

**SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN UZBEKISTAN:
A STUDY OF URBAN MAHALLAS IN TASHKENT**

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ABSTRACT

SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN UZBEKISTAN: A STUDY OF URBAN *MAHALLAS* IN TASHKENT

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The Uzbekistani state declared *mahalla kengash* as a local self-government in order to achieve decentralization in its administrative system. This thesis is a critical study of whether decentralization can be an explanatory concept in the examination of new institution-building in Uzbekistan. This thesis claims that dialectic relationship between the center and local state becomes conflictual when there is inconsistency between (a) (national) ruling class and its hegemony, and (b) (local) ruling class and its hegemony. The hegemony of both national and local ruling classes is shaped according to their capacity for conformity/dissention with the Soviet regime, and neo-liberal structural hegemony.

This study based on a case study of Tashkent *mahallashas* has demonstrated that decentralization process has been reversed as a result of the strategies of the Uzbekistani state when the different responses of the *mahalla kengash* do not conform to *mahalla* imagined by the state. Shortly, the urban *mahalla kengashes* of *mahalla* types which were shaped according to identity politics during the Soviet era could be easily adapted the new regime shifting from class to identity politics; whereas other *mahalla* types shaped according to class politics of the Soviet regime has fall in difficult situation. Finally, the decentralization policy and hegemonic projects of the regime have been shaped by the dialectic relationship between the state and *mahalla kengash*. Thus this relationship can be both spatio-temporally and socio-spatially differentiated. Consequently, it has argued that standard theoretical paradigms for

understanding transition in post-Soviet local politics are less globally generalizable than previously thought.

Key Words: decentralization, dialectical center-local relationship, *mahalla kengash*, hegemonic projects

ÖZ

ÖZBEKİSTANDA SOSYO-POLİTİK DÖNÜŞÜM: TAŞKENTTE KENTSEL MAHALLE ÇALIŞMASI ÖRNEĞİ

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Bağımsızlıktan sonra, Özbekistan rejimi kentsel mahalle yönetimlerini özerk yerel yönetim ilan etmiş ve bu düzenlemeyi ademi merkeziyetçi bir yönetsel yapı inşasında en büyük adım olarak görmüştür. Bu tez, Özbekistan’ın Sovyet sonrası yeni kurumsal yapılanmasının analizinde, “ademi merkeziyetçilik” literatürünün teorik olarak açıklayıcı bir kavram olup olmadığına dair eleştirel bir çalışmadır. Bu tez temel olarak, merkez ve yerel arasındaki diyalektik ilişkisinin çelişkili ya da uyumlu olmasının, merkezi düzeyde ulusal hakim sınıf ve onun hegemonyası ile yerel düzeyde yerel hakim sınıf ve onun yerel hegemonyası arasında uyum ya da uyumsuzluk tarafından belirlendiğini iddia etmekte ve merkeziyetçi ya da adem-i merkeziyetçi yönetsel yapıyı bu noktaya dayandırarak açıklamaktadır. Özbekistan’da merkezi ve yerel hakim sınıfların hegemonyaları ise, hem Sovyet rejimine hem de neo-liberalizmin yapısal hegemonyasına uyum ya da uyumsuzluk kapasitelerine göre şekillenmektedir.

Tezin Taşkent mahallelerine dayanan alan çalışmasından çıkan en önemli bulgu, Sovyet rejimi boyunca kimlik politikasına göre şekillenmiş kentsel mahallelerin yönetimlerinin yeni devletin sınıf siyasetinden çok kimlik siyasetine dayanan yeni rejimine daha kolay adapte olduğu; tersine Sovyet rejimi tarafından sınıf politikasına göre şekillenen kentsel yaşam alanlarının yönetimlerinin yeni rejime uyum sağlarken zorlandığıdır. Bunun sonucunda, kentsel mahalle yönetimlerinin stratejileri devletin ideal mahalle kurgusu ile uyum göstermediğinde adem-i merkeziyetçileşme süreci, Özbekistan Devleti’nin merkeziyetçi

müdahale stratejileri sonucu tersine dönmektedir. Sonuç olarak Özbekistan rejiminin hegemonik projeleri ve bu projelerin bir parçası olan adem-i merkeziyetçi politikası, merkezi devlet ve kentsel mahalle yönetimleri arasındaki diyalektik ilişki tarafından şekillenmektedir. Bundan dolayı söz konusu coğrafyada kentsel siyasetin dönüşümünü anlamada standart merkez-yerel ilişkisi öne süren herhangi bir paradigma yetersiz kalmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: adem-i merkeziyetçilik, diyalektik merkez-yerel ilişkisi, *mahalla kengash*, hegemonik projeler

To My Dear Grandfather

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who taught me the significance of science and keeping track of it....

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After it was established in 1992, the main aim of the new regime of the Republic of Uzbekistan was to restructure the administrative system away from Soviet centralism to a more liberal decentralist form. To this end, administrative power, especially the implementation of social policy, was devolved to neighborhood committees known as *mahalla kengashes*. Over the course of the 1990s, all of the different urban residential units that had existed during the Soviet regime (*mikroraion*, *garadok*, *massiv*, *mavzi*, *mahalla*) were reorganized into *mahalla kengashes*, which became the new local administrative/political unit of the Uzbekistani state after independence. Finally, in 1999 a constitutional guarantee gave the *mahalla kengash* official status in local self-government. This administrative reform affected each *mahalla kengash* differently, as each had a different socio-spatial and economic structure, and thus implemented the functions of the reform in a different way, bringing great diversity to urban Uzbekistan in terms of its political/administrative and social structures. However the question of whether this reform has really resulted in decentralized administrative power, as predicted by the Uzbekistani regime, is still uncertain.

1.1 Aim of the Study and Main Hypothesis of the Thesis

The Uzbekistani state, like other post-Soviet countries, has built its political and administrative system around the creation of a nation state and the adoption of a market-based economy while attempting to address serious socio-cultural problems during the transition era. After gaining independence, the Uzbekistani state tried to establish a nation state based on the Uzbek identity of conservative and paternalist social relations in a bid to

replace the Soviet-style modernization¹, and recalled Uzbekistani history of the pre-Islamic time in order to counter emergent radical Islamist movements. The Uzbekistani state followed a path of gradual economic transition to a market-based economy that was dependent on the creation of an economic environment in which the individual and small businesses could flourish, while supporting the vulnerable sections of society whose living standards had fallen sharply during the transition era. In this dissertation, the goals of the Uzbekistani state during this period are referred to as their “hegemonic projects” within the structural hegemony of the global neo-liberal economic system. To achieve all of these goals during the transition era, the Uzbekistani regime designed an ideal *mahalla kengash*, and used the *mahalla kengashes* in urban areas as a hegemonic instrument of its decentralization policy.

Such decentralization policies are at the very center of the new institution-building efforts of the former Soviet states. In the Uzbekistan case, decentralization policies have been based on the *mahalla*, which is historically a crucial socio-spatial unit in the daily life of urban Uzbekistani society, and the *mahalla kengash*, which today has many social policy functions, has been assigned an official role in the Uzbekistani state. The distinctive outcome of the efforts to introduce a decentralization policy over a main urban living space in Uzbekistan has been unique in post-Soviet societies, being tied closely to the state hegemony. Through the standardization of all urban residential units into *mahallas*, and the transformation of the *mahalla kengash* into an official body of local self-government, the Uzbekistani state was able to secure a hegemonic instrument in its new political/economic regime. This was the most important continuity in local politics in Uzbekistan during the transition from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era. For the Soviet regime, the endorsement of the *mahalla kengashes* had been a strategic choice, with the intention being to maintain a level of control over society. In this way, a good proletariat was created in both the workplace and the home, some of which would become the hegemonically (re-)produced Uzbek *mahallas*. In the post-Soviet era, the Uzbekistani regime has accepted the *mahalla kengash* as a local self-governing body with a level of administrative control over the *mahalla*, in which the good Uzbek citizen is created today. In other words, although the Soviet regime had developed an ideal and imagined *mahalla* in order to create a working class in the living space, due to its hegemonic strategy of *koranizatsiia* (National) in central Asia, different forms of urban *mahalla* emerged in Uzbekistan, not all of which were the ideal living space of the ideal Soviet working class.

¹ However, the fact that the Uzbek identity represents conservative and paternalist social relations had already been (re-)produced by the Soviet regime.

The Uzbekistani regime, like the Soviet regime, also developed an ideal and imagined *mahalla*, and although all urban residential units are today considered legally as *mahallas*, as mentioned above, some could be completely articulated to the Soviet regime as an ideal residential unit of the working class (D type), some of them could be semi-articulated to the Soviet regime (C type), while some were ignored by the Soviet regime (A type), and some were (re-)located and (re-)produced by the Soviet regime (B type)². In many ways, these different types of *mahalla* have been unaffected by the decentralization policy and the hegemonic project, as different types of *mahalla kengash* have come up with different responses according to their own socio-economic and socio-political contexts, which were shaped mostly during the Soviet regime. In many cases, these responses and strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* are inconsistent with the Uzbekistani state's ideal *mahalla* design, and thus a reversal of the decentralist strategy has been witnessed in the direction of centralism, creating conflict between the different policy aims of the Uzbek state.

In short, in the fifteen-year transition period from the Soviet to the post-Soviet regime there has been clear evidence that the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime and its hegemonic project have been shaped by the dialectic relationship between the state and the *mahalla kengashes*, despite the presence of a standard legal framework. This dissertation aims to study the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the different types of *mahalla kengashes* and the central government in terms of both the decentralization policy and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime through a study of the Tashkent *mahallas*.

The main hypothesis of this study is as follows: While the decentralization policy and hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime have influenced the internal structure and the modes of representation and intervention in the *mahalla kengashes*, the *mahalla kengashes* have in turn shaped the socio-spatial and socio-economic structures of the central state through their different styles of policy implementation. In other words, the decentralization policy and hegemonic projects of the Uzbek regime are spatio-temporally shaped by the dialectic, reciprocal and dynamic relationships that exist between the central government and the different types of *mahalla kengashes*. This relationship has been affected by several conflicts that have emerged at both the national and local levels of the political/economic environment, so much so that in certain types of *mahallas* the decentralization policies of the post-Soviet Uzbek regime have in fact resulted in further centralization.

This thesis is a study of the change/continuity of the *mahalla kengashes* during the transition period, and is conducted in two stages: (a) the period of the formation of the *mahalla* as a

² The different types of Tashkent *mahalla* are examined in chapter four.

local political/administrative unit and a socio/spatial institution during the Soviet era, and (b) the period of reformation during the post-Soviet era. Accordingly, some statements and/or sub-hypotheses of the thesis are related to the historical background, while others are related to more recent times. These sub-hypotheses will be tested with several case studies, taking into consideration historically the dialectic relationship between urban policies under both Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes, as tools of the rules and norms of the structure of the post-Soviet transition era, and the strategies and tactics of different neighborhood community types. To this end, the thesis focuses mainly on the dialectic relationship between (a) the effects of post-Soviet socio-economic transition and strategic-selectivity of the Uzbekistani regime –the decentralization policy and new hegemonic projects – on the urban neighborhood communities, and (b) the different strategies and actions of the *mahalla kengashes* within different socio-economic and power structures of the urban neighborhood to address the post-Soviet structural conditions through a study of Tashkent *mahallas*.

1.2 Statements and Content of the Study

This thesis offers a critical evaluation of the transformation of local politics in Uzbekistan based on a study of the various paths of transition of different neighborhood communities in the urban area, and will attempt to uncover whether these divergent paths indicate a break from, or continuity with, their previous paths in the Soviet era. To this end, it is necessary to clarify both (a) the structural dynamics of the political and economic transition of post-Soviet Uzbekistan and its effects on local politics and the daily life of the urban neighborhood community, and (b) the spatio-temporally different responses and strategies of neighborhood communities to the effects of the transition and state policies, which are shaped by the dialectic relationship between the structural dynamics of the Soviet regime and their inherent power structure. Accordingly, the main questions in this study as follows: What was the source of the conflicts that emerged at the local and central scale of the political/economic environment of the Uzbekistani regime, and how did these conflicts shape the center-local relationship in post-Soviet Uzbekistan? How did they affect the hegemonic projects and decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime in the different types of Tashkent *mahallas*? In brief, the forms of decentralization and the hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime were contingent processes of the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between action and structure.

For this purpose, first, the historical background of the center-local relationship in local politics in Uzbekistan are summarized in **Chapter Two**. Some of the dynamics at both national and local scales have resulted recently in a rift in the center-local relationship as a

residual effect of the Soviet regime, and so the historical background of the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan is of equal importance as the recent political/economic and socio-spatial transformation in its formation. This historical background covers the main characteristics of the center-local relationship in each period in Uzbekistan: pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet. In this chapter, the October Revolution and the establishment process of the Uzbekistani SSR are summarized, as well as the formation of the independent Uzbekistani Republic. The main intention is to show how the state in Uzbekistan has become gradually more centralist over the years. In an examination of urbanization and local politics in Uzbekistan, the historical background is crucial, as when a regime creates its own local political form as well as socio-spatial relationships, the political formation, local politics, hegemonic projects, socio-spatial relationship, and urbanization of the following regime are also influenced. Reviewing the history of local politics in Uzbekistan not only allows an understanding of the *mahalla* today, but also reveals that many of the intricacies of modern local politics in Uzbekistan can be traced from the past, and that legacies of pre-Soviet and Soviet local politics have actually been carried over into the post-Soviet period.

Theoretical chapter (**Chapter Three**) is formulated in order to show how the state policy of decentralization and its hegemonic projects were shaped by the dialectical and reciprocal relationships between the *mahalla kengashes* and state within the local and national structural hegemony (spatio-temporal strategies of national and local ruling classes). In this thesis, it is argued that due to the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the Soviet hegemony and native community, urban neighborhoods developed unevenly in Uzbekistani cities, which came to differ spatio-temporally from each other. Different types of *mahallas* came up with different strategies and tactics to address the structural conditions required for the post-Soviet transition in their daily life, and the state's decentralization policy and hegemonic projects. These resulted in a dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the Uzbekistani regime and the different types of urban neighborhoods, leading to different center-local relationships and urban politics in each locality. Conflicts occurred due to the clash of political/economic dynamics at national and local scales owing to the structural conditions imposed during the post-Soviet transition and the different strategies and tactics employed by the *mahalla kengashes* of different urban neighborhood communities. These two issues will be explained briefly in chapter three.

At the beginning of the theoretical chapter, the dynamics of the transition that resulted in conflict between the centralized and decentralized authorities in post-Soviet countries is explained. Post-Soviet countries, including Uzbekistan, were compelled to implement

decentralization policies in their administrative systems under the global pressure of neo-liberalism; yet the central governments in these countries had centralist tendencies in their political economic regimes, due not only to their inherited Soviet centralist political structures, but also the unique conditions of the transition era. Therefore, the first claim made in this chapter is that despite the policy of decentralization, there was a centralist tendency in the Uzbek regime that was due not only to its Soviet heritage, but also to the unique dynamics of the era in which the state was undergoing a transition from a socialist regime to a market-based economy, while also building a nation state. There are a wealth of studies analyzing the post-Soviet transition period and centralism and decentralism, however much of it is political rather than scientific, and is formulated by the strong international institutions of the global economy that aim to become dominant force in the region (Pickel, 2002). Many studies explain the centralist tendency of the post-Soviet states as being part of the Soviet experience, and especially those depending on the actor-based approach argue that the continuity of centralism and bureaucratic dominance from the Soviet into the post-Soviet era has been the main reason for the lack of success of decentralization policies. It would be fair to say that the post-Soviet transition has been shaped not only by the patterns and legacy of previous economic and political structures, but also due to the path-shaping of neo-liberal designers. Thus, in this thesis, it is claimed that there were two structural dynamics of the transition era that led to the former Soviet states becoming more centralist. First, post-Soviet states had to establish their central administration according to a new economic system – a market-based economy – which created a new class (bourgeoisie) that would become the driving force in the capitalist system. They also needed to regulate the new private sector and private property -that was lack in the old regime-. This situation ascribes many functions to the central state and makes it the main actor in the transition era. In other words, despite the global pressure to decentralize, the post-Soviet states needed to retain a centralist standpoint in order to adapt to the structural hegemony of a market-based economy. It can thus be understood that the conflict between the centralist and decentralist administrative structure was caused not by the conflict between the new regime and the Soviet heritage, but rather by the new structural hegemony of the global neo-liberal system.

Campbell (1995) notes that post-communist political leaders faced a conflict on two fronts, having to create a command structure that would oversee the rapid economic reforms, while also promoting local democracy through building a civil society. Related with the Campbell standpoint, more importantly, a second structural dynamic of the transition era was the concept of decentralization in the neo-liberal system. Global hegemonic discourse has emphasized the importance of decentralization in the new institutional structure of the state

in the democratization process through idealizing civil society against the state. This hegemonic discourse argues that the Western models of democracy can be established only through a decentralization of the administrative structure; however, the real reason behind the global hegemonic pressure for decentralization is to encourage an open form of politics in these countries. Moreover, contrary to arguments in neo-liberal discourse, the concept of civil society does not necessarily increase local or national democracy, but rather is necessary for the establishment of state hegemony. In short, in the first part of the theoretical chapter, post-Soviet transition literature is critically evaluated within the theoretical framework of centralization-decentralization.

Related with the critical evaluation of transition literature, a critical realism methodology is selected as the most suitable approach when attempting to explain the shaping of the decentralization process as a result of the dialectic relationship between the strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengashes* and the state policies. The dialectic relationship between the different strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* and the state is then applied to the decentralization policies and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime in two case chapters, after which the concept of decentralization and the hegemonic project are discussed, and the role of the local administrations in these two state strategies is analyzed. In this thesis, neo-Gramscian perspective is used in the explanation of the institutional change in Uzbekistan during the neo-liberal transition.

Second, focus turns to finding a theoretical explanation for the political/economic dynamics derived from a local scale, being local policy variations. The different strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengashes* in different urban neighborhood communities make this dialectic relationship between center and local more conflictual, as in some types of *mahallas*, the strategies and responses of the *mahalla kengashes* are inconsistent with the hegemonic projects of Uzbekistani regime, leading the decentralization policies of the post-Soviet Uzbekistani regime to be pushed aside in favor of further centralization. It is necessary to answer theoretically why variations exist between the policies of different urban neighborhoods, resulting in different strategies and policy implementations in different neighborhood types. The *mahalla kengashes* of these different urban *mahalla* types have (re-)produced different strategies to applying the new state's policies within the new structural hegemony of the market-based economic regime. Many new dynamics of the transition era have begun to affect and shape the strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengashes* within their historical context. At this point, it is necessary to discuss several urban neighborhood studies in urban theory, focusing on their explanations of the effects of the dialectic relationship between the political/economic structure and the local agency on local policy

variations. The local variations among urban neighborhood communities in Uzbekistani cities emerged mostly during the Soviet era, due to the dialectic relationship between the Soviet regime and the local communities. To examine this, it is necessary to focus on the Soviet city structure and the issue of the socio-spatial segregation in Soviet cities. Many studies on Soviet cities are based on Eastern European countries and Russia, and so fall short of explaining the socio-spatial segregation and uneven development seen in central Asian cities that had suffered under the *koranizatsiia* (national) policy of the Soviet Union. A direct effect of this policy on the city structure of Soviet Uzbekistan was that the urban *mahalla kengash* and other local institutions, rather than being abolished as part of a feudal system, became hegemonic instruments of the Communist Party in the implementation of both class politics and politics of redistribution (as main principles of the Soviet regime), and the politics of representation and identity (being a key part of the *koranizatsiia* policy) in a bid to create an equal and classless society. Thus, one part of theoretical framework of this thesis is constructed in order to explain the local variations in the urban living space of Soviet Uzbekistan. The political/economic dynamics derived from a local scale in post-Soviet Uzbekistan is explained through the dialectical relationship between state strategies (hegemony at national scale) and local variations (hegemony at local scale) within the historical perspective.

Chapter Four contains an analysis of the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit of urban Soviet Uzbekistan, with a suggestion that the mode of intervention of the Soviet regime to the socio-spatial structure of urban Tashkent through the main economic policies, national policies, and urban planning and housing policies led to the emergence of the *mahallas* and urbanization patterns in Uzbekistan that were somewhat different from those seen in Eastern Europe and Russia. The Soviet regime (re-)produced the *mahalla* committee in urban Uzbekistan for its hegemonic project, and moreover (re-)produced the different residential units through different interventions into the living space, affected their local organization. These divergent living spaces of urban Uzbekistan have followed different paths in the transition era, and their *mahalla kengashes* have come up with different strategies to the new regime's *mahalla* policy. This chapter also discusses the urban structure of central Asia and Eastern Europe in the pre-Soviet time, and demonstrates that the pre-existing uneven development of the urban structure of central Asia and east Europe was already in existence by the time Soviet Union was established. The dynamics of the reproduction of urban space by the Soviet regime through a number of Soviet policies is also discussed, dealing with the issues of industrialization and planned economy, collectivization and immigration policy, and urban planning and housing policy in order to show how the uneven development at the

urban scale was reproduced in the Soviet geography. In chapter four, after discussing socio-spatial segregation in Soviet cities, the living space of Tashkent during the Soviet era will be studied. In this part of the thesis it is argued that such intervention modes included negligence (non-action) policies, transformation policies, establishment policies and reproduction policies when dealing with the residential units of central Asian cities. Through these policies, the production mode of local communities was articulated with the state structure at different levels and formed incidentally, far from what the Soviet regime had planned for these local communities. As a result of different articulation levels, there was much inequality and uneven development within central Asian cities that differed from city to city, and from region to region in the Soviet geography. In this chapter, the urbanization process of Soviet Tashkent will be examined in three periods, all of which directly affected the living space of Tashkent: a) the first years of the Revolution; b) the period from World War II to the 1966 earthquake; and c) the period that saw the rapid construction of the *mikroraion* in Tashkent after the 1966 earthquake. The development of Tashkent in different periods demonstrates how different residential units emerged and developed different socio-economic structures, and this was taken into account when formulating the selection criteria of the *mahallas* to be analyzed in the field study. In other words, the characteristics of the different *mahalla* types were defined in detail, and included in the preconditions of the dissertation's main hypothesis, which is actually an introduction to the research.

In **Chapters Five and Six** through different cases, the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the *mahalla kengashes* of different Tashkent *mahalla* types and the central government of the new Uzbekistani regime is analyzed in detail. As already stated, the main hypothesis of the study is that the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime and its hegemonic project was shaped by the dialectic, reciprocal and dynamic relationships between the central government and the different types of *mahalla kengashes*, and that this relationship was affected by the conflicts that emerged at different political/economic scales, which in some types of *mahallas* resulted in further centralization, despite the decentralization policies of the post-Soviet Uzbekistani regime. The center (central government)-local (different *mahalla kengashes*) relationship is analyzed in two different state strategies, the decentralization policy and the hegemonic project, within a framework of three factors: (a) the state legacy of the *mahalla kengash*, in order to achieve the main aims of the new regime; (b) different indigenous characters or power structures of the *mahalla kengashes*, which resulted in different responses to the *mahalla*-scaled state policies; and (c) the responses and strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* that were inconsistent with the Uzbek State's aimed *mahalla* design and reversed the state's decentralist strategy in the direction of

centralism, resulting in a conflict between the different policy aims of the Uzbek State. These three issues are discussed in chapters five and six to show the dynamic, dialectic, conflictual, and reciprocal relationship between the new state and the different *mahalla* types. These chapters have been formulated to analyze the dialectic relationship between (a) the effects of the structural constraints that are strategically selected under governmental policies and regulations, and (b) the different strategies and actions applied by *mahalla kengashes* to address the decentralization policies and hegemonic projects.

The critical realist approach, which is the selected methodology of the thesis, offers a suitable base for the identification of the local and national peculiarities that are an essential determinant of decentralization and hegemonic projects in a transition country that are experienced in different local neighborhood communities under similar urban conditions. The critical realism approach argues that some valid laws, as absolute regularities articulated about socio-economic processes, never actually result in *ceteris paribus* (Scott, 2000; Blaikie, 1993: 58) since social actors are not passive responders to these absolute regularities. Thus, social reality is (re)produced by social actors, which are also generated by social reality or structure (both dependent and independent variables). Moreover, as Duncan and Goodwin (1988: 5) argue, “although restrained by central government and centrally imposed legal statutes, local government retains a degree of choice in its actions...*local government law is primarily concerned with powers rather than duties, and essentially established a legal framework within which local authorities are given discretionary powers to act*”. Stewart (1983: 3) claims that: “*the local authority has much more than administrative discretion. It is not directly subordinate to departments of central government*”. Chapter five and six are devoted to analyzing the divergent strategies of the different *mahalla kengashes* against the regulations imposed on them by the new regime. The new regulation of the Uzbekistani state over the *mahalla kengash* is summarized alongside an analysis of the responses of each different *mahalla* type to this regulation. The main hypothesis of these chapters is that the *mahalla kengashes* of different *mahalla* types, as local administrative/political units (re-)produce different strategies and tactics against *mahalla*-scaled state policies, according to their capacity for conformity/dissent under the Soviet regime. Accordingly, there were different levels of change/continuity in the socio-political structure of Uzbekistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union; and such a perspective raises alternative explanations regarding the nature of the contemporary decentralization policies of transition countries. Moreover, this perspective also helps us to specify which social groups are excluded under the new Uzbekistani regime during the

transition era. In other words, it is possible to determine why and how, and in which urban neighborhoods, the center-local relationship is more conflictual.

Chapter Five discusses an important and unique dynamic that has led to increased tension in Uzbekistani local politics, and demonstrates the continuity of the Soviet regime's *mahalla* policy: the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument of the Uzbekistani regime in its hegemonic project, formed in order to adapt to the structural hegemony of the global neo-liberal system. In Uzbekistan, the modern state with its modern national identity was established by the Soviet regime, which caused the Uzbekistani regime to keep in place many of the strategies and institutions developed during the Soviet period, such as the use of *mahalla kengashes* as a hegemonic instrument. Thus, one of the statements of this chapter is that the Soviet regime accepted the *mahalla kengash* as a social institution (*jemoat tashkilati*) as a means of controlling society and providing security in the local communities, rather than destroying the traditional *mahalla* structure in order to create an ideal classless and equal Soviet urban society (Noori, 2006; Baykal, 2007; Masaru, 2006; Epstein&Winter, 2004; Abramson, 1998; Pashkun, 2003; Sievers, 2002). The significance of the *mahalla kengash*, as the main actor in the decentralization policy in the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime is explained through the *mahalla* as being a hegemonic instrument of (a) *o'zbekchilik*³ between globalization and localization; (b) control of civil society; and (c) community-based organization. Therefore, in this chapter, the *mahalla kengash* will be examined as a hegemonic instrument in both the Soviet and the post-Soviet era. Here it can be said that one of the dynamics that brought about conflicts in center-local relationship in Uzbekistan was that while the Uzbekistani regime, as an actor of the global economic structure, imposed a decentralization policy through strategically selected urban *mahalla*, it continued to use *mahalla kengashes* as hegemonic instruments. The Uzbek state today sees the *mahalla* as an instrument for the creation of *o'zbekchilik*, meaning the creation of good and ideal Uzbekistani citizenship in Uzbekistani society. In other words, today the Uzbekistani regime is (re-)producing an Uzbekistani nation and identity in the urban *mahalla*. This function at times bears similarities with the Soviet regime, while at other times it resembles a break from it. The vital elements of an ideal Uzbekistani state are secularism, conservatism and entrepreneurship. Some of the duties of the *mahalla kengash* are reflected in this ideal, which is necessary for the creation and strengthening of *o'zbekchilik* in the new political/economic environment of the transition era. Accordingly, in chapter five the two main functions of the *mahalla kengash* that have been devolved by the central government are examined: (a) control of the community through the *mahalla kengash* in the discussion of

³ Uzbekness

the *mahalla* as civil society, and (b) the social assistance implemented by the *mahalla kengash* as a community-based organization. The former of these two functions existed in the Soviet era, while the latter developed in the contemporary period; however both are analyzed in terms of their variation in Tashkent's *mahallas*. In other words, on the one hand, in order to achieve its main goals (or hegemonic project) after independence, the Uzbekistani state devolved several functions to the *mahalla kengashes*, which affected the socio-spatial context of the *mahalla* as well as the power relations within local politics; while on the other hand, these functions have been achieved practically in different ways by the *mahalla kengash* of different *mahalla* types. When these local variations and strategies threaten the hegemony of the regime or the Uzbekistani state's aimed *mahalla* design, the center-local relationship becomes more conflictual, and the Uzbekistani state's decentralist strategy is reversed in the direction of centralism. This situation occurs in mostly the ex-Soviet ideal type of residential unit.

In **Chapter Six**, how the decentralization policy of the Uzbek regime has affected the power structure and social relations in the different *mahalla* types, and how the different responses of *mahalla kengashes* with different power and socio-economic structures have affected the decentralization policy will be analyzed, based on two factors: the change/continuity in the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash*, and the change/continuity in the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengash*. In other words, chapter six will examine the ways in which the central government influences the internal organization and the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengash* through the legal framework of decentralization, while also analyzing the strategies followed by the *mahalla kengashes* in different *mahalla* types in Tashkent under the legal framework of the Uzbekistani regime. In this regard, this chapter highlights the importance of both the central government and the *mahalla kengash*, as a political/administrative unit of the urban neighborhood, in shaping decentralization policy in local politics in Uzbekistan. Moreover, all of these issues are analyzed further by making a comparison with the Soviet era. The Uzbekistani regime, after independence, raised the *mahalla kengash* to the status of a unique body of local self-government through its decentralization policy, which was one of the most important acts by the Uzbekistani regime in its bid to distance itself from the "centralist Soviet regime". Although there are many similarities between the Soviet regime and the new Uzbekistani regime (in literature it is generally argued that there is great continuity between the Soviet and independence eras in terms of the internal structure and the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengashes*), by using the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic tool for the new strategies of the Uzbek regime and the structural hegemony of the new economic system, major influence has been achieved

in the *mahalla kengash* and its relations with the state. Chapter six explains in detail the legal framework of the internal organization of *mahalla kengashes*, and their relationships with the central government and the *Hokimiyat* (territorial administration), and makes a comparison with the Soviet era.

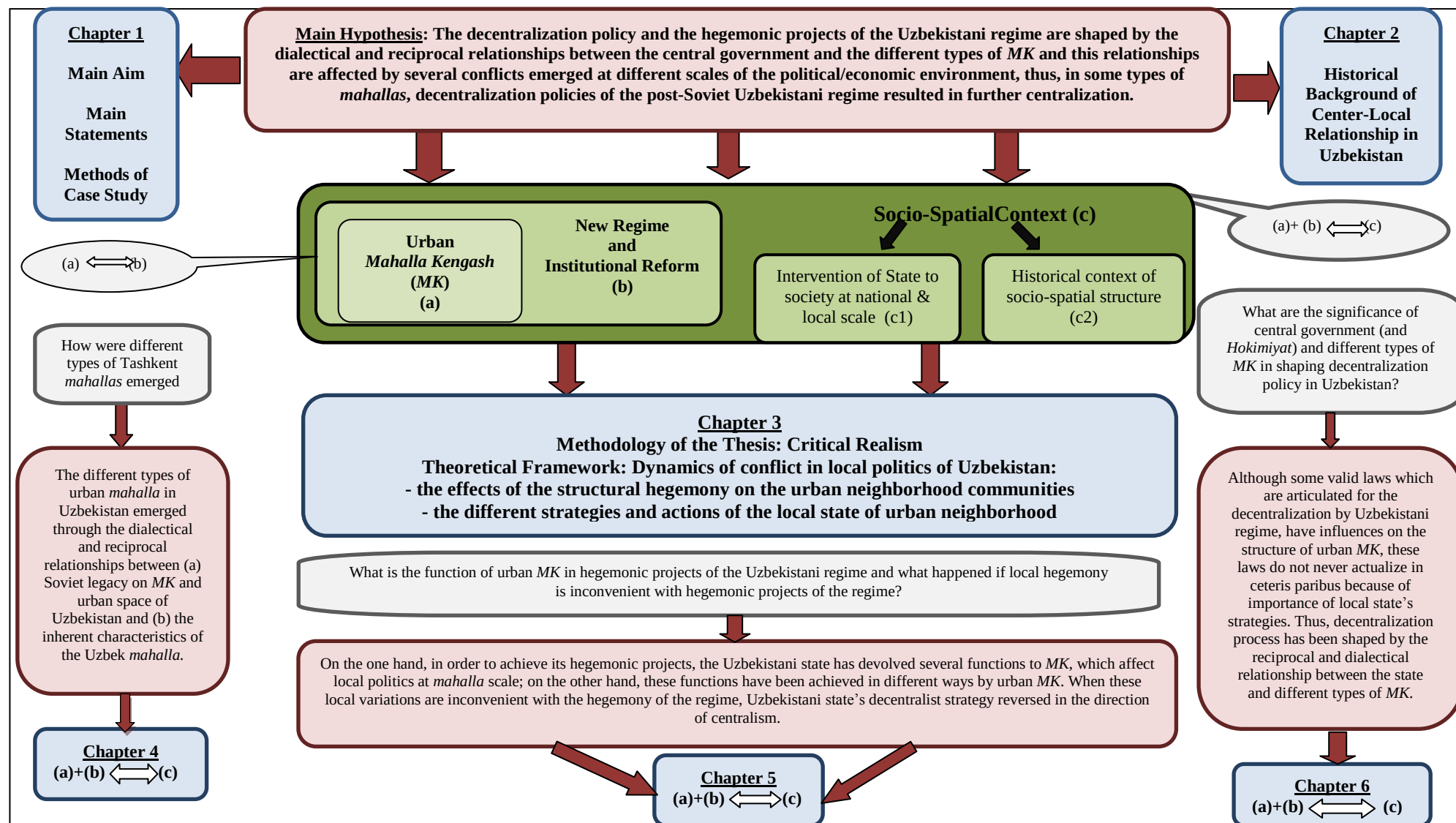


Figure 1.1 Content of the Thesis

1.3 Research Design of the Case Study

This dissertation is built upon data obtained from several *mahallas* in the city of Tashkent. The field research of the dissertation, which was an ethnographic study of the role of the *mahalla kengash* during the transformation process, was conducted over 10 months, starting in August 2008 and ending in May 2009.⁴ The study focuses on urban *mahallas* in Uzbekistan, where the many social and economic consequences of the dissolution of USSR in 1991 affected the urban rather than rural post-Soviet population due to their highly articulated capacity to the Soviet regime. The urban population of Uzbekistan often worked in state offices or factories during the Soviet era, and many of them suffered a sharp decline in living standards from those of the Soviet era due to government downsizing and layoff policies in the transition period. This saw the rise of unemployment and poverty as major problems in the post-Soviet era. Moreover, low or late government salaries, and the absence of state subsidies, which were one of the most dominant features of the old system, hit the daily lives and economic conditions of the urban citizens hard during transition. The lack of state support resulted in serious social and economic problems and huge void between social classes.

In this section, the research method of the dissertation will be introduced, which allowed the collection of extensive materials and information about how the different types of the *mahallas* have responded the socio-political transformation in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan constitutes an interesting area of study for foreign academicians due to the difficulties in getting access to information, whether formal or informal. Thus, before explaining the methods used to obtain data in Uzbekistan, the problems and benefits experienced during the case study will be presented. I had already visited Uzbekistan twice (in the summers of 2005 and 2006) before the PhD proficiency exam in order to conduct a preliminary research on the issue of Tashkent's *mahallas*, and these trips were a good opportunity to begin to understand the different types of *mahallas*. As this dissertation analyzes the different strategies and tactics of the local actors/communities of different *mahalla* types against *mahalla*-scaled state policies, according to their conformity with and/or dissent from the Soviet regime, the case study is carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the different types of *mahallas* in Tashkent are categorized according to some socio-economic and historical parameters, while

⁴ I stayed in Tashkent as an intern of the Institute of History in the Uzbek Academy of Science.

in the second stage, information and data is obtained from these different types of *mahallas* through various quantitative and qualitative research methods.

1.3.1 Problems Encountered in the Field

During the research, I experienced a number of problems while attempting to collect data, which can be categorized under three types: Problems faced by foreigners concerning resident permits and accommodation; problems of attempting to enter the *mahallas*; and problems experienced while conducting research in the *mahallas*.

A foreigner in Uzbekistan is required to find a place of residence within three days if they are to receive a residence permit. Within this period, one has to find a place to stay, acquire the necessary documents (i.e. a rental contract, a copy of the land registry and blueprints of the building), go to the related institutions and register for a residency permit. Since this is almost impossible to accomplish within the said amount of time, it is more appropriate to check into a hotel during the first days of travel.⁵ For the following two months I stayed at the apartment of a fellow academician, who moved to her *dacha*⁶ outside the city. Living in an apartment in central Tashkent gave me the opportunity to experience life in a modern *mahalla* first hand.⁷ First, I learned that I was staying at the home illegally, and that the homeowner had to bribe the *mahalla* security officers (*uchaskavoy noziri*⁸). Second, I saw that the residents of the *mahalla* were openly hostile when it came to real estate speculation in the *mahalla*, which was in one of the most luxurious areas of Tashkent, and my neighbors made it clear they did not want me living there.⁹ I was eventually forced to change my place of residence after my neighbors, the landlord and the *mahalla* officers accused me of being a spy, and of bringing foreign men to home.¹⁰

⁵ The first bribe I had to give was actually while registering at the hotel. In order to receive the necessary documents to register for five days I had to give a small amount of money to the hotel manager. Bribery is a normal part of daily affairs in Uzbekistan. In order to get processes going or fasten those bribes are instrumental and used in many institutions.

⁶ Summer cottage

⁷ On more than one occasion, the police came round and checked my passport, visa and registration. After looking at my documents they said that there were some problems, although I could not understand what they were exactly. I offered them some money to put them off. One day, when the police came, the owner of the property was at home. When she saw the policeman she began to scold him and sent him away. She told the policeman that she had given him enough money to alleviate the problem and asked him why he was still coming back. In addition, I learned that even if you stay at someone's home as a guest, you need to go to the local municipality (*rayon hokimiyati, raispalkom*) and make a registration.

⁸ *Mahalla* police who is appointed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

⁹ The *mahalla* was in one of the most developmental areas of Tashkent after independence. It contains most of the new hotels and residential areas, a new supermarket and a number of famous stores. I learned later from a neighbor that "there a local mafia gang works together with mahalla officers. Only this mafia group can decide who rents a house in this *mahalla*". This may only have been the opinion of the neighbor, but when I recalled my experience with mahalla security officers, it seemed believable.

¹⁰ At a *mahalla* meeting, one of my neighbors said: "Since this Uzbek girl came to our *mahalla*, we cannot know who enters our *mahalla*, as it is always different foreign guys that pick her up" (*anov bu Ozbek kizi her kuni*

After this initial experiment, I decided to stay with my Uzbek relatives, which was better both for my security and my research. I lived with my relatives for approximately seven months, which helped me to overcome the problem of gaining people's trust.¹¹ In addition, this allowed me to collect further information about the daily life of *mahalla* and local people and I could understand that this *mahalla* was really different from the *mahalla* structure that I read in the literature because it was not traditional *mahalla* as the old city or was not exactly an example of the residential unit established during the Soviet period. It was a hybrid between the old and new city, between the tradition and modernization. The social relations or interactions were traditional but its physical appearance was very modern. Then, I noticed that there was no such thing or a prototype *mahalla*, rather, there were different types of *mahallas* according to their some social, political, historical, and economic characteristics. When I realized that, I decided to move to two different types of *mahallas* during my research¹². Thus, I could have a chance to study in detail three different types of *mahallas* as a resident. Hereby, I could get the differences between *mahallas* such as *mahalla* of upper class and lower class, *mahalla* of old and new city, *mahalla* showing the effects of the Soviet era or not, *mahallas* or neighborhoods formed according to the occupational distribution, *mahallas* of different ethnic structures and so on.

The second problem was related to gaining entry to the *mahallas* and other institutions that were necessary for the research, as I was unable to obtain a permit from the local government (*hokimayattan ruhsat*) to enter Tashkent's *mahallas* until March 2009. This prevented me from accessing libraries, the State Archives, the *Mahalla Jamgarmasi*¹³ in city and districts *Hokimiyat* or the University of Beruni Faculty of Architecture, and I was unable to begin the in-depth-interviews and other data collections for almost two months. While waiting for the permit, I planned to work on existing material and the archives in the local library with a permit from *Fanlar Akademisi*,¹⁴ but after two months I realized that I was going to be unable to obtain a permit. The permit obtained from the Academy of Science was

bashka chetelliq adamlar bilan mahallege kiripkeladi. Biz anik bilmaymiz bu adamlar kim, bu kiz kim, bu kanaka Ozbek kizi, shunaka kop chetelliq adam bilan uchrashish boladimi, menimcha bu kizning spy bolishi mumkun).

¹¹ I never again faced the problems to which I was exposed in the previous *mahalla* thanks to my relatives. Nobody accused me of being spy or of acting immorally as an Uzbek girl. I got on well with my neighbors and the *mahalla* officers, who treated me like a daughter. Sometimes I stayed at another neighbor's home. Every weekend, we attended the GAP (traditional meeting) of *mahalla* women. I was able to interview many local people and *mahalla* officers, and could participate in many *mahalla* meetings, ceremonies, weddings, etc. One advantage was that some of my relatives worked in the *mahalla*.

¹² I stayed at two other residences, again with my relatives, in two *mahallas* for short periods. One was located in the old city, and was a good example of a traditional *mahalla*, where I for one week in every four months. The other was located in the center of the new city of Tashkent, which was established during the first years of Soviet period. In this modern *mahalla*, I stayed in the residence of my Turkish relatives, again for a week in every four months.

¹³ The department in local government dealing with *mahalla* affairs

¹⁴ The Uzbek Academy of Science

enough for some of the *oqsoqol* (*mahalla kengash* leaders) to meet with me, but only a few, and so for approximately eight months I tried to reach the *mahallas* through my Uzbek relatives, my Uzbek colleagues from different disciplines, and some *mahalla* managers that I had met previously. I could not obtain a permit from the Tashkent *Hokimiyat*, but I was given a permit by MIT (Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan) because I was a foreigner. The Tashkent *Hokimiyat* informed me only after I had obtained a permit from MIT that they could issue me a permit to enter the *mahallas* of Tashkent. After that point I was able to enter some *mahallas* to begin my field work, and so I extended my research for two months by renewing my visa. Thanks to the *Hokimiyat*, I was able to access important data about the networks among the *mahallas*, indicating the importance of clientalist/family relationships in gaining entry to the *mahallas*, and for some *mahallas* it was more important than any official permit (see table 1.2 on page 28).

The third problem I faced was in the *mahallas* themselves. One of the main goals of this dissertation was to propound the ways in which the *mahalla* organization as a socio-spatial unit was articulated into the state structure during both the Soviet era and the period following independence. To fulfill this purpose, the officers and residents of the *mahallas* were interviewed about the role of the *mahalla* in their daily lives and its functions in certain social policies, and about the differences between the Soviet and post-Soviet times. Today the *mahalla* organization and its functions are highly politicized after becoming a part of the local government, and so local people are reluctant to give any information about them. Accordingly, establishing trust was an essential part of the research, and so I decided to visit the interviewers twice or more, rather than only once. I slowly tried to gain the confidence of the respondents during the interview, leaving the most sensitive questions to the end. In addition, I made a point of always introducing myself and explaining my intentions, and the ways how I found them; this allowed me to develop more intimate relationships with the respondents, and consequently enhance the reliability of the data.¹⁵

In addition, my social position in terms of status, class, age, education and family, as well as my experiences, played a role in the shaping of the research. My age was to be a problem, as the local people I interviewed thought I was too young to be writing a dissertation,¹⁶ while

¹⁵ Also to gain my interviewers' trust, I avoided meeting them in their office during working hours, and tried to choose a more informal place and time such as cafe, restaurant or home in the evening or at the weekend, or during some special event such as a wedding, *navruz*, *Gap*, and etc.

¹⁶ Generally in Uzbekistan, dissertation research, as a process of obtaining the highest level of education, is historically and culturally associated with a more mature age. I was 28 years when I wrote my master thesis, and so many people were unwilling to show any respect for my work. Second, my age would again be problem related to my family status. In Uzbekistan, 28 is very late for a woman to still be unmarried, leading some women to not accepting me as an adult. However, my age also prevented me from being thought of as a young girl, and so they did not know how to treat me, as a girl or a woman? One of their favorite questions to me was, "In

two other aspects of my background proved to be beneficial: my education and my ethnic background. The political environment of Uzbekistan does not encourage people to talk openly about their political, social and economic issues, and local people are generally unwilling to talk with such scholars of Central Asia as political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists etc. Although I had graduated from the Department of Political Science, I learned to give my current faculty, that of Architecture, and my department of City planning when asked. Accordingly, the people I spoke with did not consider me to be a threat¹⁷. My ethnic background was extremely advantageous for me. Both my parents are Uzbeks, and so when I came across people who were reluctant to meet me or respond to my questions, I immediately told them the story of how and why my family had left Uzbekistan for Turkey. The *mahalla* officers consider themselves generally close to the *Basmachi* and *Cedit* movements, and so when I told them that my family had escaped from *Vadi* during the *Kulakpayti*¹⁸, they began to trust me and became more willing to talk. In addition, I have several relatives in Tashkent, and many times they were more helpful in gaining me access to the *mahallas* than my official permit, or even my colleagues who are experts in the *mahalla* issue.¹⁹ Finally, because of the level of my Uzbek, my request to use a tape recorder was another problem during the research. The interviewees (as is the case with many other

Turkey, what age is the proper age for a girl to get married?" Sometimes they told me that "*sen Uzbek kizisan, shunaka bomasa ham Turkiyaliksen, unda shunaka yashta turmushga chikish musulman kiz ichun farz, mayli bu yerge Yevropalik kop ayal tadjikatchi keliyapti, lokin ular Hudaga ishanmayapti, nu sen musulmansen, turmushga chikishin, oile kurushun kerek. Ayalnin birinchi vazifasi oilesidir.*" (You are an Uzbek girl, even if you don't feel you are Uzbek, but still, you are from Turkey. For you, getting married is a religious task because you are a Muslim girl. Well, many female researchers have come here to study Uzbekistani society but they do not believe in our God. However, you are a Muslim, aren't you? The first duty of a Muslim girl is to her family and her daughters and sons". Mostly, they scolded me about my marital status rather than answering my questions about their own families and affairs. However, my age and marital status proved to be advantageous when I was interviewing male respondents, as if I were a wife, they could not give me a lot of information. Because I was single, they accepted me as their daughter. An advantage of being female was that I was able to interview women; as if I were male I could not have spoken with women in the *mahalla* organization. In summary, being a single Turkish Muslim girl had both negative and positive effects on my research.

¹⁷ Despite this, when asked to compare the Soviet and Post-Soviet times, they were reluctant to talk. Some of the interviewees who felt close enough to me told me: "You should not ask questions about the Soviet era directly, do not use the word "Soviet", because our people hesitate to talk about the Soviet times and the Communist Party. Ask these kinds of questions using the phrase "before" and "after independence" or just emphasize the years, before and after 1991..."

¹⁸ From Fergana Valley during the exile period (dekulakization period)

¹⁹ However, when they accepted me as an Uzbek girl, they criticized my physical appearance, and my clothes – tight shirts, short skirts, jeans, shoes etc. – were both interesting and repulsive to some local people. Moreover, some women in the *mahalla* organization criticized me for plucking my eyebrows before getting married. When we spoke on subjects related to gender and family affairs, culture and Islam, they tended to ask more questions than I did, such as, "In Turkey, do women wear dresses? Why do women in Turkey dress like a man? Aren't you Muslim? Why do you pluck your eye brows before getting married?" - "*Turkiyada shunakami? ayaller kanaka koylak kiyadi, nima ichun sizning ayaller erkeknı okshap kiyinadi? Siz Musulman amasmisiniz? Nimaga erga tegmezden alding kashingizni teriyapsiz? Gunah amas mi?*" -

members of the Uzbek society) did not want to use a tape recorder because they could be used against them.²⁰

1.3.2 Preliminary Research

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 I went to Uzbekistan with my family to find our relatives. We had had no contact with them during the Soviet era, and everything had changed during this period. Many of our relatives in Uzbekistan and in Turkey who had known each other had died, surnames had been changed, both in Uzbekistan and in Turkey, and some had settled in different places after the *kulak payti*. We applied to many institutions and contacted many organizations and people in an attempt to obtain information about our relatives. Finally, we found our relatives through the *kengash* of *oqsoqols* in Namangan, one of the cities in Fergana Valley. The *Hokim* of Namangan said us that “*nobody can know your relatives except, maybe, oqsoqols*”. When I began my Ph.D., my aim was to write a dissertation about Uzbekistan. I remembered the story about my relatives, which demonstrates that the *mahalla* holds a more important role in Uzbekistan than in Turkey, after which I decided to write the dissertation on the role of the *mahalla* in Uzbek society.

I traveled to Uzbekistan twice (in the summers of 2005 and 2006) before my PhD proficiency exam in order to decide whether or not the Uzbekistani *mahalla* as an institution would be an interesting subject for study, and to understand whether or not I could write a dissertation on the subject. During these travels I improved my knowledge of the Uzbek and Russian languages and tried to gather some information about Tashkent and its *mahallas*. In the summer of 2006 I made my preliminary research into Tashkent’s *mahallas*, making an ethnographic study of the role of the *mahallas* as a component of local government during the transformation process. I interviewed *mahalla* officers in six *mahallas* that were suggested by my colleagues, and the collected data was analyzed in November 2006 and published as an article in a journal²¹, and included a descriptive analysis of the role of the *mahalla* in the transformation process of Uzbekistan. This research was important, in that it allowed me to understand the importance of the *mahalla* in the political and social structure of Uzbekistan. While a *mahalla* system exists also in Turkey, it is not as effective, and does not have as many functions as the Uzbekistani model. I went on to read some researches, dissertations and articles about Uzbekistani *mahallas* that had been written by European or

²⁰ In the first stage, I usually talked about myself to gain their trust (reflexivity); then I would say that my knowledge of the Uzbek language was not good, and so could I use a tape recorder. I told them they did not have to use their names, or the name of the *mahalla* in which they lived. After that, many of them let me use it, but some would ask for it to be turned off when talking about sensitive subjects: “*kızım bu narsani azgina ochirsang, senge bir narsa aytmakchiman...*”

²¹ Ayşe Kavuncu, “Özbekistan’da Geçiş Döneminde Sosyal Uyumun Sağlanması Önündeki Engeller”, (Obstacles for the Social Cohesion for Uzbekistan in Transition), *Global Strateji*, Winter 2007, 2: 8, pp 126-142

American scholars, but these was not enough to convince me that the *mahalla* was such an important institution in Uzbekistan. During my time in Tashkent, I realized that the *mahalla* organization in Uzbekistan completely different from that in the Turkish administrative system in terms of its function, its power and its role in the community. I then came up with a set of questions about the *mahalla* system in Uzbekistan that would serve as the foundation for my dissertation research.

During the summer of 2006 I identified the geographic locations, characteristics and histories of Tashkent's *mahallas*, and looked into the regulations related to *mahalla* organizations, and their role in the community in different locations of the city. Moreover, I had a chance to establish initial contacts with some of the officers of *mahallas* at local and national levels, the local administrative leaders and scholars from different disciplines who were interested in Uzbekistan's *mahallas* and their different features. Also, I arranged to contact my Uzbek relatives later for the actual research of this dissertation. All of these activities provided me with entry points into the local networks of the different *mahalla* organizations.

The preliminary research raised the following hypotheses:

- The *mahalla* organization should be seen as an intermediary institution between the state and community, responsible for negotiating the regulations of the state and exercising control over the local communities through national social policies.
- The *mahalla*, as a socio-spatial unit, represents different communities of Uzbekistani society, including people of different age groups, professions, social statuses, ethnic structures and classes.
- *Mahallas* are differentiated according to their socio-economic level, income distribution, occupation distribution, and education levels, old and new parts of the city, central or peripheral locations, and their traditional or modern characteristics.
- The power and representation mode of different *mahalla kengashes* is dependent on the characteristics of the *mahalla* community. Therefore, contrary to the arguments of some Uzbekistani and European scholars, the Uzbekistani *mahalla* is not static in terms of time and space. There is no such thing as a quintessential Uzbekistani *mahalla*. There are different types of Uzbek *mahalla*.
- Most differentiations between *mahalla kengashes* were shaped during the Soviet era.
- Both the *mahalla* as a political/administrative unit and the *mahalla* community as a socio-spatial unit have responded in different ways to the recent transition problems and *mahalla*-scaled state policies.

1.3.3 Classification of *Mahallas*

Originally, the main purpose of this dissertation was to discover the dynamics of how and why the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit in Uzbekistan had sustained itself until the present day. During each one of the two major social transformations (Soviet and independence), it was able to reproduce itself because of the style of self-articulation to the existing power structures, and the crucial functions it performed between the state and society. However, this sustainability and self-articulation create the dynamic structure of the *mahalla* because it also changed from time to time. Moreover, different *mahallas* changed in different ways; some re-organized radically during the Soviet period, while for others, change was rather slow, and some did not change at all. In addition, a number of new residential units were established during the Soviet period. The *mahalla* has a dynamic structure, and as such there are different types of *mahalla* in Uzbekistan today with significantly different social structures, spatial characteristics, levels of social interaction, and economic and educational qualities from each other. It is possible to argue that the presence of so many different types of *mahallas* is based on their differentiation in time and space. There are very different social structures in society that go through different processes to adapt to the new structures of the Uzbekistani state, and the different types of *mahallas* constitute one such group that affected the resilience of the people to the new environment that comes with social and political tension and economic instability. The classification of *mahallas* is not based on their cultural particularities, but on their different levels of self-articulation to the previous state power and their ability to change and adapt to the new state power and system. Thus, an analysis of the different types of *mahallas* is critical if one is to understand how the standard social policy of the state is practiced differently in a local setting, i.e. in the different types of *mahallas*. A broad range of statistical and historical data was obtained, from which it was possible to categorize the *mahallas* according to some important parameters that are analyzed in chapter four.

This dissertation analyzes different strategies and tactics of local actors/communities in different urban *mahalla* types against *mahalla*-scaled state policies, according to their capacity for conformity/dissent within the Soviet regime. The dissertation focuses specifically on the *mahallas* of Tashkent, the capital city of the Uzbekistani Republic, as the best city to demonstrate the shaping of different types of urban *mahallas* during the Soviet era, not only due to its status as the capital city of the Uzbekistani Soviet Socialist Republic, but also as the fourth biggest city in the former Soviet Union. The Soviet regime intervened

and transformed the spatial, social, cultural and economic structure of this city more than other central Asian city, and as a consequence, Tashkent now contains a larger range of different types of *mahalla* than any other Asian city.

How did I choose the *mahallas* to be studied? What approach and methods did I use? Identifying *mahallas* for study is difficult, as it is almost impossible to obtain official data and information due to Uzbekistan's particular institutional set up. For a long time I could not receive a permit from the *Hokimiyat*. At this point of the research, I was forced to use the ***trial and error method***. Of the 21 *mahallas* selected for study, only in some of them could I conduct a proper research, as in some I was turned away by the *mahalla* managers, while in others I could not obtain sufficient information. For this reason, this study is based on twelve of the 21 *mahallas* that I originally earmarked for study.

Snowball sampling was one of the methods used for contacting the interviewees. I initiated contacts mostly through following successive personal connections that started with my Uzbekistani colleagues and relatives. After reaching some *mahalla* officers, it became easier to contact other *mahalla kengashes* through the previous *oqsoqol*'s advice. Later, I obtained permission to contact *mahalla kengash* from the Tashkent city *Hokimiyat*, and through the snowball method I determined suitable *mahallas* for study according to certain parameters. Snowball sampling limits a researcher in obtaining maximum diversity in contacts and a broad representation of opinion; however the crucial importance of personal connections and trust-building in the *mahallas* necessitated this approach. The strategy turned out not to be less restrictive than expected, as the "snowball" grew quickly due to the level of interconnection in social relations among the residents and officers of different *mahallas*. The *mahallas* were chosen using the following approaches:

- According to suggestions of friends or relatives,
- According to experts' advice,
- Through connections with *mahallas* that I had previously studied,
- Through self-observation.

The preliminary research and the first two months in the field helped me to ***collect enough information, data, and resources*** on Tashkent and its *mahallas* to choose certain *mahallas* for the research. I read the necessary resources about the structure of *mahallas* and the city of Tashkent, talked to experts (officers in *Mahalla Jamgarma*, an architect, sociologist, political scientist, ethnologists and historians), and lived in three different *mahallas*, where I was able

to observe their particular qualities. I used different libraries to get information about the local administrative structure and local social policies in the Soviet and independence periods, the history of the city and urban planning in Tashkent²². I was able to access documents from the National Archive, newspapers such as *Маҳалла (Mahalla)*, *Халқ Сўзи (Halq Sozi)*, *Ўзбекистон Авози (O'zbekiston Avozi)*, *Правда Востока (Pravda Vostovka)* and *Вечерний Ташкент (Vachirniy Tashkent)*, and periodicals such as *Тафаккур (Tafakkur)*, *Жамият ва Бошқарув (Jamiyat va Bashkaruv)*, *Сағлом Авлод (Sag'lom Avlod)*, *Хўжалиқ ва Ҳуқуқ (Ho'jaliq va Huquq)*, *Адобиёт ва санъат (Adobiyot va Sa'not)*, *Ҳаёт ва Қанун (H'ayot va Qanun)*, *Мозийдан Сода (Moziydan Soda)*. These materials contained some statistical data about the socio-demographic indicators of Uzbekistan and Tashkent during both the Soviet and independent periods.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the limitations of the case study. The results of the thesis cannot be generalized for the whole country, since the case study was performed only in *mahallas* in Tashkent and as such does not reflect the situation in rural Uzbekistan. Moreover, the results are not generalized to other urban parts of Uzbekistan due to the inadequate statistical data. In addition, the *mahallas* of the research do not represent all of the *mahallas* in Tashkent, as two urban areas are excluded from the study. First, after independence, many rural areas around Tashkent that had been *kolkhoz* (collective farming areas) during the Soviet era were transformed into urban *mahallas* and became a part of the city. Although two of these *mahallas* were included in the research, they have been excluded from the study as they fall outside the scope of the study in that they were rural areas during the Soviet era, and thus unaffected by Soviet urban policy. Secondly, the newly developed residential areas for the new Uzbekistani elite that sprang up in Tashkent after independence are excluded from the study, being smaller than the general *mahalla* scale, and in some cases forming only a part of a *mahalla*.

1.3.4 Research Methods used in the Case Study

The study examined 12 *mahallas* in Tashkent, which are categorized into four types: A type (A-1, A-2, and A-3 *mahallas*); B type (B-1, B-2 *mahallas*); C type (C-1, C-2, C-3 *mahallas*); and D type (D-1, D-2, D-3, and D-4 *mahallas*). The areas were chosen based on their diversity and their long-standing socio-economic profiles and social identities, and are analyzed in detail in chapter four. After categorizing the *mahallas*, the field studies were conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods in the collection of main data,

²² Such as libraries of *Фундаменталний (Fundamentalniy, Torix (Torih), Миллий Университет (Milli Universitet), Архитектура (Architectura), Давлат ва Жамоат Қурулуш Академияси (Davlat va Jamoat Kurulush Akademiyasi), Навоий Давлат Қутубхонаси (Navoi Davlat Kutubh'onasi)*

which would be used to achieve the objectives and test the hypotheses of the dissertation. The methods used were important, in that they helped me to arrive at the answers and raise additional questions during the fieldwork. By applying several methods, the following activities were completed: (a) Collection of data about the legal status of the *mahalla* organization in local communities (b) Gathering of information about the *mahalla* officers' adherence to *mahalla's* functions during both the Soviet and independent periods. This involved the observation, participation and analysis of the practices of the *mahalla* officers (c) Studying the relationships between the *mahalla* organizations, the local community and the central government (city and districts *Hokimiyat*) and finally, (d) Examination of crucial social policy areas regarding the *mahalla's* role and how the *mahalla* organizations frame these areas within the body of local government.

Participant observation was one of the methods used to gather information during the study. I lived in two *mahallas* that were part of the case study: D-4 *mahalla*, where I lived for one month; and C-3 *mahalla*, where I stayed for seven months with an Uzbekistani family who are my relatives. By living with an Uzbekistani family in a *mahalla* I had the opportunity to interact with the *mahalla* community and observe systematically their daily life. This is an opportunity that is rarely afforded to foreign researchers in Uzbekistan. Through the application of the participant observation method I participated in and observed many *mahalla* meetings in which various problems were discussed, such as *shirkot* (a local private firm that offers communal infrastructural services) and social assistance, as well as many ceremonies, such as *navruz* and weddings. Moreover, I could observe the interactions among our neighbors and the officers of the *mahalla kengashes*. In summary, the participant observation method gave me the opportunity to understand everyday life and local culture, and to take part in meetings, family and community interactions and conflicts, as well as conflicts between the *mahalla kengash* and the residents.

Structured/Unstructured/Open-ended interviews was another method used in the collection of information for this study, and is the most popular method of collecting data in ethnographic researches. At the beginning of my research I prepared carefully structured questions to ask during the interviews; however the interviews ended up being shaped according to the answers of the interviewees. As a consequence, I revised and adapted my questions into a new form and a new order that took into consideration the responses of each individual interviewee, by which the interviews became open-ended, unstructured, and person-centered, which helped me to obtain deep insight into the everyday life of the *mahalla*, the problems faced by the *mahalla kengash*, the problems of the new system, and the comparisons of the Soviet era with the present. Additionally, the unstructured and open-

ended interview form allowed me to see the fundamental differences among the *mahallas* in terms of the problems experienced.

Overall, 87 people from 12 *mahallas* were interviewed, including *mahalla* officers, members of the *mahalla* community, scholars of history, politics and architecture, as well as officers working in the *Hokimiyat*. Some interviews were conducted in groups, especially with *mahalla* officers, couples, or mothers and daughters. Moreover, I occasionally arranged meetings (such as *GAP*²³) with my neighbors in the evenings, where I was able to use a tape recorder, which was extremely useful and meaningful for my research. In this way, a total of 62 interviews were conducted with a total of 89 individuals. The interviewees can be grouped as such:

- Experts from outside the *mahallas* who are interested in and/or occupied in *mahalla* affairs; members of the *mahalla jamgarma* in Tashkent; and academicians from the departments of architecture, history, engineering and political science (Total: 5 interviews with 5 experts).
- Members of *mahalla kengashes*. I interviewed the *oqsoqol* of all *mahallas*, except one, who was in hospital. In addition, I talked with all of the *oqsoqols* of D-4 *mahalla* since independence. As a total, 13 of the 29 members of the *mahalla kengash* are *oqsoqols*. I interviewed only one *uchaskavoy noziri*, the other 15 being *kotibs* (secretary of *mahalla kengash*), *maslahatchi* (religious and educational advisor), *posbons* (neighborhood guardian) and *jen-soviets* (an advisor who helps the women of the *mahalla*). As shown in Table 1.1, Total: 29 interviews with 13 *oqsoqols* and 16 other *mahalla kengash* officers.
- Workers and employers from *shirkots*. It was difficult to ask questions to the workers of *shirkots* because they generally refused to be interviewed (Total: 3 interviews with 3 *shirkot* workers and employers).
- Residents of *mahalla* communities: I conducted 36 interviews with 52 *mahalla* residents. I did not use any independent variables, such as occupation, education, ethnic identity, age, marital status or sex, while choosing these interviewees, but tried to select them at random in order to understand the differences in *mahalla* types in terms of their social structure, such as socio-economic level, educational and occupational variations, and ethnic structure. Where possible, I interviewed parents, meaning that the average age of the sample is concentrated around the middle ages.

²³ The traditional Uzbek meeting of women.

Interviews were conducted with some young people, which gave me an opportunity to identify the nature of the generational gap. Because I chose interviewees randomly, all non-Uzbek interviewees (Korean, Russian, Tatar, Armenian, and Kazakh, who constituted 14 of the total 52 interviewees) were in D-type *mahallas*. It is interesting to note that there were no non-Uzbek *mahalla* officers in my case study,²⁴ aside from one Tajik, who was an *uchaskavoy noziri*.

Table 1.1 Interviewees Scheme

<i>Mahallas</i>	Interviewees from <i>Mahalla Kengash</i>	Number of interviewees from residents	Subject of Survey
A1	<i>Oqsoqol</i> , <i>kotib</i> , <i>maslahatchi</i> and <i>jen-soviet</i> (4)	2	7
A2	<i>Oqsoqol</i> , <i>jen-soviet</i> (2)	2	7
A3	<i>Oqsoqol</i> (1)	7	9
Total A	7	11	23
B1	<i>Oqsoqol</i> , <i>Kotib</i> (2)	2	11
B2	<i>Oqsoqol</i> (1)	3	10
Total B	3	5	21
C1	<i>Uchaskavoy noziri</i> and <i>maslahatchi</i> (2)	3	18
C2	<i>Oqsoqol</i> , <i>maslahatchi</i> , <i>jen-soviet</i> and <i>posbon</i> (4)	3	4
C3	<i>Oqsoqol</i> and <i>posbon</i> (2)	7	10
Total C	8	13	32
D1	<i>Oqsoqol</i> (1)	9	19
D2	<i>Oqsoqol</i> , <i>kotib</i> , <i>maslahatchi</i> , <i>jen-soviet</i> and <i>posbon</i> (5)	8	10
D3	<i>Oqsoqol</i> and <i>jen-soviet</i> (2)	---	
D4	All three <i>oqsoqols</i> after independence (3)	6	10
Total D	11	23	39
Total	29 mahalla officers (13 oqsoqol and 16 other officers)	52 mahalla residents	115

*Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent: October 2008–April 2009

²⁴ I did not distinguish between the Uyghur and Uzbek populations.

Table 1.2 Permissions Granted by *Mahalla Kengash* to Conduct Interviews with Residents

Types of <i>mahalla</i>	<i>Mahallas</i>	Does MK ²⁵ allow to conduct with MC ²⁶	Why they did not allow
A	A1	No	“We will do the interview ourselves and give it to you later”
	A2	No	“I can bring some residents and you can do the interview in the <i>mahalla</i> building in one day”
	A3	Yes	--
B	B1	No	“Bring the official permission, it is only for <i>mahalla kengash</i> ”
	B2	Yes	---
C	C1	Yes	---
	C2	No	“Bring the official permission, it is only for <i>mahalla kengash</i> ”
	C3	Yes	---
D	D1	No	“Bring the official permission, it is only for <i>mahalla kengash</i> ”
	D2	Yes	---
	D3	No ²⁷	“Bring the official permission, it is only for <i>mahalla kengash</i> ”
	D4	Yes	---

*Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent: October 2008–April 2009

²⁵ *Mahalla kengash*

²⁶ *Mahalla community*

²⁷ Interviews were not conducted with residents of D-3 *mahallas* due to time limitations.

As shown in Table 1.1, I was able to interview more residents of D-type *mahallas* than A-types. It needs to be repeated here that convincing residents to be interviewed was quite difficult, and many people insisted in first learning about me, such as who I was, why I was doing this, and whether I had contacted the *oqsoqol* or not. Many of them refused to be interviewed unless an officer of the *mahalla kengash* was present. None of the *mahalla kengash* allowed me to conduct interviews with residents without legal permission. As shown in Table 1.2, especially the *mahalla kengashes* of A-type *mahallas* suggested I conduct the interviews with residents with a member of the *mahalla kengash* present. Moreover, in B- and C-type *mahallas* many residents asked me to show them the *oqsoqol*'s permission for the interview, while the residents of the D-type *mahallas* asked me for the legal permission of the *Hokimiyat*, which I had obtained, making interviews with residents of D-type *mahallas* easier than the others.

The interviews were recorded on a tape recorder, if the respondent allowed. Many of the respondents gave permission to record the interview, but then asked for it to be turned off when they made an important comment. The recorded interviews were transcribed into Uzbek and Russian. I also took notes during the interviewees and wrote diary.

A ***paper-based survey questionnaire*** was given to 115 residents of *mahalla* communities, selected using random methods. Approximately 10 residents tried to be chosen from each *mahalla* (see Table 1.1), and the questions were categorized into four groups: personal information, life in the *mahalla*, relationships with the *mahalla kengash*, and social assistance and *shirkots*. The data gathered during the interviews was used to determine the social structure of the different types of *mahalla* and to garner some personal information about the interviewees, as residents of *mahalla* community. The data was analyzed using the SPSS statistical program.

Statistical data collection was another method used in the case study. As mentioned in the previous section, a wealth of data was collected from documents in libraries, journals, newspapers and the State Archives, and much information and statistical data was collected from the *mahalla kengashes*. Each *mahalla* has to prepare a *mahalla passport*, which comprises the socio-demographic data of the residents, such as the number of families in the *mahalla*, the total population of the *mahalla*, ages, gender, educational status, occupation, number of unemployed residents, number of houses and apartments, number of residents who have the potential to participate in fundamentalist Islamic movements, number of low income families, number of companies in the *mahalla*, etc.

Literature regarding the Soviet urban planning process in Tashkent was collected from several libraries and the State Archives, and from the *mahalla torihi*²⁸ collected from the *mahalla* committees.

Additional material included information from certain websites, photos of the *mahallas* and *mahalla kengashes* taken during the case study, photos taken by other people, *mahalla* plans obtained from the *mahalla kengashes*, and scanned documents from libraries. An attempt was made to obtain district plans from the district *Hokimiyats* in Tashkent, but to no avail. This data collection process was another method used, known as **visual documentation**.

I had not planned to use a **life history approach** at the outset of the research; however its benefit became apparent during the interviews. I tried to obtain some basic personal information while conducting the interviews, but realized that it was better to ask for their life history at the beginning of the interviews. Another reason for using the life history approach was that many interviewees hesitated when asked to make a comparison between the present day and the Soviet era. When relating their life history, they naturally compared the two eras when talking about everyday life, and so I soon realized that it was not necessary ask these questions separately.

