmid, 2010, p. 161).

Refraining from a descriptive definition of the city also leads to looking at the city as a process: we will find density and complexity in rural areas as well, but it is their *intensification* which we can study in cities (Low, 1996, p. 384). Analytically, there is no point in seeing these processes as quantifiable markers either, as this would lead into the dichotomous dead end of playing the urban off against the rural. The processes should therefore be understood not as quantities but as qualities, and in this regard, a study of their intensification amounts to a study of urbanisation, as proposed by Lefebvre.

How then to approach urbanisation and the persisting ideology of the city; how to discern the forces and negotiations behind this phenomenon? Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space offers a tool kit for this endeavour.

2.4 What is space?

The following chapter will be devoted to exploring the origins of the spatial turn and to shed light on its main feature, which unsurprisingly is the notion of space. I will first trace the development of this concept, and then present Lefebvre's definition of the term in a second step, before finally delving into the realm of the social production of space and its implications for the study. A particular challenge for a definition of the term and its possible implications is the fact that it hardly lends itself to translation from one language to another. Its translations might have different etymological backgrounds and a wide-ranging scope of connotations. While the Latin root *spatium,* which eventually evolved into the English *space,* the French *espace,* may rather relate to a 'place of extent', which, all the more includes a notion of space-time, the German term *Raum,* much to the contrary, would not refer to absolute dimensions, but to an active creation of space, leading up to 'action space' and a 'social space'. The Persian/Tajik *fazo*, however, rather refers to cosmic space, and is rooted in connotations of emptiness. By contras, the Tajik term *obodoni* – beauty and habitability created by men's hands – is closer to the anthropocentric overtone of *Raum*, as will be discussed later on in the chapter on adaptations of space. At the same time, the Russian *prostranstvo* refers to the extent of an entity stretched out over a vast, but definable area. It is therefore akin to Euclidian space, the geometrical space of a co-ordinate system, and does not necessarily bear a social dimension.

This etymological excursion does not pretend to reflect the actual use of terms and its pertinence to local spatial practice. The Tajik or Russian terms for space were hardly ever used in the course of the interviews in Khujand. I would doubt if the implied 'emptiness' of the Tajik word or the implied 'mathematicity' of its Russian counterpart have had effects on the local conceptions and perceptions of space. Still, the variance of meanings and origins fascinatingly points to the complexity of space, and draws further attention to the pitfalls of apparently trivial translations.

2.4.1 Physical space as container of functions

Cassirer proposed that the original understanding of space is akin to the German term 'Raum', as we would find it among 'primitive' tribes, where space is based on activity and orientation

(Läpple, 1991, p. 202). The scientists of the Enlightenment era – Isaac Newton to name one – changed this anthropocentric notion of space. Space came to be conceived of as an abstract physical notion and as a container of things. Objects were thought of as being *in* a space and not as *part* of it (Läpple, 1991, p. 172). Geographers and urban planners have been widely occupied with the analysis of functions and their fulfilment in space. The idea that human life may be grouped into functions has deeply influenced urban planners and has acquired normative quality. In German (and not only German) geographic tradition, these functions were understood as "a normative orientation pattern aimed at providing a balanced amount of usable surfaces in an optimal spatial configuration" (Brunotte, 2001, p. 229). Several concurring systems have appeared over time. Partzsch, for instance, did propose a classical canon of 'basic functions of existence' ("Daseinsgrundfunktionen"), as it were: dwelling, working, supplying, education, recreation, mobility, living in community (Brunotte, 2001, p. 230). The Athens Charter[9] is in this regard a manifest of the functional division of a city, dismissing the city as a site of mixed functional use. The cities of North America are the most visible examples of this planning agenda: blue collars are assigned to specific industrial estates; white collar workers find their jobs in the business districts in the city centres speckled with office towers. Beyond office hours, the city centres become empty, for dwelling takes place in suburbs. Shopping malls cater to the function of supplying oneself, and nothing else. Motorways link these functional spaces with each other. These spaces exclusively dedicated to the car were, in Lefebvre's eyes, examples of "functional hypertrophy".

Henri Lefebvre has very severely criticised the functional subdivision of life: "Space passes as being innocent or, in other words, as not being political. This container only had its existence through its contents, only had value through this content" (Lefebvre, 2009a, p. 169). The container space paradigm has led, in his eyes, to the death of cities[10] (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 88). In Lefebvre's terms, 'official urbanism' is a class practice and an ideology. It sees only the exchange value of space, which is maximised through streamlining space according to functions. The state has "assumed ever-increasing responsibility for circumscribing and cohering the process of urbanisation, and sustaining the alienation inherent to everyday life"

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9   The Athens Charter was set up by Le Corbusier following a conference of the *Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne* on board of a ship bound for Athens. The charter promulgated the Functional city and had a tremendous impact on post-war urban planning. Functional zoning of cities and the construction of large-scale housing estates are its most visible heritage.

10   For this reason, David Harvey credited Lefebvre for "re-inventing urbanism" Aronowitz, 2007, p. 134. Jane Jacobs has made a statement in the same direction in 1961 in *Death and Life of great American cities.* Together with Lefebvre's call of the "right to the city", it was a seminal step towards a partial revision of urban planning: surely, the city was to stay bound to the logic of capitalist reproduction; yet mixed uses, density and a critical stance towards the car became prominent features of the New Urbanism movement of the 1980s and beyond.

(Charnock, 2010, p. 1294). Yet to Lefebvre, the city is, before all, the site of an "ancient polyfunctionality" (Lefebvre) which is worth fighting for. He therefore calls for a bottom-up re-appropriation of space based on mixed use, which would re-introduce the notion of use value to cities we live in.

This struggle for a better city was very important to Lefebvre, whose work aimed, beyond an analysis of the situation, to show how to overcome the alienation which capitalism brought to everyday life. Escaping from reality is just for the wealthy, says Lefebvre referring to Debord's "Society of the Spectacle"; alienation is the destiny for the rest of us (Aronowitz, 2007, pp. 143–144). Yet history for Lefebvre is not "an inevitability, but a possibility" (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 151); therefore, resistance, and striving towards alternatives is possible – as we will see in my chapter of adaptations. Lefebvre sees self-management *("autogestion")* as the goal of this strife (Charnock, 2010, p. 1295). Thanks to this legacy, the epistemic value of Henri Lefebvre's research ranges beyond his own statements, beyond his period of time and his geographic area of research.

If we refute the idea of space being a container of functions, how are we to grasp space then? As we will see in the following, the term has different meanings; and different disciplines have proposed their own notions of what space actually is.

2.4.2 Towards a social sciences theory of space

In another stream of thought, geographers and urban planners took an economic approach to space: it is necessary to overcome distances, yet it costs money to do so. Space has to be bridged by means of infrastructure; a study of space means in this vein an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of logistics. The subdivision of human life into functions, as mentioned above, contributed to this paradigm. Social scientists followed the container space model, concentrating on interpersonal relations, and thus equated space to a natural phenomenon, taken for granted (Läpple, 1991, p. 165). As Schmid argues, in the 1970s space was understood as an independent superstructure. Harvey even referred to Marx' statement of "the destruction of space through time" (Schmid, 2010, pp. 62–63). Within the social sciences there was no attempt to develop a distinct theory of space, all despite the recognition that "time-space processes are 'constitutive features of social systems'". Harvey, being a geographer himself, therefore claimed that "the question of space is surely too important to be left exclusively to geographers"

(Harvey, 1989, p. 5). In the 1980s empirical research pointed in the opposite direction, away from a notion of space as characterised by globalisation and homogeneity. Instead, space became associated with "complexity, contingence and difference" (Schmid, 2010, pp. 62–63).

The spatial turn of the late 1980s surely is but one among many turns the social sciences have experienced. Still, it may have not come unexpectedly (Dünne, 2004, p. 1). In the German academic context, Läpple was among the first to call for a social theory of space in his 1991 essay. Lefebvre was barely known at that time, nor was his early promoter Harvey, nor Castells. Indeed, Läpple manages to write an essay on space without even once mentioning the one or the other. The guidelines he proposes for a socially informed analysis of space still are nevertheless comparable to the ones identified by Lefebvre. Läpple, too, argues for an analysis of space on different levels which he calls micro-, meso- and macro-levels (which very much recall Lefebvre's aforementioned total, private and intermediate levels). Läpple continues by identifying four components of social space, as it were: (1) Physical / material substratum; (2) Societal patterns of action and interaction; (3) Institutionalised and normative regulative systems; (4) A spatial system of signs, symbols and representations (Läpple, 1991, pp. 196–197). Conceptually, similar subdivisions of space into levels of observation appear characteristic for theories of space in social sciences. Yet what they all have in common following the spatial turn is the conviction that space must be understood as a relational, social entity. In the following section, I will provide an introduction to Lefebvre's own theory of social production of space.

2.6 Lefebvre's theory of a social construction of space

2.6.1 Practice and the everyday

L'homme sera quotidien ou ne sera pas (Lefebvre, 1959, p. 266)

"Au commencement fut l'action" – in the beginning, there was *action.* This biblical allusion shows the centrality of action in Lefebvre's anthropology. Through action, man becomes human and creates himself. For Lefebvre, action – and not work, as for Marx – is the "essential category of existence" (Schmid, 2010, p. 80). *Practice,* understood as repeated action, is therefore Lefebvre's focal point of analysis. As Schmid puts it, Lefebvre's conviction is that "practice must be the point of departure and the aim of all theory-building efforts, which themselves, must open out into practice" (Schmid, 2010, p. 78). Lefebvre embellishes on Marx's statement that "all social life is essentially practical. All mysteries (...) find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1293); and develops this statement in order to accommodate it to everyday life. It is therefore the *everyday practice,* and not practice in general, which is most important to Lefebvre[11]. He is not alone in this stance among social scientists, but still outstanding in regard to the place which he ascribes to the everyday in his works. His writings attest to this preoccupation: over the course of his lifetime he devoted three tomes to a *Critique of the Everyday Life,* published in 1947, 1961 and 1981 respectively.

He argues, "the everyday life is the rational core, the real centre of practice" (Lefebvre, 1968, p. 64). The everyday is the place where "precise problems of production-at-large are being expressed". Therefore, the "societal existence of man" is being produced in the everyday (Lefebvre, 1968, p. 50). And, likewise, the everyday is the site of the production of space. Lefebvre argues that both the state and economy are outcomes of the everyday and not vice versa. Both dominate the "appearance of social relations" (Aronowitz, 2007, pp. 135–136), but

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11   Though, Lefebvre might have been influenced by Nietzsche, whose attentive reader he was. Nietzsche is credited with having introduced the everyday as a "legitimate object of philosophical reflection" (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 141.)

not the essence of social relations which is the everyday practice.

If political and economic systems have changed, but the everyday has not, then a real change did not take place. In this regard, Lefebvre did not see that state socialism after the Bolshevik revolution had brought about real change in people's lives, as everyday practices largely remained the same as before. In the same vein he would argue that the changing faces of capitalist modernity, globalisation and internet economy do not constitute real change unless they precipitate a new set of everyday practices. If a revolution is to take place, it must be a revolution of the everyday: while Marx argued that the city was "the site of the revolution, the focus and laboratory for the progression of history"(Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 7), for Lefebvre it was undoubtedly the everyday practice.

The everyday life is the site of struggles and conflicts, and also the site of everyday alienation: a critique of everyday life was for Lefebvre therefore before all a critique of capitalism and modernity. Striving for rationality, capitalism "colonises" the everyday and subdues it to its needs, which is the key to capitalism's survival (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 135). The rhythms of everyday life have been subjugated by capitalism – for instance through the transformation of biological "cyclical" time into "linear" time measured by clocks, which have become instruments of domination (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 142). Within the struggle against domination, Lefebvre argues in favour of art, music and dance which would re-introduce rhythmicity into an otherwise linear, colonised time. Lefebvre explicitly encouraged subversive artistic uses of space – which has contributed to Lefebvre's popularity within current debates on urban resistance to gentrification, for instance.

The analysis of rhythms developed into Lefebvre's central preoccupation during the latter part of his career. His last major work called *Rhythmanalysis* was meant to propose a general theory which would incorporate his previous research into the everyday life and the production of space. An analysis of rhythms, he argued, would propose a framework to analyse the interlocking of spatial and temporal phenomena – "the relationships between different forms of movement and spatial arrangement, between durations and moments" (Highmore, 2005, p. 9). The outcome would be "a (Marxian) meta-theory of the urban process", as Harvey called it (Harvey, 1989, pp. 2–3).

To Lefebvre, "the everyday is the humble and the solid (…), which has no date. It is (apparently) insignificant; it engages and it troubles and yet it does not have to be said" (Lefebvre, 1968, pp. 51–52). Unconscious action has therefore an astonishing potential as a source of knowledge about society and the individual. This echoes Bourdieu's argument that "it is because subjects

do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning that they know" (Harvey, 1989, p. 241). In this vein, it is crucial to draw attention to the seemingly insignificant everyday life – to those "sociological trivialities with wide-ranging implications" (Schmid, 2010, p. 127) – which Lefebvre saw neglected by his scholarly colleagues. His project of "lived experience taken up and raised to critical thinking" sounds to me as an argument for social sciences which must necessarily be anthropologically informed. Here, he is echoed by Hann who argues that for a study of post-socialist transformations, "it is essential to integrate the analysis of *practices,* what people actually do, and to explore how this is shaped by the beliefs they hold and the social relationships they maintain" (Hann, 2002, p. 29). Bearing that in mind, the present work will devote a great deal of attention to everyday life practices in Khujand on various levels; and address the issue of rhythms of everyday life.

2.6.2 Space is a social product

Il y a politique de l'espace, parce que l'espace est politique (Lefebvre, 2009a, p. 174)

With the conviction that for Lefebvre action is "the basis of cognition as well as of social reality" (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 24), space too could only be understood as formed in the course of action, that is, as a social product. In the same way as urbanisation is understood as a process of mediation between different levels, the production of space too, should be grasped processually and dialectically, being "both abstract and concrete in character: abstract inasmuch as it has no existence save by virtue of the exchangeability of all its component parts, and concrete inasmuch as it is socially real and as such localised. This is a space, therefore, that is homogeneous yet at the same time broken up into fragments" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1293). Space therefore does not exist independently: it is relational from inside, referring to its components, and from the outside: "time per se is an absurdity; likewise space per se. The relative and the absolute are reflections of one another: each always refers back to the other, and the same is true of space and time" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 181).

Lefebvre gives a first reason for his assumption of a social production of space, namely the argument that space is eminently laden with ideology:

Space has been fashioned and moulded from historical and natural elements, but in a political way. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally populated with ideologies. There is an ideology of space. Why? Because space, which seems homogeneous, which appears given as a whole in objectivity, in its pure form, such as we determine it, is a social product. (Lefebvre, 2009a, pp. 170–171)

The second argument for conceiving of space as a social product lies in the commodified character of space. He refuted theories which stipulate that social sciences could conceive space as a container of functions, and asserts that space is a product, a commodity, albeit not a commodity like any other:

Space is a historical product – like anything else – but, moreover, is historical in the classical sense of the term. The science of space, therefore, must be asserted at several levels. It can be taken as a science of formal space, that is to say, close to mathematics; a science that employs such concepts as sets, networks, branches, latices. However, the science cannot be situated at this level; it cannot remain formal. Critical analysis defines how and according to which strategy a given space has been produced; finally, there is the study and science of the contents, that is, if the contents which may resist the form or the strategy: namely, the users. (Lefebvre, 2009a, p. 171)

Capitalism has furthered the commodification of space, because of the emergence of "private groups who appropriate space in order to manage and exploit it" (Lefebvre, 2009a, p. 171). Space is therefore a social product, yet one which is being explored and conquered, appropriated by capital (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 150). It is "an economico-political instrument of the bourgeoisie" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 128), a "means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 26). Space being a social product, all societal change must be shadowed by a spatial change, for: "'To change life', 'to change society', these phrases mean nothing if there is no production of an appropriated space" (Lefebvre, 2009b, p. 186).

2.6.3 The tripartite production of space

Lefebvre's theory of the production of space is first of all founded on the conviction that space is a social product, as discussed above. Digging deeper into the subject, Lefebvre proposes a theory of how social production of space takes place, by which means and on which levels.

Space is being conceived *(conçu),* perceived *(perçu)* and lived *(vécu),* he argues. The production of space therefore takes place on three different fields: the mental, physical and social field. In Schmid's words, these fields can be described as follows:

- the mental field of logics and formal abstractions, defined by mathematics and philosophy;

- the physical field of nature and materiality, delineated in a practical and sensual way;

- the social field, "the field of projects and projections, of symbols and utopias, of the *imaginaire* and... the *désir"* (Stanek, 2011, p. 129).

These fields are intrinsically linked with one another. They presuppose each other and engage with each other in a dialectic relationship. Therefore, it would be impossible to discern one field which would be pre-eminent in all regards. Still, Lefebvre conceded that the mental field becomes more powerful: "in its name spatial texture as well as social practice can be changed"; and its role is growing due to a "progressive detachment from physical work" and individualisation (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 31).

Space – which is composed of the three aforementioned fields – is produced through three concurrent and concomitant processes. They are linked to the three fields but not necessarily congruent. Referring once again to Schmid, these are the processes of

- material production, or the spatial practice, which "produces the perceived aspect of space";

- production of knowledge, and thus representations of space and conceived space;

- production of meaning, "which is related to spaces of representation and which produces and experienced, or lived, space" (Stanek, 2011, p. 129).

Lefebvre's *trialectic* approach to space is of an utmost importance to the present study. It is a major component of the tool-box I see in Lefebvre's theory, for I decided to structure the findings from my fieldwork in Khujand according to the three fields of spatial production in order to make sense of my object of research.

2.6.4 The problematic social space

While the mental and the physical fields appear rather straightforward, it is the social field which poses most problems. Confusion arises from Lefebvre's writings, where the term 'social space' is employed in two senses: In its broad meaning, it is understood as the socially produced space, which is conceived, perceived and lived. In its narrow meaning, it relates to the lived space, as opposed to the mental and physical fields. (Stanek, 2011, p. 129). It is the latter, narrower understanding of the term which is under scrutiny in the following.

Yet to approach the social field in its definition as the third component of a socially produced space still raises some analytical and methodological difficulties – as exemplified by Soja's struggle to develop his Thirdspace concept on its basis – arguably the most prominent reappraisal of Lefebvre as of today.[12]. He proposes an alternative "trialectics" of space to Lefebvre's *conçu / perçu / vécu* spaces, and argues for an own triade consisting of *Firstspace, Secondspace, Thirdspace.* Firstspace is akin to Lefebvre's perceived space and is characterised by "material – spatial practices", while Secondspace covers the narratives on space. These two perspectives are intertwined and simultaneously opposed to each other. But Soja castigates them for remaining descriptive, for leaving aside processes, and for indulging in a passive view of space: "Only rarely cityscape is recognized as a dynamic process of (social) spatial construction, as a source of explanation in itself" (Soja, 1997, p. 11). Out of this concern, Soja introduces Thirdspace, which is called upon to overcome these shortcomings. It is understood as "a fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual, locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency" (Soja, 2000, p. 11). Thirdspace incorporates the dimensions of dynamic time and static space and is therefore meant to overcome a binary vision of both. As it does not lend itself to interpretative schemas, it is open to emancipatory practices. (Routledge, 2009, p. 754).

To my eyes, in practice, Soja's spatial trialectics are limited to one dimension only – the

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12   At some early stage of my working on space production in Central Asia, I gave a presentation at an interdisciplinary round-table organised by the foundation which generously sponsored my research project. I laid out Lefebvre's theory and its implications to the study, and did not hide the difficulties I encountered when dealing with Lefebvre's concept of social space. Following the presentation, a young art historian came to me and said: "Why don't you use Soja's "Thirdspace"? It's as good as Lefebvre, and it doesn't have all that Marxist tail to it". I was left both intrigued and sceptical.

Thirdspace. Indeed, this focus might serve as a good interpretative framework for looking at phenomena of modernity, which are all meant to be intertwined in a constant process of communication and hybridisation – even taken as a "creative misunderstanding" (Schmid, 2010, p. 65) of Lefebvre's theory. Yet the complexity of Thirdspace, and its ambition to encompass everything in one word, makes it less useful for an empirical study. By the author's own definition, Thirdspace is a "mode of critical spatial awareness "(Soja, 1999, p. 57), and does not provide a toolbox in the same way as Lefebvre's "original" theory.

Indeed, Lefebvre's social space which is both "lived" and "alive", potentially covers every aspect of human life. It is a space which is passively experienced, for it is the space where domination and alienation are experienced on the everyday level. At the same time, it is a space of interaction and passion (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 32), and a space of desire and imagination. (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 31). Out of the Lefebvrian *désir,* "lived" space is not just a passive one, but also a space of action. In my view, action based on *désir* is closely related to Lefebvre's concept of transduction. It is in the lived space, where practice and thinking "run parallel to each other and vis-à-vis others"(Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 25). In the lived space, the city is constructed on an everyday basis, based on the information of urban realities, but also on *propositions* of possible urban realities. They target "a virtual 'object' and its realization on a path heading toward a "proposed" horizon"(Lefebvre, 2009c, pp. 197–198). Although proposing a virtual object is not the same as implementing it, it is on the basis of this proposition that realisation becomes possible. In Lefebvre's words, "*Proposing* does not amount to *producing,* but *propositions* open the way for those who will produce" (Lefebvre, 2009c, pp. 197–198).

The lived space is therefore the space, I would argue, where reality and propositions meet in order to constantly produce a new reality: "as new theoretical imaginings are given concrete form, the feedback mechanism ensures that subsequent projections / projects are informed by this newly altered reality in an endless loop of speculation-investigation-critique-implementation" (Parker, 2004, p. 178). The lived space amounts therefore to a "transduction in action", which links up to Elden's reading of the social space as a space modified in everyday life (Stanek, 2011, p. 129), the space of a perpetual "remaking and refashioning of urban space to meet the exigencies of the users" (Parker, 2004, p. 164). Out of these considerations, this will be the approach which I will adopt in the third part of my analysis of space production in Khujand.

2.7 Lefebvre's thought in Central Asia

Henri Lefebvre's thinking evolved in a particular context and with a particular political stance. Lefebvre's aim was to develop a critique of everyday life in post-war capitalist France. It is therefore not difficult to argue that Lefebvre is rooted in a specific constellation of space and time, and bound to a particular philosophical heritage. My work however is set some fifty years later than 1968, the heyday of Lefebvre's productivity and influence. My geographical scope is different as well. It might therefore appear as if I were about to make use of Henri Lefebvre's theory out of context, both outside his time, and outside his regional setting. In the following, I will address these two critiques.

How then can Henri Lefebvre's apparently very French theory be extended to settings outside of the North Atlantic world? Kipfer et al argued that "actualizing Lefebvre sometimes requires reading Lefebvre's work against himself" (Kipfer, Saberi, & Wieditz, 2012, p. 7). Yet, to my eyes, Lefebvre's own works can in most cases accommodate these epistemological challenges. The global context was important to his thought, which was set in a "framework of 'worldness' (*(mondialité or 'globalism')",* where "everything is 'mobilized', spatialized and made dialectical": poles, centres and peripheries are dialectically intertwined in a "spatial planning of *flows"* (Lefebvre, 2009c, p. 201). Furthermore, the concepts Lefebvre uses strive for an analysis of worldwide processes. The dialectic approach to a "spatial planning of flows", is by no means limited to Western societies of the post-war era, and must therefore be legitimately applicable to Central Asia as well. Looking at cities, Lefebvre does not tell us *how* the city should be understood; neither does he tell us *what* the city is. What he tells us, is to preoccupy ourselves with space and look at the processes of urbanisation. Lefebvre insists on an analysis of the everyday life from a perspective which is decisively "bottom-up". All these Lefebvre concepts are not so much suspect of Eurocentrism, but rather invite comparative studies around the globe.

A second critique one might address to Lefebvre's theory is that it profoundly criticises the alienating and oppressive phenomena of Capitalist modernity, but falls short of an analysis of socialist, not to mention post-socialist settings. He pointed out his own interest in such research in his writings, asking himself what "do we find when we apply the yardstick of space – or, more precisely, the yardstick of spatial practice – to societies with a 'socialist' mode of production?" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 54) Yet he did not elaborate on specific

cases, "for lack of information of comprehension" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 54). But still, there are some, even if quite few, mentions of socialist settings in Lefebvre's work. And these few passages do explain why Lefebvre did not consider it particularly important to expand on cities of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. They did not, he maintained, differ much from their capitalist counterparts. In his eyes,

> *with regard to the treatment of space, the 'model' of (Soviet) State socialism offers only a buttressed and worsened version of the capitalist "model"; accelerated in accordance with the model, planned growth accentuates the privileges of 'implantations', those of industries and the decision-making centers; the other places remain passive (peripheral) (Lefebvre, 2009c, p. 206).*

Lefebvre castigated *state socialism*, as he calls it, in which spatial disparities were not alleviated, but to the contrary, gained in scope and intensity. He furthermore saw the same indistinguishable mode of space production on both sides of the iron curtain, both of them "bureaucratic regimes of controlled consumption, oriented toward economic growth"; the only difference being the Soviet "emphasis on collective consumption" (Stanek, 2011, p. 64). And, Lefebvre saw that state socialism as practised in the Soviet Union did not strive for Marx's proposal of socialism leading to the withering away of the State (Stanek, 2011, pp. 49–50) and he criticised it accordingly. If for Lefebvre there is no particular difference between both models of space production, then, finally, space production in a state socialist context does perfectly lend itself to be analysed within the context of Lefebvre's thinking on capitalist societies. When it comes to post-socialism, the former argument applies as well: if post-socialism means a 'return' to a capitalist mode of space production, then there is no handicap whatsoever. But even if post-socialism is something different, it is all the more worth looking at – Lefebvre's only fault was here not to have lived long enough. As Stanek reports, he "was much more thoughtful about the end of socialist states in Europe, which he witnessed just before his death in 1991 and whose importance for his work he admitted without having enough time to reflect upon (Stanek, 2011, pp. 1–2)".

Furthermore, there is no reason to fear the Marxist foundations of Lefebvre's theory when applying it in a Central Asian context. Khujand, as any other city, is a "unit within a geographical division of labor" (Harvey, 1989, p. 12). Urbanisation in Tajikistan, as urbanisation in other post-socialist settings, was significantly influenced by foreign investment (Smith & Timar, 2010, p. 116) – or its absence. Khujand therefore does not escape the processes of "mobilization, production, appropriation, and absorption of economic surpluses, [...] surpluses of the product of labor [...] and surpluses of the capacity of labor" (Harvey, 1989,

p. 53).

Within these global processes, Lefebvre's theory offers particular interest applicable to a Central Asian city. Lefebvre's theory of a social production of space developed out of "lived contradictions" between centre and periphery (Entrikin & Berdoulay, 2005, p. 133). The peripheral position of Central Asia, and the peripheral position of Khujand within Tajikistan, are therefore interesting instances to make use of his theory. The intertwining of urban and rural, which was at Lefebvre's centre of attention, is a salient issue as well. In this regard, understanding urbanisation as a process is valuable for exploring the presumed de-urbanisation and ruralisation of Khujand, which remains to be explored in subsequent chapters. Within this process, the conception of space from below, its production on an everyday level, is particularly interesting to look at. In this vein, Lefebvre's theory does not explain the phenomena. It opens up the perspective and sharpens the focus, and can therefore be rightfully applied to a Central Asian post-socialist setting.

3 Methodological considerations

3.1 Discerning the 'floating mists' of everyday life

La ville s'écoute comme une musique autant qu'elle se lit comme une écriture discursive

(Lefebvre, 1972, p. 64)

The findings of this work are based on a series of field trips to Khujand in the years 2009 and 2010. A first exploratory stay of four weeks took place in autumn 2009. Two further trips of three months each took place in spring and autumn 2010. During my first visit to Khujand, I stayed with the family of a university teacher in the city's 18th microraion. The first things I learned about Khujand come therefore from interaction with this family. This first stay allowed for an open exploration of the city. On this basis, I elaborated and sharpened research questions for the fieldwork to follow, with Strauss and Corbin's *grounded theory* in mind (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This exploratory approach to the urban phenomenon echoes Lefebvre's refusal to impose pre-fabricated theories on the field. He sees the "concrete as a situation to be reached, not the starting point of investigation" (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 138). The research methods must, in this vein, reflect the idea that the urban phenomenon is "the *oeuvre* of its citizens" and not "an already closed book" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1294).

In the course of the two following trips, I stayed in a small apartment in a housing block in the city centre. The daily interaction with my neighbours, and my observation of and participation in the courtyard life, provided significant information. Particularly interesting to me were regular meetings with two groups of men: the first group met daily at the shoemaker's kiosk. Some six men of all ages met there, drank tea and chatted with each other. Those who worked came later in the afternoon; the elder members often spent the whole day in the small hut – and I was very happy to be allowed to attend their sessions, which I did on almost a daily basis. Yet during these meetings, I would be unable to say where the interview situation ended and where participant observation began. The second group gathered around the vegetable kiosk in the evenings. Before and after the evening meal, men came and played chess and cards. Additionally, a bunch of different people stopped by on their way to the kiosk or the nearby supermarket. In both circles, it was possible to talk on a wide range of issues, yet these surely were no formal four-eyes interviews. In most cases, many people were present or joined the

conversation, often taking over the reins and changing topics[13]. For this reason, a schoolbook approach to interviews was hardly applicable in the Tajik social setting. Because of the many people present, two interviews are quoted as "Interview at the shoemaker's place" or "Interview at the vegetable kiosk", respectively, and not attributed to one particular informant. Due to this very informal character of the setting, only a part of the interviews was recorded.

The more formal interviews followed a set of guidelines I elaborated after my first exploratory trip to Khujand. Yet due to the informal situation of most interviews, these guidelines only rarely succeeded in providing a backbone for the talks. In most cases, interviews proceeded along a biographical line of narration, with an emphasis on spatiality: the quarters and streets where the person was born, grew up and lived; the most visited, most favourite or most neglected places; spatial routines; perceptions and desires. With this everyday life approach, I also tried to avoid a bias towards urban history, which is easily induced in interviews: it happened frequently that when I asked for their stories about life in Khujand, its major quarters and features, that my respondents wondered what this could be good for. Instead, they proposed, I should speak to long-time residents *(starožily),* who could better report on arts, crafts and traditions of the 'original' Khujand. This tendency to insist on an 'original' past is, to my eyes, induced by a Soviet-style 'musealisation' of urban history, as I will discuss in the chapter on conceptions.

My interest in an everyday life approach was meant to open the door to a processual understanding of the city, to a research of urbanisation instead of a piecemeal search for attributes of urbanity. This approach furthermore attracted my attention to a 'rhythmanalysis' of Khujand's urban life – of rhythms bound in time and in space: the succession of morphological textures (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 118) of the urban fabric – from buildings, roads and monuments to landmarks and empty terrains; and the succession of encounters between people, of festivities, seasons, and market days. "Meanings are in people, not in objects or things" (Basten, 2009, p. 7): with this methodological stance, my ambition was to place people at the centre of research rather than the built environment. These meanings which inhere in people – their feelings, motivations and reactions – refer to the social production of space (Low, 1996, p. 400). Collecting the narratives on these meanings provides insight into the social production of space (Sliwa, 2009, p. 661), and, by these means, an answer to the overall

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13   A similar 'interview' constellation was described by Baldauf in Northern Afghanistan (2007, p. 137). Furthermore, Oberkircher provides a detailed discussion of research methods in a Central Asian setting (Oberkircher, 2011).

question of the study.

The interviews were conducted in Russian and / or Tajik. In most cases, I started the interviews in Tajik, yet it was not difficult for my interlocutors to find out that my Russian was far better than my Tajik. At times, I continued asking in Tajik, but received answers in Russian. In other cases, I insisted upon the person's answering in Tajik, while I struggled to find the right words to ask a question in Tajik myself. Often my interlocutors switched from one language to the other in the course of the interview, or sprinkled words of the respectively other language into the conversation. As mentioned in the introduction, a large part of the population of Khujand speak Uzbek at home. But before I actually heard the person speak Uzbek, it was impossible for me to distinguish the ethnic background of my interlocutor – apart from asking, which generally took place well after the beginning of our conversation which had already taken off in Tajik or Russian. The degree of Tajik-Russian code-switching depended on age, education and employment – elder Khujand-born people working in the administration tend to speak better Russian than young day labourers at the bazaar. Generally speaking, Russian proficiency in Khujand is distinctly lower than in Dushanbe – also due to the fact that Russian speakers never constituted a majority of the city's population.

Altogether, I gathered around thirty interviews. Two-thirds of them were recorded on tape, most of which were then transcribed. As to the remaining interviews, as well as shorter encounters on the street, I tried to take notes or recorded them from memory where possible. I did not attempt to arrange for interviews with representatives of state authorities. I was clearly advised by a friend working with the Khujand city administration that employees were instructed to verify the letter of invitation with the purpose of my research and the respective visa before agreeing to an interview. Still, I was able to speak with low-key representatives of state authorities such as heads of mahalla committees *(raisi mahalla)*. On informal occasions, at concerts or public holidays, I was also able to speak with official representatives without venturing into the bureaucratic jungle.

Apart from collecting interviews and observations, I spent some time at the rather small regional library named after Asiri, where I looked for material on Khujand's history and architecture – although this did not amount to a systematic research of literature. Neither did I venture into archives: contemporary space production, and not so much urban history, stood at the centre of my research. Still, I have compiled a detailed press database on space-related issues of construction, mobility, recreation, urban politics and the like, which helped me to set particular events and processes into context. This data base reveals, for instance, the dates and circumstances of construction projects, and provides some information on state authorities'

initiatives, which I was unable to obtain by other means. Still, interviews and observation remain my most important sources of information on space production in Khujand.

Mobile methods constituted an important methodological pillar of my research. I spent a lot of time moving around town to gainan eyewitness and bodily experience of the multi-sited ethnography within the city of Khujand and its suburbs. Liu argues that the "purpose of the walking tour is to consider -- literally from the ground – the often hybrid and ambiguous nature of lived experience" (Liu, 2007, p. 66), and I would very sincerely embrace this proposition. De Certeau proposed to frame the sheer practice of walking as a "subversion" (Certeau, 1984, p. 93). I consider this true for the inhabitants of the city, and for the researcher alike. My walking expeditions allowed me to cross through courtyards, to penetrate into the old town mahallas, to walk down to the river, to discover the bazaar, as well as the mountains, industry zones and cotton fields around Khujand. These walking tours were rarely planned from the beginning, but over time I aimed to cover any remaining blank spots in my exploration of Khujand, and to experience a most diverse range of urban contexts. These walking tours often led to encounters and unexpected interview situations – in a flatbread bakery in the old town, on the flea market of the Sunday bazaar or with teenagers bathing at the Syrdarya River at sunset.

Still, there is more to mobile methods than walking. Mobile methods should also cover the widest possible range of the inhabitants' mobile experience; be "tuned into the social organisation of 'moves'" as proposed by Büscher and Urry (Büscher & Urry, 2009, p. 103). I strove to collect interviews and impressions on the move – that is, aboard the transport systems as well. Alongside the passengers I was waiting for marshrutkas and trolleybuses and using them on an everyday basis, in order to get a grasp of "'indigenous' mobile methods" (Büscher & Urry, 2009, p. 111). Issues of social relations, though, trumped over an analysis of 'indigenous' mobility – much in tune with d'Andrea who argued that a methodology "which includes but transcends a narrow focus on data collection on the move, needs to address structure, power and meaning at multiple levels" (D'Andrea, Ciolfi, & Gray, 2011, p. 158) – as we will see in the chapter on Perceptions of space, where a part is devoted to urban mobility.

This multi-method approach is the attempt to realise the "holistic ideal of ethnological fieldwork" (Stephan, 2010, p. 50); an attempt to grasp society in its multiple facets. This approach is very much in tune with Lefebvre's own understanding of research. His own interdisciplinarity is rooted in an "ambition to propose a theory of social totality", "to discern the consequences of modernity [...] for the multiplicity of forms of social life and for (social) being itself" (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 134). To Lefebvre, using the methods of just one of the

"fragmentary sciences" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1294) would mean a biased approach to the urban phenomenon. Lefebvre's theory therefore favours "immersive ethnographies" to achieve this holistic ideal, for "quantitative research cannot reveal the ephemeral nature of everyday life or [in Lefebvre's own words] the 'floating mists' that exist within it" (Round & Williams, 2010, pp. 1996-197).

3.2 Mental maps

Apart from the aforementioned variety of methods, *mental maps* played an important role in my analysis. Since this method is not as widespread as the ones already described, I will devote a separate section to its appraisal. Surprisingly enough, generations of German schoolchildren, and I am no exception, have been exposed to mental maps without knowing it. Since 1987, the rear endpaper of Diercke's school atlas featured a set of maps on "space perception in the city" (Kammler, 2009, p. 274). There we first can see Steinberg's famous "View of the World from 9th Avenue", drawn for the *New Yorker* magazine's March 29, 1976 edition, arguably the world's most famous mental map. Its 'scientific' counterpart is depicted just to the right of it – a map of Los Angeles which shows how various socio-economic groups perceive the city in different ways. Downs and Stea are cited as source, although the map was actually compiled by the Los Angeles Department of city planning in collaboration with Kevin Lynch (Los Angeles (Calif.). Dept. of City Planning, 1971). In the original 1984 concept for a new edition of the Diercke atlas, though, Steinberg's New York map was meant to have a much more prominent place at the very beginning of the book, illustrating divergent perspectives on the world (1984, p. 10). Yet the concept did not make it to the final draft, very exemplary for mental maps at large: they seem fascinating, yet end up relegated to the corner.

Working with mental maps is often characterised by confusion. The first confusion arrives with the term itself. Some authors use the terms *cognitive maps, mental maps, spatial image, environmental perception* or *mind maps* interchangeably[14], while others provide diverging definitions of the terms. I will use the term *cognitive maps/mapping* when discussing Tolman, as well as Downs and Stea, and stick to Kevin Lynch's term of *mental maps/mapping* in all other circumstances.

Lynch was the first to introduce mental maps to the broader public with his work done on perceptions of urban features in Boston, Jersey City and Los Angeles (Lynch, Korssakoff-Schröder & Michael, 2001, pp. aa). Mental maps are in most cases understood as means of investigation into individual *perceptions* of space, for instance as defined by Wilde (2007,

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14   Just looking on one collected book on the subject – "Image and Environment" by Downs and Stea (1973), we observe various concurrent and not necessarily consistent terms: *cognitive maps* (Downs, Stea, Tolman, Kaplan), *mental maps* (Gould), *spatial image* (Lynch, Boulding), *environmental image* (Lynch), *mapped imagery* (Orleans), *sketch maps* (Saarinen), *spatial schema* (Cox), *spatial cognition* (Hart, Moore), *individual space* (Briggs), others avoid the term altogether.

p. 120). In her analysis of Dhaka's urbanisation, Bertuzzo argued instead that mental "maps spontaneously appear as an ideal tool for the inspection of mental space" (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 48) – that is of spatial conceptions rather than perceptions. Ploch advances however that mental maps combine both *idea* and *experience* (Ploch, 1995, p. 27). This echoes Downs and Stea's proposal that "spatial behavior is not the only outcome of cognitive mapping. A second and equally important purpose involves generating frames of reference for understanding and interpreting our spatial environment" (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 68). In Lefebvre's terms then, mental maps do combine *conceptions* and *perceptions* of space. In our interpretation we consequently must not limit ourselves to only one aspect. With this double purpose of mental maps in mind. I will first provide some insight into the cognitive foundations of mental mapping before expanding on the diverging uses of mental maps as sources in social sciences research. I will then proceed to a discussion of possible approaches to the interpretation of mental maps and finally present the role they play in the present research.

3.2.1 Cognitive foundations of mental maps

Linking knowledge to space was already used in classical antiquity: Cicero referred to the *method of loci,* which he used to memorise his speeches. Information was tied in imagination to a particular point in space. 'Walking' in one's mind past these points would reassemble the information into a whole story. The American behaviour psychologist Edward Tolman (1886-1959) proposed in 1948 that our memory performs so well because our brain is able to arrange information spatially (Tolman, 1973, p. 31). He called this process *cognitive mapping.* Downs and Stea wrote a seminal introduction to the nexus of mental maps and elaborated upon their origins and uses. They argue that man-land relations were historically framed in geo-deterministic terms, namely that *land* determined *man.* Only in the 1950s, this view changed, researchers began to investigate how "'man' creates 'land' through cognition" (Stea & Blaut, 1973, p. 53) – preceding the later paradigms of spatial turn. They adapted Tolman's proposition that cognitive mapping can be understood as a set of abilities which enables us to work with information concerning the spatial environment, to "collect, organise, store, recall, and manipulate" it (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 6). The *everyday spatial environment* is translated into organised *representations* (Downs & Stea, 1977, pp. 6–7). This understanding of the spatial environment is not a goal in itself. It is primordial in order to solve spatial problems (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 58), not only the actual but also the future ones (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 62) and

is therefore useful on an everyday basis.

The mental maps, these representations of the everyday spatial environment, vary from one individual to another as far as their mode of production and their outlook is concerned. Downs and Stea define a cognitive map as a product (Downs & Stea, 1977, pp. 6–7). This product is the outcome of an organised (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 62), interactive (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 73) and selective (Downs & Stea, 1977, pp. 77–78) process, which is subject to individual decisions, that is, to questions of (1) *purpose,* (2) *perspective,* (3) *scale,* and (4) *symbolization.* (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 64). Therefore, cognitive maps can be grasped as *social products,* akin to space which itself is defined as a social product by Henri Lefebvre. What Beatrice Ploch described as textual interpretations of the interpreted city (Ploch, 1995, p. 27) could therefore in other words be framed as a socially produced representation of a socially produced space.

If we admit that identity is intimately linked to our understanding of our spatial environment, as Andreas Wilde proposed (Wilde, 2007, p. 120), then the cognitive mapping process is in its turn an expression of identity. Mental maps are therefore, as other social products, torn between the individual and the society. Downs and Stea see this as a particular characteristic: "[Cognitive maps] are similar enough to permit us to share and communicate our understanding of the spatial environment. They are personal enough to accommodate unique experiences. […] Above all, they are the outcomes of a process that can cope with both social requirements and individual needs" (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 107). Yet they all serve the same end: to solve spatial problems. Although *formally different,* cognitive maps are *functionally similar* (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 62).

Downs and Stea argue that cognitive maps can be stored either internally, that is in one's mind, as well as externally (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 62). Asking an interviewee to draw a mental map, we thus ask him to store his cognitive map externally, that is, on a sheet of paper. Talking with a person about spatial practice means likewise to externally store the individual mental map, this time through vocal recording. The external storage of mental maps thus allows the researchers to gain insight into how "spatial information about whatness, whereness and whenness gets acquired, organized, and stored in such a way that it will be functional when required" (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 62).

Ploch identified two perspectives researchers took when dealing with mental maps: Lynch is its most prominent representative. Here, mental maps are understood as a passive experience of space, a 'learned' space brought to paper. The second perspective understands the individual as an "active being, producing culture". Mental maps would then allow investigation into which

spaces human beings appropriate and how (Ploch, 1995, pp. 26–27). Ploch continues arguing that mental mapping as a process of symbolic appropriation of the environment could be understood as the intrinsic process of culture production (Ploch, 1995, pp. 25–26).

3.2.2 Using mental maps in social sciences

Following the spatial turn of the 1980s, more and more social scientists began to use mental maps in their research. Lynch, who pioneered the use of mental maps for the wider public, was not so happy about it: he would have preferred that planners used them rather than social scientists. (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 241). In spite of the disapproval of the founding father, mental maps are extensively used in social science research. Almost never are they being used as the sole source of information. In most cases, mental maps are collected together with interviews. We could therefore speak of mental maps as a widespread choice for a multiple-methods approach. However, this seemingly natural relegation of mental maps to a secondary method has led, I would argue, to a methodological neglect of mental maps in the first place.

Beatrice Ploch has criticised the "poor interpretation" of mental maps in social sciences. She notably criticises (1) that mental maps are merely being used as illustrations; (2) that they are expected to stand as examples for general phenomena; and (3) that there is no widespread methodological discussion on this topic (Ploch, 1995, pp. 23–24). Scientists, she says, are being caught in a kind of aesthetic trap when dealing with mental maps. Instead she calls for working interpretative structures for mental maps which would enable comparisons of the findings with those gained through other methods (Ploch, 1995, pp. 23–24).

Still, there is a wide array of different forms of mental maps being used in social sciences today, which contribute to the confusion about what is actually understood as *mental maps* in the academic production of knowledge. We can roughly distinguish between three methods, which relate to three different kinds of interaction between speech act and cartography:

(1) In the first case, the author of the study conducts interviews and then personally locates the information thus gained on an available map. There is no interaction between the interviewees and the final outcome of the study; the spatial localisation is in the hands of the author. This possibility is the one used by Kevin Lynch. He conducted several dozens interviews with 'users' of Boston's cityscape, inquiring into the 'readability' of the city. He asked his informants about their daily commuting routines and was particularly interested in incidents where his informants

lost their orientation. He then analysed the interviews according to a row of pre-established categories (Lynch, Korssakoff-Schröder & Michael, 2001, pp. aa), namely landmarks, districts, nodes, paths and edges. In a second step, Kevin Lynch proceeded to draw schematic maps of Boston and marked the specific features according to the mentioned categories, producing a synthetic mental map of the city. With this plan in hand he identifies places which lacked 'readability', where inhabitants usually lost orientation and were overwhelmed by negative emotions. He concluded that these were the places where urban planners had work to do in order to improve the situation – for instance, providing a road with rhythmic continuity along its path, or setting up landmark buildings for an easier orientation[15].

Kevin Lynch's approach responds above all to the needs of town planners. Yet also looking at the field of Central Asian studies, an example of this method can be found in Wilde's work on spatial perceptions of inhabitants of Herat in north-western Afghanistan (Wilde, 2007, pp. 119–134). He conducted several interviews with the city's inhabitants and transposed significant locations mentioned by the interviewees, and the emotions they tied to these locations, on a map of Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries.

(2) In the second case of mental maps' use in social science, the author confronts the interviewees with a copy of a map and asks them to mark particular elements on it. Here, for instance, we can mention Brown's inquiry into queer spatial perceptions of London's East End. His method – which he described as part of an oral history project – is centred on the perception of particular sites and spaces, explicitly positioning the result as distinct from orientation-themed mental maps (Brown, 2001, p. 51), that is, from Lynch's methodology. His approach consisted in providing the interviewees, alongside with a questionnaire survey, with a black and white map of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and asked them to inscribe sites and spaces they personally perceived as "particularly 'gay'" and areas they thought of as "particularly unsafe or dangerous for gay men" (Brown, 2001, p. 50). Follow-up interviews were conducted to discuss why particular places and spaces had been identified as such.

Didelon et al. propose to frame this kind of inquiry as *interpretative maps,* a term which does not seem appropriate to me, since other kinds of mental maps are interpretations, too. For the

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15   Although Kevin Lynch argued to arrange cities in such ways, as to ensure their 'readability' by the 'users', he insisted that a "highly visible environment may have its disadvantages". A cityscape overloaded with meanings hampers the necessary progress: "[e]ven conservative use of resources may be impaired where habitual orientation does not allow easy adaptation to new techniques and needs (Lynch, 1973, p. 314). In this light he saw, for instance, the Chinese preoccupation with geomancy as a means to overcome excessive visibility, which would help in constructing an "imageable environment that is not at the same time stifling and oppressive" (Lynch, 1973, pp. 314–315).

authors, the advantage of this method consists in an easy distinction between "the 'real' and the 'interpreted' spaces", alongside an elimination of a bias due to individual drawing abilities (Didelon, Ruffray, Boquet, & Lambert, 2011, p. 101).

(3) As for the third kind of mental maps, the interviewees are meant to draw a map by themselves. The researcher provides a sheet of paper and a set of pencils and asks to sketch, free-hand, a map of a house, a city, a country or the whole world. In contrast to both methods described above, this method leaves the highest degree of liberty to the informants. Neither are their confronted with pre-formed spaces or pre-set frames, as with annotated maps; nor is their role reduced to a repetition of learned spatial features as in Lynch's studies. I would argue that self-drawn maps are the most participatory and empowering way to use mental maps. They allow for a self-determined spatial expression. On this footing, mental maps can be used for interpretation on par with other texts and interviews. In the following section, I will expand on how mental maps are being used in my inquiry into space production in Khujand.

3.2.3 Making sense of mental maps

Towards the end of an interview, I generally asked my interview partners to draw an individual mental map of Khujand. The instruction was: "Now that we have come to the end of the interview, I would like to conduct a small experiment. We have spoken so much about the city of Khujand. Now I would like to ask you to draw me a map of *your* city of Khujand, the places *you* use, those, which are important to you". I provided the interviewees with white sheets of paper (A4 size) and a choice of pencils and pens. Altogether, I gathered some twenty mental maps following interviews. Around sixty other mental maps of Khujand came into being with larger groups of students, either at the Khujand State University or at an NGO-financed youth centre.

Beatrice Ploch argues that mental maps – combining *idea* and *experience* – can be understood and interpreted as texts. She continues by saying that researchers then "formulate their own texts on this basis – interpretations of the interpreted city" (Ploch, 1995, p. 27). Downs and Stea insist on the fact that mental maps emerge from social interaction, from a process "that can cope with both social requirements and individual needs" (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 107). This interaction is subject to power relations. The same goes for maps, which "serve as powerful indicators of nationalism, self-image, attitudes and aspirations" (Downs & Stea, 1973, p. 83).

Lefebvre, who was preoccupied with a critique of everyday life, would probably support the proposal for a similarly critical approach to the representations of everyday life, that is, to a critique of mental maps, in our case. In the same way as interviews, mental maps are culturally sensitive – both in regard to the local knowledge of interview partners who sketch them, and to the researcher in his efforts of interpreting them (Feinberg, Dymon, Paiaki, Rangituteki, Nukuriaki, & Rollins, 2003, p. 251), (Majewski, 2010).

We can think of a variety of factors which influence individual mental maps. Wilde proposes such determining factors as "climate, landscape, culture, language, political attitudes, and accessibility" of the space in question, as well as "sex, age, social roles, occupation and personality" (Wilde, 2007, p. 121). Downs and Stea see two major factors – "age (or development) and use (or learning)" (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 6), while Gould and White insist on the importance of language and culture (Gould & White, 2003). Yet setting up this kind of register is not helpful in my eyes: mental maps, as social products are surely shaped by all these factors and many others. What matters are the methodological implications: the multitude of factors increases the difficulty of a comparative analysis of mental maps, in particular with freely drawn maps. Didelon et al criticise above all the difficulty in comparing individual maps. Firstly, the relation between the informant's "knowledge of space" and his drawing abilities is difficult to assess and to compare from one case to another. Secondly, the sketched items as well as the map scales do not easily lend themselves to comparison and synthesis (Didelon, Ruffray, Boquet, & Lambert, 2011, p. 101). Ploch concedes the difficulties, saying that the "dissimilarity of sketches due to individual capacities, perceptions and evaluations proses problems to a systematic analysis of mental maps" (Ploch, 1995, p. 25). This problem though, she continues, is a relative one: an analysis of interviews has to cope with the same dissimilarities. Therefore, analysing mental maps can be done in the same affirmative way.

Downs and Stea propose two criteria that govern the choice of information to be stored in mental maps, namely "functional importance, and distinctiveness or imageability" (Downs & Stea, 1977, pp. 77–78). An interpretation of mental maps must therefore inevitably include an interpretation of that very selection of elements by the informants. Which points were included and why? Which ones were omitted and why? Finally, how were they arranged? In order to practically implement this endeavour, Ploch proposed a dialectic approach to an interpretation of mental maps, going back and forth from the detail to the general picture:

> *[The researcher should dare to] understand the general picture – the mental map – as well as a mosaic of numerous individual components. He should thus somewhat detach himself from the captivating general impression and proceed to a systematic*

comparative analysis of mental maps. Still, the individual components must always be understood in relation to the mental maps, in order to avoid an atomising view [...]. The general picture remains the point of reference, even in a systematic comparison. (Ploch, 1995, p. 24).

Referring to mental maps can profitably serve to rebalance the relation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Beatrice Ploch affirms that mental maps allow the interviewees to "individually formulate a context from his own perspective" and to "put his own emphases" where necessary (Ploch, 1995, pp. 24–25). A bias induced by the interviewer's questionings is less likely – yet at the cost of a more tedious understanding of the statements which did not emerge through dialogue between both, but as a monologue of the interviewee put on paper. Furthermore, she argues, mental maps could be even more accessible to people with a lower level of education: While the degree of differentiation of mental maps in our heads is undoubtedly shaped by factors such as experience, development and knowledge, this does not say anything about the capacity to draw this image. One could even presume that a high degree of abstraction and customary expression in writing and speaking, might even increase the barrier to sketch 'the world in our heads'[16] (Ploch, 1995, p. 25). In my own experience though, indeed, many respondents were at first indeed reluctant to take the pencil, but this did not particularly single out persons with a lower socio-economic or educational standing. Almost all of my interview partners began by saying "but I cannot draw", (Interview Davvom, 2010), "you won't understand anything" (Interview Khurshed, 2010), or "it won't be of any help at all!" (Interview Nasiba, 2010). Still, almost all of them started drawing after being softly encouraged with smiles and compliments. They very quickly grew comfortable with the process of drawing and got to like it: drawing mental maps seems to make people feel creative and its playfulness rewards them with positive childhood memories.

The drawback of this playfulness is, however, that respondents tend to omit negatively connoted elements, related, for instance, to fear, death and hate. Ploch explains this by the desire to "'harmoniously' depict the space of one's own life *(Lebensraum)"* (Ploch, 1995, p. 28) and a general tendency towards clichés and reductions (Ploch, 1995, pp. 24–25). Ploch furthermore insists that mental maps show "individualist spaces of consumption" *(individualistische Nutzungslandschaften),* with a conspicuous tendency to show "places of sport, culture and leisure rather than social relations". Saying so, she possibly neglects the social relevance of

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16   This is not the rule, though: Francescato and Mebane have made the experience that older and lower-class people tended to refuse to draw maps (Francescato & Mebane, 1973, p. 134)

sporting and cultural pastimes, yet the argument that mental maps tend to reflect spaces relevant to the individual person rather than the community, remains valid and important in my view. This was also my experience in Khujand: even if the interview partners mentioned places they would never go to – the mountains or discotheques – they generally did not sketch them on the map. One exception to the rule was the mental map of a schoolboy who marked "Attention, fierce dog *(Ostorožno, zlaâ sobaka)"* on his map.

Beatrice Ploch insists on the gender effect on mental maps. She argues that women tend to sketch an area closer to home and include more details such as shops and social infrastructure. Men however rather sketch their workplace. Furthermore, women often omit unbuilt space, from what Ploch concludes that these spaces are linked with insecurity and thus with fear. In general, masculine mental maps are characterised by a wider grasp, an attitude of self-evident mastering of space (Ploch, 1995, pp. 32–33). This contrast might indicate deep-seated problems: Tolman advanced that comprehensive maps indicate happiness and "optimal conditions of moderate motivation" and "absence of unnecessary frustrations", while narrow-strip maps indicate over-emotional, hungry, ill-clad, over-motivated individuals (Tolman, 1973, p. 50). Apart from gender, Ploch finds effects of age, education and duration of residence: young persons draft wider-ranging mental maps. The same goes for a higher educational background. As to people who have recently moved to the city in question, they tend to put their new place of residence in the centre of their mental map (Ploch, 1995, pp. 28–29).

With these ideas in mind, I proceeded to an interpretation of the mental maps that I collected during my fieldwork in Khujand. I decided to use mental maps in a twofold manner. Firstly, they were meant to serve as complement to the interviews, allowing a cross-comparison of the information from both sources. Secondly, my goal was to make use of mental maps as a source in their own right. For this purpose, I grouped and analysed the various mental maps in a range of concerns:

- Scope: which fraction of the city is shown? How is space being conquered and conceived at large?

- Style: is there a striving for geographical correctness or is it a simpler sketch or an itinerary?

- Mentioned features: what are most important and prominent features of the city? Which areas, streets and landmarks are familiar or not? Where is 'home'?

- Naming: how are the features named, is there a tendency to official or colloquial designations?

I attempted both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the mental maps. The results will appear throughout the work – particularly in the chapters on conceptions and perceptions of space. The findings of one case study in the latter chapter are based almost entirely on mental maps data, while in other cases, information gained from mental maps supplements other evidence. In any event, I found mental maps to be a culturally sensitive, valuable and workable tool in order to gain insight into processes of space production.

4 Conceptions of space

4.1 Shaping the urban ideology

Building a city is not just about building houses, roads and parks. Shaping an 'urban ideology' is as important – and as politically salient – as shaping the built environment (Wüst, 2004, p. 31). The urban theory chapter has shown the importance of grasping the city as ideology – and this ideology as being socially produced. Lefebvre has argued that the mental field – the domain of the conceptions of space – is primordial. Due to individualisation and the decline of physical work, it "dominates over the others, and in its name spatial texture as well as social practice can be changed" (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 31).

In Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, the mental space is above all the domain of experts – town planners, architects and ideology entrepreneurs. Yet I will argue to extend this domain to the general population for a number of reasons. Firstly, because the experts' production of spatial knowledge is socially produced itself. Indeed, Lefebvre acknowledged this fact, too, asking: "What is an architect? Is there something specifically architectural? Is it an art, a technique, a science?" His answer to the question was: "I argue that architecture is a social practice [… The architect is] a producer of space, but never the only one" who "operates within a specific space -- the sheet of white paper" (Stanek, 2011, p. 165). Furthermore, in contemporary Tajikistan, formal urban planning is only a shadow of the powerful bureaucracy we know in Western contexts. For lack or irrelevance of state planning organs, the population itself does indeed at times actively conceptualise space, with implications for spatial texture and social practice. Finally, this approach is in line with Lefebvre's own emancipatory perspective, as elaborated in "The Right to the City", which calls for a conception from below. With this in mind, in this part of my thesis, I will first retrace the development of knowledge production in Central Asian cities over the course of time – by scientists, planners, authorities and the population. I furthermore will look at the relevance of these concepts, and elaborate upon the conception of space in contemporary Khujand.

Urban science, and science in general, was and still is predominantly Eurocentric: 'Western' scholars are doing research in 'Western' settings. I would not strictly adhere to Ribbeck's opinion of non-European urban settings being neglected by Academia (ifa-Galerie, 2009, p. 8) – indeed there is a lot of research around – but still there is, in my view, a lower-than-average output compared to the overall mass of research. With this in mind, we have to be attentive to "geographies of knowledge production" (Smith & Timar, 2010, p. 121). This distorted geography excludes researchers from "peripheral" regions, as well as the peripheral regions

themselves, from the research agenda, and thus exacerbates inequalities between regions on a global scale.

When it comes to scientific production, the "Central" in Central Asia actually means its opposite: namely peripherality in many regards. During the pre-Soviet past very few explorers and scientists ventured to the region. In Soviet times, urban research in the country was confined to a few specific disciplines, and only a handful of foreign researchers were offered the opportunity to do fieldwork in the region. In the years since Independence, urban research in Central Asia is slowly gaining ground, yet at a very slow pace and with a particular limitation of research to capital cities. In addition, urban studies of Central Asian cities by Central Asian scholars are difficult to come by. This all adds up to the region's being excluded from global knowledge flows – not only in regard to urban studies – and to be caught, for many years by now, in a position of acedemic liminality and constant *remont.*

In the case of Khujand, my main question is: which ideologies have shaped the conception of space? As Khujand was built in the course of centuries, particular conceptions of what a city is or what it should be, were imported, assembled and rearranged, and applied to the town in the form of the built environment. An inquiry into the creation of meaning is consequently an inquiry into the interrelation of space and power (Low, 1996, p. 400). One might think: so long as the built remains of particular periods are visible and as long as the memory of these periods itself persist, so long will the respective urban ideology be present and influence the current conception of space. Yet conceptions of space in one particular place are not necessarily tied to their built embodiments in the urban landscape, as we will learn in the following pages.

Morphologies of the past which are not visible today have an impact – such as the popular conviction of Khujand's being 2500 years of age. Urban landscapes of other cities serve as sources of comparison and desire. Even if some Khujandis might have never had seen any of them themselves, new representations of the 'modern' city, are conveyed via books, movies, catalogues or video clips, or are told by relatives. Russian cities, Moscow in particular, are perceived as more modern, more civilised, more western, and serve as examples against which the home town is compared, as well as the Tajik capital Dushanbe. Dubai also plays an increasing role as urban role model. Furthermore, yet unbuilt imaginings and desires for the city shape conceptions of urbanity.

I will present the different ideologies which have influenced space conceptions in Khujand both over the course of time, and today. Grossly simplified, they are arranged into three parts: first the 'Islamic / Oriental' conception; secondly, the 'Soviet city'; and, thirdly, 'western, European'

urbanity, in the way they reach Khujand and influence the inhabitants' conception of space. In a next step, I will discuss the relevance of these spatial ideologies in contemporary Khujand, looking at two examples: referring to evidence gained from mental maps and interviews, I will firstly present the urban-rural divide; and, secondly, the role of the 'old town'. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of Central Asian urbanity: does it exist at all, and if yes, what does it look like?

4.2 Khujand's built and un-built heritage

Searching for a conception of 'the Central Asian city', in this chapter I will retrace the influences which Khujand has experienced over time. In a first step, I will briefly review the pre-Islamic heritage and the 'Islamic-Oriental city' which succeeded it after the Arab conquest. In a next step, I will examine the imprint the Russian Empire left on Central Asian cities. I will then assess the origins of the Soviet city and the strong influence it had on urbanism in Central Asia. These major stages of development characterise the development of Central Asian cities up to Independence – for those which have not been founded only recently, in Soviet times. These – indeed very generalised – periods of urbanisation have not just left buildings behind. What is most important, they have conveyed and imposed particular conceptions of what a city is supposed to be or not to be.

4.2.1 Early beginnings: Alexandria Eschate

Not by surprise, the development of cities in Tajikistan must be considered within the history of cities in the whole of Central Asia. The emergence of urban settlements in Central Asia developed through constant influence from and exchange with neighbouring regions. Thus, the arguably most ancient urban settlements in today's Central Asia – the Geoksyurt oasis in today's southern Turkmenistan – emerged under cultural influence of the already highly urbanised Middle East and Indus Valley cultures in the course of the 3rd millennium BCE (Mukimov, 2009, p. 135). The process of urbanisation intensifies in the following centuries: the existing cities grow in size and importance; many more cities emerge; excavations of ancient Merv, Samarkand and Penjikent testify to a highly developed urban culture. Masson speaks of the ancient Kingdom of Baktria, which encompassed much of today's southern parts of Central Asia, "the land of thousand cities"(Masson, 1966, p. 1). He advanced the thesis that growing urbanisation was the precondition for political stability in the Kushan period (Mukimov, 2009, p. 137) – an early example of the functional role ascribed to cities.

Very few archaeological sites are situated on the territory of today's Tajikistan: Sarazm, near Penjikent or Takhti Sangin on the Afghan border. Yet urban development in Tajikistan cannot be seen, as mentioned, in disjunction from Central Asia as a whole. Current protagonists of

official Tajik nation building take up the archaeological discourse on region-wide urban development, and present it as an achievement of the Aryans – who are presented as predecessors of today's Tajiks (Rahmonov, 2008). This common heritage leads Mukimov to the conclusion that in late antiquity, "Central Asia factually was the territory of the historic Tajikistan" (Mukimov, 2009, p. 299). Contemporary Tajik claims on Bukhara and Samarkand as being the centres of Tajik urbanity are anchored in this early stage of Central Asian history.

Alexander the Great reached the Ferghana valley in 329 BCE, after his victory over the Bactrian ruler Bessus. In order to consolidate his rule over the region, the Macedonian conqueror founded the city of Alexanria Eschate *(Greek: Ἀλεξάνδρεια Ἐσχάτη)* – the furthest Alexandria – as the northernmost and easternmost outpost of his empire. The city was strategically situated on the banks of the Yaxartes, the modern Syrdarya, which formed the northern frontier of the Empire, and dominated the trade route to the Ferghana valley and further on into China. It is claimed that the city was established on the site of a pre-existing Persian settlement (Mukimov, 2009, p. 215) called Kyreschata[17]. For this reason Khujand celebrated in 1986 its 2500 years. This assumption is upheld by such established Tajik historians as Ghafurov and Negmatov (Mukimov, 2009, p. 229) – although there is no direct evidence that Alexandria Eschate was the predecessor of today's Khujand[18]. Shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, small-scale excavations were carried out at the site. They brought some Greek pottery artefacts to light, but no convincing evidence for the existence of an antique city. Still, the equation of Alexandria Eschate with Khujand is deeply rooted in popular belief and vividly promoted by state authorities.

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[17] An uprising of the subjugated Soghdians immediately followed the foundation of Alexandria Eschate (Holt, 1995, p. 55). The long-lasting and relatively successful uprising was led by a certain Spitamenes. After independence, Tajik authorities promoted Spitamenes as a popular hero resisting foreign influence: the Nav district was renamed Spitamen district *(nohiâi Spitamen)* in his honour in 2003 and an order of Spitamen was established. During a trip to Nav, none of my interlocutors was able to tell who Spitamen was or why the district received his name. The memory of Alexander the Great, conveyed through the eponymous city title, proved to be more successful.

[18] One only can be assured that Alexandria Eschate was situated on the southern bank of the Syrdarya in northern Tajikistan. Concurrent hypotheses propose today's Nav or Bekabad sites (Nabijon, 2009). Clear evidence if Khujand really were the site of Alexandria Eschate could only be established if excavations on the premises of the old fortress – the *Ark* – were carried out. Yet the Ark has seen military use since its very beginnings, which makes archaeological excavations impossible. Russian troops have set up their barracks there after the fall of the Kokand khanate. In Soviet times it hosted a military garrison. After independence, a detachment of Tajik military police is housed in the citadel: recruits patrol its adobe ramparts overlooking the Kamoli Khujandi Park. Relocating the troops to the outskirts of the city has been debated since late Soviet times, but the idea never came to fruition. This was in particular due to the fact that the city administration would have had to build new barracks if it were to take over the Ark. As of 2012, the citadel was still occupied by the military.

4.2.2 The 'Islamic-Oriental' city

In Soviet historiography, cities of Central Asia were described as 'feudal' or 'medieval'. The concept of the 'Islamic' city was not mentioned. In the eyes of Soviet scholars, from the 6th century to the October revolution, Central Asian cities pursued an 'Oriental' path of urban development; completely different from the European path (Komatsu, 1994, p. 281). Western scholarship insisted on the importance of Islam, which allegedly brought about a particular spatial practice (Bianca, 1991, p. 23) – which justifies the use of the term of an 'Islamic urbanism'. Central Asian cities were therefore seen as contiguous with the urban culture of the "Islamic Orient" (Wirth, 2002, p. 11).

The Arab armies arrived in Central Asia towards the end of the 7th century CE. Their first appearance at the town walls of Khujand dates back to 680. In the year 713, the army of the Caliphate led by Qutayba ibn Muslim conquered Khujand and thus introduced, alongside a new political authority, a new religion which was to shape the destiny – and in our case the urban ideology – of the city for centuries to come (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 61). Yet neither the city nor its buildings or traditions were changed overnight: the Caliphate mostly retained the pre-existing administrative structures. Khujand and its region thus constituted a small feudal state, often disputed between its more influential neighbours: Ferghana, Ustrashana (Istaravshan), Chach (Tashkent) and Samarkand. Pre-Islamic private houses and civic buildings such as bathhouses and khans would keep their form and functions. Religious buildings, Zoroastrian fire temples for instance, would be transformed into mosques. Fire temples were even reproduced on a small scale in clay and served as fire-places in houses (Mukimov, 2009, pp. 305–306).

The biggest single discussion on the morphology of the Central Asian city was initiated by Bartold, arguably the first person to take Central Asian cities seriously. He dominated research on cities in Central Asia from around 1900 until his death in 1930. He confronted the terms which Arab geographers of the 9th and 10th century used in order to describe Central Asian cities, and compared these terms to excavation data and archive material. Bartold proposed that the typical Central Asian city developed in a threefold structure of the *quhandiz,* the *shahristan,* and the *rabad.*

- Quhandiz – the "old citadel", that is the fortified residence castle of the pre-Arab rulers, of which most were already in ruins when the Arab geographers described them;

- Shahristan or madina (inner city, old city), meaning the adjacent residential and

merchant quarters, also dating before the Arab conquest;

- Rabad – the suburbs outside the shahristan, which eventually took over its central functions and developed as the city's main economic hub (Komatsu, 1994, pp. 284–285).

Bartold thus established the most influential paradigm of Central Asian urban morphology. He laid the foundation of Soviet studies of cities in Central Asia, in particular with his methodological approach consisting of a combination of archaeology and Oriental studies (Komatsu, 1994, pp. 284–285). For this historical reason, our knowledge of Central Asian cities relies on archaeological and anthropological research and not so much on urban geography.

Bartold's successor, Yakubovski, embedded Bartold's theory of the threefold city into Marxist historiography: he interpreted features of the *shahristan* as typical for the pre-feudal period and those of the *rabad* as typical for the feudal city. Change of the mode of production from an ancient to a feudal one brought about the relocation of central urban features to the *rabad* and left the *shahristan* abandoned. Archaeological findings repeatedly challenged the threefold-city theory (M. E. Masson's works in Termez, for instance (Komatsu, 1994, p. 285)), but it remains the dominant paradigm for a historical morphology of cities in Central Asia as of today. Still in 1994, Komatsu cited O. Bolshakov who complained in 1973 that "since 1953, various archaeological studies of the cities have been undertaken in great numbers, but nothing new has emerged in terms of theory. The level of scholarship therefore remains unchanged from the 1950s" (Komatsu, 1994, p. 286).

As for Khujand, evidence is scarce here as well. We do not know the precise layout of Alexandria Eschate and its successors, yet analogies suggest that it was laid out in a grid pattern and maintained that pattern for some centuries. Mukimov argues that all cities in Central Asia from the earliest times through the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods until the arrival of Islam were laid out in a grid pattern (Mukimov, 2009, p. 290). Following Bartold's model, Radžabov proposed that Khujand's extensions developed also according to the threefold pattern of *quhandiz*, *shahristan,* and *rabad* (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 79).

Ancient Khujand had a relatively low population density because of large agricultural plots (Interview Sherzod). This matches Komatsu's statement that for the urban population in Central Asia, agriculture was a "routine of life" (Komatsu, 1994, pp. 310–311). He refers to Sukhareva who argued that "medieval" urban dwellers thought of a city *(šahr)* as including both the city in a narrow sense, and its suburban villages, and therefore city and village were not differentiated in pre-modern Central Asia. (Komatsu, 1994, p. 311). Geiss goes a step further

in his definition of the Central Asian city as a "dense agricultural settlement *(qishloq),* interwoven with basic urban functions" (Geiss, 2001, p. 98).

Following the Arab conquest, Central Asia which the Arabs called *Mawarannahr* – "beyond the river" – became part of a vast common political and cultural realm stretching from Spain to India, which facilitated the exchange of goods, technologies and sciences. Though Khujand never grew to considerable political importance in the region, it enjoyed a significant amount of caravan trade. Arab geographers lauded its beauty by calling the city *arūs al-mamālik*, resp. *tirāz-e jahān* in Persian: the world's bride. Even after the Caliphate's grip on Central Asia weakened in the course of the 9th-10th centuries, religious and cultural ties did not break up. The conversion of Central Asia to Islam "brought new types of architecture typologies into being: mosques, minarets, mausoleums, madrasas" (Mukimov, 2009, p. 346). The XIV century shrine of Sheikh Maslihiddin (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 101) turned into a centre of religious pilgrimage and Khujand's main Friday mosque. In the wake of the October Revolution, Khujand was reported to have some 140 mosques (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 302). A comparable number should be thought of for the hammams, a "basic equipment" of every urban quarter (Wirth, 2002, p. 297). They were called *mūriča* in old Khujand, and built adjacent to the mosques to allow for ablution and socialising[19].

Two bazaars formed the centrepiece of Khujand's trade – the Chorshanbe (Wednesday) bazaar near the old fortress; and the Panchshanbe (Thursday) bazaar to the south-east, opposite the Sheikh Maslihiddin shrine. Eugen Wirth proposed the bazaar to be the sole distinctive feature of the Islamic-Oriental city, "one of the very big independent cultural achievements", "possibly the only significant criteria of distinction between the Oriental city and cities of the Occident, which could be regarded as Islamic cultural heritage" (Wirth, 2002, p. 151). The bazaar is not only a distinctive feature when comparing the urban fabric, but also as a form of social organisation: "[Cities in India, China] were in fact 'bazaar cities' [...], market places without an *oikos,* without any trace of *Gemeindeverband"* (Zijderveld, 1998, p. 34). While for Karl Marx the city "was the site of the revolution, the focus and laboratory for the progression of history" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 7), the 'Islamic-Oriental' city was conceived of in just the opposite way: surely as a nodal point for industry and commerce, but without a *sui generis* functional or legal distinction from the countryside[20].

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19   One of these old bath houses still exists adjacent to the Shaykh Maslihiddin shrine – yet was used as storage place at the time of my field work. See illustration 8.
20   Chekhovich has proposed an alternative vision on urban autonomy in Central Asia, arguing that a number of cities such as Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarand functioned at particular periods of time as "independent

Nevertheless, a distinctive form of social organisation emerged, which was surely not limited to cities, but still became a characteristic feature of their internal organisation and lasted through the Russian imperial rule, up to our days. This feature is the neighbourhood, called *mahalla* in the Central Asian context: a strong small-scale community contrasting the power of local social bodies against a weak state (Sahadeo, 2007, p. 15). It represented a cluster of some dozen houses usually grouped around a mosque. Its members were tied by a common participation in life-cycle rituals and were often part of the same professional group. Geiss argues that membership was granted by acquisition of a house within its limits, with the consent of the mahalla population. Full membership also presupposed the participation in communal life and religious activities (Geiss, 2001, p. 97), as well as participation in joint water management (Geiss, 2001, p. 101) which shaped a strong feeling of communal residential commitment. The mahalla was thus "not only the central economic unit of the city, but the central political and social one as well (Sahadeo, 2007, p. 15)[21]. The characteristic "Islamic-Oriental" road layout replaced a regular pre-Islamic grid and its crooked, irregular roads and cul-de-sac quarters developed as the structural expression of the mahalla organisation of the city. The irregular road layout does therefore not indicate a lack of order, but the spatial expression of a particular form of social organisation[22].

The roads within the mahalla were lined by loam walls without windows. Gates led to rectangular green courtyards surrounded by single-storey buildings. This type of courtyard house, called *havli* in Persian and Tajik, reflected the wish to keep the privacy the family life, emphasising the distinction between the inside and the outside space (Bianca, 1991, p. 29). Wirth (2002, p. 327) proposed that this high esteem for privacy led to a complete neglect of outward representativeness, which explains the barren streets lined by mud walls. Loam architecture furthermore led to a particular feeling of transiency: loam houses are inevitably dissolved by rain- and groundwater and therefore need renovation or even reconstruction every decade on average.

This reconstruction often took place by means of a particular social practice common to Tajiks and Uzbeks – the *hashar* – which has gained force as an important ontological dimension of

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republics", ruled by influential merchants and landowners (Komatsu, 1994, p. 306).

21   As we will see in the following, the mahalla structure has changed over the Soviet era from a neighbourhood community to an administrative unit of the urban administration. The elected *oqsoqol* of the pre-Soviet/Russian colonial mahalla (Geiss, 2001, p. 98) was replaced by a *raisi mahalla,* appointed by the city administration.

22   Another particular form of spatially potent social organisation was the *waqf,* or pious endowment, which served to construct and maintain religious and/or welfare institutions, and was exempt from being partitioned under Islamic hereditary law (Geiss, 2001, p. 101). After a period of attempted modernisation of the *waqf* system in the early 1920s, this institution perished in Soviet times (Pianciola & Sartori, 2007).

communal practices of space production. The term describes a "collective work practice, characterised by an important mobilisation of work force" (Marteau d'Autry, 2011, p. 279), which can take place at different levels. At the household level, hashar refers to a system of mutual help, such as mending the clay roof of a neighbour's house. Marteau d'Autry argues that although the hashar practice is still maintained in rural areas, it is declining in urban contexts due to the emergence of new types of housing, the use of paid labour and changed neighbourhood relations. At the mahalla level, it refers to a community cooperation practice, such as irrigation and field work. This type of hashar, she advances, is still present in urban areas. Organised by the mahalla administration, the work aims at the construction or repair of community facilities, such as the choykhona, the sports ground or the cemetery (Marteau d'Autry, 2011, p. 281). Increasingly, the term hashar is also used at the level of state authorities and refers in this case to a 'forcedly voluntary' mobilisation of workforce on particular occasions – akin to the *subbotnik* of the Soviet era[23] (Marteau d'Autry, 2011, p. 279).

4.2.3 After the Russian conquest: the 'colonial' city[24]

Russian scholarly works on Central Asian cities began in the early 18th century with the increasing number of imperial missions and expeditions to the region. In what Komatsu sees as "the most valuable achievement in CA studies before the annexation", the Russian orientalist Khanykov observes in 1843 that "any hamlet with an ark and a Friday mosque, and surrounded by a moat or notched clay walls is called a 'city' in Central Asia" (Komatsu, 1994, pp. 282–283) – already an important remark concerning the definition of a city in the region. Surprisingly, the annexation of Central Asia by the Russian empire did not entail an increase in scholarly attention to its cities (Komatsu, 1994, pp. 282–283). The expansion of the Empire towards the oases of Central Asia brought about a flux of Russian geographers through Central Asian cities. To them, however, cities were rather transit places and supply bases for explorations rather than centres of genuine interest.

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23   This implies, for instance, tidying the city streets prior to national holidays, or donating a day's wage for the construction of large-scale state projects, such as the Roghun dam. For more information on the social implications of the Roghun dam construction see (Die schwierige Wasserkraftgeburt von Roghun 2010)

24   I prefer not to engage in the question whether the Russian dominance of Central Asia was of a colonial type or not – the debate has been amply described by Khalid (Khalid, 2007). Within the present study, the term 'colonial' refers to a period of urbanism rather than to a statement about the nature of Russian imperial rule in Central Asia.

Urban geography was slow to take off in imperial Russia: according to Harris (1970, pp. 28–30), it began with Veniamin Semenov-Tian-Shansky's 1910 monograph *Gorod i derevnâ v evropejskoj Rossii* (The city and the village in European Russia) (Semenov-Tân'-Šan'skij, 1910), a descriptive compilation of settlement and industry statistics, with a systematic review of cities by rank and categories. In Soviet times, urban geography continued on this descriptive path with the limited urban research relegated to a branch of economic geography (Harris, 1970, pp. 28–30). Central Asian cities were surely mentioned, but their distinctive morphologies and urban cultures did not gain any attention at that point.

In the mid-19th century, the Khanate of Kokand, to which Khujand belonged as did the rest of the Ferghana valley, was shattered by internal unrest. The expanding Russian Empire took this security threat at its southern boarders as a convenient pretext to take military action against the Khanate and to subdue it. Khujand was conquered in May 1866 and integrated into the Russian Empire's Turkestan Governorate-General. Russian imperial troops took up their quarters in the old fortress, the *Ark*.

The integration into the Russian Empire led to large-scale industrialisation of the region – coal mines were established in Shurab and Sulyukta, oil was found near Isfara, cotton and silk industries were set up. In 1898, the Transcaspian railway reached the Ferghana valley, giving new impetus to industrialisation and migration. Settlers from the European parts of the Empire began to come to Central Asia after serfdom was abolished in 1861, enabling landless peasants to settle eastwards. Khujand, though, did not receive its own railway station. The station was built in today's Chkalovsk, some 15km south of the town. Allegedly, the conservative citizens paid 50000 roubles so that the train bypassed the town (Kisch & Uhse, 1977, pp. 364f) and thus left them undisturbed.

The Russian imperial administration set up new administrative and military centres and engaged in a "massive exportation of architecture and town planning" (ifa-Galerie, 2009, p. 50). Some cities were built almost from scratch, such as the military fortress towns of Verny (today Almaty) or Pishpek (today Bishkek). In other cases, imperial authorities set up new Russian quarters adjacent to indigenous *(tuzemnyj)* towns. In most cases they were built according to standard grid patterns, with some notable exceptions: fan-shaped for instance, as in the new town of Samarkand, or radial as in Tashkent. Wirth describes them in most negative terms as "uninspired", "oppressive monotonous Russian new towns", "sober, almost primitive barrack settlements and residential districts", built with the aim to "settle the Russian conquerors separately, even isolated from the indigenous population, in order to prevent epidemics. In case of war and uprising, the aim was to create retreats which would be easy to protect" (Wirth,

2002, p. 53).

Although Khujand was a large city at the time of the Russian conquest, it was shunted aside by the Turkestan administration, as did the Khans of Kokand prior to the Russian conquest. Khujands merits as a city were well noticed but had no consequences for its treatment by the imperial authorities. The newspaper "Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti" related in 1868:

> *In all aspects, Khujand is superior to Tashkent, even if the latter was chosen as the local political and administrative centre and the capital of the Turkestan Governorate-General. Firstly, Khujand is located at the banks of the superb and copious Syrdarya river. Mountains surround it from all sides, with lush green gardens on their slopes. All this taken together – the water, the mountains and the vegetation in summer provides the air with pleasant freshness and purity, considering the local heat and drought. Yet in winter, it makes the air temperate. Secondly, Khujand is all surrounded by magnificent gardens, which here are more abundant than in other localities of the region. These gardens and fruits grow in astonishing abundance and supply as well the surrounding towns, including Tashkent (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, pp. 160–161).*

Khujand thus did not become a large administrative centre – only the seat of the Transdarya District, which encompassed the south bank of the Syrdarya from Khujand to Dzhizzakh (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 160). Neither did the city support a large garrison, or receive a substantial amount of European settlers. A full-fledged colonial new town, as in the above-mentioned cities, therefore never developed. A small Russian quarter – *mahallai Rusho* – was established in the very centre of the town, close to the river front, in the immediate vicinity of the *Ark*. It was then an urbanistic counterpart to the old town, although on a small scale. It boasted straight and tree-lined streets, presented as "signs of the superiority of the Russian/European culture which stood in contrast to the reportedly chaotic urban spaces of the Muslim world" (Stronski, 2010, pp. 19–20). Administrative buildings, an orthodox church and a park were built in the quarter.

No synthesis between the old town and the Russian town ever emerged. This concerns the urban forms as well as the population groups which barely intermingled. On the 'European' side, one reason for this was the image of filthiness and lack of hygiene attributed to the old city quarters (Stronski, 2010, p. 23). Another aspect concerned the street layout. As Stronski affirms, "Tsarist officials and their Soviet successors lamented the disorder of Central Asian settlements. They focused their criticisms on narrow streets, crooked alleyways, and dead-end pathways. For

Europeans, the old city was an incomprehensible maze that was difficult to navigate and could easily lead one to become lost and disoriented" (Stronski, 2010, p. 23). The old city thus had a clearly lower standing in the imperial hierarchy of values, and its reputation of unsanitary conditions, infections and mind-boggling mud paths was to be perpetuated in the Soviet era (Stronski, 2010, p. 22).

Today, only few remains of the Russian colonial quarter are visible. The church was torn down in the 1960s when the central "Old bridge", as it is called, was constructed. A former single-storey church annex is used today by the Traffic Police *(Tajik: GAI/BDA)* and well known for this reason. Painted in bright turquoise, one sees it every time when crossing the bridge, but there is no awareness of its age or history. The second still existing building from this period is a single-storey brick building one hundred metres further south, somewhat squeezed between residential blocks and the high-rise Hotel Leninabad. It houses the editorial departments of the government newspapers *Haqiqati Suġd* and a typographic centre. Yet the future of this building is obscure: regional authorities aim for the construction of a high-rise 'Press house' – *honai matbuot* – on the right bank, where publishing houses, editorial offices and typographies are to be relocated. The old typography is therefore threatened by demolition.

Arguably the main legacy of the Russian Empire in Khujand's morphology is the layout of the town's main street – today's Lenin Street – as the major artery running north-south from the train station to the river, where the Russian quarter, the fortress and the bridge are located (Mukimov, 2009, p. 447). Yet in my view, the strongest heritage of the Russian conquest is the promulgation of a most negative connotation of the 'Islamic-Oriental' old city.

4.2.4 The 'socialist city': towards industrialisation and mass housing

The 'socialist city' surely is the most visible layer of urbanism in Central Asia today. This is due to the large-scale industrialisation and urbanisation of Central Asia under Soviet rule. Along with producing a built environment, the Soviet era extensively generated urban ideology. An important part of this was academic knowledge production. After Bartold's seminal work, dozens of books appeared on the history of Central Asian cities. A number of edited works published both in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have attempted to cover Central Asian urban history very broadly, among them Ghafurov (Gafurov, 1979), Nilsen (Nil′sen, 1988), and Pugachenkova (Pugačenkova, 1989). On Tajik urbanism, the most important single work in my

opinion is the "Architecture of the Soviet Tajikistan", pulished in Russian with additional English-language image captions, by Veselovskij et al. (Veselovskij & Mukimov, 1987). This book has the stand-alone distinction to include Tajikistan's achievements in architecture and urbanism up to the mid-1980s. Almost all other publications take a purely historical stance toward urban development, with a particular emphasis on the late 19th and early 20th century. The co-authors of this book, Mukimov and Mamadzhanova, are as well the most prolific authors on Tajikistan's architecture and urbanism to date (Mukimov & Mamadžanova, 1990, among many others).

On Khujand, there is ample amount of literature on its history from the early beginnings until World War II. Two edited works exist which cover an array of aspects of Khujand's urban history. Both were published in 1986 to celebrate the city's 2500th anniversary (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, Asimov, Radžabov et al, 1986). Here as well there is a significant penchant for the late 19th and early 20th century. Research on that era was beyond political suspicion and furthermore offered the opportunity to conduct interviews with those who had witnessed pre-Soviet times, which resulted in detailed ethnographic descriptions of the old Khujand (Išankulov, 1972, Tursunov, 1974, Tursunov, 1976, among others). The accounts read like a 'musealisation' of a bygone era: the most minor details are thoroughly recorded, put on shelves behind glass, and left covered with dust. The copious amount of publications hides the fact that only a handful of persons were actually involved, and each of these persons covered one precise aspect of Khujand's history – Mukimov, for instance, the architectural heritage; and Tursunov the arts and crafts.

Very few Western studies exist on Soviet Central Asia in general, and this is also true for Central Asian cities. The region was barely accessible for researchers. The authors of the short 1961 volume on "Cities in Central Asia" readily admitted that the work was compiled "in absence of any reliable basis from which to work" (Central Asian Research Centre, 1961, p. i). Western scholars interested in the region relied on Soviet newspapers and encyclopaedias and limited themselves to the handful of cities which were accessible to foreign tourists, that is the five republic capitals plus the main tourist sights of Uzbekistan such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. In contrast to Soviet geographers who were preoccupied with economic statistics and rankings, the few foreign geographers who made it to Central Asia – East and West Germans for the most part – put an emphasis on morphology, among them Gellert (1967), Müller-Wille (1978), Fick (1971) and Giese (1980). They all mention the peculiar coexistence of an 'Oriental' old part and a Soviet new part; none of them ventured to Khujand, though. Yet here as well, the attitude towards the old city is largely negative. It is framed in terms of

"labyrinth" and "loam" (Fick, 1971, p. 170), without mentioning the cultural significance of the road layout and the *havli* arrangement.

At the time of the October revolution, the Khujand region was one of the strongholds of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia. This was in particular due to the presence of railway employees, miners in the Shurab coal mines, and oil workers at the Isfara pits – thus, a high concentration of industrial proletariat. No fighting was reported in the city in the wake of the October revolution. Neither did the Kokand Autonomy movement touch the city, all in spite of some support of local notables. Yet due to its location en route from Kokand to Tashkent, Party delegates proclaimed the town in December 1918 a "barrier between revolutionary Tashkent and counter-revolutionary Ferghana" (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 218).

With the Soviet rise to power, in the spring of 1918, the imperial Turkestan Governorship-General was transformed into the Turkestan Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (ASSR). The dissolution of the Bukharan People's Soviet Republic and the reorganisation of the Turkestan ASSR in 1924/1925 brought about the establishment of an Uzbek SSR, and a Tajik ASSR within the borders of the former. In this process, Khujand was incorporated into the Uzbek SSR, rather than into the Tajik autonomous entity. Five years later, Tajikistan was granted the status of a full-fledged Soviet Republic. Following this decision the Khujand region was attached to Tajikistan. Sinuous borders were meant to reflect intermingled residence patterns of different nationalities formed under the Soviet nationalities policy. The larger Khujand agglomeration now reaches out beyond the present state boarders: Kyrgyz settlements such as Arka or Kulundu are located some 20 km from the city centre.

From 1929 onwards, Khujand came under the jurisdiction of government of the Tajik SSR in Dushanbe. Yet from that moment on, Khujandis became the dominant regional fraction in the Republic's governing bodies. Contrary to the Khujand region, which was quite early directly incorporated into the Russian Empire, heavily industrialised, and exposed to Russian cultural influence, southern Tajikistan formed a part of the Bukhara Emirate, and was, after the October Revolution, a stronghold of the Basmachi movement. The Communist party had developed much earlier in the North, and thus was better organised, and deemed more reliable. From 1946 until the breakup of the Soviet Union, that is from Bobojon Ghafurov to Kahhor Mahkamov, all heads of the Party's Central Committee came from Khujand or its immediate vicinity.

The year 1932 marked the opening of the Khujand silk plant – an industrial enterprise of union-wide importance, a major light industry project of the first five-year plan. A large terrain on the

southern edge of the town was slated for construction. The same year, the Khujand cannery was opened on an adjacent terrain. At the time of planning, it was envisaged to yield one third of the tinned food production in the Soviet Union. The plants changed the town significantly, attracting a large number of technical staff into the town – Russians, Ukrainians, and Germans. The population increased from 34 thousand in 1920 to 77 thousand inhabitants in 1959[25] (see chart 2). Further changing the demographic picture of the region, many young Tajik women were enrolled to work in the silk plant.

Another main pillar of the large-scale industrialisation of the Khujand region was the extracting industry, in particular the Karamazor polymetal ore deposits, some twenty kilometres to the north. This mine evolved into the Khujand metallurgy plant, a high-profile enterprise which allegedly produced the first Soviet uranium[26]. Khujand and the surrounding towns of Taboshar and Chkalovsk were considered strategically important and enjoyed preferential treatment in the allocation of funds. As 'closed' cities, they "enjoyed the advantages of hosting an economic base subject to soft budget constraints, which meant a better housing supply, better social services and, indeed, a better urban infrastructure in general" (Gentile, 2003, p. 7). In 1936, Khujand was renamed Leninabad, "upon request of the whole population of Khujand and the kolkhoz workers of the Khujand district" (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 303). Yet the old name did not fall into oblivion and continued to be used for the district for some more years.

Starting in the 1930s, several two-storey buildings were erected, such as today's school Nr. 1 ("Pushkin school"), and the Pedagogical Institute on Lenin Street. The Women's Paedagogical Institute was erected in 1939. The building still exists and bears a Latin-letter inscription on its front: *Omuzişgohi pedagojii zanon* (see illustration 12).

The 1920s and 1930s marked a period when Soviet urbanists and architects conducted intensive research into what a socialist city should be. It meant, firstly, to overcome the backwardness of rural life, yet, ideally, not through a promotion of 'urban life' as such. Schmid recalls that "for

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25   This is by no means an exception in Central Asia. Dushanbe, the newly established capital of the Tajik republic, rose from 283 inhabitants in 1925 to 200'000 in 1959 (Mamadžanova, 2006, p. 174). The Kyrgyz capital Frunze experienced from 1959 to 1980 a growth rate of nearly 14% annually. Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 9.

26   Khujandis take pride in telling that this was the uranium used for the first Soviet atomic bomb, although Mayluu-Suu in the Kyrghyz part of the Ferghana valley also lays claim to these laurels. Anyway, there is indeed a lot of uranium in the mountains around Khujand. Tatiana recalls: "My uncle, by the way, went during the war to the mountains. He collected uranium and sold it to the state. After work he regularly went to the mountains. It seems that uranium was simply lying around there. He worked in the mines, and after work he went collecting uranium to support his family. And he was paid quite well. He was able to save a lot of money, but the uranium was heavy to carry, so he got a hernia, my grandmother told me" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). Even if the hernia is rather due to the weight of the parent rock surrounding the minuscule uranium inclusions, rather than to the weight of uranium itself, the account reveals the importance of non-ferrous metal mining for Khujand's local economy.

Marx and Engels, abolishing the antagonism between city and countryside was one of the first preconditions for the (communist) community. Engels had even explicitly called for an elimination of large cities. (…) This elimination should evolve into some kind of urban villages or rural towns, industrial settlements which would be equally spaced over the countryside" (Schmid, 2010, pp. 138–139). Yet through Soviet practice the city was exalted to become "the cradle of progress and (…) a generative model of transformative modernity" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 3). This instrumental understanding of the city is characteristic of Soviet urbanism. Humphrey argues that "the task of Soviet construction was to build material foundations that would mould nothing less than a new society", with architecture being "one of the key arenas of ideology" on its way towards the creation of the Socialist Man (Humphrey, 2005, p. 39). Soviet authorities "perceived the policy of a concerted regulation of space *(Raumordnungspolitik)"* as the key to domination and re-creation of the social body (Gestwa, 2004, p. 43) – and this instrumental conception of space has survived in contemporary Tajikistan as well.

"Socialist architecture" was declared socialist for its being built on socialist soil (Barth & Apolinarski, 2001, p. 11). Socialist realism in architecture firmly established the idea of what shall be understood as 'urban'. The postulate of 'socialist in content' and 'national in form' (Cooke, 1997, p. 138) determined the dichotomy which a truly urban architecture had to bridge: "quite subtle aesthetic tasks that the Stalinist party threw at their architects", as Catherine Cooke puts it (Cooke, 1997, p. 137). Social realism, understood as a method rather than as a style (Cooke, 1997, p. 144) meant that architecture was to convey a meaning, educating the 'Soviet citizen' who lived or worked within it, saw it while passing by, or looked at photographs. It was neither possible to define the characteristics of a "Socialist city", nor to lay out its development patterns. Consequently, "Cities on the territory of the Soviet Union were declared *de facto* socialist, thus ending the public debate over what constituted a 'socialist city', and along with this came a clear valorisation of the city over the countryside" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 8). If, "as Kotkin observes in Magnetic Mountain, it was hard to say what made a city socialist rather than capitalist, at least socialist urban engineers could point to what they rather hoped it was not" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 8).

In the case of Khujand, Soviet planners could clearly point to the old town quarters. In an export-oriented, German-language book on the Soviet Tajikistan of early 1950s, the author projects the stunning reader into a shiny metropolis:

> *The labyrinth of crooked and narrow streets, in which two pedestrians could barely*
> *pass each other, this labyrinth with all its tiny cramped streets, which pass like*

corridors along blind walls, with their dullness only interrupted by locked up gates, it shrinks more and more. Just some years more and there will be nothing more left of it under the onslaught of new, well-planned construction works. The flat roofs of the loam huts, the burying mounds of the countless holy persons (…), the dust and the filth – in short all the relics of an old time that passes by – are most deeply hated by the Soviet inhabitants of Leninabad. (...)

The streets of today's Leninabad are dominated by shadowy alleys, showcases, new bright coloured houses, cinemas, lawns and flowerbeds, water flowing through concrete trenches, loudspeakers, wide-opened windows of libraries, schools and other education institutions, typewriters rattling in offices, ice-cream kiosks, book stalls, restaurants, loud tooting automobiles, thousands of bicycles, colourful silk dresses, white raw silk suits and brightly shining lanterns at night. More and more rarely do you encounter an arba on the main streets, the two-wheeled chariot, and when it appears than around the old bazaar, but even then it is only a hindrance to kolkhoz lorries.

Loam gives way to asphalt and stones, polished marble, rough granite and diabase, bricks, corrugated sheeting and colourful plastering. The old mosques are no longer an adornment to the town; it now boasts colonnades and bright white statues. (...) The roads get covered with asphalt and tramway rails[27] (Luknizki, 1954, p. 70).

Similar to the conceptions of Russian imperial new towns after the conquest of Central Asia, the old city is described in negative terms. Modernisation of the society was to be reached through a modernisation of the built environment. In Khujand, too, Soviet modernity presupposed the destruction of the old town, and its replacement with large pre-fabricated housing complexes – the *microraions*. This planning agenda also had the consequence that investments into the old town quarters were very scarce. In most cases, the old town havlis were not even connected to the city's sewage systems. The streets remained largely unpaved. Other amenities, such as water and electricity were and still are rudimentary and of low capacity, which also meant that the old city housing stock could not compete for attractiveness with the emerging prefabricated high-rise estates.

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27   This must be imaginative wishful thinking, as Leninabad never had tramways, and a trolleybus system wasn't opened until 1970.