²⁸ Each *mahalla kengash* is required to prepare a history of the *mahalla* and send it to the *Hokimiyat*.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: CENTER-LOCAL RELATIONSHIP IN UZBEKISTAN

This thesis focuses on the dialectic relationship between the Uzbekistani regime and the different types of urban *mahalla kengashes*. To understand the *mahalla* politics of the Uzbekistani regime, firstly, the center-local relationship and urban politics should be examined historically, in that any regulation of the state over a local institution cannot be explained without first understanding the general local politics of the state. Thus, in this chapter this historical background will be summarized as an essential part of the analysis of the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the Uzbek *mahalla* and the state (both the Soviet and Uzbekistani states).

This historical background covers the main characteristics of the center-local relationship in each period in Uzbekistan's history: pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet. In the center-local relationship, a determination of both elements becomes crucial issue; however in the political environment and urban politics of Uzbekistan, the scales of center and local are shown change as a historically. During the pre-Soviet era, different Khanates were established in the region. Before the Tsarist regime occupied the region, the main actors in local politics were the *waqf* and *mahalla*. Thus, for this period, the structure of city politics of the region and the relationship between these city organizations and the khanates are summarized through an example of Tashkent. Despite of the establishment of several khanates in the region, local politics did not change, which raises the question of whether there was centralism in the urban politics of the region before the rise of the Tsarist Empire. With the arrival of the dominant Tsarist regime in the region, the balance of power between the central and local administrations, as well as the local politics underwent a period of change as a result of the land reform, which caused the abolishment of the *waqf* system in urban politics. The center-

local relationship during the colonial period can be summarized through the relationship between the *mahalla* organization, the local elite, and the institutions of the Tsarist regime, which caused drastic changes to the environment of local politics as well as the local economy in the cities of the region.

With the establishment of the Soviet Union, the actors in the center-local relationship in Central Asia were Moscow (the center of the Communist party) and the Autonomous Soviet Republics in the region, one of which was Soviet Socialist Uzbekistan. The Soviet era, which brought a sharp change the political, economic and social life of Uzbek society, was the most significant period in the shaping of local politics in Uzbekistan. Accordingly, this section will begin with an analysis of the October Revolution and the establishment process of the Uzbekistani SSR; after which, the Soviet history that shaped local politics in Uzbekistan is analyzed in three different periods: the civil war era; the *korenizatsiia* policy and the first years of the Uzbek SSR; and the decentralization policy of the Khrushchev era, including also the perestroika period²⁹, which was related to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In all of these periods the main characteristics of the center-local relationship during the Soviet era are visible. The hypothesis for the Soviet regime regarding the center-local relationship is that although the local governments (city Soviet) became more independent as a result of decentralization, the Soviet political system remained highly centralized, and the local governments had only limited authority in managing its finances, electing its leaders or enacting legislation (Frolic, 1970: 690).

The last period, the post-Soviet era, will be summarized through an analysis of the institutional structure of the Uzbekistani state and the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime, which will sufficient to reveal the main characteristics of the city government (*Hokimiyat*) and the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan. This section demonstrates to what degree the legal framework of local politics of the Uzbekistani regime became separated from the Soviet regime.

In summary, this chapter demonstrates that any regulation applied by the state to a local institution (*mahalla*) cannot be explained without the general politics of the state. The main point of this chapter is to show how the state formation in Uzbekistan has gradually become more centralist up until today. When analyzing historically the center-local relationship and local politics in Uzbekistan, the political and economic dynamics of the Soviet and the Uzbekistani regime, as well as their hegemonic projects to shape local politics and

²⁹ The perestroika period is summarized here only briefly, as it will be analyzed in more detail in the next chapter.

urbanization are also to be considered. In other words, the historical background is crucial in examination of the urbanization and local politics of Uzbekistan because the several states, with its strategies, politics, hegemonic projects, in the region have created its own local political formation and urbanization as well as socio-spatial relationship which have also influence the political formation, local politics, hegemonic projects, socio-spatial relationship, and urbanization of the next regime. Reviewing the history of local politics in Uzbekistan not only offers an understanding of the *mahalla* today, but also reveals that many of the intricacies of local politics in Uzbekistan today can be traced to the past, as many legacies of the local politics of the pre-Soviet and Soviet times have been carried over into the post-Soviet period.

2.1 The Pre-Soviet Era

The main characteristics of urban politics and the center-local relationship during the pre-Soviet era are summarized in two periods: before the Russian Conquest and the colonial period.

2.1.1 Before the Russian Conquest

Uzbekistan is at the heart of Central Asia, and has a long history. In pre-Islamic times, Central Asia was dominated by sedentary, or “*Sogdia*” communities, and the nomadic tribes. The cities of Central Asia had traditionally two borders: the inner boundary, demarcating the habitats of the sedentary communities; and the outer boundary of the nomadic tribes. Central Asia lay at the crossroads of many great civilizations and witnessed the movement of goods and ideas between the Middle East and China along the route known as the Silk Road (Carlisle, 2001: 48; Markowitz, 1998: 9). Accordingly, the cities of Central Asia benefited from the great economic opportunities availed by their location on the Silk Road.

Islam was initially introduced into Central Asia during the Arab conquest of the early eighth century; however pre-Islamic influences remain as important aspects of popular religious beliefs and practices in Central Asia. The Mongol Empire seized much of Central Asia in the thirteenth century and the large urban areas of Central Asia were ruined by Genghis Khan, and today the ethnic structure of the region is mainly inherited from that period. As Pashkun states, “*the Mongol invasion affected the region’s political tradition, introducing a new pattern of kinship, patronage and tribal structures of social relations. These peculiarities of the region, to some degree, have survived until today.*” (Pashkun, 2003: 5)

In the period marked by the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, several states with definite territorial borders began to be formed, each of which had their own unique administrative system, such as the Seljuk Empire, and the Karakhanid and Samanid States. The first sovereign state model was established by the Amir Timur, who succeeded in assembling all of the communities of Central Asia; however his death caused the dismemberment of Central Asia as his sons and grandsons struggled to take control. *“In the 1500s, the nomadic tribes from the north side of the country under the leadership of Shaybani Khan conquered Amir Timur’s throne. Shaybani Khan seized Samarkand, Bukhara, Ferghana, and Tashkent.”* (Ah’medov, 1995: 60) After the Shaybani Khan period, the three Khanates of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand established their boundaries, and their borders would remain mostly unchanged until the arrival of the Russians in Central Asia in the 19th century (Pashkun, 2003: 6).

Like other Central Asian cities, Tashkent was a city that bore Islamic characteristics in the pre-colonial period³⁰. Life was dominated by Islamic law (*Sharia*) and tradition, and the heart of the city was the mosque and the bazaar. Although the city was dependent on the rural economy, its economic activity was mostly based on local craftsmanship and the craft guild system. The *waqf*, as the owner of many urban public goods, was the most important institution in the provision of urban public services. The basic living area was the *mahalla*, containing houses that were designed in for privacy. Islamic cities generally had an organic structure, with small, narrow and uneven roads providing connections between *mahallas* and *dakha*; and an irrigation system based on *arks* (small canals), which were not properly designed (Geiss, 2001: 97).

The *mahalla*, the primary administrative body of the residents, was led by an “*oqsoqol*,”³¹ who was elected by the *mahalla* community and answered to the *binboshi* (*dakha* leader). Some historians claim that the *oqsoqol* had to get the approval of the *binboshi* for all matters (Fahrudinovna, 2003: 19). Although his election by the *mahalla* community had to be confirmed by the higher administrative body, he was a man of the local community, and represented the *mahalla*. The “*oqsoqol*”, who had extensive experience, was usually chosen from among the elite families of the *mahalla*. The controller of the irrigation system was the

³⁰ In the past, historical studies on Central Asian cities were generally undertaken by Soviet scientists, as researchers from other places had difficulty in getting into the area and accessing the resources. Soviet scientists referred to the period from the sixth century to the October Revolution of 1917 as a feudal or pre-industrial period, and described Central Asian cities in that period as “medieval” or “feudal”. They rarely used the label “Islamic” or “Muslim” for Central Asian cities during that time. For example, according to Komatsu (1994, 281), “Exceptional in a Soviet scholar, Bolshakov states that it is possible to discuss a Central Asian city after the ninth century as a “Muslim city” that is, “a city living in accordance with the norms of Islamic law”.”

³¹ Ziyayev (2007) and Arifhanova (2002) use the term *yuzboshi*, while Bartold and Sukhareva use the term *oqsoqol*.

mirob in each *mahalla*, known as the *kazy* in the *dakha* (Stronski, 2003: 70), and generally held the same status as the *oqsoqol* (Azadayev, 1959: 46). One of the main positions in the *mahalla* was the “*kayvoni*,” who was elected by the women in the *mahalla*, usually from the same elite family as the *oqsoqol*, and was somebody who knew “the Uzbek tradition well” (Fahrudinovna, 2003: 22) and was responsible for making women of the *mahalla* conscious of “*Uzbekistani traditions*”. The “*korbashi*” was responsible for solving the residents’ economic problems according to the rules of *Sharia law*, and set the price of every product sold in the *mahalla* bazaar. The *korbashi* was expected to preserve the traditional rules and *Sharia law* in the *mahalla*, and maintain the physical environment of the *mahalla* (Ismoilova, 2004: 57). The “*mullah*” was the religious leader of the *mahalla* who led such family ceremonies as circumcisions, marriages, funerals and memorial days. The *mullah* had the right to punish law-breakers, even physically (Geiss, 2001: 102).

“*Residential ties were also quite strong, since the neighborhood quarter was a collective unit of taxation. It was the oqsoqol who was responsible for timely tax collection*”. (Geiss, 2001: 105) As a main local tax, “*hashar*” was collected by the *oqsoqol* from residents who did not give their labor and time to participate in collective activities. Thus, the wealthy residents, who were generally reluctant to make such contribution, paid money to the *mahalla* administration in the form of “*hashar*”. The *oqsoqol* was generally the main citizen paying *hashar* to the *mahalla*, generally being the most accredited and the wealthiest person in the *mahalla*. In case of internal or external disputes, he was contacted to settle conflicts peacefully (Geiss, 2001: 103). In the city court, he acted as an advocate, defending his *mahalla* and its residents. The control and arrangement of the *arks* (water canals), the distribution of agricultural land to residents, and the resolving of local problems were among his duties.

Because the cities in Central Asia dominated the surrounding agricultural lands, the elite land-owners tended to live in the center of the city, and were thus able to take control of the economic life of the city as well. As a result, “*the craft industry played little part in the economic balance of society*” (Komatsu, 1994: 87). Many land-owners became merchants and artisans, redistributing the surplus agricultural products and handicrafts. In other words, the most powerful social class in both the city and surrounding countryside was the same, referred to as *oqsuyak* in Central Asia. According to Komatsu, “*Under such circumstances, the emergence of a commercial bourgeoisie was hindered and so there was no progressive evolution to threaten the feudalistic production system*” (Komatsu, 1994: 87). Mukminova, in her book “Tashkent before the four centuries”, claims that in Tashkent, although the power to govern the city belonged to the *hokim*, *ra'is* (*oqsoqol*) and *binboshi*, they had to be

well connected with the land-owners to preserve their power in urban politics, in that the land-owners owned most of the agricultural area and craft shops through their families or public *waqfs* (Mukminova, 1984: 23). Industrial activity in Tashkent was weak before the Russian conquest, as most goods were produced by the artisans. According to Mukminova, in the sixteenth century, half of the craftsmen rented their work places from the *waqfs*; a quarter of them owned their own workshops, and the last quarter were temporary workers of the *waqfs* (Mukminova, 1984: 33). This indicates that the *waqfs*, as well as being the main provider of collective urban services, were also related with the development of industry in the city. In other words, the role of the *waqfs* extended far beyond the mere provision of urban public services. As will be explained below, the *waqfs* had a central function in preserving the general socio-spatial and political structure of Tashkent during the long period before the Tsarist Russian invasion.

Scientists have generally claimed that the social, economic and political structures of cities in Central Asia changed very little, despite the influences of many different dynasties and civilizations, such as Seljuk, Karakhanid, Samanid, Timur, Shaybani, Kokand, Bukhara and Khiva Khanates, that came to the region during the medieval period (Komatsu, 1994; McChensey 1991; Mukminova, 1984, Arifhanova, 2004). That is not to say that there was no change in the cities, but their main features were retained for a long time. Urban politics before the Tsarist Russian period are at the root of the *mahalla* structure, raising the question of why the mode of production, social life and the political structure of the cities in Central Asia did not alter during this long period, in spite of the establishment of different states at a macro or central level?

“Many historians have imagined the Muslim world as governed by empires whose great bureaucracies snuffed out the independence of the towns” (Lapidus, 1967). Contrary to Western cities, these cities had no autonomy in medieval times, with the central state always being dominant in the local area. According to Şengül (2001: 66), studies of Ottoman cities contain similar arguments about the centralist structure of the Ottoman Empire, although such an argument is quite suspect, since the central state had to always bargain with local leaders, who on the whole were not ordinary officers of the state, in order to ensure their dominant role. It is therefore more appropriate to describe the Ottoman cities as semi-autonomous. This is also true for the Central Asian societies and cities. According to Sievers, a generation of Western scholars deduced that medieval Central Asian societies were governed by several despotic states (2002:113); however, as seen in the Tashkent case, the structure of the city did not change for a long time, despite the dominance of several states in the region over time. Was this because the city had always been dominated and controlled by

a despotic state, and thus saw no significant changes from one despotic state to another? Despite the existence of different despotic states in Central Asia, what prevented cities from making an apparent change? This issue is important for the *mahalla*, as one of the urban residential areas. There are two factors that hindered a crucial change from occurring in the structure of Central Asian cities: first, the role of central and local government in urban politics; and the second, the *waqf*, as a main institution of the Islamic city, and its leader, the *oqsuyak*.

A despotic state is one in which the state owns all of the resources in the society and is the sole actor responsible for distributing these resources (Sievers, 2002:113). This raises the initial question of whether in the medieval period the state was the sole actor in urban politics in Central Asia? However, we should discuss the existence of the state before discussing whether it is despotic or not. According to the Marxist point of view, in the pre-industrial period of Asia, although state officials appeared as executive organs of the highest authority, the local communities maintained a certain degree of autonomy from the central state as long as they paid the tribute and were articulated to the Asiatic social order through the rule of local elite and religious leaders. Moreover, according to McChensey, who studied *waqf* in the Islamic city, Balkh, being the states in Central Asia before the Russian Empire, were always weak compared with those in other Muslim regions, such as Iran and the Ottoman Empire (1991: 52); and therefore the central authority had little direct power in urban politics in Central Asia.

In contrast, the urban administration was totally in the hands of local bureaucrats, like *ra'is*, and the system of tax collection was decentralized. Most of the time, the local leader was the tax collector in the city, such as the *hokim*, *binboshi* or sometimes *yuzboshi*. Generally, the local taxes were kept by the local government to be spent on providing local services, such as building roads or cleaning the water supply:

Instead of a unitary hierarchically organized system of revenue collection and appropriation, the Uzbek system favored pluralism and localism. Responsibility for local security tax collection devolved on local authorities, usually headquartered in a city or town. (McChensey, 1991: 59)

The second factor preventing the cities from making any structural change was the *waqf* system. Looking at the local public services, it is almost impossible to see any of them being provided by the central state. The main actor in the provision of urban public services was the “*waqf*,” being the Islamic institution of charitable endowments. As a communal organization it operated independent of the state, having been founded by the elite members of the community, and provided the bulk of social services, such as education, health and

basic urban infrastructure. Moreover, as the owner of most of the urban land, the *waqfs* were authorized to distribute it among the urban dwellers. For example, in Samarqand some mosques were built by *waqfs*. Accordingly, in terms of real estate, the dominant actors were the *waqfs* rather than the central or local government. As we will see in the following chapter, the Russian Empire chose to destroy the *waqf* system in order to curtail the power of local elite aristocracies in society and underpin an administrative system with a powerful center. According to McChesney:

It is the single most important institution for the provision of community social services in Islamdom. Whether supporting education; financing public buildings and facilities; providing welfare for the poor, the indigent, and travelers; feeding birds and stray cats and dogs; or supplying communal tools and utensils, waqf has been thoroughly woven into the fabric of daily life and its ubiquitousness established by the breadth and depth of the historical record... (McChesney, 1991: 3)

The leader of the *waqfs* in Central Asia generally came from *oqsuyak*³² families, however there were two distinct forms of the *waqf* –public and family³³ (McChesney, 1991: 9). According to Mukminova, the *sayyit* families were important in both urban society and urban politics. She claims that while the *hokim* handled all the power in urban politics, the *waqf* and *sayyits*, as leaders of the *waqfs*, controlled all of the economic resources in the city and the surrounding agricultural areas. Most of the *waqfs* in Tashkent were private; and most of the craftsmen rented their workshops from these private *waqfs*. Mukminova gives the example of Khoja Ahrar's private *waqf*, which owned almost all of the mosques and *madrasas*, as well as the land, in *Chirchiq* (a village in the Tashkent province) and Tashkent. The charities for mosques and *madrasas* were given to this *waqf*, and she claims that *Khoja Ahrar* donated a part of the collected charities to his sons (Mukminova, 1984: 37).

In conclusion, it can be said that before the Russian conquest the interaction between the state and city was quite limited. The presence of the state was a phenomenon that was not directly observed, but always felt by the *mahalla* residents in urban areas. Although the *ra'is*, *khokim*, *binboshi* and *oqsoqol* were government bureaucrats, they needed the support of the local leaders to sustain their power. These local leaders, *oqsuyak*, in fact, in this way were the main actors in urban politics for a long time in Central Asia, which is why the city

³² *Sayyits*, who are descendants of Mukhammad; *Hkoja*, who are descendants of Arabian elite families; and *Tore*, who are descendants of Genghis Khan had important roles in the dissemination of Islam into Central Asia (Kamilov, 2003, 39).

³³ "For the historian of Muslim society, the two forms were usually of a different scale and often had dramatically different social and economic consequences. The public *waqf* typically had as their first purpose the support of a public institution –such as a fountain, a mosque, a hostel, a cemetery, a hospital, or a school – while the private *waqfs* were established to aid to the founder's kin and descendants. In many cases, such as the *Ahrarid waqfs* of Samarqand and Tashkent, the foundation served both purposes simultaneously by both benefiting family members and supporting a public institution. Such *waqfs* deeds might specify that family members would receive a certain percentage of the income, either as foundation officials or as direct beneficiaries, while the remainder would be used to maintain a public institution." (McChesney, 1991: 9)

structure in Central Asia had existed so long without any radical changes, in spite of the establishment of several despotic states. The local leaders established their power in the city and the agricultural areas surrounding the city through their families and through the public *waqfs*; and the local bureaucrats generally represented these leaders rather than the state or the local community.

2.1.2 Colonial Period

By the nineteenth century, the Russian colonial period had begun for the Central Asian societies. At the beginning of 1700s the Russian army began to attack Central Asia after seizing completely the Kazakh Steppe. Tsarist Russia eradicated all of the Uzbek khanates (Khiva, Bukhara and Khokand) in the eighteenth century and controlled Central Asia up until the October revolution (Wheeler, 1964: 65; Carlinse, 2001: 67; Khalid, 1998). Before Peter the Great invaded south and east Turkestan in the 1700s, the commercial alliance between Russia and Turkestan had been continuing for centuries. Because the Russian serfdom system hindered the industrial development in Russia, Central Asia emerged as a good economic opportunity for Russia to compete with European markets. In addition, Central Asia was a buffer for Russia against the British Empire, who had the control of India. As a result of the American Civil War, U.S. cotton purchases were blocked, and the amount of cotton exported from Central Asia increased five-fold in the 1800s. Had Tsarist Russia dominated Central Asia, there would have been no cotton problem (Khalid, 1998: 48). As a conclusion, Central Asia was practically a part of Tsarist Russia until 1917, and its boundaries remained unchanged until 1924.

After taking control of all of the Kazakh Steppe and Central Asia in the nineteenth century, the Russian administration divided the area between the *Gubernia* (Russian Province) of the Steppe and the *Gubernia* of Turkestan. After the Soviet Revolution, in 1924, the former became Soviet Kazakhstan and the latter became four different Soviet republics: Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (Alexander, 2007: 14). On November 7, 1867, Kaufman was appointed as the first *gubernator* (governor) of Turkestan, and given full military, political and financial authority to bind the lands to Russia. Conquered in 1865, Tashkent was made the center of the *Gubernia* of Turkestan due to its strategic position within Central Asia. “*Kaufman turned Tashkent into a capital city which would reflect the power of Russia and the values of its European civilization.*” (MacKenzie, 1974: 212).

Morrison, who made a comparison of Russian and British colonialism in central Asia and India, argued that Russia wielded a different type of colonial power to that employed by the British Empire in India and Egypt. Morrison claimed that the relationship between the

Russians and the Turks was different to the relationship between the French and the Arabs, and the Britons and the Indians. Morrison (2006: 667) claimed: “*unlike the western European empires, Tsarist Russia was ruled by as multi-racial elite comprised of the Russians, Ukrainians, white Russians, Baltic Germans, Georgians, Armenians, Tatars, and, the elite class of Central Asia such as the Khan of Kiva and the Emir of Bukhara,*” suggesting that Russian colonialism was based on an elite class distinction rather than the ethnic discrimination in British colonialism. Second, Great Britain’s colonialism mostly depended on the economic exploitation of India and Egypt, whereas the colonialism of Russia was predominantly based on military control.

After the annexation of Central Asia, two forms of administration existed in Tashkent. The Tsarist regime did not intervene in internal matters in the *mahallas* and their local government structures (Tokhtakhodzhaeva, 2007: 102); while local Russian committees were formed with the aim of strengthening the Russian section of the city. In 1865, the Tsarist regime formed the *dasht* commission, whose duties can be classified as follows (Ismoilova, 2004: 14): (a) to grasp the social, political, cultural, economic life of Central Asia; (b) to gather necessary information for governing Central Asia; (c) to govern the military and administrative affairs of Central Asia from a single center; (d) not to interfere with the internal administrative functions of the local communities; and (e) to block the functions of the *mahallas* that threatened the establishment of Russian power in Central Asia.

The commission’s first act was to establish the General-Gubernator of Turkestan in 1867, by which Central Asia would be governed under a single military and administrative authority. The Asian side of Tashkent, which consisted of four *dakhas* (districts: *Shayhantohur*, *Bashagach*, *Sebzor* and *Ko’kcha*), was kept within the old local administrative system, meaning that the *mahalla* system and its *oqsokol*, *kozi*, and *mirobad* were allowed to continue. However, this traditional system began to change due to the new rules set up by the Russian administration. These changes can be interpreted as the reactions of local people to the newly established Russian rule.

Firstly, the *oqsokol*, who was elected by the *mahalla* community, had to be approved by the *shahor hokimi* (mayor) (Kravets, 1983: 4). In addition, the mayor of old Tashkent, who was an *oqsokol*, was appointed by the Gubernator of Turkestan during the colonial period instead of being elected by the other *oqsokols*, as had been the case in the medieval period. After the rebellion of the local community against the policies of the Russian administration related to the cholera epidemic in Tashkent, the chair of *oqsokols* was abolished by the gubernator of

Turkestan in 1892, and his responsibilities were delegated to the Russian *politseimeister* (Abramson, 1998: 69). Secondly, most of the functions, authorities and resources related to urban policy processes were transferred from the *mahallas* and other local traditional institutions to the central Russian administration. For example, the *oqsoqols* and *kozi* were forbidden to interfere in family issues (Kravets, 1983: 7), and the irrigation and tax system began to be controlled by the *duma*, responsibility having been taken from the *oqsoqols* (Arifhanova, 2002: 26). In conclusion, these changes reduced the *mahalla's* local autonomy, and while the Mullahs and *oqsoqols* still continued to govern in the old city, they were tied to the *duma* and the city *hokim* (mayor) rather than to the chair of *oqsoqols*.

The plan of 1867 brought a new administrative branch to the new side of Tashkent. The administration of the new city was responsible for making and implementing the urban plan, organizing the new land tax and irrigation systems, and allocating a residential area for the Russian community. All administrative decisions of the new city needed to be approved by the city *duma*, who also appointed members of the local commission for a three-year term. Unlike the administrators of the old city, whose salaries were covered by income generated from the local community, the salaries of these local commission members were met from the city budget (Ismoilova, 2004: 18).

According to central Tsarist administration rules, if a city's population reached 100,000 (Brower, 1990: 96), it was necessary to establish a local *duma* (council). Therefore, in 1870 the General *Gubernator* of Turkestan demanded the establishment of the Tashkent *duma*, which came to power in 1877. Of the 72 members of the *duma*, two-thirds (48 members) represented the Russian side and the remaining third (24 members) represented the local community of Tashkent (Ismoilova, 2004: 21). However, this proportion did not allow a fair representation of the local community, and moreover, all of the *duma* members were from the dominant classes of colonial Tashkent, such as the local artisans from the old *mahallas*, and from both the Russian and local upper classes and merchants (Kravets, 1983: 4; MacKenzie, 1967). The city *duma* was the legislative branch, while the *hokim* (mayor) and *shahor mahkamasi* (city council) was the executive branch. In 1877, Palkovnik Pukalovni became the first *hokim* of Tashkent, after being appointed by the General *Gubernator* of Turkestan. The *shahor mahkamasi* had four Russian and two local members, all of which were appointed by the city *duma*. The city *duma* made the laws and decided upon urban policies for Tashkent, while the *shahor mahkamasi*, under the leadership of the *hokim*, executed them (Ismoilova, 2004: 21). The *hokim* was the chair of both the city *duma* and the *shahor mahkamasi*. According to the first urban law of Tashkent, dating to 1877, all decisions of the local administrations in both old and new Tashkent had to be approved by the city *duma*,

which had the authority to decide upon all urban policies, while the General *Gubernator* controlled all of the activities carried out by the city *duma* (Kravets, 1983: 8). These comprised: (a) choosing the members of the *shahor mahkamasi* and determining their salaries; (b) approving the local budget; (c) deciding on the amount of the local budget revenue and local taxes, and how to collect them; (d) determining the local budget expenditures; and (e) putting the *shahor mahkamasi* under administrative tutelage.

The last crucial change concerning local politics in Central Asia after it was conquered by the Tsarist Empire was related with the land reforms. Before Russia conquered Turkestan, the leaders (the *oqsuyaks* or *shaykh*) of private and public *waqfs* were the notables who owned most of the farmland and workshops. The Russian administration expropriated the land through two radical reforms, first in 1873 and then in 1886, to house the Russian population, and this had a great effect on the position of Turkestan's aristocracy in local politics, as well as in the daily life of the local population (Malik, 1994: 30; Mukminova, 1984; Arifhanova, 2002: 21). The 1873 and 1886 land reforms gave the Tsarist administration the right to collect taxes from the expropriated land in a centralized way (Wheeler, 1964: 72), however the local people still paid most of the collected taxes as the Russian migrants who had settled in most of the expropriated agricultural areas were exempt (Sahadeo, 2007: 54).

These land reforms had a negative effect on urban social policies in the Asian section of the city, and the local population faced poverty, unemployment and health problems. Urban social services were provided to the Russian part of Tashkent by the Russian *Gubernator*, however as the notables and the leaders of the *waqfs* (*Sheikh*) had lost their power, a lot of urban social policies in the old city, which were under the responsibility of the *Sheikhs* (*oqsuyaks*), were not able to be implemented (Azadayev, 1959). The revenue of the general budget increased from 10,000 rubles to 28,000 rubles between 1870 and 1876, 82 percent of which was used for the construction of the new Tashkent, and the rest for designing the landscape of the new city and for paying the salaries of the Russian administrators, not those of the local administrators (Ismoilova, 2004: 19). This means that the entire budget was spent on the European side of Tashkent in the colonial Tsarist regime era.

As a result, during the Tsarist regime, urban politics and local government in central Asia took on a centralist character under the strong hierarchical tutorship of the *Gubernator* of Turkestan. However, the problem was that the Russian leaders in the new Tashkent did not have the tacit knowledge necessary for governing the cities in Central Asia, and so despite centralization, the Russian leaders always had to bargain with the local leaders.

2.1.3 The Change in Position of the *Oqsoqol*, from *Hurmatli* (Respectable) to Mediator: The Case of the Cholera Riot

In 1892, the policies of the Tsarist regime resulted in a cholera epidemic that provoked the first rebellion of the local people in Tashkent. The commission responsible for the construction of the new section of Tashkent changed the water system, which created a water shortage in the old part of Tashkent. Moreover, the local people who had lost their collective farms due to the settlement policies of the Russian *Gubernator* began to learn from their Russian neighbors how to yield crops from private gardens, which required more water. Accordingly, Tashkent faced a serious water shortage problem, especially in the summer, which paved the way for a cholera epidemic that took many lives. The epidemic spread so fast and caused so many deaths that the local administration had to bury the corpses without washing them, which was in sharp contrast to local tradition.

Another problem during the Tsarist period in Tashkent was that the local artisans were unable to compete with the pace of the industrialization process in the city and the goods coming from Russia. The *waqfs* and *mahalla* organizations, which had lost most of their revenue under the land and tax policies of the Russian *gubernator*, could not implement most of the urban social policies in old Tashkent, while the city *duma* implemented social policies only in the European side of the city. As a result of the cholera epidemic, the poor economic conditions and the deficient social policies, in 1892, the local people in Tashkent's *mahallas* rebelled against the Tsarist regime.

The rebels blamed Muhammod Yoqub, who had been appointed by the General *Gubernator* of Turkestan as the head of the *oqsoqols*, for his ineffectiveness in preventing the cholera epidemic, and demanded that the previous *oqsoqol*, *Inagam Hoca*, be brought back to power. The local people gathered in the main mosque of the *Sebzor dakha* (district) after the Friday prayers to protest against Yoqub and the Russian colonial administration, and the rebellion spread to the *Shayhantohur dakha*. To stop the rebellion, *Putintsiyev*, who was the *shahor hokimi* (mayor), came and spoke to the rebels to try and calm them down, however one day later the rebels went to the house of Yoqub with the intention of killing him but headed to the city *duma* after finding him not at home. When a struggle broke out between the Russian soldiers and the local rebels, the rebels escaped to the old *mahallas*, but not before many local people were killed by the soldiers. Although the reason for the rebellion was the local people's demand for the previous head of *oqsoqols* to retake charge, the *gubernator* of the Sri-Darya region told in a letter to the general gubernator of Turkestan that the people were

actually voicing their opposition to the heavy and inequitable tax system and the unjust distribution of Tashkent's land. After the rebellion, most of the Russian administrators of Tashkent, including *Putintsiyev*, were fired by the general gubernator of Turkestan. Meanwhile, all of the *oqsoqols* were changed, and after the Cholera epidemic the general gubernator of Turkestan closed down the *oqsoqol* institution and replaced it with a new Russian administrative body, the *Politsiya Pristavi*, whose main responsibility was to provide security to the old section of Tashkent. All the officers in the *Politsiya Pristavi* were Russian (Kravets, 1983: 15).

Some social scientists, especially the Soviet ones, interpreted the uprising as a revolt of the proletariat, while others saw it as an Uzbek uprising against Russian imperialism. Regardless of which interpretation is more accurate, it is clear that after the uprising, the *oqsoqol* lost any remaining ability to represent the local people against Russian colonialism. Henceforth, the *oqsoqol*, who had once been the most *hurmatli* (respected) person in the *mahalla*, had only a minor role as a mediator between the local people and the Russian administration.

2.2 The Soviet Regime in Uzbekistan

“Our partners! Do not worry! The Soviet will always ensure your autonomy. We congratulate you on your decision to participate in the Soviet Union! We are sure that you will establish the Soviet power throughout Central Asia through cooperation with Moscow!” V. Lenin³⁴

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) was born out of the 1917 Revolution under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, and ended in 1991, and was one of the largest countries in the world, with a population of 293,047,571 people and a territory of 22,403,000 km². On October 27, 1917 the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets staged a coup and announced that the Council of the People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*), in the name of the laborers, soldiers and peasants, were taking over the leadership of the country, and that all government authorities were delegated to the Council headed by Lenin. In 1918, the Bolsheviks killed Tsar Nikolai II and his family and began to seize the land that Russia had lost during the World War I. The Bolsheviks were successful in capturing the south but not the north, and therefore by 1920 they had to recognize the independence of Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Finland. When the civil war ended in 1922, the Bolshevik Party established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic in Ukraine, Belarus, the Transcaucasia Federation and the Russian Socialist Federative Republic. Uzbekistan and

³⁴ Part of Lenin's telegraph, which is included in the book of Lenin "About Central Asia and Kazakhstan" in 1918 (Sodikov, Inkilap Lavhalari, Gulistan, 1979, p. 21)

Turkmenistan Soviet Socialist Republics joined the Union in 1925, followed by Tajikistan in 1929, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in 1936, and Latvia, Estonian, Lithuania and Moldova in 1940.

During the Soviet period, four constitutions were drawn up by the Communist Party (Dal, 1975: 38). In 1918, the Fifth Russian Congress of Soviets accepted the first constitution of the USSR, prepared by Lenin and Sverdlov (chairman of Russian Central Executive Committee). This constitution, adopted the federal system, gave the proletariat the right to vote, regardless of nationality, race, gender, education level or religious belief. This was the first example of a socialist constitution.

The second constitution, adopted in 1924 after the civil war, was an expanded version of the 1918 constitution. In order to solve the problem of poor economic conditions that had resulted from the civil war, Lenin created the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921, which was adopted by the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) at its 10th Congress. The most significant change brought by the NEP was the nationalization of all property in the country, such as banks, trading companies, wheat stores, workplaces etc. When the civil war ended in Soviet Russia, an administrative system began to take shape, and the Russian Soviet Congress was declared as the highest authority in the state. The Central Executive Committee was made responsible for coordinating all the state institutions, and the People's Commissars Council became both the legislative and executive branch of the state.

The third constitution of Soviet Union was adopted in 1936 and remained valid until 1977, a clear indication that the socialist system had been firmly established throughout the Soviet Union. Private ownership and production was completely abolished, as well as the class distinction in society. According to this constitution, the Communist Party was accepted as the sole political party in the USSR. The name of the Central Executive Committee was changed to the Supreme Soviet of USSR, and its chairman became the president of the Supreme Soviet *Prezidium*.

After the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks fought with the native groups in central Asia until 1926. After the end of the civil war, the enactment of the NEP policy brought about rapid economic development in all regions of the Soviet Union until the outbreak of World War II. This period was dominated by the central economic planning and centralist administrative structure of the regime. At the end of World War II, the Soviet political regime, by adopting the decentralization policy, began step-by-step to give autonomy to various communities and nations of the Soviet society. As a result, by 1991 the Soviet autonomous state structures in the countries of Central Asia became independent states,

while retaining their old Soviet boundaries. The political regime of the USSR, and especially the Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic, underwent five phases of transformation: (a) The Civil War Period and the Establishment Process of the Socialist Republic (1917–1928); (b) The Collectivization and Rapid Industrialization Period (1928–1941); (c) The Period of World War II (1941–1945); (d) the Post-World War II Period (1945–1970s); and (e) the Perestroika Period (1970s–1991). However, in this chapter, the Soviet regime in Uzbekistan will be summarized under three main phases: (a) the civil war period in central Asia; (b) the era marked by the establishment of the Soviet power in Central Asia and the creation of both the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan and Uzbek Nations; and (c) the Khrushchev era, characterized by a change of power relations between center (Moscow) and local (Uzbekistani-city Soviet) during which the state formation of independent Uzbekistan was mostly shaped. These three periods demonstrate how the Soviet regime established its hegemony in the region, beginning with a centralist strategy, followed by a trend of decentralization. The civil war era shows that the central Soviet administration, at the start of the revolution, tried to establish its political hegemony and security through military measures. The establishment process of the Uzbekistani SSR shows how the Soviet regime strengthened its political hegemony through its interventions into the social lives of the people. Thirdly, the Khrushchev era shows how the central Soviet administration maintained its political hegemony through its decentralization policy. These prominent features of the three periods were determining factors in the shaping of the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan and urban politics until the independence era.

2.2.1 The Civil War

After the Bolsheviks captured Petrograd and deployed the Russian Parliament, civil war broke out and continued until 1922. The war was between the Bolsheviks and the anti-Communists, who included constitutionalists, social democrats, socialists and internationalists from the Menshevik Party, being supporters of the Tsarist regime. Soviet dominance had been finalized in 1926 in all regions of Central Asia, except for Tashkent, by the time the civil war (Roy, 2000: 101) between the “*Basmachi*” movement, an anti-Soviet resistance group, and the Red Army of the Bolsheviks had ended. Because of Central Asia’s colonial past the Bolsheviks faced more resistance in Central Asia than in Russia, when they tried to establish their dominance. This civil war was critical in the shaping of the central Asian political environment, since the Uzbekistani SSR could be established finally at the end of this war. After securing Soviet domination in Tashkent, the Bolsheviks began to deal with other territories of Central Asia. However, unlike the Tashkent experiment, in other regions of Central Asia the establishment of Soviet hegemony gradually took place. On April

30, 1918 the Tashkent Soviets formed the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Yalcin, 2002: 33), however the autonomous states of Khokand, Bukhara and Khiva resisted the Soviet army, and the Red Army of the Bolsheviks bombarded Khokand between February 19–22, 1918, which marked the beginning of the civil war in Turkestan (Boworth, 2007: 501). After Khiva was occupied by the Red Army in 1920, Frunze, who was commander of the Red Army, established the Kharezm People's Republic, and in 1923 it became the Autonomous Soviet Republic of Kharezm, securing its inclusion in the Soviet Union. Finally, also in 1920, the Bukhara People's Republic was established; however, the *Jadids* took control of the Bukhara Republic and declared it as an independent people's republic (Roy, 2000: 101). In 1924, this republic shared the same destiny as the other two states, and became a part of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Power between Modernization and Tradition: Jadids and Basmachi

Many commentators argue that Soviets had a major influence on the modernization of the Central Asian societies, however it is suggested in this thesis that the Soviets (re-)produced the traditional and feudal social structure in Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan, in order to set up, strengthen and protect its hegemony. Support for this argument can be found in the relationship between the Soviet power and two political groups in Central Asia during the Civil War: the *Basmachis* (hero) and the *Jadids* (reformist). The *Basmachi* movement rejected the Soviet policies of the national delimitation and was calling for an independent Turkestan Republic (Yalcin, 2002: 33); while the *Jadid* groups of Central Asia non-violently opposed the old feudal system, which was based on the antiquated Khanates regime and the colonial order of the Tsarist regime (Roy, 2000: 104). Over time, some *Jadids* became supporters of the Bolsheviks, while others became advocates of an independent Turkestan. Finally, at the end of the civil war, many *Jadids* were killed, jailed or deported to Siberia by the Bolsheviks and the rest escaped to other countries or joined the *Basmachi* movement. In Central Asia, the *Basmachi* movement continued for approximately 10 years, from 1918 to 1928, and was a dangerous and an unexpected threat to the Soviet leaders. According to Broxup (1983: 2), the *Basmachi* movement, which had no particular political ideology, emerged in reaction to the Russian Empire's damage of the local economy, the 1916 slaughter of the nomadic clans in Fergana Valley, the 1896 ruthless suppression of the Andican rebellion, and finally, the Hocend genocide. The *Basmachi* movement took place in four regions: Fergana, Lakay, Bukhara and Khiva, led by many *oqsoqals*, as well as tribal and religious heads (e.g., *Cunayd Khan* and *Ibrahim Khan*, *Yasavi sheikhs*).

There existed a conflict between the traditional-minded *Basmachis* and the more modern *Jadids*. The *Jadids* were intellectual, educated, and were connected to a broad international social network, while the *Basmachi* were more traditional, less-educated and had only limited access to social networks. The *Jadids* movement, which was political and cultural, emerged before both the *Basmachi* movement and the Bolshevik power in Central Asia, opposing and fighting against the feudal system, the Khanate regime and the Russian colonization in the region as a whole. The *Jadid* intellectuals believed that the only way to develop Central Asia was to modernize society and to adapt Islamic traditions and customs to a modern way of life, and thus became a supporter of the Soviet regime, which had much greater ambitions than Tsarist Russia in this regard. The Bolsheviks also perceived themselves as explicitly anti-colonial and sought to mobilize support among the indigenous population of the region. This combination of circumstances allowed many reformist Muslims (*Jadids*) to join the new organs of the current center of power (Khalid, 26: 468). In this sense, *Jadid* intellectuals became the most important actors in the modernization of Central Asia. *Jadids* became fascinated with the idea of the revolutionary transformation of society, although they desired a nationalist revolution rather than a proletarian one. They opened many new schools and established courses to train teachers to staff them (Khalid, 2006: 237), however the *Jadids* movement was less effective among the native people. Although the local people complained about the traditional powers, such as the Khanates, Ishans and Sheykhs, they still supported the Bukhara Emirate and the *ulema* groups (religious leaders) rather than the Bolsheviks or the *Jadids* when the Bolsheviks fought the Bukhara Emirate (Roy, 2001, 165). For example, in the 1917 election for the Tashkent Soviet, the conservative Muslim organization, *Jami'at-e Ulama*, won 85% of the vote, while the reformist Muslim organization, *Shura-e Islam*, won only 12% in the old city of Tashkent (Morrison, 1995: 436).

What is interesting is that these two movements accused each other of supporting the Russian regime, but in reality, the *Basmachi* movement worked with the Tsarist and the Soviet armies against the *Jadids* to revive the old administrative, economic and cultural life. For instance, the *Basmachi* movement wanted to bring back Sharia law and the Khanate regime, and sought to deport the Russian migrants. Therefore, even though the *Basmachi* movement can be identified as a religious, national and class struggle, it was not opposed to entering into relationships with the Soviet Army to become more powerful than the Muslim *Jadids* groups in Central Asia. In fact, some *Basmachi* groups worked together with *Jadid* groups, whereas others worked together with the Russian power, meaning that there is more than one definition of the *Basmachi* movement in literature. For instance, at the beginning of

the movement, some *Basmachi* groups in Fergana, who have been referred to in historical literature as “the Winter Bolsheviks,” were supported by the Bolsheviks to fight the wealthy Russian migrants and Tsarist supporters; however the same Fergana *Basmachi* groups then fought against the Soviet army due to the oppressive Soviet ideology.

By 1926, most of the *Basmachi* groups had been destroyed by the Red Army and the Communist Party had established military security in the region. Moreover, Akmal Ikramov (1898–1938), the first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, denounced the *Jadids* as local bourgeoisie and outdated intellectuals (Khalid, 2006: 239). Many of them were killed or exiled to the Siberia during the *qulog*³⁵ era, while others escaped from the Soviet Union. Roy claimed that Lenin used the *Jadids* movement to threaten the Muslim nationalist rebellions, to destroy the perception of Bolsheviks as a colonial power, and to weaken the nationalist groups in Turkey and Iran (Roy, 2000: 92). As a result, it can be said that the Bolsheviks bargained with both the *Basmachi* and *Jadids* groups until they were eliminated from the political life of Central Asia.

For example, *Turkkomissiya* (1921–1928) was an institution that was replaced by the *Turksovnarkom* (Chairmen of the Council of People's Commissars in Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic: 1918–1920). According to Ohunova's book which was published in the Soviet era, “in 1921, the Red Army came to Central Asia to abolish the *Turksovnarkom* whose members increased their power in Central Asia by using the proletarian idea; but they still had both a colonial and bourgeoisie mentality instead of the revolutionary class consciousness,” which means that its members were mostly *Jadids*. With the establishment of the *Turkkomissiya*, Moscow adopted more careful strategies to strengthen Soviet domination in Central Asia. All members of the *Turksovnarkom* were fired under accusations of associations with the bourgeoisie, and new members who were committed to Bolshevism were appointed to the *Turkkomissiya* from Moscow, such as Kaganovich and Safarov. The *Turkkomissiya*, which was established to stop the *Basmachi* rebellions, allowed local people to be on the staff, brought together the Communist party of Central Asia with the Russian Communist Party, and purged all Tsarist supporters. Masses of native people began joining the Communist Party, even the Muslim religious leaders (Roy, 2001: 96), and the Party formed a new army from the local community, abandoning its direct fight with Islam and allowing the local people to keep some of their traditions. The *waqfs*,

³⁵ The era in which the power of the rich peasants, aristocratic families and old elites was destroyed through execution or exile. It is also the period in which private ownership and production was completely abolished, as state took all privately owned real estate from the landowners and distributed it equitably among the common people.

Sharia courts and all the mosques in Tashkent were re-opened. Moreover, as the Soviet leaders came to understand that a local leader knew better the conflicts between various clans among the *Basmachi* groups than a Russian leader, the Communist Party devolved the duty of stopping the *Basmachi* movement to *Fayzulla Hoja*, who would go on to become the first local secretary of the Uzbekistani Communist Party. Accordingly, it may be argued that the Soviet administration was attempting to modernize the Central Asian societies, while also removing many reformists from politics and cooperating with the traditional leaders of the native community. Is it not strange that the modernist Jadids' council was abolished and that Muslim religious leaders were made members of the new *Turkkomissia*? The Soviet regime was not interested in the modernization of the Central Asian societies during the Civil War; rather, it was involved mainly in the establishment of its political hegemony. The Bolsheviks were not averse to cooperating with any political group if it weakened the other groups that threatened Soviet power. This is one of the cases indicating that the Soviet regime had to set up networks with the local leaders and maintain some traditional figures and social relations in order to strengthen its hegemony in Uzbek society. The following chapters will provide more examples of how Soviet power (re-)produced the traditional form of social life in the Uzbekistani *mahalla* so as to guarantee its hegemony in society.

2.2.2 The October Revolution and the Establishment of the Uzbek SSR: *Koranizatsiia* (National) Policy

The Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Republic was established in 1918 in Central Asia. After undergoing a name change in 1920 to become the “Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR),” it joined the Soviet Union in 1922, only to be dissolved in 1924. To weaken the nationalist movement of Turkestan after the Civil War and to gain control of the region, the Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin, decided to divide Central Asia. The Communist Party, in a single night of 1924, determined which autonomous republics they wanted to establish and bring into the union, and drew artificial boundaries (Roy, 2000: 104). The Bolsheviks, in collaboration with the local politicians, proposed the partition plan known as the “*national delimitation of borders*” with the motto “*one ethnic group, one territory*” (Boworth, 2007: 501). According to this plan, the Soviet Socialist Republics of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan (which was then named Kyrgyzstan), Kyrgyzstan (which was then named Black Kyrgyzstan) and Uzbekistan were established in 1924. In 1929, Tajikistan was separated from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan and became a new Soviet Socialist Republic in its own right. In addition, in 1936, the region of Karakalpakstan, which was made an autonomous Soviet Republic in 1932, became the autonomous region of Uzbekistan (Yalcin, 2002: 37). The borders that gave Central Asia its physical appearance

today were designated in 1936. Tashkent again replaced Samarqand as the capital city of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan in 1930 (Boworth, 2007: 501). In short, the Communist Party divided Central Asia into five rootless Republics in order to block the idea of a Pan-Turkist movement, whose aim was to establish an autonomous Turkestan Republic. According to Roy (2000), the October Revolution brought an end to the colonial Russian system in Central Asia by introducing a new ideological logic, a new group of local elites, and a new political community. According to Clark (1999: 35):

“The Soviet Union feared that a unified central Asia would create a sense of nationalism that would threaten its rule of the region. The Soviet solution was to divide the region... ethnic groups who shared much in common in terms of history, customs, language, and traditions were differentiated and renamed by the Soviets, so people suddenly had to decide whether they were Tajik or Uzbek for instance, when they had never before thought of themselves in those terms”.

In previous literature there are different opinions about whether the Soviet regime in Central Asia was a new form of the colonial regime. According to one group of scholars, the existing colonial regime continued after the October Revolution without alteration, except the name of the regime (Roy, 2000; Shahrani, 1993; Khalid, 2006). These scholars have asserted that the Soviet regime had a typical imperialistic divide policy, *et impera*, that clearly intended to weaken the pan-Islamic and the pan-Turkic aspirations (Farrant, 2006: 64), which Buttino describes as a “revolution in reverse” (Morrison, 1995: 436). In addition, Pianciola and Sartori define the Soviet regime in Turkestan as postcolonial, in that the new regime was conscious of its anti-colonial credentials and the need to distance itself from its colonial inheritance (Khalid, 2006: 468). According to a second group of scholars, which is largely composed of Soviet intellectuals, the socialist revolution gave freedom to the Asian Muslims. Therefore, according to Ohunova, the October Revolution was made jointly by the labor movement and the local nationalist movement (Ohunova, 1983: 43). A final group of scholars claims that the Soviet regime showed neither a colonial nor communist character in Central Asia. When the Bolsheviks occupied central Asia they were only modernizing an underdeveloped society. Moreover, these scholars claim that the Soviet regime created a new and unique society, into which different ethnic groups were integrated by giving them the right of nationhood. For instance, Bilitstein (2006: 285), who wrote an article about Soviet national policies, argues that “*early Soviet nationality policy was based on techniques of cultural differentiation; contrary to the colonial policies of Britain and France, it ultimately sought to transform and integrate all peoples into one political community*”. According to Saroyan (1996: 138),

“The political practices that grew out of the idea of national-statehood contributed to the development of national identification within the bounds of the territorial state as a means of modernizing Soviet society

along the lines of an essentially West European model – despite the sometimes assimilationist views of Bolshevik leaders”.

According to Soviet rules, theoretically the Committee for Nationalities was responsible for establishing a good relationship among the different nations within the Soviet Union, and to protect the equal rights of the people in Soviet Russia. The Russian Extraordinary Commission was formed to block the activities of various political movements who threatened the solidarity of the Soviet Union. Each community was recognized by its ethnic language, and had the right to have its own administrative statute, which was determined on the basis of the community's level of development. A community that was accepted as a nation by the Soviet administration gained the statute of the Soviet Socialist Republic, which was the highest level of the administrative hierarchy. The other communities were assigned and named in hierarchical order according to their level of development: autonomous republic, autonomous region (*oblast*), and national territory (*okrug*). The Soviet Republics had all the characteristics of a general independent state, with a president, a foreign minister (after 1944), a flag, a national communist party, a national language, a scientific academy, a capital city and a national anthem (Roy, 2000: 104).

The Soviet national policies have to be compared against those of other colonialist countries in order to decide whether or not the Soviet regime had a colonial character regarding its policies in Central Asia. Moreover, this policy was important in the articulation of the *mahalla* committee into the Soviet administrative structure. This point will be analyzed in more detail in chapter six, but here the national policy of the Soviet power will be explained in brief. The Soviet administration divided central Asia into five republics under a well-known policy of the Soviet regime, namely the “delimitational *korenizatsiia* (national) policies”. “*The principles of Soviet korenizatsiia policies included the establishment of ethnically designated administrative units, the training and promotion of indigenous non-Russian personnel, and the use of their languages in administration and education*” (Bilitstein, 2006: 285). In addition, the party-state nurtured the cultures of many ethnic groups. The *mahalla* committee, as a traditional socio-spatial unit of Uzbek society, was an important institution, helping the Communist Party to nurture the cultures of the Uzbeks. The idea was that non-Russians would be more willing to accept Soviet power if they could continue to speak their own languages and sustain their cultures. In addition, Farrant argues that after the Bolshevik Revolution the new boundaries of Central Asia were intended to follow ethno-linguistic divisions, and recent studies highlight four conflicting influences on the implementation and outcome of the Soviet national delimitation policy: political directives emanating from Moscow, the ethnographical challenge, the ambitions of the

regional political and commercial elites, and economic factors (Farrant, 2006: 64). The national policy of the Soviet regime is crucial for this dissertation, because unlike most of the colonial European countries, the Bolsheviks created new nations, established a new state organization for each of them, and most importantly, intervened in their internal structures through the enactment of new laws, by which a new group of political elite, a new language and a new history were created. As Roy points out (2000: 101), this had never been done before in the world. As a tool for the national policy of the Soviet regime, the *mahalla* became one of the most important institutions in the establishment of the Uzbekistani nation and state.

The Tsarist Empire did not change the Central Asian internal political environment. “*The Russian state had neither the desire nor the capability to assimilate the indigenous people or bring about radical cultural change*” (Khalid, 2006: 233). However, the modern centralist state system that had been initiated in Russia during the 1700s (Black, 1990: 139) emerged in Central Asia with the Soviet system. The Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan was divided into regions, cities, and districts (*raion*), and their entire administrative units were tied to the central government, like the Russian system (Black, 1990: 139). To implement the national policy and to create new modern nations, including Uzbekistan, unlike the Tsarist regime, the Soviet state intervened directly and radically into the life of the local people of Central Asia. Although the new position that Central Asia gained under the Tsarist rule—being the local of the Tsarist Empire—continued into the Soviet by becoming the local of the Soviet Union following the collapse of the feudal system and the end of the colonial period, a brand new era began for Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states with the establishment of the Socialist System. Under Soviet rule, the implementation of the delimitation policy resulted in enormous changes in the social, economic, and political appearance of Uzbekistani cities, *mahallas*, towns, *kishlaks* and *auls* (villages). Among these changes, the introduction of new elite groups and new social networks in local politics are remarkable. The Communist Party launched a comprehensive campaign to modernize and *sovietize* the region in ways that enabled Central Asians to convey the ideological concepts (Yalcin, 2002: 37). Unlike the Tsarist regime, the Soviet regime aimed to modernize Uzbekistani society by replacing its traditional life with the new ideology of secularization, collectivization, central planning, industrialization and intensive education (Baykal, 2007:12; Anderson, 1997: 27; Shahrani 1991: 161; Yalcin, 2002: 36, 81). The dialectic relationship between the strategies of local community (Uzbekistan as an autonomous republic) and the hegemony of the Soviet power resulted in the (re-)production of old, traditional and feudal social structures.

If the beginning of the Soviet regime was characterized by the creation of new nations and states in Central Asia, the Khrushchev era was the period in which the institutional structures of these nations and states were completed in their fully modern forms. The decentralization policy of the Khrushchev era resulted in these republics becoming more autonomous from the Moscow administration and more centralist within their state boundaries.

2.2.3 Changing the Balance of Power between Center-Local Relations and the Decentralization Policy

If something worked well, the party took full credit, if something did not; the local government was blamed for not understanding or carrying out the vision of the party. (Sigurd: 1993: 9).

After the end of World War II, the death of Stalin, and the end of the internal war during which the Communist Party achieved full security in Central Asia and other regions of the Union, the centralist tendency of the Soviet regime in the Central Asia began to weaken. As a result of World War II the autonomous Soviet republics had already become more autonomous *vis-a-vis* Moscow. For example, in 1944a constitutional amendment established separate branches of the Red Army for each Soviet republic, which also gained the right to found their own Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. One particularly significant reform of the Khrushchev era was indisputably the decentralization policy, which greatly affected the role of the *mahalla* in the administrative system. This decentralization policy saw the emergence of several new authorities within the autonomous republics of the Union. This section will underline the general points of Khrushchev's decentralization policy and the new political area of Central Asia that was born out of this policy. This period was crucial in shaping both the national and local institutional structure of the post-Soviet Central Asian states, including Uzbekistan.

Before the Khrushchev era, because of the Civil War and World War II, the Soviet power had focused little on regulating the institutional structure of the Central Asian states. Moreover, because of the priority of the national planned economy, collectivization, rapid economic development and the Soviet anxiety of security in the regions, Soviet power remained quite centralist. All decisions were made by Moscow, where the Communist Party was dominant over the Communist Party units in the republics. This political environment was also viable for the local politics of the autonomous Soviet republics. Before Khrushchev, the local Soviets were only a part of the local units, which lacked any kind of authority. However, rapid industrialization and urbanization required the local governments to be more

authoritative in resolving the emergent urban problems, and this increased the demand for decentralization. As a consequence, a reorganization of the Soviet state and a redistribution of governmental functions were needed to facilitate the rapid economic growth and development of the capable lower cadres. Khrushchev's decentralization policy deeply affected local politics, the local economy, and the internal organization of local government and its relationship with central government. Khrushchev endeavored to readjust administrative relationships to devolve many functions and permit greater flexibility and resourcefulness within the lower administrative echelons (Swearer, 1962: 457). There were three aspects to the nature and extent of the devolution of administrative authority in the republic implemented by Khrushchev:

The first was a shift to a territorial form of organization from the industrial branch or functional form of organization. This meant that a wide variety of activities were consolidated under the authority of territorially based party secretaries, officials of the Soviet executive committees and unspecialized regional economic councils (*sovnarkhozy*) at the level of republics, cities, *oblasts* and *raions* (Swearer, 1962: 456-470). One outcome of becoming a territorial organization was local self-sufficiency, which implies the production of all goods locally. The local institutions, having a territorial base, paid attention to the economic problems only within their territory rather than those of the broader sector, and held local interests over national interests. Thus, although it caused extravagance at the national level, local Soviet institutions fought to win a self-sufficient share of the national economy, and did not hesitate to coerce the central authority with bribery. Related to this point, one of the distinguishing features of Khrushchev's decentralization policy was to replace the huge pyramid of economic ministries with local economic authorities (Carr, 1998: 279-281). Specialized industrial ministries of the Soviet republics, which had in the past overseen many of the locally significant economic enterprises, were either abolished or consolidated, and thus became less interventionist in the daily management of local industry. When Khrushchev came to power, the problem of economic inefficiency was evident, and he attributed this to the extreme level of centralization, the apathy of local interests and the enormous economic ministries. Between 1955–1957, 141 specialized industrial ministries were abolished in Moscow and the other Soviet republics, and hundreds of unspecialized *sovnarkhozy*, which were regional economic councils based on a particular territory rather than sector, were established in all regions of the Union. *“The great bulk of Moscow-based, industrially specialized ministries were abolished, and the industrial management of most*

industry was placed in the hands of over a hundred industrially nonspecialized sovnarkhozy” (Swearer, 1962: 460)³⁶.

The second feature of the decentralization program was that a great deal of authority remained at the level of the central government of each Soviet republic, and that the authority was devolved from the top downwards. This policy created its own centralism in the Soviet Union, showing that Khrushchev had failed, although he had tried to change the centralist tradition in the Soviet administrative system. Khrushchev’s decentralization policy called for political power to be transferred from Moscow to the republics, rather than being located at the local Soviet (Frolic, 1970: 676). In other words, autonomy was given to the Soviet federal republics, and the provincial organizations of the central ministries were connected to the central government of each federal republic. Each republic became responsible for everything within their territory, which can be seen as centralization within localization. Since the republics were being asked by Moscow to take on responsibilities that extended beyond human capacity, they were required to give their local units the authority to govern and to break the law. In addition, the same hierarchy was also valid for the local units of each republic, and as the Communist Party branches and governmental authorities at each territorial level were ultimately responsible for everything within their geographical areas, they often felt compelled to intervene at lower levels. The lower the officials were in the hierarchy of Soviets, the more they were restricted in dealing independently with local affairs (Swearer, 1962: 456-470). In this sense, the governments of every republic began to become more centralized than in the previous periods, and ultimately they came to put pressure on their local units. This administrative structuring of the new Soviet state also laid the foundation for the form of state organization that would arise during the post-Soviet era.

Another feature of the Soviet decentralization policy was that higher organs established the legal basis and a framework of action for lower organs, while the local Soviet had the right to set the finer details and to concretize the norms of given acts, as long as they did not alter the substantive content of these norms. Thus, it can be inferred that local autonomy and decentralization were different concepts in the Soviet system. The decentralization program

³⁶According to the 1957 program prepared by the Central Committee, especially regarding the industrial and construction sectors, 200,000 businesses and 100,000 worksites, throughout the country began to be managed by the local *sovnarkhozy* instead of the offices of the ministries in Moscow (Carr, 1998: 279-281). “*However, how has it tackled the dilemma of permitting, indeed encouraging, local initiative and, at the same time, ensuring local response to Moscow’s dictates? As might be expected, Gosplan and the Ministry of Finance, as the two main agencies of central direction over the economy, frequently encroach upon the prerogatives of territorial administrations*” (Swearer, 1962:465).

had no intention of allowing the lower administrative echelons to become in any way independent, which meant that the city and local governments took power to become autonomous from the central government (Soviet federal republics and Moscow). In this sense, it can be claimed that Khrushchev's bureaucratic decentralization policy did not mean the creation of autonomous or semi-autonomous administrative units, nor did it bring about a more deconcentrated form of power (Swearer, 1962: 457).

There are two Russian terms that explain the Soviet administrative system: *soglasovyvanie*, being a bargaining process of permanent negotiation-coordination among the officials of ministries, governments and the Party apparatus; and *upravlennysy*, which indicates the entire administrative staff (Carr, 1998: 275). If centralism was one feature of the Soviet administrative system, *soglasovyvanie* (bargaining process) among the local *upravlennysys* (local actors) was another, which reversed the decentralization policy of Khrushchev. On one side there were local actors, such as local governments, the provincial organizations of the central ministries, state enterprises and factories, all of which were affected by the local economy and had an effect upon it; while on the other side there was the huge local apparatus of the Party as peculiar to the Soviets and local interests groups as a unique feature of Uzbeks' political life. The position of each of these actors began to change in local politics under the reorganization policy of the central administration. Here, the structure of Soviet urban politics after Khrushchev's decentralization policy is summarized through the *soglasovyvanie* among the local *upravlennysys*. This part is crucial for understanding the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime after independence has changed in urban politics and the *mahalla* structure as an administrative unit, which are analyzed in the fifth chapter.

First of all, the internal organization of **local governments** and their role in urban politics changed under the decentralization policy. Seemingly, most of the administrative authority and functions were delegated to lower echelons in the republics, *oblasts*, *raions* and major cities. Each local Soviet elected a small executive committee (*ispolkom*), which constituted the core of the administrative leadership at a local level, and which generally carried out the responsibilities of government at that level between sessions of the Soviet (Evans, 2000: 116). The local Soviet was the echelon of the Soviet administration that was responsible for implementing local policies; thus, the executive committee and its presidium became more powerful within the local Soviet (Tucker, 1959: 527). The chairman of the executive committee of the Soviet was the chief executive and the highest-ranking official in local government. Since the executive leadership was selected by the legislative body, there was no separation of powers in the sense of a formal division between the legislative and

executive bodies (Evans, 2000: 116). This administrative and political organization resulted in an anti-democratic situation within the local Soviet which tended to strengthen the power of its executive committees. In addition, the collective leadership was restored with only a small difference from the past.³⁷ It is worth noting that the power of the local executive committee and the dominance of its leader have continued during the independent Uzbekistani regime, as will be seen in the next section.

It is unclear whether the role of local governments in the local economy decreased with the establishment of the *sovnarkhozy*. Some scholars claim that the *sovnarkhozy* took much of the authority from the local government to manage the local economy during the Khrushchev era; while others claim that the *sovnarkhozy* was under the control of the local Soviet, and unlike in the previous period, that all of the economic institutions in the local area were under the control of the economic ministries of Moscow or the central governments of the federal republics (Tucker, 1959: 529). For example, the chair of Gorky city Soviet argued that the city Soviet had lost the right to operate some local industrial sectors and factories due to the *sovnarkhozy*, which had taken the authority to control them. Accordingly, it can be claimed that Khrushchev's decentralization policy restricted the economic operation of the city Soviet in the service sectors (Tucker, 1959: 529). In addition, local industry was placed more firmly under the control of the executive committees of local Soviets in *oblasts*, cities and *raions*.

Local governments were urged to assume more responsibility in the execution of central commands (Swearer, 1962: 456-470). Moreover, many strategies were built into the administrative system to encourage local governments to implement the policies in the direction set by the central government. For example, every year the central government set a certain production quota for each of the local units, and made the local government responsible for reaching this quota. If this quota was not met, the central government would roll back its position. Thus, the quota was a political tool of the central government that allowed it to control the local Soviets. Under these circumstances, local governments would make all manner of interventions to force all of the economic actors in their territory to achieve the quota determined by the central government. It is important to mention that this hierarchic responsibility followed a chain within the Soviet administration (from Moscow to

³⁷ According to Tucker, unlike in the Stalin period, when draft decisions of local Soviets were not customarily discussed in the executive committees, in the Khrushchev period the chairman did not take a single important decision without the concurrence of an overwhelming majority of the members of the executive committee. A high official of the Soviet in one of the large cities summed up the main differences between the Stalin and Khrushchev eras as follows: "While the chairman called each member of the committee, read to him the proposed resolution and received an automatic expression of approval in the Stalin era, the discussions took place in the meetings of the executive committee before approval of the decisions during the Khrushchev period" (Tucker, 1959: 530).

the central government of the republics, from the central governments to local government at any level, such as districts, cities, villages, and from local governments to lower levels of local government). This hierarchic responsibility structure would be maintained in Uzbekistan after independence. For instance, many city *Hokims* were rolled back by the central Uzbekistani government if they could not achieve the defined quota.

The position of **local factories and businesses** in local politics and economy was the second change brought about by the decentralization policy. Regarding this point, there is a remarkable anecdote in the Soviet Union. In a street of Kazan there were two factories with stocks needed by each other; however because they could not exchange goods without the permission of Moscow, every time a request was made to use each other's stocks they had to wait for the approval of the ministries in Moscow. As the ministries checked out the approval, the needed goods had already arrived in Kazan from Moscow (Carr, 1998: 279-281). As can be understood from this anecdote, the centralist system brought work in the factories to a standstill, as no factory in the Union could sell a horse without the permission from Moscow. What changes occurred to remedy such situations as a result of the reorganization? According to *Novobirsk* newspaper, the decentralization policy of Khrushchev introduced a more effective system in the local economy through the abolition of this permission process (Tucker, 1959: 534). In summary, the reorganization increased the powers of some local actor in the local economy.

The third actor, of course, was the **local Party apparatus** in Soviet local politics. Like all decision-making processes under the control of the Central Committee at national level, the strength of the party continued in practice at each local level of the Union. Rather than being a real decentralization, it was realized that the restructuring policy of the Khrushchev era gave autonomy to territorial-based Party secretariats and local Soviet executive committees at the level of republics, *oblasts*, *raions* and cities. The intended decentralization was realized through the passing of authority to the local Party branches instead of the provincial organizations of the ministries or the local governments (Swearer, 1962: 460). In addition, Party membership and education were the most important career criteria for Soviet urban political leaders (Frolic, 1970: 693). However, similar to the relationship between the Party and government at a national scale, there was no connection between them according to the law; both the local government and *sovnarkhozy* maintained a certain degree of autonomy from the Party, but in practice it was the Party apparatus that was always the commander³⁸.

³⁸ According to Tucker's article (1959: 534), a chair of a regional economic council confined himself to the remark: "I too am a party member and party decisions are amendatory for me. The party organs do not directly interfere in our work, but they have the right of control over the fulfillment of decisions in all fields".

Tucker argues that two local actors became more powerful by breaking the concentration of the Moscow-based economic bureaucracy and distributing this bureaucratic power to local actors within the regional economic council: the local Party apparatus and the businessmen's groups. The administrative authority was actually deprived of a great deal of rights and so had little involvement in most of the economic decisions, and in many cases, the economic authorities had authority over the administrative authority.

Local leaders had to take more responsibility in accordance with the advice of their Party leaders, and thus began to show local deviations depending on the economic, social and political conditions of the locales. This situation forced the leaders of the local Soviets to act in line with the decisions and commands of the Party heads. To this end, Khrushchev tried to establish a connection between the local and center through the 250,000 *apparatus* of the Party to control the local leaders. Because of the administrative decentralization and the emphasis upon a territorial form of administrative organization, party secretaries in republics, *oblasts*, cities and *raions* had “*both more latitude to supervise the state administration within their bailiwicks and greater responsibility to protect national interests, as defined by the leadership, from localist deviations*” (Swearer, 1962: 456-470). In addition, one of Khrushchev's aims was to get rid of Stalin's staff, and the best way to do so was to abolish many central institutions and replace them with more local institutions. Indeed, the sweeping away of the old leaders was one of the most famous political traditions in Soviet politics, which has also continued into the post-Soviet era. In this regard, the local apparatus of the Party was the most important tool for Khrushchev in his bid to realize both his explicit and implicit desires.

The operation of all institutions in local government was supervised closely by several local organs of the Communist Party. According to Fainsod (1979), real initiative tended to be concentrated in the secretarial *apparatus* of the Party and more particularly in the hands of the prime secretary. The real center of decision-making in a district or a city was the bureau (*buro*) of the Party committee at the related level (*raikom* or *gorkom*). The Communist Party's apparatus closely managed the elections of the Soviets on all levels, and had ultimate control over the selection of all personnel to be employed at executive positions in the government. The prime secretary of the local party organization was the real mayor or governor of the locality, being superior to the chairman of the executive committee of the Soviet and responsible for all spheres of activity within the locality. Typically, the prime secretary of the region or district was not only an emissary of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but also a spokesman for the interests of the locality (Evans, 2000: 116). Moreover, “*the gorkom has the power to help enterprises with problems*

that arise in the sphere of their production goals, and both party leaders and enterprise managers have an interest in improving economic performance” (Slider, 1986: 496). In short, the ability to coordinate decisions at the territorial level, assuming that such coordination took place at all, rested with the Party committee (the gorkom).

The position of each local actor began to change in local politics under the reorganization policy of the administration, but the networks between local actors revealed a very different structure of local politics that went against the decentralization policy of Khrushchev. *“There seems to be little doubt that patron-client relationship and informal networks were both the result and the cause of important structural and institutional arrangements in the Soviet system” (Blauvelt, 2008: 105). This situation actually arose before the Khrushchev era, “as Gerald Easter (2000) has demonstrated, from the very start of the Soviet state, various personal networks (in the regions) competed to have access and control over the new state’s organizational distribution points of resources and rewards, and in turn various central leaders made efforts to expand their own networks into the region, tying horizontal regional networks into their vertical and centrally-based networks” (Blauvelt, 2008: 107). “Khrushchev had also built up a multi-dimensional patronage network with both geographical and institutional bases” (Blauvelt, 2008: 110). The strengthening of the local Party apparatus, which had been previously the least powerful actor in local politics, changed the balance at the local level in the sense that the social balance and social relationships at the local level became a tool of local politics, Khrushchev played the most important trump card to prevent the strengthening of the local and launched a constant balance policy between local interest groups that already existed in a bid to maintain power. Accordingly, some local groups were allowed to take priority and were supported, whereas others were excluded from local politics (Swearer 1962, pp: 456-470). However, the localism on which Khrushchev had relied as the principal lever of central control began to unravel, infecting the Party apparatus. The lower party functionaries all too often started associating their interests with local affairs, and became involved in family groups together with other local officials (Swearer, 1962: 466). Therefore, the existing clientalist relationships in Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan, began to penetrate into local political processes, resulting in the (re-)production of clientalist relationships in Uzbekistani social and political life. “It should be noted, however, that these nostrums are not easy to apply; as long as the party secretary in each territorial administration is ultimately responsible for all events in his area, he will find it difficult to avoid becoming enmeshed in daily administrative chores nominally assigned to other bureaucrats” (Swearer, 1962: 467). The result of the policy regarding the control mechanisms upon the local institutions was the insertion of more*

influential kinship and family relations into urban politics through the local Party apparatus. The decentralization policy gave substantial rights to the Party's local branch, by which the local control agencies were prevented from achieving complete independence from the central authority and the local party leadership. As a result, the local authorities again became answerable to the local agencies of the center, leading to local social relationships, such as kinship and family, to become more influential in local politics. Following this, many social relations in the daily life of Uzbekistani society came to be carried forward into the political environment of the Soviet Uzbekistan. As will be seen in chapters four and six, the emergence of kinship and family relations, as determinants upon urban politics in Uzbekistan, resulted in the preservation of old-type residential units (old *mahalla*) and their patriarchic social relations.