4.2.5 The great leap to the right bank

In the early 1930s, a floating bridge linked for the first time the right and the left bank of the Syrdarya. A bridge built with reinforced concrete replaced the floating bridge in 1955-56. This marked the beginning of Khujand's extension towards the Mogol-Tau range (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 425). The old town on the left bank was situated on a fertile plain, irrigated by the Syrdarya and its tributaries. The river's right bank however, surmounted by the Mongol-Tau range, was a dry stone desert and had not seen any significant human settlement. In the late 19th century, only a small cemetery and a prison were built there. The right bank was deemed unsuitable for housing in previous days:

> *(The right bank) was not used (for settlement) for thousands of years, it has a rocky terrain, it is shorn by numerous ravines, its slope faces south, towards the scorching sun, it is hot as a skillet, deprived from all vegetation, a hideout for lizards and monitors. (Veselovskij & Mukimov, 1987, p. 140)*

Nevertheless, an ambitious plan was put forward. The very first master plan of Khujand, laid out by Veselovskij in 1939, opened up the city towards the right bank. A further extension of the town on the left bank would have meant encroaching on valuable irrigated acreage surrounding Khujand's old town. The effects of this town-planning endeavour went way beyond new infrastructure and housing: it was a rejection of the old, Islamic, conservative Khujand and the construction of a truly Soviet Leninabad: it is not by chance that the first house on the right bank was allegedly built by the Party veteran Dadojon Jabborov (Radžabov & Hajdarov, 1986, p. 424). This was the starting signal for the construction of detached houses – the so-called Finnish houses *(finskie doma)* in the Yagodka neighbourhood.

Several revisions of the master plan followed in the 1950s and 1960s, until Veselovskij's revised master plan of 1966 (and its adapted version of 1979) laid out the urbanistic principles which characterise Khujand as of today:

- roughly half of the housing space is provided on the right bank;

- the right bank is mostly built up with large housing units *(microraions);*

- the old town houses are gradually to be replaced by large housing units;

- Lenin street is identified as the main thoroughfare and consequently accomodates the main representative buildings (Veselovskij & Mukimov, 1987, pp. 140ff).

Cutting right through the old town, Lenin street was broadened and saw modern buildings built all along its course. It served as the representative façade of Soviet Leninabad and perfectly hid the old city quarters from the view of any visitor. Even if the mahallas started right behind the new buildings, they were, and still are, invisible from the main street. On the way from the train station, the airport or the silk factory to the microraions, passers-by did not see a trace of the old city of Khujand, although it remained only one block away.

The microraions – numbered 1 to 34 – were laid out in two rows running east-west parallel to the river. Each one was to provide living space for 10000 persons. The first microraions to be built were the easternmost 31st, 32nd and 33rd. Given the low level of compliance to master plans, in particular in towns with one dominating industrial enterprise (Gentile, 2003, p. 10), as was the case in Khujand, Veselovskij's master plan was only partially followed[28]. Still, it remains the city's main zoning document until today.

The master plan vowed to destroy all old town quarters and to replace them with microraions. As elsewhere throughout the Soviet Union, "the residents of the old city lived permanently under the threat of demolition" (Tokhtakhodzhaeva, 2007, p. 110). Yet only very few quarters have effectively been razed in Khujand – the main attention was given to new developments on the right bank. As Benke argues in his analysis of 'socialist cities' in the GDR, major industrial plants, the absence of local urban bourgeoisie, and extensive construction works are the prerequisites for establishing a city with a socialist lifestyle (Barth & Apolinarski, 2001, p. 84). One reason for the extensive construction on the right bank and the lack of attention towards a reconstruction of the old town in Khujand lies in a wish to quickly establish a functioning socialist town alongside the old one. The second reason why new construction is preferred over reconstruction on existing sites lies in the lack of market-based land allocation mechanisms. Soviet urbanistic practice allowed for "planning, independent from conventional utilisation constraints and interest conflicts" (Barth & Apolinarski, 2001, p. 12), which led to an "absence of incentives to recycle land" (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006, p. 714). The inertia of Soviet planning therefore preserved the old city which it initially had vowed to destroy.

In the crooked streets of the old city, not only the houses, but also the social structures have stood the test of time. The mahalla organisation of the old city, for instance, persisted

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28   The feeble assertiveness of municipal planning authorities is discussed in detail in the chapter on adaptations of space.

throughout the Soviet era. Still, from being a self-organised neighbourhood unit it developed into an official subdivision of the municipal government, which encompasses several old mahallas. The mahalla committees serve today as the lowest executive organ responsible for implementing official legislation and norms at the neighbourhood level. (Marteau d'Autry, 2011, p. 284) The head of the mahalla administration *(raisi mahalla)* is subordinate to the head of the municipal administration *(raisi šahr)*. Furthermore, the official mahalla structures serve as intermediaries between the state and the citizens. It is charged with a number of administrative functions, mostly pertaining to citizen registration. Muhiddin, the head of the Mahallai Mirzoyon in the city's old town, lists the function of the mahalla as follows:

> *For instance, the registration of the population, registration of newborn, passports too. (The mahalla administration) is closest to the people. The administration of official registers, the documentation of the mahalla committee [...] Family affairs, weddings, festive reunions, mournings, all this pertains to the mahalla committee* (Interview Muhiddin, 2010).

This institutionalisation of the mahalla did not prevent neighbourhood interaction along the lines of the previous mahalla structures to live on in parallel. The new housing units were officially subdivided into mahallas too, yet the administrative character such as citizen registration and infrastructure governance, was much stronger there. Muhiddin describes these "districts of habitat and communal affairs" *(Žilišno-kommunal'nye učastki)* as "an entirely different story" *(Mahallaho dar mikroraionho ham hast, lekin in ta'rihi digar)* (Interview Muhiddin, 2010), lacking the strong communal bonds of the 'traditional' mahalla.

The situation that emerged in Khujand strangely recalls the situation in Samarkand or Tashkent at the time of the Russian Empire: two cities alongside each other, even divided by a river, built up with large housing estates instead of detached houses. The ethnic division was evident, too: the Old city was inhabited virtually exclusively by Tajiks and Uzbeks, and the microraions on the right bank by the large Russian-speaking population. On both banks, different ways of life came to the fore, as we will also see in more detail in Matluba's account in the chapter on perceptions of space. There was no "unbridgeable difference" between both parts of the city, contrary to what Liu observed in Osh (Liu, 2007, p. 67). The bridge functioned in one-way direction only, though: Tajiks surely moved to the new housing estates, yet virtually no 'Europeans' came to live in the old city.

There is no surprise in saying that the majority of the built environment in Khujand today actually stems from Soviet times: "these historically unique patterns of urbanisation' (...) will

remain with us for some time to come" (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006, p. 724). Gentile and Sjöberg rightly noticed that "the building stock, after all, is a rather conservative component of any landscape, but is nevertheless quite noticeable" (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006, p. 702). At the same time, the unbuilt heritage of Soviet times, such as the dissolution of the communal mahalla structures in housing estates, and the neglect of the old city, are likewise central to current conceptions of the Central Asian city

Soviet promises of modernity as laid out in the genplan remained in part unfulfilled. This was surely due to the unexpected demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent breakdown of the economy; but also to the inherent inertia and frictional losses inherent to Soviet planning practice which prioritised industry needs to the detriment of housing and infrastructure. The shortcomings of the planning process left many construction sites unfinished. Khujand's 3rd microraion virtually stands in the middle of nowhere, ten blocks surrounded by dust, halfway between the 8th microraion and an abandoned industrial estate. Yet in the Soviet conception of space, also construction sites – and not just the finished structures – would stand by themselves as symbols of progress. They heralded "development as forever" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 51). Unfinished construction sites were therefore paradigmatic for the Soviet city, in the same way as on-going renovation and improvement works – the "eternal remont". Following the Soviet anecdote – "I hope that in hell they will have an eternal fire and not an eternal remont" (Interview Sergei, 2010). Remont (and *evroremont*) of the years after Independence are therefore rooted in a Soviet line of heritage.

Indeed, Gerasimova has argued that already the Soviet society may be described as a "society of *remont*". Since the political and economic system of the Soviet Union was not conceived as an auto-regulating one, it was in need of permanent intervention. State authorities constantly made forays of "improvements, experiments and anti-crisis campaigns". The citizens, too, contributed to this "society of remont", either through low-key political activism within the allowed framework of grievances and petitions, or on an everyday level, through adaptation of the material world around them (Gerasimova & Čujkina, 2004). Looking at Central Asian societies through the prism of liminality allows us to conceive of them as 'societies of remont'. State authorities attempt to overcome the permanent crisis situation through large-scale campaigns – such as the Roghun share frenzy or the Dushanbe trolleybus purchases – which leads to unsustainable outcomes. The citizens take part in this system through urban gardening or housing adaptations – as we will see in the following.

4.3 Khujand after Independence

In this section, I will look at recent shifts in Khujand's conceptions of space. In a first part, I will explore how the paradigm of crisis and deficiency of Central Asian urbanity has come to supplant the Soviet modernist agenda. In a next step, I will explore how the demise of the industry and the rise of bazaars after Independence herald the return of an 'Oriental' urbanity. Then, I will turn to an exploration of the urban-rural divide in Khujand, and its implications for contemporary conceptions of space. The next part will deal with imageries of the urban conveyed by European and American cities, but also by labour migration destinations such as Moscow or Dubai. In a final part, I will present communication and communicativeness as important emic features of Khujand's urbanity by looking at the *gap* – an institutionalised form of regular get-togethers.

4.3.1 A crisis of knowing

In 1991, Tajikistan stumbled into independence, while the political and economic transformation inflicted severe hardship on the population. Soviet nostalgia is widespread, and the prospects for the future seem so far unconvincing to the population. In academic discourse, this situation has been described as "liminal" – a *rite de passage* into the unknown, consisting of "multiple separations, transitions, and reincorporations" (Czepczyński, 2010, p. 18). This rite de passage proved to be an enduring one: with the demise of the Soviet Union, "the ultimative failure of the underlying system [...] provoked a crisis of knowing that played directly into understandings of the self" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 3). This crisis paved the way to a "profound ontological and epistemological uncertainty" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 2) which we also might witness in the conceptions of urban space. This becomes evident at the level of academic knowledge production.

After independence, domestic production of academic knowledge almost dried up – first of all because of the lack of funding, but also because of an official science policy which, unsurprisingly, aimed at representative results instead of filling epistemological gaps. Tajikistan's current President Emomali Rahmon is the country's main archaeologist: the town

of Kulob was declared to be 2700 years old on his request to honour his home town[29]. A particular problem is the census data which is either outdated, unavailable or unreliable. The upcoming results of the 2010 census was possibly expected to shed new light on urban processes in the country. Scientific production in urban studies after Independence continues so far along Soviet lines, and focuses on the 19th century and on descriptive ethnography, while it does not yet contribute to an analysis of the contemporary urban condition.

Due to increasing difficulties in attracting young researchers, large part of the academic staff are ageing Soviet experts. Publication work goes on, yet new data sources are scarce, and links to debates in Russian or Western academia are virtually non-existant. Mukimov and Mamadzhanova, as well as Negmatov managed to publish several books on architecture and archaeology, even in the hardest years after Intependence, such as the Encyclopaedia of Tajik mediaeval monuments (Mamadžanova & Mukimov, 1993). Their recent books include a compendium on history and theory of Tajik town planning (Mukimov, 2009, p. 290) and on the urban development of Dushanbe (Mamadžanova & Mukimov, 2008). With regard to Khujand, they have published an Encyclopaedia of architectural monuments of northern Tajikistan in 1994. The single most important book on Khujand published after independence is the 1999 Encyclopaedia of Khujand (Abdullaev, 1999).

After the fall of the iron curtain, cities of the former Eastern Block experienced a massive surge in Western scientific interest. Experience in Kremlinology – the arcane science of interpreting official newspapers, speeches and messages from socialist countries – was no longer necessary for generating academic publications. 'Transitology' was the rallying term of the 1990s, that is an analysis of the path of conversion that cities in Central and Eastern Europe took towards Western 'normality'. However, the transitology lens was not able to address issues such as informality, differentiation and peripherisation (Pickles, 2010, pp. 133–134), which might have been at the heart of urban studies in the region. The academic focus soon shifted from normative transitology to a study of 'transformation'. Teleology was to be avoided; attention should rather be paid to ruptures and legacies, to specificities, biographies and perceptions. But still, defectiveness and social cataclysms constituted the central research paradigm – to the detriment of looking at emerging "new and different orders" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007,

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29   Evidence for dating was anecdotal at best: a brick oven was discovered but age determination was not feasible. The following equation was set up: there is the possibility that this oven could be 2700 years old, therefore there is no argument why it should not be that age. If there was a clay oven, then there must have been a settlement, therefore there are good reasons to celebrate Kulob's 2700th anniversary in 2006, as local informants related the story.

p. 11).

Apart from the attention devoted to defectiveness, scholars of post-socialist cities advance the concept that cities in their region of interest display a greater degree of complexity than other cities one could do research in. They arguably present an "incredible mélange of practices, rhythms and identities that flow through particular places; past and present landscapes seem literally to tumble over each other" (Smith & Timar, 2010, p. 122). Sykora has framed this "incredible mélange" as "asynchrony" on several levels, that is (1) between institutional, social and urban transformations; (2) between different city areas and (3) within the country, that is in regard to centre-periphery relations (Sykora & Bouzarovski, 2012, pp. 44–49). While some institutions, social relations and city quarters might function comparably to, say, the 'old' EU member states, others could still be plucked from the late Ceaușescu years. In other words, these cities are not only sites of density and complexity, but also time-machines of density and complexity still within walking distance – in Khujand on the same terms as, say, in Budapest.

Looking at urban studies, the "paths of post-communist urban transition" (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 95) vary considerably. But within the rather vague landscape of post-socialism, there is a core phenomenon of socialist legacies relevant to urban studies. Boren and Gentile have argued that

> *the strongest socialist legacies are evident where socialism was kept alive longest (most of the former Soviet Union), where it coincided with mass urbanisation (e.g. Poland), where the prestige of the system was given top priority (e.g. the central Moscow or Berlin showcase), in areas which hosted grand industrial projects (Nowa Huta), and in areas endowed with certain natural resources. (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 95)*

The cities of the former Soviet Union have a lot in common in many regards. The term 'post-Soviet' might therefore bear some analytical value, after all. The term sets the geographical scope of the fifteen Union Republics, but also refers to a common, historical, legislative basis, Russian as *lingua franca,* and a number of shared *doxa* of a common Soviet culture, all this with a relevant impact on physical, mental and lived spaces. In Lefebvrian terms, "space produced in one mode of production is never fully surpassed with the change of this mode, being constantly filled, regrouped or actively forgotten" (Stanek, 2011, p.66). The Soviet mode of space production is in this regard the point of departure – both in terms of urban ideology and the built environment – for space production in Khujand after Tajikistan's independence.

Although Central Asia opened itself up to foreign scholarship, it still remained at the periphery

of scientific interest. This has resulted in a drought of urban research in post-Soviet settings, and most saliently in Central Asia. Borén and Gentile (Borén & Gentile, 2007, pp. 105–106) considered the cities of the former Soviet Union to be still largely *terrae incognitae*. There are only rare exceptions to be found, such as the 2007 volume edited by Catherine Alexander, Victor Buchli and Caroline Humphrey – Urban Life in Post-Soviet Asia – which covered cases from Tashkent, Almaty, Astana and Ulan-Ude (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007). In the same line we can count Paul Stronski's (2010) and Jeff Sahadeo's (2007) works on Tashkent's urban history, and Morgan Liu's (2007) contribution on the Kyrgyz city of Osh, as well as the edited volume on "Ethnographies of Public Places in Eurasian Cities" by Darieva, Kaschuba and Krebs (2011). However, these works go largely unnoticed in local academia.

This peripheral position – not only in geographical terms, but also in terms of academic knowledge production – is all the more salient for small and medium-sized cities in the post-socialist context. As Sykora argues, "few metropolitan areas serve as the major sources of knowledge" (Sykora & Bouzarovski, 2012, p. 44). Capital cities such as Prague, Budapest and Warsaw were the sites of most urban research done after the fall of state socialism. In a slight eastward movement, scientific interest turned towards Tallinn, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Sofia. As far as Central Asia is concerned, the Uzbek capital Tashkent and the Kazakh capitals of Almaty and Astana[30] have attracted most scholarly attention. In this vein, Borén and Gentile (Borén & Gentile, 2007, pp. 105–106) rightly identified research beyond central cities and beyond city centres as necessary directions of further research. The crisis of knowing concerns therefore not only the populations hit hard by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but also the scientists working in the field.

The lack of research in peripheral contexts and a widespread emphasis on deficiency come together with the mentioned Soviet-era scientific tendency towards musealisation. This amounts to a paradigm of backwardness; to a stance towards the urban phenomenon which does not take new orders into account – and does not encourage their emergence either. In this regard, acedemic knowledge production on Central Asian cities finds itself in a position of decade-long *remont*.

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30   And, by extension, Atyrau, the oil capital on the Caspian Sea. Thanks to Adrien Fauve for the advice.

4.3.2 Bazaarisation: decline or rebirth?

Shortly after Independence, a civil war broke out in Tajikistan but left the country's North largely untouched. The Leninabad fraction supported the southern Kulobi fraction in its fight against the United Tajik Opposition consisting of Islamists and Democrats. It was in Khujand that Emomali Rahmonov was elected President of Tajikistan in 1992. The culture house of the Urunhojaev kolkhoz, where the election took place, has since become an important place for the regime's historiography. With the end of the civil war though, the Kulobi fraction seized all reins of power and appointed Southerners to leading positions even in Khujand. Protests against this policy led to bloody demonstrations in 1996 and 1997. Colonel Khudoyberdiev's revolt in 1998 fits well in this line of protest against Khujand's loss of influence after Independence[31].

There is no clear evidence as to whatextent Khujand ever profited from the fact that Tajikistan's leading figures of the Soviet era grew up there. But today, Khujandis look back with a certain nostalgia to times, when relatives employed in the "Centre" were able to "arrange things", and deplore that "they" – that is, President Emomali Rahmon's Kulobi fraction – "have taken over everything" *(vse podmâli pod sebâ)* (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).

The rise of market forces and the end of subsidies from Moscow led first to a closure of industrial plants, and the dismissal of thousands to the labour market. In Khujand, almost all major industrial plants closed down due to the lack of investment, loss of markets and emigration of qualified personnel. Some of the plants still operate, but on a much reduced scale. While the Leninabad silk plant employed some 10000 workers in the 1980s, its follow-up enterprises (Kabool textiles and Carrera) provide only some 500 jobs. Large brownfields have become characteristic for post-Soviet cities (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006, p. 722), and also for Khujand. The main road leading from the city centre to the south is a ten-kilometre-long succession of industrial remains, beginning from the silk plant, passing the cannery, the glass factory, the transport trust, and dozens of other decaying, if not abandoned enterprises, remnants of better times.

One employment opportunity opened up in the 1990s through the demise of the public transport system. This was mostly replaced by privately run minibuses – *marshrutkas.* Yet an even larger

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31   While Khujandis headed Tajikistan in Soviet times, today they are relegated to a lower position in the regionalist balance of power. It is interesting to note that all prime ministers of Tajikistan since 1992, with one exception from 1994 to 1996, were Khujandis.

part of the population turned to the bazaars to make a living. While in Soviet times only the Panjshanbe Bazaar persisted as major trading centre, a handful of new ones have emerged after independence.

Excursion: Khujand's other bazaars

The Jum'a-Bozor, located on the right bank between the new stadium and the 19th microraion, takes place, as the name suggests, on Friday mornings. It is mostly a clothing market, but also has some food stalls. It emerged as an outplacement of the clothing rows from the Panjshanbe Bazaar, yet it was intended to cater to microraion dwellers who do not have the time or the possibility to go to the city centre. The Jum'a-Bozor has seen hard times due to a lack of popularity as far as the clothing and food parts are concerned. At the same time, it has developed into a major centre for construction materials and hardware.

The Bozor-i Yagodka is a smaller food bazaar between the 31st, 32nd and 33rd microraions and caters to the needs of the neighbourhood population.

A bazaar was also set up to the west of the town in the Pakhtakor area as a replacement for the centuries-old Chorshanbe-Bozor in the vicinity of the old fortress. This bazaar did not catch on at all and is now reduced to a handful of vegetables stands.

The largest bazaar complex by far lies at the southern fringe of Khujand at the very heart of the Khujand agglomeration: on the main road to Chkalovsk and Ghafurov and on the crossing with the highway towards the east. For this reason, the bazaar is called the "Povoroti Qayroqqum" – the "Qayroqqum Turn". It consists of several retail and wholesale bazaar complexes on both sides of the highway. The flea market, the car market and the livestock market are also part of the complex. It is most active on Sundays, but sees a lot of activity on other days of the week as well.

The majority of my interview partners mention the Panjshanbe Bazaar as the most striking central feature of the town:

> *Now if you ask any citizen of Khujand, he will say Panjshanbe is the most important*
> *point in the city. And why? Because Panjshanbe is the centre. You could say the*

centre of the city, the centre of life. There are shops there and pharmacies. You will
find there everything you might need for your life [...] Now that I need more time
for my housework, I go and find everything ready at Panjshanbe, therefore I like
being there (Interview Muhabbat, 2010).

Muhabbat also insisted that Panjshanbe is not only the spatial, but also the centre of Khujand in terms of time and rhythms: opposite the bazaar, the city's main Friday prayer takes place in the Shaykh Maslihiddin shrine (Interview Muhabbat, 2010), and a large clock adorns the blue-clad shopping centre overlooking the bazaar square. The Panjshanbe Bazaar also appears on almost every single mental map of the city[32]. In some ways, there seems to be a rebirth of the oriental city, which had the bazaar as its major feature, as claimed by Wirth (2002, p. 151).
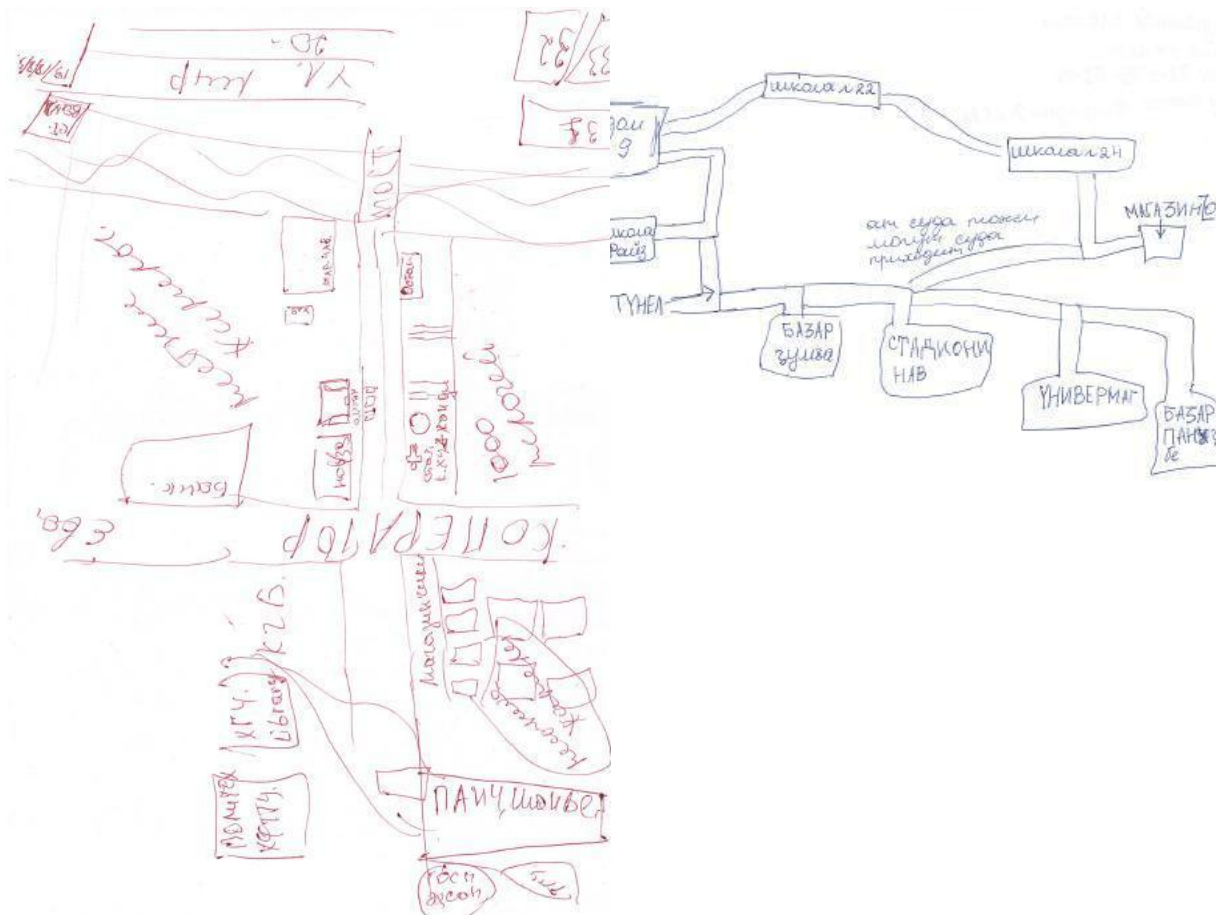
Mental map 1: Panjshanbe bazaar in the bottom right corner

Mmental map 2: Bazaars everywhere: Panjshanbe, Jum'a-Bozor, ‚Oasis' supermarket and ‚Univermag' shopping centre in one mental map

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32   The major role of bazaars within Khujand's physical space will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter on perceptions.

4.3.3 Dissolution of urbanity?

The Prophet said: in the countryside, there is one way to feed yourself. In the city, there are hundred ways. (Paẏġambar guft: qišloq ba âk rizq; šahar ba sad rizq) (Interview Nazir, 2010)

While life in Soviet cities was "after the 1930s, quite distinct from a rural way of life" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, pp. 2–3)", this does not unconditionally apply to Khujand today. The Soviet ideal of microraions as lighthouses of modernisation through urbanisation is being destroyed through an evident ruralisation of the courtyards which destroys the transmitted normativity of the urban and seemingly realigns the city to the countryside – this phenomenon will be discussed in detail in the chapter on adaptations.

In spite of the Soviet effort, the stigma of under-urbanisation sticks to cities of the Soviet Union already for a while (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 13). The rapid industrialisation of the country was coupled with an equally rapid urbanisation which did not leave time and possibility for a sustainable urban culture to emerge (whatever urban culture might mean). The massive housing construction programmes of the Khrushtchov era and beyond accelerated the urbanisation process: two-thirds of the USSR population were re-housed between 1960 and 1975 (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006, p. 704)[33] – which made the emergence of an urban culture arguably even more difficult. Looking at Tajikistan, Stephan has argued that the capital Dushanbe gave proof of an incomplete urbanisation, due to strong family ties to the countryside, economical ties to the agricultural sector, and an overall resistance against urbanisation and modernisation (Stephan, 2010, pp. 59–60). Following this line of thought, towards the end of the Soviet Union, its cities looked like cities but lacked the specific cultural attributes of their Western counterparts – and the idealtype of the Soviet urban agenda.

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[33]   The alleged inability of rural migrants to adapt to urban life has been discussed, also for socialist and post-socialist cities. Barth, for instance, reports of animals being kept in the newly built apartments in Eisenhüttenstadt, the GDR steel capital, in the 1950s (Barth & Apolinarski, 2001, p. 63). Projects of comparable scale currently take place in China or Turkey, for instance, where rural residents are massively being resettled in high-rise apartment blocks – which brings about significant cultural change. In Turkey, wardens are responsible to teach the newcomers a particular 'apartman kültürü'.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, even these presumed façades of urbanity have begun to crumble. While Soviet industrialisation brought about urbanisation, large scale de-industrialisation appears to be oftentimes coupled with de-urbanisation: "urban transformation appears to be going backwards" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 8). The process is particularly salient in Central Asia: "urbanity, in many cases, seems to be giving way to 'pre-modern' forms of living and sociality [...] Rural migrants from defunct regional centres bring with them rural habits and subsistence patterns" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 30). This process is linked to a number of factors: plant closures and lack of public funds have led to a decrease in 'urban' blue- and white-collar work opportunities. The emigration of the Russian-speaking population – who constituted the majority in many Central Asian cities – left the cities without "those who knew how 'city' works" (Interview Sergei, 2010). The influx of migrants from the countryside meant that 'urban' knowledge withered away. In some cases, pronounced population decreases made the situation even more salient. The divide between "civilized urbans" and "uncivilized rurals" (Schröder, 2010, p. 453) in Central Asia has already been repeatedly researched, with a particular regard to communitarian exclusion and the reconfiguration of 'urban' identity (Kostyukova, 1994, Yessenova, 2005, Schröder, 2010).

Looking back to Lefebvre, this presumed de-urbanisation appears as the perfect contradiction of his thought, in which he stipulated an assault of the city on the countryside. Schmid describes Lefebvrian urbanisation as "an entire urban system of objects: water supply, electricity, gas, automobiles, TV, plastic devices, 'modern' furniture, which also poses new challenges to the service sector. In parallel, there is the development of urban values: urban leisures, urban clothing, a quick adoption of fashions, and a rationality which is being propagated through the city" (Schmid, 2010, p. 127). This list of "'sociological trivialities' with wide-ranging implications" seems to be reversed in Central Asian cities. Water, electricity and gas infrastructures are failing; cinemas and theatres are closed down; rationality gives place to a presumably irrational, rural and foreign, Islam; altogether an assault of the countryside on the city. Still – this does not mean in my eyes that Lefebvre's concept should be dismissed. The situation in Central Asian cities only supports Lefebvre's demand to look at urbanisation as a process and to accept that this process may not follow a single predefined trajectory.

The youngest of my interviewees express the deepest despite for all which seems rural – but their point of view is not far away from that of elder Khujandis. One part of the story relates to their confrontation with poverty in the countryside, which is not so apparent in the city. When being asked about places she does not like, Firuza, a girl of 14 years exclaimed:

I don't like Qistaquz[34], I hate this Qistaquz! There are lots of poor people there and the town is not nice. They have so many sheep and cows. And in Khujand there are not so many sheep. I don't like it because when there are sheep, it stinks, that's why I don't like it there (Interview Firuza, 2010)

Her eighteen-year old brother Olim confirmed this view later on: "Surely, life is better in the city than in a village *(qišloq)*. There, the people are completely poor. I just don't know what they live on, I can't imagine." (Interview Olim, 2010). Firuza and Olim have spent all of their life in Khujand. They were born and raised in an apartment block right in the town centre. They come from a relatively well-off family. While their father is working abroad, the mother takes care of the children.

Related to their disdain of rural poverty is their fear of electricity cuts. They are strongly associated with the countryside, and blackouts in Khujand are being interpreted in terms of de-urbanisation:

I like it a lot, living in the city. In the countryside (qišloq) *there is no water and here we always have water and gas and electricity. But there, all is empty (Interview Firuza, 2010)*

Another aspect, why life in a town is preferred over life in the countryside, is access to a wide range of choices, understood in some way as an infrastructure of opportunities.

It's good to live here. We have a library and a cinema and many other things. You can go to the internet-café and the schools are good as well. (Interview Olim, 2010)

To be sure, there has been no gas in Khujand since a couple of years. And anyway, Olim does not frequent the library or the cinema, but the feeling that he could, shows that he sees the city as an arena of opportunities, which does not exist in the countryside.

The next aspects relates to people and their manners. In the villages, people seem to be 'abnormal' and follow strict Islamic dress codes, of which a young girl disapproves:

The people here are different, the people there are different. Here, people are normal (normal'nye) *[…] There (in the villages) they wear long dresses and long sleeves, but here in the city long dresses are not in fashion (Interview Firuza, 2010)*

Those who have experienced both worlds generally have a more balanced view, but still do not

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34   A small town in the southern vicinity of Khujand

consider rural life to be suitable for themselves. Parviza regularly visits her mother who lives in a small town to the north-east of Khujand:

> *From a women's point of view, living there is very harsh. The havli requires a lot of strength. You have to sweep the floor every day. Then you have animals. My mother keeps at least two [...] It is difficult to look after them and you have to tidy up, too. [...] Perhaps it's good for the children because they can play in the courtyard. You don't have to worry and they are in the fresh air [...] But no, that's nothing for me (Interview Parviza, 2010).*

Others view rural life as a kind of Arcadia, particularly suited to pass their old days there. Akpar, a businessman at the Panjshanbe Bazaar, likes the idea of moving to the countryside when he will retire:

> *(My wife) often compares living in the village to life in town. She says that it was better in the countryside. The air is fresh there, but here, it's noisy and there it's quiet, all normal, so she says that it was better in the village then. [...] I really can imagine myself living in the countryside. I would like living there, I think. (Interview Akpar, 2010)*

This bucolic representation of the countryside as opposed to a loud and dangerous city seems not too surprising after all, yet it does have its roots in the classical European conception of suburbia, for instance advanced by Ploch: "the idea of the village is rather characterised by a wish to escape. It corresponds to the received romantic imaginaries which, not to a small degree, were shaped by urbanites" (Ploch, 1995, p. 35).

An important aspect of a perceived ruralisation is the widespread demographic shift. The Russian-speaking population has mostly left Khujand following Independence and the economic downturn. Migrants from the countryside came to Khujand and brought 'rural' customs and a 'rural' way of life with them. This creates conflicts over the right way to behave, and these conflicts shape the long-time residents' conception of what the city of Khujand actually is:

> *If original people (korennye lûdi) live together, they know each other, rather than people who came from some place (otkuda-to naehavšiesâ). This is why the place here was called 'khub jand' – good people. And those who come now are not that way (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).*

At the same time, people in Khujand know very well that many more rural migrants are moving

to the capital Dushanbe, and are very happy that this is not the case in Khujand. At the same time, the problem is less salient because most of the rural migrants come from northern Tajikistan themselves, therefore from the extended suburbs of Khujand:

> *The intelligent part (of Dushanbe's population) began to dwindle, people started to move away, the city was flooded by rural population. Everything began to change virtually overnight. These people have the mentality which makes them unable to make use of the possibilities the city offers them, right? They have their own needs, their own norms of behaviour. When the number of these people increases even lightly, then they begin to dictate the life of the city, and city life begins to change (Interview Tahmina, 2010).*

> *There (in Dushanbe) the city is divided into four districts, and there are a lot of people coming from outside* (priezžie). *But here, we only have our own people, the local ones* (zdes' naši tol'ko, mestnye) *(Interview Matluba, 2010).*

People who identify themselves as long-time residents employ harsh terms in order to accentuate the distinction between 'them' and 'us', framed in terms of a distinction between the countryside and the city. They refer to the quality of life, to security, infrastructure and communicativeness, to higher wages and 'culture'. They formulate claims and react negatively when their conception of urbanity is not met, as we will see in the chapter on adaptations. The city of Khujand and the countryside have begun to approach each other – looking at the spread of urban agriculture, crumbling infrastructure and demographic shifts. Yet still, this does not soften the conceptual difference between city and countryside, which still is very saliently felt. Looking back at Lefebvre, this comes close to his claim that "the opposition between 'urbanity' and 'rurality' sharpens, while the opposition between 'city' and 'countryside' weakens" (Lefebvre, 1972, p. 79).

4.3.4 Institutionalised communication – the 'gap'

Even though the inhabitants of Khujand are quite critical towards countryside life and countryside values, one particular aspect stands out. Compared to Khujand, the rural population has conserved tight neighbourhood bonds: "Life in the countryside is different from life in the city: [...] They build their houses together, marry their children and live closer to each other than people in the city" (Interview Muhabbat, 2010, pp. 00:23:14-4). And this apparently got

lost in Khujand: "Previously, people lived as a closer community *(posploŝënnee)*. When there was a celebration *(tuy),* the whole mahalla would come to help you" (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010, pp. 00:01:35-7). Life in microraion apartments might have contributed to dissolution of pre-modern sociality – as the Soviet planners intended it. Parviza receives many less visits in her apartment than in the village, and she does not seem to regret it:

> *To me, life in the countryside means that there are always guests coming, and relatives. At my mother's place there is always someone. We live in the district centre, so everyone who comes from other villages – our good or not so good acquaintances, father's relatives – when they go to the hospital or something, they think they have to come along or to stay overnight. You spend a lot of money on the house, so that there is always enough to eat for all the guests. In an apartment it's somewhat easier. All people think that when you live in an apartment* (v sekcii), *then they rather won't come. Even to my apartment, which is rather big – four rooms [...] I've told you, this year I have bought a one-room apartment in the 32nd (microraion), and I am perfectly sure that people won't come to visit me. They would think: 'it's just one room, she doesn't have so much place for herself'* (ko mne ne budet nikto prihodit'. Vse budut dumat' – odnokomnatnaâ, ej samoj tesno)" *(Interview Parviza, 2010).*

Yet when interlocutors compare their home town Khujand to places abroad, the picture looks different. Akpar, who has lived a couple of years in Dubai, considers that Khujand stands out in terms of communication:

> *Dubai is beautiful if you compare the buildings, but if you look at the people, our town is better, I think. In our town, people like to communicate. You won't see such thing in Dubai. You could live there for ten years and still not get to know your neighbour, who he is and what he's doing. But here, neighbours communicate closely. But you know, in Dubai, who lives there? You might see only Indians, all newcomers* (priezžie). *You rarely see an original* (korennoj) *inhabitant; all are migrants: from America, the Philippines, India, from different countries (Interview Akpar, 2010).*

Firuza, the director of an NGO and a language school, also considers communication as a distinctive pattern of the Khujandis' way of being urban. Her family belongs to Khujand's urban elite. Although she had spent her childhood there, she moved to Dushanbe afterwards and came

back "due to circumstances" during the civil war.

When I moved to Khujand [...] first it was a psychological trauma for me. [...] I thought, I'm not in a city [...] I saw, the streets were somehow strangely crooked, I don't figure out why [...] But then I understood: by its contents, Khujand is a city (Â ponâla, čto po soderžaniû, Hudžand – èto gorod) *[...] Usually, you think that rumours usually spread faster somewhere far way, at the periphery. But here, I understood that it's not just gossip, it's some etiquette* (èto ne prosto razgovory, èto kakoj-to ètiket). *First, I thought people were just gossipping about someone. Then I was really surprised that they provide you with information. In a friendly way they provide you with an information which you will need at some point. This is why we become part of this flow* (my vlivaemsâ v èto) *and we make an effort. When you meet someone, you have to tell him something which he might need. It's not about spreading gossip, that's an information transfer going on (Interview Tahmina, 2010).*

And the best way to pass on information is through people. If you need something, you say it, then we will pass it on. People know it themselves and take part in transmitting information [...] This is why I think, passing on information is a mentality of a developed society. Not reasoning, but the transfer of information, without adding your comments (Interview Tahmina, 2010).

Children, too, underline this communicative density of Khujand, as compared the countryside: "Here, we go to parks and sit together – that is, we have a communicative *(obŝitel'nyj)* town" (Interview Firuza, 2010). Indeed, Low has argued that urban public spaces serve as "spatial templates of urban symbolic communication" (Low, 1996, pp. 400–401), which enable people to share information, and thus to pass on a "metropolitan knowledge", a particular urban culture.

One reason why Khujand has become such a 'communicative town' is a social institution which Khujandis consider to be a particular feature of their town – the *gap*:

A gap *mostly takes place once a week. Men meet each other according to their interests, for instance classmates from school or the university, or friends. They meet once a week or once a month and they cook palov. By the way, they usually cook very good palov with a lot of mutton and good quality oil, because they take turns in cooking [...] Previously, this took place in a choykhona, but today some people do it at home as well [...] For women this existed as well, but it was mostly a venue for choosing brides, and today it is not so widespread. But the male*

tradition still holds on (Interview Muhabbat, 2010).

Indeed, the gap is by no means an urban tradition: Kandiyoti has described in detail the gap practices in rural Uzbekistan. After a period of decline, this practice enjoyed a revival in the 1970s in Uzbekistan's cities. Women's gap circles emerged. These get-togethers had not only the purpose of socialising, but increasingly involved money gathering and distribution among its members (Kandiyoti, 1998, pp. 570–571) – which I did not witness in Khujand. As Muhabbat remarked, the meal – in male circles invariably a palov – is the only element of conspicuous consumption involved. Matluba regularly meets her former classmates, each time in another restaurant (Interview Matluba, 2010). One gap circle comprises around ten to twenty people who all have something in common: a circle of art teachers and artists comes together in a choykhona at the Syrdarya river; the gap of the chair of ethnography and archaeology takes place in the teachers' room; the friends of the shoemaker Nabijon meet up every first Sunday of the month at his cabin. Others meet in the courtyards of the housing estates or at home. People usually take part in several gap circles; yet being member of more than three or four gap circles is often seen as a burden, because of the investments of both time and money which are involved (Interview Sherzod, Interview Nazir, 2010).

Gaps mostly take place at lunchtime or on weekend mornings. The meetings are in general very informal. The gap members come in casual dresses; often alcohol consumption is involved. People keep coming along, sit a while, and go their ways. Yet apart from the sociality aspect, I would side with Firuza in her interpretation of the *gap* as a node of intense information exchange[35] with wide societal implications:

> *At a gap, people meet regularly. They collect information and everything is kept under control. They would also tell you how someone has managed to achieve something, or if there are some problems. If you know about a problem, it is easier to solve. This helps. It is amazing: after the civil war when the state and the legal system did not work, society lived on by its own rules. Here, society did not wear out* (ne razboltalos'), *because legal norms exist and are communicated independently from state control [...] People take responsibility and speak with each other. This is why they got through it here (Interview Tahmina, 2010, pp. 00:18:18-0).*

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35   In this regard, the gap comes close to the Afghan *maylis* – "a cultivated social reunion", where Afghan men "pass on information while socialising" (Baldauf, 2007, p. 137).

While the urban mahalla has lost a part of its potency as a site of information exchange and societal control, the gap as an institutionalised site of information exchange has come to supplant it. Because of its flexibility, and its attractiveness as a form of non-hierarchical sociability, the Khujand gap was able to adapt to individualisation tendencies and the rise of apartment housing. At the same time, mahalla structures were not as keen to adapt to new conditions, and transformed to administrative units instead. In spite of also being a widespread feature of rural communal life, the common perception goes into framing the gap as a genuinely Khujandi marker of 'being urban'

4.4 Concluding remarks: the not-so-disappearing old town

Looking at mental maps of everyday life in Khujand, it is striking that the old city, with its maze of crooked streets, its mosques and ponds, is constantly omitted. Even people who live in the old town do not draw it, and rather concentrate on the central street and a couple of landmarks.

Henri Lefebvre's theory of space production comes in handy to make sense out of it: I would argue that there is a blatant discrepancy between the physical presence of the 'Islamic-Oriental' city in Khujand, and the still dense social interaction within it – and its conceptualisation by many Khujandi inhabitants. As we have seen throughout chapter 4, the old city is being ascribed largely negative qualities. The domination of negative connotations began with the Russian conquest of Central Asia and was exacerbated under Soviet rule. The image of danger and filthiness, which the Russian colonial administration imprinted on 'indigenous settlements' stuck, and grew in Soviet times. During the Russian Empire, state authorities made no serious attempt to raze the old town. Soviet state authorities, though, had much larger – albeit unfulfilled – ambitions, as witnessed by Khujand's general plan. This also meant that no considerable investments flowed to the old town, which therefore lagged behind the new residential buildings in terms of infrastructure provision. After Independence, a re-valorisation of the old city did not take place, in spite of a general discursive recourse to history for nation-building purposes. A presumably Western urban modernity, characterised by high-rises along broad streets, remains the dominant paradigm. With regard to the old city, this means that it still under threat of destruction.

Apart from projecting the old town into a future speckled with high-rises, Soviet academia has looked at the old town as a remnant of the past, not as a lived and living organism. The preservation of historic sites was uniquely geared at landmark buildings, such as the Shaykh Maslihiddin shrine, but not on the built environment and socio-material fabric of the old city. This attitude persisted after Independence. As Pincent argues, "the urban (built) heritage is a state concept which is used for economic and political needs, not for historic ones. It aims above all at monuments which are useful to political authorities, and does not bother with historical authenticity which is so dear to the Occident" (Pincent, 2009). A striking example of this thinking is the Regional Museum in Khujand, which is situated at the edge of the old fortress. According to its employees, the Museum's backyard is going to be transformed into a narrow and winding bazaar street recalling Khujand's old city. (Interview Kibriyokhon, 2010). This bazaar replica will provide a stage to present old arts and crafts in an 'authentic' atmosphere.

The old city in its musealised form does indeed fit into the dominant urban discourse, while in real life it does not.

With this in mind, I would argue that inhabitants do not seem to consider the old town quarters to be 'urban', not 'representative' enough to be talked about as part of the 'city'. Informants consequently omit it on their mental maps. In my view, this omission is not only an effect induced by the method of mental maps, which tend to omit negatively connoted spaces, but runs deeper into their conception of urban space.

A good example of this attitude towards the old town quarters is the account of Bakhtovar. He was born in an old town havli and continues living there. In his eyes, the dissolution of the *hashar* principle contributes as well to the rejection of loam architecture, which still prevails in the old town, due to its short lifespan:

> *My house depends not only on me, but also on my neighbour. I cannot prevent him from water his garden, or raising a wall, can I? Particularly now, in our times. Watering the garden, planting trees, this all has an influence on the house. Moisture destroys it. Therefore it is impossible to rely on this house (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).*

The instability of the loam architecture, combined with prevailing urban agriculture and an apparent lack of planning, would eventually become a main argument against the Oriental city. The subsequent Russian imperial and Soviet conceptions violently clashed with that distinctive logic of space conception which relied not on "physical landmarks but (a) shared conceptions of the social order" (Eickelman, 2001, p. 96). This conflict continues today: the town's old quarters which still boast distinctive features of the 'Islamic-Oriental' town' are neither conceived as 'urban' nor as 'modern'.

In this line of thought, Bakhtovar would like the state to raze the old town quarters and to replace them with new high-rise buildings. In his own way, he gives a couple of good arguments against life in the old town, and shows the attractiveness of the Soviet conception of urban space.

> *This is one step forward on the stairs of human growth, of civilisation. (…) In the mahalla, previously, I was satisfied with one type of comfort, but when I move to this house, I will have all amenities: sewage, hot water and the like. Right? That's better; that's how it is* (Esli v mahalle menâ ustraivalo kogda-to odno udobstvo, a vot â prišel v ètot dom i tut u menâ vse udobstva, i kanalizaciâ, i gorâčaâ voda i tak dalee, pravil'no? Èto lučše, hamin hel.) *(Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).*

I would gladly move, and others would, too. Because – I have to repeat it – mankind is moving towards civilisation. Then now, let's assume they tear down our mahalla. We'd say 'thank you' for that. If they build a new house, we will gladly move there. Because all is pretty, all in one place. In previous times, people perhaps did not understand that […], but today it's different. We too, we want to see our city well-arranged and beautiful, that is with obodi, *with central streets and alleys* (My hotim tože blagoustroennym videt' svoj gorod, krasivym, obodi značit, s central'nymi ulicami, s alleâmi) *(Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010)*

We don't know when they will implement the genplan. We are ready (to move). Because one day, there will be construction going on. And, after all, the houses will be very beautiful. There, at the library, they will build four sixteen-storey buildings, all the way to the hospital. And from the houses to the river, there will be a workers' recreation zone. Is that a bad thing? They will tear down all the one-storey-buildings (odnoètažki), *and make a park there […] That's what the genplan proposes. We are happy. We welcome that (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).*

Infrastructural improvements feature prominently in Bakhtovar's argument against havlis, and in favour of multi-storey buildings. The mere idea of having running water, canalisation and decent bathrooms in a havli is not even worth thinking about, as it seems. Furthermore, the 'right' sort of urbanity, in his eyes, is not compatible with single-storey housing. The old town, finally, with its crooked street layout, the lack of infrastructures, and the loam architecture, runs against Bakhtovar's conception of *obodi,* which comes out as the central ontological category agains which the quality of space is assessed.

The old town, however, physically persists, and, most probably, will do so in the years to come. Yet on the conceptual level, its qualities have all but vanished, which lays the discursive foundation for large-scale demolition projects. Should, some day, potent investors lay their eyes upon some old town plots, it will be easy, no doubt, to convince both authorities and inhabitants that 'mankind is moving towards civilisation'. The characteristic features of conceptions of space in Khujand, namely the striving for modernity, the neglect of the old town, and a musealisation of history, will also reappear in the following chapters – albeit from different angles.

5 Perceptions of space

5.1 The bodily experience of space

The last chapter was devoted to conceptions of space, to the ideologies which have, over time, shaped the spatial knowledge of Khujand's inhabitants. In this part, I will look at the "sedimented histories" (Reeves, 2011, p. 312) of these conceptions, that is, at the built environment, or – in Lefebvre's terms – the physical field of production of space. In the last chapter, *remont* appeared, for instance, as the need to raze the old town on grounds of its defectiveness. In this chapter, *remont* would refer to a positive or negative state of upkeep, as Khujandis perceive it. Yet my aim is not to provide an inventory of buildings and their development over time. What counts is the process of space formation: in everyday life, the built environment is the space which users *perceive* and *experience*. The everyday life is the framework for an exploration of the physical space. This part deals therefore with everyday spatial practice: how do urban dwellers use and experience urban space? Apart from interviews, I will rely on mental maps collected during the field trips to Khujand. In this part they will help to discern relevant spaces and to redraw patterns of everyday movement. Exploration and appropriation of the physical space take place through movements. The first part of this chapter will therefore be devoted to mobility and its implications for space production. In a second step, I will delve into the spatial practice of Khujand's inhabitants and present a number of case studies, which should allow us to trace everyday perceptions and experiences of a Central Asian city.

Looking at the materiality of urban space poses, to begin with, a problem of perspective. One surely could write a book on Khujand's urban space, relying exclusively on remote sensing. Maps and satellite images are relatively easy to access, and indeed, tell a lot about the extent of the old town, the microraions and the abandoned industrial areas:

> *Urban patterns of various regions and cultures appear at the first glance confusing and puzzling. Only a close look reveals the intrinsic logic, which every urban pattern self-evidently possesses. How to 'read' these structures? One could propose a historical approach, as well as a typological or a morphological one. From a historical point of view, traditional, colonial, post-modern or completely recent structures become apparent, which haven't existed before. With a typological and morphological interpretation, one might find blocks, rows and clusters, open and closed (elements), organic and seemingly chaotic patterns of settlements and cities (ifa-Galerie, 2009, p. 51).*

This view from above comes close to the perspective of a tourist who looks at the city from the observation deck of a skyscraper. But this is also too often the view of planners and architects. This leads to projects and decisions imposed from above, based on elitist aesthetic discourses or on purely functional considerations which neglect the perspective of its users and neighbours (Basten, 2009, p. 7)[36]. The problem with the built environment is that it cannot be avoided, not only in New York, London or Paris: "When artists fail, you can ignore their work. When architects fail, you walk by their buildings every morning on your way for coffee shaking your fist" (Ouroussoff, 2009, p. 12).

The perspective from above makes it impossible to reveal the social dimension of space. Yet – just going there is also not as straightforward as it seems: When Schlögel writes a book on cities of Eastern Europe, his research consists in walking the streets, and exposing himself to the *genius loci* (Schlögel, 2003, pp. 269–274). The individual reading, the intimate personal experience of urban space becomes the centre of attention. What was important to me in this part, was to explore the intimate personal readings of city dwellers. My own walking experience, as well as my previous exposure to remote sensing data, serve as background information to the presentation and interpretation of observations, interviews and mental maps.

Yet before going into the depth of the urban experience, there is just one word which deserves further refinement: 'reading' the urban space. Jacobs has exposed how the spread of Lefebvre's theory of the city as a socially produced space has led to a surge of semiotic approaches to urban studies. As appealing as it appears, a narrow definition of "reading" is prone to lead to simplistic conclusions:

> *The source of understanding is assumed to be in the material objects produced rather than in the ideology and practices of which they are a product. At worst, semiotic studies can become vehicles for individualistic, although often entertaining, pronouncements on the meaning of the built environment. Barely grounded outside the author's own perceptions, such readings may search for origins and essences which belie the fluidity of meaning and power associated with the urban built form. (Jacobs, 1993, p. 831)*

Text and experience are therefore two different things. In order to grasp the urban experience, one needs to "attend to it as peculiarly condensed material" which "is not the ornamented 'froth'

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36   A perspective from above might pose problems not only when it comes to questions of urban planning. In a larger post-socialist context, Sliwa rightly observes a "bird's eye perspective of transitology and neoliberal ideology" (Sliwa & Riach, 2011, p. 24.)

perched on a more fundamental reality, it is rather the experience of ambiguity, of thickly compressed meanings that can't be entangled and arranged into neat, legible patterns" (Highmore, 2005, p. 6). "Reading" the city in this sense necessitates therefore giving a voice to the ambiguities of urban experience. It is by means of case studies in this chapter that I endeavour to *make vivid* these cultural ciphers (Highmore, 2005, p. 6).

Furthermore, we have to overcome the idea that "reading" the city amounts to its visual experience. As Lefebvre argued, seeing can be a trap: "People look, and take sight, take seeing, for life itself. (…) We buy on the basis of images. Sight and seeing which the Western tradition once epitomized intelligibility, have turned into a trap: the means whereby, in social spaces, diversity may be simulated and a travesty of enlightenment and intelligibility ensconced under the sign of transparency" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, pp. 75–76). Experiencing the city requires all senses, and an analysis of the city must therefore adopt a "touchy-feely" approach (Sliwa & Riach, 2011, p. 28). This recalls Lefebvre's proposal to think of the built environment not as text but as texture (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 118) – a phenomenon to be felt rather than to be read. Sliwa presented how smell can be used as a resource to explore the city and its transformations (Sliwa & Riach, 2011, p. 28). In particular the ephemeral nature of smell makes it worth exploring – in contrast to the built environment, which is to stay for decades if not for centuries. The bodily experience of mobility within the city is one further category neglected by a simplistic understanding of the city as a text. For this reason, the urban experience of mobility will also play a role in the following.

Excursion: orientation and city maps

Maps are a valuable tool for orientation in an unknown environment. But maps serve other purposes as well, and they are not innocent while doing so. Maps shape our image of the city, and can therefore have a profound impact on mental maps. If drawing, for instance, a mental map of Berlin or London, many might rely on the subway network plan, and distort distances, angles and scales accordingly. Maps lead us to our destinations, but maps can also mislead – not because of a lack of cartographic literacy on our part, but on purpose. In short, maps are situated at the crossroads of space conception and perception – at the crossroads of ideology and everyday routines.

Maps want to appear as conveying "true, probable, progressive, or highly confirmed knowledge", based on "measurement and standardization" (Harley, 1989, p. 4). Giving in to the apparent accuracy of maps neglects that maps are social constructions, too (Crampton, 2001). Admitting that space is a social product in a Lefebvrian sense, implies admitting that representations of a socially produced space are themselves socially produced. Soviet maps happened to be the trigger to the emergence of the critical approach to maps: in the glasnost era of the 1980s, the world got to know that Soviet topographic maps were falsified on purpose in order to mislead the enemy. The ensuing public outcry was based on the fierce conviction that "Western maps are value free", objective and truthful (Harley, 1989, p. 5). Questioning this stance led to the emergence of a "critical cartography" (Glasze, 2009) which transcended the front lines of the Cold War. Maps thus appear as (re)productions of social order, and instruments of domination.

Indeed, there is a lot to criticise with Soviet maps. First of all, maps were very scarce, and of those that were at all available, the content was often doubtful. Borén and Gentile attribute this to "the real socialist fear of accurate information" (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 101). Detailed topographical maps were in most cases intended for military purposes (and geological surveys, to some extent), and therefore classified and withheld from the general public. The case was even more difficult with detailed city maps: they were not available at all. Instead, tourist plans were on sale, which, however, were rather conceived as souvenirs than as a help for orientation. As a matter of fact, individual tourism was a rare feature, and participants of an organised group tours with a guide did not necessarily need maps. Soviet tourist plans were therefore, as a general rule, not to scale, "starkly reduced and had limited circulation; they were disproportionate and incomplete" (Pilz, 2011, p. 82). Smaller residential streets did not appear

on these plans. At the same time, far-away suburbs could be included on the plans, as long as they had representative value, as Pilz observed on Tbilisi maps (Pilz, 2011, pp. 86–88).

The Khujand/Leninabad area was, like other parts of the Soviet Union, covered by detailed topographical maps, down to a scale of 1:50000, but these were classified and therefore beyond public reach. Leninabad's being a closed town for most of its existence also meant that tourist groups were not as common as for instance in the Republic's capital Dushanbe[37] (Interview Vladimir, 2010). The only city map of Leninabad which I have found, is a 1982 tourist plan (Ûnusova, Marafiev, & Pilipenko, 1982). It shows the major streets and quarters on both sides of the Syrdarya River as well as the main monuments, sights, museums, libraries and theatres. The available information on the city centre is summarised, and the street alignment is rather sloppy, but the map can still be useful to locate the major streets of the old town, for instance. The map's most astonishing feature is however that it is wrong in regard to the microraions on the right bank. Instead of being aligned in a row running east-west, they are shown as arranged in two diagonally arranged blocks. Consequently, all the streets, landmarks and blocks on the right bank are grossly misrepresented. The reason is difficult to unearth: Marafiev, who served as consultant for that map, is a historian and expert of Khujand's quarters (see map 2 in annex).

This map, faulty as it was, did not do much harm however, since its circulation was without doubt very limited. The most detailed map of Khujand available today is an annex to the Khujand Encyclopedia (Abdullaev S. A. (ed.), 1999), drawn by hand by Khudoyberdiev, most probably tracing against the light a declassified topographical map (see map 3). The author has taken some liberties as far as the industrial areas on the right bank are concerned, but still, this map remains the most reliable and accurate printed map of the town. It is relatively expensive, for it is only available as part of the Encyclopedia, but still, it is up for sale in Khujand's major book store. The map measures 20x30 centimetres in its paper version, yet I have seen it as a digitally enlarged A0 poster print in one real estate agency and one government institution – which once again suggests that this is the most accurate map available. Still, one other map of Khujand is known to most of its inhabitants: it is painted on a large board located close to the entrance of the city park in front of the reconstructed walls of the old fortress and shows the Syrdarya River and indicates the extent of Khujand's mediaeval fortifications. If there is one map which has had an influence on mental maps of Khujand's inhabitants, then it is this one.

Bill reports that a new map of Khujand is on the drawing-board (Bill, 2010, p. 243), but was

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37   This also meant that one was not allowed to take photographs from above the second storey of a building, which explains that very few panoramic photographs of Leninabad do exist (Interview Vladimir, 2010).

not available as of the initial writing of this work. Other maps exist, but are never seen in public. The 2000 Lonely Planet guide to Central Asia boasts a map of Khujand (Mayhew, Plunkett, & Richmond, 2000, p. 443) which is even significantly less detailed than the Soviet 1982 map. It does not show much more than Lenin Street and some buildings alongside of it, and omits the rest. A detailed map of Khujand is found on the rear of the 2008 Orell Füssli map of Northern Tajikistan (2008a) (map 5 in annex) – yet it is rather awkwardly framed so that it leaves out a large western chunk of the city, and furthermore failsto number the microraions. This makes the map much less useful than it could be. The map also seemingly served as the basis for the one provided in Bill's recent guidebook on Tajikistan (Bill, 2010, p. 198). The 2009 tourist map of Tajikistan by Map Factory (2009a) features a detailed and colourful map of Khujand (map 4) – the best map to my eyes, had they numbered the microraions on the right bank. Yet at the time of my field research it was only on sale in Dushanbe, and was therefore unknown in Khujand.

As for on-line maps, which are readily available today, Yandex Maps – the most popular resource for the Russian-speaking online world – did not cover Tajikistan in detail (2012c). Google Maps had an astonishingly detailed coverage of Khujand, yet in English only and therefore inaccessible to most Tajik users (2012a), while the open source OpenStreetMap coverage was still very rudimentary (2012b). Interestingly enough, the collaborative platform Wikimapia (2012) showed some intense mapping activity for Khujand with hundreds of objects named on a detailed satellite bottom layer.

Still even this bottom-up cartography seems to reproduce the neglect of the old town. In Wikimapia this might be due to the fact that most mapping activity in Khujand is performed by Russian-speaking emigrants, who map places they fondly remember – and the old town is not a part of it. In this vein, the Soviet conception of space gains momentum in contemporary cartography. All other maps also share a neglectful handling of the old town: either it is not shown at all, as on the Lonely Planet map; or it is visually assimilated to the rest of the city – with a handful of larger lanes depicted just like ordinary streets elsewhere in town (the Soviet 1982 plan and the 2009 tourist map); or some of its streets are sketched, but mostly without being labelled (the Encyclopedia map, Orell Füssli). There are practical reasons to do so: the small and winding lanes are difficult to depict and the data is very scarce. Still, in my view, this once again illustrates the low status of the old town – in the same way as it appears (or rather does not appear) in the mental maps collected in Khujand. The printed maps have probably not influenced that because of their limited circulation, but they run in parallel to this very state of mind.

With printed maps only scarcely available, the importance of personal, bodily experience for orientation is even higher than generally assumed. The system of orientation heavily relies on daily routines and modes of mobility and is therefore intrinsically marked by gender, income, education, cultural and linguistic background (Istomin & Dywer, 2009, pp. 40–41). This is why mental maps of Khujand's inhabitants may provide fruitful insights into systems of orientation, and the undelying assumptions. Boren and Gentile argue that "given that most urban communal and commercial services such as shops [factories, and other objects] tended to stay under conditions of central planning, the inhabitants of socialist *urbs* generally knew their city better than their capitalist city counterparts" (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 101). Pilz endorses this point of view and advances that in the post-Soviet city, orientation "is made on the basis of general directions and conspicuous landmarks of the city such as shops, house colors, oriels, towers, monuments, etc. […] this system plays with fine nuances and presupposes a lot of local knowledge" (Pilz, 2011, p. 81).

This orientational framework might explain the use of the imaginative and catchy toponyms one encounters in Khujand (and elsewhere in Central Asia). Toponymic innovations are also fostered by the rise of the marshrutkas – the ubiquitous minibuses which carry the majority of Khujand's passenger load – which are not required to stop at predefine stops. The passengers need to clearly designate intermediate locations, also between road intersections. In Khujand's 18th microraion, marshrutkas generally stop three times along one 400-metres-long snake-like building; first at its beginning, coming from the centre: "Sari dom" – "start of the house"; "Tonnel" – a passageway underneath; and "Asal" – "Honey", for the name of a shop in front of it. This system of orientation might also explain why new street names do not catch on: it is less a question of ideology and nostalgia: the old ones are just too necessary for an orientation without maps[38].

Maps are one noteworthy element of the production of space. In the same way as space itself, maps are social products, too – and are important for each of the three fields of the social production of space. Maps are not innocent in this regard, but show and conceal the 'necessary' features. As officially endorsed, or just publicly available representations of space, they reflect, as we have seen, dominant conceptions of space. They also influence the perception of space – both by their presence and their absence. Their absence in Khujand adds to the importance of an immediate experience of space for orientation, and therefore provides a particular structuring

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38   Publishing a detailed city atlas with new names might help the authorities to entrench the new names in popular conscience. It provides the new names with an orientational authority, and decreases the need for the 'traditional' system of orientation. This is what happens in Bishkek and Osh, and it seems to work, I would say.

of space perception. Furthermore, the lack of codification enables a creative production of toponyms in spite of official attempts to introduce new ones.

5.2 Mobility

5.2.1 Rhythms bound in space

An analysis of urban mobility opens the research perspective towards a spatio-temporal rhythmanalysis of everyday life. Rhythmanalysis, which we have looked at in detail in the theory chapter, can be understood as a relationship between "movement and spatial arrangement" (Highmore, 2005, p. 9). Rhythmanalysis is therefore a way of looking at the mobility of people, goods and ideas. Without bearing the label of 'mobility studies', Central Asian studies have been, since the very beginning, concerned with mobility. The Silk Road – both as mystery and as reality – has brought the interplay between transportation and culture to the very core of Central Asian studies. Continuing Richthofen's works on flows of peoples, tradesmen and armies along the Silk Road (Richthofen, 1877, pp. 5–6), Fick argued for looking at transportation as a "worldwide ordering power" (Fick, 1971). Contemporary scholars, too, affirm Central Asia as a region "shaped by movement" (Reeves, 2011, p. 323).

In urban studies, the city has repeatedly been described with reference to metaphors of circulation, in particular since railways tremendously changed urban landscapes in the second half of the 19th century (Schivelbusch, 2000, pp. 152ff). Some decades later, the 'mobility turn' brought increased attention to the subject, and scholars have called for a "movement-driven social science" (Büscher & Urry, 2009, p. 100). Theories of the mobility turn propose to think of any form of mobility as "intertwined with space and power" (Jensen, 2011, p. 256). Transportation is therefore a part of the "politicised armature" (Jensen, 2009, p. 150) of urban life and a "potential venue for new articulation of politics" (Jensen, 2009, p. 155). With this toolkit in hand, the social negotiations of space production in Khujand may come to the fore. In the following, I will sketch the development of Khujand's transportation infrastructure with regard to the perception of the urban landscape. In a second step, I will address the interaction between social status and transportation.

When looking at mobility patterns in Khujand, borders are an important conditioning element, enabling and foreclosing mobility rhythms. The Tajik Ferghana valley is linked to the rest of the country only by a bottleneck with just one route crossing the mountain ranges. In winter,

this highway is generally closed to traffic, so that Khujand is cut off from the rest of the country. To the east, the north and the west the Tajik Ferghana valley is surrounded by Uzbek territory. In Soviet times, when borders between the Union republics merely existed on paper, Khujandis considered their city as a suburb of Tashkent:

> *I once went to Moscow, my aunt lives there. The distances there are infernal. We went to a concert: a two hours ride to go there, and another two hours back. In Soviet times, you would even make it from here to Tashkent in two hours. When there were no borders yet (Interview Tatiana, 2010).*

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, border regimes have been continuously tightened. Since 1999, Tajik citizens need a visa to cross the Uzbek border. This engendered severe economic and social problems in the Valley – which have since received broad scholarly attention (Megoran, 2006, Reeves, 2011, p. 307). Khujand lost its status as regional transport hub, which it enjoyed for a short period in the early 1990s when the borders were open (Interview Tatiana, 2010). Electricity and gas imports from Uzbekistan came to a halt, with tremendous effects on industry and private homes. Since the dispute around the completion of the Roghun dam, train connections, which have to cross Uzbek territory, are continuously interrupted on an unforeseeable basis. Only the border to Kyrgyzstan remains easy to cross – so that connections to the Kyrgyz Batken region are widespread and regular: my Tajik teacher at the university used to commute weekly to his relatives in Leylek, while a friend's father used to take his beehives to pastures in Kyrgyzstan each summer.

Borders and border regimes are an integral part of space production in Khujand. Soviet nostalgia means to long for a time when relatives on the other side of the border with Uzbekistan could be easily visited. It also means remembering the price of a plane ticket to Moscow (60 roubles) (Interview Nazir, 2010); and the fond memories of students betting who will get farthest with fifty roubles in the pocket, the winner giving a call from Vladivostok (Interview Sergei, 2010). This unlimited mobility within the Soviet Union, however, came at the price of very limited possibilities to go abroad, which are now open – to those who can afford it.

5.2.2 Public transport in Khujand – Soviet legacy and new mobility regimes

On a trip to Soviet Central Asia in the early 1970s, Fick exclaimed that in "virtually each large Central Asian city, the intra-urban transport is splendidly organised" (Fick, 1971, p. 190).

Indeed, the role of public transport systems was very prominent during the Soviet era, both in terms of the passenger load and in terms of the urban ideology. Their position within the administrative hierarchy gives a hint in that direction: urban transport systems were in the area of competence of different ministries of the member Republics – buses mostly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Automotive Transport, and electric urban transport systems under the Ministry of Communal Services. A system of cross-subsidies and annual debt write-offs maintained the financial survival of these systems (Akimov & Banister, 2010, p. 7).

In Khujand, the trolleybus network started operating in 1970, following the city's main commuter flow: it ran from the microraions on the right bank via the main street southwards to the silk plant. Well after independence, the network was extended in 1999 towards the railway station in Ghafurov[39]. Trolleybus systems were at the time of construction in the Soviet period promoted as spearheads of modernity. Postcards and guidebooks feature high-rise buildings along wide boulevards, with trolleybuses running on the lanes[40]. Trams and trolleybuses are largely associated with the Soviet era: support for the trolleybus in the population is coupled with Soviet nostalgia. Publicly owned enterprises which guarantee low prices and offer free transport or reduced fares for particular categories of the population still refer to of a romanticised Soviet past (Interview Amonjon, 2010, Interview Kibriyokhon, 2010, among others).

5.2.3 Rise of the marshrutkas

As in other Soviet republics, economic decline and political turmoil of the 1990s were mirrored by an abatement of publicly run transport in all cities and towns in Tajikistan. Responsibility for running urban transport systems was transferred from central ministries to the municipalities, without any appropriate transfer of funding (Gwilliam, Kumar & Meakin, 2000, p. 1). The ageing rolling stock was decaying and no funding was available for the purchase of

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39   This investment provided an important link, but was unsustainable at the time of construction, as no new trolleybuses or even spare parts were included in the investment package. It served above all as a showcase for the urban administration which was willing to present itself as catering to the population's needs.

40   The Soviet Unioneven spread the equation of trolleybuses with modern urbanism to Afghanistan. A trolleybus system for Kabul was planned in the mid-1970s as part of the urban development plan proposed by Leningrad specialists in the framework of Soviet development aid to the country, and executed with Czech technical assistance (Klimov, 2009, p. 2). The trolleybus system eventually opened with great pomp in February 1979, only some months after the Sawr revolution which brought the People's Democratic Party to power.

new vehicles or the maintenance of overhead lines. Running vehicles were taken out of service to cannibalise on the spare parts. Municipalities throughout Central Asia attempted to privatise bus fleets and created legislative frameworks for route tendering in the course of the 1990s – with various degrees of success (Akimov & Banister, 2010, pp. 9 ff, Gwilliam, 2003, p. 8). Contrary to bus systems, trams and trolleybuses did not lend themselves to privatisation due to high initial investment costs and remained therefore a severe financial burden on the urban budgets. The municipalities had to either keep up a high levels of subsidies – up to 70 % of the running costs according to Akimov & Banister (2010, p. 18) – or decide to close down the systems.

In the course of the 1990s, trolleybus traffic in Khujand became very irregular. Firstly, the lack of spare parts and neglect of overhead wirings led to frequent breakdowns. Secondly, unstable electricity provision destroyed the image of the trolleybus as a reliable means of transport. For these reasons, the trolleybus network was closed "indefinitely" in 2008 (2008b), yet surprisingly re-opened in 2009[41] (V sogde posle dolgogo prostoâ, 2009), with two buses running on the north-south line. In the course of my fieldwork in 2009 and 2010, I luckily witnessed running trolleybuses in Khujand (see illustration 20). Only during the last field trip in autumn 2010, I learned that trolleybuses had stopped running once again due to the breakdown of an electric substation. Neither the trolleybus agency nor the city administration were willing to shoulder the funds for repairing the substation, although the necessary investment would have only amounted to two working days with the appropriate equipment. As of 2010, the trolleybus enterprise only received 12000 Somoni (2000 €) a year in subsidies from the city administration – it was therefore impossible to pay for this larger repair (Interview Amonjon, 2010). The remaining handful of trolleybuses in working state therefore are rusting in the garage, while the drivers have left for Russia. No 'big' buses are seen on Khujand's streets either, at least not for urban transport[42] – fostering the image that 'big' buses or trolleybuses are not appropriate vehicles for urban transport (Interview Amonjon, 2010).

New needs and possibilities, a new legal framework and new struggles for livelihood have

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41   The swift reopening was only possible because it did not require any new investments: no repairs did take place and the funds for electricity and salaries were already budgeted. It was first of all the conviction of the city administration that trolleybuses would signal to the population that electricity supply was stable and available (albeit it was not), presenting the trolleybus service as a barometer of electricity provision, and a sign of a functioning state (Interview Amonjon, 2010).
42   Two buses remain on intercity routes, though: one red-coloured Ikarus 250 running to Zafarobod, and one LAZ 699 in yellow livery en route to Taboshar, both in dire condition. Furthermore, a dozen old LAZ buses shuttle schoolchildren and other 'volunteers' to cotton fields during the picking season, which does, however, not contribute to the popularity of 'big' buses.

drastically changed urban transport, as "new forms of social networking co-evolve with extensive changes to transport and communication systems" (Gillen & Hall, 2011, p. 33). While public transport enterprises were unable to meet basic mobility needs of the population, the gap has been filled by an ever growing fleet of marshrutkas[43]. In times of the Soviet Union, they institutionally reported to taxi companies rather than to the bus or tram companies which were meant to carry the majority of the passenger load according to Soviet urban planning principles. The taxi companies of the Soviet era were thus able to survive as large marshrutka providers, since they were independent from the ailing bus and tram companies. When industry plants were closed down and released thousands of persons into unemployment, the privatised marshrutka sector was able to absorb a large proportion of the working force, as the market entry barriers and necessary initial investments were very low. Every sixth vehicle in Tashkent's urban traffic is a marshrutka, and the proportion is comparably high in other large cities of Central Asia. Additionally, a considerable number of persons works on popular marshrutka routes on private cars, most of them on a part-time basis. Transportation is thus a vital branch of the Central Asian economy: Akimov & Banister estimate for Uzbekistan that one family in ten is supported by a member driving taxi or minibus (Akimov & Banister, 2010, p. 28).

In Khujand, Sorbon – the privatised former taxi company – boasts a market share of around 90 per cent, employing salaried drivers as well as free-lancers with their own or leased minibuses, operating in a virtually unregulated and untaxed 'shadow market'. In order to integrate the marshrutka economy into a legal framework, a drastic regulatory campaign was launched. Since 2010, Marshrutkas and taxis in Tajikistan are required to seek official registration, to pay licence fees and bear special licence-plates. There surely are several shortcomings with regard to the marshrutkas, such as safety issues, low comfort when cramped, transport chaos around main stops, no reduced fares for pensioners or students, and so forth. Yet the major issue is that financial flows in the marshrutka sector are difficult to trace and to tax. Drivers usually pay a flat licence fee – which evidently does not apply to thousands of unlicensed free-lance drivers – and then keep the surplus. Structurally, the marshrutka sector operates therefore as in the early 1990s. Moreover, many Khujandis associate marshrutkas with the negatively connoted 'wild 1990s', with chaos, danger and struggle for survival[44]. And still – marshrutkas are one of the

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43   Marshrutkas first appeared in Soviet cities in the 1930s. At the beginning, they played a minor role, yet an ever-growing one, in particular since the first domestically-built minibus – *RAF-10* of Latvian origin – appeared on the market. Contrary to standard taxis, they were assigned to fixed *marching routes,* thence their name. They provided a comfortable, albeit a rather expensive express service on major urban thoroughfares. See also illustrations 19, 21, 22

44   This point is particularly interesting from the point of view of nation-building. Regulation (not only of the marshrutka sector, but thought at large) was a central feature of administrative modernisation attempts of the 20th

very few functioning sectors of the economy, apart from bazaars and, to a minor degree, the mobile phone system and resource extraction. Getting a hold of the previously unregulated marshrutka sector and embedding it into a legal framework would show that the state has overcome the crisis of the 1990s, and has regained stability and regulative powers. At the same time, the ongoing regulation and consolidation of the atomised transport sector would additionally open up new illicit income opportunities for the bureaucracy through tendering, licensing and taxation procedures (Interview at the vegetables kiosk, 2010, Interview Davvom, 2010).

Given the role of the marshrutka sector in providing livelihoods for thousands of Khujand's citizens, marshrutka regulation is a politically highly sensitive issue. Even prior to regulation, the drivers' profit margins were low, as most of them had to pay out of their own pockets for fuel, maintenance and repair, and eventually, installments for leased cars. Resistance patterns have therefore developed in order to circumvent registration[45], but with relatively little success.

Legal regulation of the *marshrutka* sector goes hand in hand with a strict spatial regulation aimed at establishing representative town centres. Akimov and Banister state for the case of Tashkent that the "leadership cares about the image of the city […]. Private providers' use of older buses from less reputable firms would negatively impact the city's image" (Akimov & Banister, 2010, p. 24). In Khujand's city centre, marshrutkas are only allowed to use designated stops, and a large marshrutka station was set up in the vicinity of the main bazaar. The topography does not allow banning marshrutkas from the main street altogether, as happened in Dushanbe, for there is no viable alternative to the Lenin Street. Yet the ambition is there to get marshrutkas off the streets: the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development pledged to provide a credit of US$ 61.5 million for 600 new buses and trolleybuses. The first hundred Chinese-built buses were due to arrive towards the end of 2011 (Mèr Hudžanda 2011), but as of this writing, the buses had not appeared on the streets yet.

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century, as Highmore argues (2005, pp. 6–7). As far as Tajikistan is concerned, attempts to promote nation-building through an education of urban culture indeed take place by means of urban transport.

45   Most prominently in Dushanbe, where unregistered vehicles play hide-and-seek on the streets, taking their destination plates down when a police patrol comes in sight. They pretend to be private people on a private trip, and put the plates back up again afterwards.

5.2.4 Public transport: a question of status?

The choice of a particular mobility option largely depends on income, which structures perceptions via the choice of the transport mode. Due to lack of data, it is impossible to say which part of Khujand's modal split is covered with cars and marshrutkas or buses, and which with other modes of transport, be it walking, cycling, or driving by private car. From interviews and observation, I would argue for a relative victory of marshrutkas, since they are popular even for short distances of one kilometre and less, for instance, on the central stretch of Lenin Street from Panjshanbe to the Univermag stop at the southern bank of the river. One additional reason for marshrutka dominance is the division of the city into two parts, with the microraions on the right bank, and the commercial centre and the old town on the left, which generates impressive traffic flows across the Syrdarya bridges. Furthermore, marshrutkas also operate on minor streets and even penetrate into the old town, which is a rather uncommon feature in other cities of the region, as far as I know. Firuza attributes this to the particular ingenuity and entrepreneurship of the Khujandis (Interview Firuza O., 2010). Another reason for marshrutka dominance is the agglomeration effect: Khujand is the centre of a continuous urban area which is home to some 500000 inhabitants, and includes the cities of Chkalovsk, Ghafurov and Qayraqqum and a score of minor settlements. The ties within the agglommeration are quite dense and commuter flows are high. Marshrutkas often are the only choice for thousands of bazaar vendors, university students and employees. Since in most cases there is no organisational difference between urban and suburban marshrutka lines, you can have a one-seat ride from the 12th microraion to the village of Alga, located some twenty kilometres to the south – already in Kyrgyzstan.

As we have seen, marshrutkas are a major means of transportation; but they also are a major economic factor. Apart from the minibuses, a large number of private car owners use their own car to earn money as unofficial and occasional taxi driver, for instance on their own way to work. This additional source of income became possible with a surge in car ownership since the 1990s. The car trade, including lorries, marshrutkas and private cars as well as construction equipment, has evolved into a profitable sector of the economy. Several interview partners claimed that Khujand was a hub for car trade: second-hand upper class vehicles from Germany, mainly Mercedes, Audi and BMW are being sold to Latvia and Lithuania, where Khujandi

traders buy them and drive them all the way back to Tajikistan, or forward them by rail[46] (Interview Davvom, 2010).

In the Soviet era, private cars were very much sought-after, very difficult to obtain and therefore there were very few on the streets, all the more so at the Central Asian periphery. As Fick prosaically notes, "private cars stand back in the urban landscape. Instead, the large number of trucks is noticeable. Bikes are extremely rare" (Fick, 1971, p. 190). Indeed, car ownership in the Central Asian republics was distinctly lower than the USSR average, but nevertheless steadily rising (see chart 4).

The increased car ownership in urban areas is linked to the possibility of gaining one's livelihood, or at least to supplement the family income using the car for occasional taxi services. Nevertheless, the car is an important status symbol. Olim for instance will only get his driving licence in one year's time. But he is already a proud owner of a Volvo which he inherited from his deceased grandfather. After school, he works in a car wash in order to pay for parking his car directly in the courtyard. He does not want his car to be left in his relatives' havli outside of Khujand, but insists that he wants his friends to be able to come and see it. Another part of his salary goes for car care products, which he devotedly applies each Sunday on the car he is still unable to drive (Interview Olim, 2010). Still, even today, middle-income families in Khujand, often do not have a car on their own, but one car in one extended family has almost become a rule.

Today, public transport in Central Asian cities is predominantly used by lower income classes (Grdzelishvili & Sathre, 2008, pp. 7–8, Gwilliam, 2001, p. 112). At relatively low (albeit steadily rising) cost, public transport allows one to increase one's "potential action space" (Dijst, 1999, p. 165), and therefore the potential range for working and supporting oneself[47]. The use of public transport has constantly been increasing, after a severe decline in the 1990s (United Nations, 2007, pp. 132f). In Khujand, riding the interurban trolleybus line to the main bazaar

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46   This is also true for the marshrutka sector which lives according to the rhythm of import waves: in the course of the 1990s, Latvian RAF-minibuses were mostly replaced either by second-hand Western products (domestically refurbished Mercedes-Benz Sprinter and Ford Transit vehicles) or since the mid-1990s by Russian Gazel' (GAZ 3221x) minibuses. In the mid-2000s, Chinese eight-seaters manufactured by Hafei were actively imported to Tajikistan and became locally known as 'Tangem'. Since 2010, Tangem cars are banned from Dushanbe and spread to the peripheries. In the capital they are being replaced by larger Hyundai Starex vans, allegedly in a move of some government-affiliated business circles to boost Hyundai sales and to bring the profitable marshrutka sector under their control (Žiteli Dušanbe kraje nedovol'ny vvedennym, 2010).
47   This is particularly important for the poorer strata of the population. Bertuzzo has shown for Dhaka that the lowest income groups are the least mobile (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 202). She did not imply a causal relation, while authors of the mobility turn do, arguing for the concept of a "mobility capital" (Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye, 2004, p. 751, Jensen, 2011, p. 256.)

costs 0,50 Somoni, as opposed to 1,70 Somoni for a marshrutka ride, in 2010. Furthermore, publicly run transport offers fare concessions for veterans, pensioners and schoolchildren, which barely exist on marshrutka routes. Transit enjoys "high social importance", and "serious disruption to public transport (…) might undermine the political stability of the city and even the country" (Akimov & Banister, 2010, p. 24). Due to their relatively lower income, public transport users are very sensitive to the price of transport fares (Grdzelishvili & Sathre, 2008, p. 8). Fare increases give rise to publicly voiced protests, which otherwise are very rare: in Khujand a fare increase had to be taken back due to citizens' pressure.

Largely used by less well-off classes, the social prestige of trolleybuses is low. As opposed to that, marshrutkas, valued for their speed and relative comfort, are used by people with higher income. This results in blatant disdain expressed by middle and upper class citizens towards trolleybuses. Colloquially, public transport in general and trolleybuses in particular are called "lokhovoz", which roughly means bumpkin-mobile. In Dushanbe and Khujand trolleybuses are explicitly labelled as "kambaghal-arba" – pauper carriage. The attitude towards minibuses is different: informants claim them to be a more prestigious means to move around town. Much in line with the observations in Khujand, Sliwa and Riach have observed an olfactory stratification of the post-socialist society, which is, linked to public transport: to put it simply, "on a bus, it stinks"[48]. They have termed it a "ghettoisation of bodily smell in public transport" while the "private car acts as barrier of being exposed to other people's personal smells" (Sliwa & Riach, 2011, pp. 32–34). This aspect considers public transport as a means for everyday space production and sense-making. The sensory landscapes of movement (Jensen, 2011, p. 265) link mobility and power, and public transport plays a still neglected part of it.

By keeping up trolleybus systems, authorities pretend to continue running a Soviet-style public service and welfare system and present themselves as caring for the population. They provide a Soviet-style 'care' – *zabota* – in an environment otherwise characterised by economic competition and the state's retreat from public service provision. Public service provision is in this vein understood as a "moral economy of gift" (Gestwa, 2004, p. 54). Gestwa argues that this gesture forced citizens into non-repayable moral debts, with political subordination as a consequence. The state is regarded as the ultimate provider of potential movement. It offers "mobility capital", to employ Jensen's terminology (Jensen, 2011, p. 256). With regard to space

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48   Which does not imply that a crowded marshrutka smells better than a bus – but the preferences are clear.

production, mobility capital allows one to increase one's grasp of urban space, which is fundamental for its perception. Offering of mobility capital must be seen as a strategical tool of the state: Jensen argued that "moulding late-modern subjects takes place also through her or his mobile practice" (Jensen, 2011, p. 259): Even if the state is unable to provide appropriate pensions, at least it strives to provide for public transport opportunities. Even if the nouveau-riches drive around in their SUVs, the state cares for the poors' way to work as well.

Walking also plays a role for diserning the role of mobility for the perception of Khujand's urban space. Although marshrutkas are popular for short trips, too, the modal split share of walking is indeed very high. Those interviewees who live on the left bank – that is in the city centre and the old town – almost unanimously said they would cover all distances by foot. Some are not able to afford a marshrutka ride, others consider the distances too short:

> *Going by marshrutka? No, I prefer walking. I like it, and I'll make some economies. Money is difficult to come by, and there is not enough work (Interview Khurshed, 2010).*

> *We use the marshrutka very rarely. I don't need it. I walk to my work, and when I need to do shopping, the bazaar is just here. And to the kindergarten we bring her (i.e. his daughter) by foot, too. In general, we use the marshrutka only rarely. At times, when we have to go to some distant place* (kuda-nibud' agar), *if we are invited or the like (Interview Akpar, 2010).*

With de Certeau in mind, walking is a central feature of urban life, and a subversion of dominant modes of mobility (Certeau, 1984, p. 93), as his famous quote goes. Experiencing the city on foot does provide a distinctive knowledge of the city – perhaps just the one which is necessary to make possible this distinctive system of orientation which we have seen in the part on city maps and orientation. Looking at the mental maps, people who relied on cars for most of their trips, tended to draw the city as an itinerary rather than a plan.
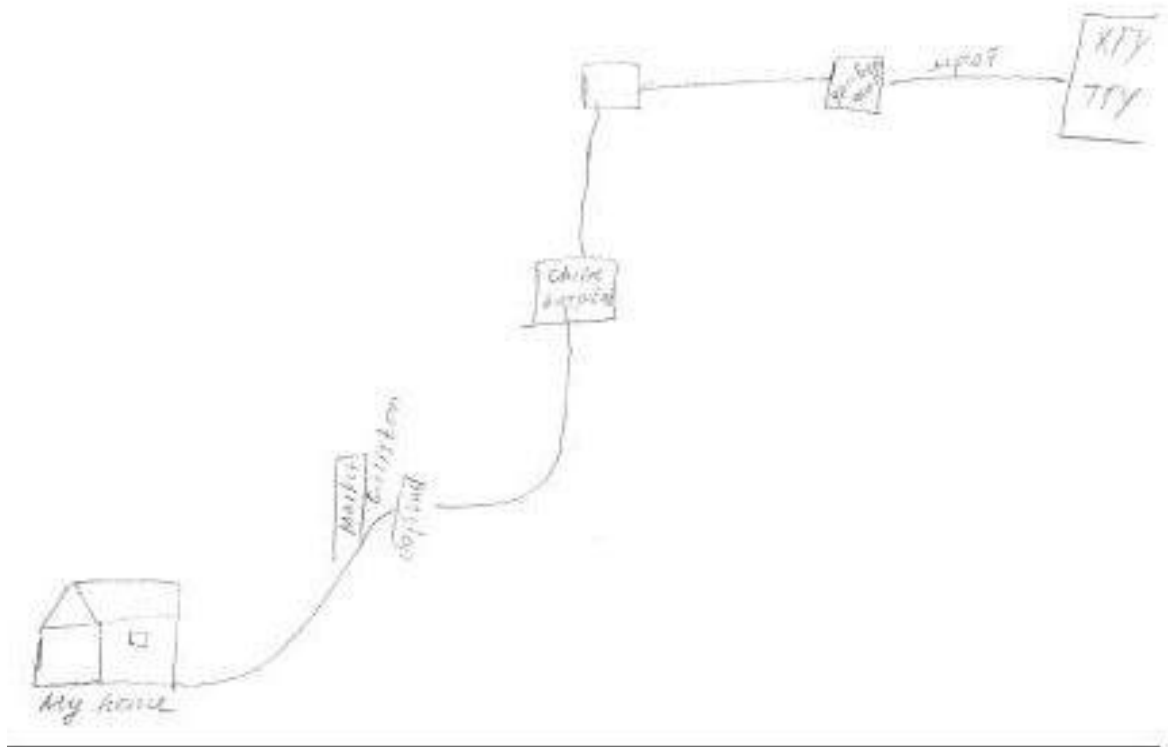
Mental map 2: Going to the university by car

5.3. Khujand's physical space through the eyes of inhabitants

As Buchli has argued, "humanity is recognised not only from the body or face of the individual but by the shelters people create". The experience of the physical space is in this sense immanently political, for "unstable materiality indexes the failure of social relations and moral orders" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 47). Through interaction with the built environment, people articulate questions of 'being human'; questions which are "intimately linked with nationhood and social progress" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 46). Interaction with the built environment highlights its "embeddedness in a set of policy decisions and coping strategies, as well as their controversial implications on the present and future use of urban space" (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2689) – the physical aspect of urban space is therefore, recalling Lefebvre, in a constant process of negotiation with the mental and social spaces.

In this part, I will present the *physical space* of Khujand, such as inhabitants *perceive* it. I will rely on four case studies to do so, as this is in my view the best way to delve into the intimacy of urban space perception. With the help of case studies based on interviews and mental maps, I will explore the city of Khujand through the lens of everyday practices: the everyday rhythms and routines, favourite places and most walked ways will come together and give insight into the interplay between urban processes and textures. The first case study, by Khurshed, a young unemployed man, should shed light on the perceptions of a lower-class youth who oscillates between city and countryside for gaining his livelihood – and nevertheless remains convinced of the landscape of opportunities which is the city. The second case study mainly covers the perceptions of two middle-class middle-age Tajik women. They have grown up in Soviet Khujand and view the city against the backdrop of a Soviet conception of urbanity – yet distinctively embedded in Khujand's history and traditions. The third case study presents the perceptions of a middle-age Russian woman who is struggling to make ends meet, facing the world with a mélange of Eurocentric superiority and Tajik ingenuity. The fourth case study is an attempt to gain data uniquely on the basis of mental maps. A group of students – Khujandis and recent internal migrants – will provide their perception of Khujand's physical space.

5.3.1 Khurshed

Khurshed is 22 years old. He was born at the edge of the old town and still lives there with his parents and his younger sister. The quarter he lives in consists of detached houses built in the 1950s, arranged along a rectangular set of streets. Over the years the original detached houses – called *finskie domiki* (Finnish houses) – have received annexes, and mud brick walls around them. Life within these Finnish houses recalls the life in the old town quarters, as does the streetscape – with the notable exception that the original houses have windows on the street.

> *I was born in Khujand in the street near the bus station* (Dar Huǧand, ulica nazdi avtovokzal tavallud šudam), *on Rudaki street, in house number 24 (Interview Khurshed, 2010, pp. 00:02:38-2). I have spent my whole life there, and went to school there, too, in Sebzor and Lomonosov, and my mahalla, it is called Razzoqi Naw. Later, they changed the name to Rahim Jalil, but previously it was called Lomonosov. There are also streets named after Kutuzov and Mendeleev, if you have heard about those scientists, and there is also Ushakov (Interview Khurshed,*

2010)[49].

Khurshed uses many different names for the quarter and the streets in it. Sometimes the toponymic significations are overlapping; he mentions the old Soviet name alongside the new one. It was a recurring feature in the interviews to name several landmarks to give directions – in particular when it comes to smaller streets or places in the old town, where street names do exist, but are almost never used for orientation.

He finished school in the same quarter and now struggles to find a job. He has tried a lot of jobs so far, and walking through the city with him reads like an account of his attempts to find a stable job:

> *After finishing school, I attended driving school, category BS. It was at Guliston. Then I went working to Qayroqqum. (There, I worked at) a factory* (ğoi kor) *at Bukhta Mirnaya, it was a mill. They produced flour and vodka and plastic caps, too. Also they had greenhouses with tomatoes where I worked. I've spent six months there, then the crisis came and they fired me. Afterwards, I worked at Sughdsokhtmon[50], near the bus station, at the Almoz shop, do you know? There, I worked three months. I had a labour contract with them. In the 12th microraion I worked as a welder, but they cheated me and paid me a lower wage so I quit. Then I worked at another factory as a heaver and in other odd jobs; then I rested a while* (otdyhal potom nemnožko)[51], *and then I began training as accountant (Interview Khurshed, 2010, pp. 00:06:18-2).*

What I found interesting in listening to this account was first of all the information that – contrary to general belief and my own previous conviction – there were still factories working in Khujand. Previous interviews and walks through town had left me with the impression that the producing industry had decreased to almost nothing after Independence. This is surely true for large enterprises: the silk plant, the cannery and the carpet factory are today bleak and dwarfed, compared with their Soviet era predecessors. But the rusting industrial landscapes on Khujand's outskirts conceal a bulk of active emerging enterprises, mostly in the food processing

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49   Some clarification in order to disentangle this rapid flow of names: officially, Sebzor is the name of the area to the south of Kamoli Khujandi Avenue. Lomonosov – renamed to Rahim Jalil – is a street in this neighbourhood. Razzoqi naw is the name of the mahalla to the north of Sebzor, named so because it borders the Razzok quarter of the old Khujand – one of the largest mahallas of the old town, occupying the vast bend of the Syrdarya river to the west of the old fortress.

50   Also known as 'Stroitrest' – a large construction enterprise, formerly owned by the Leninabad oblast administration and entrusted with public and industrial construction all over the region.

51   An euphemism for "being unemployed"

sector. They struggle with unstable energy supply, the harsh border regime with Uzbekistan, and domestic bureaucracy. They are indeed too few, too small and too unstable in order to help solve the economic dilemmas of contemporary Tajikistan. Still, they provide, however limited, jobs and opportunities, and possibly also the foundation for an economic recovery in northern Tajikistan.

After having finished the accounting course, Khurshed was once again unable to find a job. One year ago, he began working at the farm plots of his extended family in Dehmoy, to the west of Khujand (see illustration 36), and occasionally earns some additional money with welding jobs. He is very busy with the farm work, so that he barely has free time during the day and perhaps one day off a week (Interview Khurshed, 2010, pp. 00:17:58-0). Yet this day is very important to him, for it allows him to consider himself an urban person:

> *I like living in the city, because here you have anything you want. You've got a pharmacy, you've got bazaars, but (at the countryside) there are very few pharmacies and they don't work 24 hours a day, but on their own schedule, like Monday to Friday from eight to five. If someone gets ill at home, then we would not find anything. But in the centre you have everything you need and you can buy it. The bazaars are not far away, and we go there, if we need something. It's good here in the city, the only bad thing is that there are no jobs. (...) To buy toys or a chewing-gum or something to eat I would go to the bazaar. It's less expensive there. I often go to Panjshanbe, but when we need some building material we go to the Jum'a-bozor or to Guliston, or to the Koreans or the Chinese at Atush-bozor, because it's cheaper there. People go there, too. But I always prefer Panjshanbe, I like it there. (...) There, I go to the second floor to buy milk, or when I need a T-shirt I go to Panjshanbe, too (Interview Khurshed, 2010).*

> *And on a free day, I'd walk with friends to Kamoli Khujandi. There is a garden, you know, and to Chumchuk-Aral we go too, or to Navruzgoh, and if we manage, we go to Qayroqqum[52]. And on evenings: my father works at Tojikstandard, and my uncle works there, too[53]. If I get bored, I go with them* (ziq mešavam agar, meram) *and we*

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52   Chumchuk-Aral is an island in the Syrdarya River to the east of the city centre. It was first developed as a park for the adjacent microraions. Today it is the site of an exhibition centre and numerous fairground attractions. Since the main national Navruz festivities took place there in XXX [?], the island is officially called Navruzgoh. By Qayroqqum Khurshed means the beaches on the reservoir to the East of Khujand. This is Tajikistan's only summer resort, with sand beaches, pedal boats and icecream.
53   Both work as night watchmen

speak about life, or we play cards, not like casino, just playing, and then I go home sleeping. And on other days I do my work in the garden and go to sleep then. Then, sport: I used to go to the fitness club near the Stroitrest, you know, near Anis. Sughdsokhtmon they are called today, but their old name is Stoitrest. There is a fitness club there. I stopped it two or three months ago, but I would like to go there again, to make myself look good again (hoču opât' čtoby figuru normal'no sdelat') *(Interview Khurshed, 2010).*

To Khurshed, the bazaar, the parks and the fitness club are features of urban life he does not want to miss – even if he cannot afford to go there. As Khujand has several leisure and shopping options to offer, he can choose the one which is most appropriate at the moment, he argues. Furthermore, being mobile – either on foot, on the marshrutka or by car – transcends the simple need to overcome distances and becomes a pastime in its own right.

In my whole life, I have been two times to a discotheque. On Gulbahor, that is at Panjshanbe, there is Amid, you've got a disco-club there called 'Dushanbe'. But what should I do there? I'd rather talk to friends or play cards or walk around if we have time. If we have a lot of money, we go to the carousel, and if not we just go for a walk. (...) Or we take a marshrutka, or if a friend has a car, we ride the car. (...) At Chumchuk-Aral there are new fun rides, there's no such thing at Kamoli Khujandi Park. They have built three new things, but Chumchuk-Aral is still nicer. But I have to take a marshrutka there, and the other park is closer to me, so if I don't want to ride, I walk freely to Kamoli Khujandi (Interview Khurshed, 2010).