Within a short time, the decentralization policy that had been designed to restrain strong centralism and extreme bureaucratization by giving more authority to local powers resulted in a more complex administrative structure than the previous one. Instead of establishing a decentralized administrative system and reinforcing local autonomy, the policy actually resulted in a greater reinforcement of centralism in the Soviet republics. After the Khrushchev period, all of his reforms were abolished, including the *sovnarkhozy* regulation. In the Gorbachov era, a similar reform was made, namely *TMO (territorial'no-mezhotraslevo ob'edinenie)* (Slider, 1986: 500), which in political terms was very similar to Khrushchev's *sovnarkhozy* policy. Both policies reduced the power (and ultimately the size) of the central state bureaucracy in favor of local party apparatus and state officials.

2.3 The Post-Soviet Era

Established in 1991, the Republic of Uzbekistan is the largest country in Central Asia, with a population of 25,498,700 and an area of 448,900 square kilometers in 2003 (Dadabayev, 2004: 4). Administered under a presidential system, Uzbekistan is located in the middle of Central Asia, and is bordered by Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Tashkent is the capital city, while other important cities are Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana, Andijan, Termiz, Karshi, Cizzakh, Namangan, Kokand, Kiva, Urganch and Nukus. The official language is Uzbek, but Russian is still dominant in all public institutions. Tajik, Karakalpak, Kazakh and Tatar are other languages used in Uzbekistan. Its official alphabet has, since 2010, been Latin, however Cyril is still used.

Table 2.1 Demographic Indicators

Distribution of population by age group	0–14 years: 36.32 %, 15–64 years: 59.06 % and 65 years and older: 4.62 %
Birth rate (in 1000n)	19,8
Death rate (in 1000n)	5,5
Falling birth rate per woman	Until 20 age 4,7 %
Infant mortality (in 1000n)	16,4
Average life expectancy for women	74.4 years
Average life expectancy for men	70.5 years
Literacy rate	99 %
Divorce rate	7.7 %

Source: www.moh.uz

The first secretary of the Uzbekistani Communist Party, Islam Abduganiyevich Karimov, became the first president in December 1991. The main executive organ is the president, meaning that the President is also the chair of the Cabinet. The members of the Cabinet are appointed by the President from outside of Parliament, although Parliament has to approve them (Pashkun, 2003, 5). The political system is based on the presidency system, and the legislative organ is the “*Oli Majlis*” (Supreme Council or Soviet), which aside from extraordinary circumstances, meets every three months to discuss the draft laws on the agenda. However, the *Oli Majlis* “*spends most of sessions discussing and passing presidential proposals and decrees. Therefore, practically it is not the rule-making body of Uzbekistan.*” (Robertson&Kangas, 2002: 269). Parliamentary elections take place every five years according to the law, during which 250 seats are contested.³⁹ The highest judicial organ in the country is the Constitutional Court, which is independent from executive organs, political parties and other social organizations (TİKA, 2004, 8).

The female population was 13,250,360 and the male population was 12,248,340 in 2003. The population growth rate is 14.5 and population density is 57 n/sq. Ethnic distribution of population is Uzbek 80.1%, Russian 5.7%, Tajik 4.6%, Kazakh 3.1%, Karakalpak 2.5%, Tatar 1.5%, and other 2.5%. The religious distribution of population is Muslim 90%, Orthodox 6% and other 4%. The urban population proportion is 36,9% and rural is 63,1%. Other demographic information can be seen in Table 2.1. The main economic sector of

³⁹In the December 5, 1999 election, the number of seats in the *Oli Majlis* by political party was as follows: People’s Democratic Party (HDP) – 48; Social Democratic party (*Adolat*) – 11; Progress of the Fatherland Party – 20; *Fidoqlar* – 24; unaffiliated – 147. The last group represents deputies from local councils and associations who are technically non-party candidates but practically are HDP members. Concerning this point, it can be said that the HDP holds almost 200 of the 250 seats in the *Oli Majlis* (Robertson&Kangas: 2002: 270).

Uzbekistan is agriculture, in which the leading products are cotton, wheat, fruit (apple, grape, melon and water melon) and vegetables (tomato, potato, cabbage, cucumber, pepper). Moreover, Uzbekistan is rich in natural resources, with reserves of natural gas, oil, gold, coal, copper, iron, aluminum, and zinc. The main industrial areas of the country, which showed a rapid growth in the Soviet era, are agricultural machinery, chemicals, metallurgy, automobile and textiles. In 2003, per capita GDP in Uzbekistan was 2,460 dollars. The sectoral distribution of GDP between the years of 1999–2003 is shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Sectoral Distribution of GDP

Sectors	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Agriculture	29.0	30.4	39.9	39.5	32.0
Industry	14.3	13.8	11.6	10.3	16.5
Service	43.3	43.1	36.8	38.5	38.1
Tax	13.4	12.7	11.7	11.7	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: TIKA, 2004, 43

Unlike the east European countries, there had been a feudal regime in Central Asia prior to the Soviet regime, which brought an end to the power of the local leaders through the abolition of the old regime. After this, all public services were offered by the state under the socialist rule (Pomfret, 1997, 45). After independence, the new Central Asian states faced three main problems: (a) transition from the socialist regime –or state capitalism – to a market-based economy and the creation of a national (Uzbek) bourgeoisie; (b) coping with the economic crisis and poverty that came hand-in-hand with restrictions on public spending; and (c) restructuring the administrative system in a way to make it compatible with the global market economy. In the following sections, these problems faced by the new Uzbekistani regime will be summarized under two sub-titles: economic transition and the restructuring of the administrative system.

2.3.1 Economic Transition

The economic policy of the Central Asian states after independence was organized mainly to promote a free market economy, and Uzbekistan was the first country to put aside the central planning policy of the Soviets and develop strategies for the supposed economic transformation. Due to the continuation of the incentives given by the state, strict price controls and strong economic interventions in the first years following independence, it wasn't until 1994 that the new, comprehensive economic reform was prepared, when the general climate was suitable for its implementation. According to this new program, new legal arrangements were made for the abolition of the state's control of prices, allowing the state to enter into partnerships with international financial institutions or private firms,

beginning with the privatization of public enterprises and restrictions on public spending. In addition, opportunities for joint investment were made, aimed at attracting foreign capital (Dadabaev, 2004, 152).

The first area of reform was the privatization of state-owned enterprises in order to secure the development of the private sector and its dominance in the economy of the country. In 1991 the first privatization law was enacted, and by 2000 the Uzbekistani regime had enacted many new regulations to attract foreign capital, and the authority of the Committee of State Property was broadened to ease its implementation (Baykal, 2006). In 2003, the state declared that 1,519 state units (firms, factories, *kolkhozs*, *sovhozs*, etc.) had been privatized, raising revenue of 56.1 billion Sum (57 million U.S. dollars). However, it should be underlined that the share of this revenue of the total GDP was only 6%. As a result of the privatization of public enterprises, the ratio of public and private sectors in the national economy changed considerably. The share of the public sector in total GDP was 44% in 1995, with the remaining 56% working in the private sector. While almost all of the working population during the Soviet period had been employed in the public sector, in 2004, 74.5% of the total 9,589,000 workers were working in the private sector, and only 25.5% in the public sector.

In addition, since independence, the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has increased. The best option for individuals attempting to survive the harsh economic conditions is to start a small business. Although trade is the dominant sector for SMEs, the production of goods and services is also popular among smaller businesses in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has the most developed SME structure in the region (EBRD, 2003). In 2003, 5.5 million people were employed in SME, accounting for 57.3% of the total employment in the country. In the same year, of the 429,600 newly opened firms, 31.2% were SMEs, and 15.9% of the total foreign trade revenue was generated by these firms. In addition, showing a steady increase, the production ratio of SMEs in total GDP was 1.5% in 1991, 13.8% in 1995, 31.5% in 2002, and finally 35.5% in 2003.

During the transition era, two main conditions were determining factors in the economic development of Uzbekistan. First, the main function of Uzbekistan had been to produce cotton for the Soviet regime, and thanks to its natural resources, the production of energy was another dominant sector. However, Uzbekistan was completely dependent on other Soviet republics for produced goods. After World War II, the Soviet planners implemented major industrial projects in Uzbekistan, and by 1991, Tashkent had become the fourth biggest city in the Soviet Union and the largest city in Central Asia, with a population of 2

million. Contrary to the industrialized Tashkent region, the economies of the other regions of Uzbekistan were based on agriculture. This was the most significant factor in the industrial development of Uzbekistan after the independence, mainly in terms of regional imbalances.

Second, moving towards the establishment of a new economic system, most of the time the Uzbekistani state chose to implement new economic policies in a piecemeal fashion and under considerable state control. In previous literature, the Central Asian countries have generally been categorized into two groups in terms of their economic policies and the transition to a market economy: (a) states that applied shock treatment policies, like Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan; and (b) states that apply a transition policy gradually and under the control of the state, such as Uzbekistan. The Uzbekistani state chose not to privatize or close the factories that were built by the Soviet regime, and as such precious metals, petroleum, natural gas and telecommunications have been accepted as strategic sectors by the state, and thus have been excluded from the privatization portfolio. In order to transfer resources to primary sectors within the framework of the import substitution industrialization model, the state has been forced to take on a large amount of external debt, which is being repaid using the income from cotton and gold exports.

Most of the time, this process has been interpreted as a reluctance of the new elite of the Uzbekistan to lose control of the economic power it enjoyed that had roots in the Soviet bureaucratic tradition. Moreover, the members of government and business are so intermingled that this situation of weak representation and repressive government prohibit the transformation of the traditional Soviet bureaucracy. Thus, the private sector was still weak and dependent on the government after independence. In all Central Asian countries, the main problem is that the political elite perceive “outsider businessmen” as a threat (Baykal, 2004). For example in Uzbekistan, the license of any firm which is distinguished among others is taken away by the state by declaring it as a tax dodger. Many Uzbekistani entrepreneurs that have benefited from loans from international organizations lose all chance of further growth due to the continuous interventions of the state. In short, Uzbekistan ranks only 149th on a list of 156 countries in terms of its success in functioning as a market-based economy, ranking only just higher than Cuba (ICG, 2004: 20). According to Luong (2003: 356), the primary obstacles in the way of economic reform in Uzbekistan are: (a) the vested interests of the status quo groups and a political system that disproportionately advantages these interests; (b) pervasive government attitudes concerning the prescribed social and economic roles of state and non-state actors; and (c) the limited access of entrepreneurs to information on relevant laws and regulations, and limited experience using the legal system.

Despite all of these problems, international institutions have supported and helped the Uzbekistani regime to achieve economic development, since the stable economic development of Uzbekistan is also important for the global world economy. According to the report of ICG (2004: 27), Uzbekistan, located at the center of the Silk Road, has become a favorite destination for global capital due to its wealth of natural resources. Moreover, since Uzbekistan is at the heart of Central Asia and has the largest population in the region, any problems related with Uzbekistan's economy has a certain influence on the economies of other Central Asian countries. The Uzbekistani government declared that the total amount of foreign capital that entered the country between 1992–2000 was 8 billion dollars, with most of this some coming from such international institutions as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. This capital has been mostly used for the realization of infrastructure projects and to finance import substituting industrialization. Foreign investors from various countries are continuing their activities by establishing joint companies in Uzbekistan. It should be noted that the country attracts foreign investment mostly from the Russian Federation, Turkey, the United States and Pakistan (TİKA, 2004).

According to the 2003 Development Cooperation Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the sum of total aid to Uzbekistan in 2003 was 595.4 million dollars. 63.9% of which was debt assistance, 30.1% was donations and 6% was humanitarian aid. The five leading organizations providing qualified debt assistance are the Asian Development Bank (ABD), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the KFW Bank (from Germany). The five leading organizations providing qualified donor assistance are the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Switzerland, Japan, KFW Bank and the Asian Development Bank. For example, according to the USAID LGI-II program, assistance has been provided in the following areas: intergovernmental finance, urban infrastructure, NGOs and community-based development projects, and the Civic Advocacy Support Program.

2.3.2 Rescaling, Restructuring, and Re-Territorialization of the Administrative System

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, one of the main reforms carried out in post-Soviet countries has been the decentralization of their administrative structures. However, a number of scholars have criticized the central government of many post-Soviet countries – especially those in Central Asia – for their unwillingness to pursue the principle of independence for local governments, and for failing to pass effective legislation to protect the rights of the local authorities. For example, according to Libman (2008: 18), “*Uzbekistan seems to remain*

highly centralized throughout the period of independence from the de-facto point of view as well; local governors have always been strictly controlled by the center”.

Uzbekistan has a multi-level administrative system, which is comprised of one autonomous republic (Karakalpakstan) and 12 Provinces (*viloyot*). These units are divided into 156 districts which are further divided into cities (*shahar*) and *tumans*. The province (*viloyot*), city (*shahar*) and district (*tuman*) administration is called the “*Hokimiyot*”. In addition, the Tashkent city *Hokimiyat* is the special structure accepted as a province in the administrative structure. In the third tier there is a local self-government structure, being the neighborhood committees known as *Mahalla Kengashes* (neighborhood committees), which are the smallest socio-spatial governmental unit (see Figure 2.4). According to recent official data, there are over 10,000 *mahallas* in Uzbekistan, and each citizen belongs to at least one *mahalla*. The *mahalla kengash* will be analyzed in more detail in the next chapters; however, here the structure of the *hokimiyat* and its relationship with the central government will be summarized.

The *hokimiyat*, as an administrative unit of *viloyot*, *shahar*, and *tuman*, has an appointed *hokim* and an elected local council (*majlis*). The *hokims* of the provinces and Tashkent are appointed and dismissed by the President and approved by the members of the Provincial *Hokimiyat* (Council) and Tashkent city council (Pushkun, 2003, 13). City and *Tumans Hokims* are appointed by the Provincial *Hokims* and approved by the city and *tuman* councils (*Hokimiyat*) for a period of five years (Epstein, 2004, 34). “The Law of Local Government” makes no distinction between different scales of local government. The fundamental Law on Local State Authorities, itself, when addressing the powers of *Hokims* (Article 25) speaks of the province, district and city levels in the aggregate, also without differentiating among tiers. Local councils are composed of publically elected members; and the main functions of these local councils are to approve the appointed *Hokims*, to prepare and approve the local budget and decide upon local issues. The chair of the local council is the *Hokim*, who calls a meeting at least twice a year, and the local council also has sub-committees that, most of the time, are involved in issues like budgets, the environment, agriculture, industry, transportation and other social issues (Pashkun, 2003: 38). The Uzbekistani regime declared that the radical transformation in their administrative structure through the implementation of the decentralization policy had been achieved successfully, resulting in a complete break from the Soviet past. However, while certain parts of the structure of the center-local relationship in the Uzbekistani administrative system have changed after independence, many characteristics of the Soviet era have persisted. The re-structuring of the Uzbekistani administration system and the changes in the center-local relationship may be analyzed in

terms of four main issues: (a) the relationship between the legislative (*majlis*) and executive (*hokim*) branches of the local governments; (b) the division of functions between local and central government; (c) the financial system of local government; and (d) the control held by the central government over the local administrations through the power of tutelage.

First, being directly elected by the public, the local legislative councils technically have the right to reject the decisions of *Hokim*, but in practice this is very rare. According to many scholars, local councils are unable to use their legal authority in practice, as their capacity to go against the will of the community has been diminished since they are under the control of the executive body (*Hokim*). Moreover, the upper local council has the legal authority to cancel any decisions made by the local councils, which can also be cancelled by the *Oli Majlis*. This means that all decisions of the local council may be annulled by an upper body. Another factor preventing the independence of the local council is that these councils are generally composed of lower level *Hokims*, who are appointed by the top *Hokims* that also chair the local council. A distinguishing feature of the Uzbekistan administrative structure at both local and central scale is the fact that the executive organs are more effective and influential than the legislative and judicial bodies (Epstein, 2004, 50), which has been a characteristic of local politics in both the post-Soviet and Soviet eras. This issue will be covered at the end of this chapter, when the control of the central government upon local governments will be discussed. According to Wollman (2003: 327-328), as the chairmen of sub-national executive bodies are appointed and removed by the president of the Republic, local authorities have no legislative power. Thus, regardless of their formal legal position, local authorities continue to lack any real autonomy from central control in many post-Soviet countries.

One of the most dominant issues in the administrative reforms taking place in post-Soviet countries is the changing division of functions between local and central government. After being launched in the Khrushchev era, the devolution of the power to implement many public policies to the local units has continued during the post-Soviet era in Uzbekistan. Interestingly, *“the devolution of services to the municipal self-governance level is often considered a key element of successful transformation, and thus is linked directly to the issue of administrative reform”* (Libman, 2008: 13). One of the most significant changes in local policy in the new era is that the duty of providing local services has been given to local governments in most countries, whereas it was devolved mostly to the local organizations of ministries during the Soviet era. In the case of Uzbekistan, there is no specific provision in law regarding a concrete division of labor between the central government and the local-tier administrations in the provision of basic functions, such as education, health, urban planning

and community services (Epstein, 2004, 42). Moreover, in 1997, the Council of Ministers took an important decision to establish a steady balance between local and central governments. According to this, many local organizations, which had been under the control of the central government's ministries, were tied to the *Hokimiyats*. However, it can be said that dual-subordination is still the dominant characteristic of the administrative structure of Uzbekistan (Epstein, 2004, 50), by which the local organizations of the ministries are vertically responsible to the President, while horizontally responsible to the *Hokim*, giving more power to the *Hokim* than the local councils at a local level. While conducting the research for this thesis, one *posbon*⁴⁰ said that “in Tashkent, who decides everything is the *Hokim*”. It should be remembered that the *Hokim* is appointed by the President and, thus the central government still holds the dominant position in local politics, especially with regard to local decision-making processes.

After the independence, if the changes in the division of the functions between local and central government is analyzed, the most striking point is that it was mainly the functions related with social policy that were devolved to local governments, rather than the economic or political functions. For example, whereas the financial and tax issues of the local areas was defined as coming under the responsibility of the local organizations of the ministries and the *Hokimiyat*, local health and educational policies came under only the *Hokimiyat's* responsibility (Pomfret, 1997, 17). Social policy tends to be delegated further down and more comprehensively than economic and political functions, which are more tightly controlled by the central government. Thus, law enforcement organs, local financial departments and the tax inspectorate are more vertically subordinated to their respective line ministries *vis-à-vis* the *Hokimiyats* than the local health and education departments. Official sources emphasize the need to increase the efficiency and accountability of social services by making their daily management more local. Critics, however, see this as a convenient abdication of responsibility –in effect, a way for the central government to deflect blame for the rapid decay prevailing in education, health and welfare (Pomfret: 1997, 17). Moreover, the same law makes no mention of the division of tasks between local and central governments in any functions, including health, education, city planning and social services (Epstein, 2004, 42).

One of the most important issues that brought about a change in local policy in post-Soviet countries was related to the privatization of public enterprises and the provision of public services. Many countries began their privatization processes with the sale of many local

⁴⁰ The officer in the *mahalla* committee is responsible for the security of the *mahalla*.

services that had been under the authority of the local governments (*raikom or gorkom*) – especially those services with a high profit-generating capacity – as part of the transition to a market-based economy. In contrast, the services that were not profitable enough to interest the private sector have remained under the responsibility of the local governments. During the transition era, exasperated by the economic crisis and the rapid migration to the cities, the local governments in many post-Soviet countries, including Uzbekistan, have faced great difficulties in providing these local services. In addition, *“the central government has reduced its financing for social services, so that local governments have been forced to attempt raising the consumer charges for housing and urban services, despite the fact that many workers are suffering from the frequent suspension of their wages”* (Moses, 2002: 105).

The third key issue in center-local government relations is related to the financial system of local governments. *“New intergovernmental institutions and new fiscal relations devolve many responsibilities from the central to the local level, without ensuring adequate fiscal capacity there to deliver urban services and cope with the problems of post-socialist cities”* (Tsenkova, 2006: 23) in many countries, including Uzbekistan. The local financial autonomy is weak in Uzbekistan, and local budgets are tied to the national budget. *“The local governments financially heavily depend on inter-budgetary transfers”* (Libman, 2008: 15), and local budget planning is practically centralized. According to Robertson and Kangas (2002: 278), *“over 80 percent of the viloyat budgets are actually dictated from the center”*. The Ministry of Finance demands a draft budget for the following year from the regional *hokimiyats*, Tashkent *hokimiyats* and the Karakalpak Cabinet of Ministers; and within three days these local governments demand their subordinate local governments prepare their own budgets. *“Within one week of adopting the national budget, the Ministry of Finance notifies the Karakalpak Cabinet and regional and Tashkent city Hokims of their total budget revenues and expenditures, subventions, subsidies and other budgetary indicators”* (Bektemirov&Rahimov, 2005: 497-498). The budgetary control of the central government is strong, in the sense that the central government decides not only how much money is sent to each *hokimiyat*, but also how this money should be spent. In short, there is no financial autonomy when it comes to local budgets; and moreover, there is no special legal regulation relating to the allocation of local budgets, which changes annually.

After independence, there is no legal basis to the strong control of the central government over the local governments through the power of tutelage, as control is applied much more informally. The main reason for the power of the appointed local leaders *vis-à-vis* the elected local council, which was also a feature of the Soviet administrative structure. However, it

may be argued that the power of the executive organ of the local government has increased in Uzbekistan after independence. First, it should be remembered that in the Soviet era there were two crucial local actors in local politics: the *raispalkom* –*gorispalkom* (head of the local party) and *raikom* –*gorkom* (head of the local government). Even if they were mostly in relation with each other and local government was absolutely under the local party authority most of the time, today, many of the functions and powers of these two different actors have been united under the power of the *Hokims* in Uzbekistan. “*The role of the head of the local government had been expanded to reach a greater scope of intervention by including the control over the operations of economic enterprises whose activity was formerly coordinated by the local apparatus of the Communist Party*” (Moses, 2003: 107). Thus, the personalization of ties between key political actors on different levels, and patron-client relations, which were remarkable features attributed to the administrative organization of the Soviet regime, have continued more strongly after independence in the absence of the mediation provided by the Party in matters raised among the local leaders (Moses, 2003: 116). However, in Uzbekistan there is still practically a one-party system – the *HDP* – which grew out of the Communist Party.

Moreover, as an old Soviet tradition, the setting of production quotas by the central government upon local governments is a practice that is still used by the new Uzbekistani regime. This is an important political tool, allowing the central government, in other words, the President, to appoint and remove regional *hokims*. Since independence there have been many occasions on which President Karimov has unseated regional *hokims*, citing economic inefficiency as a result of their incapability to govern, although the actual reason has been their opposition to his presidency (Robertson & Kangas, 2002: 277). For example, in 1997 the Nukus and Fergana *hokims*, and in 1998 the *hokim* of Samarqand, were dismissed. In short, the *hokim* is responsible for all spheres of activity within the locality, and this political structure, which was valid in both the Soviet and post-Soviet era, demonstrates the importance of regionalism based on the clan structure of Uzbekistan’s social life. The power retained by central government to be used in most cases upon local governments (regional-*viloyot*) is an example of the centralism that existed in both the Soviet and post-Soviet regimes in Uzbekistan. However, this raises another important and peculiar point regarding the administrative and political system in Uzbekistan, which is that the support of the regional leaders is always needed by the central government; and consequently, any opposing movements or leaders are swiftly removed from their positions by Karimov or the

Soviet leaders⁴¹. Luong (2000) goes into this in depth, demonstrating how the interests and political identities of regional elites are important for the central government in Uzbekistan.

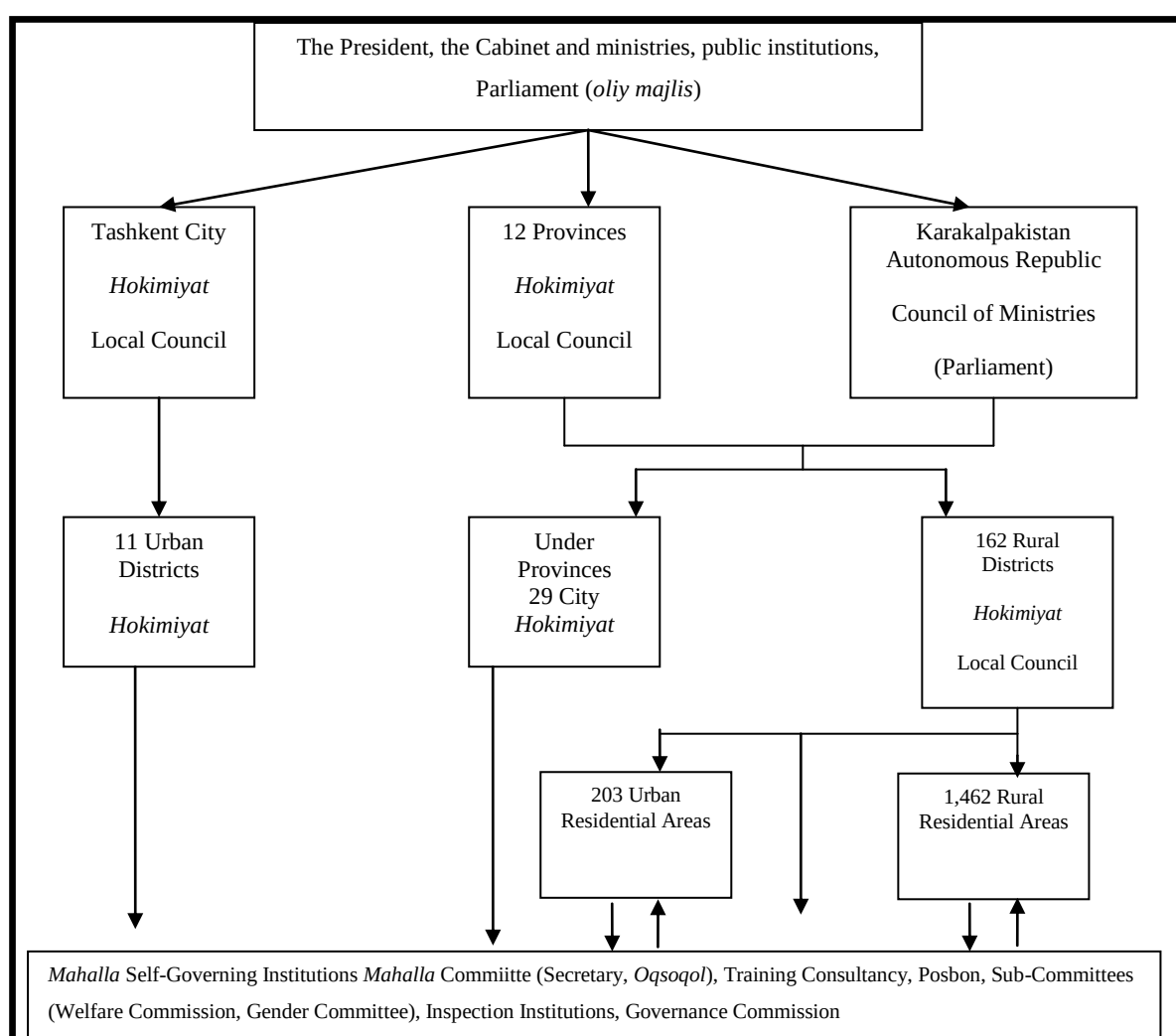
Another major reason for the dominant local executive and weak legislature is the centralized system of control over government finance. According to Moses (2003: 113), *“local government in Russia continues to bear primary responsibility for delivering a variety of services to residents, and the burden on local government in striving to discharge that responsibility has become heavier because of national government policy, the privatization of economic enterprises, and the general decline of the Russian economy”*. This is truly valid for the independent Uzbekistan as well. After independence, adopting the market-based economy resulted in the deterioration of the local economy and a lull in the economic development of small cities due to an economic crisis and the lack of local enterprises, and many local governments were unable to provide social services. In other words, because of the low budgets and heavy social service responsibilities, local governments became dependent on financial aid from the upper administrative units. In particular, in countries like Uzbekistan, the absence of a definite revenue allocation system between the center and local made local governments powerless against the central government when bargaining for aid. Moses (2003: 109) describes this issue as *“in such difficult circumstances in which there is an inadequate revenue base for local governments and they have a limited capacity for generating income through the taxes at their disposal, district or city authorities are forced to become highly dependent on the allocation of financial aid by the central and regional governments”*. As mentioned previously, one of the consequences of this has been a complete break of local resistance against the central government, and thus, negotiations between the local and center are still achieved through the leaders of different tiers of administration in Uzbekistan.

In addition, the administrative and political structure of Uzbekistan still retains some important aspects of the Soviet tradition, especially in terms of the local-center relationships in the decision-making process. The executive bodies control whether their decisions are implemented at a local level. Therefore, regarding its position *vis-à-vis* the center and its functions, the local government (*Hokimiyat*) takes the form of an extension of central government rather than an autonomous political and administrative institution (Pomfret, 1999, 14). The concentration of power in the hands of the *Hakimiyat* also implies the

⁴¹ This political tool was used by the Soviet regime upon the Uzbek Communist Party to set a balance between the powers of different regions and clans of Uzbekistan. For example, when the Fergana clan became politically powerful, Moscow removed the local leader of the Uzbek Communist Party's Fergana branch and appointed a new leader from Samarqand. For more information, see Luong (2002), Carlisle (2001), Markowitz (1998), Fierman (1991), Roy (2000) and Yalcin (2002).

territorial centralization of authority in Uzbekistan. The central government has the power to appoint and remove *Hokims*, as the executive organ of the local government, and the *Hokim* retains great power in the local council, as mentioned above. In this way, the central government retains a strong control mechanism on the local council. In short, according to Robertson and Kangas (2002: 265, 271):

“the power to appoint and remove officials as well as set goals for regional production and financing are strong indicators that the central government still maintains a firm control over the regional governments. ...all of these levels of local government are theoretically in charge of the economic, social, and cultural development of their regions. In practice, however, most executive authorities operate as an extension of the central government – as transmission belts to implement central policies. ... the central government retains a significant political and economic controller of the region”.



Source: Epstein&Winter; “Assessment of Intergovernmental Relations and Local Governance in the Republic of Uzbekistan, USAID, Washington, 2004: pp. 36

Figure 2.1 Structure of Uzbekistan Territorial Administration

2.4 The Center-Local Relationship from the Soviet to post-Soviet Era

In conclusion, “*Uzbekistan seems to have remained highly centralized throughout the period of independence from a de-facto point of view as well; local governors have always been strictly controlled by the center*” (Libman, 2008: 18). As Wollman (2003: 328) argues, especially for east European countries, the decentralization policy is continuously bypassed with the principle of deconcentration in Uzbekistan. All these features of the internal organization of the local governments and the structure of the center-local relationships demonstrate clearly the continuity between the Soviet and the post-Soviet administrative structures. Many scholars locate the feature of centralism at the center of this continuity; however these studies rarely investigate the reasons and dynamics behind this centralist tendency in the administrative structure of post-Soviet countries. This has resulted in an understanding in which the Soviet past is seen as the main reason for this centralist tendency, contrary to the existence of an expected decentralization during transition to a market-based economy. Moreover, there is a tendency to overlook the possibility that the new economic system itself creates a centralist state structure. However, there are others dynamics - analyzed in the next chapter -that push these countries towards a centralist state structure.

It is necessary to mention that the territorial structure of the administrative system of Uzbekistan and the center-local relationship is evaluated only through an institutional analysis in this chapter. In the following chapters, in which the *mahalla kengash* will be analyzed in more detail, to examine the center-local relationship again only through an institutional analysis, and to argue in the end that there is a centralist structure is thought to be a very reductionist approach. The role of local strategies is very effective in the continuation of this centralist structure, and this issue is central to the similarity between the Soviet and post-Soviet regimes. Regionalism is a crucial presentation of this issue at the upper level and the *mahalla*, and will be dealt with in the following chapters, signifies an example of this centralist tendency at the lower level. In other words, the main continuity between the two regimes in the creation of hegemony over society has been in the (re-)production of the pre-modern social relations –such as clan and kinship – through the informal personalization of ties between key political actors at different levels. This situation is related with the fact that the central power has to use local networks and relations to control the local community, regardless of the ideology of the regime, and as we will see later, although there are different compulsions behind today’s centralist state structures in the

post-Soviet countries, these states generally use the same strategy, i.e. the centralist state structure with their Soviet counterpart, when attempting to establish their hegemony.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY OF THE THESIS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction: Understanding Transition and the Contribution to Post-Soviet Transition Literature

Central Asia is treated only as a decorative figure in many Central Asian studies, failing to maintain even the lowest level of an emphatic relationship with the region. Such studies present more modern and refined versions of the traditional orientalist approach, which reduces the non-Western world to the level of exotic geographies with passive and irrational communities that were unable to affect their own destiny (Okur, 2011: 58).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new states emerged in the various regions of what was the USSR. Scholars inevitably concentrated on the Soviet command economy (Rumer 1989; 2000), Soviet nationality policy, nationstate building in the transition period, the new institutional structures of these new nationstates, (Allworth, 1994; Hajda and Beissinger, 1990; Fiermann, 1991; Roy, 2000; Khazanov, 1995; Motyl, 1992; Nahaylo and Swoboda, 1990; Tishkov 1997), the new geopolitics of the region (Fuller, 1992; Carlisle, 1995; Maleek, 1994), and the transition to a market economy and its problems (Kaser, 1997; Pomfret, 1995; Humphrey, 2002, Nazpary, 2002; King and Stucker, 2007, Lane, 2007; Manning, 2007). The fact that these issues have come to dominate literature related to the post-Soviet transition is not too surprising, given the interest in the strong international institution of the global economy that is beginning to dominate in the region. As Pickel (2002: 107) argues, it is the practical concerns of various actors that determine transformation theory, and so “*the actual institutional changes in post-socialist societies deviate significantly from the pathways set out in the blueprints of neo-liberal designers*”

(Hausner, Jessop and Nielsen, 1995: 4). In this regard, post-Soviet transition literature is a political rather than scientific project. As Pickel (2002: 108) points out:

“An international scientific-governmental-corporates plays the key role in producing and propagating this transformation theory... and not all actors are equal...transformation theory is produced by or for powerful institutions —international organizations, especially the World Bank, the EBRD and the IMF; the European Union; national governments of large and wealthy states; multinational corporations; and non-governmental organizations”.

Due to the domination of transition literature by the actors mentioned above, the two most influential issues in the post-communist context are neoliberalism and nationalism, however in this political project, many of the real agents and actors in transition countries are ignored (Pickel, 2002: 112). Accordingly, the focus of this thesis is the *mahalla kengash* of urban neighborhood communities, as a real actor in urban politics in Uzbekistan during the transition era. These will be analyzed not through textual documentation, but through personal accounts of decentralization during the transition era, and as well as the Soviet era. This thesis aims to provide an understanding of the institution-building process that took place at a local scale in Uzbekistan from the perspective of strategies and responses of national and local actors to the structural hegemony of the neo-liberal transition. In this thesis it is argued that the center-local relationship in local politics was affected by dynamics of different scales in the political/economic environment, and that these dynamics produced many conflicts in the center-local relationship. This will be analyzed through a study of different literature related to the post-Soviet transition in Uzbekistan, and in this way, this thesis aims to challenge different forms of literature related to three scales of political economic transition: the post-Soviet geography, Central Asia and Uzbekistan, and the Uzbekistani *mahalla*.

The first issue in the post-Soviet geography to raise tension in the center-local relationship was the conflict between the global discourse of decentralization and the central role of the new nation states in the transition to a market-based economy in the absence of capitalist socio-economic relations – such as a middle class and private property – in these countries, which resulted in a centralist tendency in the nation states. The source of this tension is explained in many post-Soviet transition studies as being between (a) the heritage of the centralist Soviet administrative structure through the concept of path-dependency and/or through emphasizing the continuity of the power of the political elite, and (b) the requirement for decentralization in the new administrative structure in order to be able to adapt to a market-based economy and democratization (Hadiz, Vedi R.; 2008: 527; Steen and Ruus, 2002; Turan, 2009; Humprey, 2007; Ilkhamov, 2004; 2007). This argument tends

to ignore (a) the effects of the structural conditions of the transition era that ascribe a centralist role to the state in the transition process to a market-based economy and the establishment of the new regime, and (b) the inherent tendency of centralization in capitalist political regimes. In short, this thesis aims to challenge the political hegemony of neo-liberalism – known as “decentralization –in post-Soviet transition literature on two fronts. First, this thesis criticizes explanations in post-Soviet transition literature that the centralist tendency of these countries in their state structure was related only with the Soviet past; and second, this thesis criticizes neo-liberal discourse that establishes a direct relationship between democracy and decentralization in the administrative structure.

Accordingly, this thesis primarily takes a critical view of post-Soviet transition literature, believing it to be dominated mostly by a neo-liberal paradigm and its hegemonic discourse of decentralization. There are several difficulties faced when analyzing the change and/or continuity of local politics through the decentralization of the administrative system in Uzbekistan during the transition period, but there are many such studies to choose from, including Sievers (2007), Sievers (2002), Stevens (2005), Koroteyeva & Makarova (1998; 1999), Pashkun (2003), Libmann (2008), Noori (2006), Coudouel, Sheila Marnie & John Micklewright (1998; 2005), Komiliv (2000), Hudoykulov (2005), Matkarimov (2005), Botirhanov (2007), Hokimov (2007), Kirgizboyev (2007), Umorova (2007), Usmoanova (2004), Baykal (2006, 2007), Masaru (2006), Abramson (1998), Kamp (2004), Epstein & Winter (2004), Bektemirov & Rahimov (2004), Earle (2006) and Kandiyoti (1996). Indeed, this is also not too surprising, because, as emphasized above, in general, transition literature has been politically built as a hegemonic tool of international institutions that are strong in the global economy. This is also true for the post-Soviet Central Asian countries, as undeveloped parts of the former Soviet Union. For Central Asian countries, the most dominant transition literature is decorated with the elements of old orientalist perspectives. For example, according to Okur (2011):

“Brzezinski (1986), whose words are most often cited in strategic geopolitics of Central Asia, said that the most geopolitical prize is Euroasia, and America's global supremacy depends on the length and effectiveness of the rule of Eurasia. According to him, the Eurasian Balkans are Central Asia in terms of the ethnic conflicts, commenting that the best method when attempting to control the region is to create a structure that will make possible the unimpeded access of global economic and financial actors into the region”.

Related with this issue, Noori (2006: 533), who is the most significant of all authors studying the issue of decentralization in Uzbekistan through the *mahalla kengash*, made a meaningful comment: *“Many international donors promptly tailored their development projects to work through and with the mahalla. As a result of their activities, the mahalla became the focal*

point for the vast majority of development interventions by international non-governmental organizations in Uzbekistan. Western NGOs perceived these policies to be equivalent in purpose and function to the neo-liberal oriented WB discourse on decentralization”.

After 1990, the number of academicians taking an interest in Central Asia and Uzbekistan saw a marked increase all around the world; with many of the studies concerned with Uzbekistan focusing on the institutional change and nation state building from the perspective of identity politics, clan structure and ethnic conflict (Allworth, 1994; Roy, 2000, Carlisle, 2001; Saroyan, 1996; Collins, 1999; Markowitz, 1998; Luong, 2003), democracy (Fiermann, 1991, Fish, 1998; Clark, 1999; Synder, 2000; Rahul, 1979; Rumer, 2002; Radntz, 2003), human rights, civil society (Masaru 2006; Ilkhamov, 2004), Islam (Khalid, 2006; 1998; Roy, 2000; Shahrani; Megoran, 2007; Fugere, 2005; Hanks, 2007), gender (Kandiyoti, 1996; Peshenkova, 1996; Fathi, 2003), international relationships (Robertson, 2003) and economic transition (Spechler, 2007; Dadabayev, 2004; Hisao, Saxena & Dadabaev, 2005; Ilkhamov, 2007; Ruziev, Ghosh & Dow, 2007). Although extensive studies have been made exploring the political, social and economic transformation in Uzbekistan at a national scale, attempts to understand how this transition was perceived by local social and political actors of the region have been lacking. Since access to the region was, until recently, limited, micro-level studies of these issues are few and far between in Central Asian literature. Studies by political scientists, international relations experts and economists have examined the institutional framework set up in Soviet times and their post-Soviet changes (Baykal, 2007); yet, these need to be supported by ethnographic studies into how nation building and market reforms are being experienced at a local level. Moreover, a common feature of transition studies in Central Asia has been the cultural elements, which are often emphasized to the point of cultural fetishism, and this has resulted in Central Asian society appearing to be removed from its own historicity in many studies. In contrast, this study follows a different route to these past works, choosing instead to analyze the different reflections of the urban community on the post-Soviet transition from a political/economic perspective.

There are also several studies concerned with spatial transformation and the urban structure during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods in Uzbekistan (Shadeo, 2000; Stronski, 2003; Rabenhorst, Genstler & Gradwal, 2002; Alexander, Buchli & Humprey, 2007), and this study also contributes to this field by studying the socio-spatial impacts of the transition of cities, as well as local politics and the decentralization issue in Uzbekistan. The scarcity of previous literature on this subject has caused some difficulties for this study, as most studies of the socialist city and its transformation in the post-Soviet geography are based on East European

countries (Andrusz, Harloe, Szelenyi, 1996; Enyedi, 1998; French, Hamilton, 1979; Friedrichs, 1985; 1997; Ashwin, 2000; Musil, 1980; Kotkin, 1995; Domanski, 1994; Kideckel, 2004; Hamilton, 1995; Sýkora, 2000; Kostinskiy, 1994; Baburov, 1968; Parkins, 1953; Stenning, 2005), which constitutes the primary problem of this dissertation from a theoretical perspective. Also, literature related to the decentralization process of the post-Soviet geography is dependent on East European countries and Russia. After 1991, social scientists presupposed that the post-Soviet countries underwent a distinct political, economic and social transformation when they broke away from the Soviet regime; however their individual stories show that each country experienced its own kind of transformation that was based on their individual traditions and historical backgrounds (pre-Soviet and Soviet), as well as the impositions of international structures. Thus, these studies into decentralization in Eastern Europe and Russia can be used only as secondary sources for studies of urban change in Central Asian countries in the transition period. Although these would appear to be obstacles in the way of making a connection between the transition and urban change in Central Asian and East European countries, studies into urban change in Eastern Europe can provide vital information on the urban change experienced in Central Asia. One of the differences between Central Asia and East European countries is their Soviet experiment, which in the case of Uzbekistan caused a unique decentralization policy based on the presence of the *mahalla kengash*. The establishment of nation states in Central Asian countries after the demise of the Soviet Union was also different from East European countries in a number of ways: first, Central Asian and East European countries have different historical backgrounds and traditions; second, the East European countries had established nation states prior to World War II, whereas nation states had never existed in Central Asia until the 1990s. Although some national movements arose in Turkistan at the beginning of the 1900s (e.g., *Jadidism*, *Basmachilar*), the new nations in Central Asia were established under the Soviet Union; third, despite the fact that all of the post-Soviet countries had had a socialist state history, the Soviet experience was different in Central Asia from Eastern Europe; and finally, after socialism, East European countries took influence and support from the European Union when establishing nation states and new institutional structures, while the countries in Central Asia had to reinvent themselves with no such support. In addition, when discourse related to glo-localism strengthened against the idea of the nation state, Central Asian countries established their new nation states with an imaginary national consciousness that had been formulated by the Soviet regime, and thus, the new institution-building process in Central Asia followed the Soviet political tradition more than in Eastern Europe, because their national consciousness and national institutional structure had been established by the Communist Party.

This study of the *mahalla kengash* in Tashkent will make a valuable regional and historical contribution to literature on local government in transition countries, especially in underdeveloped countries of the former Soviet Union. This contribution will be achieved through the development of a historical perspective out of the different experiences of divergent types of *mahallas* in urban Uzbekistan, and how these types of *mahallas* reproduce or change their strategies in multiple ways. More specifically, this dissertation shows how the different urban *mahalla kengashes*, whose historical backgrounds were shaped in especially the Soviet era, responded to the decentralization policy of the state. A critical assessment will be made of existing research as an impetus for further study of urban Central Asia in the transition period, which is a subject that has to date been largely overlooked in literature. Each locality has experienced transition along a different path according to their different and original historical backgrounds, especially their experiences in the Soviet era; and this dissertation aims to address this gap in our understanding of the post-socialist social, administrative and economic transformation by focusing on the Uzbekistani *mahalla* as a local institution, and by hearing first-hand the opinions and perspectives of local actors on their rapidly changing environment.

In this regard, another contribution of this thesis to literature is related to the urban structure of Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan, during the Soviet era. Much has been written to date about Soviet urban structures, Soviet urban planning and housing policy, including researches into the control of urban growth, planned economic growth, state-owned land, collectivization, industrialization, institutional structure of the urban plan, features of the urban plan, housing policy, etc. (Harris, 1970; Parkins, 1953; French, 1967; 1979; Mathieson, 1975; Frolic, 1972; Andrusz, 1984; Szelenyi, 1983; Bator, 1989; Matthews, 1979; Morton, 1980; Rukavishnikov, 1980; Smith, 1994; 1996; Sigurd, 1993; Hill, 1980; Lehmann, 1997; Humphrey, 2007; Baločkaitė, 2010; Wyly, 2010). This wealth of literature is based mostly on East European and Russian cities, as is the case with post-Soviet urbanization literature; while studies of Central Asian urbanization during the Soviet era are few and far between, and generally focus on specific cities in Central Asia (Shadeo, 2000; Stronski, 2003; Boworth 2007; Gentile, 2004; Petruccioli, 2004). The Soviet city was shaped according to interactions between elements of the socialist ideology, the parameters set by state policy, concrete implementations and the legacies of pre-socialist urban structures (Fliege-Sailer, 1999: 12); while the differences between the urban space and structure of Soviet Central Asia and Soviet Eastern Europe emerged out of their different social structures and urban features in the pre-Soviet period, and the application of different policies towards these geographies by the Soviet Union. Consequently, despite collectivization, nationalized local

urban economies, a planned economy and rapid industrialization, the aim of creating an equal and classless urban society could not been achieved in Central Asia due to the features of their pre-Soviet past, and instead Central Asia became marked by inequality between regions and cities, and uneven development and social segregation within the cities. Consequently, it is the intention with this study to contribute to Soviet urban literature by offering some important clues as to why the urbanization process in Central Asia was different to that of East Europe during the Soviet era.

There have to date been a few studies of Uzbekistani *mahallas* that have had different objectives, such as assessing their purposes as administrative or social units. These include works by Abramson (1997), Noori (2006), Sievers (2002), Coudouel (1998), Kamp (2008), Morgan Liu (2002), Dadabayev (2006), Adams (2008) and Baykal (2007). Studies concerned with the Uzbekistani *mahalla* are related generally with gender, social assistance, clan structure, civil society, democratization, decentralization and social policy; however the *mahalla* is tackled by these authors as if they follow a standard form, or at best categorized into modern and traditional. Although both the Soviet and Uzbekistani governments established standard regulations about *mahallas*, their spatial and temporal locations led to them developing differently in each period, giving rise to different social structures and different processes of transformation, from the Soviet to the post-Soviet time. Accordingly, the locations of *mahallas*, their historical accumulations (backgrounds), their socio-economic conditions, their spatial situations, and most importantly, the level of intensity of state interventions into the different *mahallas* in two periods of Uzbekistan's history shaped the different strategies of each community to deal with the problems that emerged out of the process of neo-liberalism. The Uzbekistani state, after independence, chose the *mahalla* as a local governing body to implement its social policies, however the urban *mahallas* produced different strategies to combat poverty and unemployment, and formulated different ways of fulfilling their state duties. These differentiations among strategies of *mahallas* were mostly shaped by the legacy and urban policy of the Soviet regime in Central Asia, and so by studying the different types of *mahalla* at a local scale, the different factions of a local community within the process of the transformation of socio-spatial systems and local institutions may be understood, which is an issue that has to date been overlooked in Central Asian literature.

Many studies into the Uzbekistani *mahalla* have focused on the role of the *mahalla* as a political/administrative or socio-spatial unit in the transition period. However, these studies, which use this neighborhood community or committee as one of the main tools of analysis

for understanding the issues of the transition period in Uzbekistan, have failed to analyze in detail the Uzbekistani *mahalla* structure and its divergent paths, and make only a traditional and modern distinction between the different types. Indeed, this may be understandable for these studies, because the *mahalla* has two different meanings: as a socio-spatial unit and as a political/administrative unit. In studies that focus on the *mahalla* community as a socio-spatial unit with emphasis only on the traditional *mahalla*, generalizing the results to all *mahalla* units leads to erroneous assumptions; while others studies that are interested in the *mahalla kengash* and the decentralization policy focus only on the legal reforms in local government. Accordingly, both categories of studies fall short of painting a complete picture, in that they do not analyze in detail why and how these different *mahalla* forms emerged, and thus only make a distinction between modern and traditional *mahallas*. In this study, using the critical realism theory, which emphasizes that there is real structure and mechanism generally composed of the material condition and institutional power behind the observable phenomenon, it is argued that if both meanings of the *mahalla* are examined – socio-spatial and political/administrative– during the Soviet regime, it can clearly be seen that the differences between the different *mahalla* types far exceed the merely modern and traditional aspects. In this thesis it is claimed that although there are modern and traditional *mahallas*, behind this differentiation lies the institutional power and the articulation of the production modes of the different *mahalla* structures to the Soviet regime. It is argued that different levels of articulation of the production modes of different spatial units at different territorial scales –such as local, national and supra-national – to the state structure result in inequality and uneven development both among and within the urban scale in the capitalist world. Underdevelopment and its lifestyle and traditional and patriarchal social order are results of the inequality of capitalism rather than vice versa. In this thesis it is claimed that this hypothesis is also true for the Soviet regime. Central Asia, is the third world of the Soviet Union, is under-developed and has a traditional social structure; and the Soviet regime (re-)produced this underdeveloped structure through social and economic policies, and as a result, the traditional and patriarchal social structure of Central Asia was retained. This hypothesis can be tested perfectly through the Soviet policy towards the urban Uzbekistani *mahalla*.

Such a view from below is essential for understanding how post-socialist transformations are experienced in different types of *mahalla*, and also provides an indication of the divergent role of family, kinship, communitarianism and morality in the transformation process (Baykal, 2007). Many studies of the transformation from the Soviet welfare system, based on class and redistributive politics, to the new economic liberal system, based on identity

politics and politics of representation, argue that the widening inequality and poverty has put a strain on indigenous forms of social organization, such as the family and neighborhood community that dealt with the distribution of food, services and protection (Baykal, 1997; Humphrey, 2007; Stenning, 2005; Baločkaitė, 2010; Kotkin, 1997; Ashwin, 2000; Kideckel, 2004). One of the most interesting findings of this research is that the efficacy of these indigenous social organizations was different during the Soviet era, since the Soviet regime distributed welfare to the neighborhood communities in an unfair way. Therefore, the neighborhoods that had already developed strong indigenous social organizations were able to cope more easily with the social and economic problems faced during the transition era, and the new state even glorified the ability of these organizations to deploy the distribution of social welfare. The significance level of these social organizations in the socio-economic problems of the transition era is socio-spatially differentiated at the micro-level of urban Uzbekistan. For example, while some neighborhood committees were able to perpetuate the same strategies that they had developed during the Soviet era for the distribution of welfare to the community in the transition era, those that were established after independence were much less experienced, and so less successful in the task.

Unfortunately, most transition studies concerning the decentralization of the administrative system idealize existing local governments in modern Western Europe, and suggest creating similar a political structure in Uzbekistan (Masaru: 2006); however what is more important is seeing how local people at both a national and local levels understand decentralization and center-local relations. For this reason it is necessary to research the concept of decentralization “from within” (national or local). Most studies tend to analyze the *mahalla* issue in Uzbekistan focusing solely on the constitutional order and the state institutions – within the narrow definition of local politics – which is based only on a legal framework that, most of the time, camouflages the important power relations that exist between the center and local, embedded in the practices of both social and political actors, which is the main subject of this study.

In short, this thesis aims to investigate the effects of the transition from the Soviet class and redistributive politics to the neo-liberal identity and representation politics, and the effect on local politics in different urban *mahallas* in Uzbekistan. This dissertation is a critical study of local politics and local government in Uzbekistan, and contributes in a unique way to existing literature on institution building, especially at a local scale, in Uzbekistani politics. Finally, this study challenges the main understanding of social sciences, which explains social facts using such dichotomies as modern-traditional societies, *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft*, primary-secondary relations, Western-Eastern society, etc. Herein, it is argued

that the *mahalla*, as a representative case of transition in the areas of local politics, local community and urban policy, constitutes a comprehensive picture of how these dichotomies go hand-in-hand. The *mahalla* is a prime example of this, in that it:

- has both primary and secondary relations
- has both a traditional and modern style
- represents both state and society
- represents both Islamic and secular lifestyles (representing both the secular teacher and the imam)
- is both conservative and progressive
- combines all these features in a way that is both dialectical and eclectic.

The reason why the urban *mahalla* can constitute all these features in Uzbekistan is because it is a part of a political/hegemonic project. Not only today, but historically, the *mahalla* is a representative arena of local power structures in political and hegemonic projects, although these projects have differed over time. Consequently, an attempt will be made to explain the reflections of today's political and hegemonic project on the *mahalla* by focusing on transformations in the spatial unit, in the institutional structure and in the power relations, and vice versa. Moving on from these contributions, Uzbekistani local politics will be analyzed in terms of the structural constraints and strategic actions through the case of the urban *mahalla*. The theoretical framework and methodology of the thesis will be built in this chapter. Primarily, it is argued that critical realism theory is the most suitable methodology for the attainment of the aim of this thesis, which is to understand the post-Soviet transition at both a national and local scale from the perspective of the dialectic relationship between the structural constraints of neo-liberalism and the strategic actions of national and local institutions. Accordingly, it is necessary now to explain the methodology of this study, which depends on critical realism theory, a retroductive strategy and historical reflexivity.

3.2 Methodology of the Thesis: Actor-Structure Relationship and Critical Realism

Studies of the post-Soviet transition to the market-based economy can on the whole be categorized into two main groups, which are important for understanding the crisis in the center-local relationship in the transition era: (a) actor-based approaches and (b) structuralist arguments or the structural conditions of the transition era. While several studies following the actor-based approach emphasize dominantly the *continuity* between the Soviet and post-Soviet eras using elite theory, and as a concept of historical institutionalism, path-

dependency; the structuralist argument explains the transition era in terms of the *changes* to the political, economic and social structures that occurred between the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. However, these two approaches have contrary meanings in general social theory. What I mean here is that the metaphor of structure implies stability, and so the question of how changes or breakdowns take place over time remains unanswered or, at best, explained by influences that are exogenous to the system or outside of the structures. Several actor-based approaches try to overcome this obstacle by focusing on the importance of the actor or agency. Why, while structuralist language generally refers to stability, and the actor-based approach refers to change through human action, in post-Soviet transition literature do they refer to the opposite notion?

As mentioned in the previous section, the dominant approach in transition literature is to argue that many Soviet *nomenklature* and agencies at both national and local scales have continued to retain power in socio-economic as well as political life in the transition era. These actor-based studies on the issue of the post-Soviet transition have focused on the conflicts that emerge in the change from the totalitarian Soviet past to the new democratic regime and the continuity of the elite power. They mainly argue that political actors are the main factors behind regime change (Kutmanaliev, 2009; Gallina, 2008; Steen&Ruus, 2002; Fukuyama, 2004; Frits, 2007; Kryshtanovskaya, 1995), and that although structural factors influence the formation of an actors' preferences and level of power, human actions and choices are the key elements affecting the character of a political regime (McFaul, 2002; Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1935). Many transition studies at both the national and local ends of the political scale focus on the impact of the elite on state reforms in the post-Soviet geography. These state reforms are seen as an important element in the creation of a functioning state, which in a post-communist geography means the strengthening of the capacities of a democratic, efficient and decentralized state, and these studies generally argue that the strengthening of state capacities in the transition era failed mostly due to the actions of the political elite in post-Soviet countries.

The approach of the second group, in contrast, is that the transition from the Soviet to post-Soviet era through the emergence of private property, and the transition from a planned to a market-based economy resulted in a major structural change in both political and social life at all scales across the post-Soviet geography. While this structure-based approach explains the transition era from an economic-political perspective, focus has been mainly on the effect of the transition on socio-political and economic life, being directly related to the methodological deficiency of structuralist theory. According to Sewell (1992), "*the*

structuralist arguments tend to assume a far too rigid causal determinism in social life”.

There is no doubt that the transition from state socialism to a market-based economy had a radical influence on the post-Soviet countries, however the actors who implemented and who still continue to apply the same strategies of the old political regime are ignored by the structural-based approach to the issue of post-Soviet transition. Therefore, although there has been a big refraction in this geography, many features and strategies have been carried over into the new era, particularly by former political actors and institutions at different scales. This has led to a new and unique political, economic and social structure in this geography that is somewhat different to Western capitalist society. However, these strategies have also been shaped and restricted by the structure of the new political economy in the region.

Both perspectives fall short of fully explaining the post-Soviet transition. The new era has brought with it several new constraints and opportunities, and all actors, whether operating at a local or national scale, need to abide with them in the new post-Soviet countries, despite any predisposition carried over from the Soviet political environment. An attempt will be made in this thesis to explain the change/continuity in local politics in Uzbekistan in the post-Soviet era by investigating the dialectic relationship between the strategies of actors operating under these new structural constraints, and the transition from state socialism to a market-based economy.

Accordingly, using critical realism theory and a retroductive strategy, this thesis analyses the strategies of the neighborhood committees (*mahalla kengash*) in dealing with the social and economic consequences of the post-Soviet transition and the response of the urban *mahalla kengashes* to the rapid increase in their authority and responsibility under the new laws enacted by the independent Uzbekistani state. In this section, the reasons why critical realism theory and a retroductive strategy have been adopted in this dissertation will be explained.

According to critical realism theory, reality is not necessarily observable, and there are causal relationships between phenomena and unobservable structures or mechanisms in social science. While external reality or observable data is valid in critical realist theory, like in positivist theory, it is not enough to reach the reality. According to Blaikie (1993: 98), social structures are theoretical entities that cannot be perceived by direct observation (Keat & Urry, 1971). Social reality is viewed as a socially constructed world in which either social episodes are products of the cognitive resources that social actors bring to them (Harre, 1970) or social arrangements are products of material but unobservable structures and relations (Bhaskar, 1978).

Thus, as built by Bhaskar, critical realism theory is an epistemology with roots in both

Kantian and Marxist theories. First, through the Marxist argument that the surface and core of an object are different from each other, critical realism claims that the method used to get to the core of object is dialectical. While science provides the experience and observable data of its surface, the dialectic method presents us with the reality of the core of object and the mechanisms or structures that shape it. The real dynamic of social change can be explained only through analyzing the core of an object and its mechanisms or structures. Critical realism theory argues that reality is not like its appearance, although there is a reality in its depth. Marx claims that social, political and intellectual life are shaped by material living conditions determined by modes of production in economic structures, and are transformed only through changes in the mode of production.

Secondly, the existence of both priori and posteriori forms are discussed in the transcendental philosophy of Kant. It is impossible to perceive a thing as in itself, but one can learn something about an object or a thing only through using and putting priori categories in an order in space and time. Van Dijk (1997), one of the most important proponents of critical realism, gives place to these cognitive categories in his studies, and refers to both the Marxist and Kantian approaches, underlining that the dominant discourse in the society is the discourse of the elite who have power over the society, while also argues that there is no direct link between ideology and dominant discourse, but that there is a mental process between them⁴² (Altinal, 2010: 81).

There is a significant difference between explanation and prediction in critical realism, unlike in positivism. Explanations must be pursued as the primary objective of science, but explained phenomena do not show the structures or mechanisms that generate it. It is possible to discover the necessary connections between explained phenomena and mechanisms through prediction by acquiring knowledge of the underlying structures or mechanisms. These connections and mechanisms often seem to postulate the existence of unobservable entities and processes; therefore, according to a critical realist, scientific theory should give a description of structures and mechanisms which causally generate the observable phenomena (Keat and Urry, 1975: 5; Blaikie, 1993: 98).

Critical realism does not suggest a strict and rigid method, but rather proposes a progressive (gradual) means of getting into reality, although there is a distinction between the domains of the empirical, the actual and the real.⁴³ According to Blaikie, *“the empirical is made up of*

⁴² Context consists of relative and dynamic representations of social actors. Representation of the situation in mind allows an understanding of the context and adaptation to the context, and contributes to the discourse. With this definition, the context, cognition, and discourse can be integrated.

⁴³ Indeed, the relationship between structure and agency is one of the longest-standing issues in sociological inquiry. For example, Giddens' structuration approach is one of the most suitable approaches for explaining the

experiences of events through observation; the actual includes events whether observed or not; and the real consists of the processes that generate events” (Blaikie, 1993: 98). In this respect, in critical realism, getting into reality is achieved in a progressive way. For example, Parker in his book, *Dynamics of Discourse* (1992) argues that forms of discourse among social actors and their reactions are influenced by the physical condition and the mode of production. In short, the discourse of social actors, which is an observable data, is built up through the power relations that Marxist economic exploitation (the elite and the bourgeoisie) gives form, and at the end this discourse points to a reality that is actually a deep reality or material condition behind the observable data (Altınal, 2010: 80). Therefore, in this dissertation, critical realism is adopted in reference to the main aim of this study, which refers to the explanatory mechanisms behind the strategy and the tactics produced by local actors in different *mahalla* types during the transition period.

Critical realism has several advantages over other methodologies. For critical realism, social sciences must adopt the same scientific principles as natural sciences in order to be scientific, however they should not insist on an identity of method because social reality is (re)produced by social actors, who in turn are also generated by social reality or structure (both dependent and independent variables; subject-subject relationship). As Blaikie (1993: 58) explains, “*Human beings are regarded not as passive responders to the contingencies of their social world*”. Therefore, critical realism has advantages over positivism in that experiences and observable data are tools of a scientific method; however they are not enough to allow an understanding of the structures and mechanisms that generate them. It also supersedes radical idealism, because of its acceptance that experiences and cases are generated by mechanisms that have a reality that is outside theory. Moreover, for example, hermeneutics also explain the social world correctly as comprising a pre-interpreted reality, however hermeneutics suggest that the social world is reducible to the ideas that people have about it, which is not accepted by a critical realist because the causal efficiency confirms their reality (Jessop, 1990: 42). As mentioned previously, this view of critical realism fits perfectly with the aim of the dissertation, which also focuses the reciprocal and dialectic relationship between the social actor – the so-called local actors – and the structure

structure-agency relationship. However, the distinction between the domains of the empirical, the actual and the real makes gives critical realism superiority over Giddens’ explanation of the relationship between the actor and agency. Jessop (2005: 45) explains this point as “*Giddens’ approach treats structure and agency at the level of the actual rather than in terms of real mechanisms and, moreover, he study structure and agency in terms of an alternating movement in which he brackets one moment of the duality. Thus, within the terms, Giddens treats structure at any given time in isolation from action, and thereby implies that a given structure is equally constraining and/or enabling for all actors and all actions –simply serving (no more, but no less) as the prevailing set of rules and resources for action*”. Thus in the theory of Giddens, there is little recognition of the different capacities of actors to change different structures through their actions. (Jessop, 2005: 45)

– the so-called legal regulation framework of the Uzbekistani State within the local administration system.

The instrument adopted by critical realism theory in order to discover, describe, explain and intervene in the phenomenon under investigation is the retroductive strategy, which involves *“the construction of hypothetical models as a way of uncovering the real structures and mechanisms which are assumed to produce empirical phenomena”* (Blaikie, 1993: 168). According to Bashkar, there are three closely interrelated steps in the retroductive research strategy that are used in the critical realist approach: to describe the observed connections between the phenomena or to describe the correlations between variables; to postulate the existence of the real structures and mechanisms that can explain the relationship built between phenomena; and to demonstrate the existence and operation of these structures and mechanisms, either through experimental activities designed to isolate and perhaps to observe them, or by eliminating alternative explanations (Blaikie, 1993: 170).

Jessop overcomes some of the problems of both critical realism and the perspective of political-economy through a strategic-relational approach in his state analysis, creating one of the main bridges over the gap between theory and the case of this study. In this section it is necessary to explain briefly his strategic-relational approach. In critical realism, Jessop brings great explanations to the relationship between structure and action through the strategic-relational approach. According to Jessop (1990: 48), the strategic-relational approach *“examines structure in relation to action, action in relation to structure, rather than bracketing one of them....structures are treated analytically as strategically selective in their form, content, and operation; and actions are likewise treated as structurally-constrained, more or less context-sensitive, and structuring”*. He continues to explain this approach as:

“To treat structures as strategically selective involves examining how a given structure may privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons and some actions over others. Likewise, to treat actions as structurally constrained requires exploring the ways, if any, in which actors take account of this differential privileging through a “strategic-context” analysis when undertaking a course of action”.

The strategic-relational approach can be described in five rows, which, according to Jessop, demonstrate the differences between this approach and other approaches to the structure-actor relationship. The first and second stages are the same as other critical realists (Giddens, Bashkar&Archer), but fail to explain the real dialectic relationship between structure and agency, according to Jessop (1990: 49). First is the inadmissible dichotomy between external

constraints and free-willed action. These two terms serve *“as the initial thesis and antithesis of the theoretical movement leading to a strategic-relational analysis of structured coherence. The second row presents the orthodox structure-agency duality, which sublates both thesis and antithesis by treating structure as an emergent effect of action, and agency as a structurally constrained mode of skillful action”* (Jessop, 1999: 52). The third, fourth and fifth rows are the core themes of a strategic-relational approach, and show its superiority over other approaches to the structure-agency relationship. In these rows, Jessop explains the relationship between the spatio-temporal choices of administrative structures and the differential spatio-temporal horizons and action capacities of the individual and/or institution. With the concept of spatio-temporality of structures he overcomes “some necessary historical sequence in the development of structure and agency or a mandatory order of presentation for empirical analysis” (Jessop, 1990: 49), which is the main core in both Giddens’ structuration theory and Bashkar’s transformational models of social activity. Thus, the strategic-relational approach of Jessop brings historical continuity to critical realism, which goes a long way in explaining the main argument of this study: that different types of *mahalla kengash* (re-)produced temporally-spatially various strategies to address the structural hegemony of the neo-liberal transition and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime due to their spatio-temporally different experiences, which were shaped by the dialectic relationship between the Soviet hegemonic project and their different strategies. According to Jessop (1990: 52):

“... structures emerge in specific places and at specific times, operate at one or more particular scales and with specific temporal horizons of action, have their own specific ways of articulating and interweaving their various spatial and temporal horizons of action, develop their own specific capacities to stretch social relations and/or compress events in space and time, and, in consequence, have their own specific spatial and temporal rhythms... it is in this context that one can study the spatio-temporal dialectics involved in strategy and tactics and the spatio-temporal dialectics of path-dependency and path-shaping”.

As a final point, the strategic-relational approach indicates a possible outcome of the recursive interaction between the strategic choices of administrative structures and the reflexive behavior of agents within the production of a structured coherence. This structured coherence involves *“a structurally-inscribed strategic selectivity that rewards actions compatible with the recursive reproduction of the structures in question. Nonetheless, this coherence is always multiply tendential. First, since the reproduction of structures is only ever tendential, so too are their strategic choices; second, structures cannot guarantee their self-reproduction but only privilege some strategies and actors over others; third, subjects are never unitary, never fully aware of the conditions of strategic action, never fully equipped to realize their preferred strategies, and always face possible opposition from*

actors pursuing other strategies or tactics; and fourth, institutions often embody structural contradictions and create strategic dilemmas” (Jessop, 1990: 51).

Lastly, it is necessary to emphasize the relationship, or conflict, between critical realism as a methodology and the ethnographic research methods used in this study, i.e. participant observations, interviews and focus groups.⁴⁴ The basic intention in using these methods, as mentioned in Chapter One, is “*to understand parts of the world as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who actually live them out*” (Cook & Crang, 1995: 4). For example, if using an ethnographic method in the case of an explosion in the center of a city, the main issue is not the explosion, but rather its reflections, responses and the attitudes of people to the accident. Thus, in this study, ethnographic research is used in order to obtain opinions and strategies from the *mahalla kengashes* and communities about the transition era and the new regime, as well as the decentralization policy of the regime.

Adopting the methodology of critical realism, in this study there is a crucial point related with the use of ethnographic methods. Classical ethnographic research has a structure that contains domination of the researcher over the research object. This method places the researcher in a position that is strong, decisive and dominant over the community as an object of the research. Thus, in this classical ethnographic method there needs to be a sharp boundary between the researcher and the community (object) in order to ensure the objectivity of the research. Recently, a critique of this positivist view has been made from a hermeneutic perspective in ethnographic researches, in which the most important aspects are the standpoint of the researcher, and the processes of compiling and taking down information. Situating the interpretation of the researcher at the center of the research leads to scientific suspicion in terms of its factuality. Bourdieu explains this as follows:

“...ethno-methodology rejects the absolute assumption of positivism and replaces statistical data with the tape recordings, and so is thought to expand the limits of objectivity. However, analyses are still made within the limits drawn by the recording, and thus it again acknowledges the pre-construction of some facts outside of its own” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2003: 58).