Khurshed's mental map does not reflect his actual use of the city. First of all, he deemed it important to demonstrate his mastership of the urban space: he began by drawing lines on the sheet of paper and joining these lines together, so as to produce a picture resembling an 'official' map. Then he set out to fill out the segments. In parallel to his manner of offering multiple alternative toponyms, he projects all the toponyms that came to his mind onto the sheet of paper – even if he had never been to many places he mentions. He arranges them in a very approximative spatial relation. In his writing, he does not distinguish between landmarks ("Music school", "Our house"), streets ("Kamoli Khujandi"), quarters ("Pakhtakor", Soycha"), districts ("Nohiya Jabor Rasulov", "Bobojon Ghafurov") and towns, some of which are dozens of kilometres away ("Asht", "Istaravshan"). Each toponym, it seems, boasts equal importance. This is even true if the toponyms denote the same object: he places "our house" next to the element marked "Rudaki 24", that is his address. I would argue that Khurshed's mental map expresses his

potential grasp of the city and its surroundings – all in spite of his limited means.
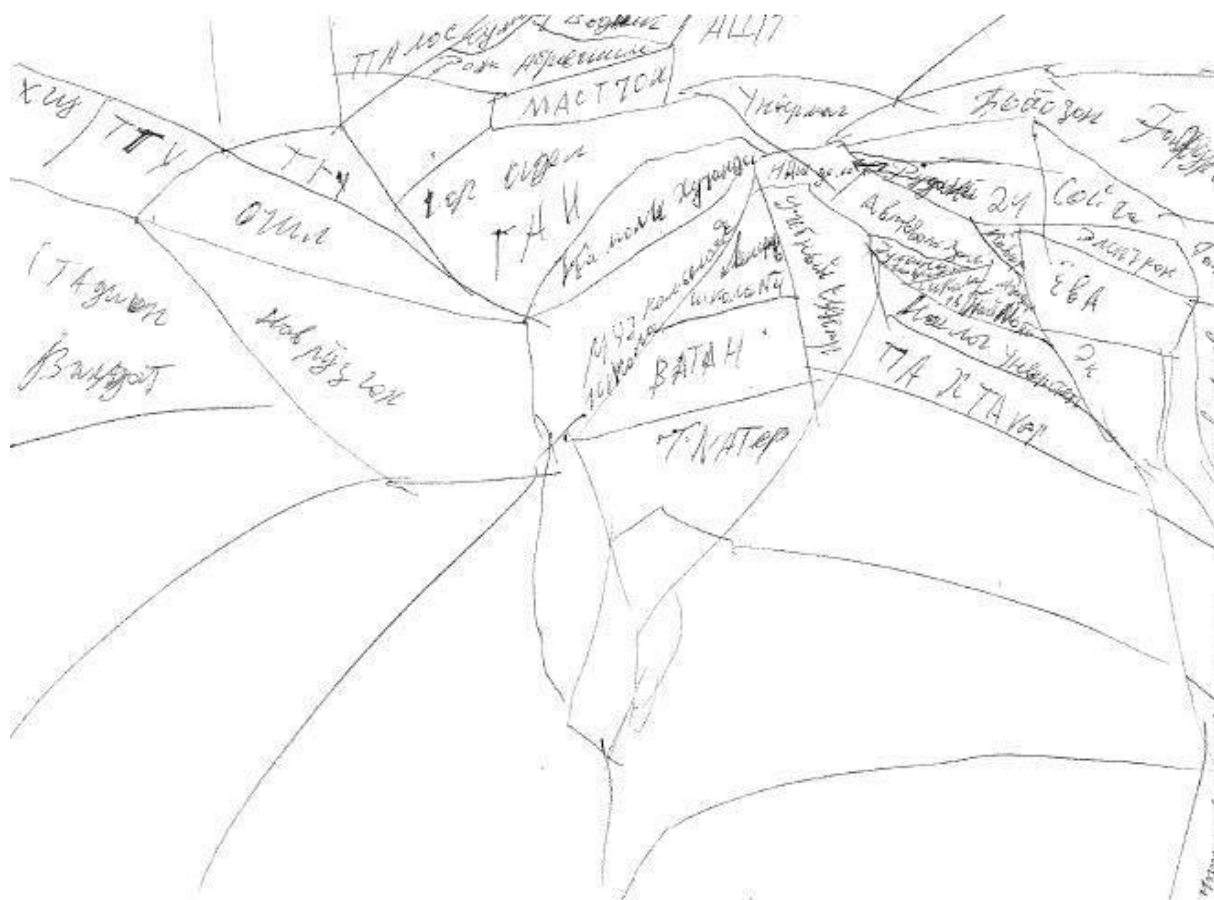
Mental map 3: Khurshed

5.3.2 Female hospital employees

I used to have lunch at a canteen[54] just opposite a Children's clinic on Kamoli Khujandi Street. There, I once shared a table with an elderly lady and her niece, who turned out to be employees at the clinic just opposite. Following this acquaintance, I conducted an interview with the

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54   In Khujand's city centre, a couple of self-service restaurants of this kind have opened to the public and cater to office employees and shopkeepers in the surroundings. They serve three or four different soups, salads, main courses and, of course *kompot:* altogether a tasty, cheap, convivial and down-to earth post-Soviet cuisine. Surprisingly enough, these restaurants call themselves *oshkhona-i pahrezi*, that is, 'dietetic restaurant', in order to promote themselves as healthy alternatives to 'national' restaurants that serve presumably greasy shashlik, osh-i palov and shurbo.

elderly lady – Muhabbat – who works as paediatrician. The following day, I was meant to conduct an interview with her niece Aziza, who worked as a nurse with Matluba – the hospital's ophthalmologist. Yet the niece did not speak a word in Matluba's presence, but, still, she drew a mental map. These two longer interviews were followed by a series of shorter encounters on the street and in their offices, frequently interrupted by visitors coming in. As Muhabbat refused to draw a mental map, I only have mental maps by Matluba and Aziza.

Muhabbat is in her early sixties. Like both other women she was born in Khujand. In the interview, she stresses that she was born and grew up in the old town, "at the very site where we sit now". She insists on the ancient character of Khujand *(s drevnih vremën)* (Interview Muhabbat, 2010) and sees it as one of the large historic towns of Central Asia: "As in a big city, we also have a Lenin street here, which is the main street, here in the central part. Then the big bazaar – Panjshanbe, and (in front of it) the Registan, like in Samarkand" (Interview Muhabbat, 2010). When she goes through the town, she says, she recalls the old names of streets and quarters, which were labelled according to the craftsmen who lived and worked here:

> *Ohakchi, Tuppiduzon, Kosibon – in Istaravshan there's even a Soapmakers' Street – then, Sholatoron, Ruhanchigon, where they produced oil; and where I lived, it was the Karnaychi street[55]. (...) Today they're called Lenin Street followed by a number* (Lenina s drobâmi). *(...) Others were re-named by names of heroes: Lenin, Tukhachevski, Chernyshevski, and our, what's his name, Rakhimbaev[56] (...) But the old people remember the (old) names, for, you see, these craftsmen do not live there any longer, because the business does not give any profit (Interview Muhabbat, 2010).*

She continues with an emphasis on the old trees which still today constitute the landmarks of neighbourhoods. The best-known example is the tree right at the Panjshanbe bazaar which gives shade to shoemakers sitting below. The most spoken-about tree is however the *Tuti kalon,* the big mulberry tree, which has given its name to the mahalla surrounding it. It grows in a quiet quarter of the old town to the south-west of the bazaar where few people pass by – yet it has a saint's tomb tucked underneath (Interview Muhabbat, 2010) (see illustration 16).

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55   Ohakchi – lime-burner; Tuppiduzon – cap embroiderer; Kosibon – craftsmen; Sholatoron – cloth weavers, Ruhanchigon – oil pressers; Karnaychi – trumpet makers.

56   Mikhail Tukhachevski (1893-1937) was Marshal of the Soviet Union and commander of the Soviet Army in the 1920s; Nikolai Chernyshevski (1828-1889) was an author and revolutionary, known by all Soviet schoolchildren for his novel "What is to be done?", which had a large influence on Lenin's works; Abdullo Rakhimbaev (1896-1938) is one of the first revolutionaries in northern Tajikistan, member of the Central Comittee of Tajikistan's Communist Party.

Her childhood memories are geographically set in the old town, yet the overall presence of the old street names rather refers to musealised folclore, since her childhood memories are very much embedded in Soviet innovations: she particularly recalls the fragrant smell of the flower shop, and the ice cream kiosk, to which she ran barefoot (Interview Muhabbat, 2010). Her 'urban ideology' is therefore set in Soviet terms, which very much permeates her perception. This becomes apparent for instance through her description of the old town as consisting of small mud huts *(malen'kie glinobitnye kibitočki)* (Interview Muhabbat, 2010), in a mélange of nostalgia and belittlement.

She is also well informed about important places for worship and veneration. She considers these places as important for culture and identity, and insists that "in every Muslim state, every Muslim who honours Allah must do this" (i.e. pilgrimages to shrines) (Interview Muhabbat, 2010). Yet she does not engage in popular Islamic practices, which first of all becomes apparent in her use of the word "they" and the repeated reference to "the elder generations" who are better informed about holy places and rituals:

> *You've got the burial site of a holy man* (zahoronenie svâtogo) *at Tut-i kalon, then one and Pakhtakor[57], and one further on in Yova[58]. They pass by and say a blessing* (delaût 'omin')[59], *and they do it too when they pass along Muslim graveyards, this is one custom of paying reverence to the deceased. And then, there is the passport office, you know, where the bridge begins, (...) just behind it, there is a small mosque, where a very holy person is buried. In the past, he was very much venerated, and when one passes by, one says 'omin'. (...) I was told that he was a holy man and had prophetic powers: once, there was a flood. Then he pronounced a spell and the waters slowly descended. Such powers he did apparently have. I don't know for sure; you should ask someone from the elder generations. (...) Then, just behind the clinic there is one small minaret. Previously, there were graveyards at this site, therefore you have a minaret as well where people pass by and say 'omin'. The site is called 'Hojamukhron'. You've got a lot of these saints, in every*

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57   Pakhtakor (Cotton worker) is the name of a residential district to the west of the city centre. It consists of five-storey residential blocks built over old town quarters along the Kamoli Khujandi street and around the old trolleybus loop. The name supplants the names of the old mahallas of the area prior to the Soviet construction programme in the same way as the blocks have supplanted the previous residential quarters.
58   Yova is a large village bordering Khujand to the west. Many inhabitants claim it is older than Khujand proper. It boast a number of large shrines, among them the Burh Sarmasti Vali, which attracts pilgrims from Khujand as well.
59   To "make 'omin'" – *omin kardan* – is a short movement of both hands over one's face. This blessing is performed for instance at the end of a meal or, as in this context, when passing by a holy place.

mahalla you have one, and therefore you have these small mausolea there (Interview Muhabbat, 2010).

Indeed, some dozens of shrines – called *mazor* – are scattered throughout the old town. In most cases they take the form of an eight-cornered brick structure with a small blue dome on top. A majority of them were rebuilt in the early 1990s, after being neglected in Soviet times. Some stand at cemeteries, others at the streets or under a prominent tree (such as is the case with the *Tuti Kalon)*; again others are hidden behind Soviet era buildings. The most prominent of this kind is the one Muhabbat spoke about, which is located just behind the passport office (OVIR). Although that mazor cannot be seen from the street, women on the marshrutka make 'omin' when they pass by (see illustrations 14,15). Perhaps mazors in Khujand do not feature as prominently as in Bukhara (Louw, 2006, pp. 321 ff), but they are undoubtedly an important part of the built environment, for those who do frequent them and for those who do not.

Muhabbat and Matluba were born in the old town quarters and later moved to the residential quarters on the right bank of the Syrdarya. Their experience is exemplary for thousands of other Khujandis who have moved from the *havli* to the *microraion*. It is very interesting to observe how distinctive cultures have developed on different banks of the river: on the right bank, the microraions are dominated by Russian language and culture; on the left bank, the traditional old town quarters remain anchored in tradition. Matluba insists:

We were more modern there on the right bank, we did not wear headscarves, but there, they wore headscarves and trousers, we walked around like our Russians. (…) That bank is called the new bank, the new city, and this bank is like the old town (Interview Matluba, 2010).

There, you have the newly built quarters (tam novostroiki). *In the new quarters, all people lived there together: us, and the Russians, and the Germans, all of them. And the culture was different there compared to the culture on this side. We had a mixed school there, with Russians and Tajiks. (…) On this bank, there were fewer (Russians), because almost all of them lived over there (Interview Matluba, 2010, pp. 00:25:54-0).*

This cultural difference was also reflected in the language. On the right bank, Tajiks used Russian for everyday communication or, at least, used more Russian loanwords when speaking Tajik. Matluba recalls that on that two banks different Tajik words were used, too:

My aunt and her children, they grew up on this side (that is, in the old town), and we over there, so we speak differently. (...) I remember, for a bucket we say 'faqeh' and they say 'chelak'. I went to my mother: "Mama, what does 'chelak' mean?" – "I don't know. 'Chelak'? Wait, ... a bucket!" Why do they speak that way? (...) It's somehow transmitted; it passes on like a hereditary disease (Interview Matluba, 2010).

Two different worlds existed on each bank of the Syrdarya, and the Tajiks who moved out from the old town became very quickly accustomed to microraion culture, so it seems. Still, they were aware of the value of the old town in terms of cultural belonging, saying: "(the old town) remains bound by blood to us, it's ours, it's local *(krovnye, naši, mestnye);* it remains the historical part of our city" (Interview Matluba, 2010). Yet the pattern of appropriation seems to be the same as for the holy shrines: you know it's out there, you know it's important, but neither do you live by its rules, nor do you go there: "After I finished studies", says Matluba, "I was assigned a district (in the old town, as general practitioner), but I have never been there in my whole life. They had to draw me a sketch (to explain the way), and then I took off" (Interview Matluba, 2010).

Both women insist that moving to an apartment was an astonishing experience when they first moved in, and still is a great experience, provided the infrastructure is functioning. "A bath, toilet, running water, communal services" (Interview Muhabbat, 2010) are only imaginable in high-rise buildings, it seems. After the end of the Soviet Union, though, utilities in the microraions have dramatically deteriorated: "previously, comfort was there in the high-rise buildings, but now... *(Ran'še v mnogoètažkah byli vse usloviâ, a teper'...)* (Interview Matluba, 2010). As central heating, water and electricity are supplied only sporadically, and gas is not supplied at all, high-rise apartments lose their attractiveness. In summer, the women value the havli for the fresh air and shady comfort: "particularly in summer, it's much better. You sit there, the air is fresh, you put a *topchan* out there and some *kurpacha*[60]. (…) You can sleep outside, while in the apartments it's hot; although when the air conditioning is working, that's another story" (Interview Muhabbat, 2010). Then Muhabbat argues that communication is easier in the havli: "The door is always open, and the neighbour women pass by very often or you go to the neighbours. Then you sit there, two or three people and you exchange news and chat. But if you come inside an apartment, there are four walls, your own family, your own

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60   'Topchan' is the Russian terminus for an elevated platform, which is called *kat* in Tajik. In most cases it is placed outdoors and used for eating and sleeping in summertime. 'Kurpacha' denotes stitched cushions which are placed on the floor or on the *kat*. They serve as seating or as mattresses for sleeping.

problems and sorrows" (Interview Muhabbat, 2010).

Yet this is a desire which comes with age (Interview Matluba, 2010, pp. 00:12:49-3), (Interview Muhabbat, 2010), for a *havli* imperatively needs a *kelin* – a daughter-in-law – to look after it and to keep it tidy. As modern urban women, they do not want to perform 'rural' work:

> *I would prefer to have a* havli *in the city centre. Because I am an urban person and I do not have time to dig in the earth and to take care of the garden. The specificity of my work is a different one and I am an urban person. (...) For those who were born in the countryside and are accustomed to labour and to the soil from their early age (it's different). Here, is a centre of civilisation, after all. Panjshanbe just there, and all that I need: I go out to buy a thing, I take the child to school or to kindergarten. Out there, it's all different, and more difficult, because of the distances, too (Interview Muhabbat, 2010).*

For this reason, life in the havli is relegated to the realm of imagination and both women still prefer living in apartments, provided that infrastructure is working. Moreover, with a double family income[61] – the husbands work at the university and the city administration respectively – they have the means to mitigate infrastructural shortcomings. Both are far from belonging to the upper class, yet their income allows them to buy gas balloons, electric heaters and bottled water – and to enjoy urban life. With her female friends – that is, her *gap* circle – Matluba regularly tours the restaurants of Khujand:

> *Previously, we met at someone's home, but today it's so interesting: which restaurant prepares which meal? You go there, taste it, ask how it's made, then you come back home and cook it at home, something new for the family menu. We go there not to show off, it's because we want to learn something. (...) Like in the Sughdiyon restaurant at the river bank where they had meat in silver foil. (...) Previously, we did not go anywhere, we had children, but now we go, in a normal and civilised manner* (normal'no, kul'turno). *It's not for relaxing, it's because it's interesting. (Interview Matluba, 2010, pp. 00:05:37-7)*

The moral category of 'normal and civilised' is important in structuring the urban space according to age and gender. Even for Muhabbat going out is an exception rather than the rule

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61   The salary for hospital employees, is relatively low, around 300 Somoni (50 € in 2010), but the patients informally hand out 1-2 Somoni for each visit, which brings around 50 Somoni a day. Although about half of the sum is passed upwards to the head physicians and directors, the official salary is multiplied by three or four by the end of the month.

– or at least very difficult to admit:

> *I am a very busy person, you know. I leave the house at seven and come back at six.*
> *There are children to care for, and errands to run and all kinds of obligations.*
> *Therefore I virtually never have time to go for a walk or to go out. (...) And we*
> *would never go to some night life places* (zlačnye mesta my ne poseŝaem) *(Interview*
> *Muhabbat, 2010, pp. 00:32:07).*

For other female interviewees, their similar perceptions were linked to the assertion that women did not go to chaikhonas, which were a men-only institution, and therefore should not go to restaurants on their own either. Aziza, the twenty-four-year-old nurse at Matluba's station, would never even dare going to a restaurant with her female friends. Here, the Soviet normative moral category of *kul'turnost'* – a mélange of Bolshevik ideology and refined manners (Volkov, 2000), meet Islamic normative categories of women not intermingling with men in public. On spatial terms, *kul'turnost'* relates to *obodi,* as I will argue in the following chapters. For Aziza, keeping up the right façade is therefore preeminent. As many other unmarried young women in Khujand, she drew on her mental map only the most representative buildings along the main street – the World War II monument, the bazaar, the university. The workplace – and even more the home of a young woman – must not be revealed, at least not to me as a young male researcher. This is in stark contrast to Matluba's mental map, which is very much home-centred. It only features the immediate surroundings of her apartment building and the adjacent Yagodka[62] quarter which she likes a lot.

For Matluba and Aziza, the Panjshanbe bazaar plays an important role, since both take food shopping for the family as their personal duty. Yet the central bazaar has lost its role in the course of the last four-five years due to the emergence of supermarkets throughout the city. Half a dozen large supermarkets operate in Khujand today – in the city centre as well as in the microraions. The emergence of supermarkets has deeply transformed women's shopping routines: virtually all women who work outside of their home said they prefer supermarkets for their daily shopping – dairy products, preserves, cosmetics, noodles and the like, even if they are slightly more expensive than in the bazaar. The supermarkets permit convenient shopping on their way home. They also seduce middle-income women through their novelty, their appealing hygiene and air conditioning. Still, the bazaar remains the major destination for the

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62   Yagodka meens "small berry" in Russian and is the name of a grocery store at the crossroads of Rahim Jalil and Sultan Umarov streets. The shop still exists and has, by extension, given its name to the crossroads, the trolleybus stop and the entire residential quarter around it.

purchase of large quantities (potatoes, onions, rice and meat), but also for fresh fruits and vegetables, since the choice is much wider at the bazaar:

> *In the supermarket, everything is under one roof, it's much easier, since we (work)*
> *in the centre. (At the bazaar) there are too many people, it's a hustle. I don't like the*
> *bazaar, I'm such a person by nature, by character. (...) I buy fresh things little by*
> *little in the supermarkets, and for the big shopping we go to the bazaar on weekends*
> *(Interview Matluba, 2010).*

To these middle-class women, comfort is an important category of their life in the city. The city appears as a facilitator of everyday life by offering a wide range of services, opportunities and socialising opportunities – and all within easy reach. The city furthermore allows them to maintain a certain level of 'culture', 'civilisation' or 'refinement' – the notion of which is embedded in Soviet terminology and is being framed in contrast to rural life. In spite of a full-time job, their urban space of the everyday revolves around their own home, and 'female' chores, such as shopping for the household and taking children to school.
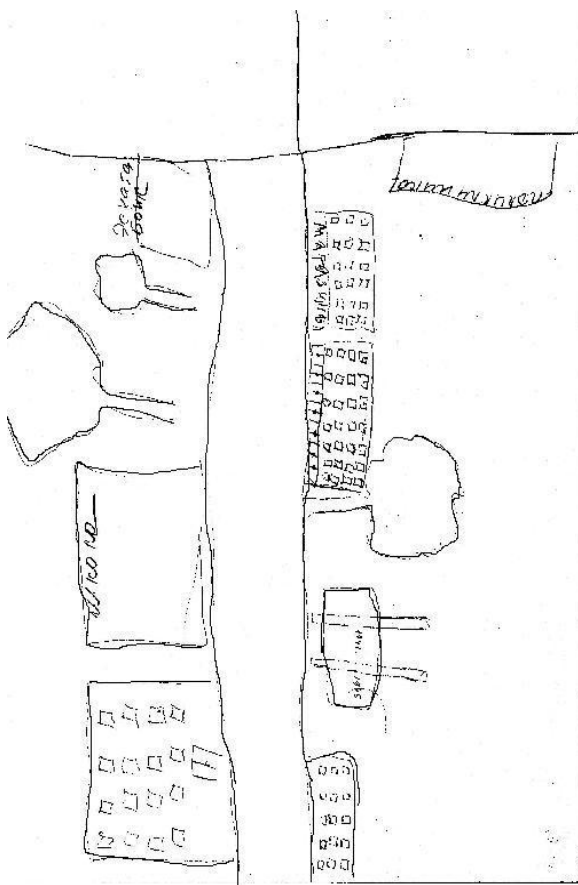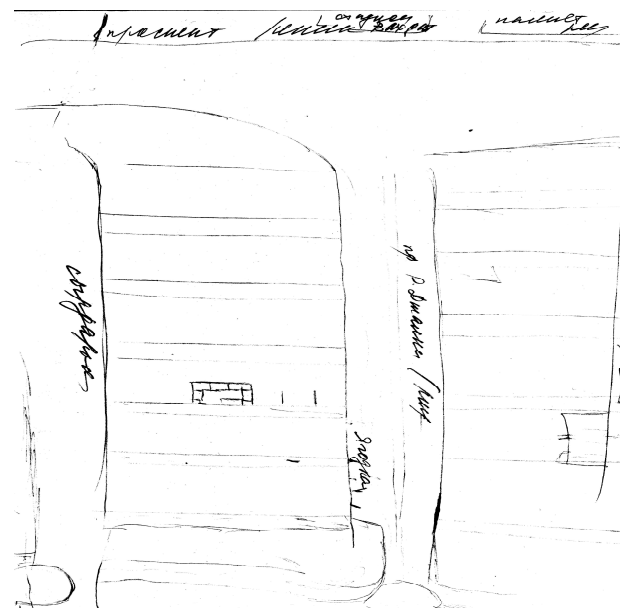
Illustration 4: Aziza's mental map　　　Illustration 5: Matluba's mental map

5.3.3 Tatiana

Tatiana is in her fifties. She was born in Khujand – Leninabad at the time of her birth – and spent her entire life in the city. Her parents came to Leninabad in the late 1930s after they were 'de-kulakised' in the Orenburg area. She went to the pedagogical university in order to become an art teacher, but later did not work in schools at all. Instead, she came to the silk plant. There she specialised in painting propaganda posters. After Independence, like other employees, she did not receive any salary, but was still officially registered on the payroll until 2006. She could go back to work at the silk factory, she says, but the salary is too small: "If I went to work, I would get 170 som[63]. Hardly any more. And from that, you give away 100 som to buy (Roghun) shares[64]. Is it worth to go working at all?" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). She makes some money with office cleaning, yet the majority of her income comes from the flea market where she sells second hand clothes and flower seedlings which she grows at home. With this – rather meagre – income, she supports her husband who is almost blind, and her stepfather who lives in the same household.

She has very fond memories of the Soviet past[65] and deeply deplores how the independence of Tajikistan came about: "When they were about to destroy the Soviet Union, they did not ask anyone where you would like to live" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). Today, she feels alienated from the Tajiks around her and insists that their mentality is different: "the Tajiks have their own ways of thinking, their own peculiarities. A lot of it you can take as a game, as some kind of disguise *(râdât'sâ),* but I sometimes get sick of seeing how they perform at the bazaar" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). Still, this is not the main reason for her wish to leave the country. She speaks Tajik and gets along well with her Tajik neighbours, but her economic condition is

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63   Roughly 30 Euro as of summer 2010.

64   In 2010, a state-wide campaign was launched aimed at selling shares of the Roghun hydroelectric plant. The dam was meant to ensure a bright shining future for the country, yet turned into a bureaucratic nightmare for the population: students were forced to present shares in order to be admitted to exams, employees were paid in shares instead of cash (voluntarily, to be sure). For some background information: (Die schwierige Wasserkraftgeburt von Roghun, 2010)

65   The fond memories are intrinsically linked to low and fixed prices. Tatiana says: "a loaf of bread costed 20 kopecks, half a litre of milk – 15 kopecks. When I was at the university, I got a scholarship – 40 roubles, and you paid 60 kopecks for a kilogram of duck. I plucked them, it's not difficult, you know. There were of low quality and not so well plucked. So I singed them, cleaned them, put them into buttered wax paper and baked them in the oven. And now go, get a duck, if you're a poor student. Well, poor people do not go to the university any longer; here at least." (Interview Tatiana, 2010). Some minutes later, she comes back to the subject, stressing: "Previously, everything was cheaper. Look, at Soviet times, you paid five kopecks for a kilogram of tomatoes, ten some time later, but still you could afford to eat it. But now, they don't come at that price any longer" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). Remembering food prices is a common feature of remembering the Soviet Union and has been repeatedly noted in other research settings in Central Asia (Harris, 1998, p. 655, Kurmangaliyeva & Ercilasun, 2010, p. 168).

deplorable: "Deep inside you wait for a change for the better better, but the change doesn't come. Over time, it gets tiresome. This is why I want to leave for Russia. I hope, things will get better there" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). Still, as she doesn't have a Russian passport, the process is lengthy and difficult.

The mental map of Khujand which Tatiana draws towards the end of the interview is clear-cut and simple. She emphasises the handful of places that are important to her: her house in the centre of the map, the Panjshanbe bazaar in the upper left corner, right behind the house; to the right of the house, the theatre and the city park leading to the Orthodox church; in the lower part the Syrdarya river and the quarters on the right bank.

The home she lives in is a four-storey building of pre-fabricated concrete, built some time in the 1960s. It is located right in the city centre near the crossroads of Lenin and Kamoli Khujandi streets. Her grandmother, with whom Tatiana grew up, already lived in that building. Still, Tatiana says with a surprised undertone: "Well, it really looks like as if I have spent my whole life in this quarter *(polučaetsâ, čto â vse vremâ dejstvitel'no v ètom raione živu)*". She likes living there, first of all because of the comfort – "Everything is close, all the (state) institutions *(učreždeniâ),* the shops, just half an hour to the bazaar, everything in walking distance" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). But it is also a question of status: in spite of her very low income, it is one last element of comfort she enjoys. Indeed, being able to live in the city centre is a key issue in post-Soviet survival strategies for the urban poor, who thus remain embedded in dense networks of sociality (Round & Williams, 2010, p. 188).

The Panjshanbe bazaar is close to her home and she goes there regularly. It is handy, but it is strange and discomforting at the same time: "The bazaar, you enter it, it's bustling, even if it's a jostle. It's somehow a feeling of its own *(Bazar – zahodiš' tuda-sûda, žizn' kipit, hotâ i sutoloka. Kakoe-to svoë oścušenie)"* (Interview Tatiana, 2010). But what she dislikes most about the bazaar is the business atmosphere: "there are no toilers *(rabotâg)* left, they all left for Russia. Those who stay are all speculators. Yes, by Soviet measures, they are all speculators. To buy cheaply, to sell dearer, that's their only business, the only work they do" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). This very much resounds what Pachenkov observed at the St Petersburg flea markets among a group which he called the "fossil Homo Sovieticus" or in other terms the "new poor". They engage in petty trading activities, but at the same time adhere to the Soviet view which "vilified and even criminalized involvement in trading" (Pachenkov, 2011, pp. 189f). This might also be the reason why the flea market does not feature on her mental map, although she sits there each Sunday.

Drawing the theatre on her mental map seems to be a homage to the post card image of the city. In the interview she mentions it twice, when talking about places she would show to visitors, and even there only parenthetically: "I think (I would show them) the museum, the theatre. I don't know what they would like to see. People from Russia would come to lie in the sun and to eat fruits. (…) What else, I don't know what else there is. National dances?" Some time later she says: "In principle, I like the place here, too: the theatre, the alley, even if there was more shade here previously, it was nicer then. Now it's all barren *(sejčas ona stala lysaâ)"* (Interview Tatiana, 2010). In general, she considers that there are considerably less plants around, since the Russians have left: "People have become so lazy, there are hardly any fruits. The gardens have disappeared, and there were many gardens here previously" – even in the havli, where a relative of hers used to live. After it was sold to a Tajik family, they razed the orchard and covered the garden with concrete. (Interview Tatiana, 2010).

To Tatiana, parks and greenery are signs of civilisation, that is of Russian and Western civilisation. Speaking of Tashkent she says: "I liked it. The town is more progressive. (…) I had a good feeling there, in Tashkent. It's like a park. You know, in Tashkent the Russian Empire settled down *(obosnovalas')* earlier than in Tajikistan. And Konstantin Romanov lived there, he was meant to become Emperor, but they persuaded him to defer to Nicholas II. (…) The Russian culture has brought a lot there in Soviet times" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). In general terms, Tatiana sees cities as motors of cultural change, as promoters of modernity. European clothing came to Khujand via Dushanbe, after Independence, she argues, and now spreads out to the countryside:

> *People from Dushanbe, for instance, have changed the way how women dress. Now I'm used to it, but back then it was barbaric. Some years ago, Tajik women dressed very traditionally, even in Soviet times. (...) Perhaps, Party officials dressed in a European way. But when the Dushanbe people came (during the civil war), European dresses came into fashion (Interview Tatiana, 2010).*

The city park was officially laid out in 1924 and opened to the public in 1939 (Abdullaev S. A. (ed.), 1999, p. 582), although a predecessor existed in times of the Russian Empire. Today it bears the name of Kamoli Khujandi. To Tatyana, the park is a very dear place. It was therefore not by accident that she took me there for the interview. This is the place where her parents met, the place of her early childhood memories and her favourite place for leisure:

> *My parents met here, at the dances. There was a dance floor just over there. My mother told me that there were fences all around the park, you had to pay a fee to*

enter. (...) I think everything was better back then. At least, the walkways were sprinkled with red sand, I remember. Where they got the red sand from, though, I can't imagine (Interview Tatiana, 2010).

The old park, I like it a lot. In the mornings, particularly, there's a nice atmosphere. Some kind of aura, some silence. (...) For the soul, I'd go there on warm days, imperatively. If I had small children, I would take them there on warm days. On early mornings it's just wonderful (Interview Tatiana, 2010).

In a residential street just behind the park lies the Orthodox church of Khujand. The first church of the city was situated where the main street met the Syrdarya River, on the eastern side of the park, but it was razed in the mid-1960s to give way to the bridge ramp and the Leninabad Hotel. The congregation moved to a house nearby, which was transformed into a church and even got a bell tower attached to it. One year before my research in Khujand, though, the church building burned down: the nuns who lived in a side tract left a stove burning over night. At the time of my research, services were held in a side chapel which was used for baptisms, yet construction work for a new church was ongoing. The Russian consul[66], "although he is a Muslim" (Interview Tatiana, 2010), apparently contributed significantly to speed up the works (see illustration 17).

Tatiana regularly attends the Orthodox church, saying that faith helps her to overcome hardship, while a strict observation of fasting periods helps her to save money on food (Interview Tatiana, 2010). The church features prominently on her mental map – and probably would do so on the mental maps of many other Russian-speaking inhabitants of Khujand, too. On Sundays, the chapel is full – around one hundred people attend the services, elderly for the most part. The church is an important community centre for them. Parishioners make home visits and help with the paperwork in pension and visa questions.

Indeed, the right passport and the right pension are a question of survival – particularly so for Tatiana, who did not manage to get a Russian passport so far:

There are many Tajik pensioners who have somehow managed to get Russian citizenship and who get Russian pensions. Some of them even 1000 somoni. The woman who sat at the next table she's Tatar. Perhaps she was even born in Russia. She organised herself a Russian pension and gets 1000 somoni in Tajik money. You can live perfectly with this money here. And many others know that (Interview

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66   Azim Alaudinovich Yarakhmetov, Consul of the Russian Federation in Khujand since 2006.

Tatiana, 2010).

The lower half of the mental map shows the river and the right bank, where the mikroraions are located. Tatiana reports that she is not familiar with that part of the town: "You know, in the centre, I feel comfortable. I don't even know the right bank properly. When I go there, I have to ask my way" (Interview Tatiana, 2010). As we have seen, Tatiana's everyday life takes place in a narrowly circumscribed area at the very centre of Khujand – with the exception of the flea market on the road to Chkalovsk. In spite of her low social status and the economic hardships, she is proud of Khujand when she compares it to other cities:

> *Evidently, Dushanbe was a village* (kišlak), *and Khujand was a city* (gorod), *even if it consisted just of mud-brick huts* (s glinobitnymi mazankami) *and flat roofs. Dushanbe developed out of a kishlak, there was no city before, even the name was made up in Soviet times. In fact, Khujand was meant to become the capital, but I think Stalin had some imperial ambitions. In Soviet times they thought, it seems, that they would grab Afghanistan (Interview Tatiana, 2010).*

Tatiana's account sheds light on the life of the Russian minority in Leninabad. It shows, to my eyes, a perception of the city which is not so much different from the accounts of ethnic Tajiks. The difference is not so much in the mentioned places, but in the framing of these places. To Tatiana as well, the park is a favourite place within the urban fabric. Yet she resolutely puts the park – and urban culture in general – in a line of heritage from the Russian Empire to the Soviet era. The goal of urban development should be fulfilling this superior, 'European' modernity. To her as well, the bazaar plays a central role – for shopping, but also as a source of livelihood. Yet she straightforwardly sees both the advantages and the disadvantages of the bazaar as an 'Oriental' element of Khujand. She offers a series of very clear-cut negative judgements on Khujand, but they are not the reasons for her wish to leave. She presents herself as being a part of Khujand – and suffers not from its 'Oriental' aspects, but from lacking networks and her dire economic condition.
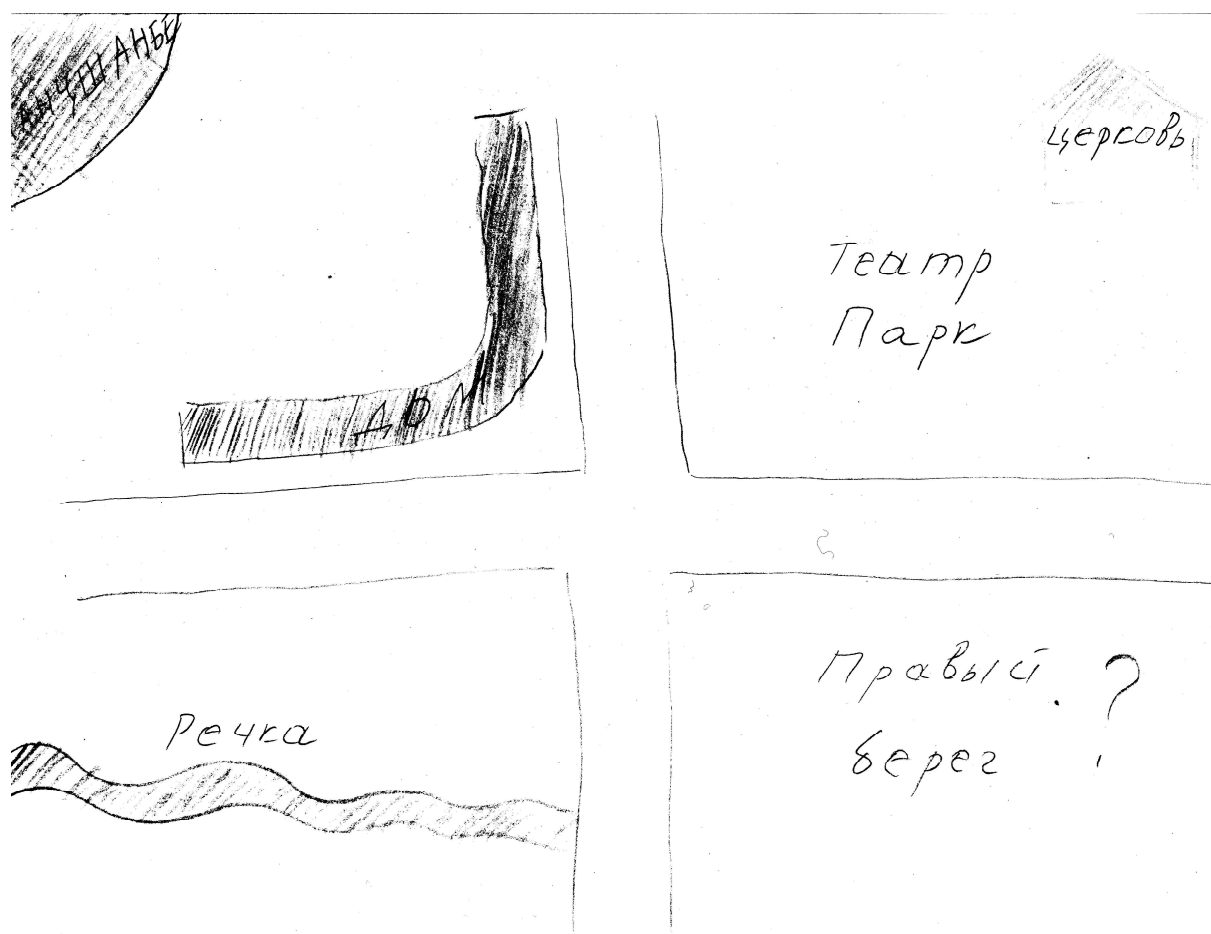
Mental map 6: Tatiana

5.3.4 Students' lives

This case study is based on a series of mental maps I collected with several groups of students in Khujand. Over the course of my fieldwork, two classes (21 persons) at the Khujand State University (KhGU), and three groups of English students at a local NGO (40 persons) sketched mental maps during group sessions of roughly half an hour. Men and women were roughly equally represented. Altogether, 61 persons, aged 17 to 25, sketched maps of Khujand. Most of them were university students, while a smaller part attended final high school classes. The sample is by no means representative but provides some relevant insights into perceptions of space of a cross-section of Khujand's young population. The English courses aimed at

'vulnerable strata of society'. I have therefore reason to hope that not only members of high- and middle income families appear in my sample. Furthermore, the groups consisted of people born in Khujand, and people who moved to the city for studies from other districts of northern Tajikistan. More than that, students living in the microraions appear side by side with residents of the old city and the suburbs. I asked the respondents to draw a map of *"their* own city of Khujand"*. Additionally, they were asked to fill in a very short questionnaire, asking for age, current address, city of origin, and their most widely used means of moving through the city. In addition to mental maps, this data is the only source of information for the case study. On this basis, I retrace the most important features of physical space as perceived by students in Khujand, and insert these features into the general framework of the study.

Three categories of mental maps emerged from the sample: 22 students attempted to draw the entire town. 26 focused on one particular part of the town – their immediate neighbourhood or the city centre. 13 students sketched an itinerary – their path through the city of Khujand – without paying attention to the geographical location of the elements.

Those who went for a map of the entire town were predominantly students who had come to Khujand from the surrounding districts. Most of them share flats with other students; a few others live in dormitories or with relatives. The majority of them live in the microraions on the right bank. This is not surprising, since the apartments are cheaper than in the city centre, and are closer to the main university campus. These students have a very large grasp of the city; they are acquainted with a large portion of Khujand and possess a detailed knowledge of landmarks. They regularly use marshrutkas in order to commute to the main campus, or to other university locations throughout the city. Bus stops feature prominently on a large part of these maps. In general, the main bus stop at the bridgehead *(Univermag)* is explicitly mentioned ten times on the mental maps. Other bus stops *(ostanovka / bus stop)* are mentioned eleven times and bus stations for travels outside of Khujand *(avtovokzal)* – five times.
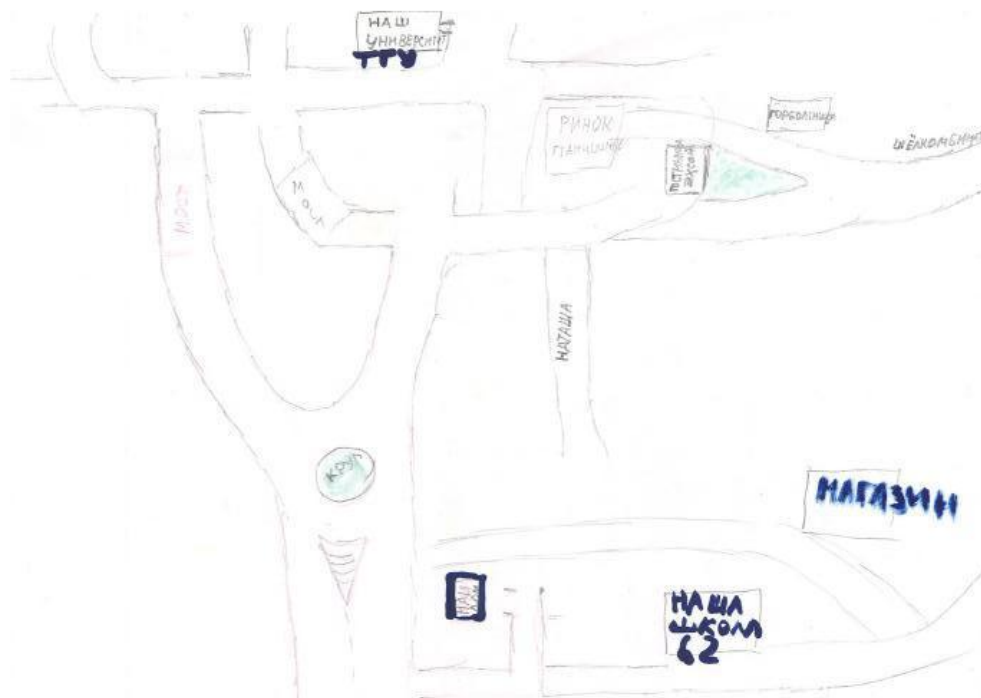
Mental map 7: A large and fairly detailed grasp of Khujand

Those who drew their neighbourhood and its immediate surroundings are, for the most part, born in Khujand. They have spent their entire life there and continue living in the city centre, generally together with their parents. They show a very detailed knowledge of the spatial features – often labelling locations house by house. This group of respondents tends to walk for most of their trips – apart from taking the marshrutka to the main campus of the university at the other side of the bridge. Shops and supermarkets are their main landmarks: the generic *magazin* (15 times), and individual ones *(Avesto, Anis, Èshata, Toǧiksodirotbank, Ganǧina, Somonkom, TK Mobile, Aviakassa, Telekom* and the like). This group also regularly mentions state institutions on the maps *(Gorsvet, Hukumat, MVD, sud, nalogovyj).* A large proportion of these persons live in a *havli* – in the courtyard houses of the old town. Still, there is generally no reference to their home quarter's streets or landmarks: all attention shifts to main streets and adjacent shops.

There is one particular subgroup of the small-scale mental maps. Some young women have only sketched the city centre without showing their own house – in the same way as Aziza, the nurse at the childrens' hospital. I would interpret it as an expression of privacy and morality, which leads to sketching the city as a representative façade behind which the researcher shall not venture.
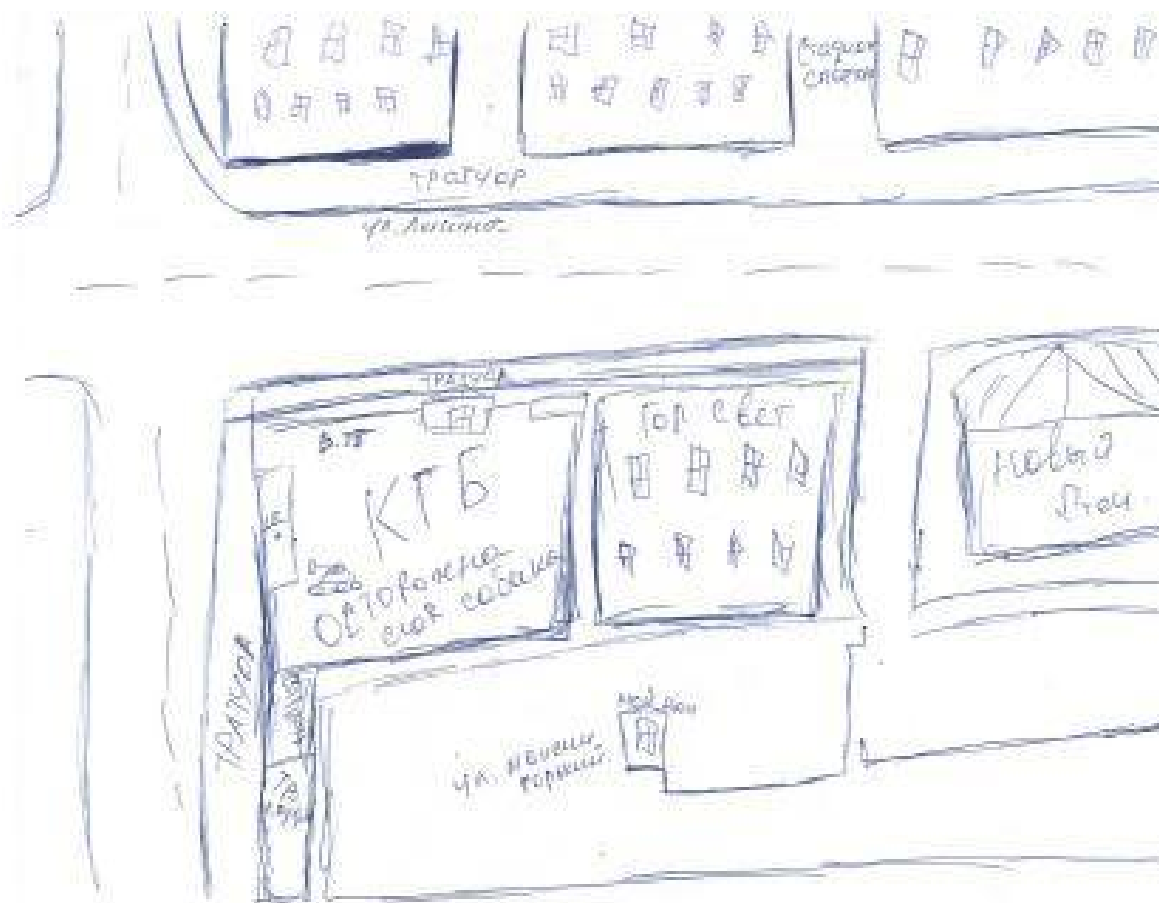
Mental map 9: Only a small radius around the own home, which lies in the old town. All attention goes to the main street, however

The third category – the itineraries – are an exclusively male phenomenon. On these mental maps, the city appears as a pearl-string of places, joined by roads. There is nothing in between – neither rivers, nor trees, bazaars, nor mountains – apart from rare major landmarks on crossroads, such as the high-rise Ehson hotel. Those students who tend to draw this kind of mental maps, usually move through Khujand by car.

Among the itinerary-type mental maps, those persons who live in an outlying quarter of Khujand sketch the least information, and show the smallest scope of the city on their mental maps. Those who come from outlying villages, as well as those who do not live in the city centre, have in general a larger scope of the city and sketch more detailed information. Those students however, who live at the outskirts and have a lengthy commute to the university often feature only two elements: their home, and the university building.
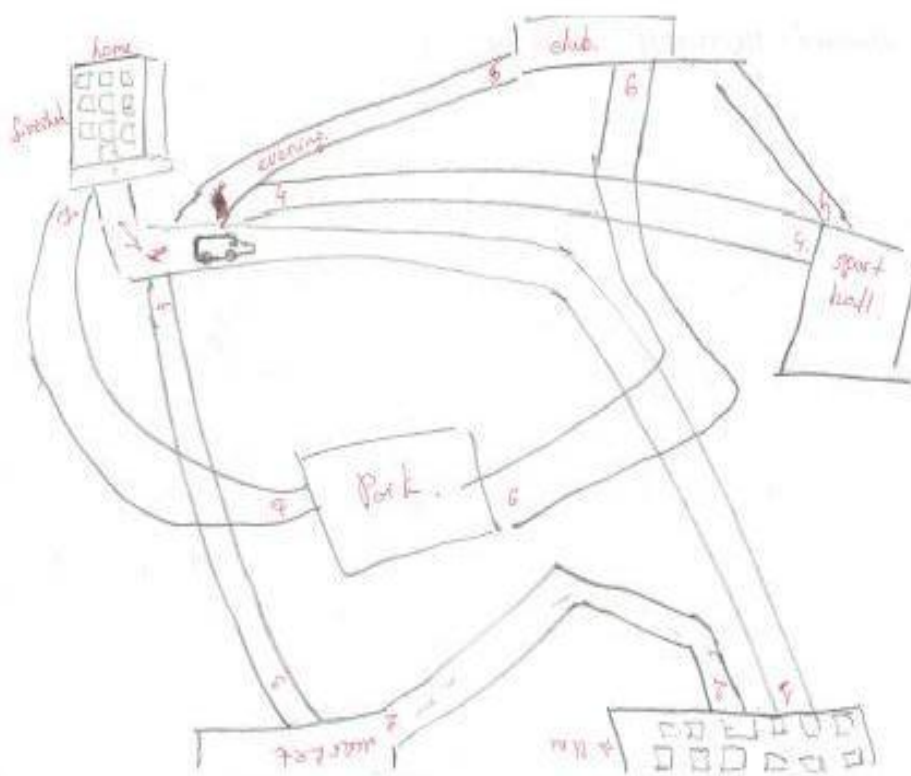
Mental map 8: Itinerary by car. Destinations numbered in a row

Out of all 61 respondents, 46 depicted their house (labelling it *xonai mo / xonai man / xobgoh / moj dom / v ètom dome â živu,* and the like). This is clearly the most important element of the mental map. Still, it does not mean that the house lies at the centre of the map. In most cases, the house is sketched in a corner of the sheet and serves as point of departure for a presentation of the city. The second most important feature is the university: 33 out of 61 sketch it or some of its campuses *(Donišgohi mo / HGU / HFTUT / Pedagogičeskij / naš lûbimyj institut,* and the like). In 25 cases, schools were mentioned: this refers to the pupils who were among the interviewees at the NGO, yet it also shows that schools serve as important landmarks for university students as well.