The ethnographic method focuses on only current relations, in a break from historicity, and thus critical realism rejects both ethnographic researches. In this thesis, the ethnographic method is used with the idea that reality is not only the opinions and reflexivity of the individuals, but is also historically the social and political relations that shape the individual acts and ideas. The meanings, responses and attitudes of an individual in a network of relations may be understood only within the historical process of their relationships, and

⁴⁴ The research methods used in this study were explained in introductory chapter

accordingly, critical realism is one of the best methodologies for this study in its aim to analyze the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the *mahalla* (as an actor) and state regulations (of both the Uzbekistani and Soviet regimes).

3.3 New Institutionalism and Decentralization: Continuity/Change in the *Mahalla* as a Local Institution

Decentralization, related with the internal structure of the state, means the transfer of power and authority to local government. In other words, decentralization is defined as any act by which central government formally devolves powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political administrative and territorial hierarchy (Ribot, 2004: 8). Wollman describes it as “*devolution of the state’s functions to (democratically elected) autonomous territorial governments which can act within the scope of decentralized functions on their own behalf, without recourse to higher-standing authorities*” (Wollman, 2003: 114). Decentralization is thus the process of changing the balance of power from the central to sub-national levels. It relates to the role of central and sub-national institutions, and the relationship between them. Decentralization reforms, according to Ribot, are typically promoted to achieve six broad objectives: (a) dismantling or downsizing central government; (b) consolidating national unity; (c) consolidating central power; (d) increasing local participation and local democracy; (e) improving the efficiency and equity of local service and delivery; and (f) strengthening local government” (Ribot, 2004: 8), and come in two primary forms: democratic decentralization (also known as political decentralization or devolution), involving transfers of decision-making powers to elected local authorities; and deconcentration (administrative decentralization), or the transfer of power to local offices of central government agencies within the hierarchical system of state bureaucracy, such as to appointed district officers or local offices of line ministries that are subordinated to central authorities. While internal administrative efficiency and the efficiency of service provision are supposed to be improved through deconcentration, democratic decentralization gives more autonomy⁴⁵ to local authorities and local people, allowing them to make decisions for themselves through their representative local authorities, and thus, central government gets to support its legitimacy (Ribot, 2004: 8; Wollman, 2003: 114; Rondinelli, Nellis&Cheema, 1983: 25-26).

⁴⁵ “Autonomous local government can be described as having its own capabilities to receive messages from the environment, to process those demands, and to direct its outputs toward the functions it seeks to fulfill” (Walsh, 1969: 179).

This explanation of decentralization covers only descriptions of legal competences and formal powers and depends on an orthodox institutional analysis in political science, making no explanation of local autonomy or the real dimensions that cause conflict/tension in the relationship between central and the local state in any regime. Moreover, this classical explanation of decentralization contains two fallacies: (a) decentralization is viewed as a one-dimensional process, rather than a multidimensional set of relationships, and (b) decentralization and centralization are treated as opposites in a zero-sum relation, which is criticized in this study. As Pickvance (1997: 129) points out, “*decentralization is a multidimensional concept, and actual local government systems can be positioned differently on each dimension (function, control and finance) depending on the implicit model of local government*”. Moving away from the descriptive and a theoretical style of the earlier generation of institutionalists, the new institutionalists developed a more expansive and sophisticated definition of their subject matter (Lowndes and Wilson, 2003: 278), by which it was possible to understand decentralization within the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the central and local state, because new institutionalism places emphasis on seeking to identify how “rules in use” can be more important than “rules in form” (Lowndes and Leach, 2004: 559; Sweeting, 2008). The new institutionalists are concerned with informal conventions as well as formal rules and structures, paying attention to the way in which institutions embody values and power relationships, and they study not just the impact of institutions on behavior, but the interactions between individuals and institutions. An institution can be defined as the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy (Hall and Taylor, 1996). This definition allows a clear understanding of the dialectic relationship between the state and the *mahalla kengash*.

New institutionalism is an important theory for analyzing the role of local government in urban politics and in urban policy variations, in that it challenges classical institutionalism, which explains the core activity of local government using only descriptions of constitutions, legal systems and government structures (Lowndes, 2009: 91). Particularly since the community power debate in urban politics, the centrality of formal institutions to urban political outcomes began to be questioned, and new institutionalists, neo-Weberians and neo-Marxists have given great impetus to local politics by emphasizing the importance of political and social process in urban policy. All these studies demonstrate that the strategies and power relations in the social and political process, as well as the constitutional accounts of decision-making, influence local policy variations. These approaches are theoretically important for the main hypothesis of this thesis, in which a discussion will be made of how

and why different types of urban *mahalla kengashes* produced different strategies to the regulations and policies of the new Uzbek regime and implemented them in different ways. In other words, what have been the effects of the *mahalla kengash*, as a state agency, on the state structure?

The new institutionalist approach is crucial for understanding the importance of institutional change during the neo-liberal transition in post-Soviet countries. According to Campbell and Pedersen (1996: 4), while orthodox economists have argued that a “*competitive market economy will emerge naturally if privatization is pursued quickly, trade barriers are dropped, private property rights are clearly specified, and government generally withdraws from the economy ... the new institutionalist perspective has been criticized for neglecting the important role that institutions, and especially the state, play in shaping economic development (e.g., Amsden, Kochanowicz & Taylor 1994; Haggard, Levy, Moravcsik & Nicolaidis, 1993; Hausner, Jessop & Nielsen 1995; Pedersen 1993)*”. The *mahalla*, as a local institution, is neither static nor unique, in that it changes both spatially and temporally according to the political, social and economic context. The *mahalla* can be described as a local institution that is ever-changing, both spatially and temporally, as a result of the dialectic relationship with the more general social context and the political economy. The *mahalla* has importance in the accumulation strategy and hegemonic projects of the state, which determines its sustainability and articulation capacity to the state, and thus the *mahalla* changes both temporally and spatially. Therefore, as a socio-spatial unit, historically, the *mahalla* in Uzbekistan is an important asset for explaining institutional transition and/or continuity-change. The *mahalla* has existed until today as a local social institution, and has even become a unique player in local government in Uzbekistan. This thesis claims that despite the change in regime (from socialist to capitalist) in Uzbekistan, as a local institution the *mahalla* continues to exist today, clarifying the transformation and/or continuity/change of local politics in the post-Soviet geography. Accordingly, one of the main questions raised in this dissertation is why and how has the *mahalla*, as a local institution, survived until today in its different spatio-temporal forms.

New institutionalism is categorized into three groups: rational choice, sociological and historical institutionalism (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Koelble, 1995; Campbell & Pedersen, 1996). On the subject of rational choice, institutionalists argue that individuals and their strategic calculations ought to be the central concern of social science. North (1993), one of the new institutional economists, suggests that institutions are created by utility-maximizing individuals with clear intentions. Despite recognizing the importance of institutions as constraints, rational choice theory neglects the importance of their role in enabling actors to

interpret their situations. In addition, institutional instability in post-communist countries has made it increasingly difficult for actors to interpret their interests (Campbell & Pedersen, 1996: 7), and so rational choice theory, which is based on individual decision-making, is unsuitable for explaining the institutional change in post-Soviet countries at local as well as national scales. Moreover, as will be seen in the case study chapters, many actors in the urban *mahalla kengashes* in Uzbekistan do not decide according to a discourse of collective unity, as in a communist society, but rather according to their individual interests.⁴⁶ Second, sociological institutionalism arose primarily within the subfield of organization theory. It has been argued that: “*Individual decisions are a product not only of institutional setting but of a much larger frame of reference. Individuals find themselves ‘embedded’ as Mark Granovetter and Karl Polanyi put it, in cultural and organizational ‘fields’ or ‘sectors’*” (Koelble, 1995: 232). The notion of embeddedness as used by sociological institutionalists underlines the important role of culture, society, organizational identity and industrial sectors in defining the interests a person, in that they make a conceptual distinction between organizations and their institutional environments. According to sociological institutionalism, “*Organizational change occurs in response to environmental pressures and the development of new rules, and organizational analysts often depict the diffusion process as if there is little struggle or resistance to the spread of new institutions*” (Campbell & Pedersen, 1996: 234). This explanation fails to explain the decentralization policy through the dialectic relationship between the *mahalla kengash* and the state strategies in Uzbekistan, as there is no reciprocity in this kind of view, since it neglects the role of the struggle for institutional change.

Thirdly, historical institutionalism, through the concept of “path-dependency,” which has challenged many classical views in organizational theory, is one of main perspectives in the issue of institutional reform in the post-Soviet transition era from the perspective of the continuity of the institution from its old pattern. Historical institutionalism tries to explain the change and/or continuity of an institution with emphasis on its path-dependency, and gives clues that help in understanding the reason for the survival of the *mahalla*, while also explaining the continuity or/and changes in center-local relationships in post-Soviet countries. Therefore, the importance of path-dependency can be explained with the argument that power relations in a society are historically represented and carried out by institutions.

⁴⁶ Although the consciousness of their collective utility is changeable according to their positions of articulation or resistance and their different experiences within the Soviet regime, such as proletarian or socialist communal spirit, or ethnically Uzbek communal spirit; as seen in the case chapters, all of them have a consciousness of *fidoiliq* rather than individual interest as homo-economicus.

Path-dependency has come into frequent use in recent social science debate to emphasize the influence of such historical patterns and legacies. According to this argument, in the post-Soviet transition, *“Notwithstanding the impact that the global and international factors may have, country specific institutional political and cultural traditions and country specific historical starting conditions are likely to unfold such resilience, inertia and persistence that the institutional development is bound to follow a particular historical track and corridor”* (Lazin, 2007). However, as Scott (1995) claimed, in order to survive, an institution should conform to the rules and belief systems of the environment and should achieve organizational legitimacy, which is often ignored by the historical institutionalists when over-emphasizing the importance of path-dependency. Therefore, the new rules and systems of the new political/economic environment of the post-Soviet geography, in other words, the structural conditions of neo-liberalism and the new public administration also influence the actors and institutional agencies in the post-Soviet geography, as well as the historical patterns and legacies of these institutions. These two realities affect the new form of the old Soviet-institutions, and as a result, the internal organization of the institution, its forms of intervention and its representation start to change in the dialectic relationship between the structure and actors. In this respect, the transformation process cannot be explained only by emphasizing the concept of path-dependency, because the new rules and systems in the new political/economic environment of the post-Soviet geography have been shaped also by the path-shaping approach. This path-shaping approach implies that “social forces can intervene in current conjunctures and actively re-articulate them so that new trajectories become possible” (Hausner, Nielsen & Jessop, 1995: 6). Many studies of the post-Soviet transition have exaggerated the Soviet past and the centralist tendency of the post-Soviet countries by over-emphasizing the rational choice of the elite and the historical patterns of institutions regarding the concept of path-dependency from the perspective of new institutionalism. To explain the transformation process only from the elite perspective (rational choice of the individual) or path-dependency leads to a number of misconceptions. All these theories concentrate on individual behavior, aiming to understand political and social life, and ignore the effects of the new structural conditions upon the choices of the agency. Moreover, these three new institutionalisms fail to explain the dialectic relationship between the actor and structure.

After independence in Uzbekistan, the *mahalla*, as a historically traditional neighborhood gained a constitutional guarantee as a body of local government, and is the only form of local self-government in Uzbekistan today. Why would the central government choose to reshape an old institution while realizing its new institution-building process? What are the potentials

of the *mahalla* in this respect? Moreover, how and why has this traditional socio-spatial unit survived as an institution into present day? How, as a socio-spatial unit, has the *mahalla* survived two major historical disruptions and at least three different socio-political regimes (pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet)? Although these questions are all centered on the *mahalla's* continuity, in fact they are related to transformation or change. History is generally analyzed with emphasis on breaking points – there are breaks in macro systems, and there is continuity at the local level, and these are constantly interrelated with each other. The question of “Why and how has the *mahalla* managed to survive until today in Uzbekistan?” inevitably raises a number of different arguments:

- Uzbek Society, like other societies, has undergone constant transformation or change. Some changes have provided social stability in society, while others have resulted in fundamental transformations
- All institutions in a society are affected by this intense transformation to some extent. Hence, some new institutions have emerged, some of the older institutions have disappeared and some institutions have been revitalized.
- Although some old institutions have been affected by this sharp social transformation, they have survived by applying the macro social project or transformation through old habits, rituals and norms.
- Once a social project for social transformation at the national or macro level has been realized, it affects the old sub-institutions in society. However, such projects are also affected by these old sub-institutions as a result of their social resistance or the social groups represented by these institutions; *and it is this reciprocal relation on which the originality of this society is based.*

An analysis of the change in the *mahalla* as an institution and its relations with both the state and society in the transition period necessitates a study of the social and political transformation in a general context. How can the transformation of an institution be analyzed? The main intention is to explain how the *mahalla*, as a traditional socio-spatial institution, and today as an element of local government, has been able to exist until today through a study of the multi-dimensional reciprocal relationship that exists between the *mahalla* and the state, and the dynamics that have always existed, but have since been changed or transformed into new forms.

There are continuities between the two sides of the transition period, as can be seen in previous literature, such as the clan structure and its political position, and the presence of

the elite in the political arena. The perpetuation of the *mahalla* throughout the transition period is a good example of this; the *mahalla* changed, and the state paid more attention to it. Not only did its functions and organizational structure change, but also the interest groups represented in the *mahalla* began having their voices heard in the state. As a result of these processes, the institutional structure of the *mahalla* developed differently from what had been envisaged by the central government, and the urban social policies devolved to the *mahalla* started to be changed during implementation by the *mahalla*. At the same time, the old structure of the *mahalla* and the power relations in the local community changed in the transition period. The best example of this continuity in transition is historically the dynamic position and role of the *mahalla* as a local institution or government in the service of urban social policies, which is also useful for understanding the continuity of the ever-changing relations of the *mahalla* with the central government in each period. This results in the stories of urban policy from the Soviet period being mirrored in the independence period as a result of the tacit knowledge of the locality and the clientalist relations in the *mahalla*. It can thus be argued that by accepting the *mahalla* as a local authority, and by devolving certain policies to it, society may be shaped according to its previous informal forms. Also, informal power relations and the reproduction of authority in the *mahalla* allow access to the state organization. Definitions of the *mahalla* vary according to the historical conjuncture, as it is in constant flux based on its dialectic relationship with the state in a general political economic context. Thus, new institutionalist studies are crucial, in that they do more than merely applying a static definition to the *mahalla*⁴⁷ in terms of neighborhood change.

When I began this study, I asked myself how the urban *mahalla*, as the oldest and most traditional form of urban living space in Uzbek society, had survived the grand hegemonic project of the Soviet regime that was based on the creation of a modern socialist urban society. Despite the 70 years of grand and strict hegemonic projects of the Soviet regime, these local units, as a living space of the native community, became an area of resistance of civil society. This demonstrates clearly that the tacit and practical knowledge embedded in localities⁴⁸ wields great power against the strong and huge modernist state hegemony, and the answer to the key question is hiding in this point: the *mahalla* in Uzbekistani society perpetuated with its local knowledge against the Soviet modernist project. Scott explains this point as “*designed or planned social order is necessarily schematic; it always ignores*

⁴⁷ In the next section I will summarize several theories on the changes in the neighborhood, which are related with the issue of local variation, and which contributed to the methodology of my field survey.

⁴⁸ Local knowledge is referred to as “*metis*” in Scott’s terminology. The concept of *metis* “*a means of comparing the forms of knowledge embedded in local experience with the more general, abstract knowledge deployed by the state*” (Scott, 1998: 311)

essential features of any real, functioning social order ... the formal scheme was parasitic on informal processes that, alone, it could not create or maintain. To the degree that the formal scheme made no allowance for these processes or actually suppressed them, it failed both its intended beneficiaries and ultimately its designers as well" (Scott, 1998: 6). A similar expression came from Jacobs (1992: 23) related with modernist urban planning:

"... modernist urban planning rejects the city because it rejects human beings living in a community characterized by layered complexity and seeming chaos. Modernist planners used deductive reasoning to find principles by which to plan cities. Among these policies the most violent was urban renewal; the most prevalent was, and is, the separation of uses".

This story of the *mahalla* as an area of resistance of the native community against the Soviet hegemony comes full circle to sit exactly in the center of civil society, as conceptualized by Gramsci, as a hegemonic tool of the state. Historically, the *mahalla* developed based on local practical knowledge, and resulted in an enormous contradiction for the regime that was aiming to realize a major social project. The *mahalla* had already provided the coding of society, and this coding was necessary for the regime in order to understand this society, and thus the *mahalla* became a highly functional tool for the control of society. For the realization of its highly modernist social project, the regime aimed to deconstruct this old and decrepit local institution. Therefore, the *mahalla* is neither, as Scott argues, a pure representative institution of civil society against the state and its highly modernist and socialist projects, nor, as Gramsci argues, is it a pure hegemonic tool within civil society that is shaped by the state hegemony. During the case study it became apparent that these urban *mahallas* in Uzbekistani society have not only survived for a long time, but also have become socio-spatially different from each other. Local practical knowledge is historically changed and transformed in each locality within the macro economic and political context according to their different dialectic relationships with the regime and their form of articulation to it. In the case of Uzbekistan, local practical knowledge in the different types of *mahalla* is shaped according to the dialectic relationship between the *mahalla* and the previous regime. In other words, historically, local knowledge and culture are spatially and temporally changed and/or (re-)produced by the dialectic relationship between the actor and structure. As such, the Uzbekistani *mahalla* is neither, as Jane Jacobs, Lefebvre and Scott argue, an ideal micro and a glorified living space or community, nor is it, in Gramsci's terminology, a hegemonic extension of the state in civil society. Rather, it is a local institution that is shaped by the relationship between spatio-temporal choices of the regime in Uzbekistan and the differential spatio-temporal action capacities of a social group or individual, as Jessop argues. Thus, the main question in this thesis evolves from "Why and

how has the *mahalla* as a social institution survived until today” to “Why and how has the *mahalla* become different, both spatially and temporally, within its reciprocal and dialectic relationship with the state structure” and “Why and how have different strategies and tactics to address the Uzbekistani State accumulation strategy and hegemonic project been produced”.

This thesis argues that the decentralization policy and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime are spatio-temporally shaped by the dialectic, reciprocal and dynamic relationships that exist between the central government and the different types of *mahalla kengashes* in local politics, rather than only by the standard state regulation. Thus, while the decentralization policy and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime have influenced the internal structure, and the modes of representation and intervention in the *mahalla kengashes*, the *mahalla kengashes* have in turn shaped the socio-spatial and socio-economic structures of the central state through their different styles of policy implementation. This center-local relationship has been shaped by several different political/economic dynamics and/or conflicts derived from the reciprocal and dialectic relationship between the structure and agency at both a local and national scale during the neo-liberal transition. These conflicts will be explained at two levels within a framework of critical realism theory for the case of decentralization: (a) the dialectic relationship between structural hegemony of neo-liberalism and the hegemonic project of the new nation state, the Uzbek regime being an agency of neo-liberalism; (b) the dialectic relationship between the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani state (as a structure) and the spatio-temporally different strategies of urban the *mahalla kengashes* (as agencies/actors).

The first level, in short, focuses on the dynamics at a national scale that cause tension in the center-local relationship in post-Soviet countries, and discusses the roles of the central and local administrations in the transition regime with concepts of the hegemonic project-structural hegemony (Jessop, 2008; Joseph, 2002; Jessop, 1997) within the framework of the centralization and decentralization of the administrative structure. In other words, at the national scale, the main dynamic is the Uzbekistani state as an agency that exists in the conflict between global discourse of decentralization and nation-state building process in the post-Soviet transition. The first stage of the theoretical framework will be constructed around three discussions: (a) a criticism of the domination of the actor-based approach in the post-Soviet transition period, and a criticism of the perspective of pluralism (also new right and neo-pluralism) and the Weberian concept of decentralization; (b) an explanation of global discourse related to decentralization as a structural hegemony of neo-liberalism, and the role

of the local state in the post-Soviet transition; and (c) an explanation of the originality of the strategic choices of the Uzbekistani regime in centralization-decentralization discussions, and the *mahalla kengash* both as a hegemonic instrument and a level of local self-government. Thus, in this thesis it is argued that one of the main reasons for the increasing tension in the center-local relationship is the Uzbekistani *mahalla*'s status as both a hegemonic tool of the state and a level of local self-government. This argument is not only related with the continuity of the role of the *mahalla* as a hegemonic instrument of the Soviet regime, but also with its dual and conflicting roles as a body of local government in a capitalist regime and an agency of the state (Cockburn, 1977; O'Connor), and a key player in local social relations (Poluntzas, 1975; Duncan & Goodwin, 1988).

The second stage of the theoretical framework is related with the hypothesis that the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime not only depends on state regulation and state strategy, but also heavily on the different strategies and policy implementations of local political actors in the *mahalla kengash*. The question that needs to be asked at this point is why have the local political actors (re-)produced different strategies and policy-making processes? This stage is going to be constructed in three parts: (a) an overview of different urban theories on the issue of local policy variation; (b) an understanding of local variations in Soviet cities and Central Asia; and (c) the role of the local state in the dialectic relationship between the hegemonic state, and the local variations in the urban living space as a civil society from the perspective of uneven development, which will allow an analysis of the continuity in the role of the *mahalla* as a local institution in localizing the state hegemony in both the Soviet and post-Soviet eras.

These two stages in the theoretical framework demonstrate clearly that the spatio-temporally differentiated *mahalla* types in Uzbekistani cities emerged out of the dialectic center-local relationship; and the different *mahalla* types in turn influenced the strategic choices of the Uzbekistani regime – the decentralization policy, based on accumulation strategies; and hegemonic projects, based mainly on the nation-state – during the era of neo-liberal transition. In short, although the national (state strategy in the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism) and local (local policy variations) dynamics will be analyzed in two separate stages in order to ensure a clear explanation, they remain inseparable due to the dialectic relationship that exists between them. While the state strategy causes an uneven development of society, local government has spatio-temporally affected the state strategy through the (re-)production of different tactics. At the end of this chapter an analytical framework will be proposed for analyzing this dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the central state and

the urban *mahalla kengash* on issues of decentralization and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime, and this framework will constitute the main structure of the case study chapters of the thesis.

3.4 The Concept of Decentralization between Hegemonic Projects and Structural Hegemony

In this section, the sub-hypothesis that the conflict between the global discourse of decentralization and the centralist tendency of post-Soviet countries increased the tension in the center-local relationship in Uzbekistani local politics will be addressed. To this end, two important issues will be analyzed: (a) the dynamics of decentralization pressure, and (b) the dynamics of the centralist tendency in the administrative structure of post-Soviet countries. Concerning the second issue, it should be noted that the post-Soviet states began institution-building in line with the new economic system, being the market-based economy; created a new social class (bourgeoisie) as the main driver of the capitalist system; and regulated the new private sector and private property. This process made the central state a main actor in the post-Soviet transition era. However, global pressure and international actors pushed these states towards social development and democratization in society through the devolution of many functions and authority to their local governments, meaning a decentralization of the administrative system. These two dynamics together put a strain on the center-local relationship in urban politics.

The *mahalla kengash*, to which many state functions were devolved through the decentralization policy in the neo-liberal transition era, was formally integrated into the state structure, while also maintaining its role as a local socio-spatial unit. In the previous section, the concept of decentralization of the state structure from a new institutionalist perspective was explained to illustrate the change/continuity of the urban *mahalla* in Uzbekistan, while in this section it was demonstrated that the three perspectives of new institutionalism fail to explain adequately the institution-building of the regime at a local level in Uzbekistan. In the process of re-institutionalization, the fact that these states have faced the pressure factor of global discourse – “decentralization” – is undoubtedly related with the fact that these states declared an interest in integrating with the world economy by converting to a market-based economy. It is necessary at this point to mention the Perestroika era, which compelled these states to declare a market-based economy. This section shows that the actor-based approach does not explain why these countries still lack a democratic structure, and why they have been unsuccessful in their decentralization policy, however it does allow an understanding

the role of the Soviet *nomenklature* in passing to a market-based economy. Second, the problems faced by these states during the re-institutionalization of their administrative system at a local scale within the framework of the transition to the market-based economy are explained. In short, in this sub-section an analysis is made of the structural conditions during the transition era from the perspective of the political economy, which caused a crisis in the post-Soviet states in the dichotomy between decentralization-centralization, being one of the most important dynamics influencing the relationship between the Uzbekistani state and the *mahalla* (center-local relationship). Here, the aim is not to analyze the entire decentralization issue or the local government system in the former Soviet countries, but, through a critical approach, to prove that literature related to the institution-building of the post-Soviet state in the transition era and the decentralization of the administrative system was a hegemonic tool of the global new economic system (neo-liberalism), as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This section presents the main concepts behind the first stage of the theoretical framework, explaining the significance of the local state from neo-Marxist and Neo-Gramscian perspectives. Also in this section, the role of the local state in the institutional structure of the state in not only post-Soviet countries, but also in the capitalist regime during the neo-liberal era will be explained.

3.4.1 Significance of the Actor-Based Approach in the Decentralization Process of the post-Soviet Transition: Continuity or Change

Tashkent had been known as the leading agricultural machinery and farm equipment supply hub during the last decades of the Soviet era. Beginning with independence, a number of laws and decrees established the policy framework for further privatization. According to the 1993 Law on Privatization, state factories could be closed upon the decision of the top managers after a detailed evaluation of production efficiency, internal structure and other related factors. Therefore, if they judged that it is was necessary, these directors of the state factories could reduce capacity or even close the factory. Soon after the enactment of the privatization regulations, one of the largest factories in the cotton machinery production sector was closed by its top manager under the pretext of inefficiency, however many cotton farmers in Uzbekistan relied on the products of this factory. After a short time a German corporation managed to launch some cotton harvesting machines onto the Uzbekistani agriculture equipment market ... but nobody wanted to buy these new machines because of their cost. Thereupon, the mafia applied pressure on the farmers and began to threaten them – if they refused to buy the machines, their produce would not be accepted in Tashkent's largest bazaars (Alaiiskiy, Charsu bazaar). As a result, many farmers were forced to buy them. In a few years, a dealer of this German firm opened in Tashkent, ran by the former director of an ex-state factory, who had closed it. The real reason why the director closed the state factory thus became clear. The privatization of state factories in Uzbekistan was

*carried out in this way. It is possible to see and understand the bigger picture in hindsight...*⁴⁹

This quotation clearly demonstrates how the regime changed and how the market-based economy affected the strategies of political actors and technocrats through constraints and opportunities. The process of Perestroika actually culminated in many similar stories, and many studies relating these stories claim that the demise of the Soviet regime was begun by the Soviet *nomenklatura*,⁵⁰ with suggestions that Perestroika eliminated the spatial restrictions on the mobility of the capital that they accumulated during the Soviet regime. The aim of this thesis is not to explain the process that brought about the end of the Soviet regime, however it is an important issue for explaining the structure of both the national and local ruling classes and/or the dominant class in the new post-Soviet countries. As we will see later, this issue is one of the most important dynamics in the continuity between the Soviet and post-Soviet eras in terms of the relationships between the center and local (*mahalla*-state) in Uzbekistani political life.

Why did the Soviet *nomenklatura* launch a process that would bring down the Soviet regime in which they had all the political and economic power? Although the Soviet regime aimed at a classless and equal society, social class and inequality persisted throughout the Soviet era (Baykal, 2007; Noori, 2006; Carter, 1967; Medvedkov, 1990). According to official Soviet data, there were only two main classes: the working class in cities and the working class in rural areas. The intellectual social group, on the other hand, was accepted only as *a social stratum*⁵¹ (Medvedkov, 1990) that was officially at the same status as the working class, but more powerful in practical terms, dominating the working class (Carter, 1967). Lane (2006), attempts to make a class explanation of the transition from state socialism to capitalism, arguing that one of the reasons for the dissolution of the Soviet regime was the conflict between two major social strata: the administrative stratum and the acquisition stratum. He explained this point as follows (2006: 145-146):

⁴⁹ Quote from an interview with an expert working in a ministry in Uzbekistan, learned during the training program in “*Davlat va Jamiyat Qurilishi Akademiyasi*”.

⁵⁰ The *nomenklatura*, a large proportion of which is formally elected, is agreed to be one of the basic social strata of Soviet socio-political life. The *nomenklatura* system under the Communist Party apparatus controls every sphere of national life. This Soviet political elite was organized at all levels from the central government down to the village soviets (Rygby, 1990: 73).

⁵¹ “*State socialism was characterized by two major overlapping social strata: one with administrative control of economic assets (an administrative stratum – which was able to turn executive power into ownership of capital assets) and the other, made up of individuals with personal skill assets (an acquisition stratum – concerned with valorizing skill assets through a market)*” (Lane, 2006). Educational qualifications and occupational skills are the main distinguishing features of the acquisition class. Employees, self-defined as members of the “*intelligentsia*,” as well as skilled workers, were potentially privileged with respect to their market position. In the Soviet regime, acquisition the stratum was at a disadvantage, in that they were dependent on the administrative class, which controlled the market for labor.

“In the 1980s, the intelligentsia was a stratum receptive to an alternative conception of socialism in its social democratic form, to a vision of a future different from that of their parents... on the other hand, the administrative stratum would continue to own and control economic assets and would have no interest in furthering representative institutions. Many members of the administrative stratum were in a contradictory position. They occupied influential, secure and privileged positions in the ruling elites; but they also had potential to join an even more privileged economic class position if they could turn their administrative control into ownership of property and/or were able to valorize their administrative and executive capital through a market. From being members of a privileged salaried administrative stratum or elite they would become part of a capitalist class with legal rights over the expropriation of surplus value.

As can be seen, this individual-based elite perspective provides a unique explanation of the transition. Since the Perestroika era the Soviet political elite (Soviet *nomenklatura*) has tried to create private sector and restrict state authority in the economic sector, while aiming to increase their own political and economic power and capital. In post-Soviet states, the directors of ex-state factories remained in their positions and retained power in the newly privatized enterprises (Humphrey 2002: 180). The elite theory⁵² is important in that it allows an understanding of the power relations at play behind these institutions, and thereby the way they actually operate— which is often in ways that are different from design or intention (Hadiz, Vedi R.; 2008: 527; Steen & Ruus, 2002). Although this approach can explain many cases of post-Soviet transition in both Eastern Europe and Central Asia, it is not sufficient for understanding both the dynamics and results of the transition era upon the choices and behaviors of the national elite in the institution-building process. In addition, this approach may methodologically lead to incorrect results.

Indeed, actor-based perspectives tend to emphasize institutional change based on either elite pacts and technocratic crafting⁵³ or the continuity of several old institution patterns, which refers to the concept of *path-dependency*. It is also fair to say, especially for Central Asian states, that the political and economic choices of many social and political institutions and their decision-making processes are restricted by their old patterns, which were shaped during the old regime (path-dependency). According to Gleason, “*The only way the new*

⁵² As seen in the next sections, the elite theory, especially the radical one, contributes points to both the center-local relationship and the community power studies in urban theories, both of which are crucial for this thesis’ hypotheses. One of the contributions of radical elite theory is that it allows an understanding of the relationship between national and local elites –business, social and political– through networks of patronage and clientalism which ensures the power of both local and national elites (Dunleavy & O’leary, 1987: 179; Duncan & Goodwin, 1974). On the other hand, elite theory in community power studies emphasizes the importance of power relations in the community, and analyzes the policy process of local governments through these relations. It is important to understand the policy variations in *mahalla kengashes* of different neighborhood communities with their different social relations.

⁵³ Dunleavy and O’leary categorized elite theory into three sub-theories: classical elite theory, democratic elitism and radical elite theory (Dunleavy & O’leary, 1987).

countries could avoid chaos was to rely as much as possible on existing institutions and the people who ran them: the communist leaders themselves assumed responsibility for engineering the transition to post-communist rule” (in Clark, 1999: 43). The importance of path-dependency can be explained by the argument that the power relations in a society are historically represented and carried forward by existing institutions. Recently, new approaches to institutionalism, especially historical institutionalism through the concept of “path-dependency”, has become the second mainstream approach to institutional reform in the post-Soviet transition era in terms of institutional continuity. Accordingly, new institutionalism is an important theory for the main hypothesis of this thesis, which analyzes mainly how and why different types of urban *mahalla kengashes* have produced different strategies to the regulations and policies of new Uzbekistani regime and implemented them in different ways (analyzed in more detail in previous sections). However, what will be emphasized here is that many studies of the post-Soviet transition exaggerate the Soviet legacy of centralist tendencies in the former Soviet countries by over-emphasizing the elite power and the historical patterns of institutions. All of these theories concentrate on individual behaviors in their attempts to understand political and social life, and ignore the effects of new structural conditions upon the choice of the agency. However, explaining the transformation process exclusively from the perspective of an actor-based approach or in terms of path-dependency leads to several misperceptions, which are clearly apparent in the decentralization process in the former Soviet states.

In the course of this institutional change that began in 1989–1990, post-Soviet states have had to cope with three fundamental transformations (Wollmann, 2003: 318): (a) from a centrally planned state economy to a private market economy, (b) from authoritarian centralist rule to a pluralist democracy, and (c) from party-and state-dominated societal organizations to a civil society. Moreover, some countries have also faced the challenge of nation-building. According to studies of post-Soviet societies, the main driving forces behind the process of transition in post-socialist cities, especially in Eastern Europe, are: *economic factors*, such as reindustrialization or deindustrialization, unemployment resulting from privatization processes, growth-decline, globalization, international investment; transition from *urban government* to *governance*, such as the new role of the state in urban policy, the change in central-local relationships, provision of urban social services, the change in urban planning; *socio-demographic factors* such as polarization, migration, ethnic segregation, poverty; and *spatial transformations*, such as urban renewal, change of city center’s main functions, the shift from production to consumption, trading areas and public space. These four elements have direct influences on urban politics in post-Soviet countries, in which

decentralization is one of the most important dynamics. This shift from a centrally planned economy to a market economy has been accompanied by institutional changes such as the creation of new institutions, both formal and informal. Local government has become an increasingly important area for the democratic representation of local communities (Lazin, 2007).

In this regard, the most important reform for local government and institution building in post-Soviet countries should be considered as decentralization, meaning the devolution of power and responsibility to local governments. Transformation of the territorial structure of government and decentralization was considered an important task while establishing a pluralist democracy and a civil society (Wollmann, 2003: 318). According to Libman (2008: 13), *“The territorial decentralization of power and the devolution of services to the municipal self-governance level are often considered as key elements of a successful transformation, and thus are directly linked to the issue of administrative reform”*. The re-establishment of local government was implemented in almost all post-socialist states, and in each case, both the scales and functions of urban, local and regional government have been restructured (Stenning, 1996). Through decentralization, significant power and functions are transferred from a national to a local level of government, strengthening the local authorities (Stren, 2003; Vogel, 2004). *“The decentralized local body should have its own budget, a separate legal existence, and the authority to allocate substantial resources to a range of different functions, the decisions being made by representatives of the local people”* (Vogel, 2004: 8). Therefore, as the main justification for decentralization policy in all post-Soviet countries, the contribution of democratic development through the devolution of authority to the local governments has been the subject of much discussion (Stren, 2003; Vogel, 2004; Wollmann, 2003; Libman, 2008; Spechler, 2007; Ilkhamov, 2007; Ruziev, Ghosh & Dow, 2007; Fish, 1998; Clark, 1999; Fierman, 1991; Masaru, 2006; Sievers, 2002; Epstein & Winter, 2002; Pashkin, 2003; Noori, 2006):

“...the political objective of decentralization is concerned with building democratic institutions and promoting political pluralism in countries once dominated by a one-party monopoly and highly centralized government (Illner, 1999; Wetzel, 2001). These reforms have been associated with introduction of democratic electoral processes and the encouragement of citizen participation in local decision-making and governance” (Babajanian, 2008: 376).

This argument, which necessarily requires a direct relationship between democratic society and local government, belongs to the pluralist paradigm and depends on the acknowledgment of the local state as a *“channel for obstruct democratic despotism through standing different power focus against the central government. Moreover, decentralization*

helps prevent the emergence of democratic despotism and multiple points of access, and sites for pressure group activity enhance citizen participation and control over politicians” (Dunleavy&O’leary, 1987: 58). According to the pluralist point of view, the state is simply an arbitrator among the different social groups in society; thus, from a pluralist perspective, the state and politics are autonomous realms that possess real authority and command important resources and explicitly reject the notion that economic or social elites control the state in any instrumental sense. Thus, the pluralist view also implicitly rejects any deposition that structural logic subordinates local politics to the private economy (Mollenkopf, 2007: 99). According to this point of view, despite the existence of political inequalities, the state preserves its neutrality. Accordingly, the main subjects of the pluralist perspective are the individual and/or interest groups in society and their influence in the decision-making process (Şengül, 2001: 45). Accordingly, the state is a “*political market place in which the supply of decisions comes to balance and reflects the level of effective demand*” (Saunders, 1979: 155). The main problems in a liberal democracy are democratic despotism, centralized administrative system, and political polyarchy. All pluralists treat local governments as the key to democratization. For instance: “*There is little doubt that Dahl’s central concern, the relation between scale and democracy, and his consequent exposure of the spurious primacy of the nation state in democratic terms is a vital one. Clearly, local government has democratic primacy over the national government because it enables more people to participate in their own government*” (Sharpe, 1970: 160). Most pluralists argue that each legitimate interest group has control over some important resource, but that no group controls the others, and so define the urban power structure as a bargaining sphere for a multiplicity of groups (Mollenkopf, 2007: 99).

The new versions of the pluralist view, constructed to explain the state of the neo-liberal system, are referred to as “new right” (public choice) and “new pluralism”. “*The new right’s highly critical and pessimistic view of bureaucracy is offset by only one qualification*” (Dunleavy&O’leary, 1987: 121). The public choice theory, which is a dominant stream within the new right, criticizes classical pluralist views, rejecting the structural logic that subordinates local politics to the private economy. Tiebout argues that if there are a number of localities, and if people can move freely between them, then citizens will be able to control what services local officials provide and what local taxes will be raised (Dunleavy&O’leary, 1987: 122). The control citizens or consumers have over local services is not based on local elections or through lobbying their local council or city mayor; rather, local governments have to compete for the support of residents using different incentives and desires in the form of different service packages at various tax costs. Efficient local

authorities (entrepreneurial city managers) who supply a given level of service cheaper than their competitors will clearly receive more votes. In this way, the production of public goods at optimum efficiency will be reached (Mollenkopf, 2007: 104). The public choice theory of urban development suggests that market values and motivations channel officials to pursue economic revitalization, aiming at attracting more private investment. This economy-based theory is built on the belief that cities should seek to upgrade their economic standing by competing against other cities in attracting new investments through economic development. Peterson claims, *“The decisions of the city are governed by rational principles designed to increase public utility”* (Peterson, 1981: 22).

Neo-pluralist observations are substantially based on individual studies of policy making in particular spheres, supplemented by theories related to the attainment of collective action attainability (McFarland, 2007: 59). Dunleavy and O’leary (1987: 310) explain the differences between neo-pluralism and classical pluralism:

“Wherever policy making is split between different agencies or tiers of government, complicated systems of inter-governmental or inter-agency relations evolve. These systems create policy communities where rational debate and education about issues can take place, processes which are equally or more important than the traditional interest- or power-based bargaining observed by conventional pluralist”

In almost all public policy-making cases, ordinary knowledge, social learning and interactive decision-making systems exist among quasi-governmental agencies and local government; and one approach is a policy network that attempts to move beyond the pluralist and corporatist models of government/private interest (MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999: 510), the systematical order of which leaves little space for the articulation of structure and agency (Jessop & Hay, 1995; cited by MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999).

The pluralist paradigm, in its revised forms, is the dominant theory in local government, and today, especially in the post-Soviet transition related to decentralization, this paradigm has become a hegemonic literature of neo-liberalism. According to this dominant transition literature, the post-Soviet countries failed in their decentralization policy, and still retain a strong centralist tendency in their administrative and political structure. *“...although everywhere in the region decentralization was declared by the national government as one of their legitimate programmatic goals, the actual process of decentralization did not run smoothly everywhere, and turned out to be more complicated and lengthier than originally expected”* (Wollmann, 2003: 326). Many studies assert that the political elite of these countries induced instability and had a negative impact on decentralization, although decentralization has become a part of broad market reforms while building democratic

institutions in transition countries. For example, according to Erol (2009), after 1991, Azerbaijan began to make reforms on the way to democratic development; however it was not easy to escape from the totalitarian Soviet legacy, and the country could not establish a democratic political regime. Moreover, Boettke, a prominent author on the post-Soviet transition and the institutional reform of public administration, claimed that the main reason behind the failure in decentralization and the establishment of democracy in the former USSR was the Communist Party's political monopoly of the old regime (in Turan, 2009: 579).

It is possible to find similar arguments in a number of articles of the post-Soviet transition and decentralization policy, all of which claim that the Soviet regime had an over-centralized state structure, which was the greatest barrier to establishing democracy and the rapid economic development of the former Soviet republics, which can only be achieved by a decentralization policy. For this reason, it can be claimed that post-Soviet transition literature is political rather than scientific, and is substantially based on the new pluralism and the new right perspectives, which are extensions of the neo-liberal discourse. This literature seeks to scientifically establish a convenient administrative structure for the global economy through administrative reforms with a decentralized territorial structure as its essence. Moreover, in the case of state failure in the decentralization processes, this approach blames the Soviet legacy. While this may be true, the accusation totally neglects the possibility that there may be additional reasons.

Unfortunately, most transition studies of the decentralization of the administrative system idealize existing Western European local governments and propose creating similar political structures in post-Soviet geography. It is predictable why the new-right and neo-pluralism explain the failure in decentralization policy with sole reference to Soviet legacy, since it presents the mainstream public administration reforms as the vital remedy for all societies, while ignoring the socio-economic conditions and the internal social and power dynamics in the socio-political structure.

The Uzbekistani regime, shortly after independence, declared the *mahalla* as a unique body of local self-government, and the most representative organization of “civil society”. According to Karimov, “*the Uzbek society will be more democratized in its mahalla*” (Gadoyboev, 2004: 130). The mentality of the Uzbekistani regime can be clearly explained with reference to “the direct relationship between democracy and civil society”. The representational perspective is at the core of liberal democracy and pluralism, and these perspectives share:

“...in common the view that the state is neutral in its functions and independent of any particular class interests. The state itself is seen as a set of political institutions standing outside civil society, and it is this position of externality and superiority which enables it to regulate and mediate the conflicts within civil society, by the use of force if necessary. Thus, the causes of state action lie outside the state itself, and its functions serve the interests of the majority at any one time” (Saunders, 1979: 151).

According to pluralism, the local state/government is an institution that protects the rights of the local community against the state. The local state prevents democratic despotism by empowering different power groups against the central government, while pressure groups are able enter the political sphere through decentralization, enhancing citizen participation and limiting politicians. From this it can be concluded that “all pluralists are hostile to centralized states” (Dunleavy, 1987: 57). In pluralist or representative theory, the civil society concept has a transcendent meaning against state power, and local government is a sphere in which civil society can preserve itself against the state. These theories formed the basis of the formal and hegemonic discourse of liberalism, which leads to fallacious results through the disassociation of the historicity of the new economic regime and capitalism. Specifically, this is critical for post-Soviet states, since political transition took place in both the totalitarian regime and the democratic one. Thereby, there would appear to be a direct relationship between marketization and democratization, however decentralization and democratization, nor marketization and democratization, necessarily go hand-in-hand. The coexistence of democracy and markets may or may not progress well, similar to the coexistence of markets and authoritarianism (Hausner, Jessop& Nielsen, 1995: 15).

Many actor-based approach studies on the post-Soviet transition serve this hegemonic discourse, for several reasons (Young, 1994). In a comparison with other approaches paying attention to the position of political leaders become more important when explaining institutional transformations or regime changes. Many studies of elite power serve this hegemonic discourse of neo-liberalism due to their methodological deficiencies. First, they argue that the main reason for the centralist tendency of the post-Soviet states is the excessive centralist and bureaucratic structure of the Soviet regime at a national and local scale. This perspective is based on elite theory, and even more on the Weberian theory of the bureaucratization and managerialism of the modern state.⁵⁴ Weber and organization theory argue that the power of central government or the state is independent from the power of social groups, and in this sense, they are the opposite of pluralism. According to this theory, local units lost their power against the central government in the modern nation-state period,

⁵⁴ The local political version of the Weberian view, which will be summarized under the heading “Local Variations”.

however local government is a complementary part of central government, sharing with it the responsibilities of central government while decentralizing it. Saunders explains the Weberian perspective as follows:

“... the mode of political domination in modern societies is increasingly and necessarily bureaucratic. ...the bureaucratic mode of domination is essentially independent and neutral with respect to class interests. The increasing rationalization of administration reduces the possibility of effective political control over the state bureaucracy” (Saunders, 1979: 172)

Weber's political sociology is based on two key principles: first –that a relationship between economic classes and politics does not necessarily exist; and second– that the mode of political domination in modern societies is increasingly and necessarily bureaucratic. Consequently, the modern state is not necessarily class-biased since the bureaucratic mode of domination is essentially neutral and independent of class interests. Unlike in the case of pluralism, this perspective argues that the *“increasing rationalization of administration reduces the possibility of effective political control over the state bureaucracy”* (Saunders, 1979: 167). Weber and later organization theorists shared the common assumption that a single hierarchical ordering of the state's organization is an ineluctable but generally desirable feature of the modern state. Moreover, Weber believed that despite their best intentions, socialist power would only further the dictatorship of the official rather than the dictatorship of the proletariat. The novel administrative tasks of industrialized and competing nation-states –public education, public welfare, urbanization –create strong pressure towards centralization and bureaucratization, none of which would lessen or disappear under socialist government (Dunleavy&O'leary, 1987: 177). On the other hand, during the neo-liberal era, when the center of attention in urban politics studies shifted from collective consumption to economy, new perspectives emerged in the actor-based approach. Urban regime (Stone, 1989) and urban growth (Logan and Molotoch, 1987) are two such perspectives, both of them focusing on the alliances of key interest groups, such as public-private partnerships, in local economic development. These two perspectives will be examined in the second stage of the theoretical framework.

It is a fact that many ex-Soviet *nomenklature* maintained their political and economic power in the new era. A simple explanation of the post-Soviet transition from a Weberian perspective (managerialism and elite theory), would make it easy to claim that the centralist tendency of the Soviet political system continued into the post-Soviet era. However, even if this claim is valid, it fails to consider the results of the socio-economic transition, and moreover, these actor-based approaches –Weberian bureaucratic structure and other elite

theories –also ignore two crucial dynamics of the centralist tendency of these states in the new era, which are analyzed in detail in this section.

First, when this approach blames the centralist political structure of the ex-Soviet regime as the sole reason for the failure of decentralization and democracy, it obliges us to accept two mandatory presumptions of neo-liberal discourse: (a) that capitalism is an ideal environment in which to establish a democratic regime; (b) that decentralization leads to a democratic regime through the autonomy of local self-government in the capitalist system. According to Young (1994: 155), the new government and administration institutions are yet to establish a fully functional working relationship, and so the local elites remain as the dominant actors in local politics in Omsk. This different interpretation of Young denotes that provided the new institutions of administration are fully established, the local politics of Omsk –and/or all post-Soviet cities –will become more democratic through the participation of different actors rather than the domination of the local elite. Second, the hegemonic discourse of post-Soviet transition literature ignores the fact that several structural conditions of the transition era pushed these states further towards centralization while adopting the market-based economy and establishing the nation-state. Related with these criticisms, two points need to be analyzed for the main hypothesis of this dissertation: (a) the role of the local state in the capitalist regime, and (b) the structural conditions of the post-Soviet transition, both of which generated tension in the center-local relationship in local politics in Uzbekistani during the transition era.

Furthermore, this actor-based approach makes a further presumption, disassociating the post-Soviet countries from their own historicity by dealing with the Soviet regime as an excessive centralist regime.⁵⁵ During the Khrushchev era, the Soviet regime devolved considerable authority to the local elite in order to strengthen its hegemonic projects in the region, with the *mahalla kengash* becoming a part of the Soviet administrative structure. Hence, approaches that analyze the centralized or decentralized state system solely from the perspective of the administrative structure or the rationality of bureaucracy fail to explain how this huge bureaucratic and centralized regime fostered an informal bargaining process between the center and local, and how the “Sovietization of the local” in this centralist regime was reversed to become “localization of the Soviet”. This clearly demonstrates that the agency or actor approach based on literature assessing the Soviet transition has a reductionist inference of the Soviet history. In this thesis, although the framework of the

⁵⁵ In chapter two the center-local relationship during the pre-Soviet, Soviet and the post-Soviet periods was analyzed in order to demonstrate what changes occurred in the centralist –or decentralist – tendencies of the Uzbekistani regime from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era.

actor-based approach and community power during the transition era will be used while analyzing the *mahalla kengash* and its relations with the center, these criticisms will be taken into account.

In this section, a critique of post-Soviet transition literature that explains the institution-building process of post-Soviet countries through the actor-based approach is made. Although the actor-based approach gives priority to the continuity of political actors and the Soviet legacy using the concept of path dependency, it is argued in this thesis that the transition process was shaped by the political economic structure of the new market-based economy as well as the “*constellation of social forces that was obtained in each society under state socialism*” (Hausner, Jessop&Nielsen, 1995: 4-5). It is also argued that the post-Soviet transition process depended on both the political economic structure and the strategies of the political actors; in other words, that the institutional change in the post-Soviet states should be understood as an institutional reform that was based on the dialectic relationship between neo-liberal designers and the political actors of ex-Soviet countries within each state’s political economy context. The analysis of the Uzbekistani regime in terms of the relationship between the state and the urban *mahalla* will be presented in the next chapter under the title of “The Strategic Choices of the Uzbekistani Regime: The *Mahalla* as a Hegemonic Instrument”. In this section, the question being asked is, “How we can theoretically explain the conflict and/or crisis in the center-local relationship in the political regime of a post-Soviet country?” To respond to this question, it is necessary to focus on the role of the central and local administrations in a transition regime. The first step will be to explain the dynamics of the political economic structure in the post-Soviet transition that led to conflicts during the institutional change within the discussion of decentralization and centralization.

3.4.2 Significance of the Neo-Marxist and Neo-Gramscian Approach

According to Noori (2006: 533), “*many international donors promptly tailored their development projects to work through and with the mahalla. As a result of their activities, the mahalla became the focal point for the vast majority of development interventions by international non-governmental organizations in Uzbekistan. Western NGOs perceived these policies to be equivalent in purpose and function to the neo-liberal oriented WB discourse on decentralization*”. Moreover, she claims that the decentralization policy was reversed in order to decrease the state functions, by which a more state-oriented structure emerged (Noori, 2006: 534). In other words, the *mahalla*-scaled decentralization policy resulted in a localization of the state power rather than a decrease in the role of the state in social and

economic life, which was the main purpose of the decentralization strategy during the neo-liberal era. This situation resulted from the continuity of the Soviet strategy in which the urban *mahalla* was used as a hegemonic instrument. This dissertation suggests that a further reason for the failure of the decentralization policy was the effects of the neo-liberal economic regime on the institutional structure of the capitalist state and the role of the local state.

Decentralization, with both economic and political objectives, has become a part of the broad market reforms in transition countries after the early 1990s. The economic rationale for decentralization has its basis in the relation with the industrialized West and has been linked with the objective of improving public sector efficiency (Bird & Wallich, 1994; Wetzel, 2001). This is based on the belief that due to their proximity to the population, local agents are better suited to identify and respond to the needs of the people (Tiebout, 1956; Oates, 1972). *“In the post-Soviet world, a shift of authority between different levels of government became part of the overall complex process of economic transition; however both decentralized and centralized forms of governance have their advantage and disadvantages, depending upon the specific form and instruments of decentralization, and the framework institutions determining the interplay of the center and the periphery in the particular decentralization scheme”* (Libman, 2008: 13). Indeed, this process is not unique to post-Soviet countries, as there is a worldwide trend towards decentralization and previous literature on the subject implies that globalization leads to political decentralization. As Vogel (2004: 8) explains:

“First, globalization is associated with delocalised cities which require new governance arrangements. Second, in response to globalization, nation states have devolved responsibilities that they had traditionally assigned to lower levels of government. Political institutions and the intergovernmental system are restructured in response to external pressure under globalization. City leaders embrace new public management techniques to improve efficiency and supply amenities demanded by the upper tier of the global economy (world city system). Political institutions and their boundaries are adjusted to create metropolitan or regional interests to compete in the world economy (state globalization). Local officials seek to mitigate the negative effects of globalization on the local community (local-global interaction). In addition, local leaders are proactive in redesigning and rebuilding their cities in the post industrial age (new localism)”.

It is apparent that there are many studies and perspectives (new localism, world city system, glocalism) on local state and decentralization in urban politics that emphasize the role of economic development since the 1980s. Does globalization really lead to decentralization? Considering specific theories of globalization, no examples of cities experiencing decentralization consistent with the explanations of the world city system, local-global

interaction, glocalization of state, and new localism perspective can be found. For example, the push towards decentralization in Tokyo was consistent with the state glocalization perspective, which means the central governments promoted decentralization as a way of increasing the competitiveness of their capital cities in the world economy (Vogel, 2004: 11). Another example can be seen in Britain under Thatcherism, when Britain was justifiably characterized as a highly centralized unitary political system (MacLoad & Goodwin, 1999; Duncan & Goodwin, 1988; Gamble, 1994). Another important question is whether globalization leads to a hollowing out of the nationstate. Vogel (2004: 12) in his study of 75 cities, found that in many cities, interventions resulted in greater centralization rather than decentralization during the neo-liberal era. What was the driving force behind this centralization? The interventions were indeed motivated by globalization, however, globalization does not appear to encourage political autonomy in cities. Global competition prompts higher-level governments—such as regional rather than urban administrations – to develop world class cities in their territories. Centralization provides a mechanism to ensure the development of a world-class city that gets a share of the world economy within the nation's borders. Accordingly, the governance model of globalization does not lead decentralization, as the impetus for decentralization is rather external to the city. Moreover, no example exists of a hollowed out nation state, as the nation state in a neo-liberal economic system rather rescales itself. For this reason, while many governments seek to integrate constitutional reforms with new structures for decentralization, the political system is characterized as highly centralized. Interestingly, despite the highly centralized political system of the capitalist state in the neo-liberal West, blame for the failure of the post-Soviet countries in their decentralization policies is put on their highly centralized socialist state histories. However, such highly centralized political systems under the decentralization discourse and the new structure of urban governance are not unique to post-Soviet countries. Indeed, many examples denoting this dichotomy existed even in Western and North America cities. Neo-Marxist and neo-Gramscian approaches provide substantial explanations of a state's centralist tendency under a capitalist regime within the framework of political economy, but they also allow an understanding of why post-Soviet countries developed with centralized political systems in the transition to a market-based economy. Firstly, a summary of the local state in Marxist theory will be provided, after which an explanation will be made of decentralization policy and the reconfiguration of the state in post-Soviet countries, with emphasis on the concept of state strategy (hegemonic project and accumulation strategy). This explanation will help with the consideration of decentralization policy within the framework of the dialectic relationship between the actor and structure in political, economic, and socio-spatial activities, as a series of situated, context-specific – but actively

constructed – processes, and opens up the inquiry to a multi-scaled analysis (MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999: 505).

3.4.2.1 Role of the Local State in Neo-Marxist Approach

When writing an analysis of the dialectic relationship between the state and different types of *mahalla* as a body of local self-government during the transition era, it is necessary to provide a theoretical definition of the state and the *mahalla*. The local variation will be discussed in the next section in order to analyze the *mahalla* within the context of its spatial and temporal changes. Moreover, in the next chapter, the *mahalla* will be discussed with reference to its strategic selection by the Uzbekistani state as the main local institution in its decentralization policy and its hegemonic project.

Marxist theory explains the state with social conflict (class consciousness) and mode of production. The new Marxist theory focuses on the state theory in more detail. According to some Marxists, local government is just an extension of the central government, reproducing the labor force and the social relations. Other Marxists argue that the city is a sphere of collective consumption and social movements, and thus they emphasize the autonomy of local (urban) politics.

In contrast to pluralist or elite theory, Marxist theory explains the state from a macro-economic perspective, referring to economic relations and the class conflict. The instrumental model of the Marxist view and the most orthodox Marxist interpretation identify the state as a tool that serves the interests of the dominant class, and claims that the state has always had a critical role in fostering the development of a capitalist economy. According to Miliband (1969), a distinguished proponent of the instrumentalist approach:

“...the ruling class of a capitalist society is that class which owns and controls the means of production and which is able, by virtue of the economic power thus conferred upon it, to use the state as its instrument for the domination of society”.

On the other hand, Poulantzas argues that, *“the state is neither an instrument of class domination, nor a centre of power independent from classes, but is rather the representation of the balance of class forces in any particular society at any particular time”* (Saunders, 1979: 181). In other words, the *“state has the particular function of constituting the factor of cohesion between the levels of a social formation”* (Poulantzas, 1978). Poulantzas, a known structural functionalist, claims that: *“...each level in a mode of production consists of structures that tend to reproduce and stabilize the mode of production and class practices that generate conflicts and contradictions within the mode of production. A structure*

consists of one or more institutions that fulfill specific economic, political, or ideological functions necessary to sustain a particular mode of production” (Barrow, 2002: 22). Thus, according to Poulantzas, the political structure of a mode of production depends on state institutionalized power. The structural view differs from the instrumentalist one in its definition of both the state and state power. First, while for an instrumentalist, the state is a system that is composed of particular institutions –governmental, administrative, coercive and judicial apparatus, and sub-central governments – that come together and constitute its own reality, and this system is a tool in the hands of the ruling class; for a structuralist, as a political structure of a mode of production, the state fulfills a general maintenance function as a factor of cohesion between the levels of a social formation. From this functionalist-structuralist perspective, the state is relatively autonomous from the economic level of the capitalist mode of production, and is therefore a separate structure that has own capacity for self-production and its own laws by which it maintains the capitalist mode of production.

Instrumentalist and structuralist views differ towards the decentralization concept. According to instrumentalists, centralization and capital concentrations put pressure on the state to intervene on behalf of the monopolies, as the state has to regulate the contradictions of monopolistic capitalism (Dunleavy&O’leary, 1987: 241). Saunders (1979: 155) categorizes the instrumentalist view into two groups: elite theory and the Marxist instrumentalist view. According to him (1979: 158):

“What both of these traditions share in common is a view of the state as the instrument whereby one group achieves political domination over another, although they differ in the way these groups are conceptualized, elite theorists distinguishing between the elites and the masses, Marxist distinguishing between the ruling class and the proletariat”.

The best known Marxist instrumentalist in urban theory is Cockburn (1977), who argues that both the local and central states are a direct instrument of the capitalist class. For Cockburn, the local state is an agent of the nation state that takes care of the overall interest of capitalism. According to Cockburn, *“Local government becomes the local state as part of a whole; where the whole the capitalist state, is a relatively autonomous instrument of class domination, thus allowing it to manage social and economic reproduction above the competing demands of different fractions of capital but in the interests of capital as a whole”* (Duncan &Goodwin, 1988: 32). However, she raised the question of, if the local state is simply an instrument of the nation state, why there is a conflict in their relationship? It can be understood that her structuralist-functionalist perspective is based on interpretations of Althusser and Poulantzas rather than the instrumentalist perspective of Miliband. The instrumentalist perspective is really falls short of explaining the dialectic and reciprocal

relationship between the center and local because it interprets the relationship as unidirectional, from central to local state.

On the other hand, the implications of structuralist theory for the analysis of urban politics can be explored in the work of Castells. For him, *“The starting point must lie, not in the study of local state institutions and policy-making procedures, but rather in the analysis of the class struggle because urban management can only be explained in the context of class struggles which reflect the growing contradictions within the social formation”* (Saunders, 1979: 182). Local state is an actor that is responsible for the provision of collective consumption goods in a capitalist regime (Castells, 1997). The behavior of state administrators are thus explained with reference to the structural relationship between the political and the economic, the state and capital (Saunders, 1979: 183). Dual state theory is another structuralist-functionalist Marxist view that has three main stages (Dunleavy & O’leary, 1987: 252): (a) three functions of the state in the capitalist mode of production are defined: preservation of order, promotion of capital accumulation and manufacture of legitimation; (b) forms of state expenditure corresponding to each of these functions are identified; (c) the direction of state organizations is structured so that accumulation functions are ranked higher than legitimation functions. Thus, *“conflicts in central-local relations reveal the structural tensions between the accumulation and legitimation imperatives acting upon the capitalist state”* (Dunleavy & O’leary, 1987: 252). In addition, the typology put forward by O’Connor provides a good example of a functionalist perspective. He constructs taxonomy of the key functions as follows: (a) sustenance of private production and capital accumulation; (b) reproduction of labor-power through collective consumption; and (c) maintenance of order and social cohesion. According to these structuralist-functionalist views, the central government or national state is identified with production, while the local state is identified with consumption. Such a sharp distinction or dichotomy between national and local state excludes the dialectic relationship that is mostly shaped within the contingent process or within the dynamic socio-spatial and political economic processes.

There are different arguments related to the concept of local state autonomy. For example, Saunders (1979) argues that there are three issues determining the degree of local state autonomy: limitations of space as an ecology, political restriction on local autonomy, and economic restriction. Duncan & Goodwin (1988) argue that the relationships between the local state and the central government, market and local society determine the degree of local state autonomy. On the other hand, Dunleavy (1980) emphasizes three key areas that have decreased local state autonomy and increased non-local policy determination at a local scale

in recent years: policy formulation within the welfare state as a whole; the involvement of large private firms in urban development and public provision; and professionalism at both a local and the national level. According to Dunleavy (1980:28):

“Different local authorities can mediate and translate these non-local forces in dramatically different ways. Economic forces only operate within and around specific social and political conditions. Thus, different authorities (local) pursue totally distinct policies, determined largely by local political considerations”.

The argument of Dunleavy is crucial for this thesis in terms of its emphasis on local policy variations and spatio-temporally different local state strategies, considering the issue of the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime. This will be discussed in the next section of this chapter as the second stage of the theoretical framework. Marxist theory explains decentralization in terms of the relationship between the state, the ruling class and the political economy framework rather than the levels of authority and division of function between the central state and local government. This point is more significant for the hypothesis of this thesis when compared to the new institutionalist perspectives. Although decentralization is related with the internal organization of the state structure, it is shaped by the dialectic relationship between state strategies (hegemonic project and accumulation strategy) and spatio-temporally different responses of the local state, and both are affected by the political economic context of social relations at a national and/or local scale. In this regard, the local state can be both an obstacle and/or an agent for the nation state according to the degree of convenience of its local social relations to the state hegemonic project. In the next section, the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime during the era of neo-liberal transition from the neo-Gramscian perspective will be explained.

3.4.2.2 The Local State between the Structural Hegemony of Neo-Liberalism and the Hegemonic Project of a Nation State in the Post-Soviet Geography

Different perspectives in neo-pluralism and neo-Weberian theory explain the change in urban politics in neo-liberalism or in the transition era from a Keynesian welfare state to a Schumpeterian post-national regime, exclusively within the context of state restructuring. Macleod & Goodwin (1999) emphasize three factors in state restructuring: denationalization (hollowing out of state), destatization (from government to governance), and internalization (towards entrepreneurialism/competitive innovation, explained with reference to the increased strategic significance of the global economic context). Many examples of these can be found in numerous studies, making these three factors highly debatable in that they are often misread, being explained solely with reference to the economic perspective. The dialectic relationship between economic and political structure and/or sphere is ignored in

these perspectives and thus the role of political forces and discourse in the economic transformation are insufficiently analyzed. In other words, as Jessop (1997) argues, “*The emphasis is on exploring how political, intellectual and moral leadership is ‘mediated through a complex ensemble of institutions, organizations and forces operating within, orientated toward or located at a distance from the juridico-political state apparatus’*” (in Macleod & Goodwin, 1999: 515). The neo-Gramscian approach becomes significant for understanding the role of the political aspect of the economic structure and civil society through the concepts of the *hegemonic project* and *strategic selectivity*.

These concepts, while constructive, avoid the dangers of economism by accepting the nation state and/or political force as an agency within the global economic structure and the dialectic relationship between the state and agency. This critical realism is appropriate for the methodology of this thesis. Jessop explains this in terms of the relationship between two state strategies: the accumulation strategy and the hegemonic project. According to Macleod & Goodwin (1999: 516), these state strategies refer to a pattern of intervention in the economy and society which (a) favors the course of accumulation strategy and the flow of material benefits to the requisite social base; and (b) constructs representative forms that systematically favor key sectors and social groups. According to Jessop, in the global era, it is harder to demarcate a relatively autonomous economic sphere. An accumulation strategy is defined for different spatial scales, from international regimes to national and local economies. Because economies are always embedded in a wider ethico-political context, the stability of the ethico-political context also merits attention. A hegemonic project achieves this by resolving the abstract conflicts between particular interests and general interest (Jessop, 1997: 62). The concept of the hegemonic project shows how - structuralist/functionalist view of Poulantzas inspired Jessop. What Jessop (1997: 62) says about the hegemonic project is no different to Poulantzas:

“This project mobilizes support behind a concrete program of action that asserts a contingent general interest in the pursuit of objectives that explicitly or implicitly advance the long-term interests of hegemonic class. Moreover, although the hegemonic project serves the long-term interests of the dominant class, this class will typically sacrifice certain economic-corporate interests in the short term to help legitimize its overall hegemonic project”.

Jones (1998: 982), speaking on the hegemonic project of the state, points out that “*ideology and policy making are anchored through the support of (national) state projects which represent the institutionalization of state power and state strategy*”. Moreover, the policy making process of the state apparatus should be seen within the relationship between the accumulation strategy and the state’s hegemonic project. According to Jessop, the state is

neither a neutral (pluralist) apparatus open to all social groups, nor a closed (elitist) instrument (Jones, 1989: 982). Drawing on Poulantzas, the state should be viewed as a social relation, considered “as the site, the generator and the product of strategies” (Macleod & Goodwin, 1999: 516). At this point, a particular hegemonic project can be decisive in resolving (albeit temporally and unevenly) the conflicts between particular interests (Macleod & Goodwin, 1999: 517; Jessop, 1997: 62).

Moreover, the strategic-relational approach and the relationship between state strategies and projects can be used to explain why each nation state has a different hegemonic project and institutional structure (e.g. differing degrees of centralized or decentralized political systems) in order to achieve an accumulation strategy. If state is a form of social relation, then, a hegemonic project emerges as a balancing force among the different interest groups. The concept of strategic choice is used by Jessop to explain the effects and/or role of the actor/agency (e.g., nation state, local and regional state) within the economic and social structure at a supranational, national and/or local scale. The relational character of strategic choice implies that, “*The differential ability of social forces to pursue their interests through different strategies ‘is not inscribed in the state system as such, but in the relation between state structures and the strategies which different forces adopt’.*” (Jessop, 1990: 260). Thus, strategic choice is a sorting mechanism in favor of those groups (strategically significant sectors of the population) and actors (institutional agents) in need of legitimizing policy implementation; and its geographical location depends on the balance between the different class forces within the social and economic structural under girding (Jones, 1998, 982; Keil, 2003: 291). Moreover, as Macleod & Goodwin (1999: 519) point out, the strategic choices of the state can be deliberately promoted by political and intellectual leaders, and that this can, in part, be realized by reconfiguring the internal institutional structure and the representational regime of the state.

The decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime should be analyzed from this perspective. The strategic choices of the Uzbekistani state, supported by the political and economic elite, are achieved by restructuring and rebuilding the internal institutional structure and the representational regime during the post-Soviet transition. Accordingly, the last point in the conceptualization of Jessop’s neo-Gramscian approach is the relationship between structural hegemony and the hegemonic project. According to Joseph (2002: 133):

“The hegemonic project of a national state and struggles are determined by the basic structure of society but they are not reducible to this. Hegemonic projects, thus, develop their own dynamics which need to be analyzed in their specificity. Because they are emergent out of underlying structural hegemonic conditions, these projects ultimately cannot escape these conditions, but they can at least develop in their own individual way

and may come into conflict with these conditions in dialectic over determination”.

The hegemonic project of the nation state is strategically developed in its own way within the constraints of the structural hegemony of society, as critical realism argues. A decentralization policy, as a part of hegemonic project –and/or the accumulation strategy – of a nation state should not be explained without emphasizing the structural hegemony of society. The explanation of the dialectic relationship between structural hegemony and the hegemonic project is necessary for this dissertation in terms of the effects of the transitional era and/or structural conditions (structural hegemony of neo-liberalism) upon the internal institutional structure and representational regimes of post-Soviet countries, including Uzbekistan. Gramsci defines hegemony as a nation state-scale concept; and the neo-Gramscian perspective, which mainly adjusts the Gramscian approach to neo-liberalism, studies the concept of hegemony at an international scale. According to Jessop, from a neo-Gramscian perspective, the concept of hegemony can be addressed at both supranational and subnational levels (Jessop, 1997: 63).

According to Jessop, globalization has both structural and strategic elements: structurally, it involves objective processes, thereby increasing global interdependence among actions, organizations, and institutions within different functional systems; while strategically, it makes conscious attempts to promote the global coordination of activities in different functional subsystems (Jessop, 2008: 179; Goodwin & Painter, 1996: 641). In these structural and strategic moments of globalization, each nation state re-establishes, re-structures and re-configures its internal organization according to its strategic choices, which is shaped by class conflict. Thus, both the structural hegemony of society and neo-liberalism affect the institution-building process of nation states. In other words, the dialectic relationship between the structure (neo-liberalism and social structure) and strategy of the state entails a complex process of historical conditioning and recursive transformation (MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999: 519). Accordingly, the post-Soviet countries have strategically realized the institution-building of the nation state in a global era through the dialectic articulation of both (a) structural hegemony of society that is based on path-dependency to the Soviet past, and (b) the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism that is based on path-shaping actions and policies of neo-liberal designers. This is why transition literature is a political rather than scientific process, and is not shaped solely by the path-dependent Soviet past, as Weberian and pluralist views argue. As Hausner et al. (1995: 4) argue:

“The transformation process cannot be path dependent... post-socialist transformation processes depend heavily on politico-economic structure and the constellation of social forces that are obtained in each society under state socialism; on how specific state socialist societies are

decomposed and/or were overthrown; and on how these factors feed into current attempts at economic, political and social transformation”.

Due to the dialectic relationship between the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism and post-Soviet societies, they have spatio-temporally different experiences in the global era. The transition to neo-liberalism took place differently for post-Soviet countries. Each nation state, as an agency of the new global neo-liberal system, strategically selected policies to establish its accumulation strategy and hegemonic projects. In the new global era, these two factors drive the nation-states in structural contradictions and strategic dilemmas, especially during the transition. For instance, post-Soviet countries that try to establish institution-building at a local scale experienced these contradictions and dilemmas. To support with a case, shortly after independence, the Uzbekistani regime declared urban *mahalla* as a unique body of local self-government and devolved many functions to the *mahalla kengash* in urban social policy. These functions were related with the state hegemonic project, aimed at establishing a nation state during the transition to a market-based economy. In this regard, the first question to be answered is which dynamics in local politics in Uzbekistan came into conflict during the transition era. To answer this question, further questions first need to be addressed: What were the state accumulation strategy and hegemonic projects? Why did these create conflicts in local politics? And what was the function of the local state in respect to these two points during the transition.

Nation states can have important roles in making world cities and achieving decentralization despite the power and influence of transnational corporations; and it is nation states that instigate the new world economic order by devolving their urban policies to cities and forcing them to be more self-reliant and competitive. Brenner (1999: 439) explains that states “*fix territorial scales at both sub-national and supra-national levels for economic regulation in order to enhance the administrative efficiency of state institutions, to enable new forms of capital mobility on supranational to promote the global competitiveness of major sub-national growth poles and to enforce the de- and revalorization of capital within declining cities and regions*”. Globalization is a political objective as well as a political instrument. It is a rationale as well as a methodology through which political elites advance neo-liberal policies that lead to a convergence of world cities and diminish liberal welfare policies. In this regard, nation-states serve as agents of change, fostering a post-Fordist economy. Smith (2002, 434) asserts, “*national states are reframing themselves as purer, territorially rooted economic actors in and of the market, rather than external compliments to it*”. Swyngedouw (1997) refers to this scale fixing as “glocalization,” which is constructed through social conflicts and political struggles. He observes the consequences of a glocalized

scale fix as follows: “... *rescaling of spatial levels of governance leads to multiply articulated, but increasingly authoritarian, state apparatuses and a parallel marginalization and reconstruction of the citizen. These changes are legitimated and pushed through on the basis of the need to develop competitive places in a context of intensifying inter-place competition*” (Swyngedouw, 1997). He concludes that although local characteristics do influence urbanization patterns under globalization, what kind of locality will emerge depends on the scale and ultimately on the decision makers holding power over the political economy of cities and the welfare of citizens. Therefore, place matters, but scale decides (Swyngedouw, 1997: 144; Vogel, 2004: 5–6).

The nation state, as a form of sovereign state, is a historical product of capitalism. During the neo liberal era, many new modes of territorializing political power have come into being, new expressions have emerged, and yet even more can be imagined. Moreover, new territorial scales, as the primary nodal point of the institutionalization of political power, have been established. “*This indicates the need to be as precise as possible regarding the sense(s), if any, in which the sovereign state system is challenged by globalization; and to consider the potential for re-structuring statehood along one or more of its principal dimensions*” (Jessop, 2008: 211). According to Jessop’s regulationist approach (1993, 1994, 1995, 1997), the transition from a Fordist to post-Fordist paradigm promotes innovation-driven structural competitiveness. This situation encourages local competition through place-based partnerships between local unions, local chambers of commerce, local venture capital, local education bodies and local research centers (Jessop, 1994: 272). Local states enter into arrangements to regenerate the local economy, which has resulted in a shift from local government to local governance (Jessop, 1994: 272). The decentralization policy in the global era should be analyzed as a part of a structural hegemony of neo-liberalism rather than as part of the relationship with democracy through the increasing representation of civil society, as the neo-pluralist view argues.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, many new countries emerged in the post-Soviet geography, and this generated a major transformation in these countries, including their urban areas. Social scientists presume that the post-Soviet countries underwent a standard political, economic and social transformation, however it can be demonstrated that each country experienced a transformation in its *sui generis* way, based on their own individual traditions and history – shaped in both the pre-Soviet and Soviet eras – as well as the impositions of international structures. As seen below, many Soviet countries, including Uzbekistan, declared independence alongside their adoption of a new liberal economic regime, and together with the continuity of the political and economic power of the ex-Soviet

leaders and bureaucrats. As referred to at the beginning of section 3.4.1. in the quotation from an interview, it is clear that many ex-Soviet bureaucrats and the directors of old state factories had no difficulty in establishing their new business positions through their contacts with external collaborators. As Lane (2006: 145) argues, “*The global capitalist class, through the exogenous global political elite, had a major effect on the collapse and the direction of transition*”. These exogenous global political and economic elites had a substantial influence on the post-Soviet regime change.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the transition from a socialist to a capitalist regime took place in the post-Soviet countries.. Although, as elite theory and new institutionalism emphasize, the elite power and the historical patterns of institutions perpetuated several continuities from the ex-Soviet regime, the dynamics affecting urban politics and the center-local relationship in the transition cannot be ignored. In this thesis, the intention is not to explain the differences between the capitalist and socialist regimes; however this economic transformation is crucial to understand the emerging crisis in the center-local relationship in post-Soviet countries, as the integration of these countries into the new global economy required a qualitative rather than quantitative change in the institutional structure that brought a new form, and a new crisis, to the center-local relationship. For this reason, it cannot be said that the failure of the decentralization policy in post-Soviet countries was based solely on the continuity of the centralist tendency in the Soviet political structure, as the capitalism-led crisis in the center-local relationship can also be held to account.

After the 1970s, despite the glorification of decentralization in the neo-liberal era, there are many examples indicating the increasing centralist tendency of the capitalist state in the Western world. It may be argued that neo-liberalism increased centralization in the political system of post-Soviet states, despite the attempts at decentralization; while due to the lack of economic and social infrastructure, these states became also the main actors in establishing an environment suitable for the smooth transition to a market-based economy. At the same time they established their nation state, incorporating a capitalist system that entailed private ownership and a capitalist class; and thus these states’ centralist tendencies increased in the transition period in which capitalist socio-economic relations were absent. This conjuncture resulted in an increase of institutional reform conflicts in the local-center relationship that stemmed from the dual role of the local government: as an agent of the state, and as a representative of the local community. Hence, arguments that highlight the failure of the post-Soviet decentralization and democratization can be considered irrational within the structural conditions of the transition. In short, the structural conditions for the transition, as

well as the Soviet legacy, were influential in the centralist tendencies of the post-Soviet states.

For example, the most fundamental change in the transition to a market-based economy was the privatization of property. After independence, these countries permitted private property in housing, buildings and urban enterprises, ending the shortages of consumer goods and services that had plagued the state-controlled Soviet economy. It can be asserted that post-Soviet states that share similar characteristics of control over spatial development have become more flexible in attracting investors and international entrepreneurs (Moses, 2003: 116), and the authority for implementing social and infrastructure services in urban living space has been transferred to local governments. However, if local state policy fails to attract international and national capital, the central state immediately intervenes in the local state's internal organization, as in the new transition era the local government is seen as an instrument in local economic development. According to Campbell (1995, 262), post-communist political leaders are in a conflicting position, torn between their role of commanding structures to pursue rapid economic reform and their role in local democracy to build a civil society. Many leaders preferred to pursue economic policy in order to achieve rapid economic reforms which increase the centralist tendency. Since many post-Soviet regimes attempted to realize rapid economic development, decentralization at a small scale decreased their economic efficiency. These states refused to pursue a decentralization policy at a small scale, and consequently the decentralization policy was realized at a regional scale. Furthermore, when analyzed in detail, it is possible to argue that the decentralization policy turned into a de-concentration policy in practice (Wolman, 2003: 327-328). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, migration to cities increased sharply, and the population density left local states in a difficult position while implementing urban social policies and establishing infrastructure. As Suraszka (1996) demonstrates in her review of urban politics in Warsaw, Budapest, Prague and Bratislava, the post-socialist era was characterized by changes in the political and administrative relationships between cities and the nation state, and between cities and their districts. Her concluding remark asserts that there are few clearly defined urban governance legislative structures in the region's major cities, and that such jurisdictional fragmentation created problems in ensuring cohesion in urban development (Stenning, 1996).

During the transition, many new features in local politics, shaped by neo-liberal actors (elites, international, national, and local actors), have emerged in the post-Soviet geography and its structural hegemony (McAuley, 1997; Moses, 2003; Heusner, Jessop&Nielsen, 1995; Suraszka, 1996; Volman, 2003). This conjuncture was no different in Uzbekistan's local

politics; however most of the transition studies on decentralization have been based on East European countries and Russia, and the differences between these countries and those of Central Asia should also be considered. Applying the results of East European and Russian decentralization studies and their critical approaches to Central Asian cases will result in inaccurate results about the *mahalla* and Uzbekistani state relations; thus, it is necessary to emphasize the fundamental historical conditions that affect a local political structure as well as national politics during the transition era. Its historical conditions make the Uzbekistani regime one of the most unique and original regimes in the post-Soviet geography.

As will be seen in the next section, the socio-spatial and economic segregation and inequality in Central Asia was greater than in Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe. In addition to the institution building process and the creation of private property and a bourgeoisie, the regime had to tackle these problems to achieve rapid economic development, and hence, some functions of local government became more privileged for the nation state. Lemon (2007: 18) discussed the importance of local government in the democratization of under-developed South Africa in the globalizing world in his book “*Democratizing Local Government*”. He claims that there are three reasons for the existence of local government in underdeveloped countries. First, the bureaucratic structure of the modern state requires the hierarchical administrative system and local government to be a part of this hierarchical system by implementing local policies effectively, as the Weberian view argues. Second, devolving autonomy to the local government increases the democratic legitimacy of the central government, while local government shares responsibility in hierarchical problems. Last, uneven development is crucial for the functioning of local government. The central state could control underdeveloped regions and cities through autonomous local government, for example, in Uzbekistan the *mahalla kengash* is referred to as the “ears and eyes of the government”.

Another historical condition that affects the new institutional structure and hegemonic project of the state in Uzbekistan is the contradiction between the modern administrative structure and the bureaucracy established by the Soviet regime. Before the Soviet era, there were several khanates in Central Asia that by the 1800s had become the colonial society of the Tsarist Regime. The Tsarist regime did not intervene in local political and social life in Central Asia aside from occasions when it was under threat (Yalçın, 2002; Roy, 2001; Khalid, 1996). The establishment of a modern state in Central Asia by the Soviet regime resulted in these Central Asian nations giving priority to the former institutions in their structures than Eastern European countries, which had experienced a modern state before the

Soviet era and, path-dependently, continued their old political strategies. Although previous authors have argued that after independence these countries re-generated their pre-Soviet traditional values, norms and institutions, at least in the Uzbekistan case, many of the pre-Soviet remnants had survived throughout the Soviet era as a result of the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the Soviet regime and local society. In other words, in order to control and manage the region, many strategies and policies of the Soviet regime reversed the “sovietization of local community” into the “localization of the Soviet,” and thus many pre-Soviet norms, identities and institutions, along with their social relations, infiltrated the Soviet state organization and bureaucratic structure, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Some scientists claim that the strategy of the Communist Party in Central Asia was to provide a balance of power among different clans and regions, giving power and a position of authority to local leaders (Uzbekistan) in the Communist Party, and this political structure survived after independence. For example, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emerging states started to establish new institutional structures based on their “*nomeklature*” culture and authoritarian structure. Particularly for Central Asian countries it can be claimed that the new political elite or elite groups (clans) became leaders of both the public and private sector as a result of their economic and political resources. For example, in his studies on post-communist political regime categorization, Moller (2007) places the Central Asian states in the autocratic regime category. According to Luong (1998), “...unless a dramatic shift in power is widely perceived to have taken place, established elites will continue to dominate the process by which institutions are designed, and hence, reduce the likelihood for institutional innovation and political liberation”. Moreover, the power that the Communist Party devolved to local leaders to maintain balance among the different clans of Uzbekistani society helped to create a strong, powerful bureaucratic structure. According to Saroyan (2001: 139), the federal system of national republics established not just the symbolic trappings of modern nation-states, but also the institutional basis for the formation of indigenous ethnic leadership. The net result of the *korenizatsiia* (nativization) policy was the creation of an ethnic administrative elite that still survives today. Thus, after independence, many Central Asian political leaders changed their ideas on key nationalist issues or shifted to a new national bourgeoisie. The *mahalla kengash* is the most appropriate example of this continuity, having become part of the administrative structure of the Tsarist regime, then appointed as a social organization under the authority of the Communist Party, and then finally, accepted as a body of local self-government.

Another historical condition that affected the new institutional structure and hegemonic project of the state in Uzbekistan was the modern national identity created by the Soviet regime, and summarized in Chapter Two. Before the Soviet regime, Central Asia was a colony, and in 1924, the Uzbekistani Soviet Socialist Republic was established with its new Uzbek identity. Although there was a modern national struggle in Central Asia around the Turkish identity, the Soviet regime divided the region into five republics with their new language and ethnic identity. “*The Soviet Union feared that a unified central Asia would create a sense of nationalism that would threaten its rule of the region. The soviet solution was to divide the region. In the mid-1920s the current national boundaries were drawn and the five republics, none of which had existed independently prior to that time, were created*” (Clark: 35). It is possible to argue that the Soviet regime established not only a supranational Soviet identity, but also national identities in Central Asia. For this purpose, the regime had to use and (re-)produce many pre-Soviet remnants at a local level (a sub-regional of Central Asia), which resulted in the perpetuation of some of the old social relations, such as the clan and tribe. How did this situation affect the new regime? While Central Asian states were attempting to establish their nation state, they continued to use many strategies of the Soviet regime in order to establish national identity. This is crucial for understanding the role of the *mahalla kengash* for the Uzbekistani regime. As can be seen in the following chapters, historically, the *mahalla kengash* continued to exist under the post-Soviet regime as a hegemonic instrument in the creation of a national identity (*O'zbekchiliq*) (Abramson, 1998; Baykal, 2006; Luong, 1998; Roy, 2001; Masaru, 2006; Sievers, 2002; Epstein & Winter, 2002; Pashkin, 2003; Noori, 2006). It is this that makes the Uzbekistani state unique in its transition, and was one of the most important factors increasing the tension in the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan. As in other former Soviet countries, the Uzbekistani regime devolved the implementation of urban social policies to the *mahalla kengash*, which became also the main hegemonic instrument in the creation of a national identity. Furthermore, many Uzbekistani state strategies and policies demonstrate that the new regime mimicked the Soviet regime in its use of the *mahalla kengash* to control the local community. In the political system of Uzbekistan, the *mahalla kengash* became primarily an agent of the central state, similar to its function in the Soviet era, while also being a representative of the local community (Duncan & Goodwin, 1988; Cockburn, 1977).

Finally, the historical condition that affected the new institutional structure and hegemonic project of the state and the role of local state in Uzbekistan was the non-existence of capitalist social relations in Central Asian and Uzbekistani society. During the colonial period, the feudal structure remained the same, although economic life was negatively

affected. The transition was from feudal regime to a socialist one. This was different for the East European countries where a capitalist regime had been experienced before the Soviet era. Due to the lack of experience of capitalism in Uzbekistan, the Uzbekistani regime had to create a national bourgeoisie and permit private ownership, which resulted in more centralization than in Russia or in any of the East European countries, and indicates the significance of the *mahalla kengash* in the creation of local entrepreneurs and entrepreneurialism. The Uzbekistani regime today perceives the *mahalla kengash* as the main institution of local entrepreneurialism, in that it encourages local people to establish SMEs through micro credits. Moreover, the central state arranges many conferences in order to explain entrepreneurialism at a *mahalla* scale. The Soviet regime raised awareness of the ideal socialist worker at a *mahalla* scale, whereas today, it is the awareness of the ideal entrepreneur that is raised.

In a nutshell, the regime in Uzbekistan strategically appointed the urban *mahalla kengash* as the primary body of local self-government as part of its decentralization policy in its institution-building process. The functions and significance of the *mahalla kengash* for the hegemonic project and the accumulation strategy of the Uzbekistani regime are determined by the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism (path-shaping), as well as the historical conditions of the Soviet era (path-dependent). This is noted by Jessop as: “*structural constraints operate selectively*” (Jessop, 1997: 64). According to Noori (2010: 547), “*the mahalla reform of the Uzbek regime has successfully drawn upon Communist technologies of government, and the government can claim to have enhanced public perceptions of the state’s reach and power*”. The state, as a social relation, pursues particular strategies in order to adopt the hegemonic project and accumulation strategy into the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism. The Uzbekistani state chose strategically the urban *mahalla kengash* as a unique body of local self-government. This denotes that the decentralization policy, through the urban *mahalla kengash*, was an instrument of the hegemonic project and the accumulation strategy of the Uzbekistani regime during the post-Soviet era. The regime in post-Soviet Uzbekistan faced several crucial problems, such as the creation of a nation state, the adaptation of a global neo-liberal economy, control of society, and the resolution of the chaos and social tension of the transition period, and it was amid all these structural problems that the regime tried to build its hegemonic project, in which the urban *mahalla kengash* proved to be a valuable asset. There are a number of important reasons for the articulation of the urban *mahalla kengash* into the Uzbekistani state’s institutional structure. First, the *mahalla*, as a traditional local socio-spatial institution, was recognized as a form of self-government that brought the citizens closer to the central government. Second, using the

mahalla as a main element in the re-configuration of the state demonstrated that the Uzbekistani state could successively separate itself from the centralist tendency of the Soviet regime. Third, the central government was able to control every home and family through the *mahalla kengash*, which today is considered as the “ears and eyes” of the central government. Fourth, the *mahalla kengash* has capabilities in the provision of public services, and saves the central state from becoming involved in considerable duties. The Uzbekistani state used the *mahalla* as a body of self-government due to the importance of localization that relies on globalization. In Uzbekistan, the nation has been created in the *mahalla*, and they have become representatives of the Uzbek identity (*o'zbekchiliq*). Besides, not only is the state organized, but also the groups of radical Islam are organized at the *mahalla* scale. For this reason, the *mahalla* organization is a socio-spatial unit in which there is struggle for power. Lastly, as a neighborhood unit, the *mahalla kengash* enables the regime to exclude local government from the urban planning process.

As a conclusion to the first stage of theoretical framework, the arguments that assert the centralist political structure of the Soviet regime as the sole reason for the failure of today's decentralization and democratic development leads us to accept two mandatory presumptions of neo-liberal discourse: (a) that the market regime is an ideal regime under which to establish a democratic society and political regime; and (b), that decentralization leads to a democratic regime through autonomous local self-government. The experiences of former Soviet countries demonstrate that the market-based economy is not an ideal regime under which to establish a democratic society and political regime, and that a decentralization policy as part of a structural hegemony of neo-liberalism does not necessarily lead to a democratic regime. The post-Soviet experience clearly demonstrates that the role of the local state in a neo-liberal transition is determined by the dialectic relationship between the decentralization discourse of the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism and the process of institutional-building in post-Soviet states as a part of their hegemonic project. Therefore, the neo-Gramscian approach is one of the main theoretical perspectives of this dissertation. Through this approach, this study argues that the re-scaling –and reconfiguring –of the internal structure of the Uzbekistani state has been shaped by the strategic choices of the Uzbekistani political and economic leadership, which is an actor in both the structural hegemony of Uzbekistani society and in neo-liberalism. Moreover, deriving from Jessop's argument, the decentralization policy, as a part of this institution-building process, became hegemonic at supranational, national and local scales. For this reason, the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime should be analyzed through the dialectic relationship between (a) the hegemonic project of the nation state within the

structural hegemony of the neo-liberal transition in the post-Soviet era, and (b) the hegemony of the local level, which is shaped by the spatio-temporally differentiated strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengashes* within the constraints of the structural hegemony of local social relations. Coming to the second stage of the theoretical framework, although the decentralization policies were legally determined by the central state as a part of its hegemonic project, the strategies and tactics of the local state were spatio-temporally different, depending on the dialectic relationship between state strategies and the structural hegemony of the local social relations, and resulted in local policy variations.

The spatio-temporally different *mahalla* types in Uzbekistani cities emerged out of the differences in the dialectic center-local relationship, and each influenced the decentralization policy that was a part of the accumulation strategy and hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime. The reasons why the *mahalla*, as a traditional type⁵⁶ of urban living space of Uzbekistani society, existed and was even (re-)produced in the Soviet period, despite its aim to create an ideal socialist society, should be analyzed. The response to this question is crucial for the main hypothesis of this study in two aspects: (a) local variations, and/or the social segregation of living space in Central Asian cities, and (b) the centralist tendency of the Soviet regime. Therefore, it is theoretically essential to come up with an answer to the following question: Why and how do local variations occur in any regime?

3.5 Spatio-Temporally “Types of *Mahalla*” as a Local Variation

In this section the second stage of the theoretical framework of the thesis will be presented. The *mahalla* has become the main socio-spatial unit in Uzbek society, and it is argued in this thesis that due to the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the Soviet hegemony and the native community, the inequality between urban neighborhoods has deepened in Uzbekistani cities, and these neighborhoods have become spatio-temporally different from each other. Different types of *mahalla* (re-)produce different strategies and tactics amid the structural conditions of the post-Soviet transition in their daily life, and the state’s decentralization policy and hegemonic projects. This has resulted in a dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the Uzbekistani regime and the different types of urban *mahallas* that have shaped the center-local relationship and Uzbek urban politics differently in each locality. The different strategies and tactics of the individual *mahalla kengashes* have made the dialectic relationship between center and local more contradictory, in that the

⁵⁶ I use the term traditional type hereto refer not to an ideal Soviet form of living space that was shaped according to class and redistribution politics, but rather, as seen in Chapter Four, a traditional type of urban living space (*mahalla*) (re-)produced by the Soviet regime according to politics of identity and representation.

strategies and responses of some *mahalla kengashes* have been inconvenient for the hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime, and have thus brought about further centralization. The first national level dynamics to cause tension in center-local relationships are theoretically explained through local state theories at the beginning of the chapter. The second dynamics require a theoretical response to the question of why there exist local policy variations among urban neighborhood, resulting in different strategies and policy implementations in the local committees of different neighborhood types. These local variations emerged mostly during the Soviet era as a result of the dialectic relationship between the Soviet regime and the native community. For this reason, the second stage that focuses on the relation degree between neighborhood studies and local policy variations will be followed.

In the first phase, three groups of neighborhood (*mahalla*) studies will be summarized. The different available *mahalla* and/or neighborhood studies that focus on local policy variations can be categorized into three groups: (a) output studies, primarily based on an ecological approach and the urban spatial analysis of Chicago school, orientalist studies, (b) community power studies, predominantly based on an actor-based approach, and (c) several Marxist studies which explain local variations through uneven capitalist social relations and political-economic contexts.

The second phase explains the historical conditions of Uzbekistan that caused the uneven development in cities during the Soviet era, in which the inequality and socio-spatial segregation in the Soviet regime is discussed through the Soviet hegemony. This last part seeks to integrate the first and second stages of the theoretical framework through the concepts of state hegemony and local variation. This thesis argues that the dialectic relationship between the central and local states is inherently dynamic, in that both the central and local state are dynamic forms of social relations. Accordingly, local state institutions are constantly being restructured by the dialectical relationship between the structure and actor in the local variation of the urban living space. In other words, there is a reciprocal effect between the local state and the local variation, and this indicates that *mahalla kengashes* are affected constantly by the dialectic relationship between the state structure and the local power structure. It is possible to argue that the *mahalla*, as both an administrative/political unit and a socio-spatial unit, has been a hegemonic instrument of both the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes, which has enabled its survival. The second step in the theoretical framework is analyzed through a discussion of the hegemony concept and civil society within the daily life of the urban living space, which can be found at the intersection of hegemony and civil society.

3.5.1 An Overview of Neighborhood Studies

This section first summarizes the neighborhood and *mahalla* studies that do not take into account policy making and local politics, which can be categorized into two groups: (a) studies examining the *mahalla* as the main living spaces of Islamic cities, which are mostly referred to as orientalist, and (b) studies examining the neighborhood as a sociological and geographical unit, which are mostly from the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. Both of these are methodologically positivist and treat the neighborhood and/or *mahalla* as non-political processes.

Classical urban thought and orientalist studies refrain from analyzing the policy making process at a neighborhood level, while Marxist studies analyze local policy variations through power relations at several scales. Unlike in the actor-based approach of community power studies, the Marxist view provides an opportunity to analyze spatio-temporally differentiated *mahalla* types through the dialectic relationship between the *mahalla* and the state, and for this reason community power studies that focus on the policy-making process and explain local variations through an actor-based approach are going to be discussed. Finally, several Marxist studies that explain local variations through Marxist notions of analysis are going to be discussed. Marxist studies on local variations can be categorized into three groups: (a) those in which the urban is conceived as a locus of the contradictory and crisis-hidden process of capital accumulation; (b) those in which capitalist class relations provide a fundamental perspective for urban politics; and (c) those that recognize the ideological content of categories such as the urban and bourgeois separation of the political, social and economic (Geddes, 2009: 55).

3.5.1.1 The *Mahalla* and/or Neighborhood as an Isolated Socio-Spatial Unit

This section presents a summary of literature analyzing the *mahalla* concept in orientalist studies and classical urban thought, with emphasis on the concepts of neighborhood and its transformation. These two fields of study in which the *mahalla* is considered as the main actor in decentralization and the state's hegemony project will be summarized to clarify four important points: (a) the sharp distinction between the *mahalla* in the Eastern world and the neighborhood in the Western world; (b) the constant *mahalla* definition; (c) the inflexible distinction between the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit and as a political/administrative unit, and (d) the rigid dichotomy between definitions of traditional and modern *mahallas*.

3.5.1.1.1 *Mahalla* in Orientalist Studies

The etymological root of the word *mahalla* comes from *mahal*, which means local, and is defined as a small residential district, quarter or neighborhood of a city that is established as a permanent or temporary residence of an Islamic community (Bayartan, 2005: 94). The *mahalla*, as the smallest administrative unit of the city, is one of the foremost determinants of the physical and social evolution of cities. The *mahalla* is a physical and social phenomenon that has played a crucial role in the definition of the city since the beginning of the Islamic period (Kıvrım, 2009: 232), and its function has been defined as providing social cohesion in Islamic societies. Therefore, most definitions of *mahalla* are related to critical views of the “Islamic city”. A summary of these definitions will be provided in order to analyze the *mahalla* concept within the whole urban system.

At the beginning of the 20th century, social scientists began attempting to conceptualize the Islamic city. Until the 1970s, literature on the Islamic city was based on the studies of such orientalist as William and Georges Marçais, who conducted researches of Arab cities, Roger Le Tourneau, who studied North African cities, Louis Massignon who carried out studies in Fez and Morocco, Gustav von Grunbaum who made a more general assessment of Arab cities, and Ira M. Lapidus who studied Damascus and Aleppo during the period of the Mamluk Empire (Raymond, 1994; Neglia, 2008; Aslanoglu, 2008). According to these “orientalists,” Islamic rules shaped daily life in Islamic urban society as well as the urban system, economic activities and the cultural values of the urban people. Influenced by the works of Max Weber and Henry Pirenne, orientalist studies postulated that all cities in the Islamic world had a unique social and political organization, and each individual orientalist, using different methods and techniques, came up with their own urban models, and each presumed that their urban model represented all Islamic cities. As a result, literature up until the 1970s became rife with studies that tended to generalize the social, economic, political and spatial characteristics of cities in the Islamic world.

Since the 1970s a number of geographers, sociologists, architects and anthropologists, such as Andre Raymond, Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Besim Selim Hakim and Dale Eickelmann, have strongly challenged the orientalist perspective, rejecting the orientalist’ homogeneous model of the Islamic city. According to their critiques, “*every urban organism has its own unique identity, which is different from others in terms of geographical and historical circumstances*” (Neglia, 2008: 14). Raymond remarks that nobody “*can speak of an Islamic*

city by only considering Mediterranean Arab cities, and ignoring the remaining five-sixths of the Islamic world” (Raymond, 1994: 12). Accordingly, it is unreasonable to use the Islamic religion as a tool of analysis while studying the urban phenomena of different territories with particular histories. These critiques also argue that most common features of the Islamic cities cannot be attributed to the religion, but rather to the basic peculiarities of the pre-modern period. In this sense, the urban structural similarities between the Western and Islamic worlds are greater than the differences.

Orientalists claim that the dynastic or monarchial system led Islamic cities to become dependent on the central power, in contrast to medieval European cities (Neglia, 2008: 17). For example, Lapidus, in his book *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (1967), argues that Islamic cities were not self-sufficient units, and had no power in their hinterland, unlike in Western cities. According to Munck, it is impossible to argue for a universal theory of all medieval European cities, claiming that, “*The most basic distinction for the early modern period is a broadly geographic one, between the towns of western and central Europe, and those of the east and south-east*” (Munck, 1990: 166). Similar to Europe, some cities in the Islamic world were autonomous and some were not. For example, in the late medieval period, while the cities in the Ottoman Empire had no autonomy due to the centralist power, those in central Asia had relative autonomy due to a lack of the same centralist power. However, claims that the Ottoman cities were not autonomous are also debatable, since Faroqhi and Zubaida have cited evidence of autonomy in some Ottoman cities (Faroqhi, 1993; Zubaida, 1993). There is no connection between the autonomy of the cities and Islam, but rather between their autonomy and the central power. When they were conquered by the Tsarist regime, the Central Asian cities lost the relative political and fiscal autonomy that they had enjoyed during Islamic rule under the Khans period. Taking into account Weber’s perspective, it can be argued that in contrast to the West, cities in the East did not have autonomous power, courts or secular laws. Orientalist studies have pointed out the absence of any civic government in Islamic cities, and moreover, they assert that no social or spatial relationship exists between different neighborhoods due to the spontaneity of the Islamic administrative organization (Neglia, 2008: 18). As a result of the Islamic urban structure, no social solidarity exists across the whole city, however there is strong and close social cohesion within each neighborhood (*mahalla*), which Grunebaum describes as a *mosaic society* (Neglia, 2008: 13).

Among the various definitions of *mahalla*, three common features are emphasized, being the physical, social and administrative/political aspects. The first of these, related to space,

considers the *mahalla* as a habitat in which people with similar characteristics live together. The *mahalla* can be considered as a miniature city in terms of its organic structure, where social, economic, political and cultural activities all take place (Bayartan, 2005: 94-96). The spatial characteristics of the *mahalla* clarify two points: First, the *mahalla* is a self-sufficient unit, containing a communal place worship, such as a mosque, church or synagogue, at the center of the *mahalla* (Mischek, 2006: 158); a bazaar and craftsmen's workshops that make up the *mahalla* trade centers at the outskirts of the communal place of worship; the houses located around organic, narrow and dead-end streets that extend from the center of the *mahalla* to the periphery. Second, the *mahalla* contains public facilities such as a primary school and a fountain, which even though they may have belonged to an individual person or a *waqf* (religious foundation), were regarded as communal property of the *mahalla*. The *mahalla*, accessed by one or more gates, was a private enclosure with an underdeveloped road system and a specific house type, and was like a small fortress that protected its residents (Tuna, 1987: 159-162).

Eickelman identified the *mahalla* as a social model rather than an urban model, depending on "*a mutual sense of nearness and on the dynamic structure of social relations*" (Neglia: 13). Social solidarity and participation did not take place across the entire city, as the city was unable to organize itself as a commune. It worked at the *mahalla* level, because each *mahalla* defined itself according to its original region, sect, faith, family or ethnic group. Accordingly, it is not possible to consider the *mahalla* as a miniature city in terms of the social model. The *mahalla* as a social model had two functions that inevitably worked together: *social solidarity* and *social pressure*. The close communication in the *mahalla* created a shared identity (Mischek, 2006: 158). According to Lapidus, there were strong social controls within the social life of the *mahalla* (Aslanoğlu, 1997: 48; Kıvrım, 2009: 232) that included: the imam or one resident had to sponsor anyone who wanted to settle in a particular *mahalla*; immoral people who disrupted the peace of the *mahalla* were expelled by the community; and unmarried men had to reside in the city center instead of the *mahalla* (Arıkboga, 8/3:105; Düzbakır, 2003).

The third feature of the *mahalla* denotes it as a micro administrative/political unit in charge of the most basic needs of the community; and the *mahalla* also functioned as intermediary local administrative body between the state and the citizens (Kıvrım, 2009: 232). The *mahalla*'s intermediary functions included assessing local taxes, as well as ensuring public security and fulfilling civic duties (Düzbakır, 2003; Kavruk, 99). However, the *mahalla* was not simply an extension of the state, as it was also a communal unit that was in charge of family ceremonies such as weddings and funerals (Ortaylı, 2008, 307). The *mahallas* were

autonomous sectors of the city, where the community lived (Inalcık, 1998: 263), and the state was not supposed to interfere in *mahalla* affairs, since it was defined as a private sphere (Inalcık, 1998: 263).

The features of the *mahalla* cannot be universalized to all cities in the Islamic world, in that the internal organization, social and economic structure, population and ethnic diversity of each *mahalla* varies from the one society to another. Many scholars argue that the religious leader in the *mahalla*, the *Imam*, is also an administrative leader of the *mahalla* community; however this is certainly not always the case, as during the 19th century *mahallas* in Central Asia had two leaders: the *oqsoqol*, as the administrative leader of the community, and the *imam*, as the religious leader (although sometimes these roles were combined). In addition, there are also differences between societies in the means of selection of the *mahalla* leaders. In the Ottoman Empire, the *imam* was selected by the *mahalla* community and then approved by the Sultan, or he was directly appointed by the Sultan; but in Central Asia it was sufficient to be elected by the community to become the *oqsoqol* (Duzbakir, 2003; Kıvrım, 2009: 232).

3.5.1.1.2 Neighborhood as a Socio-Spatial Unit in Classical Urban Thought

The neighborhood concept comprises face-to-face relationships in a certain residential area, and its function is to solve problems in the complex modern city. A discussion of the neighborhood concept is important for this thesis, in that it will allow an understanding of the *mahalla* as a traditional residential unit in Uzbekistan, and the differences that exist between the traditional *mahalla* and the planned neighborhood. Interestingly, the planned neighborhood structure also existed in the Soviet era, when it constituted the main residential area and was known as the *mikroraion*. In this section, the concept of the neighborhood is examined in brief to clarify the various perspectives. The neighborhood concept means different things to planning and policy practitioners, while also suggesting different things to each historical society (Mitoulas, Lebel, 2007: 2; Kotler, 1969: 1), but in all cases, the neighborhood is a dynamic and ever-evolving concept.

The beginnings of the industrialization period in Europe saw the first description of the neighborhood, inspired by the writings of Ebenezer Howard, who describes it as a population that shares basic facilities and services within a well-defined territory (Keller, 1968: 127). Between the two World Wars, the comprehensive planned neighborhood concept was implemented as a residential unit by many Western countries to improve the slum areas of their modern cities. Although it has been defined with reference to the pre-industrial time, the neighborhood has always been part of the modern city (Kallus, 2000: 818; Keller, 1968:

116). In another sense, the neighborhood is an independent self-sufficient unit with a distinctive identity, as well as being an adjunct part of the larger modern city (Kallus, 2000: 818).

Different conceptual views, such as *humanistic*, *instrumental* and *phenomenological*, emphasize different features of the neighborhood concept. According to the *humanistic* view, the neighborhood, as a universal human phenomenon, has always existed and will continue to exist because, as Mumford (1954: 257) says, it is “a fact of nature” (Kallus, 2000: 820). From the humanistic perspective, there are three basic arguments: the *naturalistic argument*⁵⁷ (Perry, 1974); the *nostalgic argument*⁵⁸; and the *utopian argument*⁵⁹ (Kallus, 2000: 821). The *instrumental argument* perceives the neighborhood as a functional tool for planning purposes (Lebel, 2007: 3), and different from the humanistic view, the instrumental view deals with improving the neighborhood to solve the complexities of modern cities (Smithson & Smithson, 1970). The *phenomenological view* considers the neighborhood as a cultural phenomenon, namely, deeper in meaning than the social association associated with physical proximity. Ruth Glass suggests two alternative definitions that are necessary to comprehend the idea of the neighborhood. In the first definition she refers to the distinct territorial social group by virtue of specific physical characteristics; while the second definition is given as a “territorial group,” whose members have a common ground of basic social activities and spontaneous social organizations. Thus, the two common elements of *territory* and *inhabitant*, make the neighborhood unit both a social and a planning concept (Keller, 1968: 87-88).

Three important perspectives tend to analyze the neighborhood in different ways. Sociologists are more likely to stress the importance of the symbolic and cultural aspects of a neighborhood and take the physical features more or less for granted. The neighborhood, according to Woods (1923: 148), is an organic social group, a “family of families”. In contrast, physical planners tend to first consider the physical aspects of the neighborhood (Keller, 1968: 91). Considering its geographical aspect, the neighborhood is a residential unit characterized by a specific collection of spatially based features (Lebel, 2007: 4). This aspect makes it a good planning unit for the conceptual articulation of the modern city (Kallus, 2000: 826). According to Kearns & Parkinson (2003: 281), the neighborhood, as a part of

⁵⁷ There have been claims that because the neighborhood relates to the most basic human necessity, being social interaction, it is a reality, regardless of planning efforts.

⁵⁸ As the capitalistic venture broke the rituals of local attachment, neighborhood design in the modern urban area has to become a conscious process of planning.

⁵⁹ First claimed by the social utopians of the 19th century (Owen & Fourier), the utopian argument sees the neighborhood as the most suitable ground for communal associations (Kallus, 2000: 826).

daily life, is often considered as a mediator between two spatial scales: the houses and the city. The third group, which comes from the political perspective, deals with the neighborhood as an “institution” or an “organization”. Because the existing metropolitan institutions are unable to facilitate the personal growth of the lower classes, neighborhood institutions have to be established in the metropolitan areas (Kotler, 1969: 1–2), and theories of neighborhood government can be divided into three categories: *integrative*, *romantic* and *reactive*.⁶⁰

All of these different definitions of the neighborhood from different perspectives are based on the classical urban thought known as the Chicago School of urban sociology, which is associated with urban geography and spatial analysis. There are three groups that define the neighborhood according to three different characteristics. The first group: the Park and Chicago school, treats the neighborhood as a natural area, and researchers in this group argue that a natural area involves: (a) a geographic area, physically distinguishable from other adjacent areas (b) a population with a unique social, demographic or ethnic composition, (c) a social system with rules, norms and regularly recurring patterns of social interaction that function as a mechanism of social control, and (d) aggregate emergent behaviors or life styles that distinguish the area from the areas around it (Schwirian, 1983: 85). The second group carries out studies that analyze neighborhoods as social areas. This perspective is closely tied to a general theory of social organization and social change (Greer 1962). Accordingly, the degree of social differentiation in lifestyles among individual urbanities and among the characteristics of city neighborhoods is a functioning of the societal scale. Societal scale refers to the degree of division of labor within a society and the degree of elaboration of integrative mechanisms and institutions centering on transportation and communication. As societies increase, in scale so do they increase in social differentiation. This is reflected in the increasing specialization of urban land use and in the social characteristics of the population (Schwirian, 1983: 85). Finally, Chicago school urban ethnography examines neighborhoods as interaction systems. Most ethnography studies deal with social structure at a given time, and underestimate the role of change in the relationship network. Two major examples of this line of analysis today are the studies of Suttles (1972) and Warren (1978), who have proposed that neighborhood social organization may exist at

⁶⁰ According to integrative theories, the neighborhood has to be integrated into the larger metropolis. These theories advocate neighborhood representation within the context of local government instead of autonomous neighborhoods; however romantic and reactive theorists hope to resolve metropolitan problems by decentralizing power to the neighborhood. Because the local institutions of metropolitan cities are not able to satisfy fundamental human needs, romantic and reactive theorists, such as Mumford, Hampden, Turner and Kotler, propose a new local institution, namely, the “neighborhood organization”.

several levels, and accordingly, have developed a typology of neighborhoods. These studies demonstrate clearly an increasing emphasis on the vertical integration and extra locality linkages of neighborhood populations. The symbolic interaction and human ecology perspectives have begun to find common areas and have merged. Unlike the static definition of the neighborhood community and its organization, generally, sociologists, and more specifically, human ecologists, presume that if the population size or composition of a neighborhood changes, then change will follow in the other components of the system (Schwirian, 1983: 84), and local administration is also one of these components. According to these studies, neighborhoods change over time (Mowbray, 2007: 679) and there is evidence of internal differentiations between each neighborhood. The studies of human ecologists have based their explanations on observable human behavior outcomes, such as patterns of migration, social segregation and land-use, the locational behavior of firms, the size and location of urban areas and so on. These imperatives drive the individual agents that collectively produce them but with limited within the intentions, motivations or interaction of those agents⁶¹ (Harding, 2009: 28). Moreover, Harding (2009: 28) emphasizes that:

“The work within urban geography and spatial analysis in the Chicago school drew more upon neo-classical economics than evolutionary biology. It employed the notion of distance minimisation – a spatial version of the utility-maximisation principle favoured by economists – as a basic assumption about how people satisfy their wants and needs and built various explanations of the development of cities and urban systems around it(Harding, 2009;28).

Different neighborhood socio-economic structures are explanatory of different decision-making process and policies of neighborhood administrative units. Using socio-demographic data, these studies claim that the local social structure influenced local policy variations, reflecting the objective socio-economic characteristics of the local citizens (Duncan&Goodwin, 1988). Accordingly, these studies were classically positivist in their orientation and methods, which is in direct contrast to the argument put forward in this thesis. Duncan and Goodwin (1988), in their studies “*the local state and uneven development*”, draw three conclusions from these output studies: (a) areas similar in terms of social and political conditions can produce very different policy results; (b) local governments do not exist in isolation; and (c) resident populations are also affected by local and national policies.

⁶¹ For example, according to Warren (1978: 310–331), the dimensions employed to construct neighborhood variations are as follows: (1) the extent of individual identification with the local area, (2) the degree of social exchange between neighbors, and (3) the extent to which the area is explicitly linked to the larger community. Using these three indicators, he categorized *mahalla* types into six groups: integral neighborhood, parochial neighborhood, diffuse neighborhood, stepping-stone neighborhood, transitory neighborhood and anomic neighborhood.

There are more important results of these studies for this thesis. Classical urban thought defines the change in living space solely in terms of human behavior, based on the natural selection/competition of evolutionary biology and/or maximization principle of neo-classical economics. Firstly, this is a process in which the political process, power and social relations, and the dialectic relationship between the structure and actor are absolutely ignored, or are simply accepted as components of the neighborhood that are isolated units of self-regulation. In this section, a summary of the following is provided: (a) orientalist studies that examine the *mahalla* as the predominant living space of Islamic cities, and (b) studies that examine the neighborhood as a sociological and geographical unit, and are mostly based on the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. Both are methodologically positivist and address the neighborhood and/or *mahalla* as a non-political process. For an analysis of the *mahalla*, the problems are paired since the orientalist studies of the *mahalla* are also based on classical urban thought. Accordingly, neither the orientalist view nor the classical urban thought of the Chicago School present a theoretical framework that can allow an understanding of the main argument of this study. This thesis argues that the local policy variations among *mahalla kengashes* emerged historically out of the dialectic relationship between the *mahalla* and the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes. In contrast, orientalist studies define the *mahalla* in terms of its Islamic roots, which denotes a cultural fetishism, while the Chicago School defines the neighborhood within its own adaptive systems as autonomous from local and national political processes, which denotes a spatial fetishism.

From this perspective, the dichotomy between the modern and traditional *mahalla* can only be understood as being the result of free human behavior in the neighborhood. This thesis, however, will explain both the modern and traditional *mahalla* within the history of urban development resulting from the dialectic relationship between the state hegemony and local agency. The dichotomy that existed between the modern and traditional *mahalla* was one of the most significant problems encountered during the case study and writing process of the dissertation due to the integration of critical realism theory and the ethnographic method. In the case study, all interviewees responded to the questions using the modern (European or Russian)-traditional (Uzbekistani) dichotomy.⁶² While transcribing the interviews, the decision of whether or not to use the terms *modern* and *traditional* was difficult, but after much consideration it was decided to use them, but only within the structural context. In other words, modern and traditional cultures, resulting from human behavior, norms or

⁶² In Uzbekistan, to be modern is understood in many cases to be synonymous with being Russian or European, while to be traditional means to be Uzbekistani. This is based mostly on the national policy of the Soviet regime to produce an Uzbekistani nation and Soviet citizenship at the same time (Abramson, 1998), which will be discussed in the next chapter.

rationality, are also (re-)produced by the economic and political process through state intervention into both the economic sphere and civil society. Modern and traditional living spaces are not explained through the idealized and marginal elements of city, but rather through their reciprocal relationship within the political and economic context. They are also perceived to be temporally and spatially (re-)produced through state intervention. Abramson (1998: 18), in his dissertation regarding the *mahalla* in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, pointed out:

“The formation of a tradition is implicitly, if not explicitly, a political process in that it asserts specific symbolic spatial and temporal relationships, thereby challenging alternative experiences of space and time”.

3.5.1.2 An Overview of Community Power Studies from an Actor-Based Approach

The Community Power Theory in North America emerged in reaction to the suggestion by the Chicago School that neighborhood transformation and differentiation took place as observable outcomes of human behavior. Putting decision-making processes at the very center, Community Power Theory claims that *“the way in which urban environments and urban life were consciously shaped by those with responsibility or power to do so was just as important as the impact of myriad decisions, households or businesses, that inadvertently drove urban change”* (Harding, 2009: 28). While analyzing local variations, these studies pay attention to the different political processes, especially the organizational differences among local governments, and concentrate on case studies of the internal organizations of particular institutions, and more specifically on the detailed processes of policy-making (Duncan&Goodwin, 1988). There are two main approaches in Community Power studies in North America, being pluralist and elite theory, which can be summarized as follows:

“While elite theory argues that communities were controlled by a small group of leading businessmen and financiers, who together with the mayors and trade union leaders who were beholden to them, determined the community’s future. Pluralists accept that multiple decision-making processes treated urban policies as the outcome of events in which diverse groups competed” (Peterson, 1981: 5).

Hunter, known as the father of urban elite theory, and Dahl, known as the father of pluralism stand in conflicting positions in terms of their understanding of the power of urban change. Hunter, inspired by the classical elite theory of Mosca and Pareto, puts forward a narrow political analysis of the structures and bases of local political influence (Dunleavy, 1980: 28). According to Hunter (1953), in his study of Atlanta, there are four groups that may be assumed to have power connections: business, government, civic associations and society activities (Harding, 2009: 29). According to him, *“power can be defined as the property of individuals, and he measured this power by a reputational methodology”* (Dunleavy, 1980: 28). On the other hand, Dahl, in his classic study of New Haven in 1961, argues that while

some individuals were particularly influential within one area, none exerted influence across the board. Power, although by no means equally shared across social groups, was diffused enough to preclude unelected elite rule. This work made Dahl the leading US pluralist thinker (Harding, 2007: 29; Dunleavy, 1980: 28, 30). While researchers observed that elites control specific domains without regulation by executive or legislative authority, pluralism argued that local power networks are composed of relatively large numbers of actors from different social backgrounds (McFarland, 2007: 54).

These two classical community power perspectives were attacked in several studies of the neo-elite, neo-pluralist, neo-Weberian and Neo-Marxist perspectives. The first attack against the pluralist conception of urban studies came from neo-elite perspective. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) in their article “Two Faces of Power”, criticized the pluralist political equilibrium for ignoring the relationship between the state and the underlying socio-economic system that shapes the political agenda of the city (Mollenkopf, 2007: 101). Moreover, they set the notion of non-decision making, which is defined as the capacity of elite groups to restrict the scope of community decision making. Neo-elitists have argued that the decision points studied by pluralists were purely arbitrary, and that the decisional analysis was blind to the way in which policy agendas were set. According to the neo-elitists, the power used to make concrete, controversial decisions represents only one aspect of power, as there is a second aspect that involves non-decision making (Mollenkopf, 2007; Harding, 2007). Bachrach & Baratz (1962) posed the following two key questions, “*Who set the urban agenda, and why aren't they challenged?*”

On the other hand, from the perspective of managerialism, known also as neo-Weberian urban sociology, power is located at the center of analysis (Keskinok, 1997: 16). The managerialist perspective refers to the elite theory in North America, and claims simply that inequalities in the urban system may be explained as being a product of a socio-ecological system in which inevitable spatial inequalities are reinforced or mediated by the actions of strategic urban gatekeepers (Duncan & Goodwin, 1988). Pahl (1975), and Rex & Moore (1967) in Britain draw attention to the activities and values of key officials, such as the urban managers who through their positions in local authorities, building authorities, building societies and estate agencies, are able to allocate scarce urban resources. Thus, unlike pluralism, managerialism argues that increasing the rationalization of administration reduces the possibility of effective political control over the state bureaucracy. For example, in his study of urban managerialism, Pahl claims that urban managers (urban gatekeepers) have the

leading role in urban politics, and are independent from the local community, such as the position of the state in a society.

Two theories emerged in the 1980s that contributed to the community power studies from the perspective of pluralism and elitism: public choice theory and the growth machine thesis of Molotch & Logan (1987). *“The public choice theory was advanced by Paul Peterson in his 1981 book, City Limits. Peterson states that urban politicians and governing regimes are subordinate to the overall economic principles that force cities to compete to capture new investment and capital. He writes that the competitive nature of cities encourages the business elite and politicians to favor new development projects, concluding that successful cities require a local infrastructure that is supportive of the needs of business and economic development”*.⁶³ In short, he analyzed how external economic conditions shaped and constrained the urban political arena, and concluded that political variables are no longer relevant to the analysis (Mollenkopf, 2007: 104). On the other hand, although they used the Marxist concept of exchange and use value, the growth coalition/machine thesis of Molotch & Logan (1987) is interpreted as a modernized elite theory. Unlike Peterson, they argue that urban systems are shaped not only by the actions of the business and political interests – known as the growth machine – but also by a third participant in the urban development process: the community residents and their concerns, and used the terms “use value” and “exchange value” to define the concerns of different interest groups in the urban system. According to them, whilst the houses, supermarket and shopping malls represent a substantial exchange value for city entrepreneurs, they have extensive use value for the residents. By regularly using the rhetoric of enhanced economic development for the city, the elites aim to maximize their profits, however urban development does not always serve a beneficial purpose for the city (Rudzitis, 2009: 578). Logan & Molotch argue that the existence of competing values within the same place encourages development conflict, and emphasize the negative impact of development on the neighborhood conditions and small businesses. Logan and Molotch criticize the gap between the market-driven development policies and the reality of neighborhoods. *“They describe how politicians and development officials develop specific strategies to exclude community participation from all stages of the development process”*.⁶⁴ Both of these studies focus on economic development rather than political power in urban politics.

⁶³ <http://webatomics.com/jason/Images/thesisthree.pdf>

⁶⁴ <http://webatomics.com/jason/Images/thesisthree.pdf>

All the above have made major contributions to the literature on urban politics and neighborhood studies by criticizing the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. The first contribution was that they brought an end to the dominant perspective in urban theory that the urban and neighborhood are a simple instrument of human behavior, and are isolated from political and economic relations. Secondly, power relations in the decision-making process and institutions of local government became crucial issue in urban and neighborhood discussions. Duncan & Goodwin (1988) claim that these studies contributed much to the existing literature, such as: important discussions on the importance of community power and local councilors in different policy-making processes; discussions on the importance of power relationships between the elected and appointed councilors; and discussions on the role of external groups in the policy-making process. However, both the elite and pluralist community power studies – and their new versions – were methodologically individualist in that, in the last instance, they perceived individuals as the basic explanatory unit for all social phenomena (Harding, 2009: 29). This is unsuitable for the methodology of the current thesis in regards to the dialectic relationship between the structure and the actor. It is also contradicts the hypothesis that local variations in Tashkent’s living space emerged within the state hegemony and the structural coherence. Moreover, in these studies the urban and the neighborhood, with their political units, remain isolated from the macro-economic and political structure, in other words, social relations; and so focusing merely on the internal structure of local institutions in an attempt to understand the reasons behind the variations in local policies is insufficient for the current thesis, as there are more general processes within the socio-economic environment and politics that affect the strategies and policies of local authorities. Keskinok (1997: 14) argues that *“since the urban is conceived as an autonomous realm separated from the economic sphere, the explanation of economic and social inequalities results in an analysis of the actions and the values of the urban managers”*. Although I share these criticisms, I do not agree that local variations in the urban living space are derived only from inequalities in the economic sphere of any regime, as it is necessary also to discuss the relationship between the state, civil society and the economic sphere in the context of hegemony and structural coherence. I will explain this point in the next section, in which the Marxist studies are summarized, and in the following section, focusing on the relationship between state hegemony and local variations.

3.5.1.3 An Overview of Local Variation Discussion in Neo-Marxist Theory

Marxists perceive the urban structure and local state mainly as a product of the capitalist mode of production, and therefore, unlike the pluralist paradigm and elite theories, they look at the effects of economic relationships and the class struggle in the social realm on the

political structure of the state and the local state. Unlike the classical school of urban sociology and the Weberian perspective, the Marxist view argues that socio/spatial differentiations are encouraged by the necessities of capitalism, such as capital accumulation and the (re-)production of labor power (Massey, 1984; Harvey, 1981; Castells, 1978). This socio-spatial differentiation at each scale –international, national and local – is central to the processes of capitalist production. Developed and underdeveloped countries, and cities and districts within the city are all connected to each other within the structure of capitalist development. In other words, all these inequalities at different scales are the (re-)production of an uneven process of capitalist development. Underdeveloped countries, as well as underdeveloped neighborhoods in a city, are all part of the uneven development of capitalism.

Marxist studies of urban politics can be roughly categorized into three groups, in which: (a) the urban is conceived as a locus of the contradictory and crisis-hidden process of capital accumulation; (b) capitalist class relations are seen to provide a fundamental perspective on urban politics; and (c) recognition is made of the ideological content of categories, such as the urban and the bourgeois separation of the political, social and economic (Geddes, 2009: 55). In this section, some Marxist studies will be provided as examples of the first two perspectives on the issue of local policy variation. Marxist urban analysis is distinct from the most conventional works of the Chicago School and the Elite Studies. First, instead of viewing the urban structure and urban problems as being a result of issues related to population size, density, heterogeneity, physical design and transportation, Marxists see these mainly as a product of the capitalist mode of production. Second, instead of viewing the urban structure as something that has developed as a result of the actions of a political or economic elite –meaning individualism – Marxism considers the urban system to be part of capitalist structure, which restrains the actions and choices of the individual.

Smith (1990) explains the spatial segregation and/or uneven development in a capitalist regime using the concepts of differentiation and equalization in the levels and conditions of production. According to Smith, the differentiation is a consequence of the division of labor and the direction of investment, but at the same time pressures exist for the equalization of the conditions of production and the development of productive forces. Capital inherits a geographical world that is already differentiated into complex spatial patterns, and as the landscape falls under the sway of capital, these patterns are grouped into an increasingly systematic hierarchy of spatial scales. Three primary scales emerge in the production of space under capitalism: urban space, the nation state and global space. According to Smith (1990: 136), *“the centralization of capital finds its most accomplished geographical*

expression in urban development... With the development of the capitalist city there is a systematic differentiation between the place of work and the place of residence, between the space of production and the space of reproduction". On the other hand, Harvey, inspired by the expression of Marx "*annihilate space with time,*" explains uneven development through the dichotomy of the production of fixed and immobile spatial configurations. "*The ability to overcome space is predicated on the production of space. The spatial organization and the creation of geography are necessary to overcome space and outflank geography. Furthermore, the creation of new improved spatial organization means the abandonment of at least parts of the old. Thus, in Harvey's analysis, the annihilation of space also creates space*" (Duncan, 1988: 65). Both for Smith and Harvey, the state and local state are only necessary for the provision of structural coherence⁶⁵ in a capitalist mode of production. Smith, for example, argues that state intervention into the social economy at an urban and national scale is necessary for capital accumulation, and state intervention in the social economy, such as fixing exchange rates, labor laws, housing, internal security, etc., is one major means of establishing this (Smith, 1990).

Besides these two authors, who explain uneven development from the perspective of the world-wide system of capitalism, some neo-Marxists have studied the issue of the urban neighborhood with a Marxist analysis. Castells argues that the urban unit is essentially the everyday space of a delimited fraction of the labor force, and goes onto define the specificity of the urban as a field of collective consumption, or as a sphere of reproduction (Jaret, 1983: 520–521). Castells argues that an argument that the urban is characterized not by any spatial or cultural boundary, but as the site of consumption process involved in the reproduction of labour power. This consumption process is increasingly provided by the state in a collectivized form. State intervention and action in the urban system is influenced decisively by class struggle, expressed in the form of urban social movements (Duncan, 1979: 23). He believes that urban community movements develop in popular response to the state's inability to resolve the problems of collective consumption, and that they are able to unify various classes and social strata against the dominant interest of capital. In conclusion:

"An important contribution of Marxist urbanists like Harvey, Smith and Castells has been to emphasize that a key facet of the capital vs. labor struggle occurs outside the work site, over the reproduction of labor power (through biological and socialization processes) and the provision

⁶⁵ "*The need for a spatial fix interacts with an in-built tendency to produce what Harvey calls the "structured coherence" of production and consumption over given spaces. Processes and infrastructures, both social and physical, combine to produce a particular space currently suitable for a specific mix of surplus value production*" (Duncan & Godwin, 1988: 65).

of collective consumption (e.g. housing, transportation, education). This suggests that the class struggle originating in the work process is displaced into the community living space and institutions, and these neo-Marxist urbanists attribute greater significance to community struggles than have previous Marxist analysts” (Jaret, 1983: 519).

Marxist studies, which explain local variations as being a result of uneven development, focus on the arguments that (a) the urban is conceived as a locus of the contradictory and crisis-hidden process of capital accumulation and/or (b) capitalist class relations provide a fundamental perspective on urban politics. These cannot be applied to this thesis because of two reasons: first, these studies are functionalist. In other words, they over-emphasize the structures of capitalism and the urban system, and claim that local variations in urban space emerged as part of the very the nature of the capitalist mode of production. By arguing that local variations in the urban living space are a result of capital accumulation in the global economy, all of these studies can be categorized under the same heading as the classical thought of the Chicago School in terms of the rational functionalism of the city, in that they ignore the dialectic relationship between the structure and the actor. After independence, many post-Soviet countries began to integrate with the global market-based economy with their own strategies and actions, which resulted in quite different urban structures. Moreover, besides and/or because of this national scale strategy, each local state has adopted different strategies and choices in the process of integration to the market-based economy. In this thesis, it is impossible to ignore different strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* that were mostly shaped during the Soviet era, as well as by the effects of the global world economy. Secondly and more importantly, in this thesis an examination is made of local variations in the Soviet urban living space, which, I believe, is impossible to analyze with the capitalist mode of production. Thus, despite the concise explanation, their contribution to the nature of capitalism and its impact on local variations and uneven development, these neo-Marxist studies cannot be applied to the current thesis due to methodological and theoretical mismatching.

This thesis argues that the different responses and strategies of different localities (*mahalla*) have resulted in tension in urban politics. So, why are there variations in *mahalla kengash* policies? Whatever the measurement of variation between one authority and another, if it can be understood why such differences exist it would go a long way to explaining decentralization in both theory and practice in Uzbekistan. This would also allow an understanding of the aim of the state and the strategies of *mahallas*, showing how center-local relationships are shaped in the various types, and through this process, how the decentralization process has itself been shaped. The tensions between local and central

governments ultimately derive from the latter trying to control the activities of the former. In other words, variations in local choice and service are crucial factors in explaining local-central tensions (Duncan & Goodwin, 1988). Thus, the question of how local differentiations (types of *mahalla*) can be explained is the focus of this study.

In the previous sections, definitions of the neighborhood and *mahalla* were given, and the disputes over the distribution of power in local communities, especially from the perspectives of pluralist and elite theories, were summarized in order to show how power structures in communities are crucial for understanding the local policy variations of different *mahallas* in the transition era. The power structure of communities, as constructed by elite and pluralist views, is not enough to allow a full understanding of local policy variations; and so a second view, focusing on center-local relations from the perspective of the local state, is suggested. This second view conceives intergovernmental conflict from a broader socio-economic context, rather than the narrow concentration on the power structure within the community. As this section demonstrates, local policy variations do not derive only from the power structures of communities, but also from intergovernmental conflicts, and more specifically, from managing and (re-)producing social and economic functions, and from the local state as part of a hegemonic project and accumulation strategy. At this point, it is necessary to discuss, to what extent the local state maintains the hegemonic project and the accumulation strategy. In the first part of the theoretical framework, under the title of the Neo-Marxist View, two main approaches were presented: instrumentalist and structuralist. The aim is to demonstrate how the role of the local state should be analyzed, taking into account the structural constraints of neo-liberalism and the strategic choices of the state when conducting its hegemonic project and accumulation strategy during the post-Soviet transition era, which resulted in conflicts in urban politics. In the second part, the importance of local variations in the state accumulation strategy and the hegemonic projects is discussed, which have also caused conflicts in local politics. As local state theories are not independent from the general state theories, in this section the conceptualization of the center-local relationship, for the purpose of this study, was constructed in two stages within the discussions of the autonomy of the local state and the local variations in different Marxist views. Analyzing the two stages together shows that the dynamics of conflicts in local politics are derived from the political economy and social process at both national and local scales, and more importantly, that neither structural constraints, state accumulation strategies or hegemonic projects create local variations or inequality at a local scale; nor does a different locality alone create or change the structure or state strategies. In fact, there is a dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the state and local. For this reason it is crucial

to mention the fact that local variations in the cities of Uzbekistan may not be understood without examining the Soviet regime, in that differentiations among the urban *mahallas* emerged mostly during the Soviet era. For this reason it is necessary to discuss local variations by focusing on the relationship between the Soviet regime and socio-spatial segregation in urban living space.⁶⁶ As Jones (1998: 982) emphasizes:

“... geographical complexities (uneven development) occur as national state projects are societalised in different local contexts. The form of state projects is influenced by preexisting institutional conditions and, therefore, a series of local path dependencies occur within nationally-bound contexts”.

3.5.2 Local State between State Hegemony and Local Variation

“...our residential unit was one of the most beautiful mikroraions during the Soviet era. We had a green area in the middle of the mikroraion in which our children played and our womens at in the evening. Now, it has been destroyed and a business center is being built. Is this possible? This space was our public space. How can a business establish a building here? Urban land is still state owned in Uzbekistan. The Tashkent hokimiyat rented this area. The hokimiyat means the state, and today our state does not take care of its citizens, our state only focuses on money. Who knows, maybe someone in the hokimiyat is benefiting from renting this area. It is a big problem!” (a 54-year-old Uzbek woman doctor, D-1 mahalla).

“...thanks to God, after independence, immediately a Turkish tokuv zavodu⁶⁷ was opened near our mahalla. Many of the unemployed residents began to work in this factory. During the Soviet era, we were unemployed; we tried to find jobs in the bazaars. We did whatever we could during the Soviet era. Now, we can earn money. More importantly, we can spend our own money freely. Everything was different in the Soviet era. If we made anything to our mahalla or bought new thing for our house, the Communist party would come and ask many questions about where and how we had found the money. This is the blessing of our state today” (a 65-year-old Uzbek male, retired engineer, B-2 mahalla).

The state, especially the modern state, is one of the main actors in the (re-)production and transformation of urban space. Without doubt, the Soviet regime was one of the most interventionist into social and economic life because of its social project. The Soviet Communist Party intended to introduce a new ideal for the organization of society and the notion of citizenship which meant intervention into all aspects of life: economic, political, cultural and social. The state intervened in the management of urban space through direct or indirect policies in an attempt to overcome certain socio-economic problems, and by doing so it maintained its hegemony. Therefore, political systems, particularly those with a strong ideological base and that are in power for a long time; leave their mark on cities and the built environment. In this sense, as (Sigurd, 1993: 9) emphasized, *“the Soviet state held total*

⁶⁶ This will be covered in more detail in the next chapter, and is only discussed here to show the relationship between the state hegemony and local variations in the case of the Soviet regime.

⁶⁷ Textile factory.

dominance over the living and working environments and the educational, entertainment, cultural, and recreational spheres”.

Having both similarities and dissimilarities with the capitalist regime, the Soviet regime intervened into the urban space in a more radical way than any capitalist modern state, as it had strong means of intervention in the field of urban planning. *“In the Soviet Union, urban planning and architecture played a crucial role in shaping the socialist way of life”* (Baločkaitė, 2010: 63). As a result, the Soviet state re-shaped urban space so thoroughly that, as seen in the next chapter, the regime planned in detail every aspect of city life in order to hold influence over all social relations. The Soviet regime in particular tried to reform society and its operation by changing the basic urban configuration. The regime believed that the Soviet citizen should be created in accordance with the new design of public spaces and workplaces in the urban space, as well as the new form of living spaces, and to this end the Communist Party aimed to influence the design every neighborhood, every house and every residential unit. Tahirov (1971: 17) summarized well the Soviet urban policy, *“What completes the communist spirit in Soviet factories is the communal activity in the living space”.*

Although the Soviet ideology called for the creation of the ideal citizens and a society in the newly designed Soviet city with a distinctive modernist urban form, featuring large public spaces and minimized spatial and social inequality (Wyly, 2010: 14), it could be argued that this ideology was not practically achieved and some main principles of the Soviet regime resulted in social and spatial segregation both within and among cities. In this chapter, the main features of Soviet urban planning – especially those related with the urban residential unit – are summarized. First, the main principles of Soviet policy affecting the urban space, being the industrialization policy, a planned economy, collectivization and strict immigration controls, are examined in order to demonstrate the inequality or regional injustice within the Soviet geography. Then, the Soviet housing policy will be explained in order to highlight the socio-spatial segregation within the urban space, creating a background for answering the question of why there are different types of *mahallas* in Tashkent, despite the main Soviet ideology to create an equal and classless Soviet city, as discussed in the next chapter.

Socio-spatial segregation within Soviet cities, including those in Uzbekistan, can clearly be seen during the transition era, and this socio-spatial segregation had a significant influence on the local policy variations of the *mahalla kengashes* of different urban neighborhoods.⁶⁸ This thesis argues that blame for the socio-spatial segregation in the living spaces of the Soviet Uzbekistani city can be attributed to, first, the general urban planning and housing policy of the Soviet regime; and second, the effects of the nationality policy of the Soviet regime in Central Asian cities, and this is why it is necessary to analyze in detail in Chapter Four the Soviet housing policy and urban planning and their influences on Tashkent's different residential units. The rest of this section contains a discussion on the relationship between the state hegemony and socio-spatial segregation in the urban living space.

The reasons behind the socio-spatial segregation in Soviet cities have been examined in numerous studies of Soviet cities. Despite egalitarian ambitions, the control of immigration into the city and the collectivization policy, the allocation of housing always remained a crucial problem, especially for the dense population in the capital cities of the Soviet republics (Lehmann, 1991), and the socialist cities could be characterized by a degree of socio-economic and demographic segregation and physical differentiation (Gentile, 2004: 703; Andrusz, 1984; Szelenyi, 1983; Bator, 1989; Matthews, 1979; Morton, 1980; Rukavishnikov, 1980; Smith, 1994). According to Szelenyi (1983), who is one of the most notable authors of studies of Soviet cities, *"In East European socialist countries, housing inequalities are being created now, as those with higher incomes get the better housing; and these inequalities are being created by administrative allocation"*. The socio-spatial differentiation being (re)produced by the socialist housing construction and allocation system was being mirrored by the capitalist system, yet this outcome was being attained through entirely different means (Gentile: 703). As the Soviet city prioritized the state and institutional concerns over private individual preferences, income was a relatively unimportant factor in acquiring accommodation, and it was clearly understood as a socio-spatial segregation between the higher and lower status groups of Soviet society (Fliege, 1999: 11). This socio-spatial segregation within the city was evident especially in the consumption culture of different social status groups in their private spaces⁶⁹, rather than

⁶⁸ It is not suggested here that the sole reason for the different strategies of different *mahalla kengashes* is their experience during the Soviet era, but it is assumed that because the Uzbekistani regime chose the policy of gradual transition to a market-based economy rather than a sudden changeover, the transition did not result in a sharp change in the daily life of the Uzbekistani urban neighborhood.

⁶⁹ All citizens had legitimate claims to all spaces, as they were considered public. Officially, private space did not exist during the Soviet era, but it was the unofficial private space where social life really happened for Soviet citizens (Robinson, 2009: 5).

social classes determined by the mode of production, and it should be underlined that Soviet society was in no way classless.

However, these studies fail to provide a clear understanding of the socio-spatial segregation and uneven development of Central Asian cities. As the under-developed region of the Soviet Union, there was one more unique reason for the socio-spatial segregation experienced in Central Asian cities: the *koranizatsiia* (national) policy of the Soviet Union, under which the states in Central Asia were being encouraged to establish a socialist consciousness and a modern national identity, whether it be Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik etc., at the same time. In other countries, in contrast, the modern nation state was being created under a capitalist regime. The direct effect of this policy in the city structure of Soviet Uzbekistan was that the urban *mahalla kengash* and other local institutions became hegemonic instruments of the Communist Party in implementing both class politics and politics of redistribution –as the main principles of the Soviet regime – and politics of representation and identity politics –as a part of the *koranizatsiia* policy, instead of being abolished as remnants of the feudal system in order to achieve an equal and classless society. This resulted in a dialectic relationship between the Soviet regime and these local institutions. Accordingly, one part of the theoretical framework of this thesis is constructed to explain the local variations in the urban living space of Soviet Uzbekistan through the dialectic relationship between state hegemony and civil society, in that it affects local state activities and spatially distinct social relations in local civil societies, and how this historically leads to different local state forms. The hegemony and civil society concept will be discussed within the framework of the local variations among urban living spaces in order to analyze one sub-hypothesis of this thesis – that, *the different types of urban mahalla in Uzbekistan emerged through the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the Soviet legacy and the inherent characteristics of the Uzbekistani mahalla.*

Of the many authors that tend to raise the following point as an example of ethnic discrimination, Gentile (2004: 118) argues that the socio-economic or ethnic segregation became highly acute in certain regions of the Soviet Union, such as in the Baltics and Central Asia. Fliege (1999: 8), on the other hand, claims that “*state investment in areas of old pre-socialist housing stock was largely earmarked for demolition and new housing construction rather than renovation. However, in Central Asia this goal was semi-realized and pre-socialist legacies and some traditional residential units remained untouched during the Soviet era*”. The level of social segregation was negligible in the inner city in general due to the presence of different ethnic groups, which was a Soviet success. However, the cities to the south and east (especially Central Asia) witnessed significant social segregation, and in

cities like Tashkent, segregation was clearly evident after being divided into their old and new parts by the Tsarist regime (French, 1979; 97). This ethnic division would continue until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Consequently, as shown above, in spite of the policies of collectivization, nationalized local urban economies, planned economies and rapid industrialization, the creation of an equal and classless urban society, as one of the main goals of the Soviet regime, failed in Central Asian cities due to their pre-Soviet past. However, the inequality in living spaces in Central Asian cities during the colonial period was not the only reason for ethnic segregation in Central Asian cities during the Soviet era. The national policy of Lenin at the beginning of the Revolution created new nations and national consciousness, as well as the proletarian consciousness in Central Asia. In Uzbekistan, the public consciousness was built on two identities, set in motion at the same time by the Soviet social engineers: Uzbek and Soviet. Many countries experienced nation state processes and capitalism together, including both developed and developing countries, ex-colonial nations and many post-Soviet countries; however in the Central Asian states were unique, in that they experienced a nation state within the socialist era.