The Syrdarya River is the next most featured component of Khujand's morphology. Interestingly, attention was not paid as much to the river itself as to the bridges spanning across it: 24 mental maps show the bridge in written *(most)* or sketched form, but only fifteen out of them spell out the river itself *(Sir-darë / Syrdar'â / darë / sea)* or sketch it with lines and waves. This shows in my view, that mental maps indeed reflect the landscape of everyday use. They

do not emulate geographical city maps[67], but show elements of everyday relevance. In this case, the bridge over the river is more relevant in practice than the river itself[68]. This might also explain why monuments – which are promoted as the most important landmarks from the official point of view – barely appear on my respondents' mental maps. The Lenin monument is mentioned three times; the Ismoil Somoni and the Kamoli Khujandi monuments appear twice; and the monument to World War II fighters just once.

Besides the Syrdarya bridge, the Panjshanbe bazaar is an important point of reference. More than one third of all respondents (24) mentioned it on their mental maps. Other bazaars – *Atuš, Sahovat, Ğum'a* – only appear once or twice. Apart from the bazaar, locations linked to leisure play an important role: the stadium features prominently, in particular for male respondents. The new stadium *(Vahdat / stadioni nav / novyj stadion)* appears 18 times – which is surely partly due to the fact that the NGO offering English courses is located in its vicinity. The old Spartak stadium in the city centre, where most football matches took place at the time of my fieldwork, appears on six mental maps. Other leisure-related venues are also repeatedly sketched, such as *sport,* Internet cafés *(internet / komp'ûter),* parks *(Navruzgoh / Čumčuk-Aral, park, boği Kamoli Xuğandi)* and cafés.

Only five respondents included mosques *(masğid)* on their mental maps. One young girl has marked two mosques on her mental map. Religious courses are not shown on mental maps at all – and yet they take place, in my understanding[69]. One might assume that religious education happens at a younger age – and not for 18 years olds and upwards, as were most of my respondents. Nevertheless, even the older ones mention their former schools, but seem reluctant to mark locations of religious education.

As I have pointed out above, even those respondents who live in the old town chose not to display the quarters they live in – on small-scale maps as well as on maps covering the whole of Khujand. On rare occasions, the house is linked to an arrow pointing in the direction of the old town quarters. In other cases, their own house stands alone, with the surroundings completely omitted. Yet other respondents ignore the old town altogether. In my view, respondents are silent on the issue of the old town in many regards. When Khujand's quarters

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67   City maps are largely unknown in Khujand, as I have described at the beginning of the chapter on perceptions. The absence of a cartographic prototype might also explain that mental maps rarely face North – as this is the case with mental maps I collected with students in Berlin, for instance.
68   Those who regularly go swimming to the river mark this separately *(plâž / kupat'sâ).*
69   For a detailed description of religious eductaion in the urban context of Dushanbe see Stephan (2010, p. 215).

are cited by name on the mental map, this either refers to the microraions *(3rd, 8th; 13th; 32nd and the like, mentioned nine times outside of the own home)*, or to regularly planned quarters with single-storey houses *(Sebzor, Nataša, Âgodka)*. Only two respondents spelled out the name of their old town mahalla *(4-boġ, Razzoq Masğidi Surx)*, writing their precise address on the mental map. The silence also continues at the pictographic level: houses either appear as large multi-storey blocks, as in the case of the microraions, or with pointed roofs. In the entire sample, there is no pictorial evidence for a flat-roofed havli of the old town.

Together with previous case studies, this sample of 61 mental maps illustrates some most important features of Khujand's physical space and makes explicit their perceptions. The river is undoubtedly one major landmark, which is a unique feature of Khujand when compared to other Central Asian cities. The importance of the bazaar however, reinserts Khujand into the paradigmatic line-up of Central Asian urbanity. The disappearance of the old city on the students' mental maps points, in my view, to a heritage of decade-long neglect and the negative features which are associated with it – as discussed in the chapter on conceptions.

5.4 Concluding remarks: common features of perception

The absence of the old town is, in my view, the most distinctive feature of the perception of physical space in Khujand. Neither the inhabitants of the old city, nor those of the Soviet housing stock, value this heritage. The affection for history is rather found in landmarks such as mosques and shrines, than in everyday architecture. This, too, is an effect of the Soviet heritage: landmarks could be reframed – such as the Shaykh Maslihiddin shrine which was rearranged as the regional museum. Within the built environment of the old town, though, Socialist life was more difficult to promote. The strive for modernity, however, has endured after Independence, and with it, the argument that modernity cannot be achieved living in the old town. Even if there is no imminent threat of demolition any longer, the old town is not perceived as if it was here to stay while the city is moving towards modernity.

Neither mosques nor shrines, but bazaars and shops seem to be the most prominent landmarks which set the spatial rhythm of the city. In one place, however, these two elements meet: at Panjshanbe, which happens to be, as Muhabbat argued, at the centre of both space and time, where the Friday bazaar takes place as well as the Friday prayer. When shops and bazaars, alongside with leisure activities, emerge as central features of physical space, this would also mean that those who cannot afford it, are excluded from it. Yet, as we have seen in Khurshed's account, the mere opportunity is more important than the actual use. The bodily experience of mobility can also serve, as he has demonstrated through his accounts, as a substitute for consumption – which once again underlines the importance of mobility within the realm of space perception.

6 Adaptations of Space

6.1 Disentangling lived space

Life is boiling, like meat for palov, and that's how it should be

(Varitsâ žizn' kak v zirvake[70], vot tak i nado) (Interview Sergei, 2010)

This chapter will be devoted to the third field of space production, that is, to the social field. Through the social field, 'lived space' becomes apparent, argues Lefebvre. To Lefebvre, this was the site of everyday individual spatial practice, the site of desire and imagination. In order to grasp the social field, I will have a look at how people involved in space production processes handle space: how they change it by their own hands, in the context of their own life. In the following, I will observe visible changes to façades, public squares and courtyards, to garages and parks. These changes to urban morphology are embedded into societal processes taking place in Tajikistan, such as the growing role of Islam, the increasing labour migration, the state's withdrawal from the social care system and its engagement with nation-building through monuments. Yet these changes are not just reactions to outward inputs, they are producing space in their own right. Adaptations interact with conceptions and perceptions of space. They formulate new horizons and reconnect into new conceptions and perceptions of space. Here as well, *remont* is an important key-word to keep in mind. Whereas in the previous chapter it stood for a perceived need for renovation and replacement, in this chapter, *remont* is an activity; *remont kardan* – to do *remont* – is understood as an active engagement with space.

6.1.1 From transformation to adaptation

Sykora and Bouzarovsi have proposed to subdivide post-communist urban change in three different phases: In the short term, basic political and economical principles are changed; in the medium term, behaviours, cultures and norms are adapted; the long-term concerns the more resilient aspects of morphology, land use and residential segregation (Sykora & Bouzarovski, 2012, p. 45). The institutional transformation away from the administrative system of the Soviet Union is nominally accomplished; although in many cases only the names have changed – the

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70   More precisely, zirvak denotes the basis of this Tajik national rice dish. Zirvak generally consists of meat, onions, carrots and spices braised and boiled in a large amount of oil.

administrative channels have remained the same. Behaviours, cultures and norms are changing – yet here as well, the Soviet conception of the urban is prevailing, as previously demonstrated. As to morphology and land use patterns, the Soviet heritage remains predominant (Buisson & Khusenova, 2011, p. 128) and is here to stay for years to come. In spite of political will to change the urban landscape, funds are very scarce. If available, investments are channelled to Dushanbe – for the capital city emerges "as icon and source of national identity" (Köppen, 2009, p. 42), to the detriment of other cities and regions. In this regard Sykora and Bouzarovski are right in saying that "urban change in post-communist cities has been significantly shaped by the character of institutional reforms and transformations in social practices" (Sykora & Bouzarovski, 2012, p. 54): cosmetic institutional reforms and persistent social practices have supported the survival of Soviet urban landscapes.

At the same time, change – in whatever form – does not uniformly cover a city as a cloth or a layer of ash. Change in all the three aforementioned terms comes asynchronously. Institutional, social and morphological transformations come at different speeds and different spatialities. We observe asynchronities between city areas and between the city centre and its periphery (Sykora & Bouzarovski, 2012, pp. 44f), but also within one microraion or from one apartment to another. Adaptations of space therefore need to be addressed on multiple levels. In the following parts I will proceed by narrowing down the focus from the public space of national monuments, via the semi-private neighbourhood space, down to the private space of the individual home.

Looking at adaptation of space via a framework of strategies and tactics will permit integrating the state as one actor among others: the state, too is involved in changing space, with its own agenda and interest. The next part of the chapter will therefore be devoted to the role of the state as space entrepreneur. Here, I will present how urban space is being shaped by actors 'from above' – that is the state, the region and the city governments. Looking first at planning processes in Khujand, I will attempt to relativise the role of state authorities in the planning process. Then, an analysis of monuments will serve as a backdrop to an outline of the negotiation processes between state actors on different levels. In parallel, I will insist on the increasing importance of *obodi* in monument design. In a further step, I will delve into adaptation on the verge between public and private spaces, looking at courtyards in large housing estates. In a final step, I will present the adaptations of private space: infrastructure replacements, building extensions and renovations.

6.1.2 *The art of the possible:* transduction in action

Where change takes place, it takes place through "praxis", mirroring Lefebvre's claim of the pre-eminence of everyday practice for bringing about change. To Lefebvre, a study of the everyday life had to point to the "precise problems of production-at-large" and engage in a critical analysis of abundances, constraints and determinisms (Lefebvre, 1968, p. 50). This analysis of changes to urban morphologies will therefore look into underlying motivations – and shortages are one very prominent motivation, as we will see in the following.

From a normatively transitological perspective, urban change in Central Asia appears as some kind of defectiveness which eventually gives way to improvisation. The explanatory notes to an exhibition on urban landscapes in Uzbekistan read: "the change from a socialist planned economy to modern city management is barely accomplished, and the old plans and norms are no longer valid. Improvisations and short-term solutions have to fill the vacuum. New centres emerge spontaneously" (ifa-Galerie, 2009, p. 93). In my opinion, this widespread point of view distorts the picture. First of all, it naïvely attributes to the state and the "modern city management" the capacity (and the will!) to set out plans and norms which benefit the urban population. It also devalues the aspirations and capacities of individual actors. From my observations in Khujand, their aspirations are by no means short-term, but are guided by the will to sustainably improve their way of living. 'Improvisation' falls short in describing their actual capacities, which rely on its own logic of planning and implementation (Brown, 1998, p. 627). It needs therefore another framework to grasp the knife-edge between wishes and the limits to them.

Bouzarovski et al. have suggested the concept of *resilience* to analyse everyday life coping strategies in post-socialist settings (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2690). They understood it as a "capacity to adapt" and an "ability of cities to transform their political, economic and technical structures in line with the demands of a more challenging future environment", and proposed to conceive it in terms of a "complex network of socioeconomic practices and material sites" (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2690). This concept takes into account the complex negotiation process and acknowledges the actors' room to manoeuvre. Yet adaptation is rather seen as a passive reaction to external impulses. This is consistent with a straightforward idea of *remont:* mending and repair indeed takes place when something is broken and needs to be fixed. Some spare part is being replaced, the *status quo ante* is being restored. Yet I will insist in the following that *remont* is not about mending broken spaces: it is a creative production of space in its own right.

This consideration brings to mind the process of transduction, which I have already sketched in the theory chapter. Transduction "targets a virtual 'object' and its realization on a path heading toward a 'pro-posed' horizon. […] *Proposing* does not amount to *producing,* but *propositions* open the way for those who will produce" (Lefebvre, 2009c, pp. 197–198). Transduction is therefore more than the "refashioning of urban space to meet the exigencies of the users" (Parker, 2004, p. 164), but a negotiation of the possibilities of the production of space: "As new theoretical imaginings are given concrete form, the feedback mechanism ensures that subsequent projections / projects are informed by this newly altered reality in an endless loop of speculation-investigation-critique-implementation" (Parker, 2004, p. 178). This practice is grounded in the local cultural context. In Lefebvre's terms, it can be framed as "a creative and expressive negotiation between the spatial affordance and the cultural significations" (Stanek, 2011, p. 93).

In order to implement this idea of a *negotiation of possibilities* of urban space production into the discussion of urban landscape change, I suggest looking at de Certeau. He has proposed to distinguish between strategies and tactics when looking at everyday life practices (Certeau, 1984, p. 365). Strategies are understood as a "calculation of power relationships". Those who are able to employ them, pro-actively shape the spaces they operate in. Tactics however, are negotiations with these spaces and negotiation with those who possess power and wealth which allows them to create space strategically. The distinction between strategies and tactics helps to clarify Lefebvre's understanding of social space. He has expressed the distinction between wishes and limitations with the terms of the 'dominated' and the 'appropriated' space. They co-exist and engage in constant negotiation: "Dominated space and appropriated space may in principle be combined – and, ideally at least, they ought to be combined. But history – which is to say the history of accumulation — is also the history of their separation and mutual antagonism. The winner in this contest, moreover, has been domination […] Not that appropriation disappears, for it cannot: both practice and theory continue to proclaim its importance and demand its restitution" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, p. 166). Out of this understanding, Bertuzzo has described the social space as the "field of a dominated, and hence passively experienced, space, whereby 'desire' and imagination seek to change and to appropriate it" (Bertuzzo, 2009, p. 31). Using de Certeau's terminology to describe this line of thought, the strategic handling of space forces those who have no access to it to experience it passively. Having no means for strategically handling space, people engage in tactics within the limits of their possibilities. At the same time, they will not renounce the opportunity to behave strategically when they have the capacity to do so.

There is, however no clear-cut distinction between those who are able to produce space strategically and those who do not. Round argues that the relationship is neither dualistic nor fixed. To the contrary, the "relationship between strategies and tactics is not a static one: they can operate within the same space, through the same people and at different scales" (Round & Williams, 2010, p. 187). Looking at urban change through the lens of tactics and strategies means therefore to reflect the dynamics between constraints and possibilities. Czepczyński argues, post-socialist urban landscapes are "no longer typical for the previous regime and planning, but at the same time quite different from the aspired ones" (Czepczyński, 2010, p. 18). In my understanding, they will never be as the aspired ones, for transduction targets a horizon. *Remont* appears in this sense as transduction in action. This is what we will see in the following, looking at space production processes in Khujand within the social field of space production.

6.2 The state as space entrepreneur

6.2.1 Planning: secret and stuttering

The state as space entrepreneur appears most obviously in two ways: as planner; and as building contractor. As building contractors, state authorities at different levels order constructions to be built: administrative, military and cultural buildings, housing estates, and infrastructure. As planner, state authorities develop land use plans and supervise their implementation. This was also the case in the Soviet Union, and, following its demise, in its successor states – at least in theory. The aspirations of the Soviet state to shape consciousness by shaping space provided a significant impetus to urban planning, as we have seen in the chapter on conceptions. As Liu argues, "the state thought about and laid out where people were to live, to work, to be educated, to shop, to obtain services, to deal with government agencies, and even where they had to have fun. In theory, they did so for molding the Soviet person (progressive, hard-working, selfless, and healthy) as much as for efficiency." (Liu, 2007, p. 73).

In praxis, neither the Soviet state nor the autocratic regimes that have followed it in Central Asia actually possess those monolithic top-down planning powers which they are all too often being ascribed. The ambitions were there, yet the decisions from the 'Centre' stumbled over local power constellations, particular interests, informal rules and actor constellations (Barth & Apolinarski, 2001, p. 69), (Liu, 2007, p.73). The idea of a monolithic state is difficult to uphold, looking at state authorities on different administrative levels, since interests on the union-wide, republican, regional and municipal levels regularly came into conflict with each other. Conflicts within the administrative system took place under their surface, and were rather subtle compared to conflicts with actors outside of it. The most significant vested interests lay in the hands of heavy industry. This was an immediate effect of the Soviet economic system: in the face of omnipresent shortages, and in the absence of price setting markets, the allocation of scarce resources had to take place via rationing. Consequently, sectors which enjoyed priority status would receive a preferential allocation of resources (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006, p. 713). In the case of the Soviet Union, the bulk of investment was directed towards the heavy industry, to the detriment of light industry, consumer goods and housing. Within the Soviet production system, enterprises strived for an "accumulation of means of production rather than of profit"

– that is for an accumulation of space, for the enterprise itself, but also for housing, recreation and transportation of its employees (Stanek, 2011, p. 66). This meant that the municipalities were in practice subordinated to the needs and wishes of enterprises.

The authorities' planning abilities depended upon the type and strength of heavy industry enterprises located on their territory: "In smaller cities, planners were in a very weak position since the industrial enterprises were, in practice, the only actors able to afford to build any housing at all, leading to the a sensation of a "company town" (Gentile, 2003, p. 10). In such a context, in questions of land allocation, "industry had first choice, while the town planner was near the bottom of the food chain (with the populace immediately beneath)" (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 99). Two industries were prioritised in the Leninabad area: firstly, the extraction and processing of non-ferrous metals (uranium being the most important among them in the first years of industrialisation), and, secondly, light industry based on textile production (silk and carpet factories) and food processing (canneries, jam and juice factories).

The prioritised industries received large plots of land in central locations. The Leninabad silk plant was granted some 32 hectares at the southern edge of the old town. The major cannery was placed adjacent to it. Already in Soviet times, the central location of industrial plants was a problem for town planners, who aimed at relocating all industries to the right bank of the Syrdarya. The land-use plans were changed fundamentally several times (entirely new plans were set up in 1939, 1953, 1966, 1982, with major revisions done in between). With every new plan, the industry received even larger terrains – in the city centre and at the outskirts. Yet after the enterprises closed down, the brownfields developed into a burden for the town administration which did not have the capacity to redevelop them. A Korean real estate developer has proposed to build a row of residential high-rises at the eastern edge of the silk factory grounds, but this project has come to a halt following the financial crisis (V Hudžande priostanovleno stroitel'stvo pervyh 2011), amidst allegations of corruption (Interview Anastasia, 2010). Brownfield redevelopment is even more problematic for smaller cities of the Khujand agglomeration: in Chkalovsk, the metallurgical plant occupied a site of 200 ha; out of the 50 ha of the carpet factory in Qayroqqum, only a small part is still used for production purposes; Taboshar, finally, is encircled by abandoned opencast mines and corresponding transportation and processing facilities.

Security concerns were subordinated to the needs of the industry: trucks carrying radioactive ore from Taboshar to the processing facilities in Chkalovsk would cross the Syrdarya river on a pontoon bridge at the eastern edge of the old town and proceeded along city streets. A bypass bridge was only built in the mid-1990, allegedly privately financed by the managing director of

the Taboshar mines, Amon Abdulloev – and has been since called 'Amon bridge' (see illustration 18).

Apart from the space taken up by industrial heavy-weights, their influence on urban morphology is considerable: the public square in front of the main entrance at the crossroads of Lenin and Gagarin streets appears today somewhat oversized, but back then this was the point where commuter buses to the factory converged. The lavish mosaics of the pedestrian underpass under the square – which is blocked today – bear witness to the bygone important of the transport node. Another example is the 'Culture house of the silk workers', which appears throughout the interviews as an important site of concerts and parties (Interview Ansatasia, 2010, Interview Sergei, 2010). As major employers, factories would organise a wide array of activities out of their budget which were not directly linked to production: culture, parks, restaurants, and so forth. That means that in Khujand, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, these services to the population were scaled down together with the downturn of the industry. The major factories also had considerable influence on the housing sector, both as contractors of residential estates, and within the housing allocation administrations. Microraions to the South and East of the silk factory ('Zagorodnyj' and 'Bofanda') were built in the 1980s with funds of the silk plant. Additionally, in the residential districts on the right bank of the Syrdarya, a number of houses were provided for silk plant employees.

In this situation, urban planning departments surely could set up planning documents. But it was by no means sure that plans would be followed (Gentile, 2003, p. 10), for industrial needs definitely prevailed. The municipal administration and the industrial enterprises ran non-conforming parallel planning processes. Concerting their efforts was difficult indeed as planning details were considered state secrets (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 99). This situation has prevailed until today. The current land use document for Khujand – which still is the revised 1966 *genplan* – is not accessible to the general public, although it is outdated in all aspects. In Dushanbe in 2007, I was not able to get access to the city's planning document, even if a new one was already being set up there, supplanting the one which was so vigorously protected. Nevertheless, I was generously provided with an almost unreadable A4-copy of the A0-sized poster. With the main planning documents being inaccessible and the stakeholders' plans and ambitions being undisclosed, "town planning was akin to town lobbying" (Borén & Gentile, 2007, p. 99). The planning departments had to defend their interests in the back-rooms of the respective central ministries, and were still confronted with top-down decisions which they finally had to execute. This resulted in institutions which, in spite of exalted ambitions, were very weak in practice – mirroring Kassymbekova's analysis of early Soviet state-building in

Tajikistan (Kassymbekova, 2011, p. 33). Main decisions were either taken on an interpersonal level which bypassed these institutions, or were rushed through following orders from above.

Summing up, the Soviet city was not as meticulously planned as it appears at first glance. More precisely: it was thoroughly planned and thoroughly executed only in those places where one major player was present who had not only the ambition, but also the means, to push the project forward – in yet in most cases, this player was not the municipality. In the Tajik capital Dushanbe, the Republic's government was able to produce a showcase of the Tajik SSR, in the city centre at least. In Khujand, where many interests ran up against each other, there was no sign of concerted planning. This has not happened after independence either, with the major distinction that industry has collapsed and is no longer a significant player in urban planning questions. Even if substantial functions are vested into local governments by recent laws, municipalities lack appropriate funding and therefore depend on state contributions. With the provincial government of Sughd, another significant player has entered the arena, with the effect that Khujand's mayor Sodiq Mirholikov[71] is rarely visible, while the governor of Sughd, Kohir Rasulzoda, appears in public as the actual mayor.

The municipality's room to manoeuvre is consequently small; urban projects do not march on but can only grope their way forward. The planners' activity is directed to projects which come at no, or very low, costs. This planning practice heavily discourages private initiative and participation, while at the same time it has to rely on private funds to function. As mentioned, the initial *genplan* for Khujand provided for a number of additional microraions to be built – in particular to the west and to the north of the existing ones. The numbering gaps of the existing microraions reveal it quite well: As of today, the 3rd, 8th, 12th, 13th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 27th, 28th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd and 34th microraions do exist. For the remaining microraions, some preparatory works, such as levelling, major water and sewage infrastructure, and roadworks were already carried out in Soviet times. Yet the urban administration which is in charge of housing construction, was unable to fund high-rise and high-density housing estates on these premises, as planned. Neither are investors around which could step in. Out of these concerns, the planned microraions are being subdivided in small plots which are sold to individuals who then build detached houses on their own.

This process takes place on the edges of the 27th and 28th microraions, and on the entire

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71   Mirholikov was mayor *(raisi šahr)* of Qayroqqum 2009 before being promoted to mayor of Khujand in 2009; therefore he was mayor of the city at the time of my fieldwork. In 2011, the President demoted him to the function of the *rais* of the surrounding district (Nohiâi Boboğon Ġafurov), and Radjab Karimov became mayor of Khujand. He too served as mayor of Qayroqqum prior to his appointment in 2011.

territories of the 29th and 30th. The plots measure roughly 60 x 20 metres – twelve *sotiq*[72] – and are thus three times as large as plots in the old town or in the Sebzor and Yagodka neighbourhoods. They are even larger than average household plots in agricultural settlements surrounding Khujand: in Palos, renowned for its gardens and orchards, an average plot measures around nine sotiq. One argument for the bigger plot size is the relatively low quality of the soil, where less square metres would make it impossible to grow a sufficient amount of vegetables for subsistence. Following another argument, the larger surface allows for larger houses to be built for the new upper middle classes of Khujand (Interview Sherzod). Both arguments sound reasonable and are compatible, too. Unfortunately, I was not able to obtain an official statement on that issue. The roads in the new "low-rise microraions" are unpaved yet, but construction is under way. In the planned 1st and 2nd microraions land was given out to 879 individuals for private construction, while further 75 hectares in the 4th and 5th microraions are being prepared to be subdivided into plots {Hudžandcam ne razrešat stroit' doma #524}. However, construction has been halted, as the terrains are not yet connected to water and electricity grids.

Today as in Soviet times, the local administration involuntarily resorts to some kind of a Lefebvrian "progressive-regressive mode of knowledge production" (Charnock, 2010, p. 1286). The pre-eminence of industry precluded municipal administrations from a strategic handling of space, yet once possibilities to do so arose, the municipality grasped them to develop, for instance, the microraion areas. Today, because of generally insufficient funding and weak institutions, the vertical organisation of state power might function even smoother than in Soviet times. Almost all large projects depend on state money, therefore the municipality has to lobby even for minor projects both with the Sughd region and the central ministries in Dushanbe. At the same time the municipality has to accept the projects imposed on it from above – as we will see in the following part.

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72   The Tajik 'sotiq' comes from the Russian word 'sotka' meaning 100 square metres, i.e. one are. It is a common measure to describe plots of land for construction and agriculture.

6.2.2 Monuments: tactics and strategies

Public monuments are highly consensual and highly contested elements of the built environment: consensual for their ambition to remember or to inspire great achievements; and contested precisely because of their community-building character which always excludes one group or another. Lefebvre sees monuments as ambiguous elements of the built environment, as sites of both repression and sociality: "a seat of an institution, it organizes a 'colonized' and 'oppressive' space, and (...) simultaneously, it is a place of collective social life" (Stanek, 2011, p. 195). As we will see in the following when looking at monuments in Khujand, the dimension of sociality and *obod*-ness, that is, man-made beautification, is becoming increasingly important – and receives a particular definition, distinct from the Soviet era.

Prior to the Russian conquest, statues and monuments were unknown of in Central Asian cities. This was not only due to Islamic aniconist tradition, but first of all to the high value placed on privacy, which suppressed the need for outward representation (Wirth, 2002, p. 327), (Bianca, 1991, p. 186). Under Russian imperial rule, only very few statues were erected in the colonial new cities, such as the monument to Russian soldiers fallen at the storming of Tashkent (Sahadeo, 2007, pp. 48 ff). Statues and monuments became an integral part of Central Asian urban landscapes only under Soviet rule and were promoted as "truly revolutionary elements": "It was only after the October revolution that this art has been liberated from its serfdom. Works of architecture now organically enter into the architectural compositions of streets, places, parks, cities and villages" (Pisarskij, 1965, p. 28). In this vein, monuments became a part of the Soviet idea for the instrumental use of urbanism, educating the population through the built environment, as has been shown in the chapter on conceptions of space.

Yet in spite of high-flying aspirations, the construction of monuments was characterised by ad-hoc decisions and opacity – in the same way as urban planning practice in general. In Soviet times, a "long-term general plan of monumental propaganda" (Muhammadiev, 1988, p. 3) was called for, but never even mapped out. In the same way as the *genplan* of Soviet cities was subject to frequent changes and an even more controversial implementation, also the setting up of monuments was not a straightforward task. Constant transformation on all levels also meant that monuments were changing at the same pace: "(Socialist realism) was crucially about the constant invention of […] new 'images' to embody and transmit messages and myths to audiences who were themselves always 'moving forward' as their political consciousness and

aesthetic sensibilities developed" (Cooke, 1997, p. 143). Lenin statues are no exception to this rule. On particular occasions, in regard to changing circumstances, new Lenin statues were set up at places which seemed appropriate at a given time: In 1919, the city of Khujand acquired a first series of portraits of Marx, Lenin and Liebknecht and publicly displayed them on public holidays. The first monument dedicated to Lenin was erected in 1924 or 1926 close to the city park at the eastern gates of the old fortress. A new, larger monument was unveiled in 1936 after the city was renamed to Leninabad. (Marafiev, 1986, pp. 242–243). Finally, in 1974, on the 50th anniversary of the Tajik SSR, the new monument was set up on the right bank.

Monuments were uniquely set up in appropriate 'modern' surroundings, that is, in Soviet-style quarters, and never in the old town. This factually limited monumental architecture to the Lenin street, the theatre square, and the microraions. The city's main monuments were set up along Lenin street: a memorial dedicated to silk factory employees fallen in World War II stands at the main gate of the silk factory. Further north, the central World War II monument dedicated to the 'defenders of the fatherland' was unveiled in 1969 adjacent to the Panjshanbe bazaar (Marafiev, 1986, p. 244) (see illustration 30). Some hundred metres further north, we find a monument to the victims of the fight for the establishment of Soviet rule in northern Tajikistan (illustration 31). One block further on, a red-painted hammer-and-sickle guarded the busy Univermag bus stop until 2010 (illustration 22). From here on, the monumental scenery was dominated by the gigantic Lenin statue on the opposite river bank (illustration 27)

When the city expanded to the right bank, a new Lenin statue was planned at a hill above the central bridge, overlooking the city[73]. It was intentionally not placed in a pre-existing urban setting, but was meant to create a new centre, entirely defined in ideological terms (Rolf, 2006, pp. 145ff). The statue had to be worthy of the city which bore the name of the depicted, and was therefore designed in appropriate dimensions: it was the second-largest Lenin statue in Central Asia, topped only by the statue in Tashkent. After the latter was torn down and replaced by the Globe of Uzbekistan in 1992, the first-place award, at least temporarily, went to Khujand.

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73   The authors of "Architecture of the Soviet Tajikistan" describe the statue as following: "The location of the monument on the high right bank of the Syrdarya River was assigned during the elaboration of the general plan of the city. This had a deeply ideological sense: the monument to the Leader was not to be located between buildings, should not be lost among local urban buildings, but be set up in a place where he would belong to the entire city, as if he would float over it in wonderful natural surroundings, set against the picturesque Mongol-Tau mountain chain, between the giant park and the azure waters of the great Central Asian river. The sublime monument to V. I. Lenin glares in the sunlight with its stainless steel. It can be seen from afar approaching the city from the south-west from the Dushanbe road and from many points of the left bank. The monument and its surroundings have emerged as attractive places for the citizens. From its forecourt the city emerges it all its beauty. The Lenin monument, interwoven with the pathos of revolutionary transformations, reflecting the greatness of the Leader and his achievements, has become an inalienable part of the cityscape" Veselovskij & Mukimov, 1987, p. 154.

The Lenin statue thus constituted a link between the left and the right bank, the new and the old town which it faced[74]. Since its construction, the Lenin statue emerged as an important part of Khujand's urban identity – and appears on mental maps, too.
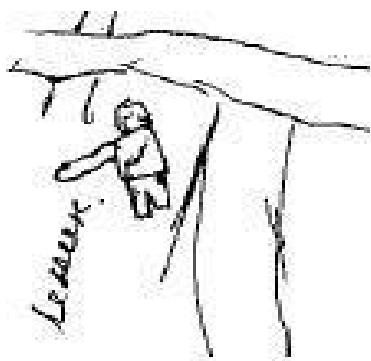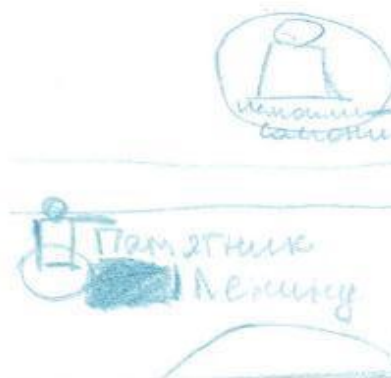
Mental map 9: Lenin   Mental map 10: Lenin and Somoni

Looking at the development of independent Tajikistan's monumental propaganda, we can distinguish three distinct phases. Each phase shows a particular interplay between strategies and tactics on national and local administration levels. Immediately after Independence, the civil war made it impossible to invest in monuments. Only very few monuments were set up until the end of the civil war. One notable exception is the statue of the 10th century poet Ferdowsi in Dushanbe, erected in 1994 on the previous location of the Lenin statue, which has been violently torn down in September 1991[75]. This was the first representative occasion for the newly elected president Rahmonov to appear as mastering the situation amidst an ongoing civil war – at very low cost, by the way, as the Ferdowsi statue was already cast in Soviet times and had been preserved in a backyard until it was rediscovered as a potential central monument (Sgibnev, 2007, p. 86). Furthermore, the statue of the author of the Shahnameh matched well

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74   In Tashkent as well, the Lenin statue was built at the limit of the old and the new town. This was due to the fact that the residence of the Governor-General was built adjacent to the city gates. The residence was subsequently replaced by Soviet government buildings and the place became the city's focal point of political representation. This feature is undistinguishable today, for the old city quarters behind the statue have been torn down and replaced by the Pakhtakor stadium.

75   The circumstances of the statue's dismantling are dramatic and highly contested. In a series of interviews which I conducted in spring 2007, both former civil war parties blame respectively the other party as responsible for Lenin's fall. The prevailing opinion was to classify the dismantling as "barbaric", and "the start signal for the civil war" (Sgibnev, 2007, p. 82).

with the prevailing pan-Iranian orientation of the earliest years of Tajik independence (Buisson & Khusenova, 2011, p. 99).

The second phase roughly spans from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s. This period sees growing political and economic stability. For the sake of stability, statues of the Soviet period remain largely preserved – in Dushanbe, for instance, the small Lenin statue in the city's central park as well as the busts of Dzerzhinski and Putovski[76]. In Khujand, the large Lenin statue remained in place[77], as did the other Soviet busts and monuments scattered around the town. At the same time, a number of monuments were set up affirming Khujand's regional identity. In 1996, a statue honouring the Khujand-born poet Kamoli Khujandi was built on Lenin Street, adjacent to the monument to the establishment of Soviet rule in northern Tajikistan (illustration 33).

On the other side of the monument, an alley bearing the busts of the town's important personalities – the so-called *sitorahoi Xuǧand* – the stars of Khujand – was extended and had additional busts added to it. In front of the theatre, a fountain was built, featuring the replica of an ancient Soghdian statue of a female dancer excavated in Penjikent. Finally, in 2008, the theatre square saw another embellishment with the statue of a wolf feeding two babies: the statue is inspired by antique mural paintings in the region and is meant to symbolise Khujand's location on the Silk Road, along which legends travelled together with goods and people[78].

After the end of the civil war, Tajikistan set out to catch up with its Central Asian neighbours in terms of production of a national ideology and even to outpace them in terms of a massive spread of the national ideology in official discourse, school curricula and monumental representations. The search for the foundation of the Tajik state aims at establishing a distinct identity – drawing lines against Turkic neighbours and Iran, and avoiding granting Islam too extensive dominance within the national identity (Buisson & Khusenova, 2011, p. 98). The search ends up with a Soviet-style "ethnisation of history" and, in practical terms, with an

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76   Felix Dzerzhinski (1877-1826) was the head of the Soviet secret police, the *CheKa*. His bust was located at the crossroads of Chapaev and Shevchenko streets just opposite the Department of Internal Affairs. Cheslav Putovski (???-1924), head of Tajikistan's chekists in the 1920. The bust was situated on the right bank of the river, approaching the central bridge which also bore his name.

77   Just Lenin's slogan ("Our socialist republic of the Soviets will stand firmly, as a torch of international socialism and as a model for all working masses", Očilov & Marafiev, 1977, p. 8) was removed, and Lenin's name arranged at the top of the pedestal.

78   The statue is also an example of an economical approach to monuments: the same statue was unveiled in 2002 at the Shahristan tunnel, here as well reminding that modern road construction witnesses the rebirth of the Silk Road, with the Sughd region at its heart. As the cast for the statue existed already, the second version only costed 50000 Somoni.

eclectic mixture of historical references to aryanism, zoroastrianism and the Somonid dynasty (Buisson & Khusenova, 2011, pp. 101–102). The empire was promoted to the rank of the cradle of the Tajik nation, and its ruler Ismoil Somoni was granted the role of the nation's founding father, thus establishing historical continuity for Tajik statehood from the 10th right to the 20th century (Nourzhanov, 2001, Buisson & Khusenova, 2011, pp. 101–102). As an expression of the new state ideology, the Ferdowsi statue on Dushanbe's central square was replaced in 1999 by a monument dedicated to Ismoil Somoni.

Monumental nation-building seems to emerge as a priority sector – akin to the heavy industry of Soviet times. It devours a significant amount of resources and has top priority when it comes to questions of urbanism, and it is strictly Dushanbe-driven with virtually no range of manoeuvre left to local interests. This is in short the characteristic of the third and current phase of monument construction roughly since the end of the 2000s. A particular role falls to the President Emomali Rahmon. He is the author of the official ideology through his discourses as well as his oeuvres on the Aryans and the Somonids (Rahmonov, 2000-2002)[79]. While Somoni is meant to be the founder of the historical Tajik state, Rahmon appears as the founder of modern Tajikistan. Through this parallel, Somoni statues are always Rahmon statues, too, argues Nourzhanov (Nourzhanov, 2001), and the opinion that "our President is our Ismoil Somoni" is indeed widespread (Sgibnev, 2007, p. 112). Monuments to the honour of Ismoil Somoni have begun to proliferate all over Tajikistan some ten years after the first statue of the ruler was unveiled in the capital. Khujand is no exception to it.

In 2011, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Tajikistan's independence, the President inaugurated a Somoni monument on the former site of the Lenin statue, overlooking the city and the Syrdarya River[80]. The statue is embedded in a sumptuous arrangement of mosaics and reliefs reflecting the history of the Somonid state. They are executed in 'ancient Persian' aesthetics in order to recall the Zoroastrian and Aryan heritage. Fountains and lawns side the stairs and platforms which lead to the statue.

The new Somoni monument which came to replace Lenin brought about a number of relocations. Not just the Lenin statue had to be moved, as we will see in the following. Also the

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[79]   Following this line of thought, the President has become, towards the end of the 2000s, the embodiment of the Tajik nation, with the new Presidential residence bearing the official name "Palace of the Nation". This feature is discussed in more detail in Sgibnev (2007, p. 109).

[80]   Interestingly enough, the same procedure took place in Khorugh, the capital of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province: there too, a Lenin statue was removed and replaced by Ismoil Somoni (Leninro az markazi šahri Xoruġ 2010).

old Somoni statue, which stood some hundred metres away, in front of the university building, had to move. It was transported to the district centre in Ghafurov, to the south of Khujand (V Tadžikistane budet otkryt eŝe 2011). The vacant pedestal was adorned with national flags as a makeshift solution. Reportedly, the regional administration of Sughd insists on placing a statue of Timurmalik there, a local hero who fought against Mongol invaders[81].

Other monuments built in recent years are also centred on nation-building education: in front of the municipal administration on a platform above the river, a column with Tajikistan's coat of arms in gold and the national anthem inscribed below was built in 2006[82] (Dopolnenie k informacii o rabočej 2006). Another alley of busts of important personalities was inaugurated in 2012. It leads from the theatre to the river, yet this time with an emphasis on national rather than regional heroes. The alley concludes with a hemicycle of columns adorned by national flags opened in 2012 (V Hudžande otkroût Istoričeskuû kolonnadu 2012). Furthermore, just behind the new Somoni statue, a giant flagpole of 70 metres was designed to be built in Khujand (V Hudžande tože postroât flagštok 2012) – after the erection of the world's largest flagpole in Dushanbe in 2011[83].

This period of frenzied nation-building through monuments accompanies the suppression of Soviet statues. In Khujand, the giant hammer-and-sickle were brought down in January 2010, officially because of its state of disrepair; and, finally, in late 2011, the giant Lenin statue was removed in order to make place for the new Somoni statue. The city administration did all it could to abdicate any responsibility. During my fieldwork, rumours of the removal circulated already, yet Khujand's mayor proclaimed in the summer of 2010 that the city would not tear down the Lenin monument; that there was no order from above to do so; and that the population had to be asked beforehand (Mèr Hudžanda 2010). I would doubt this statement, as preparatory works for removal had already begun. The marble plaques were already removed from the pedestal and earthwork was underway. Still the site engineer assured me, that there was no intention whatsoever to remove the statue. The tactic was clearly one of appeasing the rumours and delaying the announcement of the removal.

The Khujand administration is very sensitive about the disposition of Soviet monuments: not

81   His statue is on display in the entrance hall of the Regional Museum in the old fortress.
82   The column seems to copy the column dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Tajik SSR that was unveiled in Dushanbe in 1949.
83   This flagpole – 165 metres high – carries a flag of 30 x 60 metres and is situated to the left of the "Palace of the Nation", that is the President's residence. To the right of the palace, a giant coat of arms of Tajikistan parades on a column of 45 metres.

only in regard to the Lenin statue, but also with other monuments of the era. Is it because it takes into account the popular feeling that a city which was named Leninabad should be careful with its Soviet past? Is it because of the powerful lobbying of the still active Communist Party which demonstrated for the Lenin statue to be preserved, and which now takes care of the relocated statue? Contrary to other removed statues, remainders from the Soviet past are not sold for scrap. The city wished to establish a park with historical monuments around the already existing monument to Afghan War fighters and so both statues have been placed there, alongside the Kirov statue which stood in front of the university which once bore his name, (Na severe Tadžikistana pamâtniki kommunističeskoj 2011) (see illustration 50).

In spite of the removal of Soviet leaders from Khujand's streets, one part of the monumental heritage is firmly being kept: the monuments to World War II fighters – very much in line with the situation in other Central Asian countries. On 9th May, celebrations are held at the central monument adjacent to the Panjshanbe bazaar, in the presence of veterans and the President of Sughd. On this occasion, schoolchildren stand guard at all monuments related to military action; that also happens at the monument for the Afghan war fighters, and the monument to the establishment of Soviet rule[84].

Far away from the capital, it is even possible to open a new monument honouring the Soviet past, provided there are potent sponsors and a semi-private setting. In 2010, the Russian consulate assisted in setting up a monument in the courtyard of Khujand's High school Nr. 1, "from the thankful Tajik people – to the first Russian teachers", who "in the first years of the establishment of Soviet rule in Tajikistan did not fear Muslim fanatics, and laid the foundation for a new Soviet school and a new system of education": Monument to Russian teachers fighting for Soviet Rule (V Hudžande otkryt pamâtnik pervym 2010). I have no evidence which provides a clear-cut explanation for suchcautious handling of the Soviet past. I would argue that this could happen only because Khujand is not the national capital: in spite of all representative ambitions, on the periphery there still is some room to accommodate the past, but also room for local actors to exploit their range of manoeuvre where possible.

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84   This is the sole occasion where one can see the monument's eternal flame burning. This is quite significant in my view, as the average population has not had any gas in their kitchens for over a decade. See illustrations 29,31)

6.2.3 Nation-building through obod-ness?

In the Soviet urban conception, central monuments were never thought of as sites of sociality. They surely received large crowds during parades and witnessed wreath-laying ceremonies, parades and speeches. But still, they remained "undefined places, ceremonial axes that became orphaned outside of holidays" (Rüthers, 2007, p. 13). Apart from tourists and bridal couples taking photographs, the central monuments were not attractive enough to spend time there – and intentionally so. Leisure activities might have undermined the solemn atmosphere, and they would also undermine the functional paradigm of the Soviet city, which set aside "Parks of culture and recreation" specifically designed for leisure purposes. The Lenin statue in Khujand stood atop a wide and impressive set of stairs, but was definitely not an inviting place to be. This was and still is the case with Tajikistan's first and most important national monument – the Ismoil Somoni statue in Dushanbe. Soldiers and policemen guard it in permanence and extort money from people who wish to take photographs. Active appropriation of space by "ordinary" citizens and visitors is not only unintended, but even powerfully prohibited.

Still, unintended appropriation of monuments does take place in certain niches: the old Somoni statue in Khujand in front of the university was tremendously popular with young boys from surrounding microraions who would take a bath in its fountains (illustration 35). Yet from a Lefebvrian perspective, this does not amount to a creative production of space, for "reappropriation (...) can call but a temporary halt to domination" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, pp. 167–168). Although Lefebvre concedes that possibly, "techniques of diversion have greater import than attempts at creation (production)", he argues this cannot be a viable and long-term perspective, as the "preexisting form, having been designed for some other purpose, is inappropriate to the needs of their would-be communal life" (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1997, pp. 167–168).

The last years have witnessed a different approach of Tajik authorities towards monumental nation-building, who now purposely design and promote representative monuments as places of sociality. Monuments honouring the poet Rudaki emerged throughout Tajikistan in 2008, to mark his 1150th birth anniversary. The most impressive of these monuments was placed in the Dushanbe's central park, which previously hosted Tajikistan's first Lenin statue. This complex was particular indeed: Dushanbe's mayor argued: "this will be a truly new and modern park with musical fountains, four of them, and alleys" (2008c). For the first time 'singing fountains' came to Tajikistan: the water jets dance up and down to the rhythm of musical tunes,

accompanied by colourful light effects. In the early 2000s, the fountains swashed from Las Vegas to Asia and the former Soviet Union. Dozens were built in Russia and in Kazakhstan. Particularly in Kazakhstan's new capital Astana they became tremendously popular attractions for evening entertainment. As Köppen argues, Astana was designed in order to overwhelm the spectators with astonishment (Köppen, 2009, p. 44), with a clear aim of fostering loyalty to the regime.

Tajik authorities could not take a back seat – and to the contrary, they managed to combine the singing fountains craze with nation-building. The new Ismoil Somoni statue in Khujand is the perfect example of the endeavour to combine state ideology and entertainment. The President inaugurated the Somoni complex not only together with a brand-new swimming hall just below (È. Rahmon prinimaet učastie v 2010); five singing and dancing fountains were placed on the stairs leading to the monument. The place therefore became "a wonderful and attractive place for strolling and entertainment on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Tajikistan's independence". This also works on a less costly scale, but with the help of extensive landscaping and beautification around monuments. In Kurgan-Tyube, as well as in Khujand, the 2008 Rudaki monuments were surrounded by plants, fountains and benches (illustration 35). As for Khujand, the reported costs ranged at 3,4 million somoni (550000 €) – nothing compared to the 4 million US$ allegedly set aside for the Rudaki complex in Dushanbe (Central'nyj park imeni Lenina 2007), or the gigantic 80 million somoni (13 million €) for its new 'Capital City park' *(Boģi Pojtaxt)* (Otkrytie parka "Pojtaht", 2011). And indeed, these places have become attractive for citizens: children play there in the afternoon heat, women gather on the benches after the evening meal, students eat ice cream and listen to music from their mobile phones. They all appreciate the place for its *obod*-ness, for the qualities of a place which is well arranged and well maintained.

The city park near the fortress and the funfair on Chumchuk Aral Island were constantly popular since Soviet times, but had no political connotation attached to them. The Kamoli Khujandi monument built in 1996 also quickly developed into a favourite place of leisure for the neighbourhood, particularly for youth. Fourteen-year-old Firuza who lives three minutes away from the monument says:

> *I spend a lot of time here at Kamoli Khujandi, because there's a lot of people there. They go out and talk to each other. At evening, around six or seven I go there for roller-blading or to ride the bike. Not every day perhaps, but every other day, when we have time (Interview Firuza, 2010).*

Her brother, four years her senior, meets his friends at the ice cream bar, after his student job is finished:

> *The Kamoli Khujandi square is just nearby. We go there because it's close. My friends come there, they all come. There's ice cream there, so we gather and sit around a while and chat (Interview Olim, 2010).*

The newer projects of monumental propaganda, however, from the very start endow monuments which are meant to convey a nation-building message with *obod*-ness, leisure quality and sociality. Monuments become part of a positively connoted leisure time. I would not go as far as to say that the esteem for Ismoil Somoni is forcibly growing – this must remain a subject for further research – but the legitimacy of state authorities does grow indeed: they arrange for *obod* places and fulfil the expectation that the population does vest in them. At the same time, there is hardly any range of manoeuvre left for theappropriation of space. *Obod*-ification appears therefore as a means of domination of a state which is convinced of the possibility for the instrumental use of urban space.