The political practices that grew out of the idea of nation-statehood contributed to the development of a national identity within the boundaries of the territorial state as a means of modernizing Soviet society along the lines of an essentially Western European model. Nation building in the republics was engineered to coincide with the ethno-territorial organization of Soviet state formation. In short, in order to prevent nationalism in the unified Central Asia, the Soviet Union divided the region. *“In the mid-1920s the current national boundaries were drawn and the five republics, none of which had existed independently prior to that time, were created. Ethnic groups of Central Asia who shared much in common in terms of history, customs, language, and traditions were differentiated and renamed by the Soviets, so people suddenly had to decide whether they were Tajik or Uzbek for instance, when they had never before thought of themselves in those terms”* (Clark, 1999: 35). It has been argued that the formation of an ethnic identity in Central Asia was structured through the establishment of national republics and a process of cultural construction that favored a national consciousness based on the identification of the nation with a specific territory and state administration.

For Central Asia, the Soviet era and its policies were totally different from the Western world in terms of the establishment of a socialist regime, while some familiar strategies were shared with Western states in terms of the establishment of a modern nation state. Like capitalism, the socialist Soviet regime needed civil society for its production and rapid industrialization. The Soviet regime transformed civil society in central Asia, and in return

was itself affected by it. In this thesis, no separation is made of civil society and the state, but what I try to emphasize here is that in the Soviet regime, like capitalist one, the modern state was an instrument of the ruling class, which attempted to establish its hegemony over civil society; and this hegemony itself caused and/or (re-)produced socio-spatial segregation in the urban space of the Central Asian republics. Moreover, state and society affect each other constantly, which means that as the state (re-)produces socio-spatial segregation in society and the civil society that has already inequality carries its own inequality. This reciprocal relationship between the pre-existing structure of civil society and the new state structure permits an explanation of the center-local relationship of the Soviet regime and post-Soviet regime. For example, the local institution of Central Asian society and its local elite was the *mahalla* in the case of Uzbekistan, which became a mediator between the state and civil society in both periods. This explanation is meaningful if the state and civil society are defined within the framework of structuralism. In other words, this explanation is only true if the state and civil society have relative autonomy, however neither state nor civil society has absolute autonomy, and neither the state nor civil society is simply an instrument of the economic sphere, as they constantly affect one another in a dialectic way. In addition, the hegemony of the state and the practices of civil society shape this dialectic relationship, while also being shaped by it.

What affected the different shaping of living space in Central Asian cities were two important policies within the hegemonic project of the Soviet regime: the establishment of the socialist regime, and the establishment of national identities. However, these two policies had spatio-temporally different influences upon the urban neighborhoods. The main principles of Soviet city planning were class politics and politics of redistribution, meaning that the “*workplace was turned into the main axis of organization of social life*” in the Soviet city (Stenning, 2005: 986). Social lives too were constructed through the workplace, and through the particular pattern of employment, housing and social mobility. Domestic lives were shaped to a great extent by relations of production and work status (Ashwin, 2000; Kideckel, 2004; Kotkin, 1995, 1997; Stenning, 2005a, 2005b, from Stenning, 2005). However, it is not enough to understand the Soviet city planning in central Asia. The Soviet regime was closed to Western capitalist regimes in terms of its national policy strategies in Central Asia, leaving it free to establish a socialist regime through class and redistributive politics in urban social policy, while also establishing new nations under a federal administrative system through identity politics and politics of representation. As a result, in Central Asian cities, the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the Soviet regime and the local institutions in different urban living spaces was different in each locality, leading the

practices of civil society also to differ from each other. Through national identity politics, the Soviet regime constructed social relations around the pre-existing social categories of civil society within the formation of a national-territorial administration system.

In the previous section the different theories behind the local policy variations have been summarized. Classical urban sociology explains these local variations in terms of the observable outcomes of human behavior, such as patterns of migration; however this perspective ignores the effect of political processes on the urban space, which is at the center of the hypothesis of this study. Some orientalist studies of the *mahalla* were also summarized in which the *mahalla* is defined as static and unchanged, however these can be considered as a cultural fetishism of Eastern societies, in that they also ignore the effects of political, social and economic processes on the *mahalla* as an urban living space. Studies into community power in North America, and managerialism, as its British version, explain local variations in terms of the behavior of local and political elites, which means their method is absolutely individualistic and ignores the political and economic structure. Next, Marxist studies that explain the local variation through uneven development were summarized, being based mostly on capital accumulation strategies and the mode of production in capitalist regimes, which are great explanatories of local variations in urban space in their integration of the political and economic process and structure. However, their analyses are valid only for the capitalist world, and fall far short of providing an explanation of local variations in Soviet cities. Finally, a number of authors concerned with socio-spatial segregation in the Soviet city have contributed to the explanation of the Soviet strategy; however they also fail to explain the local variations in Central Asian cities during the Soviet regime. It is claimed here that the socio-spatial segregation in urban living space in Central Asia emerged due to the dialectic relationship between the *mahalla* and the Soviet hegemonic project, which was shaped within the frameworks of class politics and national identity politics. Thus, in this thesis, the Soviet policy regarding the *mahalla* as a socio/spatial unit, and the *mahalla kengash* as a political/administrative unit, is going to be examined in terms of these two policies of the Soviet hegemonic project. This will demonstrate how different urban living spaces emerged during the Soviet era, which led to different strategies being followed by the *mahalla kengashes* in the transition era.

Gramsci's work is useful in its analysis of the dialectic relationship between state strategies and the different responses of the *mahalla kengashes* that shaped the decentralization policy in Uzbekistan, for several reasons. Gramsci re-established the Marxist dialectic, focused attention upon civil society and analyzed the functioning of the capitalist state (Hadjimichalis, 1987: 26; Anderson, 2007; Jessop, 2008; Jessop, 1997; Bobbio & Texier,

1982). As Gramsci argues, social action is not just a matter of economic agency, being also a question of specific and spatially varied social relations in the production and maintenance of social ideologies and expectations (Duncan & Goodwin, 1988: 71). Indeed, the mechanisms of patriarchy and ethnicity were cultural instruments for the Soviet regime in building structural coherence in Uzbekistan, which is the main reason for the emergence of different types of urban *mahalla*.

The *mahalla kengash* is a level of local state that in a way reflects local social relations, just as the state is produced by national social relations; however the *mahalla kengash* is also reproduced by the central state as an agent of state power. In other words, the *mahalla kengash* as a local state is both an agent of the central state (hegemony) and a representation of local social relations (Local strategies). In this thesis, this dialectic relationship between state hegemony and civil society will be shown historically, presenting how local state activities were affected in the spatially distinct social relations of local civil society, which led historically to different forms of local state. In short, the fact that different types of urban *mahalla* existed in Uzbekistan demonstrates that spatial segregation emerged in urban living space out of the Soviet hegemony over civil society, while also being part of the inherent socio-spatial and economic structure of Uzbekistan. This spatial segregation led to particular local power structures and local administrative systems in each community, where different responses and strategies to the recent Uzbekistani regime's policies were produced by the *mahalla kengashes*, as an instrument in the decentralization and hegemonic project. When analyzing the historical continuity of the local institution in the living space, from the socialist regime to the capitalist regime in the post-Soviet geography, there is need to focus on the relationship between the state and civil society rather than the locus of the contradictory and crisis-hidden process of capital accumulation and/or capitalist class relations or struggles. As Duncan & Goodwin (1988: 68) suggest for capitalist uneven development, "*Inequality in the urban community is not simply a matter of the mode of production, and not all social processes derive from the class relations or struggle*". Various practices of civil society –relations of kinship, gender and household, or the imagined communities of the locality or nation – are generated by the state hegemony to provide structural coherence, and thus, they are able to survive, which are true for the Soviet regime in Uzbekistan.

The regime (re-)produces inequality among neighborhood communities in daily life through the use of social practices of locality in its hegemonic projects in an attempt to ensure structural coherence, for which the state needs local institutions and/or the local state for its maintenance and control. However, the local state is also a part of the local social relations,

and so may become both an agent and obstacle for the state. Whether the center-local relationship becomes conflictual or not depends on both (a) the degree of local representation, and (b) the degree of coherence between the policies of state and locally derived policies. The emergence of tension in the center-local relationship is spatially and temporally changed and, thus, for example, in urban Uzbekistan, some neighborhoods that were ideal Soviet living spaces are today host to excluded social groups, while the excluded and/or ignored neighborhoods that were (re-)produced by the Soviet regime are presented as ideal Uzbek neighborhoods. Moreover, the Uzbek regime has presented the *mahalla* as an “ideal living space” for the (re-)production of social relations in civil society, which is necessary for the creation and perpetuation of a national consciousness, while the local community’s social relations and cultural features are unimportant in this imagined and ideal community of the nation state. Accordingly, when the responses and policy implementation processes of the various *mahalla kengashes* were out of conformity with the nation state’s imagined community, the decentralization policies of the post-Soviet Uzbek regime actually resulted in further centralization.

In this section it will be argued that “local variations in the urban living space, born out of the state authority –whether Soviet or Uzbekistani – in the separated spheres of social relations, intervene, ignore and (re-)produce daily life in civil society through imagined communities for the maintenance of structural coherence”. Civil society responds to the different intervention modes of the state in a dialectic way, and local variations lead to different local consciousness and local state forms. The local state, as an institution, is neither passive nor simply an instrument of the central government or local community, as it is able to influence both state policies, by producing different responses and implementing them in a different way, and the local community power structure, by managing, controlling and implementing state policy.

Pluralism and its new manifestations –neo-pluralism and the new right – which are the dominant perspectives in the neo-liberal economic regime related to the issue of decentralization in the administrative structures of post-Soviet countries, were addressed at the beginning of this chapter. Moreover, it was mentioned that elite and Weberian explanations of decentralization serve the interest and structural hegemony of neo-liberal discourse by emphasizing the continuity of elite power from the Soviet into the post-Soviet era. In this thesis, it is argued that decentralization is shaped by the dialectic relationship between the central and local state, despite the strict legal framework on the issue of autonomy of the local state in terms of finance, function and authority. Despite being restrained by the structural hegemony of the new economic regime, the Uzbekistani state,

like other regimes, has relative autonomy in the establishment of its hegemonic project and retains a degree of choice in its strategies. Duncan & Goodwin (1988: 5) argue that “... *although restrained by central government and centrally imposed legal statutes, local government retains a degree of choice in its actions...local government law is primarily concerned with powers rather than duties, and essentially established a legal framework within which local authorities are given discretionary powers to act*”. Therefore, in this thesis, it is argued that the neo-Gramscian perspective of Jessop, as the institutional perspective, and the theory of local state of Duncan & Goodwin (1988), which makes a point of the dialectic relationship between the state and civil society in explaining the local state, can theoretically present a framework to understand the decentralization process in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, and the dialectic relationship that exists between the Uzbekistani regime, as a structure, and the urban *mahalla kengash*, as an actor.

Although the decentralization policy can be considered as an attempt to reform the internal structure of the state, it can also be considered as a hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime, shaped by the dialectic relationship between the strategic choices of the state and the spatio-temporally different strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengashes* that resulted from the uneven development within the new structural hegemony of capitalism in the neo-liberal era.

The spatio-temporally differentiated *mahalla* types in Uzbekistani cities emerge out of the dialectic center-local relationship, and produce different power relations within the community and with the central government, influencing the strategic choices of the Uzbekistani regime (decentralization policies based on accumulation strategies, and hegemonic projects, based on the nation state) during the transition era. Thus, local politics are different in each locality in terms of the different conflictual and dialectic center-local relationships. There are two dynamics that are derived from national and local politics that cause conflicts in urban politics: (a) the dialectic relationship between the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism and the hegemonic project of new nation state, and the Uzbek regime as an agency of neo-liberalism; and (b) the dialectic relationship between the different strategies and tactics of the local state (*mahalla kengash*) and the central state policies. The first question to be answered is which dynamics brought conflicts to Uzbekistani local politics during the transition era. Each nation state, as an agency of the new global neo-liberal system, made a strategic selection of policies to establish its accumulation strategy and its hegemonic projects. In the new global era, these two dynamics force nation states into structural contradictions and strategic dilemmas, especially during times of transition or change, as can be seen in the post-Soviet countries in their attempts at

institution building at a local scale. This point takes forward to answer theoretically the question of the exact nature of the state accumulation strategy and the hegemonic projects, why they create conflict in local politics and the role or function of the local state in terms of these two dynamics. For this reason, the first stage of the theoretical framework analyzed local state theories within the framework of state theories in the discussion of relative autonomy of the central and local states.

The question of why the *mahalla*, as a traditional type of urban living space in Uzbekistani society, existed and was even (re-)produced in the Soviet period, despite the aim to create an ideal socialist society, is answered through two issues : (a) local variations and/or the social segregation of the living space in Central Asian cities, and (b) discussions of the centralist tendency of the Soviet regime. Theoretically, it is necessary to answer the second question of “*Why and how do local variations occur in any regime?*” This question is directly related to the second question, “*Are local variations shaped by the power structure of the different communities, or by state policies and the socio-economic system?*” In other words, what makes or creates different power structures in a community? To understand this, it is necessary to discuss local variations and local power relations in conjunction with a discussion of the role of the local state in the accumulation strategy and hegemonic projects of the state.

Local politics are shaped by processes that are related to each other: (a) the local state, as a part of the nation state as a whole, managing social and economic reproduction, in which it is a relatively autonomous instrument of class domination as well as the state; and (b) variations in local authority policies, which is necessary to allow focus on local (community) politics through local social relations within the community. These are indivisible from each other, and neither can claim superiority over the other. By devolving functions to the local state, the state manages social and economic reproduction at the local scale, causing local variations and inequalities within the framework of hegemonic projects and accumulation strategies, while local policy variations change and influence state policies through their different power relations in the community. In this section of the chapter, the theoretical framework of the thesis is to be constructed through an analysis of (a) the relationship between state hegemony and local variation; and (b) the concepts of hegemonic projects and decentralization policy.

3.6 A Proposed Analytical Framework for an Analysis of the Socio-Political Transition through Different Types of *Mahallas*

At the end of the theoretical part of the thesis, an analytical framework for the investigation of the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the state and *mahalla* on issues related to the decentralization policy and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime is proposed, forming the main structure of the case study chapters of the thesis. To sum up, in this thesis, the *mahalla* is analyzed as both a socio-spatial and political/administrative unit in an attempt to explain the institution building and/or institutional changes made in the Uzbekistani state organization. Additional focus is on the concepts of path-dependency and/or path-shaping within the dialectic center-local relationships from the perspective of critical realism and the general scale of the politico-economic transition of Uzbekistan from a socialist economy to a market-based economy under the structural constraints of the neo-liberal discourse of decentralization. It is argued that the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime and its new hegemonic projects have been shaped by the dialectic relationship that exists between different types of urban *mahalla* and the central state, which came into conflict due to the dynamics of the transition era that derived from the strategic choices of the actor (political elite and institution) made as part of the path-dependency and/or path-shaping activities at both a national and local scale. There is a wide range of literature covering the issue of transition in post-Soviet and Central Asian countries. The contribution this study makes to post-Soviet transition literature lies in its explanation of the institutional change witnessed in Uzbekistan through an analysis of the “urban *mahalla*” and its role in dialectic relationship between structure and strategic action. More specifically, three dynamics that resulted in conflict in the center-local relationship in local politics in Uzbekistan and shaped decentralization policy and the new state hegemony are presented:

1) *Conflicts between path-dependency and path-shaping at both national and local scale:* Several institutions and actors have path-dependently carried old habits, customs and behaviors into the new institution building efforts of the Uzbekistani regime at both national and local levels. However, unlike the general argument in the post-Soviet transition, what has been carried by the agencies and institutions from Soviet era is not its centralist tendency, but rather a form of center-local relations based on negotiation and bargaining, especially for the Soviet Uzbekistani political-regime. This center-local relationship in Uzbekistan during the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet eras was analyzed in Chapter Two.

2) *Conflicts between the new structural constraints related with the new accumulation strategy and the nation state-building processes related with the hegemonic projects*: The structural constraints of neo liberalism upon the nation state, and the path-shaping of the new institutional administrative structure and system in line with neo-liberalism are necessary for the accumulation strategy of the neo-liberal market-based economy, being based mainly on the decentralized administrative system. Also, in order to establish a nation state and create a suitable economic environment for the transition to a market-based economy, the new hegemonic project of the Uzbek regime accommodates conflicting elements within the accumulation strategies of the neo-liberal system. Related to this point, as a spatio-temporal strategic choice, the Uzbekistani regime accepted the urban *mahalla* as a body of local self-government in 1999, through which it aimed to achieve both the decentralized administrative structure necessary for the accumulation strategy of neo-liberalism, and the creation of a national consciousness, which was vital for its new hegemonic project. For this reason, the *mahalla* became both a body of local self-government and instrument of hegemony.

3) *Conflicts between the strategic choices of the Uzbekistani regime and the strategies and tactics of the mahalla kengash* due to their differential spatio-temporal characteristics, or in other words, the conflicts between the state accumulation strategy and hegemonic projects of the central state and the local variations of the *mahalla kengashes*, which are the main focus of this thesis. These different strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengash* contradict spatio-temporally the state accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects of the central state.

These dynamics raise three main questions. First (a), how and why did local variations (or spatio-temporal differences) that resulted in different responses, strategies and tactics of the individual *mahalla kengashes* emerge? This question will be answered in the first part of the case study chapter (Chapter Four) in the framework of the dialectic relationship between spatio-temporally strategic choices of the Soviet regime and as the local actor in the Soviet regime –or as an actor of this regime- strategies and tactics –or resistance- of native community which means urban *mahalla* in Uzbekistan. This dialectic relationship between the center (Soviet regime) and local (Uzbekistani *mahalla*, as a socio-spatial institution) will be analyzed in terms of the (re-)production of urban space and the Soviet hegemony over Central Asia in the case of Tashkent. Here, Jessop's strategic-relational approach is crucial, in that it overcomes some necessary historical sequences in the development of structure and agency or a mandatory order of presentation for empirical analysis. It can be said that the recent tactics and strategies produced by different types of *mahalla kengash* to deal with the

policies of the Uzbekistani regime are based on the dialectic relationship between the Soviet regime and the different urban communities of Uzbekistan. It is impossible to categorize urban *mahallas* under basic headings of *traditional* or *modern*, as their strategies and tactics are shaped primarily according to their different social, economic and political capacity in articulation to the Soviet regime. These are determined according to the relationship between the spatio-temporal choices of the structures (Soviet regime) and the differential spatio-temporal horizons and capacities of the individual and/or institution (urban *mahalla* community).

The second (b) and third (c) questions relate to how the different strategies and tactics of *mahalla kengashes* contradict the state accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime, and are explained in the Chapters Five and Six. First, the hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime and the functions of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic tool will be analyzed, with focus on three important issues: *o'zbekchiliq*, control of society, and state financial assistance, which highlight the important role of the *mahalla* in the creation of a nation state, and its importance as a civil society and as a community-based organization during the transition from the Soviet regime to a market-based economy. In this chapter, the *mahalla kengash* will be analyzed in terms of its mode of intervention. Second, the decentralization policy that the Uzbek regime adopted within the structural constraints of the neo-liberal system will be analyzed through an investigation of the standard state regulations and the different strategies and responses of several *mahalla kengashes* in Tashkent. In this chapter, the *mahalla kengash* will be analyzed in terms of its internal organization and its mode of representation⁷⁰. In short, these two chapters demonstrate how transition in Uzbekistan, spatio-temporally in the case of the urban community, has been realized along different paths under the dialectic relationship between the choices of the central structure and the different strategies and tactics of *mahalla kengash*. This shows also which urban communities are able to be articulated to the new accumulation strategies and

⁷⁰ Jessop's (2008) analysis of the capitalist state in three levels provides a beneficial analytical tool for this study:

- The capitalist state's internal organization: "... its internal organization expressed through the distribution of powers among different parts of the state system is considered both territorially and functionally; in addition to the obvious issue of the relative weight of the legislative and executive branches of government, it is also important to investigate the relative weight of different parts of the administrative apparatus, the role of the law and money in its internal organization, and the form and extent of its administrative unity".
- Its representation mode: "...the various forms of representation and their articulation into a representational regime, among the relevant forms of representation we can include territorial and functional representation, pluralism, clientalism, *raison d'etat*, and populism. Also relevant here would be the roles played by political parties, various types of corporatist body, social movements and state managers".
- Its mode of intervention: "...its various forms of intervention in civil society and the capitalist economy. This concerns not only the state's role in demarcating the changing boundaries between public and private, but also the specific institutional mechanisms available for intervention"

hegemonic projects of the state, and which cannot. In short, this means that during the transition era, the effects of the political shift of the regime, from class politics to identity politics, and from redistribution politics to representative politics, on the urban *mahalla* differed according to their different capacities for articulation to the class politics and redistribution politics of the previous regime.

CHAPTER 4

THE EMERGENCE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF *MAHALLAS* IN TASHKENT AND SOVIET STRATEGIES IN CENTRAL ASIA

This part of the thesis examines the validity of the statement that the different types of urban *mahalla* in Uzbekistan emerged through the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between (a) the Soviet legacy of the *mahalla* committee and the urban space of Uzbekistan, and (b) the inherent characteristics of the Uzbekistani *mahalla*. In the previous chapter, the socio-economic and political transition of Uzbekistani society during the Soviet regime and local politics were summarized, while the intention in this chapter is to show how the Soviet transition affected the urban *mahalla* and its social and political relations. Moreover, how the various already existing local social relations in urban Uzbekistan were shaped by the Soviet regime through such an integrated local institution as the *mahalla* committee will be analyzed. In other words, the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit of urban Soviet Uzbekistan, will be analyzed to assess whether the mode of intervention of the Soviet regime into the socio-spatial structure of urban Tashkent through the main economic, urban planning and housing policies led to the emergence of today's different types of *mahalla* in Uzbekistan, and the different urbanization process from the East European and Russian urbanization. In this part of the thesis it will be argued that this mode of intervention included acts of negligence (non-action), transformation, establishment and (re-)production over the urban residential units of Central Asian cities. Through such policies, the production mode of the local communities was articulated with the state structure at different levels and forms incidentally, far from what the Soviet regime had planned for these local communities. As a result of different articulation levels, inequality and uneven development began to emerge within the Central Asian city in the Soviet geography. Undoubtedly, the *mahalla kengashes* in Tashkent developed different characteristics according to their different historical experience and different socio-economic neighborhood structure as a socio-spatial unit. This differentiation

must be taken into account when analyzing the central state-*mahalla kengash* relationship. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the *mahalla* not only as a political/administrative unit, but also as a socio-spatial unit. In this chapter, the emergence of the different types of *mahalla*, in which different strategies have been developed to deal with the recent neo-liberal transition, will be examined. This chapter also introduces the case study of the thesis, in which different types of *mahalla* and the different strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* to the hegemonic projects and decentralization policy of the new regime will be introduced, with an analysis of their main characteristics.

Urban structures are in a state of constant change, rather than being static and stable, under the influence of the socio-economic and political features of the macro-national system, and this is true also for Soviet cities. Therefore, when analyzing the structure of a city, it is impossible to exclude the national and international system to which the city is articulated. The Tashkent urbanization process was directly affected by the socio-economic and political structure of the Soviet regime, and one of the most crucial aims of the Soviet ideology was the creation of an ideal Soviet citizen and society through the radical socio-spatial and economic transformation of Soviet cities. According to Gutnov-Baburov (1968: 53), to create an ideal Soviet citizen, “*it is not enough to arrange the inside of a house or to adjust a convenient distance between the factory and house of a Soviet citizen; it is rather necessary to arrange all of his social relations in the city, thus, the Soviet city has been planned in terms of all aspects*”. However, the aim of the Soviet regime in Central Asia was not only the creation of ideal Soviet citizen and society, as there was also an intention to develop the *koranizatsiia* (national) policy. The *mahalla kengash* (neighborhood committee) was used as a hegemonic instrument by the Soviet regime as a part of its *koranizatssia* policy, which is path-dependently implied by the Uzbek regime. The Soviet administration (re)produced the old type of urban *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit and used the *mahalla kengash* to create the ideal Soviet citizen in Central Asia instead of destroying them. The *mahalla kengash* was used to disseminate the propaganda of the regime and for the control of society. The ideal consciousness of the Soviet citizen in Central Asia comprises a socialist and communal spirit and ethnic identity (*o'zbekhchiliq*), and the *mahalla kengash* was at the center of this hegemonic project of the Soviet regime to achieve this. It is therefore possible to argue that the *mahalla kengash* in urban Uzbekistan has been used for social (re-)production under the identity of Uzbekistan by the Soviet regime, and so it is necessary to discuss the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument of the Soviet regime in order to understand why different types of urban *mahalla* emerged in Soviet Uzbekistan.

These variations in Tashkent's *mahallas* as a socio-spatial unit are not analyzed according to their socio-demographic data, like in output studies, but according to the mode of intervention of the state through ideological tools and political/economic strategies. Previous literature has included many different opinions on why local policy variations emerge, especially in capitalist societies, however in this thesis it is argued that the variations are a result of unevenness in the process of development in society. In addition, there are many views to explain socio-spatial inequality in urban society in the capitalist system. Undoubtedly, there are many reasons for the socio-spatial segregation in the urban residential spaces of Uzbekistan that had lived through the Soviet regime; however the main reason is the radical intervention of the Soviet regime into urban social life in the country through centralist planning, both economically and socio-spatially. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, according to Lefebvre (1973), capitalism could sustain itself through the (re-)production of its own space. Here, I claim that this is true not only for capitalism or capitalist states, as all power creates or (re)produces its own public and private space in order to establish its hegemony. Lefebvre argued that the Soviet power could not create its own living space, believing that it was learnt from the Soviet experience, for the revolution, it is not enough to achieve economic policy such as collectivization. New social relations should be created, and this can only be achieved through the production of new social space (Gottdiener, 2001: 262). Although the Soviet state radically intervened into the urban living space, at least in Uzbekistan it (re-)produced old living space and social relations. Thus, in this chapter, it is claimed that Soviet city planning had a major influence on the shaping of various living spaces in Tashkent. In short, the shaping of Tashkent's residential units during the Soviet era will be analyzed; however this alone will not be enough to allow an understanding of the emergence of various living spaces in the urban area. As Fliege-Sailer (1999: 12) argue, the Soviet city was shaped according to the interaction between elements of the socialist ideology, the parameters set by state policy, concrete implementation measures and the legacies of pre-socialist urban structures. Therefore, here it can be argued that the different types of Tashkent *mahallas* were mostly shaped during the Soviet era through the dialectic relationship between the Soviet regime's policy and the legacies of pre-socialist urban structures that were carried by the native community. This chapter is important, as the administrative organization (*mahalla kengash*) of these different residential units of Tashkent produced different strategies to deal with the recent political, social, economic and socio-spatial transformations, as well as the politics of the new regime. Thus, chapter four sets out an alternative model for understanding the transformation of local politics in different types of Tashkent *mahallas* within the informally local networks of

neighborhoods. The characteristics of the divergent *mahalla* types will be defined and putting the preconditions of the dissertation hypotheses in this chapter.

In the previous chapter, the urban inequality that exists both in and between Soviet cities, as well as regional inequality and the dynamic of the reproduction of urban space by the Soviet regime was discussed in brief, alongside such contributing Soviet policies as industrialization and the planned economy, collectivization and the immigration policy, and urban planning and the housing policy, in order to show how uneven development at the urban scale was reproduced in the Soviet geography. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is difficult to integrate literature related to the Soviet urbanization process, which is based on mostly Eastern Europe, with the Tashkent experience during the Soviet era, which was located in the under-developed region of the Soviet Union. In this chapter the intention is to integrate the unequal development of the Soviet urban structure and the effects of Soviet hegemony on Central Asian cities. First, the urban structure of Central Asia in the pre-Soviet period will be discussed in order to demonstrate that when the Soviet Union established, the urban structure of the Soviet Union was already on a path of unequal development. Then, the urbanization process of Soviet Tashkent will be examined in three distinct periods in which the living space of Tashkent was significantly affected: the first years of the Revolution; the period of World War II and the 1966 earthquake; and the period of rapid construction of the *mikroraion* in Tashkent after the 1966 earthquake. In this section, the transformation of the cities in Uzbekistan and the emergence of the new form of *mahallas* during the Soviet period will be summarized. This will be followed by an analysis of the imposed policies of the Communist party in Uzbekistan during the first years of the Bolshevik Revolution, the intervention into the urbanization process, the planning of the cities and their old *mahallas*, and the legislation related to the *mahallas*. Following this, the second period of the Communist Party (1950–1980) and what it meant for the cities of Uzbekistan, especially Tashkent, after the 1966 earthquake will be discussed. This period may be accepted as a time of urban revolution in Central Asia, especially in terms of its urban residential units. In the wake of the 1966 earthquake, most of the new residential units in Tashkent were built. If the first years of the revolution for Central Asia and Tashkent were a time of industrial revolution, the second period of the Soviet era was an urban revolution, and these two periods had a marked influence on the socio-demographic appearance of Tashkent. In short, the periods of Tashkent's urbanization are as follows in this chapter: (a) Pre-colonial Tashkent and its *mahallas*; (b) Colonial Tashkent and its *mahallas*; (c) Socialist Tashkent and its *mahallas* – the beginning of socialism and post-World War II; and (d) Republican Tashkent and its *mahallas*.

This will be followed by an explanation of the selection criteria for the *mahallas* chosen for the field study, and their characteristics will be examined through some socio-economic parameters. In other words, the characteristics of the divergent *mahalla* types will be defined and put the preconditions of the dissertation's main hypothesis, which will act as an introduction to the research. Finally, before summarizing urban planning during the period following independence, a discussion will be made of how the pre-Soviet Tashkent *mahallas* were sustained during the Soviet era in order to show, as mentioned above, the dialectic relationship between the Soviet state hegemony and the resistance of the native community. This section analyzes in detail the importance of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument for the Soviet *koranizatsiia* (national) policy, as explained in chapter two, and how this policy was reflected on the urban living space. In the final section of this chapter, urban planning under the new regime will be discussed, drawing upon different examples of Tashkent's *mahallas* in order to highlight the changes that occurred between Soviet and post-Soviet urban planning. The development of Tashkent in different periods demonstrates how each power historically (re-)produces its own residential units and affects the existing living space. In this way, urbanization is shaped as a dynamic process of the political economic structure, and the different socio-economic structures of urban living spaces constantly develop within this dynamic process.

4.1 Pre-Soviet Urban Structure of Tashkent

Central Asia was one of the first areas on the planet to witness the growth of urban centers due to the presence of the Silk Road. Compared with Samarqand and Bukhara, Tashkent was a small city⁷¹ and a trading center (Stronski, 2003:7) on the Silk Road until the Russian armies seized it from the Khokand Khanate in 1864. The oldest reference to the name "Tashkent" can be found in Chinese documents, which reveal that the original name of Tashkent was *shi*, meaning stone (Hurshut, 1996: 5). Beruni, in his book "India", mentions that *chach*, or *shash* is a kind of stone in Turkic languages (Muh'ammadkarimov, 2004: 9). After the attack of the Arabian Army, Tashkent began to be called *binkat* by the Arabs (Ah'rarov, 1973: 7).

The social composition of the city's population followed a standard pre-industrial pattern. Jankunis (1970: 17), who focused on Samarqand's development in the pre-industrial period, claims that the social structure of the city can be defined as a pyramid, with its lower levels consisting of poor, illiterate, landless people, and its top consisting of the political and

⁷¹ In 1864, while Samarkand's population reached up to 500,000 inhabitants under the Samanids from the eighth to twelfth centuries (Sievers, 2002:104), Tashkent, the capital of Turkistan had a population of only 100,000 (K'asimova, 1983: 16).

religious leaders, alongside the upper echelons of the military and bureaucracy. Arifhanova (2003: 19), on the other hand, classifies Tashkent's population according to different occupations: civil servants, soldiers, religious leaders (*ulama*), merchants (17.8%), artisans (29.5%), farmers (9%) and slaves or temporary workers. Tashkent had four *dakha*,⁷² *kukc`ha*, *sebzo`r*, *beshyog`och* and *shayh`antahor*, each of which was self-governed (Komatsu, 1994: 306). As a residential unit, a *dakha* was a combination of at least 10 *mahallas* (Muh'ammadkarimov, 2004: 13). During the 19th century, Tashkent had 12 gates, three of which belong to one *dakha*, for example, the gates of *sebzo`r dakha* were *labzak*, *tahtapul*, and *karasaray* (Fahrudinovna, 2004: 14). Access to Tashkent was only possible through these gates during the day, because the gates were closed at night, meaning that the *dakha* was like a fortress, providing protection for its inhabitants.

All *dakha* included at least 10 *mahallas*, but they would expand over time. According to Arifhanova (2003), the center of daily life in Tashkent was the *mahalla*, being the location of the main residential units of the various clans (*urugh*). Local traditions and tacit knowledge were transferred from generation to generation in the *mahalla*. “*Mahalla*, known as *dakha*, *guzar*, *mahallat*, *yer*, *yurt*, and *el*, is not only an ordinary administrative unit but also the main unit in shaping the social life of the Uzbek nation” (Arifhanova, 2003: 15). It is hard to say when exactly the *mahalla* appeared for the first time. Some of Tashkent's *mahallas* were established two or three centuries ago; however Arifhanova (2003: 23) claims that the *Chigatoy mahalla* appeared in the thirteenth century when the *Chigatoy Urugh* of Uzbekistan began to live in Tashkent. All *mahallas*, like *dakha*, had gates and a large street, which was lined on both sides by craftsmen's workshops. This was the trade center of *mahalla*, which sometimes also included a bazaar, and each *mahalla* would have its own teahouse and mosque where the men of the *mahalla* would gather together and socialize (Ibrah'imov, 2007: 15). Many of these buildings that belonged to a person or a *waqf* were considered as the public property of the *mahalla* (Geiss, 2001: 100).

The community of the *mahalla* shared different parts of the agricultural area at the periphery of Tashkent (Azadayev, 1959: 46), but most of these agricultural areas were the property of families or the public *waqf* (Mukminova, 1984: 35). This proves; first, that socio-economic life in central Asia in that period was shaped according to the *mahalla*; second, that the residents of *mahallas* could use the agricultural area communally, meaning that the urban economy was integrated with the rural economy. Lastly, the *mahalla* residents were economically dependent on the leader of the *waqf* in the agricultural area. The residents of

⁷² *Dakha* is also referred to in the Uzbek as “*rukn*,” “*tuman*” and “*raion*,” meaning “district”.

Tashkent who were employed in various economic sectors moved to the agricultural areas allocated to each *mahalla* and worked communally there in the summer (Arifhanova, 2003: 29).

Under the Russian colonial system, the cities in Central Asia began to develop around the general pattern of modern but colonial urbanization. In this part of the thesis, the effects of the policies of the Tsarist Empire on Tashkent will be summarized. During this period, cities of Central Asia, especially Tashkent as a capital city, had taken on a new form of urban territory in which two nations (European-Slavic and Asian people) lived next to each other in separate parts of the cities. One of the common features of colonial cities is that the new city, established by the colonial government, is located close to the previous one, while commercial, administrative and political institutions are concentrated in a few localities (Chaichian, 2009: 137). “The Asian and European towns in Tashkent, originally three miles apart, now grew side by side, separated by the *Ankhor* Canal” (MacKenzie, 1967: 213), and the reason for establishing the European Tashkent close to the old city was to take advantage of the local labor and resources.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Russian colonial rulers were responsible for introducing a different social and cultural pattern to Tashkent, including the new modern industry, political institutions, military organization and legal system, as well as new education, health, hygiene, and sanitation systems. Wheeler (1964: 74) declares town planning and urban development to be the most spectacular achievement of the Tsarist regime in Central Asia, claiming that its urban policies and planning did more than merely enhance the existing native cities, as it actually created entirely new European cities. According to Scott (1998: 90), the European colonist empires implemented their first modern urban plans not in their own cities, but in their colonial cities. There were three reasons for this: first, to accommodate the European migrants; second, for legitimacy; and finally, to use the colonial cities as experimental grounds for their new urban policies.

Like the other colonist empires, what Tsarist Russia did in 1866 in the first place was to make a city plan for Tashkent, which was carried out by a Russian architect by the name of Kolesnikov (Ismoilova, 2004: 6). In the same year, the gubernator of *Sri-Darya* founded two committees for the implementation of this plan, the first, to oversee the construction of the Russian section of Tashkent, to decide where to establish houses for the new Russian population and to arrange the budget; and the second, to oversee the construction of the irrigation system for the Russian settlements (Ismoilova, 2004: 37). According to this plan, tracts of agricultural land in Tashkent were parceled out and sold to the European people

who had migrated to the city, ignoring the local people and their collective regime. The east side of Tashkent, between the two waterways of *Ankhor* (Bozsuv and Sibli), was planned to house the new European citizens of Tashkent, and was one of the most fertile collective agricultural areas of Tashkent's *mahallas*. Appointed by the governor-general to chair the committee for the construction of the Russian side of Tashkent, Ozerov approved the plan of Makarov, who used St. Petersburg, as the most European Russian city, as a model in 1870 (Sahadeo, 2007: 36). Just 15 years after this first Tashkent plan, the city had become one of the most attractive centers within the Russian empire, and featured a multi-ethnic social composition (MacKenzie, 1974: 212), however the spectacular features of the city were completely in the Russian side⁷³.

This urban plan needed regulation to control the use and taxation of the land. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Russian administration expropriated landed property through two radical reforms in 1873 and in 1886, with a significant detrimental effect on the native population⁷⁴ who lost their all power with these land reforms to high land tax rates and the implementation of urban social policies by the local aristocracy.

Table 4.1 The New and Old Tashkent's Population, 1869–1910 (,000)

	<i>Dakhas of Tashkent</i>	1869	1884	1910
1	<i>Beshoghach</i>	14.3	16.8	---
2	<i>Ko`kcha</i>	22.9	19.1	---
3	<i>Cebzor</i>	15.0	19.7	---
4	<i>Shayhontaxur</i>	18.7	21.5	---
Total of Old Tashkent		70.9	77.1	72.4
5	New Tashkent	2.9	13.0	56.5
Total		73.8	90.1	128.9

Source: Мулладжанов, И.Р.; Население Ташкента, ташкент ўқитувчи, Т. 1983, р.10 – Кравец, Л. & Исмоилова, Ж.; Тошкент – Ўрта Осиёнинг Революцион Ҳаракат Маркази, Ўзбекистон ССР Фан, Тошкент 1983, р. 8

At the beginning of the conquest only the military class and elite civil servants migrated to Tashkent from Russia, however these were followed by people from the entire spectrum of

⁷³ Until 1886, there had been 2,021 buildings on the Russian side of Tashkent; 458 of which were military buildings, 16 were state buildings, 20 were social buildings (e.g., hospitals, schools, churches), and 1,527 were private houses (Ismoilova, 2004: 9). The European side of Tashkent, with its amenities such as shops, theatres and public gardens, was like a modern city. Compared with many colonial cities, Tashkent's infrastructure was extremely advanced. Wheeler, who compared Indian cities and Central Asian cities in the colonial period, said that most of the cities of Central Asia were equipped with electricity before most of the Indian cities (Wheeler, 1964: 70).

⁷⁴ See Chapter II, pp. 43

Russia's social classes – military families, exiles, peasants, doctors, teachers, traders, manufacturers and the new labor groups (especially railroad and textile workers) – who began to settle in Tashkent due to the political chaos in Russia, the war between Russia and Japan, and the railway construction between Tashkent and Orenburg (Stronski, 2003: 8). In addition, an expanding colonial administrative system provided jobs for many Central Asian people, especially in the lower ranks of government and industry. Although this attracted immigrants to Tashkent from all over the rural areas of Russia and Central Asia and contributed to a considerable increase in the population of Tashkent, the population of the old side of Tashkent did not increase, as almost all the new arrivals settled in the European side (Table 4.1).

As a consequence, between 1869 and 1910, the population of Tashkent increased from 73,800 to 128,900, with an average annual growth rate of 13.4 percent. This annual growth rate was higher than that of Cairo (12.5 percent), which was also a British colonial city in the same period (Chaichian, 2009: 137); but less than that of Kiev (65,000 in 1861 and 626,000 in 1914) and Odessa (110,000 in 1861 and 655,000 in 1914), which were the most important industrial cities in the Russian Empire (French, 1979: 21). Table 4.1., which shows the population of the old and new sides of Tashkent, gives no clue as to the ethnic structure across the city, as some wealthy Uzbek merchants were settling in the new Tashkent, while Russian workers and employees were living among the Uzbeks in the old side of the city (MacKenzie, 1974: 213). Sahadeo, in his book *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923*, the number of Muslims living in Russian Tashkent in 1875 was 938, or 19% of the total population of 4,859 (Kostenko, 1880: 412–413 cited in Sahadeo, 2007: 37).

With the large number of migrants coming from the countryside of Central Asia and Russia to Tashkent, a new form of *mahalla* emerged, characterized by inadequate infrastructure and slum conditions. The number of *mahallas* increased in the colonial period as the rural area around Tashkent became a part of the city, and the new local people of Tashkent began to settle there alongside the Russian workers. These forms of *mahalla* differed from the old *mahallas* in certain aspects. Firstly, the people in the new form of *mahallas*, who were not artisans, were generally urban laborers who worked in the construction of the railway system or in the factories in Tashkent. For example, the *Kokcha Dakha*, *Yangishara* and *Obunazar mahallas* were established in the colonial period on what was previously a rural area, and the inhabitants, who had worked in agriculture in the medieval period, became laborers in the city in the colonial period (Arifhanova, 2002: 23). According to Carlisle (2001: 79), the class consciousness of the Russian workers in Tashkent was stronger than the local workers as the local workers, who generally came from rural areas, were generally illiterate, could not

speaking Russian, and thus were more likely to be exploited. Therefore, although Soviet literature has indicated that the local workers had a crucial role in the 1906 and 1917 revolutions,⁷⁵ their role was not as important as that of the Russian workers. The new migrants experienced a tough adaptation process to the alien environment of the new city, unlike the longtime native artisans and merchants in the old *mahallas*. Secondly, as a spatial feature, these *mahallas* were more uniform than the old *mahallas*, as they were established according to the city plan. They still had a mosque and a teahouse at the center, but now they featured large streets that connected all the *mahallas* and the families of the residents in the new *mahallas* still lived in the *kishlak* (countryside).

In the Russian part of the city, the residential unit was known as the *kvartal*, which was different from the Uzbek *mahalla* traditional living space. The *kvartal* had no specific administration, or center or public properties (Ismoilova, 2004: 38; Interview with Prof. Azim Aka from the Faculty of Architecture in Fanlar Academy). Unlike the houses in the *mahallas*, the *kvartal*'s houses did not have high ceilings, and the streets and roads in the *kvartals* were straighter than those in the *mahallas*. As a consequence, during Tashkent's colonial period there were three different forms of residential area: the medieval form of the *mahalla*, the new form of the *mahalla* and the *kvartal*.

Colonial Tashkent had a dichotomy not only in terms of living spaces, but also concerning the working districts. "Two very distinct social groups, adhering to two very different understandings of economics and market activity led to the financial polarization between local and European population" (Pashkun, 2003: 51). The wares sold at the local market could not compete with the cheaper and better quality Russian goods — especially textiles and metal goods (Malik, 1994: 31) and so most of the craftsmen who had dominated the urban economy had to close their businesses. For example, the number of *boz* (calico) shops in *Shayhantohur dakha*, which was the most famous textile *dakha* (district), decreased from 567 to 42 between 1864–1912 (Fahrudinova, 2004: 19). In Tashkent, the number of *ko`nchilik* (leather) shops decreased from 341 to 66 between 1871–1892, and the *bo`yoqchilik* (dyeing) shops decreased from 300 to 20 between 1885–1892 (Arifhanova, 2002: 18).

Rapid industrialization was to be more influential than the new Russian traders on the changing structure of economic activities in colonial Tashkent. The opening of some 60 new factories, engaged in the production of, for example, alcohol, textiles, coal, cotton and oil,

⁷⁵ For example, according to Kravets (1983: 75), because the workers (either local or Russian) had the leading role in the October revolution, Tashkent was one of the main centers of the Russian revolution.

turned Tashkent into the largest city in central Asia (Kravets, 1983: 7) as large numbers of migrants came from rural areas to work in the industrial sector. Consequently, a new labor class, which was at the heart of the socialist revolution in 1917, began to take shape in Tashkent. The new workers in Tashkent came from both Central Asia and Russia – in 1871 there were 628 workers in the factories of new Tashkent, 348 of whom were Russian, 159 were Uzbek, 87 were Kazakh, 19 were Jewish, and 15 were Tatar (Ismoilova, 2004: 39).

The railway between Tashkent and Orenburg was more influential on the increase of the number of workers in Tashkent than the opening of the new factories. Construction began in 1899 and was completed in 1906 (Wheeler, 1964: 71). The railway system was crucial for Tsarist Russia in its endeavors to control the territory and to secure the flow of cheap cotton from Central Asia; however, the 2000 workers required to build it (Kravets, 1983: 71) would be a significant part of the Bolshevik revolution in the territory, which basically relied on the working class. Tashkent accordingly became one of the most important centers of the October Revolution in Russia (Carlisle, 2001: 78).

In conclusion, according to previous literature relating to cities in Central Asia in the Tsarist period, the general opinion is that the Russian gubernator was not an interventionist in the life of the local people and the old city (Fahrudinovna, 2004: 17; Wheeler, 1964). Little or nothing was done by the Russians to improve living conditions in the native cities, but each urban policy in the new Tashkent transformed urban social life and the local economy, either directly or indirectly. The main local policies for the European Tashkent, which had an influence on the social, cultural, and economic life of the local people in the *mahallas*, can be classified as: (a) modern urban planning for the new European side of Tashkent (in 1866), and immigration and settlement policies for the new Russian community; (b) land reforms (in 1873 and 1886) and land tax systems; (c) changes to the irrigation system; (d) industrialization and the new dual local economy; (e) construction of the railroad; (f) reforms to the education system; (g) reforms to the local administration (in 1865, 1886 and 1892) and the establishment of the local *duma* (council).

4.2 Soviet Experience of Tashkent *Mahallas* as a Socio-Spatial Unit

Tashkent, whose pre-soviet history is summarized at the beginning of this chapter, underwent dramatic change and development during the Soviet era. Although the Communist party enacted many standard laws in different periods, practically, different styles of intervention into the city by the Soviet regime resulted in many different forms of residential units in the living space of Tashkent. Before the Tsarist regime, the living space

consisted only of *mahallas* within the *dakha*. After being occupied by the Tsarist regime, the new city was established in *Shayhantohur*,⁷⁶ *Okkurgan*, *Mirobad*⁷⁷ and *Minguruk*, which were mostly located between rivers of *Ankhor* and *Salor*.

In this section, the urban experience of Uzbekistan in history and the articulation of its *mahalla* with the Soviet regime during three different periods will be analyzed: the first years of the Soviet regime; the period of the World War II and the 1966 earthquake; and the period of the rapid building the *mikroraion* in Tashkent after the 1966 earthquake. Since the 1966 earthquake was such a significant factor in the spatial restructuring of Tashkent, this will be taken as a watershed in the periodization of the city's urban experience during the Soviet era. However, before analyzing these periods, it is necessary to mention the importance of Tashkent for the Bolshevik power. Tashkent was always the central city of the Bolsheviks; and thus had a distinctive role above that of other cities in Central Asia in the revolution. Since the administration in Tashkent was weak, the Bolsheviks were able to overpower the state, take over power and make reforms, especially in the *mahallas*. For this reason, it is the role of Tashkent in the process of Soviet domination in Central Asia that will be presented first.

In the period from the October Revolution to the World War II, the new Soviet regime tried to establish hegemony in the region. The Bolsheviks eliminated all of the old elite social groups in Central Asia, who mostly lived in Tashkent (*Jadids*). The Communist Party did not interfere in the living space of Tashkent, but tried to arrange public space for the creation of its hegemony. The second significant period in the building of Soviet power in Tashkent came during World War II, when the city's population saw a dramatic increase due to immigration from Russia, and many factories and state institutions were brought to Tashkent from Russia and the European side of the Soviet Union. The third significant period came in the aftermath World War II, and was the most important in the shaping of Tashkent's residential areas. Coinciding with the Khrushchev era, this period was crucial not only for the city government and decentralization, as mentioned in Chapter Two, but also for urbanization. The restructuring of Tashkent's residential areas was realized mostly in this period. The shift towards modernization brought by the Communist Party included, for example, the adaptation of the concept of the neighborhood that had been used as a planning tool in Western-Modern terminology to the residential unit in Uzbekistani cities, and referred

⁷⁶ D-4 *mahalla* in the case are in this part of the city.

⁷⁷ D-1 *mahalla* in the case are in this part of the city.

to as *mikroraion* (micro-region). In this period, another important issue for Tashkent was the 1966 earthquake, when two-thirds of Tashkent's buildings were damaged.

Much has been written about the Soviet-era city that sprang out of the wilderness under the sheer force of the drive for industrialization, but little has been written about Central Asian cities during the Soviet era. Tashkent represents the first type of Soviet city, being an urban area with a large, dense population, the capital of a Soviet republic and the fourth largest city in the Soviet Union. Its pre-revolutionary precursor was transformed during the Soviet era, yet the city continues to bear evidence of both the Soviet and Imperial periods. Its population according to the last pre-revolutionary census (in 1877) was 100,000 – the gradual expansion of the city and its population can be seen in Table 4.3. Spread out along the banks of the *Ankhor*, its population at the end of the Soviet era was approximately 2 million (1980) – over an area of 28 hectares – making it the fourth largest city in the Soviet Union (Table 4.2). Tashkent was in a section of the country (Uzbekistani SSR) in which agricultural employment was less prominent when compared to industrial employment, but could be considered as the agricultural center of the entire USSR. Tashkent's importance was political and cultural rather than economic, being the capital city of the Uzbekistani SSR, as well as being the center of the Bolshevik revolution in Central Asia. During the early years of the Soviet industrialization drive the city evolved into a center of automotive and agricultural machinery industries.

Table 4.2 Tashkent's Size and Population, 1877–2015

Year	Size of city (hectares, ,000)	Population (,000)
1877	1.6	100
1920	2.0	232
1939	9.0	585
1946	13.0	650
1957	15.0	800
1965	16.9	1,090
1972	25.0	1,500
1979	25.5	1,800
1980	28.0	2,120
1996	32.7	2,088
2015 (projection)	39.9	2,800

Source: Tokhtakhodzhaeva, 2007, 102

4.2.1 Socio-Spatial Segregation in Soviet Geography

In this section, first, the dynamics of the reproduction of the urban space by the Soviet regime is discussed, giving instances of Soviet policies, such as industrialization and planned

economy, collectivization and immigration policy, and urban planning and housing policy, with the intention being to show how uneven development at an urban scale was reproduced in the Soviet geography. Second, the urban structure of Central Asia and Eastern Europe in the pre-Soviet and the Soviet era is discussed; showing that the urban structures of Central Asia and Eastern Europe had already developed unequally by the time the Soviet Union was established and their urban structure continued to be developed unequally during the Soviet era.

4.2.1.1 Main Principles of Soviet Policy on Regional Inequality

The planned economy and rapid industrialization were crucial state policies that affected the urbanization process of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic as well as other Soviet republics. The rapid industrialization was the main goal for the Soviet State to realize the aspired modernization of the economy and cities were regarded as the focal points for this goal (Fliege-Sailer, 1999: 8). Thus, the Soviet economic growth led to great changes in the structure of all cities of the Union. Between 1917 and 1945, the number of major cities (500,000 or more) in the Union rose almost three times. Between 1939 and 1970, the rate of urbanization in the Soviet Union increased from 32% to 56%. The role of the rural areas was limited to the provision of raw materials needed for industrial development, and the sources were shipped from the rural to the urban area⁷⁸ (Mathieson, 1975: 50). The results of the rapid industrialization on urbanization became evident in the Krushchev period (1953-1964) in Soviet cities. As most of the population began to work in the rapidly industrialized urban areas, the ratio of the rural population decreased. Table 4.3 exhibits the striking change occurred over a period of 30 years in employment rate of different economic sectors. A decrease in agricultural employment (from 54% to 27%) was in conjunction with a rise in the employment figures of the industrial sector (from 23% to 37%) (Mathieson, 1975: 44).

⁷⁸ During the period covered by the second Five-Year Plan (1933-1937), 4,500 factories and energy areas were built in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Besides, in the last Five-Year Plan (1938-1941) period, approximately 3,000 industrial areas were built. Therefore, just before the Second World War, the USSR's heavy manufacturing industry reached twelve times that of 1913, before the Revolution, and the entire industrial sector made up the three-quarters of the gross national product (GNP). During the First Five-Year Plan, 210,000 kolkhozs (collective farms) were created by combining 15 million peasant families (61,5 % of all peasant families). By 1937 (the end of the Second Five-Year Plan), this ratio reached to 93% and these families inhabit 99% of the fertile land. Before the Second World War, the USSR government evaluated these developments and reached the conclusion that significant progress in the economy (collectivization, nationalization, and expropriation) was achieved toward the creation of a new Soviet socialist society (French, 1967: 67; Ohunova, 1983: 9).

Table 4.3 Employment in Basic Sectors of the Soviet Economy (%)

Basic Sectors	1940	1970	Percentage change
Industry and Construction	23	37	+14
Agriculture and Forestry	54	27	-27
Transportation and Communication	5	8	+3
Marketing (trade, public care centers, restaurants, and shopping areas)	5	7	+2
Education, health care, and science and art	6	15	+9
State and Public Organizations	3	2	-1
Housing policies, municipal services, and other services	4	4	---
Total	100.0	100.0	

Source: *Novosti Press Agency Yearbook, 1972, p. 37*

The policies of the Soviet State for the realization of the rapid industrialization caused results that were conflict with another main goal of Soviet regime that was to accomplish the equalization within and between regions of the Union. Rather than solving the problem of economic inequality between the regions of the Union, the rapid industrialization engendered it. For example, two-thirds of the cities were concentrated on the European side of the Union. Furthermore, most of the big cities were located around Ukraine and the Volga River. By the 1970s one-third of the cities on the European side had a population of more than 100,000. A dense urbanization was achieved on the European side especially due to the existence of heavy industrialization. The productive industrial sectors of the economy, which were located mostly European side of the Union, were regarded as fundamental for rapid economic growth in the Soviet Union. Moreover, each Soviet Republic had a specific function in the Soviet economy, which caused that each republic became economically dependent on each other. The so-called super-specialization was the practice that the Soviet Union initiated in central Asia, especially in Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, to meet the needs of cotton. Although the central Asian region of the Union was the richest area in oil, hydroelectric energy, and natural gas (after Siberia), the Soviet power was more interested in the cotton capacity. Therefore, as one of the main economic contributions of Uzbekistan was to produce cotton⁷⁹, its urbanization and industrialization rates remained lower than the Union's average.

⁷⁹ Since the Soviet power improved methods to increase the cotton production in central Asia, almost all the cotton and cotton-based products were produced in republics of that region of the Union: 95% of the Union's raw cotton, 100% of cotton equipment, 15% of cotton oil, 90% of chrichirs (an artificial chemical for cotton) production, and a large portion of weaving equipment. Even though all the cotton was produced in central Asia, this region was dependent on Russian do the European Soviet republics for the clothing industry. For example, 96% of the Uzbek cotton was shipped to the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and White Russia to be used in textile manufacturing. As 70% of central Asia's agricultural area was used for cotton cultivation this region was dependent on Russia for staple food. In the late 1980s, the negative effects that were observed on the ecology and life of central Asia, due to this policy, reached embarrassing levels, even by Soviet standards. For example, the Aral Sea dried up, which caused a scarcity of water and the break out of many diseases. The agricultural policy of

Table 4.4 Growth Rates of Urban Population in Economic Regions (1897-1957)

Regions	Subregions	Urban Population (...1000)		Rate of Urban Population (%)		
		1897	1959	1897	1959	Urban growth rate
Middle Region	Centre	1,846	13,132	12.1	53.0	40.9
	Don-Dinyeper	829	8,231	10.6	49.7	39.1
West	Northwest	1,736	6,013	21.7	52.4	30.7
East and South	Caucasia	527	3,481	11.5	36.6	25.1
	Central Asia	618	3,678	11.4	26.9	15.5

Source: Adapted from "Cities of the Soviet Union, studies in their functions, size, density, and growth," by Chauncy D. Harris, 1970, *The Association of American Geographers*, p. 290-291

Between 1897 and 1959 the urban population increased in all regions, however, in different ways (Table 4.4). Accordingly, during the 60 years after the Revolution, the average urban population growth was around 35-40% on the European side of the Union and around 20% in the southern and eastern regions. By the 1960s, on the one hand, in the western and central regions, the urban population reached 50% of the total population; on the other hand, this rate remained around 30% in the less-developed regions, such as central Asia.

Second, the rapid industrialization policy caused inequality within the regions because state preferred the economically developed cities in each region to realize industrial investments. Thus, there was a problem of the *primate city*, which means that the leading city of its country or region was disproportionately larger than any other city in the urban hierarchy. Because most of the European Soviet citizens who came to central Asia were settled in Tashkent by the Communist party, this capital city of the Uzbek Republic was highly developed by the Soviet power after the Second World War (Boworth 2007: 501). Until the Perestroika period, in Uzbekistan, many kinds of state investments were realized only in its capital, Tashkent, such as factories, offices, universities, and cultural centers. Consequently, its population doubled to a million inhabitants. It is only in the Perestroika period that the Communist party began to pay attention to other cities of the Uzbek Republic.

the Communist Party that only allowed Uzbekistan to yield cotton turned this state into a cotton field. All the cotton farming equipment was brought to the region from Russia and was operated by Russians. Because of this Soviet cotton policy, in central Asia, the growth of both urbanization and industrialization remained at very low level during the 70-year Soviet period.

Table 4.5 Population of the Cities in the Soviet Union in 1967

Regions	Sub-Regions	Cities	Population (1967)-(...1000)
Middle Regions	Center	Moskova	6507
		Yaroslavl	498
		Kaluga	179
		Kalinin	318
	Don-Dinyeper	Khar'kov	1125
		Nikopol	110
		Zaporozh'ye	595
		Sumy	140
West	Northwest	Leningrad	3706
		Pskov	112
		Petrozavodsk	171
		Sykt'yvkar	102
East and South	Caucasia	Baku	1196
		Tiflis	842
		Batum	100
		Leninakan	133
	Central Asia	Tashkent	1239
		Namangan	158
		Frunze	396
		Ashkabad	238

Source: Harris (1970: 14-20)

There are several cities that became the primate city in their regions by 1967 (Table 4.5). Moscow's population was nearly six times greater than the sum of the other three cities in the central regions, and Khar'kov was close to twice of the sum of the other three cities in the "Don-Dnieper" regions. In the northwest, Leningrad reached almost 10 times the sum of the other three cities. There were no differences between the developed and less developed regions of the Union. For example, it is possible to say that Baku in Caucasia and Tashkent in Central Asia shared a similar position with the other primate cities of the Union.

Indeed before the October Revolution, the industrialization had already begun in the Tsarist Empire. There had been a serious problem because of lack of the housing for the people migrated from rural areas to the city (Belediyeler D., 1935). There are two factors that led urban planning in Soviet regime easier than in capitalist system: the collectivization and the controlled immigration to the Soviet city. After the October Revolution, the new Municipality law accepted on the August of 1918 declared that all property will be transferred to the state and municipalities. The private ownership on the land ended and the city Soviets had the right to arrange all urban land and re-distributed it to the Soviet citizens. The Soviet state and city Soviets were the unique authorities on city planning and, thus, on the housing problem, which assigns to urban planning a positive, promotional role in the development of physical fabric of the new communist cities (White, 2004: 212). Bertaud

(1997: 142-143) claims that whereas in a market, housing construction organizations are value maximizers, bureaucratic housing builders are cost minimizers and they have little interest in final user satisfaction because future residents are not their direct clients. Moreover, since urban land and the private rental market were transferred to state ownership, land rent basically lost its significance for urban development (Fliege-Sailer, 1999: 8) and hence, no location variances or advantages due to market forces were influential on the urbanization process (Sigurd, 1993: 9). Therefore, the Soviet planners did not face with the limitation of satisfying the individual land owners but they had to satisfy the interest of the state institutions, state factories, bureaucrats, soldiers (Fliege-Sailer, 1999: 8). What the Tsarist Empire had commenced before the 1917 Revolution was completed by the Soviet regime. With the collectivization policy, remaining few *waqfs* in central Asian cities were closed.

Another policy of the Soviet regime is controlled immigration to the Soviet cities, especially to the primate cities. Before the October revolution, in the Russian cities, there was the lack of housing to the labor class. The Soviet regime firstly decided to restrict the immigration to the big city, thus, according to Lehmann (1991), non Russians from other republics or countries were not drawn in significant numbers into Russian cities to fill the demands for unskilled labour and service personnel – with notable exception of the ethnic republics within Russia (for example Tataristan, Bashkortostan and Chechnia). However, this strict immigration policy was implemented in different ways in central Asia, at least in Tashkent, which is mentioned in detail under the title of Tashkent urbanization process during the Soviet era. However, it is necessary to mention here that after the October revolution, because of political control, there was constant migration of different ethnic groups, many of which were actualized by government incentives, to Tashkent city from different regions of the Union. However, the native people from rural areas and other small Uzbek cities could not migrate to Tashkent due to the general policy of the Soviet urban planning resting on such strict migration policy. As a conclusion, Tashkent became a city which was dominated by other ethnic groups.

4.2.1.2 Soviet Urban Planning System and Housing Policy

Undisputedly, the most dominant principle of the Soviet urban planning is centralism. Urban growth, functional orientations, internal structures, and local economy for all Soviet cities were determined by the centrally-planned guidelines to realize the rapid industrialization within all republics of Soviet Union and the physical plans were prepared at all spatial scales from the Union scale to the detailed plan for a small neighborhood (White, 2004: 212). In

other words, one of the main principles of the Soviet urban planning was that every city had to be compatible with the national placement network and the national economy that were developed according to the framework put forward by the national plan (French, 1979: 76). Moreover, as mentioned before, regarding with centralism, the Soviet planners and Soviet state were the unique authorities in the decisions concerning urban change and development. Related with this issue, all urban planning issues were arranged according to state benefits rather than individual interests to create a classless and equal society (Sigurd, 1993: 9). Because of the centrally-planned guidelines, “there is much greater degree of central government control than the local authorities in the USSR even to the extent of being over-centralized, placing too heavy reliance on the preparation of plans by central ministries for cities throughout the country” (White, 2004: 212).

Localities’ dependence on enterprises for the provision of services to the local population was one reason for the high level of centralization in the allocation of material benefits, since each industrial or agricultural enterprise was under the direction of a centralized ministry rather than being accountable to the local soviet. In addition, the portions of a city’s trade and services that were administered through local government were subjected to dual subordination, since they were the responsibility not only of the local soviet but also of the hierarchically structured ministries that directed the distribution of such benefits. Another factor that detracted from discretion of local officials in determining the provision of services in the municipality or territory under their formal authority was a high degree of centralization of control over government budgets in the Soviet Union. Most of the budget of a city or semi-rural *raion* was typically allocated to the locality through transfers from higher levels, while only a small proportion of the revenue of a local government came from taxes at the disposal of that level of government. In short, there were a number of reasons for a high degree of centralization of control not only over investment in production but also over spending on housing and services. Thus the functions that local governments specialized in performing were incorporated into a system structured primarily to facilitate the exercise of authority from top to down (Evans, 2000: 118).

The first agencies concerned with planning in the Soviet Union were *Gosplan* (Republic State Planning Committee) and its municipal arm *Gorplan*, responsible to the USSR Council of Ministers. Through the preparation of five-year economic plans, *Gosplan* determined the direction of the national economy and the levels of investment in each sector, including

construction⁸⁰ (White, 2004: 212). Second agency in the Soviet urban planning was of course the Soviet city (Local Government) that have responsibilities only for the housing construction, provision of community services, including the acquisition and distribution of food, manufacture of consumer products, and urban infrastructure (Siquard, 1993: 9), rather than urban growth, local economy, or urban development. The Soviet city had little control over its own annual plan and must work within a framework established by the Republic Party and state organs. In addition, “an urban plan of one Soviet city is based upon control figures worked out by various within the *Gosplan*, and affirmed by the central Committee of the Republic Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Republic” (Frolic, 1972: 38).

Under the eye of the local communist party bureau and secretaries, the government of a *raion* or city was responsible for the provision of a wide variety of benefits to local residents. The main function of local government was to ensure the delivery of housing, public services, and retail services for the population. Soviet local governments furnished a broader scope of goods and services to citizens than local governments in western countries, since a district or city government in the USSR not only was responsible for parks, streets, medical facilities, schools, and libraries, but also owned a substantial proportion of urban housing and controlled many retail stores, restaurants, and service shops due to the socialist character of the Soviet economy. Local government in the Soviet Union exerted much more influence on the level of consumption of local residents than on the level of production, since the management of industry and agriculture was not under the authority of the soviets and their executive committees. Stimulating and assisting local enterprise management in the fulfillment of targets for production under economic plans were responsibilities of the local communist party secretaries and the administrators of ministries (Evans, 2000: 117)

The main features of the Soviet city can be summarized as follows. Each city was compatible to national transportation network. The structure of this network was rational and should be developed within the framework of the national plan for the economic and social benefit of the Soviet society. This spatial development was to occur in a manner of spreading equally throughout the country and had to be planned from the national scale to the smallest scale, *kolkhoz* (collective farming area). Thus, the elimination of differences between rural area around the city and the city centre was one of the main goals of the Soviet urban

⁸⁰ Regarding the construction sector, there was another governmental institution called the *Gosstroy* (The State Building Committee) which holds responsibility for all construction matters and *Gosgrazhdanstroy* (subsidiary to *Gosstroy*) which holds responsibility for civil construction and architecture (White, 2004: 212).

planning. The residents of a rural area could benefit from education and other social services just like the residents of an urban area. Moreover, the urban areas were divided into functional categories using layouts (industrial area, trade area, living space, green area, transportation space). The partial project for streets, roads, squares, *mikroraions* should be planned by treating the city as a whole and through a coordinated policy practice. One of the main features of the Soviet urban planning was the clear objective of meeting the housing needs of the masses. In this sense, every *mikroraion* had its own socio-cultural organizations and each of them had its own park, sport area, health center, kinder garden, and bathroom (Parkins, 1953: 51; Keleş, 2003: 322; French, 1979; 101).

As understood, the Soviet planners gave up the spatial standards of the capitalist city in order to built social equality within the first years of the October Revolution. The imagination of the Soviet planners is that each city had to have its own cultural identity and it should be preserved. Unlike the capitalist city, the center of the Soviet city had a cultural and administrative identity reflecting the socialist ideology. In the central business district of the city, only a hotel, restaurant, and a shop were allowed by the Soviet State and the monumental squares and allies used for political parades formed the typical formal elements of the socialist city centre. (Fliege, 1999: 9) In each Soviet republic, its capital city was the prime city.

As a part of the Soviet planning system, there was no landing tax in the urban areas. Theoretically, there was neither a social nor a spatial segregation among the urban communities within the city, but in practice, as it will be seen in the next title in more detail, there was both social and spatial segregation within city as well as an apparent disparity among cities. Due to the extensive and dense industrialization policy, there was an agglomeration of the working class in the Soviet city. Therefore, all of the collective urban services were offered cheaply. For example, urban transportation was mostly based on public transports and the basic logic of the transportation system of the Soviet city was to minimize the transport costs between the working and living spaces. To sum, it should be noted that the authority upon all decisions about urban development and change was the Soviet planners and the Soviet government and that there was no individual choice and competition regarding the urban planning issue.

Although local government was seen as a responsible authority, practically, industrial ministries were more in charge of the housing construction, thus, of the development of the residential units in Soviet cities. In other words, the decisions concerning the investments in much new housing and urban services and the maintenance of existing facilities were in the

hands of ministerial officials and enterprise management. As mentioned by (Lehmann, 1997: 1086) “construction funds were distributed through various industrial ministries to particular enterprises within the city which in turn built the bulk of the housing and related services”. For example, Lewis (1983) estimated that about 40% of all urban housing was controlled by local soviets in 1980s. Therefore, in most cities and districts, the majority of housing and services were provided by the local enterprises, which were under the authority of the ministries headed by the members of the council of ministers in Moscow.). Shortly as Humphrey (2007: 185) explained, “*in Soviet times, the great mass of people had no choice about where they lived. They were allocated housing, usually by their place of work, or otherwise by the town Soviet*⁸¹”.

All of the housing constructions were under the strict control of the local municipal government and the central respective ministry, which refers to the concept of dual subordination of the city enterprises. However, because of the Party role, there was a third subordination of the city enterprises. As mentioned in chapter two, the Party was the originator, the prime mover, and the monitor of all activities, including urban planning. “All decisions of the Communist party on the most important questions of public life are obligatory for all state organs, including the local Soviets” (Hill, 1980: 153). Likewise, as Sigurd (1993: 10) puts forward, all urban managerial leaderships came first not from component professionals, but from interchangeable, politically reliable members of the *nomenclature*.