Looking at the origins of the word *obod,* the Encyclopaedia Iranica indicates its origin in the Middle Persian *āpāt,* meaning "developed, thriving, inhabited, cultivated". This is followed by the contemporary definition of the word meaning "inhabited space" or "any place where a group of individuals has come together and erected dwellings for itself" (1982). The Tajik adjective *obod* refers in the same way to a set of positive qualities ascribed to a particular space: beautiful, well maintained, blossoming – both literally and figuratively. Yet – these qualities must have been produced by mankind. Tajik/Persian place name endings witness this concept: Leninobod, Stalinobod, Zafarobod, Mehnatobod and the like (-*abad* being the Russian form of the term – yet we may also turn to Hyderabad and Islamabad for its cognates further south). In a Russian-language interview, it was a Rosetta stone experience for me, when I heard:

> *We too, we want to see our city well-arranged and beautiful, that is with* obodi, *with central streets and alleys* (My hotim tože blagoustroennym videt' svoj gorod, krasivym, obodi značit, s central'nymi ulicami, s alleâmi) *(Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).*

More generally, *obod* is heard when something man-made is described in positive terms, teven with this kind of particular reference to the national character:

> *(That's a) splendid national-type project: wood carvings, painting, everywhere.*

That's lovely as well. At the Azizon tea house, they have done some national wood carving, they have done honour to themselves, it's turned out very obod. The national specificities, the truth, the Northern, the East[85] and the Tajikness (Xušru nacional'nyj proekt, kandakori, čubkori, naqoši, hama ǧoâš ba. Vaj ham priâtno. čojxonai Azizon, kandakorii milli kunand, xurmat kunand, bisěr obod šud. Xususiâthoi milli, haqiqi, šimoli, šarq va toǧikona) *(Interview Muhiddin, 2010).*

The term obod also regularly appears in propaganda slogans of the state authorities, who tend to link beautification of the city to civic education. On Dushanbe trolleybuses, we read for instance:

Obodi *and blossoming of the capital is an important task of our citizens!* (Obodivu šukufoii pojtaxt vazifai muhim šahrvandi most!) *(Trolleybus Nr. 1068);*

We will keep our capital always obod *and beautiful* (Pojtaxtamonro hameša obodu zebo nigoh dorem) *(Trolleybus Nr. 2038);*

Making the capital obod *is our goal* (Obodonii pojtaxt maromi most.) *(Trolleybus Nr. 2052).*

The term *obod* does therefore refer to a high state of upkeep, to beauty and blossoming which is publicly visible, and publicly expected. In this regard, the *obodi* of one's home is an inherent part of social relations:

It is advisable to do remont before weddings, so that everything looks decent (prilično), *that is obod, we would say,* (obod ki šavad, meguem) *when people come courting or for the celebration. (Interview Sherzod).*

Obodi appears as the spatial counterpart of the Soviet *kul'turnost'* (Volkov, 2000), which encompasses civilised norms of behaviour, but also of fashion and taste. Taste, argues Gerasimova, was for the Soviet state by no means a private affair, but "an important social and political choice" (Gerasimova & Čujkina, 2004). Transposed into contemporary Tajikistan, kul'turnost, intermingled with traditional and Islamic norms, reappears as *odob*-ness: a similarly complex set of moral norms – understood both as process and product – which become apparent through social practice (Stephan, 2010, pp. 28ff). I would therefore propose to see *obod*-ness as a spatial constituent of *odob*-ness, as a set of norms of a spatial morality which is being enacted, among others, by means of *remont,* as we will see in the following.

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85   That is, typical to Northern Tajikistan, and to the 'Orient' in general.

6.3 The re-definiton of neighbourhood: building and destroying community

In this part of the chapter on adaptations of space, I will look at the level of the neighbourhood. At this level, the privacy of the home and the public space "where strangers mingle" (Kürten, 2008, p. 67) interact with each other. Individual coping strategies and traditional community values are re-negotiated. They lead to new spatialities which rebound to new conceptions of space. To look at this phenomenon, I will explore the scope of the "ruralisation" and "traditionalisation" of urban life (Stephan, 2010, p. 59), which arguably take place in Central Asian cities. In a first part, I will present the background of the ruralisation and traditionalisation paradigm and its implications. In a second part, I will look at the development of urban agriculture in microraions in an attempt to dissect the notion of ruralisation. In a final part I will look at the phenomenon of party halls – *tuykhona* in Tajik – in order to analyse the spatial implications of traditionalisation in the city.

6.3.1 Courtyard gardening

Khujand's inhabitants underline the distinction between city and countryside, up to the point of expressing disdain towards the latter. They repeatedly voice the fear of their city being ruralised by an influx of rural migrants and deplore the destruction of urban ways of life which might accompany it – although in Khujand, the urban-rural divide is not as salient as in the capital Dushanbe. On the following pages, I will present the actors and processes of a perceived 'rurality' becoming visible in the urban landscape of Khujand. The outcome is rather paradoxical: what appears as ruralisation at first sight, is first of all driven by long-established Khujandis, and is presented as a fulfilment of urban life.

Walking through Khujand, the most visible attribute for a ruralisation of the city is the widespread urban agriculture. In the old town quarters, urban agriculture is almost invisible, as it takes place behind the walls of the havli. Here, it seems perfectly natural to grow fruits and vegetables on the plots of land adjacent to the residential buildings. In Khujand before Soviet urbanisation, agriculture was indeed an integral part of urban life – like in the havlis of Central Asian cities (Andres, 2012). Following collectivisation of farm land on the outskirts of the cities, the loss of urban farming land due to densification of the urban tissue, and the growth of

employment opportunities in industry and services, the role of urban agriculture decreased somewhat in Soviet times. It nevertheless remained important for supplying the family and, to a lesser extent, the urban market.

After Independence, the Tajik population experienced food shortage. With the breakdown of the Soviet-wide system of distribution, Tajikistan was forced to supply itself on the world market at world prices. These are volatile and steadily growing. Taking into regard that Tajik households spend 60% of the household income on food, the population is very vulnerable to rising food prices. (Hiltner, 2012, p. 2). Since only 6-7% of Tajikistan's territory are effectively available for agricultural purposes, (Hiltner, 2012, p. 27), the role of urban agriculture for self-subsistence is increasing.

Every family I spoke to in the old town heavily relies on their plot of land in the havli in order to grow at least some vegetables and herbs. Nazir, a history teacher at a public school, owns a large plot of land in the Razzoq quarter. He considers that he would not otherwise survive in Khujand. This concerns the vegetables his family grows on the terrain, and the apricots which are sold on the bazaar to pay for wheat[86] (Interview Nazir, 2010). Khurshed's family relies on very low and unstable income outside of agriculture. For this reason, Khurshed goes five days a week to work on an inherited plot of land in Dehmoy where his family raises some dozens of chicken and grows apricots. The remaining days he helps his mother to take care of the garden plot in their *havli* near the bus station (Interview Khurshed, 2010).

For many of those who do not own a plot of land, it is a sincere wish. This not only pertains to the old women who would like to spend their retirement years on a *topchan* under a grapevine roof (Interview Matluba, 2010, Interview Muhabbat, 2010 – we have already made their acquaintance in the chapter on perceptions of space). This is also true for Akpar, a young businessman selling mobile phones in a small shop in the underpass at the Panjshanbe bazaar:

> *If I have the opportunity, God willing, after I'll have sons and grandchildren, I will take myself a small house or something, somewhere in a village, perhaps even further away, and I'll take my wife and go there. I'll buy some horses and some cattle, it will be like a rancho and I will live there. I don't need anything more. It's a dream, you name it. There, I will spend my old days with my old wife* (laughs). *But until then I have to work, so I will work. But when I'm fifty or sixty years old, I will*

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86   According to Nazir, the small sort of apricots called *Qandaq* which he grows, also protects from nuclear diseases, since natural background radiation is famously high in the Khujand area. For a picture of his havli see illustration 37.

go to the farm, just for myself, not for business. I will have my own products, my own milk (...) Today, you don't know if it's milk or if it's chemistry. But if it's your own, the cow is your own, it eats fresh grass, not some chemistry, then (the milk) will be pure (Interview Akpar, 2010, pp. 00:36:34-0).

The picture gets more complicated when it comes to large housing estates from the Soviet era. In these areas, agriculture was not intended.. The lucky ones could engage in agriculture at their dachas on the outskirts of the town. Yet since Independence, the former dachas around Khujand have been transformed into full-fledged houses, and the need for agriculture in housing estates was still growing. Stephan argues that microraions attract the poorer strata of the population because of lower real estate costs. The microraions, however, appear today as problematic for many families, compared to the havli (Stephan, 2010, p. 60), where self-subsistent agriculture is conveniently possible.

Although the microraions were not laid out for agricultural purposes, their inhabitants occupied and cultivated unused areas and, most prominently, the inner courtyards. This process is not unique to Tajikistan, but was a common feature of post-socialist real estate privatisation. Popescu describes a case in Romania: "The former tenants, who had meanwhile become private owners, also expanded their activities to incorporate the collective space allotted to their dwellings. The stripes of greenery in front of the blocks were systematically closed in with trellises and grilles of different shapes and sizes to delineate what was seen as a personal garden" (Popescu, 2010, p. 188). Contrary to the Romanian case, though, the occupied plots in Khujand are not used for recreation, but almost entirely for agriculture purposes.

The plots are as wide as the apartment wall, some four or five metres in most cases. Those who own the plots on the abutting ends of the houses are luckier, as they have direct access to plots to the right or the left of the house. In most cases, the first floor tenants occupy the plots immediately adjacent to their balconies:

All our neighbours on the first floor have gardens. It is easier to water the plants then. They can take the water directly from the apartment. They fix a hosepipe to the tap and take water from there[87]. This is a privilege of the first floors, they all

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[87]   Watering plants from the tap is indeed a problem for the urban infrastructure, which anyway struggles with water shortage. Alexander and Buchli mention conflicts about water usage in Tashkent because of extensive urban agriculture (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 30). In Khujand, I did not hear of conflicts over tap water used for agriculture purposes. Still there are no precise ways to make the plot occupants pay for their water use, since no water metres are installed so far. Fare collectors reportedly take an additional fee of ten Somoni per month for gardening water (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).

have this small plot of land (Interview Parviza, 2010).

In rare cases, the plots are held by upper floor owners. Also, some upper floor families may have occupied plots in the middle of the courtyard. In these cases, the plots are unfenced (see illustrations 40, 41). Other kinds of agriculture also occur where possible: In a city centre microraion, the kiosk owner has planted two rows of cherry trees all over the courtyard. These are unfenced, too, but well protected: Although the kiosk trader owns a flat on the third floor, he usually spends the night at his kiosk, as he doubles as night watchman for the courtyard and takes care of the cars parked there.

The precise process of plot occupation remains unclear and varies from one microraion to another. In one block of the 18th microraion, plots were initially distributed on a lottery basis among flat owners and afterwards cashed out by ground floor families (Interview Muhabbat, 2010). In the adjacent 19th microraion, the pattern was similar, yet without the first floors reimbursing other owners for the plots:

> *If I remember well, there was some kind of distribution among all apartments at the very beginning, long time ago. But here, the people are accustomed to the fact that when you live in an apartment* (na ètaže) *you do not have to work the earth. Therefore, only three years ago no one worked on the land. I remember that in my house absolutely no one worked there. Only during the last two years. And the first floors have simply taken over this land. That's how it was, I think (Interview Parviza, 2010).*

In a city centre microraion, it seemed natural and went apparently unopposed that ground floor tenants occupied the adjacent terrain: "They sit on the first floor, that's their plot of land" (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010, pp. 16:50:32-2). Furthermore, the phenomenon here is older than two or three years ago, as in Parviza's case. Here, the quality of soil is an important factor in the attractiveness of microraion gardening. In the city centre, as well as in the 3rd microraion, gardening seemingly began earlier than in other locations:

> *In the 3rd or the 4th (microraions), the soil is good. There, people do plant something. But we have very bad soil, and with the water it's difficult, too. There are days when we get water only in the evenings, particularly in summer. This is why it is quite difficult to grow something on that kind of land (Interview Parviza, 2010).*

What is common to all accounts of privatisation of formerly common grounds is the absence of state authorities. There are no formal property rights attached to the plots. Their subdivision and distribution was, as it seems, organised on a courtyard basis and is perpetuated and

renegotiated at the same level. After privatisation, private ownership and community building developed alongside each other, yet at the expense of collective land ownership. As Kürten argues, "Due to the increasing development of the private sector initiated by economic liberalisation [...] public space is treated as a collective consumer good, which everyone can use. It forms the basis of people's subsistence production" (Kürten, 2008, p. 71).

Apart from growing plants, urban farmers also keep animals on their plots of land. This is a less widespread phenomenon, which is furthermore viewed critically by some neighbours: "There are even those who have sheep. Some of them have already begun with raising chicken, there are also such neighbours (Interview Parviza, 2010)". Following my observation, chicken are rather widespread and found on every fifth plot[88] (see illustration 38). Sheep however only appeared in two locations: in the 3rd microraion and in the 32nd. Both microraions are located on the very outskirts of the city and harbour, on average, inhabited by a poorer population. In the 32nd microraion there furthermore is a large well-watered park. The neighbours scarcely use it for recreation purposes – it qualifies therefore very well as grazing terrain (illustration 39).

Urban agriculture in Khujand does not perfectly fit into the contemporary urban farming craze, where Michelle Obama planted organic food and set up beehives at the White House lawn. To Khujand's urban farmers, food security is the key argument. They flexibly interpret the handed-down self-images and public images of urbanity. They actively shape urban spaces and create farming plots on terrains which were not at all designed for these purposes. Looking at urban farming in Central Asia solely as "stop-gap measures", "apparently designed to be independent of expensive and failing city structures" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 30) falls short of acknowledging the creative potential of these undertakings. In some ways, microraion agriculture has the potential to combine the best of both worlds in the eyes of Khujand's population: contrary to havlis, the apartment could provide modern amenities as tap water and electricity; and the adjacent garden plot would fulfil the dream of a plot of land on one's own[89]. Looking back at the agricultural traditions of pre-Soviet Central Asian cities, microraion agriculture is not the worst possible comeback of a 'traditional' urbanity.

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88   Urban legends are spreading that rural newcomers keep cows in high-rise buildings and use the lift in order to get them down for grazing. Although I concede that they are possibly based on eyewitness testimony, I rather doubt the validity of these accounts as for Khujand. Particularly in Dushanbe, this lore is being used in 'other'ing rural migrants. As a matter of fact, in the capital the city government pronounced a ban on animal keeping in 2009 (Hiltner, 2012, p. 70) on grounds of public hygiene. Arguably, the motive was to ensure representative urban landscapes, which grazing animals would distort; and thus to impose a (Soviet? European?) ideology of urbanity which leaves no place for cattle.
89   Indeed, this dream is only open to the fraction of the population residing on the ground floors; and without any doubt relies on stable water and electricity supplies to the microraions.

6.3.3 The tuykhonas

This example shows another use of public space in microraions, of which the courtyard community is not only the organising entity, but also the beneficiary. In several courtyards of Khujand, one finds large roofed steel carcasses standing between the houses. They generally measure ten by twenty metres and reach up to the second of third floor of the neighbouring houses. Today, these strange structures are being used as garages. They were built around the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s as halls for community celebrations such as weddings, circumcisions and death rituals. Life cycle rituals in Central Asia have received wide scholarly attention, both inside and outside Tajik academia (Išankulov, 1972, Mcbrien, 2006, Roche & Hohmann, 2011, to quote a few). While Tajik scholars would focus on detailed descriptions of the ceremonies and emphasised national particularities, Western scholars increasingly analyse life cycle rituals under the premises of a re-negotiation of modernity, torn between Western modernity and Islam. In the case of the tuykhonas, this re-negotiation takes place through adaptations of space.

The spatial settings of life cycle ceremonies have shifted over time. In the havlis – and this also applies to Khujand's old town today – one large decorated room is set aside for the festivities in the male and the female subdivisions of the house. The courtyard is covered with carpets and can therefore accommodate a large number of guests. After the prefabricated high-rises replaced the havli as the main dwelling format, the ceremonies could no longer take place in the traditional spatial setting. In the 'European' custom, weddings and the like took place in restaurants – in Khujand's case, for instance, in the restaurant of the Leninabad hotel at the riverbank. For many Tajik families of the city, restaurants were too expensive and furthermore did not provide the opportunity to subdivide into separate male and female parts (Interview Sherzod). Therefore, weddings continued to be celebrated in courtyards, but this time in the courtyards of the housing estates. Tables were put up in a row and carpets with ropes divided the parties. This arrangement was particularly problematic in case of rain. The celebrating families began therefore to build tents, some time in the 1970s – first from military stock and later custom-built larger constructions. The disadvantage was that they needed to be assembled and disassembled for every celebration, which was a cumbersome task:

> Previously, we had to build tents, in wintertime particularly. Tarpaulin sheets on scaffolding. Do you imagine, what a hassle it was? Assembling this stuff in wintertime was just terrible. We almost beat up a friend of ours because he wanted to get married in winter (Interview Sherzod).

Out of these concerns, the neighbourhoods began to set up permanent structures in the courtyards, which began to be called *tuykhona*. This happened towards the end of the 1980s, with few of them built in the beginning of the 1990s. The last years of the Soviet Union witnessed a time of relative prosperity for the region, coupled with increasing liberalisation which allowed for this kind of community initiative. Khujand was relatively well-off in the first years of independence, as it was not touched by the civil war and profited from the then still open borders to Uzbekistan, which found its expression in a continuing building of community tuykhonas in the microraions. Arguably, they were an improved version of the havli wedding, offering accommodation to a large number of persons, and combined with a roof and a central storage facility – an example of "tradition in a new guise" *(tradiciâ v novom vide)* (Interview Sherzod).

The neighbours were able to use them at a nominal fee. A particular advantage was the fact that each tuykhona had a small barn attached to it where a stock of tables, chairs, kitchenware, dishes and carpets was kept. Sherzod recalls:

> *Previously you went from one neighbour to another and asked for dishes, tables and carpets. At times, you could get tables from organisations, like restaurants or schools. Later, we had shops where you could lease this kind of stuff, they were run by the Bytkombinat[90]. Since 2007 we have some of them re-opened again. There were also leasing points at the mahalla level, but what was inconvenient there is that if you lost something you had to pay it back two or three times the value. The dishes, in particular. Go and find the same dish again, in Soviet times (Interview Sherzod).*

The tuykhona structures were built using the "collective work practice" of *hashar* (Marteau d'Autry, 2011, p. 279) – as described in the previous chapter on conceptions. Building the tuykhona structures is in my view a community cooperation practice at a close neighbourhood level. The mahalla administration was not directly involved in their construction. First of all, the official mahalla organisations in the microraions generally cover several houses and courtyards and are therefore too large to be the driving force behind such kind of enterprise. Furthermore, these official structures merely function as registration and control entities, and

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90   Short for "Bytovoi kombinat", i.e. the organisation responsible for services to the population, such as repairing clothes and shoes, and also renting out equipment.

are considerably less involved in neighbourhood affairs than in the old town quarters. Their name is considerably more bureaucratic – 'Districts of habitat and communal affairs' *(Žilišno-kommunal'nye učastki)*. The inhabitants of one multi-storey house might at times conceive of themselves as belonging to one mahalla, but in any case there is no official structure that would cover one particular house of a microraion. Sherzod argues:

> *The people know to which mahalla they belong. I would say the house where I live, we are one mahalla. But in our case, people would not say 'our mahalla'* (mahallai mo) *but 'our house'* (domi mo). *(...) Previously, one might have said, this is the Mahallai Taġi Savr. But today we say it's Lenin Street Nr. 40 (Interview Sherzod).*

In this line of thought, the construction of the tuykhonas in the microraion courtyards is a bottom-up mutual help initiative of neighbours. Not only does it emerge from a local community. It also perpetuates the community through common access to the celebration hall and common management of the barn where equipment is being stocked.

The hashar practice did not carry on at this neighbourhood level. Indeed, help with preparations of the *tuy* are often assimilated to a hashar activity (Marteau d'Autry, 2011, p. 298). Still, the mobilisation is not necessarily linked to a spatial community, such as a mahalla, but rather to kinship. Furthermore, tuykhona construction remained a singular event, and had no follow-up constructions which would perpetuate the hashar practice on the courtyard scale. Finally, the tuykhona structures themselves fell out of use very quickly. After roughly 1997 (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010, Interview Sherzod), no more wedding or circumcision tuys have been celebrated in the courtyards. Instead, they have moved to professional tuykhonas which began to spread in the town, offering all-round carefree packages with catering, music and decoration. Their greater convenience and comfort is arguably one reason for the decline of the neighbourhood tuykhonas:

> *They fell out of use because we have wedding halls in each part of the town. On the right bank there is a lot of them, and on this bank, there are some, too. Why should you buy something, or set up tables or whatever? This is unnecessary hassle. You can simply go there, order tables for so and so many people, and you've got your wedding (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010, pp. 00:01:35-7).*

The decline of the courtyard tuy is partly linked to increased labour migration which has contributed to conspicuous consumption at weddings[91] (Roche & Hohmann, 2011, p. 121). But

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91   I was told that, as of 2010,an "average" wedding ceremony in a professional tuykhona, costs about

those who remember the weddings of the past days maintain that the loss of community sense has fostered the rise of professional tuykhonas; and that the rise of the commercial tuykhonas has fostered the decline of this community sense:

Remember, if you want to have people seated, you have to carry benches. Now, people do not have free time left. I mean, under socialism, you worked for five days and you had two days off. Therefore, on a Saturday or a Sunday you were surely able to carry all that you need at the tuykhona. But now, on Saturdays and Sundays, we mind our own business. Today, even a good friend of yours would not come to help you: 'Sorry, I'm busy'. Therefore you have these halls where you can get married (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).

The abandoned tuykhona structures function as garages[92] – they have a roof and can be locked, which makes them perfectly apt for the purpose. Only on one type of occasion do they continue to serve their initial, ceremonial purpose, namely for death rituals. They remain open to the family for three days (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010) in order to receive mourning guests and to perform the necessary rites. Since these ceremonies must imperatively take place at the home of the deceased (Interview at the vegetables kiosk, 2010), it is impossible to rent a room for that purpose elsewhere (illustration 42)

Both cases – courtyard gardening and the tuykhonas – can be framed in terms of a rebirth of the 'Oriental-Islamic' city, characterised by public spaces which emerged through negotiation and not through planning; spaces appeared where it was needed for one particular occasion (Bianca, 1991, p. 186). Furthermore, it seems that the last years before the demise of the Soviet Union and the first years after independence were the only period of time where a bottom-up community-led practice of spatial production did exist in Khujand. This proposal is also supported by the emergence of neighbourhood mosques and the (re-)construction of local holy shrines throughout the town during the same period[93]. Before and after these years, space

US$3500: $300 for the rent; $200 for the music, $1000 for the gifts to the bride and the rest for the food. Stating the dangers of excessive conspicuous consumption, the government recently enacted a law regulating marriage expenses in detail. For a discussion see Roche & Hohmann (2011, p. 123).

92   See illustration 43. In some rare tuykhonas, a clay oven *(tanur)* is being installed, too.

93   Several kinds of buildings were re-appropriated for mosques – storage rooms, garages, stores and many others more. In the 18th microraion, a bottle deposit kiosk *(punkt po priemu steklotary)* was used for this purpose. The kiosk was closed in the mid-1980s following Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign. In 1994, microraion inhabitants transformed it into a neighbourhood mosque, with only basic amenities. In 2003, one local businessman paid the reconstruction of the mosque, which received an extension, a new roof, and amenities for ablution (Interview Nabijon, 2009). See illustration 49.

production was either entirely taken over by state authorities – as we have seen in the previous chapter, or confined to the level of individual households – as we will see in the following.

6.4. Adaptation of housing: active living

In this part, the focus will shift to the household level. The creative practice of housing adaptations will be in the spotlight of attention. This topic stood at the forefront of Lefebvre's theory of the social production of space. Speaking of a housing estate in Bordeaux, he exclaims:

> *And what did the occupants do? Instead of installing themselves in their containers, instead of adapting to them and living in them 'passively', they decided that as far as possible they were going to live 'actively'. In doing so they showed what living in a house actually is: an activity. They took what had been offered to them and worked on it, converted it, added to it. (Stanek, 2011, p. 92)*

Housing adaptations are therefore "a social and yet poetic act" (Aronowitz, 2007, p. 147). This interpretation sounds like a rejection of a purely functional understanding of housing as 'machines for living' – or, additionally, as machines for educating the masses, as in the Soviet case. In the following part, I will first present the shortcomings of the housing sector in Khujand. In a second step, I will show how the inhabitants react to these challenges by means of building extensions. The third part, finally, will be devoted to a particular set of embellishment practices – the *Evroremont*.

At this point, it is worth reminding of the elaborate understandings of *Remont* in relation to a Lefebvrian, trialectic understanding of a production of space, as discussed earlier on: *Remont* as perception relating to a good or a bad state of upkeep. *Remont* as conception referring to the desire to attain a certain *remont* status. And finally, *remont* as adaptation refers to the activity being undertaken to reach this status – and this is this ultimate perspective on *remont* which will be at the heart of the present chapter.

6.4.1 Shortages in quantity and quality

With the onset of Soviet large-scale industrialisation since the 1930s, the population of Khujand rose dramatically (see chart 2). To the detriment of housing construction, the heavy industry was assigned a higher priority, as discussed beforehand. Housing construction by no means kept up with population growth. Bouzarovski et al. argue that "communist policies forced industrialisation on an urban system that was by no means able to absorb the population expansion […The prioritisation of heavy industry] implied that the nationalised housing stock not only failed to expand to meet the needs of urban growth, but deteriorated in quality as well." (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2692).

In cities of the European part of the Soviet Union, the housing needs were addressed by 'densification' *(uplotnenie),* which meant in practice that a number of families shared one flat. This heralded the emergence of the *kommunalka* phenomenon. Until the mid-1960s, 80% of the urban population lived in kommunalkas. The construction boom under Khrushchev significantly lowered this proportion, but still in 1993, 1,5 million people in Moscow lived in communal flats (Messana, 1995, p. 9). The widely told stories of overcrowding, quarrels and unhygienic conditions of the kommunalkas (Evans, 2011, Gdaniec, 2005, Messana, 1995, Utechin, 2004) are mirrored by the same kind of stories set in the *havlis* of the Central Asian old towns[94]. Tatiana recalls the distress of her grandparents who came to Khujand in the 1930s: "For twenty years they vagabonded from one private house to another. They arranged everything, painted the walls. Then the owners came and told them: 'well, our son is getting married, you've got to go'" *(Remontirovali, belili, potom prihodili hozâeva i govorili: 'da, syn ženitsâ, davajte uhodite')* (Interview Tatiana, 2010). It was only in the late 1950s that her family was able to obtain an apartment in a newly-built block in the city centre.

Indeed, the 1950s finally saw the onset of industrialised housing construction, which in Khujand

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94   Description of dire accommodations is an inalienable part of novels of the time, from Il'f and Petrov's "Twelve chairs" to Habur's "Peaceful times", set during the establishment of Soviet rule in Tajikistan in the early 1920s: "In the courtyards where the patriarchal Tajik families lived, gas stoves were roaring, and Russian women grouched on light-haired suntanned children. Tenants were living in each and every courtyard. On the quick, they built wooden topchans, they bought quilted cotton blankets and colourfully painted teapots. Twisting Russian and Tajik words, they somehow agreed with the owners and built their family nests. […] The people of the new city lived in cramped mud-walled huts, and sometimes even in tents, but they went working into bright houses built of stones, with shiny floors and large windows" (Habur, 1962, pp. 42–43). Even high-ranking officials struggled to get a place to sleep: "In one of the new houses Gulyam managed to get a room on his own – not without the help of Kasym-aka. This white cube with one window and chipboard ceiling appeared to Gulyam as some wonder from a fairytale" (Habur, 1962, p.75).

led to the construction of microraions on the right bank of the Syrdarya river. This only partially alleviated the pressure on the housing sector. Already in1926, Soviet legislation had defined that each person was entitled to a living space norm of 9 square metres. Yet this official norm was not met until the late 1970s (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2700). The housing allocation system for the newly built apartments was plagued by inefficiency and corruption (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2692), (Brown, 1998, p. 614), (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006, p. 710). The waiting time for a state-allocated flat lasted for years – unless one matched specific conditions: being employed by the silk factory, for instance. Thus, the key industry enterprises continued to influence housing allocation (Gentile, 2003, pp. 5–6).

After independence the privatisation of apartments took place rather chaotically. The out-migration of the Russian-speaking population left many apartments in the microraions in an unclear property situation. At the same time, the out-migration somewhat reduced the housing shortage in Khujand, as the population did not grow (see chart 2) very much in contrast to the capital Dushanbe. The legislative acts for apartment privatisation were either insufficient or ignored. Processes and norms of real estate management were negotiated on a day-to-day basis. The legislation stipulates that common premises – that is the roof, the staircase, heating and plumbing – are meant to be jointly managed by all owners. A new law on common ownership was adopted in July 2009 (Republic of Tajikistan, 2009), yet is hardly being implemented (TSŽ v Tadžikistane, 2010). In reality, the management of common premises does not abide by the law, at least not in Khujand. This lack of coordination results in a general neglect of common premises and in a decline of housing quality. Leaking roofs are one particularly salient issue. Parviza argues "You've got this problem in every house. In this flat which I bought, too, the roof is leaking. I was told already that I had to fix it myself. So I will start with the roof, and then go on to a *remont* of the apartment" (Interview Parviza, 2010). This case is common to other post-Soviet settings. As Bouzarovski et al. observed in Tbilisi, "the inability and unwillingness of most tenants to pay for repair and maintenance resulted in a rapid deterioration of almost all apartment buildings in the city" (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p.2693). In this regard, the distinct composition of a house or a staircase community is decisive. Houses with a majority of apartment owners are managed in a distinctly different way than houses where many flats are rented out. Buildings with a majority of one- or two-room apartments are in general terms not very well kept. These apartments do not suit the average extended family. The previous owners opted to buy larger apartments in the neighbourhood as 'Europeans' moved out, and to rent out the smaller apartments – either to students or to internal migrants. Owners of rented apartments refrain from large investments. At the same time, the

rapidly changing tenants do not cooperate in order to obtain better living conditions.

On the staircase where I lived in Khujand while on fieldwork, half of the flats were occupied by owners, and the other half was rented out. On the ground floor, all three flats were occupied by owners and had access to garden plots in the courtyard. Both smaller flats on the second floor were rented out to students, whereas the larger flat was owner-occupied. On the third floor, one flat was rented out to students, while two adjacent flats were owner-occupied by an extended family. On the fourth floor, finally, two flats – a larger and a smaller one – were rented out, while one flat was owner-occupied. This owner though – a secluded and run-down middle-aged professor of mathematics – did not participate in house management affairs. With two apartments with frequently changing tenants and one excentric professor, the fourth floor had no authority in the management of common premises, and thus had to live with leaking roofs and sordid plumbing. The inhabitants beneath were unimpressed if it rained through the roof, as long as those above collected the rainwater in buckets[95]. This example of negligence coupled with quite an individualist attitude, also illustrates that microraion neighbourhoods are mixed in terms of income and status. As Gentile argued, "socio-economic differentiation is more likely to be reflected in segregation by housing tenure, quality and size rather than at the neighbourhood level" (Gentile, 2003, pp. 5–6), as was the case in Soviet times already.

The adjacent staircases are overwhelmingly owner-occupied and therefore in a significantly better state of upkeep. Another reason for better management is the presence of 'natural' authorities – retired teachers, politicians or sport champions who are able to convince the neighbours to contribute to common investments. As far as I was able to observe, such engagement was disinterested indeed, for neither of the 'authorities' lived on the upper floors and was directly threatened by leaking roofs. The role of authorities underlines the importance of community structures and person-to-person negotiations on the neighbourhood level.

6.4.2 Housing extensions in the rhythm of life-cycles

The massive construction programme of the Soviet era surely did produce a large amount of square metres, but the problem of overcrowding was only alleviated at best. The slight decline

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95   This is a prevailing problem in Khujand. Parviza argues:

in Khujand's population after independence has barely suppressed the need for more housing:

> *In Soviet times it occurred in prefabricated houses that three families would live in a three-room apartment. But it's the same today. At a friend of mine's, there are seven people living in a two-room apartment, and he himself sleeps on the balcony (Interview Sherzod).*

This sentence witnesses not only the fact of a densely packed apartment, but also one solution which the inhabitants have attempted in order to expand the available living space: they transformed the balcony into an additional room. As we will see in the following, this is a very common adaptation of the built environment.

Another motivation for individual housing changes is the fact that the apartment layouts were – intentionally – not well adapted to the customs of the persons who were meant to move in. The apartments were designed to support the emergence of nuclear families. After marriage, young couples were intended to move out to their own apartment, where they would be removed from their families' influence (Stephan, 2010, p. 60). Through this support for *neolocality,* Soviet authorities intended to bring at least the younger generations in line with a common Soviet urban way of life[96]. This aspiration was rooted in the conviction that space could be used as an instrument of education: "carefully designed living quarters (...) could eliminate the conditions for individualistic and *meshchanskie* (petty-minded bourgeois) ways of life, and on this basis a new human type would become the norm" (Humphrey, 2005, p. 39). Still, most young couples do not have the opportunity to move to their own apartment – in Soviet times because housing construction did not keep pace with housing needs; and after independence because of a lack of money to buy an apartment. It is therefore not unusual for a young couple to stay in the apartment with the bridegroom's parents, which is not an easy task: "It is very difficult for the newly-wed in an apartment. Their private life must be kept" (Interview Sherzod).

In the old town havli, the solution would have been to build another room or another storey, if space and means were available. In this regard, the "unstable materiality" of loam constructions does, in my view, not point to "the failure of social relations and moral orders" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 47). To the contrary, loam architecture would allow for a relative flexibility of the layout at relatively low cost. The house had to be strengthened or entirely

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96   Only in the late 1980s, architects turned towards acknowledging the housing needs of multi-generation families. A series of projects saw the light (Veselovskij & Mukimov, 1987, pp. 182 and 275), yet none of them was implemented to my knowledge.

rebuilt every decade or so, anyway. As rooms open to the courtyard and not necessarily to a corridor, another room can be easily stuck into the havli[97]. Bakhtovar recalls his grandfather building a room on his own when his son – that is Bakhtovar's father – was four or five years of age, in 1894 (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010). Bakhtovar himself built an additional room for himself and his family in the 1960s, but admits that it was of low-quality, because construction material was difficult to come by. The room which Bakhtovar's father built back then was later transformed into a living-room, until it eventually burnt down on New Year's eve 2008. The family decided to build a new structure on the site, this time of bricks and concrete, in order to provide a place for Bakhtovar's son and his family (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).

This account shows the flexibility of the havli-type spatial arrangement. Metaphorically, the space of the havli takes part in the family's life cycle and lives on together with its inhabitants, while the inhabitants actively live this space. Yet modern construction methods and fashions are about to preclude this flexibility for the future. The concrete structure built for Bakhtovar's son will surely last for a couple of decades. The other loam buildings in the old town will also be replaced by more enduring structures. All those who can afford it build large mansions in the old town which rise three or four storeys. This surely provides enough comfortable living space for the extended family, but clamps down the lid on the flexible and creative handling of living space which was possible with loam structures.

In a microraion, the adaptation of the apartment layout to the needs and aspirations of a family is more difficult. Yet in light of a largely unregulated legal environment, as we have seen above, it still can take many forms. Buying or renting an additional apartment is an evident remedy, but it is affordable for higher incomes only. The emigration of Russian-speaking families in the early 1990s has allowed many families who decided to stay to buy apartments relatively cheaply – I was told of prices of two or three thousand US$ for four-rooms apartments in the attractive 18th or 19th microraions. It is therefore not very rare to see an extended family occupying two or three apartments on the same floor or at least on the same staircase. With two or three apartments on one floor, all doors are generally kept open and the staircase space is being transformed to a havli-type arrangement.

If the possibility of buying several apartments in one staircase is not available, moving would

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97   One particular arrangement where no free plots are available and the existing structures would not support a second storey built on top is the *bolo-khona* (house on the top). It is being built above the gates to the havli and profits of the pre-existing walls leading to the gate. Due to this construction technique, the structure is limited by the width of the gate and therefore in general is very small. See illustrations 9 and 10.

be another option. Still, this only rarely occurs in practice. Real estate prices have considerably risen in Khujand over the last years, making it prohibitively expensive to move out into a larger apartment if the need arises. Furthermore, even if a real estate market does exist since Soviet times, the banking sector is embryonic (Brown, 1998, p. 614). Large parts of the population do not have access to any mortgage systems and therefore cannot ante up the required amounts of cash. Since the banking sector is underdeveloped and mistrusted, investments in an apartment is a common way to put surplus capital to service and to increase the apartment's value (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2702). In this vein, housing adaptations appear as a "material manifestation of alternative economic practices" (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2691).

Cultural factors also play a role in the decision to stay rather than to move. Bouzarovski et al. argue that "rural migrants prefer to stay and expand rather than move", feeling a "strong emotional attachment to their homes and thus refused to move to other dwellings even if they had the financial capital to do so. Having adapted to their urban apartments, they preferred to increase their size and function, and inhabit them as extended families" (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2705). A further argument for the tendency to remain in the apartment is the high role of social capital in survival tactics. Round states that this "demonstrates the importance of place in everyday life as social capital flows through" (Round & Williams, 2010, p. 188). Taking these arguments together, extensions to existing apartments are the most widespread answer to mitigate living space needs. Bouzarovski et al propose to understand this process as an alternative to residential mobility in the traditional sense (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, pp. 2690–2691). Inhabitants experience "multiple housing events without changing their residential location" in a context "where 'non-market options' play a key role in the progression of housing careers" (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2693).

In the context of apartments in large housing estates, balcony enclosures are the most widespread adaptation of the built environment. The existing concrete balcony casing is being extended up to the bottom of the following balcony. Many materials may be used for these purposes. An all-glass solution was more widespread in Soviet times, but is employed still today for smaller balconies too. Large balconies are often walled in with bricks of various sorts. Households with lower income might opt for plasterboard, corrugated iron sheets, wood or chipboard, although these are rather perceived as provisional arrangements (see illustrations 45, 46). Bouzarovski et al. report that this practice was widespread in the Soviet Union since the 1960s (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2697). Then as today, state authorities

tolerated these types of adaptations and did not request formal planning documents. Indeed, these adaptations arose to meet state aspirations – helping "to alleviate chronic housing shortages, while improving the living conditions of the population" (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2698).

The extra room was often adapted as a kitchen – while the original kitchen, which often was adjacent to the balcony, was transformed into a living room. The living room, in turn, could then be transformed into a bedroom. Looking at examples from Skopje and Tbilisi, Bouzarovski et al argue that the additional living space did not serve as bedrooms, because of difficulties of introducing heating to the extensions (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2703). In Khujand though, I have regularly witnessed another arrangement when the enclosed balcony is used as the husband's living space. At times, it is shared with one of the sons. On very rare occasions I have encountered the enclosed balcony as being used as the women's space – the argument was its being next to the kitchen.

Provided the enclosed balcony is on the first floor, it is also possible to transform it into a small kiosk. Then it would require an additional staircase from the street level. Additional entrances are possible up to the second or third floor if commercial space needs to be made accessible (see illustrations 47, 48).

Apartments located on the ground floor at times have the opportunity to expand greatly beyond the original balconies and to add dozens of square metres to the surface with the help of additional walls and extra roofing. In contrast with Dushanbe, in Khujand I did not encounter this practice on a widespread basis, and if so, then almost exclusively for commercial purposes. The possibility for engaging in urban agriculture is more important than the need for additional living space, as it seems.

Multi-storey building extensions on frames of steel or reinforced concrete, as can be found in the South Caucasus or on the Balkans, I never came across in Khujand. This absence might possibly be linked to seismic hazards, as the extensions considerably affect the stability of the original buildings. Yet already minor extensions such as balcony enclosures can have an adverse effect on living quality. They might obstruct ventilation and introduce mould and moisture to the apartments. But the biggest issue are problems with DIY-adaptations to plumbing and isolation. Parviza recalls:

> *My neighbour is flooding me regularly. Something is broken at her place and water seeps down to my balcony. Every time I go to her and tell her that she has to fix it* (čtoby sdelala remont), *but she tells me: 'I don't have any money'. Her husband is*

somewhere, working, and she doesn't have sons. Well, I can't pressure her. I don't know. I live with it. I have done some repair work at my balcony, but it didn't help (Â delala remont, no on uže isportilsâ) *[…] The problem is that she has transferred her kitchen to the balcony and apparently something was not done the right way. Now, water seeps through. Whatever I do, it doesn't work (Interview Parviza, 2010)*

Adaptations of the built environment come in a plethora of variants and styles. Yet as a matter of fact, the apartment extensions do not match the style and colours of the original apartment buildings. All individual balconies combined on one façade transform the previously monolithic blocks into a mosaic of sometimes sloppy and sometimes affectionate workmanship and decoration. These extensions become signs of social status (Bouzarovski, Salukvadze, & Gentile, 2011, p. 2706), but also of individual taste (see illustration 46). When asked why he painted his balcony in a bright yellow, Murodali exclaimed "There are no comrades when it comes to taste and colour!" *(Na vkus i cvet tovariŝa net),* and the shoemaker sided with him: "This cheerful colour is there, because grandpa is a cheerful guy himself!" (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010). Popescu has argued that this "patchworks of diverse patterns" is an expression of a "yearning for individualization, combined with a progressive social demarcation" which reduces architecture to "the role of a support mechanism" (Popescu, 2010, p. 188). I would not go that far toward this interpretation. I do rather see them as answers to precise practical needs and as attempts to fulfil aspirations. Coping appears here to be more important than self-fulfilment. In this regard, I would support Alexander & Buchli who sum up that while "a new uniformity is emerging where it is hard to distinguish the house and lifestyle of the 'new Buryat' from that of a 'new Kazakh' […], the lives of the poor and methods of 'getting by' […] are more distinct" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 33).

With these lines, I had the intention to show that everyday architecture is by no means less important than "Starchitecture" (Basten, 2009, p. 7). The aforementioned apartment extensions emerge as spatialised expressions of culturally embedded household coping strategies. In this regard, everyday architecture must not be neglected and more research in this field would be more than welcome.

6.4.3 Infrastructure failures: contraction of space

Now that we have seen the practice of building extensions, I will briefly present the opposite practice – that of spatial contraction. I will refer here to a spatial reaction to infrastructure failures which are widespread in Khujand since independence. This does not only mean simply sharing one apartment with a big number of household members. In this regard, spatial contraction does not refer to a lack of space, but to particular practices, which intentionally lead to moving physically closer together.

The microraion apartments were at the time of their construction connected to a central heating system which provided electricity, warm water and heating to the housing estates. This system collapsed after independence, first of all because of lacking energy imports. In Soviet times, Khujand was linked to the Uzbek power grid and was isolated from the rest of Tajikistan after Uzbekistan left the common Central Asian grid in 2009[98]. Already since independence, Tajikistan was struggling to receive fossil fuels from Uzbekistan to keep its electricity stations running in winter. *Barqi Toğik,* the state electricity provider, was therefore constrained to impose electricity rationing, running every year approximately from November to March. This also meant that electricity was provided two or three hours a day. Rural areas were often completely cut off from electricity provision in these times. Alexander and Buchli have argued that the breakdown of infrastructure led to a definite loss of trust in the state. As "continuing flow within the pipes [...] literally and metaphorically [constitutes] the body politic" (Alexander, Buchli, & Humphrey, 2007, p. 23), the end of infrastructure provision sounded the disintegration of society. The unstable provision was coupled with steadily rising costs for a miserable service. This is, in my view, the most important single factor for the still prevailing nostalgia for the Soviet Union.

In order to substitute for the provision of hot water, virtually all apartments are equipped with water boilers locally known as "Ariston", after the Italian firm which used to be the brand leader on the post-Soviet market in the 1990s. The living space heating problem, though, is much more difficult to solve. Like most other households, Parviza's family has bought an electric heater,

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98   In times of the common grid inherited from Soviet times, the upstream countries Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan were supposed to provide electricity from their hydroelectric plants to downstream countries– i.e. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan – in summer, during the cotton watering season. In winter, they were supposed to receive thermically generated electricity as well as gas and coal for domestic energy production in exchange. Since the collapse of the system, the upstream countries are forced to run their hydroelectric stations in winter as well. This depletes domestic water resources and spoils the soils downstream.

but also keeps a coal oven as reserve:

> *Sure, I have an electrical heater. There is no (central) heating in my house. Since many years already. […] Before I had a small child, we had a coal oven* (buržujka) *and a chimney installed there. That's how we did it. But now I am worried: he is such a hooligan, he touches everything, and the oven is too dangerous for a child. This winter, I won't heat the oven. I will just hope that we will have light (i.e. electricity) and that we will be able to use the electrical oven […] But I still keep a sack of coal at the balcony and all the necessary stuff. If you come, I'll show you (laughs). I still have the whole equipment. The coal oven is still at the balcony. I do not exclude any eventuality. I have no idea how the heat provision will be this year. There was a time when we almost had no electricity at all: one hour in the evenings and one hour in the mornings, then I used the coal oven (Interview Parviza, 2010).*

Parviza is about to buy a one-room apartment in the 32nd microraion. Sicne the four-room apartment she lives in belongs to her parents, she will have to move out in a couple of years when her brother marries. The family could not afford a larger one and decided therefore that a one-room apartment on one's own is better than nothing. Furthermore, this new apartment is close to her daughter's school, which will spare her a lengthy trip on the marshrutka. Yet heating considerations also contributed to her decision: "We think, we all will move there for the winter. It is easier to heat when you are all in one room" (Interview Parviza, 2010). Several other interview partners confirmed this practice: in winter, the whole family moves to the living room where the coal oven is being installed for the time being. They seal up the windows casements with cotton wool and close all other rooms in order to improve insulation: it is already bad in the original houses, but even worse in the apartment extensions. In winter time therefore, life in the microraion apartment approximates the traditional life of the havli. There as well the family gathers in one central room where the oven is located. Additionally, a low table combined with a recipient for smouldering coal called *sandal* is being installed. The table can be covered with a blanket which then also shelters the people that sit around the table (Interview Sherzod, 2010).

Similarto apartment extension, contraction must therefore also be seen as a particular spatial tactic of getting-by. Another noteworthy instance of spatial contraction also occurred with the strengthening of the border regimes and increased costs of mobility – yet this was most saliently felt in rural areas.

6.4.4 Evroremont: negotiating modernity

In the following last case of adaptation of space, I will expand on space production through upkeep and embellishment – that is through striving for *obod*-ness on the level of the private home. In general, this process is called by the Russian word *remont,* – a term which has already appeared several times throughout the work. As mentioned before, remont denotes not only the mending of broken objects, but is an implementation of dreams and aspirations against a background of constraints: Lefebvrian transduction in action. *Remont* furthermore gains cultural significance: it is a rhythmically performed enactment of *obodi* in the course of life cycles.

Remont is an activity which must be performed at regular intervals, according to the situation. Parviza compares the state of remont in her mother's havli in the town of Asht to the one in her own apartment:

> *In the havli, my mother has to do remont twice a year. It's necessary. Because they keep the doors open at all times, and the windows are open, and everything decays very quickly. I don't know why this is so. You have to put the walls in order, to paint them or to hang new wallpapers. In the apartment* (v sekcii) *it's less often, perhaps once every four-five years. Even if it's some cosmetic remont, it still has to be done. (Interview Parviza, 2010).*

Parviza considers remont to be an obligatory practice – it just has to be done. Neighbours condemn the person who fails to perform it regularly, she says. She concedes that one has to do a remont when one moves into a new house, but still it does not imply the need to do everything from scratch. She does not conceal her anger when she recalls the condition of the apartment she is about to buy: "The apartment is in an appalling condition. The owner is a terrible woman. She turned her back on everything, the whole apartment rotted away. We had to remove everything, even the floor. We will have to do some fundamental remont" (Interview Parviza, 2010).

Yet the practice of remont does not only mean the regular upkeep of the house. In the same way as building extensions, it is prominently linked to life cycle rituals. While building extensions should accommodate the housing needs of an enlarged family, remont should also accommodate the needs of the family's representation in front of the community. In this vein, *obod*-ness goes hand in hand with the inhabitant's notions of modernity. The home should appear as state of the art. This goes for apartments in multi-storey blocks as well as for havlis:

The house was built one hundred and fourteen years ago. From raw loam bricks. And it still stands, thank God. But from the outside you would not say that the house is more than hundred years old. The façade is done in the modern way, all around the courtyard. It's plastered and painted, the best remont. No one could tell if it's made from burnt bricks or from raw bricks (Interview at the Shoemaker's place, 2010).

Through the practice of remont, the wish for *obod*-ness is particularly articulated on the occasion of life-cycle rituals.