Officials of city Soviets in all parts of the Soviet Union acknowledged housing to be one of the most serious and worrisome of their problems. In contrast with the capitalist societies, the goal was the equalization of housing conditions for all households (Fliege, 1999: 8) since the housing policy was the leading policy in order to create an equal and a classless urban society. In addition to the elimination of the differences between rural and urban areas, it was necessary to mitigate the inequality among urban residential units for the Soviet state. For this aim, there were two crucial strategies used by the Soviet urban planners. First was the creation of self-contained and balanced residential units within the Soviet cities, which means that each residential unit had its own facility places and that all residents should utilize equally from all public urban services (Parkins, 1953: 51), such as its kindergartens, communal dining halls, parade and rally grounds, and obedient mass media, which were to shape the mentality and behavior of the people (Sigurd: 9). Second was the elimination of inequality among urban residential units, which means that the residential units on the

⁸¹ Probably the author wants to say local soviet by using town Soviet

periphery of the city should become self-sufficient and there should be no difference between neighborhoods of the downtown and peripheral areas of the city (Keleş, 2003: 322).

Despite the egalitarian ambitions, the control of immigration to the city, and the collectivization policy, the housing allocation always remained a crucial problem especially for the dense population in the capital cities of the Soviet republics (Lehmann, 1991) and therefore the socialist cities could be characterized by a degree of socio-economic and demographic segregation and physical differentiation (Gentile, 2004: 703; Andrusz, 1984; Szelenyi, 1983; Bator, 1989; Matthews, 1979; Morton, 1980; Rukavishnikov, 1980; Smith, 1994). Socio-spatial segregation within the Soviet city was especially related with two issues. Szelenyi (1983: 6) argued in his book titled “Urban Inequalities in Under State Socialism” that “in East European socialist countries, housing inequalities are being created now, as those with higher incomes get the better housing; and these inequalities are being created by administrative allocation”. Socio-spatial differentiation was being reproduced by the very system of the socialist housing construction and allocation, that is, the same outcome with that of the capitalist system was being reached through entirely different means (Gentile: 703). As the Soviet city reflected state and institutional priorities over private individual preferences, income was relatively unimportant in acquiring housing and it was clearly realized as a socio-spatial segregation between higher status and lower status groups of the Soviet society (Fliege, 1999: 11). Until the establishment of *mikroraions* in Khrushchev era which is explained in the next title, higher status groups, such as people in bureaucracy and groups employed in industrial sectors, especially in heavy industrial sectors, were likely to obtain new housing in large, more well-groomed, fifth floor located apartment complexes with better sanitary services and infrastructure in the center of the city while lower status groups, such as teachers, doctors, white collar personnel and service worker settled to the residential units with less well-groomed apartments located at the periphery of the city⁸² (Lehmann, 1991). Humphrey (2007: 185) explained this issue as the Soviet subjecthood is defined principally by occupation.

Gentile (2004: 118) pointed out several ways through which segregation was generated during the Soviet period. First was the planned professional segregation which means that the political elite, such as KGB officers or members of the writer’s union, resided in high-quality dwellings erected in attractive locations. Second was the demographic segregation, which implies the preferential allocation of new apartments to younger couples during

⁸² These residential units will be mentioned as *type D mahallas* in our case study.

various periods of the housing construction⁸³. Third was the socio-economic or ethnic segregation which became highly intensive in certain regions of the Union such as the Baltics and central Asia because of the conflict between industrial ministries (national economic goals) and the city Soviet (territorial goals)⁸⁴. This socio-spatial segregation within the city is evident specifically in the consumption culture of different social status groups in their private spaces⁸⁵, rather than social classes determined by the mode of production. It should be underlined that the Soviet society was not a classless society. There were two main social groups: the Communist party membership/position of authority (*nomenclature*), and the expertise/skill/ability (Robinson, 2009: 15). Moreover, the third one was the social group composed of those who belonged neither of these two main social groups mentioned above, so it was the excluded, the marginal group. The Soviet Union produced a specific culture of consumption. The highly ranked social groups of the Soviet Union could separate themselves from mass of the population by using luxury items, which included champagne, caviar, chocolate and fruit cakes, assorted chocolates, perfume, amber jewelry, crystal, fur and etc. The case study on Tashkent clearly shows us how these social groups were segregated from each other in the living spaces of the Soviet city.

Although it was easier to build new residential units and to place the Soviet citizens in the vacant spaces of the city as a result of the mere state ownership upon the urban land, there was the risk of strong socio-spatial differentiation which may exist in the residential units built in the pre-socialist times next to the city centre⁸⁶. Therefore, pre-socialist urban structures were to be gradually demolished (the zone of transition). Expanses of socialist housing projects – blocks of flats or prefabricated high rise apartment houses – were scattered among the old housing stock. In addition, state investment in areas of old pre-socialist housing stock was largely earmarked for demolition and new housing construction rather than renovation. However, in central Asia this goal was semi-realized and pre-socialist legacies and some traditional residential units remained untouched during the Soviet era, at least until the post World War II (Fliege, 1999: 8). After the World War II, the Communist Party gave the residents of the zone of transition the opportunity either to take new *kvartira* from the new labour block⁸⁷ (*mikroraion*) or to establish a new house in the form of

⁸³ The controlled migration policy of the Soviet regime created demographic segregation among *mikroraions*. Unlike income segregation in Europe, in the Soviet cities the young couple who married recently was allocated to a home in the new *mikroraion* (Lehmann, 1991)

⁸⁴ Industrial enterprises constructed *mikroraion* in the direction of Moscow's industrialization and Russification policy and in most of the time little attention paid to existing master plans that was made by the city Soviet.

⁸⁵ All citizens had legitimate claims to all spaces as they were considered public spaces. Thus, officially, private space did not exist during the Soviet era but it was the unofficial private space where social life really happened for Soviet citizens (Robinson, 2009: 5).

⁸⁶ These residential units will be reflected as *type A mahallas* in our case study.

⁸⁷ These residential units will be reflected as *type C mahallas* in our case study.

traditional type⁸⁸ on the serviced land outside the city. Therefore, in a Soviet city, as mentioned before, there were two main spaces on which the Soviet state established the Soviet style residential units: vacant land and the transition zone formed by the pre-socialist urban space (*type D and type C mahallas of the case study*). Especially in central Asia, there were two more residential units: untouched residential units in pre-Soviet urban space and relocated residential units on the periphery of a city (*type A and type B*). Thus, the Soviet city of the Central Asia consists of different types of residential units rather than being a city with balanced, equal, and self-contained neighborhoods.

The collectivization policy implemented in central Asian cities did not prevent the emergence of segregation and uneven development because of two main reasons. First, while the transfer of the land ownership to the state and municipalities was realized without any problem in the newly formed urban areas, in the old part of Soviet cities this transferring process faced serious problem due to the clash between old private ownership and the subsequent state ownership. This problem was widespread in all Soviet geography. “*To create an equal society, land became the ownership of the state and, mainly in the old city centre, large houses of rich families were confiscated.*” (Smith, 1996: 73). Although the Communist Party mostly intervened in the historic center of the old city to demonstrate its ideological power, political manifestation, and military parade (Petrucchioli, 2004:200), it was a serious problem to intervene especially in pre-Soviet residential units because of the existence of old families who belonged the houses in old cities. Moreover, building new residential units in new, untouched areas of the cities was less costly. Therefore, the Communist party preferred to build new residential units on vacant lands of the city and by this way it also refrained from the reaction of the above mentioned urban families. As a result of this choice by the Soviet regime the old residential areas remained and existed next to the new Soviet-style apartment buildings. This indicates that there was no equal and classless society in the Soviet city and there was a clear segregation among the residential units.

Second reason which was specific for central Asian cities was ethnic segregation in the city. Because of the lack of private ownership, the government could easily settle the population in the city according to its urban plan. Therefore, social segregation was almost negligible in the inner city in general because of the mixture of different ethnic groups, which was a Soviet success. However, there was social segregation in the cities of the south and east (especially central Asia). The social segregation in the cities of central Asia was clearly

⁸⁸ These residential units will be reflected as *type B mahallas* in our case study.

evident because these cities, like Tashkent, were divided into the old and new parts by the Tsarist power (French, 1979; 97) and this ethnic division continued until the collapse of the Union.

Consequently, as shown above, in spite of the policies including collectivization, nationalized local urban economies, planned economy, and rapid industrialization, an equal and classless urban society, which was one of the main goals of the Soviet regime, could not be achieved in central Asian cities because of the features of their pre-Soviet past. In opposition with the creation of a classless society, inequality between regions and city, and the phenomena of uneven development and social segregation emerged in central Asia during the Soviet era. Therefore, the imbalance between regions, the creation of a primate city in each region, and the social segregation in the inner city were considered negative features of the central Asian cities during the Soviet period.

4.2.1.3 Urbanization of Central Asia and East Europe during the Soviet Era

The Soviet Union, for its ideal citizen, should have created an ideal Soviet city. Therefore, one of the most important goals of the Communist Party was to re-arrange the urban space in all its different aspects. The Soviet regime had many different opportunities than that of Western capitalist countries to make radical urban planning decisions. There is a vast literature about Soviet urban structure, Soviet urban planning and housing policy. Despite its richness, like the post-Soviet urbanization literature, this literature is mostly on the eastern European and Russian cities⁸⁹. However, the Soviet city was shaped according to the interaction between the elements of the socialist ideology, the parameters set by state policy, concrete implementation measures and the legacies of the pre-socialist urban structures (Fliege-Sailer, 1999: 12). Therefore, when analyzing the urbanization process of Tashkent during the Soviet period via this literature, it is crucial to pay attention to the differences between central Asian and Eastern European cities.

There are two reasons regarding the emergence of different urban forms and urban structures in central Asia and Eastern Europe, which partly stem from their different social structures

⁸⁹ As if representing the colonial history of Central Asia, the recent main literature of central Asia is related with the creation of new central Asia by the Soviet regime in terms of political, cultural, and social life. Also, the main works about central Asian cities are written by the Soviet authors and some doctoral thesis which are interested in a specific city. Tashkent has a special importance in this literature, which was a center of Bolshevik Revolution and the fourth biggest city of the Soviet Union. There is a consensus about the periodization of Tashkent Soviet history in the literature: at the beginning of the Revolution, the World War II, and after the 1966 Tashkent earthquake.

and urban features in the pre-Soviet period. Thus, different policies were developed towards these geographies by the Soviet Union. First of all, being a colonial society of Russia before the October Revolution resulted in a different form of social segregation in the central Asian cities than that of in the Eastern European and Russian cities. Unlike class inequality in the capitalist cities, in central Asia, there were typical colonial cities that had old and new parts which formed a spatial base for the complete separation of ethnic groups from each other. Thus, ethnic inequality and dual city was the first problem that the Soviet regime should have overcome in order to create a classless and equal society. However, as a requirement of the national policy of the Soviet Union (particularly Lenin's policies) towards central Asia, the creation of new nations in central Asia -in order to remove political threat- minted heavier than the concern for creating a classless society. Therefore, an Uzbek nation was created in the traditional *mahallas* of the city by way of preserving them instead of their abolishment. That is why The Communist Party had been much less willing to transform the traditional neighborhood to Soviet-type residential unit in Uzbek cities than in the cities of East Europe even and other central Asian republics. Thus, it is possible to argue that the Communist party reproduced the traditional *mahalla* and the traditional social life to create the Uzbek nation.

Another difference between two geographies in the pre-Soviet time was the extent of industrialization and urbanization. Until the October revolution, unlike in the Russian cities, urbanization and industrialization was so low in central Asian cities. Although Tashkent had rapidly developed during the Soviet period, urbanization and industrialization of central Asian society never reached the level of European part of the Union. What the Communist Party chose for Uzbekistan as its economic function exerted a profound influence on this development. The main principle of the Soviet economy was that each republic was specialized in a particular economic field and what fell to Uzbekistan in this sense was cotton production which was the basic reason that Uzbekistan carried a rural character until its independence. Thus, after the independence, Uzbekistan has to overcome the problems created by the lack of industrial infrastructure in many economic areas and the economic crisis of post-Soviet transition stemmed mostly from this Soviet policy. It is, thus, possible to claim that territorial justice and inter-regional equality were sacrificed for the sake of the country's economic interest. Uzbekistan was transformed into the cotton plantation of the Union instead of an ideal Soviet republic.

Last difference between central Asia and other regions of the Soviet Union during the pre-Soviet period was the economic structure. Until the occupation of the Soviet Union, the native society in central Asia had a feudal system of economic relations whereas others had

experienced the capitalist regime. This situation showed that the Communist Party had to transform central Asian society into not only a socialist society but also a modern one. Therefore, the Soviet power behaved more interventionist to transform the central Asian social life. However, although the Soviet regime introduced many policies in religious life, gender issues, education etc, these policies were realized in certain residential units and until the end of 1950s, many traditional *mahallas* with their spatial form and social life continued without any state intervention in Tashkent. It is only after the 1950s that some parts of the old city could be transformed until the Uzbek independence. Yet old-style traditional *mahallas* structure was re-established around the periphery of Tashkent city instead of abolishing the old city and the traditional life. It is again necessary to emphasize that modernization of the central Asian society for the creation of equal-classless society was ignored by the Communist Party in order to control it. Indeed, instead of modernizing the society, in central Asia, the Communist Party tried to use the traditional social control mechanism which was produced in the traditional *mahalla* structure. Thus, it is seen that the movies which praised old-traditional *mahalla* life, traditional family structure, and patriarchal relationship instead of modern women and family structure and modern residential units were made during the Soviet era. Thus, *Holima Apa*⁹⁰ commented about Soviet system that “the Communist Party which bring a standardization even in women underwear in the eastern European republics and Russia did not see any harm in Uzbek women’ serving to their mother-in-law in the evening with their atlas (traditional Uzbek women clothes) when they returned from their job and their modern appearance.”

Table 4.6 Urban Structure of Tashkent and Kiev during the Pre-Soviet Era

Tashkent (Central Asia)	Kiev (East Europe)
Colonial	Nation-state
Feudal Regime	Capitalist Regime
Non-Industrialization	Industrialization
Low urbanization	High urbanization
Pre-modern	Modern

As seen in the previous title, the fact that the Soviet regime implemented different policies into central Asian and European cities resulted in a very distinctive urban structure in Tashkent from that of the European Soviet cities by 1991. In contrast with fiction of a classless and equal urban society, many different communities –with their distinctive social structure, social life, and local networks- occurred in Tashkent during the Soviet era and these different neighborhood communities have produced many different strategies and

⁹⁰ my homeowner

tactics against some of the problems of the transition period in Uzbekistan. Thus, it is crucial to analyze the experiment of these different neighborhood communities of Tashkent during the Soviet period for the main argument of this dissertation. That is why it is necessary to analyze in detail the Soviet housing policy and urban planning and their influences on Tashkent's different residential units as today's Tashkent's different *mahalla* types emerged during the Soviet era. Thus, the chapter four will analyze this point.

During the Tsarist regime, the economy of Tashkent was developed, for example, first factory was established during this regime. According to Abramson, "*these changes contributed ultimately to the ideology of transition as modernization on which Soviet socialist ideology in central Asia would be based*" (1997: 70). However, all this development movement in Tashkent was only realized in the new part of Tashkent. The Gubernator of Tsarist Russia did not add all these changes to the diversity of social and cultural life in Tashkent, but the Russian rule affected the traditional social structure, though indirectly. As a conclusion, the Tsarist regime caused the emergence of two different city parts in Tashkent reflecting an ethnically-based separation in parallel with the concept of the colonial city: the Slavic or European groups in the new Tashkent and the native people in the old Tashkent. Afterwards, the Soviet regime spent an effort to create its ideal Soviet city in Tashkent together with this historical background. Tsarist Russia and the Communist party shared the ideology of modernization, but the former considered only the European side of Tashkent and ignored the Asian side of the city. Even though the Communist party tried to mitigate this dichotomy, which was created by the Tsarist regime, it ultimately became a significant factor in the formation of the political, social, and economic bases of Uzbek Soviet and even independent Uzbek policies.

Table 4.7 Soviet Policies and its Results in Tashkent and Kiev

	Tashkent (Central Asia)	Kiev (Eastern Europe)
Policy towards national movements	Support National movement by Communist Party	Struggle of Communist Party against National movements
Policy towards the preservation of traditional life	Protection and reproduction of the parts of traditional life	Destruction of traditional life
Housing policy	Domination of private housing structure	Domination of communal housing structure
Urban planning policy	Flexible urban planning	Non-flexible urban planning
Policy towards family structure	Demolishment of traditional-large family structure (to different house)	Different family merge (within same house)
Results of policy towards ethnic groups	More complicated ethnic problem	Ethnic problem (Russian-Slavic)
Results of policy towards residential segregation	Non-dominated residential units based on occupation	Dominated residential units based on occupation
Results of policy in the utilization of existing local networks	More effective local networks	Less effective local networks

4.2.2 Tashkent *Mahallas* in Soviet Period

In this section, the urbanization process of Soviet Tashkent is examined in three periods in which the living space of the city was deeply affected: the first years of the Revolution; the period from World War II to the 1966 earthquake; and the period of rapid *mikroraion* construction in Tashkent in the wake of the 1966 earthquake. The development of Tashkent in different periods demonstrates how different residential units emerged, and gave an idea of their different socio-economic structures.

4.2.2.1 The Importance of Tashkent in the Soviet Revolution

Tashkent was the most important city in the Bolshevik's struggle against the Menshevik groups, Tsarist supporters and *Basmachi* groups before and after the October Revolution. Tashkent's central role in the revolution was based on a number of reasons: first, as the Central Asian capital in the Tsarist Empire, the political struggles, class conflicts and social movements that emerged in Russia also occurred within a short time in Tashkent; second, many Russian intellectuals lived in Tashkent, including social democrats (e.g., Koriyushin, Bahirev, Morozov, Hudash) and Bolsheviks (e.g., Feoletov, Shumilov, Manjara), who spread the Marxist-Leninist ideology in Tashkent at the beginning of the 20th century (Ohunova, 1983: 3). Tashkent was *местосылки* (a place of exile) for Austro-Hungarian prisoners of the war (Morrison, 1995: 436) and for many Bolshevik and Menshevik civil servants from Moscow and St. Petersburg; third, before the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks of Tashkent were in constant communication with the Bolsheviks of Moscow and St. Petersburg, who would bring newspapers and journals to Tashkent. In addition, the Bolsheviks published their first newspaper, *Nasha Gazeta* (наша газета), in Tashkent.

Lastly, during the Tsarist colonial regime, the feudal economic system persisted in Central Asia, but not in Tashkent, where the capitalist mode of production slowly emerged. Thus, the class conflict of the capitalist system had begun in Tashkent even before the October Revolution. New factories, new commercial relationships and the construction of the railway between Russia and Central Asia increased Tashkent's population at the beginning of the 20th century; and by 1914, 852 factories had been established throughout central Asia, 223 of which were cotton factories, 112 were leather factories and 30 were oil refineries. Furthermore, there were 20,925 workers living in Central Asia by 1914. In Tashkent itself, 111 factories opened and employed 2,528 workers 60% of which were of Uzbek origin, and some 81.4% of Tashkent's total economic income came from these factories (Akramov,

1983: 34). The working class, especially Russian workers, raised their awareness about the proletarian revolution. In 1903, the first labor union for railway construction workers was established, and the first strike took place in 1905 to fight for an eight hour working day and to have the right to celebrate May Day (Ohunova, 1983: 5). Because most of the workers that were employed in the factories lived in the rural areas with their families, they carried the communist ideology from the city to the agricultural areas in Central Asia.

In 1917, the February Revolution launched by the Social Democrats, destroyed the colonial system in Turkestan as well as the Tsarist Empire in Russia, and three important institutions were established in Tashkent in its wake: the provisional government's Executive Committee for Turkestan, the Tashkent Soviet and the Tashkent Municipal *Duma*. "*The provisional government declared all subjects of the Russian empire to be free and equal citizens, regardless of sex, religion or ethnicity, and gave them all an equal right to vote*" (Khalid, 2006: 232). However, according to Ohunova, since the February Revolution did not stop colonial exploitation in Central Asia, the local people supported the October Revolution (Ohunova, 1983: 7). As a sign of the political domination of the colonial regime in central Asia, the Social Democrat Party, which was established in Tashkent on March 5, 1917 with 285 Russian members, had only 15 native members (Ohunova, 1983: 9). On March 3, 1917, the election for the Tashkent *duma* took place and many leaders of from the working class were elected, with Bolshevik A.Y. Pershinni becoming the chair of the Tashkent *duma* (Ohunova, 1983: 7).

Between the two revolutions, the Tashkent Bolsheviks organized the working class and established the Tashkent Soviet. In April 1917, the workers of Tashkent, together with the Bolsheviks, arranged several strikes. In May 1917, the *kasabasayuz*⁹¹ (*kasabasayuz*) of the workers was established, with a total of 2,350 workers from the cotton, footwear (70), food and textile factories, and the construction (600), trade and craft industries. The Bolsheviks established the Central Bureau in Central Asia, bringing together the 44 *kasabasayuz*. All the *kasabasayuz* in Tashkent were obligated to the Tashkent Soviet, which was composed largely of Russian railway workers and soldiers. As Morrison (1995) mentioned, elections for the Tashkent Soviet were made separately in the old and new side of Tashkent, and he argues that the Social Revolutionaries were most successful in the Russian quarter (the new side) of Tashkent, winning 62% of the total vote (Morrison, 1995: 436). The rate of

⁹¹ *Kasaba* means district, village or town; *sayuz* (direct translation) means federation, but here it is used as a subunit of the workers organization or council.

Bolshevik members in the *Tashkent Soviet* increased in the new election on November 10, 1917 after the October Revolution.

4.2.2.2 Tashkent in the First Years of the October Revolution

After 14 November, 1917 the Bolsheviks won the struggle for power in Tashkent that was the capital city of the Uzbek SSR in 1930. Tashkent remained as the center of Bolshevik power in Central Asia, and the October Revolution was a major turning point for the development of the city. The inequality that existed under the colonial regime was eradicated and a new modern city began to appear, accompanied by a process of rapid industrialization (Aminov, 1983: 16). Urban planning was given high priority to control the development of the society, and so it is worthwhile mapping the development of Tashkent's living space in the first years of the Revolution by presenting the main characteristics of the Soviet urban planning and housing policy.

The first issue that affected the direction of development of Tashkent's landscape was connected with the discussion among the Soviet elite of the form Soviet urban planning and architecture should take. One of the spoke out ideas was that the revolution was already made and it is not necessary to suggest any utopist opinions for the Soviet cities. As Lenin said, "there is no evidence to create utopia, discover the unknown things in Marx. He states a communist issue as such a natural scientist analyzes the problem of the new biological species: the natural scientist analyzes this problem, only he notices that this species exists and evolves in a certain direction" (Gilison, 1975). According to the second idea, the revolution, which depends on a change of ownership of the productive resources and the end of private ownership, is not sufficient. Additionally, as Lefebvre (1973) argued, a city plan that is appropriate to a socialist revolution, transforming all social relations into socialist ones, is necessary. Adopted by the artisans, this second opinion was suppressed by the Communist Party in a short time. Kaganovitch said, "today some groups defended to form a socialist city, but they forget one detail – that the cities of the Soviet Union have already been socialist on the social and political side. Our cities were socialist when we nationalized the bourgeois and make the productive resources common things in the October Revolution". As Le Corbusier stated: "*One day, the authority in the Soviet Union said: 'It is enough! The entertainment is finished'. This voice called for artists to unite in the arts like in politics*" (Bumin, 1998). In short, through the refusal of the urban utopias that were accepted in many Western cities, the first Moscow city plan demonstrated the adoption of scientific socialism rather than utopist socialism in the Soviet Union (Parkins, 1953: 14). In a short time, the results of the rejection of utopias were reflected in Tashkent. *Azim Aka*, an architect in the

Tashkent Faculty of Architecture, when interviewed for this case study, described the utopian movement in Tashkent as:

“After the October revolution, the first Tashkent plan was made by Slovechik in the 1920s. According to his plan, the old part of Tashkent with both its living space and public space had to be destroyed and turned into the big green space as the new center of Tashkent. The people of the old city settled into new modern living spaces. However, thinking that it is unrealistic, the Communist party declined this plan. Slovechik was accused of preparing an unrealistic plan and thus putting the state in a difficult situation, and thus was sent into exile in Siberia. The second plan was prepared by Bulatov who was also appointed by Moscow-Gosplan in 1939. In this plan, which was almost different from the first plan, Bulatov aimed to build a connection between the old and new parts of Tashkent through the production of green spaces rather than destroying the old city. In this way, it achieved the integrity of city as an appropriate attempt at the socialist ideology, but despite his efforts the feudal structure of the old city continued to exist. The green space between the old and new city was declared as the center of the city and many public and cultural buildings were established there. In the plan, it was suggested that the destruction of the old part of the city be made gradually due to the potential difficulties; however, as you see today, almost nothing has changed in old Tashkent”.

The second issue concerns the collectivization policy, whereby the Soviet regime continued to confiscate the *waqf* until 1928 in Tashkent, which radically changed the entire city structure and economy. This policy effected deeply the *mahallas*, which were supported by *waqfs* in the pre-Soviet period, and they lost their significant financial resources, described in Soviet discourse as *“their community kicked the feudal type of exploitation”* (Mukminova, 1984). More importantly, the confiscation of *waqfs* provided the state with a new source of revenue, and, according to Khalid (2007: 470), *“the new regime ran into the reality of continuities from the colonial past, as Tsarist categories and Tsarist practices continued to shape the new order”*. Indeed, during the 19th century, both Muslim states and colonial powers had tried to regulate the *waqf*, and so this was not only a strategy of the Soviet Union. Consequently, the old *mahallas* lost their main link to a strong social institution (*waqf*), while the new part of the city gained a much stronger supporter, being the State, which used the spoils of the *waqf* confiscations almost exclusively in the new Russian part of the city (Karimov, 2004: 132-133). The specific policies of the State concerning many social services, including health, education and cultural services were supposed to guarantee the support of the productive forces (Smith, 1996: 73) in the new side of Tashkent, while the old side of Tashkent faced a severe shortage of these services. In short, because of the State’s support, the new Tashkent developed rapidly, and unequal urban growth within the city emerged, and so at the beginning of the revolution, the inequality between the old and new parts of Tashkent increased rather than going into decline.

The third issue that affected the segregation between living spaces was rapid industrialization, which was not as crucial an element in the development of other central Asian cities as it was in Tashkent. Industrial development was a high priority in Tashkent and it was necessary to get good access to work and to guarantee a good and cheap infrastructure network in the city (Smith, 1996: 73). Since many state investments were realized in Tashkent, the city, with its dense population, became the largest in Central Asia, but became a prime example of the primate city problem. In Tashkent it was possible to see industrial areas with new residential areas built around them, even in the 1930s. The domination of industry was so clear that the districts of the city took their names from factories, such as automobile, textile or tractor factories (*garadok*). The industrial areas were developed mostly on the east side of Tashkent, which was the new part of the city, and a central city square connected the newly developed, planned part of Tashkent to the historical pre-Soviet part of the city. As these new industrial areas had their own residential units in which the workers lived (Petruccioli, 2004: 200), there was not only spatial segregation between old and new city, but also socio-economic or class segregation between the residents of the old and new city. The inhabitants of the new neighborhoods became the favored labor class members, while the residents of the old city, who were still engaged mostly in traditional handicrafts, became marginal groups in the Soviet Tashkent, and could not articulate to the regime in terms of the production mode.

Under the strong centralism, another important character of Soviet urban planning was that many decisions related to Tashkent's development were made in Moscow rather than by the Tashkent city soviet. The Tashkent city soviet was made up mostly of native people (see Chapter Three) who lived in old Tashkent, but the state institutions under the control of Moscow, who were more effective in city planning, implemented mostly the decisions of Moscow that were oriented towards national economic development and state benefit rather than local priorities. As Lehmann (1997: 1087) mentioned, the city soviets were almost powerless in directing the city's development during the Stalin era. This situation prevented the realization of many of the suggestions or demands of the Tashkent city soviet members about the old city, as the decisions of Moscow were related rather with new factories and living spaces, which were important for national economic development, and with the residential areas of the political elite, who were central to the national political hegemony.

This centralist planning in Tashkent was aimed at producing much more public space than living space at the beginning of the Revolution, except in the neighborhood units of the

newly industrialized areas. Public spaces, especially in the city center, became areas for demonstrations against the Soviet political hegemony, and so it can be claimed that at the beginning of the Soviet regime the Communist party tried to strengthen its hegemony in Tashkent through the (re-)production of public space rather than by transforming the social and economic life of urban society. This was achieved through the (re-)production of living space in which a radical transformation took place after World War II with the concept of *mikroraion*. Early Soviet urban planners and architects had a significant philosophical problem with all of the historical figures of the old city, as they were seen as the symbols of the pre-Soviet era, like the living spaces of the old city. After the Bolshevik Revolution, everything old was to be replaced by the artifacts of the new society, yet the Communist leaders also realized that the wholesale destruction of formerly sacred and still admired buildings could inspire popular unrest and would be a waste of resources (Sigurd, 1993: 17). As a result, many restored historical places became museums, concert halls, theater halls, workshops, offices, military facilities etc.

Another reason behind the deepening ethnic segregation within Tashkent was the immigration policies of the Soviet regime. As mentioned before, an important characteristic of the Soviet urban planning was the strict immigration policy, which obstructed the native people from migrating from rural areas to Tashkent. However, at the beginning of the Revolution, another migration policy of the Soviet regime was at work, involving the forced immigration of many different ethnic groups, mostly Slavic citizens, to Tashkent for different reasons, such as providing political security or necessity of some experts for providing economic efficiency. Thus, while native citizens were prevented from moving to Tashkent under the general immigration policy in Soviet urban planning, the Slavic population and other ethnic groups increased in Tashkent under the special migration policy of Moscow regarding Central Asia. According to Azim Aka:

“It can be argued that until World War II there had been three main types of residential unit in Tashkent: the kvartal, which was the traditional living space of the Slavic citizens; the mahalla, being the traditional living space of the Central Asian communities; and the new modern residential unit, consisting of apartments built for the industrial workers and the bureaucratic elite. While the mahalla had its own center (mahalla kengash) that provided social solidarity and some services, the kvartal had no center and only a few magazines (stores or grocers). Many kvartals in Tashkent were replaced with new apartments during the Soviet era, and so there is no kvartal in Tashkent today. The new modern residential units located around the factories and public buildings were Hurushovkha apartments built for Soviet laborers and civil servants. However, these residential units were few in number, and many were destroyed in the big earthquake in 1966. After World War II, the mikroraion was established in their location. As such, today, only few Hurushovkha apartments can be found in Tashkent.”

As a conclusion, it can be said that during the first period of the Soviet regime, *mahallas* located in the old part of Tashkent did not change socio-spatially, with a few exceptions; while the *kvartal* on the new side of Tashkent, which was dominated mostly by the European population, began to be replaced by modern apartments. Besides this, new factories and associated residential units sprang up on the empty lands around the new part of Tashkent. As summarized above, due to the key features of Soviet urban planning, these two distinct forms of residential unit had not only different spatial forms (*mahalla* and *kvartal*-modern apartment), but also different ethnic structures (Asian and European communities), including the members of various occupational (based on the old feudal mode of production and Soviet labor or civil servants) and socio-economic groups (low status – then becoming marginal groups – and middle and high status). It will be useful to mention here that these two different residential units represent two of the four *mahalla* types in the case study (Types A and D). After World War II, in order to decrease socio-spatial segregation in the Soviet city, the concept of *mikroraion* was introduced into Soviet city planning (French, 1979: 41). Instead of decreasing the socio-spatial segregation within the city, the fact that the *mikroraions* were built in the old part of Tashkent as well as in new part caused the development of two other types of *mahallas*, referred to as Type B and Type C in the case study. Before describing in detail the formation of the Type B and C *mahallas* during the post-World War II period, it is necessary to summarize the period of World War II and the 1966 earthquake in general, as they were significant periods in the development of Tashkent.

4.2.2.3 Tashkent during World War II and the 1966 Earthquake

The Tashkent plan, which envisaged a radical intervention into the living space of the city, was prepared in the late 1940s before World War II, but it could not be put into practice until the end of the 1960s (Burlachenko, 1973: 24). There were two reasons for this, both of which are offered as strong proof of the collective spirit in Soviet literature: World War II and the 1966 Tashkent earthquake, both of which were crucial in the development of Tashkent. While World War II affected radically the economic development and socio-demographic structure of Tashkent; the earthquake in 1966 destroyed many living spaces of Tashkent, and thus brought about a transformation of the socio-spatial structure of Tashkent.

During World War II, the bulk of resources were mobilized for the war effort by the Soviet regime, and the Tashkent soviet also devoted itself to the war. Peshkov, a journalist, emphasized that the city soviet of Tashkent did not demand the financial resources assigned

to it for the purpose of planning from the Moscow Public Finance Ministry during the war (Abdullayev, 1996: 156). Tashkent provided much assistance to the fronts, and also hosted prisoners of war, orphans, war veterans and groups who escaped from the war or who were sent to Tashkent by the Party. During the war, many workshops, education and cultural centers, and public institutions were shifted from the European side of the Soviet Union especially to central Asia especially to Tashkent, and many state factories were relocated to Tashkent. The most important development for Tashkent in this sense was the decision of the Soviet regime to move the Academy of Science from Moscow to Tashkent in 1943, which brought with it many intellectuals, architects, engineers, authors, poets and artists, bringing about a significant and positive change in the cultural identity and capacity of the city (Burlachenko, 1963: 28). In the light of these developments, it can be said that Tashkent was transformed significantly during the war.

The city's population tripled in the period between 1926 and 1966, and due to World War II 49% of Uzbekistan's heavy industry was located in and around Tashkent in 1964, up from only 2% in 1913; and the share of industrial activity in the economy increased 28 times from 1913 to 1964 in Uzbekistan (Akhmedov, 1966: 26). According to Akramov (1973: 23), 50% of the population who had migrated from other Soviet republic to Uzbekistan during the war settled in Tashkent, resulting in an increase in the populations of other ethnic groups in the city. Table 4.8 shows a growth rate in the number of immigrants from other Soviet republics to Tashkent of 24.2, compared to only 14.7 from other regions of Uzbekistan.

Table 4.8 Population growth rate of cities in the regions of Uzbekistan during World War II (,000)

Regions	Population	Population growth rate	
		Growth rate in the number of immigrants from other Soviet republics	Growth rate in the number of immigrants from other territories of Uzbekistan
Tashkent city	1,404.5	24.2	14.7
Tashkent	600.5	10.8	3.1
Farghana	446.5	7.9	3.3
Andijand	258	2.0	0.9
Samarkand	396	–	3.9
Bukhara	297	4.6	1.0
Sirdarya	176	1.2	0.4
Surkhandarya	107.5	0.6	0.5
Kashkadarya	134.5	3.3	2.1
Khorazm	104.5	–	0.1
Karakalpakistan	253.5	0.7	0.2
Namangan	246	2.1	1.0
Total Uzbekistan	4,424.5	61.8	32.8

Source: Akramov, 1973: 23

Arifhanova (2002: 26), in her book “Tashkent Mahallalari,” speaks about the activities of the Tashkent *mahalla kengashes* during the war, asserting that they sent assistance to the war effort in the form of clothes and food for the Soviet army. For example, the *oqsoqols* of Obinozar, Islamov with Ohunboboyev, who was the *oqsoqol* of the Uzbekistan SSR, took the responsibility of providing compulsory assistance to the Soviet army at the fronts. The Tashkent *mahalla kengashes* determined who would go to war among the *mahalla* residents and kept their records. During the war, more than 10,000 citizens from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Crimea and other east European countries moved to Tashkent for various reasons, and many of them settled in the *mahallas* of old Tashkent, being allocated places by the *mahalla kengashes*.

Tashkent, whose population had increased dramatically during the war, was hit by a major earthquake in 1966, leading to the destruction of at least two-thirds of the living spaces over 2 million square meters of Tashkent (approximately 95,000 homes), and one-third of the total population of the city (nearly 400,000 people) died. Moreover, 700 firms, 181 education centers, 225 nurseries and 185 health centers were destroyed (Sodikov, 1979: 21; Boworth, 2007: 502). As a result, the construction of new housing became an urgent priority. The 1966 earthquake was a turning point in Tashkent’s development, bringing about the reconstruction of the city, especially its living spaces, in a short period of time, and earning the city the accolade “one of the most beautiful Soviet cities”. There is an expression that Tashkent has two histories: one being the 2000 years before the 1966 earthquake, and the other being the years after the earthquake (Sodikov, 1979: 22).

4.2.2.4 Mikroraion and Tashkent⁹² after the 1966 Earthquake

The post-World War II period saw not only a major reorganization, but much urban renewal due to the rapid industrialization. Especially for Central Asia there had been little opportunity to realize urban plans in the earliest period of the USSR. However, after World War II the rapid urban renewal of Uzbekistan started. “This was a decade (1955–1965) of

⁹² By 1980, more than 60 ethnic groups were represented in Tashkent, and its population had reached 2 million, making Tashkent the fourth largest city in the Union. In this period many new state factories – especially agricultural machinery and cotton factories – and institutions were established, and some old factories were renewed. In 1982, Tashkent won a competition as a cultural center, and a center for construction and the industrial sector among all Soviet cities, and took the red flag seven times (Kasimova, 1983: 33). Moreover, in the 1980s Tashkent became a center for educational activities. In the 1981–1982 academic year, there were 259 primary schools, 36 high schools, 27 technical high schools and 19 universities in the city. In the same year, the Academy of Science had 730 PhD and 8,070 master students. Besides, there were 630 libraries, nine theaters, fourteen museums and eleven publishing centers in Tashkent (Aminov, 1983: 27). The public transportation system of Tashkent also developed during this period. There were nine train stations that connected Tashkent with several other Asian cities; and within the city there were several kinds of public transport, such as bus, trolley bus, tram and metro (Kasimova, 1983: 27).

intense urbanization, corresponding to the introduction of new technologies in construction (foundations of reinforced concrete). Entire quarters of the old city gave way to modern multi-story constructions and surrounding communal green spaces. Efforts were made to accommodate residents of the same *mahalla* together in the new apartment blocks, so as to preserve the community and traditional social habits” (Boworth, 2007: 501). The Soviet Communist Party indeed destroyed the traditional *mahalla*. The center of the old *mahalla* was transformed into big street, and they built big complex apartments instead of the traditional style houses of the *mahalla*. The traditional *mahalla* changed significantly in the Khrushchev period. Although the Communist Party’s aim was to destroy the traditional *mahalla*, in 1989 one-third of Tashkent’s population lived in traditional *mahallas*. Interestingly, while the government was getting rid of the old *mahalla* with its housing policy and establishing the *mikroraion*, at the same time, around the city new but old-style *mahalla* structures were being established. This was the result of the Soviet housing regulation, which will be covered in more detail in the next chapter. In this way, the old style traditional *mahalla* and its lifestyle continued to exist during the Soviet period in Uzbekistan.

The production of housing units and almost all other urban services based on collective consumption were sacrificed to rapid industrialization during the first years of the Revolution and military consolidation during World War II in the Soviet Union. This led to a rapidly increasing urbanization process and a housing shortage that was one of the main problems in the (re-)production of a working class (Sjöberg: 2006: 704). For example, the 1970 census in the Soviet Union indicated that the population of the country had reached 241.7 million, 136 million of which were urban and 105.7 million were rural. The urban population had increased by 36%, while the total population had increased by only 16% from 1959 to 1970 (Harris, 1971: 102). In the same period, the urban population of the Uzbekistani SSR increased by 47%, and Tashkent’s by 51% (from 911,000 to 1,384,000), far exceeding the urban growth of the entire Soviet Union (Ahmedov, 1991: 58). Although during this period urban growth was rapid in the Uzbekistani SSR, the general urbanization rate was always lower than the USSR. Table 4.9 presents the percentage of urban population in both the USSR and Uzbekistani SSR. As can be seen, by 1989, 66% of the total population of the USSR was urbanized, whereas only 41% of the total population in Uzbekistan inhabited urban areas.

Table 4.9 The urban population of USSR and Uzbekistani SSR (%)

	1926	1940	1959	1970	1979	1989
USSR	18	32.5	47.9	56.3	62.3	66
Uzbek SSR	22	24.5	33.6	36.6	41.2	41

Source: Ahmedov, 1991: 58

To overcome the problems of rapid urbanization and housing shortages, a massive housing program was initiated under Khrushchev's rule in the late 1950s, and the policy was continued by his successors. Thus, following the death of Stalin, the housing situation gradually improved (Boworth 2007: 502), and by 1975 two-thirds of the Soviet urban population was already settled in *mikroraions* (Lehmann, 1997: 1088 and Sjöberg, 2006: 704). Each *mikroraion*, according to the Soviet planning principles, had approximately 10,000–12,000 residents, with 1,500–3,000 flats (Reiner; 1979; 61 and Underhill, 1990: 271). Petruccioli (2004: 201) described the physical appearance of a *mikroraion* as such:

“A mikroraion consists of four quarters, and one-quarter is composed of four housing complexes. These housing complexes are four–five stories buildings which stand together on one block. They are accessible through an access road and a parking area running parallel to the large boulevard. Social facilities were planned to be located at the sides of the blocks that face the street at street level. These facilities are merely small kiosks supplying basic goods for the mikroraions”.

It can be understood that the *mikroraion* was the smallest residential unit of urban Uzbekistan. Soviet planners adopted the Western neighborhood concept, especially the German planning approach, and rigidly codified it into their own *mikroraion* formula (Sigurd, 1993: 13). For example, the Soviet planners reduced large free spaces in the neighborhood concept in Germany in line with the logic of the Soviet mentality, “the Soviet laborers should spend much of their time in the factory” (Kosenkova, 2000: 103).

In the Khrushchev era the housing stock was gradually turned over to the municipalities in order to take city development out of the control of local enterprises, who had built many residential units for the state factories. In this way, the city Soviets gained an opportunity to ensure the urban integrity of Soviet cities through the *mikroraion*. The urban integrity tried to be achieved through a physical echelon of the settlement structure. Examining the spatial arrangement of cities, it can be observed that the Soviet cities consisted of a four-level hierarchy of settlement areas, with the *mikroraion* being the smallest residential unit. This 10,000–12,000 population was at the heart of the urban settlement structure. At the second level, the *zhiloy raions* were composed of several *mikroraions* and had approximately 30,000–50,000 residents. At this scale, there were small polyclinic, shopping centers and primary schools serving the inhabitants. The third level in the settlement hierarchy was the *gorodskoy raion* (approximately 100,000–300,000 residents), in which public buildings, cultural and historical places, hospitals and universities were located (Reiner; 1979; 61). The final scale of the settlement structure of the Soviet city, the *gorodskaya raion* (800,000–1,000,000 population) was observable only in the larger cities (Reiner; 1979; 61), with

spatial units such as an industrial zone in which heavy industry was located (*rabochnik garadok*) or certain areas in which educational institutions were concentrated (*akademi garadok*) (Underhill, 1990: 271).

Three major changes occurred in housing production with the establishment of the *mikroraions* that changed fundamentally the nature of Soviet neighborhoods and communities. First, apartment units were built some distance from the factory, although the factory was still a determining factor in the allocation of apartments and the management of properties (Lehmann, 1997: 1088). This caused a change in the social structure of Soviet residential units, as residents of Soviet-type apartments were only workers in certain factories before the Khrushchev era, while the advent of the *mikroraion*, with its intensive production of housing units for the masses, led to a more complex composition of residents of different status levels and occupations. Second, the fact that the decree had further advised that the housing stock be gradually turned over to the municipalities in order to take city development out of the control of local enterprises (Lehmann, 1997: 1088) increased the power of the local government in the allocation of housing, and made local patronage relations more important for access to housing. As will be seen later, some interviewees in the case study claimed that while many Uzbek citizens could not get a house during the first years of the Revolution, they were able to settle into the *mikroraions* due to the strong power of the Soviet city. However, other interviewees commented that Uzbek citizens could not get houses in any *mikroraions* due to the prevalence of corruption and the long waiting list for accommodation during the 1960s and 1970s. Both of these opposite interpretations are accurate, and offer a clear indication of the spatial reflection in the state hegemony, which will be analyzed in the next section.

The third change that came with the *mikroraion* concept in the Soviet city was the self-sufficiency of each residential unit in terms of public services. The Soviet city was developed using the logic of the *mikroraion*, where residents within that area would have almost all of their needs met (Robinson, 2009: 14). Some three-quarters of urban services were provided without any direct charge to the user, thus, there was little, if any, profit in the urban public service sector. Therefore, the cost of urban public service should have been kept as low as possible. The fact that each resident would be provided with a comprehensive array of services, including per-school facilities (kindergartens), shops selling basic food supplies, a laundry and dry cleaners, a polyclinic for all health care needs, and some form of entertainment or leisure center – a club, cinema or library (French, 1979: 89) in his/her *mikroraion* led to the emergence of an urban system based on the reduction of the need for trips to the center, thus lessening the stress on the public transport system. A neighborhood

self-management committee, known as JEG, provided all infrastructure services for “*the organization and promotion of community development*” (Robninson, 2009: 14). Unfortunately, services were never provided to sufficient levels to make the *mikroraion* a truly self-sufficient suburb (Lehmann, 1997: 1089). Accordingly, it can be said that the *mikroraion* was not a solution to the problems of urban development, as the realities of urban growth affected the nature of the *mikroraion* in ways that were not desired by the planners (French, 1979: 89).

The establishment of the *mikroraion* in Tashkent was accelerated after the 1966 earthquake. Up until 1960, the living space of Tashkent had remained untouched, aside from several residential units belonging to the state factories and for the elite civil servants. The Soviet regime had intervened into the public space of Tashkent much more than into its living space until the 1960s. After World War II, while the Tashkent Soviet was trying to allocate housing for new migrants resulting from the war, the 1966 earthquake destroyed at least one-third of the existing housing stock in Tashkent. As a result, after the earthquake the city experienced a rapid boom in housing construction (Kasimova, 1983: 23).

The 1966 earthquake in Tashkent became a symbol of Soviet solidarity. All of the Soviet republics helped in the re-establishment of Tashkent, and each undertook the task of building one of the *mikroraions* in Tashkent. For example, Soviet Russia built *mikroraions* on 330,000 square meters of Tashkent residential land (Moscow soviet – 230,000; Leningrad soviet – 100,000); and Ukraine established new *mikroraions* on 160,000 square meters of total residential land.⁹³ Moreover, engineers, laborers, architects and city planners were sent to Tashkent from all of the republics of the Soviet Union as volunteers. After the earthquake, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Supreme Soviet of USSR made swift decisions related to Tashkent: in the years between 1966 and 1970, new *mikroraions* and residential units should be built on 5 million square meters land, and in accordance with these decisions, by the end of 1967, new *mikroraions* had already been established on 1.2 million square meters of Tashkent (Ahmedov, 1991: 12).

Many urban residents of the Soviet Union who did not work in factories or state institutions were living in clear socio-spatial segregation. Indeed, the main aim of the *mikroraion* was to solve the issue of socio-spatial segregation of the Soviet city through the building of adequate housing with equal access to public services within the *mikroraion* for these low-

⁹³ Soviet Belarus – 25; Kazakhstan – 28, Georgia – 22, Azerbaijan – 35, Lithuania – 10, Kyrgyzstan 11, Moldova – 6, Armenia – 15, Turkmenistan – 9, Latvia – 7, Estonia – 5, Tajikistan – 8,000 square meters.

income groups. However, in practice this aim was not achieved for many reasons. For example, far more people than projected were housed in the *mikroraions* in a bid to reduce the cost of public services. The population (12,000) in most of the *mikroraions* was four (and sometimes even as much as six) times the upper-limit of the population (3,000) suggested by the planners (French, 1979: 90). For example, one residential district of Tashkent described as a *mikroraion* had a population of 15,000 (French, 1995: 85). In Tashkent, socio-spatial segregation among the residential units was increased during this period for various reasons, as covered in the previous section, some of which were related to the implementation of the *mikroraion* policy. As examined previously, up until the 1960s two different forms of residential units had shaped Tashkent's living space: the *mahalla* (*kvartal*), and the modern apartment, which had not only different spatial forms, but also different ethnic structures, being inhabited by people with different occupations (and engaged in different modes of productions) and socio-economic levels. Thus, instead of decreasing socio-spatial segregation within the city, the fact that the *mikroraions* were built both in the old and new parts of Tashkent caused two other types of *mahallas*, referred to as Type B and C *mahallas* in the case study, to emerge.

After World War II, the building of labor blocks, i.e. the production of housing for dense labor population that emerged during the intensive industrialization period of the Soviet Union began to spread from Minsk to Tashkent. This was a decade (1955–1965) of intense urbanization, corresponding to the introduction of new technologies in construction around the whole urban Soviet. In Tashkent, intensive housing construction transformed the *mahallas* of old Tashkent, especially the parts close to the city center. “Many *mahallas* of the old city gave way to modern multi-story buildings, surrounding communal green spaces” (Boworth 2007: 501). Ibragimova (1983: 208) summarized this process of Tashkent as follows: “*The mikroraion began to be built in Tashkent after World War II, but its rapid spread to old Tashkent occurred after the 1966 earthquake, which had damaged many mahallas. The districts of today's Tashkent began to take the form observable today at this time*”.

One expectation of the Soviet planners with the establishment of the *mikroraions* was that the old residential units of the Soviet city would be cleared. Even before the end of the Khrushchev period, this expectation was achieved in some parts of the urban Soviet. In Tashkent, for example, as in other central Asian cities, extensive residential sections of the traditional city were swept away in order to make room for wide modern streets, lined by *mikroraions* and office blocks; and the 1966 earthquake had greatly facilitated the removal

of the old central areas of Tashkent (French, 1995: 83). However, Khrushchev's housing policy was different from that of the previous Soviet period. For example, whereas before World War II many residential units were established by several ministries for the laborers of certain state factories, the building of *mikroraions* was the duty of the city Soviet in the Khrushchev period. Two options were offered to the residents of the old *mahallas* for housing in the new *mikroraions*.

The first option was that the residents of old *mahalla*, if they desired, could settle in the new *mikroraion* that was to replace their *mahalla* (1957: 91). This option indicated that "efforts will be made to accommodate residents of the same *mahalla* together in the new apartment blocks, so as to preserve familial solidarity and traditional social habits" (Boworth 2007: 501). The residents of the new *mikroraions* did not display a homogeneous composition in terms of their occupations, contrary to the classical Soviet residential units that were for residents employed in the same workplace, such as a particular factory or state institution. The city Soviets tried to offer housing to a wide urban population with the substitution of mass production in new *mikroraions*. The Tashkent Soviet attempted to settle both residents of old *mahallas* and the homeless urban groups that emerged during World War II and as a result of the 1966 earthquake. Thus, the social composition of these *mikroraions* was not dependent on any professional homogeneity. An academician in the Architecture Faculty in Tashkent explained the differences of *mikroraions* in Tashkent as: "*After the 1966 earthquake the city Soviets built many new mikroraions in the old part of Tashkent. Citizens from any occupation, and especially old residents of these areas, settled in these mikroraions. The Soviet ministries continued to establish new mikroraions for laborers of their factories in Tashkent. Thus, the residents of these mikroraions represented a more homogeneous social composition, as almost all had the same occupation.*" These two different *mikroraions* constitute two of the residential areas described in the case study: the Type C and D *mahallas*.

The second option offered by the state to the residents of the old *mahalla* was that, if they wanted, instead of settling to new *mikroraion*, they could take money from the state and construct their own houses on the periphery of the city on lands allocated by the city Soviet. There are no records of which option was more popular among the residents of the old *mahalla*. According to Toktakhodzhaeva (2007: 108), the Uzbeks who lived in the old *mahallas* were reluctant to move to these *mikroraions*, preferring to re-establish their own *mahalla* at the periphery of the city (B type). Toktakhodzhaeva gave no reasons for this situation, however, in the case study of this dissertation some interviewees made an important point while talking about their housing history in the Soviet era. The *oqsoqol* of

one *mahalla*, which was established at the periphery of Tashkent during this period, said: “I was born in an old *mahalla*. Our *mahalla* was destroyed by the Communist Party and the new *mikroraion* (*Tahtapul*) was established. My parents chose to establish a new house rather than move to an apartment because they had got so used to living in a *mahalla*. We moved to this place, which slowly transformed into a *mahalla* together with other newly built houses”. One Uzbek man from the same *mahalla*, who was 82 years old, said: “If you wanted to move to a new flat in the *mikroraion* you had to write your name on the waiting list of the *gorispalkom*, and then wait. The citizens who had political connections used their acquaintanceship and got a flat quickly. We had no connection with the *gorispalkom* or the Communist Party, thus we chose to go outside the city and maintained our traditional life. We were happy.” Lehmann (1997: 1990) also commented on this situation:

“Although the Soviet state was the only authority in the housing market, both the official and unofficial housing markets favored connections and bureaucratic manipulations as much as bribery and direct monetary payments. As a result, the wealthier members of Soviet society tended to have better housing. Such interventions into the official housing distribution mechanism tended to favor households with greater status and, to a lesser extent, monetary wealth”.

For example, in Tashkent many lower status residents of the transition zone preferred the second option rather than joining a municipal or enterprise waiting list for *kvartira*, and so many new *mahallas* following traditional forms were established on the outer edges of Tashkent (Type B) by the citizens, not by the state or city Soviets during the Soviet era, especially after World War II. In particular, it can be seen that older people, who were illiterate and thus had no ties with state institutions, had to choose this option. Moreover, one of the main housing policies of the Communist party was to settle young couples in the new *mikroraions*, leading to a clear socio-demographic segregation between the two different *mahallas*. A *maslahatchi* from a *mahalla* committee in the case study had the following to say on the issue: “... for example, elder people whose *mahalla* had been destroyed by the Communist party generally moved to the periphery of Tashkent and rebuilt their old houses and *mahallas* there”. Moreover, some of these *mahallas* were established by their old residents. As mentioned previously, like some new *mikroraions* (C type) that hosted old neighbors of a demolished *mahalla* altogether, many old neighbors moved together to the periphery of Tashkent and re-established their old *mahalla* in a new area. The *oqsoqol* of a *mahalla* who had been an inhabitant of the *mikroraion* established by the Economy Ministry for the laborers of a tractor factory in Tashkent during the end of the Soviet regime, says of this issue: “I worked in the *raikom* for a long time, so I know these issues very well. I heard that many residents of the old *mahalla* moved together and re-established their *mahalla* at the periphery of the city. In addition, some neighbors decided to move a new *mikroraion*

altogether, and maintained their old mahalla lifestyle in a mikroraion. Do you know, in Tashkent there are two Labzak mahallas. When the Communist Party destroyed the old Labzak mahalla, half of the residents decided to go to the peripheral areas of Tashkent and rebuild their mahalla, while the other half preferred to move to the new mikroraion that was established in the old Labzak mahalla”. Prof. Azim Aka from the Architecture Department in the Academy of Science said:

“The Russians feared Uzbekistanis, because unlike the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, as close Middle East countries, Uzbek society was more conservative. Thus, the Communist party was always cautious of Uzbek society. During the transformation of the residential units, in order to get raise no reactions among the people, the Party distributed flats to people freely, or gave them money and allowed them to build their homes out of the town. However, the amount of money was too little, and the periphery of Tashkent had disadvantages, such as a lack of infrastructure, and the community who settled there had to build the infrastructure themselves. The citizens who wanted to live in houses rather than flats in an apartment block settled in these new areas and established their old-type mahallas, and retained their old customs and social relations. However, these kinds of mahallas were rare, as people preferred to settle in a new and prepared flat. The Soviet regime was clever; the leaders appeared to be bowing to the wishes of the people, but indeed they were not. The poor Uzbeks who had no oracle and who were not members of the Party were not allocated new flats from the waiting list. When asked, they would claim that they preferred to settle to outside the town because they wanted to retain their old traditions, but indeed because they could not get a new house, and had to move there ...”

4.3 Types of Tashkent’s Urban Mahalla

In short, the mahallas in Tashkent during the Soviet era can be categorized into four different types a) Type A, being the mahallas that remained untouched and preserved their traditional forms in the old Tashkent until the collapse of the Soviet Union; b) Type B, as the mahallas that were newly established by the community at the periphery of the city, but built in the old style; c) Type C, being those mahallas that were established as a form of new labor blocks or mikroraions in the zone of transition; and d) Type D mahallas, being those built by the enterprises of ministries or city Soviets as examples of the new ideal Soviet neighborhood units. These different types of residential units of the Soviet cities also bore differences in the social status of their residents, their access to urban social and infrastructure services, and the administrative structures of the city, as well as the urban spatial form, which will be summarized in this section. In summary, in this section, the main characteristics of these four types of mahallas will be explained through a study of the selected mahallas in the case study; and in this sense this section will be an introduction to the research that was carried out in Tashkent, Uzbekistan between August 2008 and May 2009.

The research in Uzbekistan took approximately 10 months, and focused on the city of Tashkent and its *mahallas*. Tashkent's urban *mahallas* were classified into four types according to the dialectic relationship between the Soviet intervention into the urban space through urban planning and housing policies and the local strategies developed by the Uzbekistani communities (here, Uzbekistani refers both to the autonomous republic and the *mahalla*). The crucial point about the *mahalla* types determined in this case study is that they should be seen as ideal types that cannot be exactly distinguished from each other in real life. In other words, although when categorizing these *mahallas* I tried to adhere to reality as much as possible, there will definitely be deficiencies.

4.3.1 Selection Process of Mahallas

In this research, urban *mahallas*, as the main analytical tool, were selected from across Tashkent. The reason for the selection of Tashkent for case study is that the main differences among the different *mahallas* have stemmed from the distinct interventions of the Soviet state, and Tashkent is the Uzbekistani city into which the Soviet state intervened to the greatest extent. Tashkent is therefore the most complex city in which the most diverse *mahallas* exist side-by-side in the same urban area. Although in Uzbekistan the *mahalla* system exists also in rural areas, the focus of this dissertation is the urban *mahallas*, and as such the *mahallas* of Tashkent province are not covered in this research.

What were the selection criteria for the *mahallas*, and what methods and approaches were used in their selection? An attempt was made to choose *mahallas* from the districts in which different characteristics were identified, according to which, five districts were selected: *Mirza Ulugbek*, which is composed of several factories and surrounding residential units; *Yunusobod*, which has several labor suburbs; *Sabir Rahimov*, which represents the old side of Tashkent; *Mirabad*, which was inhabited by the elite, civil servants and the intellectual community during the Soviet era; and *Shayhantohur*, which saw the first steps of transformation into a *mikroraion* in the Soviet period, but whose transformation was not completed. The next step involved obtaining basic information about the *mahallas* in these districts from the *Rayon Hokimiyatlari*, however obtaining assistance from this institution proved to be difficult, as was the case with the city *Hokimiyat*; however this was not such a setback, as the main differences among the residential units exists not at a district level, but at a *mahalla* scale. Although there are some basic defining indicators, especially from the Soviet time – such as occupation and education – at the district scale, each district can have different types of *mahallas* today. As shown in Figure 4.1, the border of each *raion* has expanded from the center to the periphery of the city. While the center of each *raion*

generally hosted the upper classes (elite and civil servants), the periphery was usually home to the lower classes in the Soviet era. Accordingly, the main social segregation was realized at smaller scales of residential unit, such as *massiv*, *mahalla*, *mavzi*, *okrug*, *garadok*, *mikroraion* and *dom-kvartal* during the Soviet period.⁹⁴

Mahallas are differentiated according to the socio-economic levels, income and occupational distributions and educational levels of their residents, their locations within the city determined by their existence in the old or new parts, or at the center or periphery of the city, as well as according to the traditional and modern characteristics in their general architectural and urban design forms. After visiting several *mahallas* it was apparent that indicators showing only the recent situation of the *mahallas* would not be enough to identify the differences between various types. For example, interviewees from many *mahallas* gave the same answer to the question of the occupational distribution of the community, stating that “*in our mahalla, there are citizens engaged in every occupation*”. Moreover, educational levels were almost the same in each *mahalla*. It was realized that the main differences among *mahallas* were related to the Soviet period, since when the same question regarding the Soviet period was asked, the answers were considerably different. For example, an interviewee from a type D *mahalla* said that “*Ah, no, the Soviet time was not the same as today. In that period, the residents of this mahalla were working in the nearby tractor factory. This housing area was built by the Communist Party for that factory, but when the factory was closed by the government after independence, the residents entered into different occupations*”. Another person who lived in a Type A *mahalla* said: “*In the Soviet period there were no civil servants in this mahalla, but there were a few laborers who worked in state factories. Today, the number of civil servants has increased in our mahalla*”. Also, an *oqsoqol* from a D-type *mahalla* commented that, “*This mahalla was built by the Soviet state in the 1960s as a rabochnik garadok*”⁹⁵. In that period, only state laborers were settled in this *mahalla* by the Communist party; however, today, any resident from any occupation may live in our *mahalla*. In particular, the number of businessman has increased”.

⁹⁴ These represent different spatial units of the Uzbek Soviet city. *Mavzi* has the same meaning as *mahalla* in the Uzbek language. *Garadok* (*sector-shaharcha*) is the part of the raion defined according to the occupation of its residents, for example student *garadok* or academy *garadok*. A *garadok* can cover a residential unit or not, but is certainly larger than a residential unit, in that it includes state institutions, hospitals, dormitories, universities etc. A *massiv* is smaller than a *mikroraion* and in each *mikroraion* there are 4–5 *massivs*. After independence, *massivs* were transformed in name to *mahallas*, while the borders of many *massivs* did not change. A *dom-kvartal* is a part of a *mikroraion*, where *dom* refers to an apartment and *kvartal* to a bloc of an apartment.

⁹⁵ A residential unit or suburb for laborers.



Source: Tashkent: Geograficheskiy Atlas, Pri Sovyete Ministrov CCCR, Moskva 1984, pp. 7

Figure 4.1 Districts of Tashkent City

An analysis of the ethnic structure of the *mahallas* becomes meaningful only when comparing the situation today with the Soviet era, since the demographic data of *mahallas* shows that today each *mahalla* has approximately the same proportion of Uzbekistanis, Russians, Koreans, etc.⁹⁶ in the population. For example, a *Jen-Soviet* of a Type D *mahalla* emphasized that “the Uzbek population has been increasing after independence,” while a *Kotib* of a Type B *mahalla*, when asked about the changes in the ethnic structure since the Soviet period, said: “In the Soviet time, no Russians lived in our *mahalla*; but after the independence a few Russians settled here”. For these reasons, the *mahallas* were chosen taking into account the changes in some socio-spatial parameters from the Soviet period to the time of Uzbek independence, instead of considering these parameters only in the Soviet era or in the post-independence period. Thus, in this dissertation, the concept of neighborhood change becomes more meaningful than the concept of neighborhood, as there is no stable *mahalla* in Tashkent today.

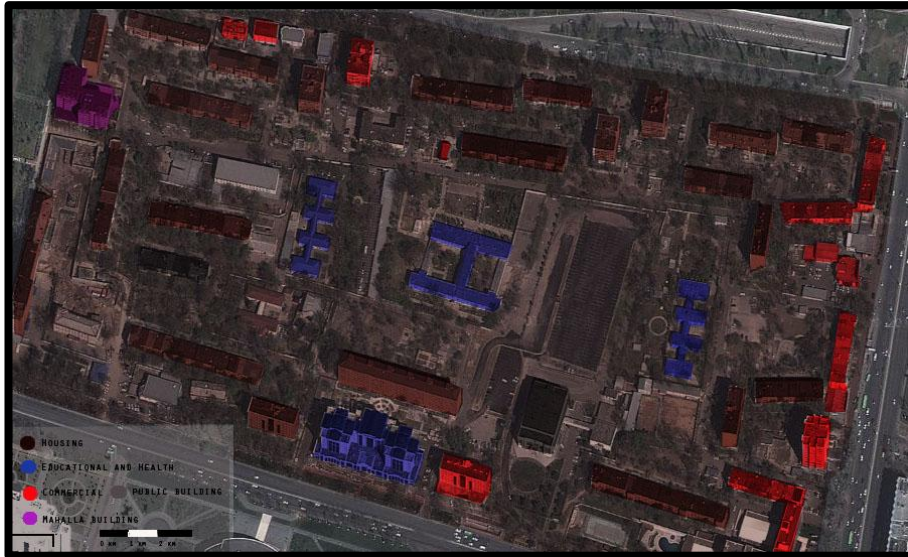
This kind of an analysis depends on the assumption that although the differentiations among the *mahallas* today derives from their modern or traditional characteristics or their location in the old or new part of the city, the real reason for the apparent diversification of the

⁹⁶ Only the *mahallas* of the old city had a lower Russian population, while the *mahallas* of the new city has more Russians with lower minority populations.

mahallas is the different intensity of intervention by the Soviet administration. It is crucial to note that some *mahallas* were transformed during the Soviet period, while others were not. Moreover, while both the social and physical structures (administrative structure as well) of some *mahallas* were entirely reconstructed by the Communist party, in others, only the social or the physical structure was reshaped. This diversification resulted in different local strategies in each type of *mahalla* to deal with the problems of the transformation process, such as poverty and unemployment, in the post-Soviet time. Considering this, some parameters become more crucial than others in the classification of the *mahallas* in this research. These parameters are: (a) the foundation date of *mahallas* and their history; (b) their level of transformation (in social, economic, occupation, physical, etc. terms); (c) whether they were established by the state or by the local community itself; (d) the domination of Soviet or Uzbek identity in the *mahalla*; (e) the level of the specific occupational composition of the *mahalla*; (f) the changing level of the ethnic structure in *mahallas*; (g) the level of Soviet state intervention; and (h) the different social statuses of the groups within the *mahalla* community (rather than their mere income levels).

4.3.2 Different Types of Mahallas

The blurred areas shown in Figure 4.5 below represent the four different parts of Tashkent, and the colored dots indicate the 21 *mahallas* in which the research was carried out. I chose twelve from 21 *mahallas*. In order to present the framework of the case study, some important characteristics of these 12 *mahallas* will be summarized. Tashkent is divided into its east and west parts by the *Ankhor* River. The west side of the city existed before the Tsarist Russia period, and is older than the east side, which was founded by Russia to house its European citizens. Under the Soviet regime in the first years following the October Revolution, this new Tashkent, and a small part of the old Tashkent – especially near the *Ankhor* River – were transformed into residential units, with modern apartments located around state factories and offices. As a result, many of them had a homogenous social composition, containing both Soviet laborers and the elite (Type D - green color). These residential units represented exactly the Soviet style living space, in that the laborers that worked together in the same state factory also shared their living spaces. Established in different times during the Soviet regime, many *mahallas* of this type were built on the empty lands of Tashkent; and some were established through the complete destruction of the old type *mahallas*, both in physical and socio-demographic terms, especially during the *kulok* period. In the case study, four of these types of *mahalla* were chosen for study.



Source: <http://maps.google.com/>

Figure 4.2 An Example of a D Type Tashkent Mahalla Plan

The **D-1** type *mahalla* was one of the first residential units to be built, and allocated for the Tsarist soldiers and officers of the Tsarist Empire. The location had been a collective agricultural area of the native community before the Tsarist Empire period, and its population had been mostly Russian Jewish. After the October Revolution, during the kulak period, all of the pro-Tsarist officers and soldiers living in this *mahalla* were exiled. Many high-ranking members of the Communist Party of different ethnic origins settled in this *mahalla*. After the 1950s, the building process of the *mikroraion* began, and by 1970 the entire *mahalla* had been transformed into a typical *mikroraion* unit, and hosted state engineers and geologists. After the 1950s, JEGs was established, which was the main local institution under the authority of *Raikom* and provided infrastructural services to the *mikroraion* community. In 1993, it was declared as an official *mahalla*. The **D-2** *mahalla* was a *kolkhoz* (Soviet type collective agricultural area) in the Tashkent province until the 1980s, until 1987, when the entire area was turned into a *mikroraion* for the new factory that had been established in the region. Thus, all residents were newcomers from all ethnic backgrounds, but all worked in the factory. In 1991, it was declared an official *mahalla*. The **D-3** *mahalla* was an old *mahalla* containing traditional houses (*havlu uy*). After the 1960s, when the region in which the *mahalla* was earmarked to become a *rabochnik garadok*, it was turned into a *mikroraion*. All of its former were sent to live in other areas, and the laborers who worked in the state factories located in the *rabochnik garadok* were settled in this *mikroraion*. In 1992, it became an official *mahalla* and its local institution (JEG) was

replaced by a *mahalla kengash*. The last *mahalla* in this type, the **D-4** *mahalla*, became a residential unit in the 1830s in the old part of Tashkent. During the colonial period,



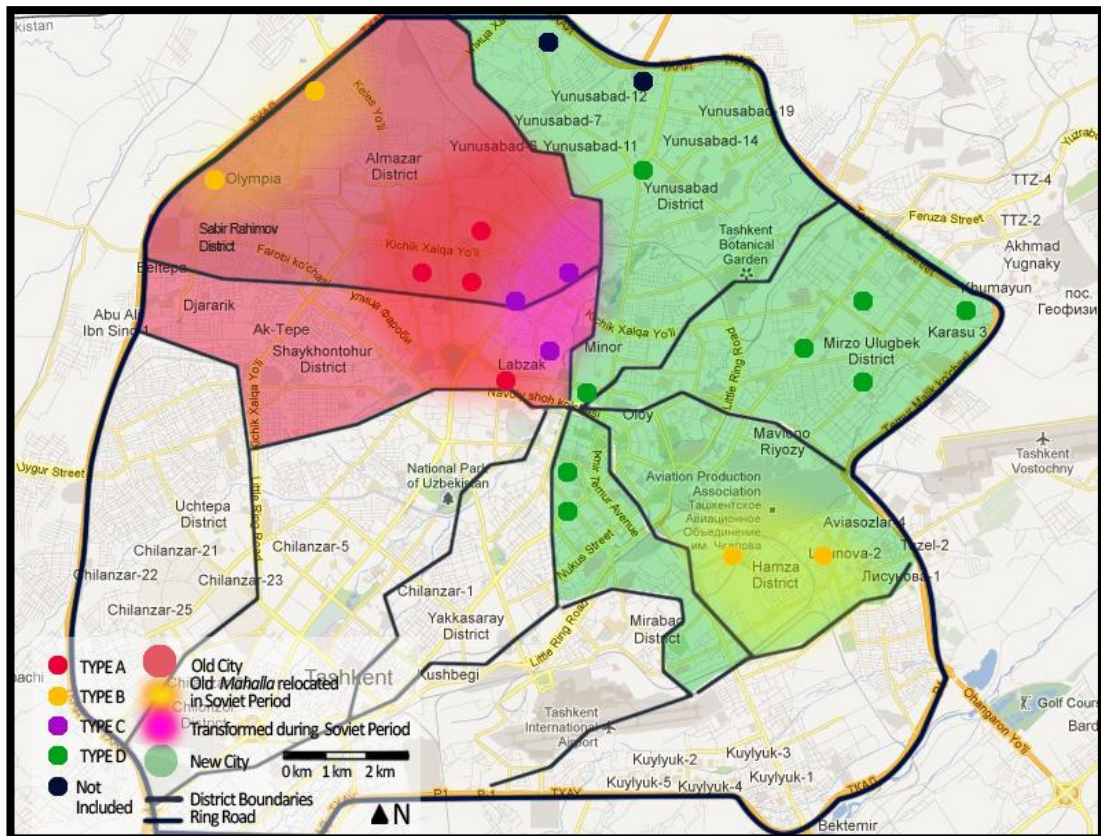
Figure 4.3 A View from D Type Tashkent Mahallas

Tsarist civil servants settled in this *mahalla*, which was crucial in the sense that it was the first European-style residential unit in Tashkent. The residents of this *mahalla* were once again evacuated after the October Revolution and were replaced by the elite civil servants and high-ranking members of the Communist Party. Almost all buildings were destroyed in the 1966 earthquake, after which a new *mikroraion* was built. During this period, many Uzbek ministers and civil servants lived in the *mahalla*, as well as many Soviet artists, authors, painters and poets, making it one of the highest level residential units of the Soviet era. By 1994, it had been declared as an official *mahalla*.