It is advisable to do remont before weddings, so that everything looks decent (prilično), *that is* obod, *one would say,* (obod ki šavad, meguând) *when people come courting or for the celebration. The rooms where the guests would enter must be spacious, well-lit, not moist or anything. With windows to the east, if possible [...] In prefab houses, you choose one of the rooms for receiveing guests, but you have to do remont everywhere, because people pass through the entire apartment (Interview Sherzod).*

There is no discussion whether remont has to be performed before a wedding *tuy.* It appears as a logical precondition: "My wife says: we've got a son to marry. So I go and make remont" (Interview Nazir, 2010). The equipment necessary for remont and construction work can be easily bought in Khujand. Currently, plasterboard is a favourite material for a remont, "as it should be" (kak nado) (Interview Mavluda, 2010). It is cheap, versatile, easy to work and easy to paint. It serves to subdivide rooms, but also to produce elaborate suspended ceilings with discrete background lighting. There is a handful of dedicated bazaars in the city, and the choice is very large. Nevertheless it's an expensive enterprise:

At Jum'a-Bozor there you find wall colours and lustres. At Guliston, you have almost no colours, but instead you have plastic and armstrong[99], and you also have pipes. If you need long ones, you get them only at Guliston[100]. Or perhaps on the road to Unji, there might also be some. But it's expensive. You don't have factories here; colours always come from abroad. You have a candy factory, or vodka, then you have juices and carpets at Qayroqqum. You also have plastic windows and doors there, since recently. But the machines they have to buy abroad, so it's

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99   Armstrong designates a mineral fibre panel used for suspended ceiling and, more rarely, walls. Pennsylvania-based Armstrong World Industries is a major producer of this material.
100   This is also the place where *mardikor* – day labourers – gather and wait for patrons.

expensive (Interview Khurshed, 2010).

The remont expenses surely increase the cost of the wedding. These expenses are not regulated by the newly adopted law; conspicuous consumption with regard to housing does therefore exist, and is likely to grow in the near future (Interview Muhiddin). Yet regardless of all expenses, remont only addresses the surface of things and not their essence, and therefore cannot solve all problems: "At times there are simply unlucky rooms. Remont does not help against the evil eye; even a *mushkulkushod*[101] can't help" (Interview Sherzod).

Apart from representational purposes for life cycle rituals, remont also refers to a quest for modernity. Contrary to the capital Dushanbe, there is little construction activity going on in Khujand. The houses which are being constructed, though, are strongly rooted in Soviet styles and techniques. Two multi-storey buildings recently joined Khujand's microraions, but both are structural copies of Soviet housing series of the 1980s, only somewhat refined in their outer appearance with the help of plastic and aluminium panels. Architectural 'modernity' with its glass façades is very slow to arrive in Khujand. One hotel at the main street is currently the sole example of this style. Yet it remains empty, after the city government had to finish the glass façade on its own, in order to save its dignity after the investor filed for bankruptcy. The unfulfilled Soviet promises of modernity remain also unfulfilled after independence. By virtue of the old zoning plan, the city still expects to replace the old town with housing blocks in the long run. For this reason there is no concept of how to integrate the old city into the general fabric, and thus Khujand's two parts continue to exist alongside each other.

Meanwhile, the desire for modernity finds its expression on the intimate level of the household. On every noticeboard in town, you would find advertisements for firms which propose *evroremont* – best quality at best price. This term defies a precise definition: the broad range of possible meanings of remont is joined by all possible connotation of its allegedly 'European' character. Akpar wonders: "I don't even know where this word came from […] Perhaps in Europe too, people do this kind of remont as well. Perhaps?" (Interview Akpar, 2010, pp. 00:43:13-1). The expression emerged in the early 1990s. Ex-Soviet middle classes, wary of the meagre offerings in hardware and construction material they were used to (Borén & Gentile, 2007, pp. 97–98), developed a crush on newly available Western imports (Danilenko, 2011). Some years later, evroremont had conquered Tajikistan:

We did not have plastic windows previously. You didn't have a choice. Everyone

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101   A religious ritual practised by a group of women in order to provide solutions for difficult situations in life

had wooden windows, like standard wooden windows, because there weren't any companies which would produce plastic ones. But now, there are some. And the price is the same. (Interview Akpar, 2010).

Labour migrants working on Russian construction sites brought those materials to Central Asia. They spread the latest interior design fashions with the help of printed catalogues which widely circulate in Khujand. I saw Mavluda arguing about colours and designs proposed in a catalogue with her colleagues at work in a copy shop. When I asked her, she told of having a pile of these catalogues at home, spending her evenings flipping through them (Interview Mavluda, 2010). She has married recently and is about to choose the design for their bedroom. Her favourite is a suspended ceiling in a heart-shaped form painted red against a pink background, with, of course, indirect lighting installed behind the plasterwork. Among the emerging middle classes, the choice of designs and colours is, as far as I have experienced, generally made by women. Their accounts have a sincere feeling of pride in common: "the colours and the lustres, I have chosen them myself. You like it?" (Interview Gulanjom, 2009). The dominance of women sometimes seems to result in enforcing less elaborate designs:

But I don't want any of these modern things. (Although) my husband loves it. (In the old apartment) he has built some plasterboard walls, some ornaments, but I don't want. I said 'stop', and it stopped there. We will just hang some wallpaper or paint the walls and do the floors. That's all. I just want to move in quickly (Interview Parviza, 2010).

Khurshed occasionally did some odd jobs at construction sites. He is a great fan of Evroremont and would speak endlessly of the various possibilities it offers:

Evroremont in the Soviet Union, it was just colours on the walls. The painter came and put the colours on the wall, then the colours went away and you coloured anew. This was the old remont. (But now) you buy spackle for the surface, you buy the colours, you buy the Armstrong and then you work with all that. It takes a lot of time, one month at least. So they do remont, spackle the surface, they lay the skirting board, and this will be a evroremont. And they might want to put Armstrong sheets, or Al Capone[102] sheets, or tiles. (Interview Khurshed, 2010)

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102   It took me a lot of time to figure out where the word Al Capone came from and what it originally meant. It is a kind of a metal sheet covering the façades of almost every new or newly renovated public or business building. Every child knows that this sheet is called Al Capone. Only by accident I stumbled upon the origin of the term: "Alucobond" was the leading brand of this kind of material. On European construction sites, the material might

Indeed, compared to the Soviet era, when wall colours and lime plaster were the only materials available (Dejhina, 2005, p. 81) – and they were already hard to come by, the wide range of material available appears today as the promise of modernity.

Khurshed helped in doing evroremont for his own house, bringing it in line with a perceived European modernity. He, too, sees remont as being a necessary and unavoidable part of a housing career, embedded in life cycles:

> *We had an old house but we made remont there. It's a normal Tajik house, but now there is a remont like in Europe. We have evroremont now, you understand. [...] It's a Finnish house and we have done all the remont already, it looks like new. But [...] we will do another remont when we have a wedding. Then we will renew the remont* (magar tui nav mekunand, remontro nav mekunand). *So, here the evroremont is done (already), but we still have a house in Dehmoy, where my grandmother lives and my uncle, we will make it* obod *there too* (inǧo obod mekunem ham) *(Interview Khurshed, 2010).*

Together with the construction business, remont has become a major part of the Tajik economy. Fuelled by remittances and the skills of labour migrants, Evroremont goes on and on. When one house is ready, the next one must follow. And when a wedding lies ahead, a new remont is on its way. It seems as if remont has become an integral part of an informally transmitted Tajik identity: "Tajiks all work at Evroremont. It's a job *(professiâ)* which is called evroremont. You can't learn it in school, you just do it" (Interview Khurshed, 2010).

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be known as "Aluminium composite panel", or "sandwich panel". It is a lightweight and resistant cladding material consisting of a polyethylene core sandwiched between two aluminium sheets which come in a variety of colours and shapes.

6.5 Concluding remarks: new desires and new inequalities

This chapter was centred on the notion of social space. I attempted to show how production of space can be seen through the lens of adaptations. In this field, all actors – state authorities at local, regional and national levels, industry enterprises, community groups and individuals – engage and compete in the production of space. They are all bound by constraints and guided by wishes. From a Lefebvrian perspective, I understand this as transduction in action.

In a first part we have seen how strategies and tactics of state authorities with regard to planning and monumental propaganda changed in the course of time. The range of manoeuvre of authorities on the national level has expanded to the detriment of industrial enterprises, while the local authorities remain as powerless as they were in Soviet times. Increasingly, state authorities resort to *obod*-ness and sociality in the design of statues and monuments. On the spatial level of the neighbourhood, individuals negotiate the extensions of public space. In the case of urban agriculture, public space was privatised in order to reach food security. In the case of tuykhonas, the neighbourhoods filled available public space with a new purpose. Without involvement of authorities, a bottom-up production of space created and perpetuated new community bonds. On the household level, individuals were confronted with housing shortages – both in quantity and quality. Guided by possible alternatives, they employed spatial strategies in order to improve living conditions. The inhabitants' involvement and enthusiasm shows the importance of analysing adaptation processes when looking at social space production. Also on the private level individual adaptations of space are not limited to self-assertion. They are deeply embedded in a community context, as shown by the constant importance of *obod*-ness. At the household level, *obod*-ness is achieved, as we have seen, through the practice of remont. Life cycle rituals are a major factor in perpetuating community and are central occasions for adaptations of space. Remont is therefore a recurring phenomenon. In accord with a Soviet anecdote, remont is nothing that can be stopped; it can only pause for lack of available funding (Interview Sergei, 2010).

In this light, *evroremont* appears as a meaningful cultural practice, as a negotiation of identity on the household level. Questions of modernity arise in the same way as was the case with modern wedding dresses – the *evromoda* (Mcbrien, 2006, p. 341). Yet even in the case of traditional, or conservative, Islamic weddings, there is no question of renouncing *evroremont* in the apartment – for the sake of the *obodi* it brings about. Housing adaptation are therefore powerful vehicles for experiencing the "possibility of a difference, without prescribing what

this difference should be. It is consumption of space that conveys a hunch of an everyday beyond the society of consumption" (Stanek, 2011, p. 128).

7 Concluding remarks

With the help of Lefebvre's theory of the social production of space, I have attempted a dense and multifaceted analysis of the Central Asian city of Khujand. Instead of looking for a checklist of features of urbanity, I rather tried to gain insight into how, and by whom, urban space is being produced.

In this regard, power appears as one central keyword of the study, and the Soviet mode of space production is identified as the most powerful factor until the present day. This especially pertains to the perception of space, in which mental maps of its inhabitants have revealed the disappearance of the old city. This power constellations also refers to the conception of space – the fostered disregard for the old city and a tendency towards the musealisation of landmarks. Looking at adaptations of space, state authorities have the largest range of manoeuvre, while bottom-up initiatives are relegated to adaptations of the household. It seems as if the situation was a different one in the early 1990s, when private initiatives managed to carry out large-scale projects, such as the constructuion of tuykhonas and mosques. In my view, this historic aspect opens up interesting possibilities for further investigation.

Projects of housing adaptations stand out as exemplary for a particular negotiation of modernity, which is characterised by both individualisation and traditionalisation. The decline of community tuykhonas and their replacement with commercially run establishments is one link in this chain. The rebirth of bazaars can also be interpreted in this vein – both as the comeback of a traditional Central Asian urbanity, and as an illustration of rising consumerism. In other words: the de-industrialisation of the economy is counterbalanced by the emergence of a life cycle celebrations industry.

On this basis, new sectors of the economy have emerged which have altered the spatial rhythms of Khujand: the tuykhona business, but also the ubiquitous *evroremont,* are bound into traditional life cycles, yet reinterpret them in a striving for modernity. As for the marshrutka sector, which has emerged out of the debris of de-industrialisation, it has introduced new spatial rhythms into everyday life. These new rhythms have brought along new inequalities – for those who can afford neither spatial mobility, nor an *obod*-ification of space. The latter however, is being understood as a social obligation, as a sort of spatial morality: it fuels labour migration and is in its turn fuelled by labour migrant remittances, in a competition for higher status. The quest for *obodi* appears to me therefore as a form of social domination. On the part of state authorities as well, the recourse to *obodi* sparks the creation of a perfectly controlled, dominated and dominating space around monuments, which leaves no opportunity for its re-configuration and re-conceptualisation.

Yet this portrait of Khujand reveals not only a conspicuous rat race or strive for domination. Reaching *obodi* by means of *remont* appears at the same time as a self-confident and creative practice of space production, as a spatial negotiation of identity at the household level. This adaptation of space feeds back into conceptions of space and its perceptions. In their name, new adaptations will appear, which – for sure, will give place to further research on the social production of space in Khujand and ensewhere.

Annex: maps, charts and images

Maps:

Map 1: Soviet military survey, sheet K-42-G: (1986);

Map 2:Digitalised 1982 map of Leninabad: (Ûnusova, Marafiev, & Pilipenko, 1982);

Map 3: Khujand Encyclopaedia map, 1999: (Abdullaev S. A. (ed.), 1999);

Map 4: Map Factory, 2009: (2009a);

Map 5: Orell Füssli, 2008: (2008a).

Charts:

Graph 1: Urban population in Central Asia (in per cent) {UN Common Database #712}

Chart 1: Urban population in Central Asia (in per cent) {UN Common Database #712}

Graph 2: Urban population of Khujand (in thousand) (Abdullaev S. A. (ed.), 1999; Asimov, 1974)

Chart 2: Urban population of Khujand (in thousand) (Abdullaev S. A. (ed.), 1999; Asimov, 1974)

Chart 3: Ethnic population of Khujand (in thousand) (Abdullaev S. A. (ed.), 1999)

Chart 4: Private cars per 1000 inhabitants per year (French, 1995, p. 165), (Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, 2011), (The World Bank)

Images:

Images are taken by the author, with the exception of:

Illustrations 4, 15 19, 24, 26, 27, 45, 46 by Susann Behrendt;

illustrations 3, 7, 50 by Nabijon Rahimov,

illustrations 10, 11 by Weronika Zmiejewski.

The black and white images at the beginning of each chapter were all taken by Susann Behrendt.

List of quoted interview partners

Names have been changed for the sake of anonymity, unless the interview partners requested otherwise. I was talking to many more people, whose words and ideas have found their way into the text. I am very much indebted to them, even if they do not appear with names or anonyms in this list.

Akpar, ca 35, businessman, owns a mobile phone shop at the Panjshanbe bazaar. Has studied in Dubai and keeps travelling there for business purposes. Lives in a havli close to the bazaar.

Amonjon, ca. 60, head technician at Khujand's trolleybus depot.

Bakhtovar, ca 70, worked as lorry driver, spends the most of his day in the Shoemaker's kiosk, unless he has to pick up his grandchildren from school. Lives in a havli in the city centre.

Davvom, 20, economics student at Khujand state university. Lives with his parents in the 20th microraion. Works as marshrutka driver in the evenings with his parents' car. His brother transports cars from the Baltics to Khujand.

Firuza, 14, Olim's sister, lives in an apartment block in the city centre.

Gulanjom, 45, wife of a university teacher, from an Uzbek family from Isfara, lives with two children and her husband, in an apartment in the 18th microraion.

Parviza, ca 40, works as project manager in an NGO. Comes from a small town in northern Tajikistan.

Khurshed, 20, unemployed, lives in a havli in the Pakhtakor area.

Kibriyokhon, ca 60, head curator of the Regional Museum in Khujand's old fortress.

Matluba, ca 55, works as ophthalmologist in a children clinic.

Mavluda, ca 25, runs a copy shop in the city centre. Her husband owns several marshrutkas which he leases out to drivers.

Muhabbat, ca. 60, works as paediatrician in a children clinic.

Muhiddin, ca 65, former journalist, now head of a mahalla in Khujand's old town.

Murodali, ca 70, formerly turner at a metalworking plant, today one of the regulars at the

Shoemaker's shop. Lives in a high-rise on Lenin street.

Nasiba, ca. 40, works as project manager in an NGO

Nazir, ca 60, former mathematics teacher, now full-time owner of a havli in the Razzoq quarter.

Anastasia, ca 55, Russian, formerly engineer at the silk factory, now sells second-hand clothes on the market.

Olim, 18, Firuza's brother, lives in an apartment block in the city centre. He attends his last year in the High School Nr. 1 (Lenin School).

Sergei, ca 50, Russian, grew up in the silk factory quarter and still lives in the Bofanda microraion. Construction worker, runs a floor tiling business.

Sherzod, ca 55, university teacher, lives in a high-rise building in the city centre.

Tahmina, ca 50, works in a an English-language school and an NGO.

Tatiana, ca 50, Russian, former employee at the silk factory. Currently works as cleaning lady and sells second hand clothes and home-grown seedlings at the flea market.

Vladimir, ca 60, Russian, photographer for the Haqiqati Sughd newspaper.

2 Groups of **HGU students,**

3 Groups of **English language students** at a local NGO

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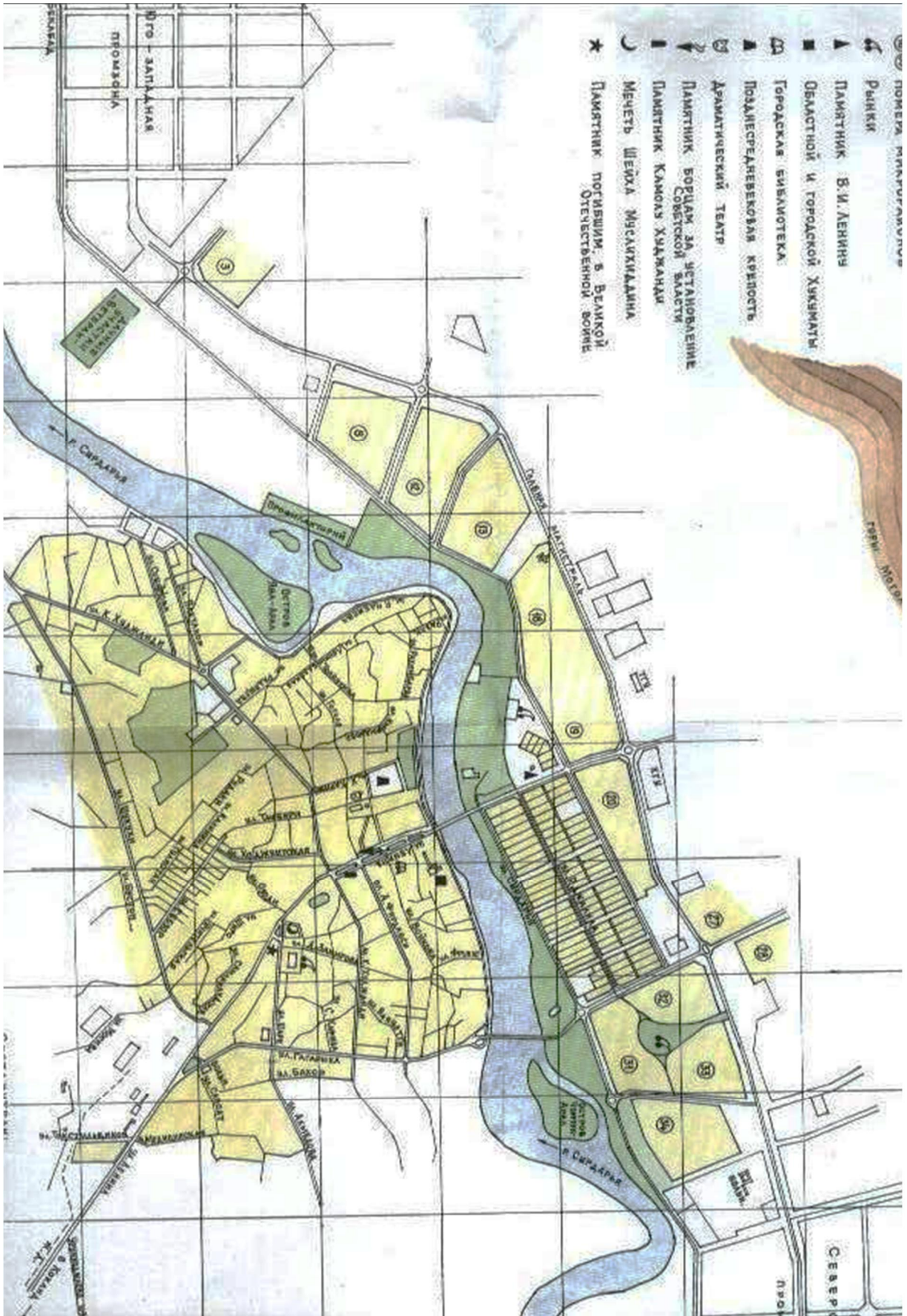
Wikimapia: Khujand. Retrieved September 28, 2012, from http://wikimapia.org/#lat=40.2623135&lon=69.651545&z=12&l=5&m=b.
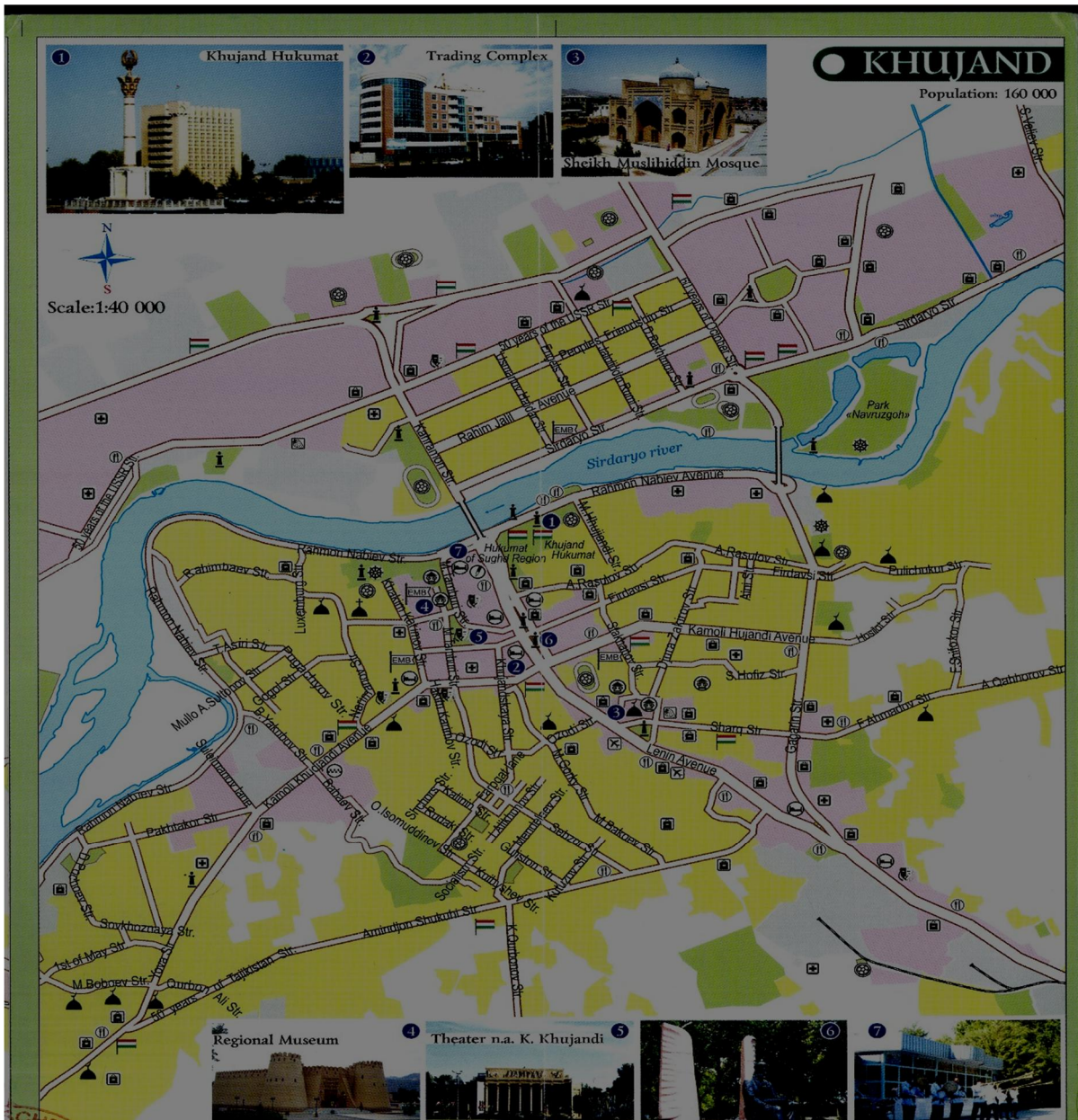
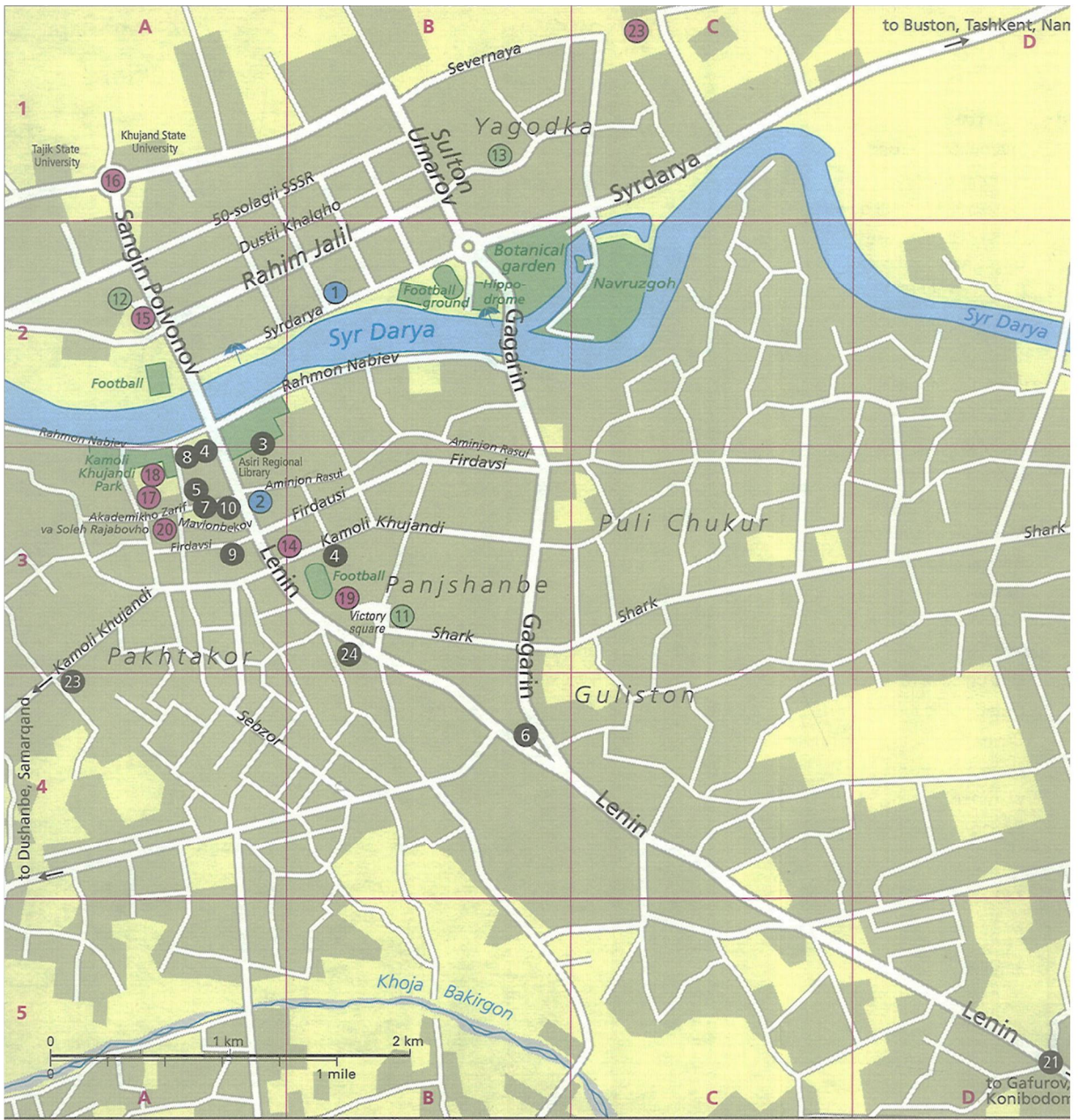Map 1: Soviet military survey, sheet K-42, 1:500000
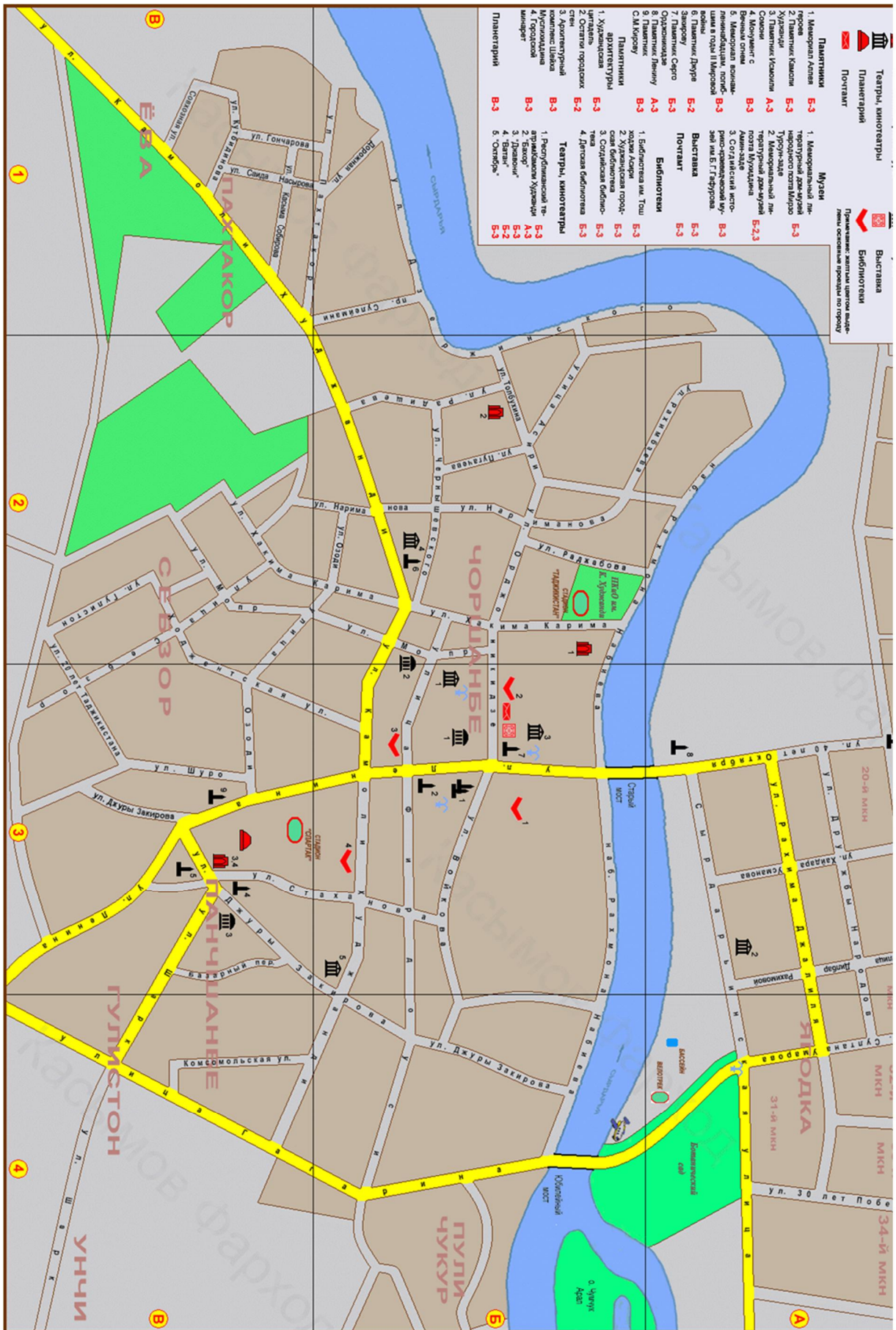
Map 2: Digitalised 1982 map of Leninabad

Map 3: Khujand Encyclopaedia map, 1999

Map 4: Map Factory, 2009
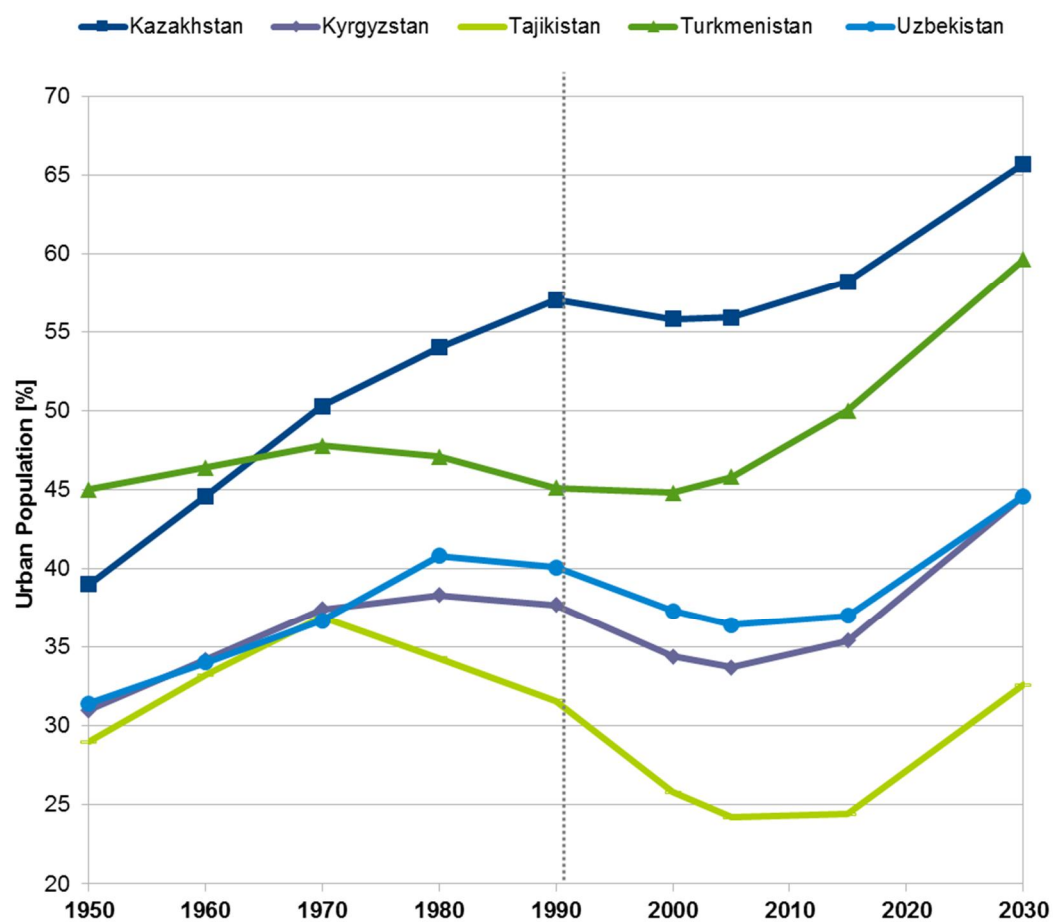
Map 5: Orell Füssli, 2008

Chart 1: Urban Population in Central Asia (in percent)

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2015	2030
Kazakhstan	39,00	44,6	50,3	54	57	55,8	55,9	58,2	65,7
Kyrgyzstan	31,00	34,2	37,4	38,3	37,7	34,4	33,7	35,4	44,6
Tajikistan	29,00	33,2	36,9	34,3	31,6	25,8	24,2	24,4	32,6
Turkmenistan	45,00	46,4	47,8	47,1	45,1	44,8	45,8	50	59,6
Uzbekistan	31,40	34	36,7	40,8	40,1	37,3	36,4	37	44,6

Source: UN Common Database (UN Population Division estimates), 2012.

Chart 2: Urban population of Khujand (in thousand)

Chart 2: Urban population of Khujand (in thousand)
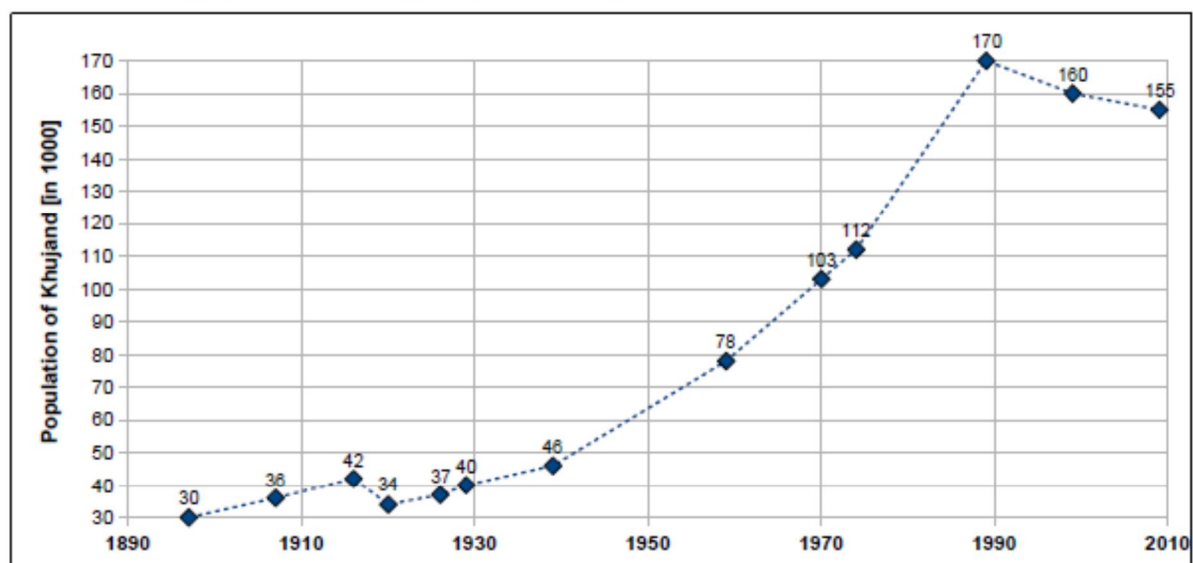
	1897	1907	1916	1920	1926	1929	1939	1959	1970	1974	1989	1999	2009
Population [n in 1000]	30	36	42	34	37	40	46	78	103	112	170	160	155

Source: Abdullaev S. A. (ed.) (1999), Asimov, M. S. (ed.) (1974):

Chart 3: Ethnic population of Khujand (in thousand)

	1939	1999
Tajiks	26.5	131.0
Russians	12.6	14.0
Uzbeks	2.0	5.5
Tatars	1.4	3.9
Kyrgyz	0.1	0.2
Others	3.0	5.5
Total	45.7	160.1

Source: (Abdullaev S. A. (ed.), 1999)

Chart 4: Private cars per 1000 inhabitants per year

	1970	1980	1988	2007
Tajikistan	4	19	41	38
Uzbekistan	3	22	40	–
Kyrgyzstan	5	23	41	59
USSR	6	30	53	–
Germany	194	330	423	553

Source: (French, 1995, p. 165, Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, 2011, The World Bank).

Annotation: According to official data, car ownership in Tajikistan today is slightly below the late Soviet level, which I would attribute to a decreased car ownership rate in the countryside. Although no data is available, I would agree with the anecdotal evidence that car ownership in urban areas has increased significantly. The observation of a "substantial growth of private car ownership" for Tashkent is shared inter alia by Akimov and Banister {Akimov June 2010 #157: 27}.

Illustration 1: Shaykh Maslihiddin shrine

Illustration 2: The madrasa at the Shaykh Maslihiddin shrine with the Mogol-Tau range in the background

Illustration 3: The Registan place at the end of the Ramadan

Illustration 4: Panjshanbe bazaar, main building

Illustration 5: The Regional Museum in a reconstructed tower of the old fortress

Illustration 6: Reconstruction of the fortress walls

Illustration 7: Celebrating the melon at the fortress walls

Illustration 8: The old bath house in a basement close to the Shaykh Maslihiddin shrine

Illustration 10: A bolo-hona in Khujand's old town, Razzoq quarter

Illustration 9: An old town street and a bolo-hona, Panjshanbe quarter

Illustration 11: Inside the Panjshanbe bazaar

Illustration 12: Women's Paedagogical
Institute, built 1938

Illustration 13: Carved niches in a preserved
19th century havli

Illustration 15: Mazor behind the Children's hospital

Illustration 14: Mazor tucked behind the OVIR building

Illustration 16: Tuti Kalon with a saint's tomb underneath

Illustration 17: The Orthodox church is being rebuilt

Illustration 18: The Amon bridge, the newest bridge over the Syrdarya

Illustration 19: Marshrutka stopping on Lenin street

Illustration 20: Trolleybus on Lenin street

Illustration 21: The busy Univermag bus stop

Illustration 22: Univermag bus stop before the removal of the Hammer and Sickle monument

Illustration 23: 3rd microraion

Illustration 25: 8th microraion

Illustration 24: A row of prefabricated houses in the city centre

Illustration 26: The Ehson Hotel – a major landmark

Illustration 27: Lenin statue some months before removal

Illustration 28: Children bathing in the fountains at the old Somoni statue

Illustration 29: Honour guard at the monument to Afghan fighters

Illustration 31: Honour guard at the monument
to the establishment of Soviet rule in Khujand

Illustration 30: World War II monument

Illustration 33: Kamoli Khujandi monument

Illustration 32: Column dedicated to the Tajik coat of arms and the state anthem
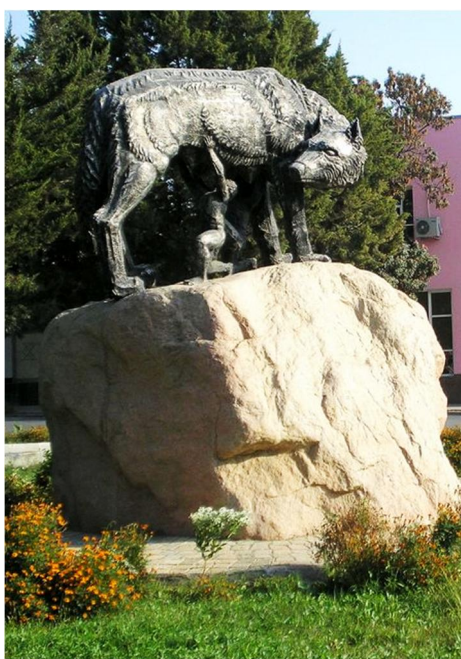
Illustration 34: A wolf from Istaravshan, feeding babies

Illustration 35: Rudaki monument with the administrative complex in the background
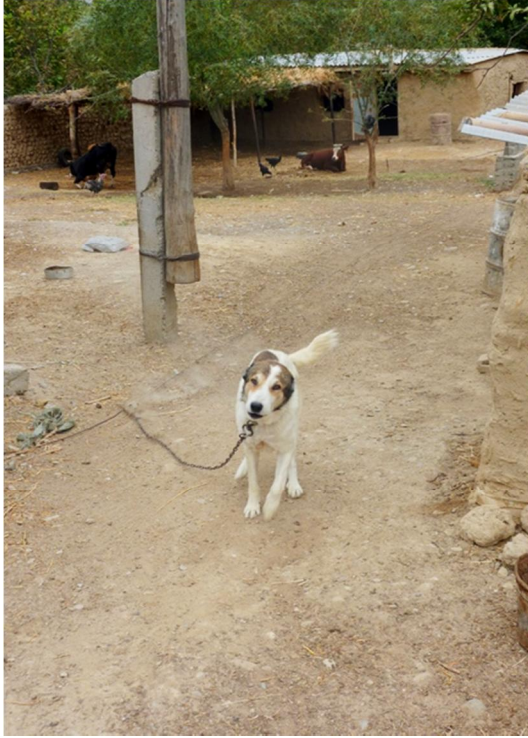
Illustration 36: Khurshed's havli in Dehmoy

Illustration 37: Nazir's havli in Razzoq

Illustration 38: Hen in a city centre microraion
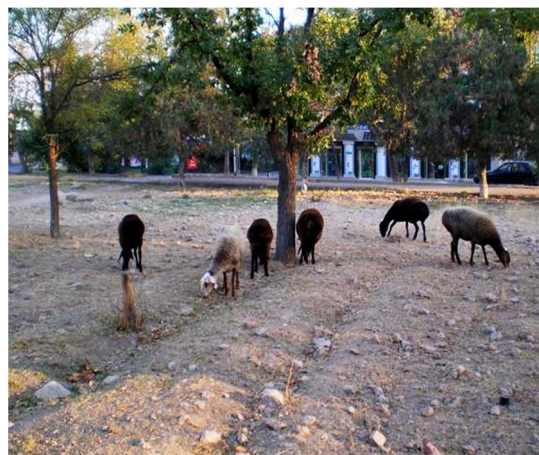
Illustration 40: Courtyard agriculture

Illustration 39: Sheep grazing in the park of the 32nd microraion

Illustration 41: Clay oven on an agricultural plot in a microraion courtyard, a tuykhona structure in the background

Illustration 42: Mourning ceremony in a tuykhona in a city centre microraion. The female part is closed off with carpets

Illustration 43: Tuykhona behind a high-rise off Lenin street

Illustration 44: Football game in a microraion courtyard

Illustration 46: 'Rich' remont versus 'poor' remont

Illustration 45: Variety of balcony enclosures

Illustration 48: New access to an office on the first floor

Illustration 47: Balcony transformed into a kiosk
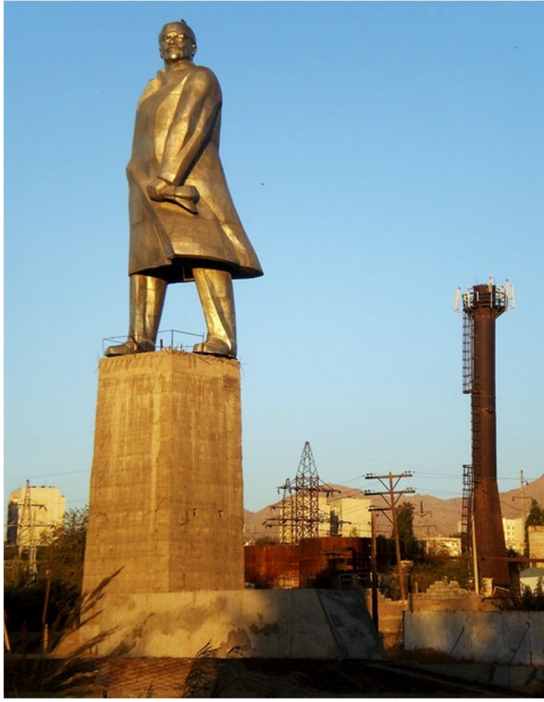

Illustration 49: Neighbourhood mosque in the 18th microraion

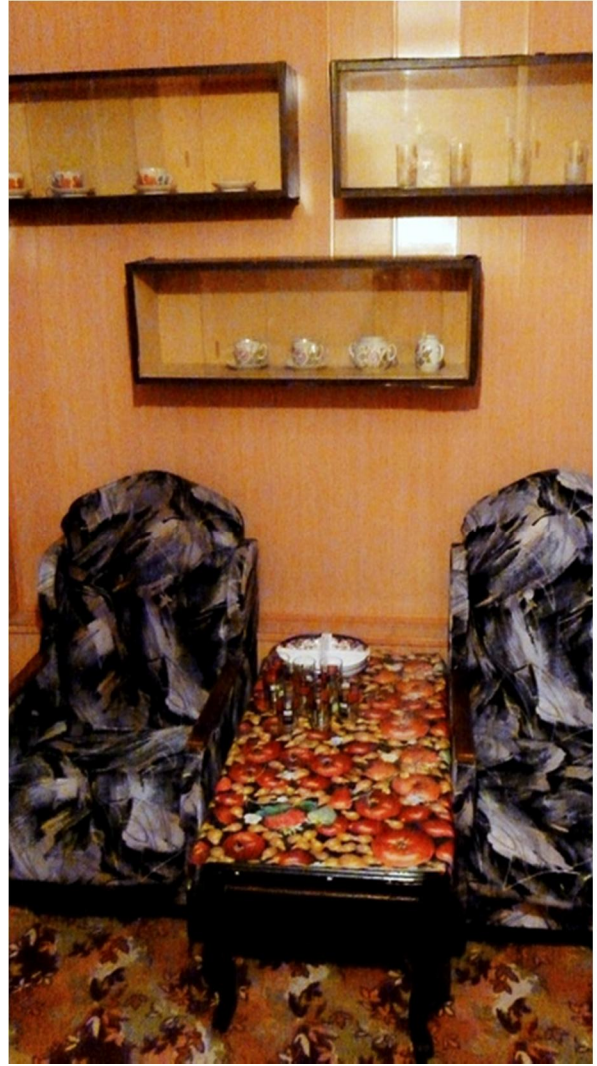Illustration 50: Lenin statue transferred to the Victory park

Illustration 51: Evroremont of the late 1990s

Illustration 52: 'National' arts and crafts at the Azizon tea house