Figure 4.4 A View from D Type Tashkent Mahallas

It is apparent that after the 1966 earthquake the development of some *mikroraions* was differentiated from that of type D *mahallas*. The Communist Party launched a project to demolish all the old *mahallas* and turn them into new *mikroraions*, but their residents were not new comers, as was the case in the Type D *mahallas*, as many of them were old residents that had lived in these *mahallas* or came from any part of the republic (rural area, other cities). In these neighborhoods, the traditional social relationship continued during the Soviet era, unlike in the Type D *mahallas*, and another common feature of this group of Tashkent *mahallas* is that they are located in the old Tashkent and transformed into new *mikroraions* during the Soviet time, but not as completely as type D *mahallas*. This kind of Tashkent *mahalla* are referred to as Type C in the presentation of the case study findings, and are designated in purple on Figure 4.5. The residents of these destroyed *mahallas* carried their traditional life styles and old ways of social interaction to these new *mikroraions*, which also became home to many Soviet citizens of different social status and occupations. In this respect, these residential units represented a kind of hybrid lifestyle between the modern Soviet and traditional Uzbek styles. In the case study, three *mahallas* have been chosen to represent this type of Tashkent settlement. Among them, the **C-1** *mahalla*, located in the *Tahtapul* region in the old part of Tashkent, experienced a number of transformation processes at different times during the Soviet era; and some parts still remain untouched today, while other parts have been transformed into small *mikroraions*, retaining their old residents. After independence some Russian families settled in this *mikroraion*, however the inhabitants of the untouched part of the *mahalla* have on the whole remain unchanged during the Soviet and independent eras. The **C-2** *mahalla* is named after one of the 12 city gates of Tashkent, and has a history that goes back to ancient times. Prior to the 1966 earthquake it had remained untouched, but began to be transformed by the Soviet regime into a *mikroraion* following the earthquake, although half of it remains untouched in the present day. The building process of this *mikroraion* took place during the 1966–1985 period. It is essential to note that the old residents of this area preferred to move to the periphery of Tashkent city, and in this way re-located their *mahallas*. The residents of the new *mikroraion*, on the other hand, were from many different parts of the Soviet Union, from many different professions and of many different ethnic origins.

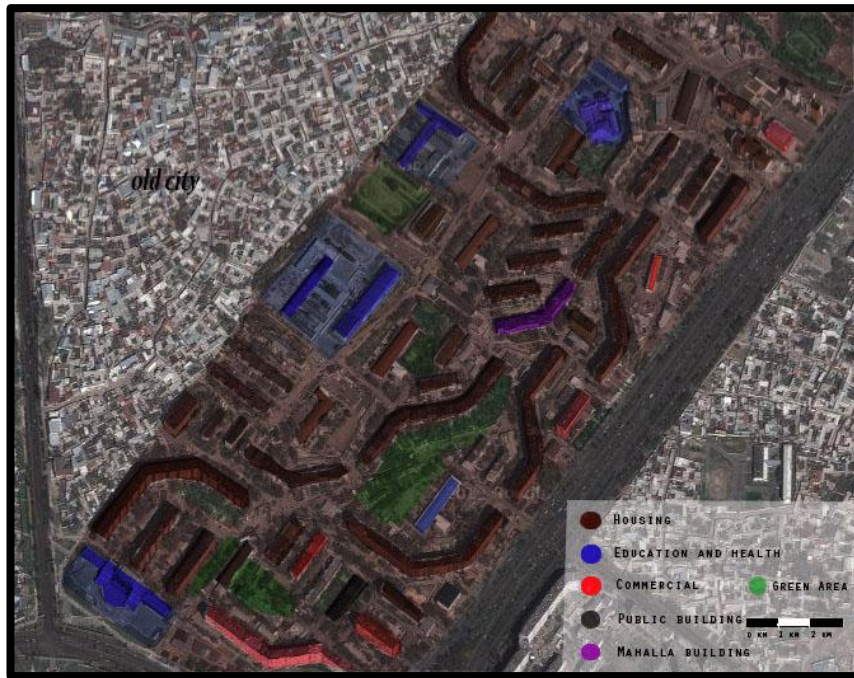


Source: <http://maps.google.com/>

Figure 4.5 Different Residential Units of Tashkent

(The two black points on the map represent the kolhoz in the Tashkent Viloyat that became parts of Tashkent city as an urban mahalla after independence. These recent urban mahallas, which were transformed from Soviet

The old part of the *mahalla*, containing the old family residents, has remained unchanged until today. After Uzbekistan gained independence in 1995, it was declared as an official *mahalla*. Like C-1 *mahalla*, this example is a hybrid form of neighborhood, including both the old and new forms of social relations. The final *mahalla* of this type is the C-3 *mahalla*, which is also one of the oldest residential units in Tashkent. This *mahalla* also maintained its unchanged form in terms of both its residents' social composition and its physical appearance until the 1966 earthquake. After the earthquake, rapid housing construction took place until the 1980s, and as a result many old residents that had lost their houses in the earthquake began to live in modern *mikroraions*, along with new residents, again from different parts of the Union and with different professional backgrounds and ethnic origins. In particular, Russian and Korean residents were dominant in the *mahalla* during the Soviet era, but after independence, the Uzbek population increased, mostly coming from the rural regions of Uzbekistan.



Source: <http://maps.google.com/>

Figure 4.6 An Example of a C type Tashkent *Mahalla* Plan



Figure 4.7 A View from C Type Tashkent *Mahallas*



Figure 4.8 A View from C Type Tashkent *Mahallas*

Some residents of the old *mahallas* that had been destroyed moved to the periphery of Tashkent and established their own houses and *mahallas* in their traditional styles with the financial support of the Soviet regime. This type of *mahalla* is referred to as Type B in this case study, and is indicated in yellow on Figure 4.5 Since the residents of these *mahallas* were usually employed in the private sector, including the services sector and trade – especially in bazaars – they lacked close ties with both State offices and state factories, and therefore had little opportunity to benefit from neither the municipality’s nor the ministry’s housing facilities, and so preferred to move to the periphery of Tashkent. Thus, the rate of state officers or workers among the residents was low in these *mahallas*. It would be fair to say that these *mahallas* were quite remote from the Soviet system, and it is interesting to note that after independence, ratio of Russians and other ethnic populations increased in these *mahallas*. During the Soviet regime, these *mahallas*, which had tried to survive without any support from the Soviet state, hosted today’s excluded minority groups. The communities in these types of *mahallas* had a strong culture of solidarity, having established their *mahallas* themselves. Moreover, in the transition zone, as explained above, residents were free to choose where they wanted to live, and so there was no occupational homogeneity in these areas.



Source: <http://maps.google.com/>

Figure 4.9 An Example of a B Type Tashkent Mahalla Plan

For the case study, two *mahallas* have been chosen to represent this type with high internal solidarity. In this sense, the **B-1** *mahalla* was a collective agricultural area of the native community until the October Revolution, after which, up until the 1950s this area was designated as a *kolkhoz*. During the 1950s, the Soviet regime included this area within the borders of the Tashkent city plan, and in this way initiated the transformation of its residential units. Many families chose to take money from the state and establish their own houses in different times; and as a result B-1 emerged as a traditional form of *mahalla* instead of being a *mikroraion*. The existence of only one apartment building in the *mahalla* is indicative of this situation. As all residents of this new *mahalla* came from Tashkent's old *mahallas*, the Uzbek population dominated its ethnic structure; however after independence the ratio of other ethnic groups, including Russians, increased. The other *mahalla* chosen from this type is referred to as **B-2**, and is located at the periphery of Tashkent. After the 1966 earthquake, citizens who had lost their houses established this *mahalla* by *hashar*. Its residents were again from the old Tashkent *mahallas* and were mostly involved in trade. Until the earthquake, this area was a *kolkhoz* and was declared as an official *mahalla* in 1992.



Figure 4.10 A View from B Type Tashkent *Mahallas*



Figure 4.11 A View from B Type Tashkent *Mahallas*

The Soviet regime launched a transformation project in old Tashkent, but until the collapse of the Soviet regime many of the old Tashkent *mahallas* kept their old form and old residents due to the absence of state intervention. Such *mahallas* are referred to as Type A, and are indicated in red on Figure 4.5 “As a result of selective segregation processes, these areas were populated by low to very low social groups in all socialist states at the end of the

socialist era” (Fliege, 1999: 10). Type A *mahallas* had no dominant employment demographic, but were inhabited mostly by citizens employed either in the service sector, such as in bazaars, restaurants, etc., or the unemployed, indicating a low social status. In other words, no occupational homogeneity was apparent in Type A *mahallas*. “Depending on the extension of the high-grade residential areas from pre-socialist times and the better-quality socialist housing projects, small clusters of middle to higher social status groups could be also concentrated in the zone of transition, and also low-status, elderly or immigrant households were able to be expelled into decaying pre-socialist working class districts, poorer-quality new housing stock or the self-help housing sector” (Fliege, 1999: 10).



Source: <http://maps.google.com/>

Figure 4.12 An Example of a A Type Tashkent Mahalla Plan

For the case study, three *mahallas* of this type have been chosen from the old part of Tashkent. During the Soviet period, nothing changed in these *mahallas*, and so they have remained untouched until today. The **A-1** *mahalla* is located near the traditional bazaar, *Charsu*, which is at the center of old Tashkent. Information on the emergence of this *mahalla* goes back to the 14th century. Since its population had decreased continuously during the Soviet era, four old *mahallas* were joined to A-1 and its *mahalla kengash* was established in 1992. The **A-2** *mahalla* is one of the most important and famous *mahallas* in the old part of Tashkent, and there is evidence dating its emergence to the 15th century. During the Soviet era, this *mahalla* continuously lost residents due to a lack of basic infrastructure. Even the water supply was inadequate, and the Soviet regime did nothing to improve the physical conditions of this *mahalla*. It was declared an official *mahalla* in 1992, and in 1998 seven different residential areas were added owing to the very low residential density, resulting in

the population and settlement area that can be seen today. The last *mahalla* in the case study is referred to as **A-3**, and is the most remarkable in that it remained untouched despite being located near the large state institutions, university and business center, and again, this *mahalla* also had poor infrastructure, despite being located between the old and new city in the center of Tashkent. Information on its emergence goes back to the 15th century, and it is known as an old Jewish neighborhood. In 1992 it gained the legal right of local self-governance (*ozini ozi bashkarush*), and in 1996, with newly enacted regulations, five *mahallas* were brought together under one *mahalla*, resulting in the *mahalla's* present settlement size and population.



Figure 4.13 A View from A Type Tashkent Mahallas



Figure 4.14 A View from A Type Tashkent Mahallas

4.3.3 Socio-Economic and Socio-Spatial Parameters of Tashkent's *Mahallas* in the Case Study

Today, there are 12 districts (*tuman*) and some 450–500 *mahallas* in Tashkent. The field survey and in-depth interviews were conducted in 21 *mahallas* in six districts, which are shown in Table 4.10 by district. *Mirabad tumani* is the center of new Tashkent, established by the Tsarist regime, and so this district was home to many of the Russian civilian and military elite during the Tsarist regime. After the October Revolution, the district became the first area to be transformed with modern apartment buildings, resulting in the arrival of its high-ranking residents. After World War II, most of the houses in this district were destroyed and new *mikroraions* were built, with the new residents being especially Soviet engineers, as well as high-ranking civil servants and Party members. It is apparent that the population of *Mirabad tumani* was historically predominantly Russian.

Mirzo-Ulugbek tumani is located on a large area in the east side of Tashkent, which is also a new part of Tashkent. The district contains different types of residential units: First, in the area close to the city center, there are *mikroraions* referred to as TZ (center) that host especially elite civil servants, including Soviet ministers, and members of the Communist Party, the Soviet government and the Tashkent *duma*. These TZ *mikroraions* are generally five-story buildings, and are considered as luxurious and good-quality apartments. Second, the area close to periphery of the Tashkent in this district contains many residential units that were built by different Soviet ministries for the workers in several state factories, meaning a large number of working class inhabitants, in buildings of between nine and thirteen floors. Lastly, in this district there are residential units in which many famous academicians, authors, poets and artists lived during the Soviet era. These residential units are mainly luxury houses, being exceptions to the essence of the Soviet housing policy.

Many areas of *Khamza tumani* became a part of Tashkent after World War II and the 1966 earthquake, and their residential units were established by the community as an old form of *mahalla*. *Yunusabad tumani* had been a *kolkhoz* (collective farming area) in the rural area of Tashkent province until the 1966 earthquake, after which it was transformed into *mikroraions* and included within the borders of the city. These *mikroraions* were built mostly by the Tashkent Soviet through mass production methods, and became home to many citizens from diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, and from different work places in different professions. However, the area in this district close to the city center has a different history, being a part of the old city before the Tsarist regime. The Tsarist regime

established its center (*Urda*) in this area and demolished the old type residential units, after which the area became home to many high-ranking people during both the Tsarist and Soviet regimes.

Table 4.10 Urban *Mahallas* of Tashkent in the Research

Districts (Туманлар)	<i>Mahallas</i> (Махаллалар)
<i>Mirabad</i> (Миробад)	<i>O`zbekistan</i> (Ўзбекистон) <i>Sharaf Rashidov</i> (Шараф Рашидов)
<i>Mirzo-Ulugbek</i> (Мирза-Улугбек)	<i>H`umayun</i> (Хумаюн) <i>Boz-1</i> (Боз-1) <i>Navoi</i> (Навои) <i>Shukur Burhanov</i> (Шукур Бурханов)
<i>Shaykhontokhur</i> (Шайхантохур)	<i>Labzak</i> (лабзак) <i>Okchi</i> (Ўқчи)
<i>Khamza</i> (Хамза)	<i>Tornavbashi</i> (Торнавбаши) <i>Yunusov</i> (Юнусов)
<i>Yunusobod</i> (Юнусобад)	<i>Akbarabad</i> (Акбарабад) <i>K`ashqar</i> (Қашқар) <i>Biruni</i> (Бируни) <i>Islamabad</i> (Исламобад)
<i>Sabir-Rakhimov</i> (Сабир-Рахимов)	<i>Namuna</i> (Намуна) <i>Chiltoq`an</i> (чилтогон) <i>Eski Shakhar</i> (Эски шаҳар) <i>Gani Azatov</i> (Гани Аъзамов) <i>General Qafurov</i> (Генерал Гафуров) <i>Guzar</i> (Гузар) <i>Sebzor</i> (Себзор)

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

The *Shayhatohur* district is an old *dakha* in Tashkent dating back to the pre-industrial period. After the arrival of the Tsarist regime, the area close to the city center (*Urda*) hosted the Tsarist elite; and after the revolution, in particular after World War II, some of residential units of this district were transformed into *mikroraions*, while others remained as traditional *mahallas*. Lastly, the *Sabir Rahimov tumani* is located at the center of old Tashkent, and faced many spatial interventions during the Soviet regime after World War II. While some of its residential units were turned into *mikroraions* to house the previous residents of the district, others, especially those located at the periphery of the city, were established as a form of traditional *mahalla* in the 1960s. Some of these *mahallas* have remained untouched into the present day.

Table 4.11 Mahallas in the Field Survey

Types	Mahallas	Districts
A	A-1	<i>Sabir-Rakhimov (Сабир-Рахимов)</i>
	A-2	<i>Sabir-Rakhimov (Сабир-Рахимов)</i>
	A-3	<i>Shaykhontokhur (Шайхантохур)</i>
B	B-1	<i>Sabir-Rakhimov (Сабир-Рахимов)</i>
	B-2	<i>Sabir-Rakhimov (Сабир-Рахимов)</i>
C	C-1	<i>Sabir-Rakhimov (Сабир-Рахимов)</i>
	C-2	<i>Shaykhontokhur (Шайхантохур)</i>
	C-3	<i>Sabir-Rakhimov (Сабир-Рахимов)</i>
D	D-1	<i>Mirabad (Миробад)</i>
	D-2	<i>Mirzo-Ulugbek (Мирза-Улугбек)</i>
	D-3	<i>Yunusobod (Юнусобад)</i>
	D-4	<i>Yunusobod (Юнусобад)</i>

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

It is apparent that there is no difference among the 11 districts in Tashkent in terms of their socio-economical levels, since each *tuman* is connected to both the outer periphery and the central core of Tashkent, and each had residents from different social classes during the Soviet era. The main spatial unit is the *mahalla*, known in Soviet terminology as both *mahalla* and *mikroraion*, and therefore each different type of *mahalla* determined for this dissertation is not found exclusively in particular districts of Tashkent. *Mahallas* of a certain type can be found in many different districts of Tashkent. As can be seen in Table 4.11, these types do not correspond to the different districts of Tashkent. D-type *mahallas* are found in many different districts (*Миробад*, *Мирза-Улугбек*, and *Юнусобад*). In this dissertation, 12 of these 21 *mahallas* from five districts are used. Some important parameters concerning the socio-economic and demographic indicators and the socio-spatial backgrounds of these *mahallas* are analyzed here in order to allow the categorization of the Uzbekistani *mahallas*. These can be summarized as: (a) the socio-economic level of the *mahalla*; (b) the formation of the *mahalla* (an old or a new *mahalla*); (c) the duration of the *mahalla*; (d) the ethnic structure of the *mahalla*; and (e) the rate of social mobilization in the *mahalla*. These 12 *mahallas* contain the four different types of Uzbekistani *mahallas*, and are referred to in this research as A type, B type, C type and D type. The 12 *mahallas* are then numbered according to their types, such as A-1, D-2, etc. so as to conceal the identities of those interviewed. The distribution of 12 *mahallas* according to *mahalla* type is as follows:

Table 4.12 categorizes these *mahallas* according to their dates of foundation. According to this table, all of the Type A and C *mahallas*, and *mahalla* D-4 existed prior to the Tsarist regime, while D-1 was established during the Tsarist period. Both of the type B *mahallas*, as

well as D-2 and D-3, were formed during the Soviet era; however it is important to note that their transformation process is more central to the aim of this dissertation than their foundation date. Table 4.13 shows a summary of the transformation histories of the *mahallas*.

Table 4.12 Foundation date of *mahallas* included in the field survey

Period	Transformation process	<i>Mahalla</i>
Before the Russian Empire	Established	C-2, A-3, D-4, A-2, C-1, A-1, C-3
During the Russian Empire	Transformed	D-4
	Established	D-1
During the Soviet Period	Transformed	C-2, D-1, D-4, C-1, C-3
	Established	D-2, D-3, B-1, B-2

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

As can be followed from the table below, D-4 was an old *mahalla* that was first destroyed in the Tsarist regime, after which some parts were rebuilt as apartment blocks or *kvartals* (Russian neighborhood), while other parts were turned into public spaces, including many governmental buildings of the Russian Empire, for example the office of the Turkistan Gubernator was built in this area. On the other hand, the Soviet regime transformed all residential units of both the *mahallas* of the native community and the *kvartal* of the Tsarist regime in different periods, except for the Type A *mahallas*. The Type D *mahallas*, which represented the new Tashkent of the Tsarist regime and in which many Tsarist elites lived, became a residential area for the Soviet elite during the first years of the October Revolution. Prior to World War II, there had been no other change in the living spaces of Tashkent; but after this time, many of the old *mahallas* (C type) were transformed into new *mikroraions*, and retained most of their old residents. Moreover, D-1 and D-4 *mahallas* were renewed with new luxury *mikroraions* for the Soviet elite, and other new *mikroraions* were constructed on the empty areas on the west side of Tashkent (D-2 and D-3). D-2 was established by the Economy Ministry for the state factory workers and D-3 was built by the Tashkent Soviet as mass housing for the population of the city. Lastly, some residents of the area that was transformed from the old *mahallas* (C type) moved to the periphery of Tashkent and established their own traditional *mahallas* with the support of the State (B type). In conclusion, based on the parameters determined for analyzing the *mahallas*, the urban *mahallas* in Tashkent may be divided into four categories, as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Types of Urban *Mahallas* in Tashkent according to their socio-spatial change during the Soviet era.

Types	Mahallas	Transformation process of <i>mahallas</i>
A	A-1 A-2 A-3 ⁹⁷	-Old city of Tashkent -Interventions by neither the Tsarist nor the Soviet regimes
B	B-1 B-2	-Old kolkhoz in the rural area -Established by the community as a traditional <i>mahalla</i> during the 1950s and 1960s
C	C-1 C-2 C-3	-Old city of Tashkent -Transformed by the Soviet regime into <i>mikroraions</i> after the 1966 earthquake -Old residents remained
D	D-1 D-2 D-3 D-4	-New city of Tashkent, or transformed from the old city during the Tsarist regime -Transformed or established by the Soviet regime as <i>mikroraions</i> -Residents from the same occupation and socio-economic status

Source: *The Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009*

Table 4.14 presents socio-demographic information about the *mahallas* evaluated in this research. This table demonstrates some basic differences between the socio-demographic structures of the *mahalla* communities. The average population of Type A *mahallas* is 4,889, similar to that of the Type C *mahallas* at 4,310. Type B and D *mahallas* have lower populations, being 3,240 and 2,990 respectively. During the Soviet period legislation was in place stating that the population of any residential unit should be 3,000. As some *mahalla* officers in the research mentioned, the B (*mahallas*) and D (*mikroraions*) types had around 3,000 residents during the Soviet era, and their borders did not change after the independence. *Mahallas* in A type, on the other hand, were highly divided, scattered, fragmented and irregular. The *Kotib* of A1 claimed that: “[It was] as if the Communist Party forgot us. Many residents moved to new *mikroraions* and these *mahallas* constantly lost population. In the 1980s, for example, one *mahalla* in the old city has only fifty-hundred households”. After independence, the Uzbekistani state merged three or four *mahallas* into a single *mahalla* with approximately 5,000 residents. The C-type *mahallas* were converted into *mikroraions* by the Tashkent Soviet after the 1966 earthquake. Their populations were meant to have been around 3,000, but the true figures were higher than this in an attempt to reduce the cost of public services. Moreover, after independence the Uzbekistani state changed their borders and made them larger, while the borders of the D-type *mahallas* were

⁹⁷ As of the 1950s, this *mahalla* has been accepted as an urban renewal area.

left the same. Accordingly, the populations of C-type *mahallas* are today higher than the D types.⁹⁸

One of the Soviet regime's aims in Central Asia was to break down the large family structure and create nuclear families. The Soviet regime implemented many policies for the realization of this aim, such as giving young married people priority in the allocation of new housing. However, as seen in Table 4.14, the ratio between housing and family numbers is $\frac{1}{2}$ in the A-type *mahallas*, indicating that almost two families live in every house.⁹⁹ Another important issue is the differences in household size among the *mahalla* types, being 4.5 in A and B types, but only 2.5 in the C and D types. An interesting difference between the old and new types of *mahallas* can be read in the divorce rate, with a higher rate recorded in the old *mahallas*, in other words, in the traditional *mahallas* (A and B), and with a low rate recorded in the Soviet-type *mahallas*.

⁹⁸ As learnt from *Passport malumatnomasi* of the *mahalla kengash*:

- A-1 *mahalla* was formed through the merging of four old *mahallas* in 1996,
- A-2 *mahalla* was formed through the merging of seven old *mahallas* in 1998,
- A-3 *mahalla* was formed through the merging of five old *mahallas* in 1996,
- C-1 *mahalla* was formed through the merging of two old *mikroraions* in 1996,
- C-2 *mahalla* was formed through the merging of four old *mikroraions* in 1995, and
- The boundaries of B and D types of *mahallas* were not changed.

⁹⁹ A-3 *mahalla* is a special case, being a transformed area and lots of families are registered in one house because of getting bigger flat.

Table 4.14 Socio-Demographic Indicators of the *Mahallas*

Types	Average Population	<i>Mahallas</i>	Population (Male-Female)	Housing	Family	Housing/ Family	Household Size	Number of Divorced Family
A	4,889	A-1 (1996) ¹⁰⁰	5,583 (46–54%)	778	998	587/1,078	4.5	10
		A-2 (1998)	6,590 (47–53%)	712	1,586			10
		A-3 (1996)	2,520 (54–46%)	271	651			5
B	3,240	B-1 (1991)	3,020 (49–51%)	610	620	630/694	4.6	7
		B-2 (1991)	3,460 (46–54%)	651	768			6
C	4,310	C-1 (1994)	4,803 (46–54%)	1,600	1,920	1,401/1,690	2.5	6
		C-2 (1995)	3,627 (42–58%)	1,142	1,252			2
		C-3 (1994)	4,500 (47–53%)	1,462	1,900			9
D	2,990	D-1 (1993)	1,320 (46–54%)	NA	684	1,108/1,210	2.5	3
		D-2 (1991)	4,909 (44–56%)	1,205	1,413			4
		D-3 (1992)	3,028 (47–53%)	1,052	1,249			4
		D-4 (1994)	2,706 (38–62%)	1,493	1,494			1

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

¹⁰⁰ Information taken from passport *malumatnamesi* of each *mahalla* committee, which shows the socio-demographic indicators of *mahalla* residents. The *passport malumatnamesi* of different *mahallas* were prepared in different years.

Another important result derived from the findings of the field survey concerns the financial aid of firms within the boundaries of the *mahallas*. There is a significant difference in the number of firms among the different *mahallas*. As shown in Table 4.15, there are 11 firms in the A and B Types *mahallas* (total of five *mahallas*) and 91 firms within the boundaries of the C and D Type *mahallas* (total of seven *mahallas*). Therefore, whereas the firms in the C and D Types were an important source of revenue, the A and B Types lacked the financial support of firms. It is essential to note here that as a result of the state halting financial aid to the residential units, the financial contribution of the private firms becomes a critical source of revenue. This factor is the main cause of the differentiation in revenue among the *mahallas*. The location of *mahallas* affects the number of firms within the boundaries of the *mahalla*. If the *mahalla* is around the center of the city, many firms exist within its borders; but if the *mahalla* is at the periphery of the city or in the old city, businesses are scarce. Regarding this point, the *oqsoqol* of B-2 said that “they (C and D-type *mahallas*) have lots of money because they were developed during the Soviet time. Now, yes, you are right, the state withholds its financial support from them, but there were lots of state firms established during the Soviet time within their boundaries, and now although these firms become private they still help the *mahallas* financially”. Moreover, because of the locational advantage of this *mahalla*, there is will be a tendency for the establishment of more private firms, and thus the spatial segregation among the *mahallas* is likely to deepen. It can therefore be argued that the state should implement some incentive policies for the establishment of new firms in the peripheral areas of the city, which is an issue that will be explained in more detail in the chapter concerning center-local relationships (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15 Some Socio-Spatial and Political Differences between Types of *Mahallas*

Types	<i>Mahallas</i>	Housing		Photos ¹⁰¹	Public space	Number of firms	Resources of <i>mahalla</i> budget	Participants in Radical Islam
		Apartment	Home					
A	A-1	-	+++	J	<i>Chayhone, toyhane</i>	2 groceries	Community	30
	A-2	-	+++	J	<i>Chayhone, toyhane, masjid</i>	2 groceries	Community	13
	A-3	+	+++	J	-	2	Community	3
B	B-1	+	+++	J	<i>Masjid, Healthcare, Chayhone</i>	3	Community	2
	B-2	+	+++	J-W	<i>Chayhone, toyhane, masjid</i>	3	Community	0
C	C-1	+	+++	J-W	<i>Chayhone, toyhane, bakery</i>	7	Firms-Community	3
	C-2	++	++	J-W	<i>Chayhone, toyhane, restaurant</i>	11	Firms	1
	C-3	++	-	J	<i>Chayhone, toyhane</i>	6	Firms	3
D	D-1	++	-	W	Neighborhood building and square	15	Firms	-
	D-2	++	-	W	Neighborhood building and square, <i>toyhane</i>	15	Firms	-
	D-3	++	-	W	Neighborhood building and square	17	Firms	-
	D-4	++	-	W	Neighborhood building and square	20	Firms	-

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent; October 2008–April 2009.

¹⁰¹ Photos on the wall of the *mahalla*: *Jadids* (J) or participants in World War II (W).

Another point worthy of note is related to the *homi* issue in the *mahalla* budget. Particularly in the traditional *mahallas* (A and B types), residents donate funds to their *mahalla kengash*, but before discussing the consequences of this tradition, it is important to note that the *homiliq*, as a traditional concept in Uzbekistani and Soviet *mahalla* life (as well as in the residential units articulated to the Soviet regime – the C and D types), is slowly vanishing due to the fact that the Soviet state satisfies all the requirements of the inhabitants of these residential units. However, the *mahallas* that could not be articulated to the Soviet regime (A and B types) need to perpetuate *homiliq* due to a lack of state support. Thus, it may be said that these *mahallas* did not preserve the tradition consciously, but rather out of necessity. The *homiliq* tradition has also served to perpetuate many other customs of the pre-modern or patriarchal communities of these *mahallas* (Table 4-15).

After independence, due to the socio-economic structure of the Soviet era, while the residents of Type A and B *mahallas* were able to establish their own businesses easily, the residents of the C and D types were more frequently faced with unemployment. The reason for this was that, on the one hand, the Type A and B *mahallas* were not provided with many urban services by the Soviet regime, and so had to carry them out themselves following the old practices and utilizing existing informal networks. As a result, they did not suffer from the unemployment problems that accompanied the closing of the state factories, nor problems related with urban life due to the withdrawal of the state from the provision of social services during the transition era, and the former workers in the old state factories could easily find work in the private sector. On the other hand, many residents were only capable of working as officers or laborers in the state factories, and so after independence they had trouble finding new jobs in the private sector due to the lack of an entrepreneurialism spirit. In the case study, drawing upon information obtained from the *mahalla* passport, it can be seen that the level of unemployment in the Type A and B *mahallas* is much higher than the Type C and D *mahallas*; however it should be mentioned that the main reason for this is that the residents –both the currently employed and unemployed residents – of type A and type B *mahallas* apply to the *mahalla kengash* to find a job more often than the residents of Type C and D *mahallas* (Table 4.16).

The unemployment figures (both in proportion and number) in the tables may be misleading, as in some *mahalla passportnamesi* only the people who apply to the *mahalla kengash* for a job are recorded, while in other *mahalla passportname* with unemployed residents unsecure and for daily workers is also enlisted. The same problem is encountered with information related to social financial assistance. In some *mahallas* the number of poor families is determined by the *mahalla kengash*, however in other *mahallas* only the recipient families of

social financial assistance in recent years are registered. Accordingly, these two sets of data cannot be used for an accurate analysis, and in-depth interviews related to these issues become more important for clarification.

Table 4.16 Unemployment and State Financial Assistance Figures in the *Mahallas*

Types	<i>Mahallas</i>	Collaboration with <i>Birje</i> ¹⁰²	Number of unemployed	Receiving state financial Assistance	
				Applications	Recipients
A	A-1	+	365		22
	A-2	+	154		120
	A-3	+	250	56	
B	B-1	+	86		10
	B-2	+	81	53	
C	C-1	+	92	130	4
	C-2	-	12		4
	C-3	+	274		37
D	D-1	-	20		10
	D-2	+	75	51	7
	D-3	-	50		31
	D-4	-	11		5

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

Under the Soviet system, the patterns of residential settlement were more tied to the place of employment than to income, which was an outcome of the Soviet housing policy. For example, in some residential units only civil servants, ministers and officers lived, whereas others were inhabited by students and laborers. The occupational distribution during the Soviet era becomes meaningful when the differentiations between the *mahallas* are analyzed. In this regard, the *mahalla* officers were asked about the occupational distribution of *mahalla* residents during the Soviet and post-Soviet era, and the change in the socio-economic levels for each *mahalla*.

¹⁰² *Birje* – the State Department of Unemployment.

Table 4.17 Some Economic Indicators and Occupational Distribution of the *Mahallas*

Types	Occupational distribution		Change in the Socio-Economic level ¹⁰³	Economic level of the community	
	Soviet	Independence		Soviet	Independence
A	Self-employed (mainly in bazaar), craftsmen	Self-employed, service sector workers, temporary laborers, officers, business	Increasing	Low	Middle
B	Self-employed (mainly in bazaar) and trade	Self-employed, service sector workers, business, trade	Same	Middle, mid-high	Middle, mid-high
C	Civil servants, state workers, self-employed (mainly in bazaar), craftsmen	Increasing workers in service sector, temporary laborers, decreasing state workers	Decreasing	Middle	Lower
D	Civil servants, managers of state factories, intellectuals, authors, engineers and artists	Increasing workers in service sector, temporary laborers, decreasing state workers ¹⁰⁴	Decreasing	High and mid-high	Middle and mid-high

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

¹⁰³ From the Soviet regime to independence.

¹⁰⁴ The state sector decreased from 90% to 25% in the 1980–2000 period.

According to their responses (Table 4.17), it can be understood that the residents of type A and B *mahallas* were mainly self-employed in a bazaar, and that only the residents of type B *mahallas* were engaged in trade activities during the Soviet era. On the other hand, the residents of Type D *mahallas* were mainly civil servants, managers of state factories, intellectuals, authors, engineers and artists. The occupations of the residents of Type C *mahallas* showed a hybrid form, including civil servants, state workers or self-employed workers (mainly in the bazaars), as well as craftsmen. Moreover, the change in their socio-economic levels shows clearly that Type A and B *mahallas* were discriminated during the Soviet regime. All of the *mahalla* officers from the three Types A *mahallas* said that the socio-economic levels of their *mahalla* residents had been increasing since independence. The *mahalla* officers in the Type B *mahallas* responded differently to the same question, stating that the socio-economic level in their *mahallas* had not changed, due to the fact that the residents had been setting up their own businesses since the Soviet period, and into the independence era. They commented that “*because our residents have never been in need of state services, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the new regime did not affect our economic level*”. On the other hand, all of the officers of the Type C and D *mahallas* said that “*the socio-economic level in our mahalla has dramatically fallen after independence*”.

Another remarkable result of the survey is the diversity of the ethnic structure between the districts. Even, only one specific characteristic of *Tuman* is ethnic structure. In the Soviet Period, urban segregation was based on ethnic rather than class differences, however after 1991, although some Russian and European people migrated to their home countries, some of them came to Tashkent, alongside some Russian people who migrated to Tashkent from other parts of Uzbekistan. For this reason the share of the Russian population in Tashkent saw little change. However, the ethnic structure of the residential areas of Tashkent started to change in the 1980s. Uzbek people started to move from other *mikroraions* to the elite residential areas; while some Russian people sold their houses in center and moved out to the periphery of the city to take advantage of the cheaper land. That said, due to a lack of formal information, the exact nature of these migrations cannot be stated as fact. The change in ethnic structure in the *mahallas* is shown in Table 4.18, based on personal observations and information obtained from the *mahalla* offices. It should be underlined that migration from the countryside had always been controlled by the Communist Party during the Soviet period (*Prapiska*), and although it is still controlled, the rate of migration from rural to urban areas is increasing.

Table 4.18 Change in the Ethnic Structure of the *Mahallas*

<i>Mahallas</i>	Soviet (%)	Independence (%)	Types	Soviet (%)	Independence (%)
A-1	(5) Russian, (90) Uzbek, (5) others	(1) Russian, (96) Uzbek, (3) others	A	(7) Russian (80) Uzbek (13) others	(2) Russian (92) Uzbek (6) others
A-2	(1) Russian, (80) Uzbek, (19) others	(1) Russian, (98) Uzbek, (1) others			
A-3	(15) Russian, (70) Uzbek, (15) others	(3) Russian, (90) Uzbek, (7) others			
B-1	(98) Uzbek, (2) others	(4) Russian, (90) Uzbek, (6) others	B	(1) Russian, (96) Uzbek (3) others	(10) Russian (87) Uzbek (3) others
B-2	(95) Uzbek, (5) others	(90) Uzbek, (10) others			
C-1	(90) Uzbek, (10) others	(10) Russian, (70) Uzbek, (20) others	C	(23) Russian (60) Uzbek (17) others	(13) Russian (73) Uzbek (14) others
C-2	(30) Russian, (50) Uzbek, (20) others	(15) Russian, (80) Uzbek, (5) others			
C-3	(25) Russian, (40) Uzbek, (35) others	(15) Russian, (70) Uzbek, (15) others			
D-1	(70) Russian, (10) Uzbek, (20) others	(40) Russian, (50) Uzbek, (10) others	D	(72) Russian (16) Uzbek (12) others	(39) Russian (54) Uzbek (7) others
D-2	(70) Russian, (20) Uzbek, (10) others	(34) Russian, (46) Uzbek, (20) others			
D-3	(60) Russian, (30) Uzbek, (10) others	(20) Russian, (80) Uzbek			
D-4	(90) Russian, (5) Uzbek, (5) others	(60) Russian, (40) Uzbek			

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

The last difference among the *mahalla* types is the level of neighborliness (*sosedstva*). Many researchers that have studied the *mahallas* or neighborhoods under the Soviet regime argue that feelings of neighborliness (*sosedstva*) declined drastically in large Soviet cities, especially in the *mikroraions*. Frolic (1970) argued that the Soviet policy to develop an urban community through the establishment of neighborhood units had failed. According to his research, the inhabitants of apartment complexes in neighborhood units knew only five to ten of their neighbors by sight and three to five by name, but knew almost nothing about where they worked or their characters (Frolic, 1970: 682). In this case study, the responses of the residents of the Type C and D *mahallas* to the question of how their relationship with their neighbors was during the Soviet era were quite varied. An Uzbek woman who had lived in a Type D *mahalla* for 58 years said, “We knew everyone in our *mahalla* (she used *mahalla* to refer to her *mikroraion*) because most of our husbands worked in the same factory, and solidarity and cooperation were very good during the Soviet era”. On the other hand, response from an Uzbek woman who lived in a Type C *mahalla* for 35 years was that: “Our residents were from very different places of the Soviet Union, we did not know our neighbors very well. Indeed, once we closed the apartment door after coming home from work, we shut out the rest of the world, including our neighbors”. It would thus be fair to say that the Soviet regime, through the residential units it established at the beginning of the revolution to house the workers employed in the same factories, succeeded in developing a sense of community in the living spaces of Tashkent, whereas the *mikroraions* established as mass housing in the Khrushchev era failed in this respect. In the field study, many residents of Type D *mahallas* claimed that their feeling of neighborliness (*sosedstva*) was at a medium level during the Soviet era, while those of the Type C *mahallas* defined it as weak. The residents of both the Type A and B *mahallas* said that their sense of community was stronger during the Soviet period (Table 4.19).

Table 4.19 Sense of Sosedstva in Different Mahalla Types during the Soviet Era

Types of Mahalla	Strong	Medium	Weak
A	x		
B	x		
C			x
D		x	

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

4.4 Pre-Soviet Tashkent *Mahallas*: Soviet State Hegemony and the *Mahalla Kengash* as a Hegemonic Instrument

The emergence of different types of Tashkent *mahallas* presented in this chapter clearly show us that although the Soviet regime theoretically had an idea to build a classless and equal society, there was social segregation within the Soviet city as well as territorial injustice among the regions of the Union and inequality among the Soviet cities. However, it is not answered yet why and how pre-Soviet *mahallas* had sustained during the Soviet era¹⁰⁵. In this part, I will summarize the reasons why the old type of *mahallas* sustained and thus, why there was inequality and segregation in the Soviet Tashkent. Firstly, how the Soviet state hegemony (the Soviet state hegemonic policy in central Asia: *Koranizatsiia* policy¹⁰⁶) reflected to the urban space in the case of Tashkent *mahalla* is explained. Secondly, the reasons of the socio-spatial segregation in Tashkent's living space during the Soviet era are summarized.

Before focusing on social segregation and inequality in Tashkent in the Soviet period, it is useful at this point to make a summary of the socio-spatial transformation of the city. The main residential unit in Tashkent had been the *mahalla* up until 1868, when the Tsarist Empire occupied the city. In the colonial period, the Empire established a new city for the Russian population near the old Tashkent, and in this period, Tashkent became a classical colonial city, with two parts inhabited by two different nations – Uzbeks and Russians. After the October Revolution, the Communist Party decided to demolish all of the old parts of Tashkent in order to create an equal and classless urban society; however this plan could not be achieved until after the 1966 earthquake. After the earthquake, the Soviet housing policy began to be implemented intensely by the city Soviet of Tashkent and several ministries, and a period of rapid construction of new buildings began in the city, which can be referred as the process of *mikroraion* building. At the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, four types of Tashkent *mahallas*, representing the socio-spatial segregation of the Soviet city, could be identified in the city: a) Type A, which included untouched traditional *mahallas*; b) Type B, being newly established but in a traditional *mahalla* form by Uzbek community members at the periphery of the city; c) Type C, comprising the newly established labor blocks or *mikroraions* in the transition zone; and d) Type D, which were built by local

¹⁰⁵ In 1970s, only 1/3 of Tashkent's population lived in the traditional *mahalla* (Beknozov, 1975)

¹⁰⁶ The relationship between the *Koranizatsiia* policy and the *mahalla* committee will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

enterprises of the ministries or by the city Soviets as the new ideal Soviet neighborhood units, and housed people working in the same professions.

4.4.1 Spatial Impacts of State Hegemony: *O'zbekchiliq* between Traditionalization and Modernization

Some *mahallas* in the cities of Uzbekistan, even Tashkent, maintain quite a traditional social life, with traditional or patriarchal social relations continuing as if they had not been affected by the Soviet modernization. How come only some *mahallas* in the capital city of one Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic became modern under the Soviet regime's attempt to create an equal and classless society and modern Soviet citizens? There is a crucial reason for the socio-spatial segregation in Tashkent city during the Soviet era, and this is a key part of the main argument of this chapter: due to the Soviet policies, different types of *mahallas* experienced different transition stories. In Uzbekistan, residents of different type *mahallas* were articulated to the Soviet regime in different ways, leading to the *mahalla* arrangements in the Uzbek state being implemented differently by different types of *mahalla*. Why were different types of *mahalla* articulated to the Soviet regime differently? A short discussion addressing this question will be made using the hierarchical social relations of patriarchy¹⁰⁷ and state hegemony.

As will be mentioned in the next chapter in detail, after independence the Uzbek identity and *o'zbekchiliq* became the core of the establishment process of the nation-state in Uzbekistan. The president and other high-ranking politicians used the term "*o'zbekchiliq*" in every speech, which came to mean "being a good Uzbek through the saving of tradition". For the Uzbek state, the *mahalla* has a vital role in the (re-)production of *o'zbekchiliq* in daily life with a reference to the pre-Soviet Uzbek tradition. Here, the main argument is that *o'zbekchiliq* is not a concept that the Uzbekistani state invented, but was rather created by the Soviet regime. The national policy of the Soviet regime was one of the main reasons behind the survival of the old traditional *mahalla* structure, and so it can be argued that the (re-)production of a traditional-modern *mahalla* dichotomy in literature was not only a

¹⁰⁷ The concept of patriarchy in feminist theory refers to the control of women by men. In other words, it refers to the hierarchical nature of the division of labor between sexes (Kandiyoti, 2004; Walby, 1989; Kandiyoti, 1988; Hartmann, 1976). The hierarchical organization of the definition of patriarchy is as a set of social relations between men that have a material base. Patriarchal social relations are defined as hierarchical organization and control. With the emergence of the modern state apparatus, the sharp public-private separation resulted in a direct personal system of patriarchal control to translate into impersonal system of control, mediated by the society-wide institution (Hartmann, 1976). Here, "patriarchal social relations" refers to the patriarchal techniques of hierarchical organization and control. In other words, I emphasize the significance of the hierarchical organization of patriarchy within the community for the state patriarchy to create solidarity among the community

sociological concept, but was rather directly related to the Soviet state strategy and hegemony. Therefore, when discussing the traditional-modern *mahalla* concept, it is necessary to emphasize that the different *mahallas* were not independent from the mode of production and political environment, nor were they based only on pre-Soviet inequality. There is a conscious policy of the Soviet regime on the old Uzbek *mahalla* form that may be referred to as the “spatial impacts of state hegemony,” in that the socio-spatial differentiation of *mahallas* is a kind of clear reflection of the Soviet hegemony.

Indeed, it may be claimed that there is a similarity between the Soviet and Uzbekistani states not only in terms of their use of the *mahalla kengash* as an ideological tool, but also in their reproduction of the patriarchal and traditional social relations of the *mahalla*. Indeed, the concept of *o'zbekchiliq* was produced in response to the Russification policy of the Soviet regime, and in time, these two concepts were connected with traditionalism and modernism (Abramson, 1988). *O'zbekchiliq* gave two opportunities to the Soviet regime to maintain its hegemony in Uzbekistan through the *mahalla kengashes*. Firstly, the general opinion in previous literature is that today's different nations in Central Asia are a production of the Soviet regime. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Soviet regime created different nations with different languages and traditions, customs, etc., with the intention of controlling the region and to prevent the emergence of a Turkistan Union and nationalist movements in Central Asia. As mentioned previously, the Soviet regime had always used the *mahalla kengash* in Uzbekistan as a hegemonic tool in order to create both the ideal Soviet citizen in the public sphere and the Uzbek citizen through *o'zbekchiliq* in the private space, and in this way, to control society. This is related with the Soviet hegemony to sustain the old *mahalla* structure in urban Uzbekistan, which was explained in detail under the previous title of “*Korenizatsiia* Policy and the *Mahalla*”. Another opportunity provided by *o'zbekchiliq* for the Soviet hegemony was the patriarchal social structure of the old *mahalla* structure, which was used to control the native community.

After Lenin, and especially in the Khrushchev period, the Communist Party adopted different policies in different Soviet regions (contrary to its own ideology). In the 1970s, in Eastern Europe women resisted the Soviet policy defining a standard style of underwear, while an Uzbek woman (54 years of age, retired), during our interview, mentioned the same era, and said: “Yes, in Soviet times we began to adopt a modern lifestyle. For example, in the morning we wore our modern clothes and went to work in the state factory or office. However, in the evening, when we returned our home, we immediately changed our clothes and wore our *atlas* (traditional dress) and served our mother-in-law”. I interrupted her and

asked whether, or not, this was real modernization, and she said “Yes, we *had the appearance of a modern woman in the street, at work ... but the Communist Party did not intervene in our family life. It was mahrem (intimate). Look! Even, the Communist Party could not damage our traditional mahallas*”. As can be understood from this statement, the Soviet regime aimed to create a modern lifestyle in the public spaces of Uzbekistan, but did not intervene in the private spaces of families. The priority aim was to create a modern Soviet citizen in the public space and a traditional Uzbek citizen in the private space.

It may be argued that in deploying one of the biggest modernization projects the Soviet regime realized certain policies in Uzbekistan that show clearly the relationships between power and patriarchy. The Soviet Union, in a manner contrary to its aim of creating a social system based on equality and certain standards, implemented interesting policies that brought about the existence of a traditional and paternalist social life in Uzbekistan that has persisted until today. This is obviously related with Soviet identity politics, but what kind of identity politics the Soviet regime implemented in Uzbekistan is a subject for debate: The creation of a Soviet citizen, Russification over the native community, or the creation of a new nation? However, there emerged differences in opinion among the residents of different *mahallas* regarding Soviet identity politics, and the opinions of the respondents on whether the Soviet regime re-produced paternalist relationships in society with the identity of a Uzbek nation, (traditionalism) or whether it created a new Soviet citizen and/or implemented a Russification policy over the native community (both indicating modernization) are provided below. The *Jen-Soviet* of the A-1 *mahalla* said:

“You should understand one thing: the Soviet system never opposed the Uzbek tradition, but it did oppose Islam ... it did not eradicate our old traditional mahallas, it did not help us, but also it did not hinder us. It left us alone. ... The Oqsoqols organized conferences and speeches, and some intellectual members of the Communist Party gave presentations in the mahalla about being a good Soviet citizen and a good Uzbek. The main point of their propaganda was fidoiliq¹⁰⁸ and they generally said that fidoiliq was dependent on o’zbekchilik and is a crucial point for the ideal socialist society. The ideal Soviet citizen should be fidoiliq ... you see, the Communist party complimented o’zbekchilik instead of eliminating it”.

On the other hand, in Type-D *mahallas*, nobody mentioned *O’zbekchilik* and *fidoiliq* when explaining the politics of the Soviet regime related to identity. For example, an Uzbek man who was retired from a state factory (aged 63) said that “*The Communist party changed our social life. We forgot our old customs that exploited us; for example, we were free from religious people, sheikhs, thanks to the Communist Party. Moreover, in that period we*

¹⁰⁸ Sacrificing oneself for the community.

gained some principles that blessed the voluntarism of the socialist community”. The Uzbek woman (49, academician in history department) from C-2 mahalla said, “Of course our life changed during the Soviet time,” and when asked to give an example, she said:

“How I can explain this issue ... of course there were good and bad sides of the Soviet regime. Our socio-economic level increased during that time. I am a historian, so I know that, for example in the Tsarist period, the native community had been like colonial ... however, after the Bolshevik Revolution the Communist Party aimed also at changing and increasing our living standards. For example we could work with the Russian community in the same position; however the Soviet regime wanted us to be like the Russians, and tried to change and eliminate our Uzbek tradition. For example, our mahalla is an old mahalla, yes, it semi-transformed into a mikroraion, but 50% of the community live in traditional houses and 50% live in modern apartments. However, most of our residents were old residents of this mahalla. After the establishment of the modern labor blocks, the old residents were mostly settled in these apartments, and so we could be both Soviet citizens and Uzbek! How? ... For example, we went to modern Russian schools, we had a good education and we could work in good state offices or factories as managers, civil servants, officers, etc. ... Also, when we return to our mahalla, even though it had a modern appearance, the traditional social relationships continued in the modern apartments because of the existence of the old residents. So, when we returned to mahalla in the evening, in the street everybody respected each other. If any of the neighbors had a problem, everyone in the mahalla would try to solve it”.

When asked whether the change, therefore, had been in her working life rather than her daily life, she replied: “You are exactly right. ... I was a doctorate student in the Soviet time, and I remember that I smoked at the university with my friends and could meet and speak with boys. However, in the mahalla I never smoked and I never spoke to my boyfriends because of uyad.¹⁰⁹ We keep our Uzbekness in our daily lives in our mahalla, even if it is in modern apartment buildings”. Finally, a male Uzbek respondent (58 years of age, businessman) from B-1 mahalla said: “We have always tried to retain and live our tradition and o’zbekchiliq. If we made no effort to do this we would forget our nation and identity. Especially during the Soviet era, we were never subordinated to the Soviet regime. If we had accepted Soviet rule, we could have turned into a Russian community, in that the main aim of the Communist Party was the Russification of other nations. Therefore, we preferred to live in this kind of traditional mahalla, we established this mahalla. Unfortunately, some of the more stupid Uzbeks preferred the easy way”. After being asked to elaborate, he said:

“Many residents, even some of my old neighbors, stormed out of their mahalla, settled into new apartments, and went to Russian schools so as to find good jobs and reach a high social status in Soviet society. Today they have become like Russians or Europeans. If you see them in the street you would not say that they are Uzbek and Muslim. Look! Today they lose their power, it is our time, and we are real Uzbeks! We, the real Uzbeks, have struggled against the Communist party, and even today the

¹⁰⁹ shame

Uzbek state is struggling to save our customs. However, today we are more free. For example, during the Soviet time, we could not hold a big wedding celebration that would continue, for example, for a week. If we had done, the Communist Party would have immediately come and asked us where we had found that much money. Thanks be to God, today we can”.

As can be seen from the interviews, Uzbekistanis from different types of *mahallas* have different opinions regarding the politics relating to identity of the Soviet regime and the perspective of the Soviet system about *o'zbekchiliq* and the traditional lifestyle. Since the Communist party on the whole left them to their own devices, residents of Type A *mahallas* generally believed that they had the chance to retain their traditions and customs during the Soviet time, and in some cases were even supported by the Communist Party in their efforts to retain traditional characters and *o'zbekchiliq*. Residents of Type D *mahallas* mostly emphasized that the Communist Party had no interest in the creation of a Uzbek nation or the protection of Uzbek traditions and customs, but rather tried to create an ideal Soviet citizen and a socialist society. Finally, most of the residents of both the Type C and B *mahallas* mentioned the policy of Russification and Uzbekness. The Type C *mahallas* were re-established in the form of modern labor blocks, and the residents were mostly educated in Russian schools and knew Russian, and worked in state factories or offices, however their social structure did not change as much as that of the residents in the Type D *mahallas*, as many old neighbors settled together in the same labor block and thus traditional social relationships partially continued. According to the residents of the Type C *mahallas*, the Soviet regime may have changed their public life, but their daily life and family life was unaffected during the Soviet era. The residents of Type C *mahallas* distinguished themselves from those of Type D *mahallas*, claiming that the residents of Type D *mahallas* have forgotten their Uzbek traditions and have been assimilated through the Soviet Russification policy, in that even their daily life (in the *mahalla*) and family structure have been transformed into a modern lifestyle. On the other hand, they think that there is a high level of illiteracy in the old *mahallas* dating back to the Soviet era, and that feudal character has been retained there. The residents of Type B *mahallas* also stated a belief that some Uzbeks had been turned into Russians under Soviet rule after abandoning their Uzbek tradition and customs. Going even further, they believe that not only the residents of Type D *mahallas* had become Russified, but also the residents of C and D Types of *mahallas*. As the residents of Type B *mahallas* preferred to live in the traditional *mahallas* during the Soviet period, they think that to be a good Uzbek and to protect the Uzbek traditions, an Uzbekistani should not leave his/her traditional form of *mahalla*. According to them, although Soviet regime allowed them to establish their own *mahallas* at the periphery of the city, the reason for this

was not that the Communist Party tolerated Uzbekistani tradition or the protection or reproduction of their culture, but that the Communist Party was forced to do this due to a lack of sufficient funds. In their opinion, the Communist Party spent great efforts to play down the Uzbek tradition and applied strong pressure to do this; however as a real Uzbek is expected to remember tradition and *o'zbekchiliq*, the residents of Type B *mahallas* claim that they were real Uzbeks as they believed they had resisted the Communist Party and Russification. The basic difference between the B and C Types of *mahallas* regarding this issue is that the residents of Type B *mahallas* did not articulate to the Soviet system in their daily and private lives and in public spaces, in which working areas were of primary importance.

In short, residents of A Type *mahallas* think that the Soviet regime saved or overlooked the Uzbekistani tradition and *o'zbekchiliq*, and even reproduced the Uzbekness identity. According to the residents of B Type *mahallas*, the Communist party attacked the Uzbek tradition and tried to eliminate it, as it spent great efforts in transforming Uzbeks into Russians through the Russification policy. Residents of C-type *mahallas*, unlike those of the B type, mostly worked in the state factories or offices, and could therefore articulate into the ideal Soviet culture in their working and other public spaces. Thus, although they believed that the Communist Party was attempting to make them more modern or turn them into Russians, the policies implemented by the regime did not intervene with their daily life or private spaces. Lastly, as the social and family lives (in other words, both their public and private lives) of the residents of D-type *mahallas* completely changed, they felt that the Communist party never had a problem with their Uzbekness, and was only trying to create an ideal Soviet society and citizen. As we have seen, different types of *mahallas* underwent different developments in terms of identity during the Soviet era due to the different policy approaches of the Communist Party to different neighborhood communities.

It is clear that especially for A Type *mahallas*, the Communist Party re-produced the traditional paternalist social relationships and patriarchy. Why did the Communist Party create a modern and Soviet lifestyle in some types of *mahallas* and not in others? I may be argued that there is not only a strong link between the capitalist power and patriarchy, but also a between socialist power and patriarchy if we accept the Soviet Union as a socialist system.¹¹⁰ It is suggested in this dissertation that in any regime, state power can never cut itself off from the patriarchal social relations in civil society. The state uses different

¹¹⁰ Folbre and Ferguson, in their article "the unhappy marriage of patriarchy and capitalism," argue that where capitalist social relations have incorporated many forms of patriarchal domination.

strategies to articulate the citizens of different localities. As Althusser (2006) states, the modern state uses historical knowledge, cultural values, education and economic opportunity as ideological tools, and through these tools, the state makes the citizens compatible with the regime. Althusser argues this especially for the capitalist state, but indeed it is explanatory for any administration, including the Soviet regime. Indeed, the continuity or re-production of the patriarchal social structure is also one of the ideological tools used by the state. The state tries to articulate those citizens who could not be integrated with the regime ideology through education or through their work places and public spaces by underpinning the reproduction of patriarchal relationships. Now, in the light of this explanation, an attempt will be made to analyze the reflection of this situation upon the spatial differences (different types of *mahalla*) of residential areas in Uzbekistan. As mentioned earlier, residents of C and D Type *mahallas* were able to be articulated to the regime by way of their work places and public spaces during the Soviet era. The residents of these *mahallas* worked in state factories as socialist labor, or went to Russian schools as a socialist student. On the other hand, the A Type *mahallas* consisted of generally underclass residents who could not be articulated to the regime through education or work, and thus may be accepted as a marginal group in Soviet society. It was impossible to articulate them to the Soviet regime in the work place, in that many worked in the informal sector, such as in bazaars, or were in the army, where relationships are entirely patriarchal. Under these conditions, utilizing the *mahalla kengash* to articulate them to the regime was the only option, meaning that controlling them involved the preservation of their patriarchal social relationships, which was easy for the Communist Party. In a patriarchal social structure, power is unicentral (father in family, *oqsoqol* in *mahalla*, state in society, etc.). If an outside power seizes this unique power center, it means that it can control the entire community. For this reason the Communist Party controlled all of the neighborhood communities through occupation of the *oqsoqol* position in the *mahallas*. In contrast, if the power from outside damaged the patriarchal relationships in the traditional community, chaos would ensue, and the outsider power would be required to replace the old relationship pattern with a new one (like modern, like all citizen work in the working place in that the power can be dominated). At that time, the outside power, i.e. the Soviet central administration, desired to control everybody individually. Moreover, in the patriarchal social structure, the main sub-institutions, such as the family or *mahalla*, did not threaten the institutions in the political arena, and so it was more appropriate to integrate them to the system than to damage them. At this point, a question emerges: “Why did the Soviet regime not integrate the Turkistan Union into the Soviet System and damage it through the creation of new small nations in Central Asia to control the region?” The answer to this is that the Turkistan movement did not have a patriarchal social structure, but rather a

national and modern character. The Turkistan Union was a threat to the Soviet regime in the political arena, unlike the family or the *mahalla*; and therefore all of the colonial states preferred to re-produce the traditional social structures of their native communities rather than transforming into modern societies. Lastly, it should be noted that the B Type *mahallas* were in a special situation in that they wanted to maintain their patriarchal social structures, like the residents of the A Type *mahallas*, but their economic structures were completely different. The residents of B Type *mahallas* were relatively well educated and their socio-economic levels were relatively better, and since they tended to be involved in trade activities, demanded private property and did not adopt a communal lifestyle, they represented a complete opposite of the Soviet lifestyle. Although they were close to the A Type of *mahallas* in terms of their social and cultural structures, they were obviously different. Besides this, they were also different from the residents of the C-type *mahallas*, as they did not have good connections with the state officers of the Soviet regime, and so had little opportunity to obtain housing in the new residential units.¹¹¹ As such, they belonged neither to the traditional Uzbekistani nor the Soviet social structure, and as the Communist Party was unable to control them either through patriarchal social relationships or in the public space or workplace, they were highly exposed to the pressures of the Communist party.

A movie entitled “*Kelinlar Kuzqoloni*”¹¹² in the 1960s perfectly summarized the strong relationships and alliances between the Communist Party and the patriarchy. The movie, which interestingly enough is still shown on the official state TV channel in Uzbekistan, tells the story of a mother and her 10 sons and daughter-in-law who all live together in a small house with a single *havlu*.¹¹³ This communal structure is so strong that everyone works, and as soon as they receive their salaries they give them to the *kaynana*,¹¹⁴ who manages all the funds and decides how they should be spent. When the school opens, the basic materials are bought for the children, in the same way as the basic dress is bought for the daughter-in-law – nobody has more or less than anyone else (an exact ideal socialist social structure). Breakfast, lunch and dinner are prepared communally in the *havlu*; everyone is happy with their lives, there is no chaos, until one day the youngest son starts a family, and the new daughter-in-law is different from everybody in the *havlu*. She has had a European style education and is modern woman, and begins to resist the social structure of the *kaynana*. She wants to dress differently, she wants to cook only for her husband, and she wants to eat only

¹¹¹ Look at “waiting list issue”, pp.206-211

¹¹² Revolt of Brides

¹¹³ yard

¹¹⁴ Mother-in-law.

with her husband, away from all the others in the *havlu*. She spends her salary for herself and does not give it to *kaynana*. In time, the other daughters-in-law, impressed by the youngest girl, begin to complain about everything, and demand to be able to live like her. Finally, all the sons also begin to get angry at their mother, and everybody stops giving their salary to the *kaynana*. Moreover, nobody now respects *kaynana*. The *kaynana* is broken hearted and decides to leave the *havlu*, moving into her neighbor's house. After the departure of the *kaynana*, the once happy life in the *havlu* comes to an end and chaos ensues. When one of the daughters-in-law cooks a meal, others wash the clothes, and her clothes smell. They fight! When one husband presents a golden necklace to his wife, the others complain and demand necklaces from their own husbands. They fight! All of the sons try harder to earn more money to satisfy their wives. One day, one daughter-in-law gets up in the morning and sees rubbish in front of her door. They fight! One of the children defecates in front another's door. They fight! The children steal each other's pens, pencils and books. They fight! It comes to a point where nobody is speaking to anybody else, and nobody is happy. The *kaynana* observes everything and smiles. To solve the problem in the *havlu*, the 10 sons and daughters-in-law visit the *kaynana* and say: "*Mom, sorry, excuse us, we did not know your value! Please, come back home, be our head, manage us! We cannot do anything without you! We need your leadership!*" The *kaynana* returns to the *havlu* and they regain their happy lives, thanks to the *kaynana*! The position of the *kaynana* in the *havlu* is exactly the position of the Communist Party in Soviet society. The *kaynana* in the family is certainly a metaphor for the Communist Party in society. In the patriarchal community of Uzbekistan, such as a traditional *mahalla*, the Soviet regime occupied the unique central position in the patriarchy to control the neighborhood community and to ensure a stable patriarchal social order rather than implementing the modernization project. The *oqsoqol* in the community has also exactly the same position as the *kaynana*, and the Communist party was able to control the neighborhood community by replacing the old *oqsoqol* with its own *oqsoqol*, who was dependent on the socialist ideology and members of the Communist Party, instead of eliminating the traditional *mahalla* structure.

We can itemize the different forms of the relationship between patriarchy and socialism as follows: the *kaynana* in the family; the *oqsoqol* in the *mahalla*; and the Communist Party in society. The *kaynana* is a resisted institution in the family against the Communist Party; and the *oqsoqol* is a resisted institution in the *mahalla* against the Communist Party. The residents of A type *mahallas* experienced the patriarchal structure in all aspects of their daily lives, in the family, in the *mahalla*, and in the workplace; while the residents of B type *mahallas* lived under a patriarchy in the family and the *mahalla*, but were liberal in the

workplace. The residents of C type *mahallas* also lived under a patriarchy in the family, and to a lesser extent in the *mahalla*, but were under socialist rule in the workplace. Finally, the residents of D-type *mahallas* experienced a less forceful patriarchy in the family, but a strong socialist rule in the neighborhood and in the workplace. Did the old types of *mahalla* exist because of the resistance of native people, or due to the Soviet hegemony? It can be argued that the dialectic relationship between local strategies and the state hegemony was important not only in the decentralization process during the post-Soviet era, but also in the emergence of inequalities among the residential spaces of Soviet cities.

In conclusion, the different *mahalla* types and the socio-spatial segregation in Tashkent emerged not only due to the policy of ignorance of the Soviet regime, the resistance of the native people, the financial and technological limitations, or the Soviet policies in order to strengthen its hegemony in the region, as it can also be claimed that the dialectic relationship between the hegemony of the regime (Soviet) and the strategy of local residents (both at the national – Uzbek republic – and local scale – *mahalla*) played a role, although the Soviet regime aimed to destroy all old type feudal structures in living spaces. This argument is related both to the centralist structure of the Soviet regime discussed in the second chapter, and the importance of the dialectical relationship between state hegemony and local strategy discussed in the third chapter. This relationship supports the claim that the dialectical relationship between local and center in terms of local strategies and central hegemony resulted in a “spatial reflection of hegemony” in the living spaces of Tashkent. This case represents the main points of susceptibility of different strategies produced by the different *mahalla* types against the regulations of the new Uzbek state in the post-Soviet era. The different strategies of different *mahalla* types shaped during the Soviet regime influenced the decentralization policy and hegemony of the Uzbek regime, and this is one of the main answers to the question of whether the Uzbek regime is centralist like the Soviet regime, a point which is discussed in the second chapter. Before starting to analyze in detail the dialectic relationship between the strategies of different types of *mahalla* and the hegemony of the Uzbek state on the issue of decentralization, in the next chapter some examples of the different responses of the people in different *mahalla* types to the questions concerning the impacts of the post-Soviet transition period in Tashkent city space will be presented under the title of the hegemonic project of Uzbek regime and the *mahalla kengash*.

4.4.2 Soviet Urban Planning and Social Segregation in Tashkent's Living Space

In this case study, the classification of Tashkent *mahallas* has been carried out mainly through an analysis of Soviet urban planning and housing policy. The classification of *mahallas* as administrative and socio-spatial units based on solely spatial planning can be questioned; as it can be seen as spatial fetishism, a clarification is necessary at this point. In this sense, when speaking about the region that was under the rule of Soviet regime, there are two important points to take into account. First, due to the absence of a private market in the Soviet regime, the state was the only authority in the determination of the urban structure, intervening into urban space utilizing the urban planning tool. Second, the Soviet urban planning system consisted of not only spatial, but also social planning. Therefore, as seen in this part, different *mahalla* types can be categorized according to their socio-economic and/or ethnic structures. Moreover, these different types of residential units of Soviet cities also differed in terms of the status of their residents, made evident in their access to social and infrastructure services, in their administrative structures and in the spatial variances. For example, the different administrative structures of the *mahallas* have a significant influence on the realization of the decentralization policy of the Uzbek regime under different strategies, which will be analyzed in the following chapters. It is important to note here that these strategies were shaped mostly during the Soviet era.

Destroying the old part of the city was more difficult than was estimated by the Communist Party, as there were many factors that caused the old type of *mahallas* to sustain. First, at the beginning of the October Revolution, four reasons can be identified for the emergence of a dual city structure (two city parts inhabited by two different nations): (a) the rejection of utopian urban planning; (b) financial and technological problems; (c) the civil war period; and (d) the priority of public spaces rather than living spaces in regulation policies. In addition, the (re-)production of old *mahallas* rather than their abolition worked to the advantage of the Communist Party as this policy was central to strengthening its hegemony in two main aspects. First, the presence of old *mahallas* was to the advantage of the national (*korenizatsiia*) policy of the Communist Party. Political uprisings were prevented in Central Asia through the creation of different nations based on different ethnic identities rather than a single Turkic identity, and in this sense, the *mahalla* emerged as a suitable ground for the creation of an Uzbek identity in two main aspects. First, in Central Asia, since the institution of the *mahalla* existed only in Uzbekistan in the sense that the settled population was mostly comprised of one ethnic origin, i.e. the Uzbeks, the Uzbek identity can easily be

differentiated from other ethnic groups through the *mahalla* structure. Second, while the *mahalla* was socially and culturally an important institution in social life, it did not pose a threat either politically or economically, to the Soviet regime. In this sense, the presence of the *mahalla* was not an obstacle in the way of the development of the political hegemony of the Soviet regime, but was rather an advantage. The second main advantage to the Soviet hegemony based on the (re-)production of the *mahalla* is related with the patriarchal social relationships in the *mahalla*, which made it easy for the Communist Party to control the native community by building dominance over the unicentral power structure of the patriarchal community. Thus, the *Koranizatsiia* policy of the Soviet regime in central Asia, as a part of the hegemonic project of the Soviet regime, was one of the main reasons for the different types of urban living space. This is referred to in the dissertation as “the spatial impacts of the state hegemony,” which is an issue that was examined under that title.

The end of World War II, the positive financial and technological results of the rapid industrialization and planned economy during the first years of the Revolution, the problem of the high-density population in a large city, and finally the 1966 earthquake that damaged one-third of Tashkent’s housing stock, especially in the old *mahallas*, constituted a major opportunity to the Soviet regime state to transform the old city. However, as seen in the second chapter, this was the Khrushchev era, in which the Soviet decentralization policy was launched and the central government of the autonomous republics gained more and more power against Moscow and a more centralist structure internally. Therefore, most of the time, the authority to intervene into the urban space was held by local institutions such as the city Soviet, the *raispalkom*, and the local ministries (*savnorkhozy*), which were dominated by Uzbek people. This resulted in a reluctance of the local authorities to transform their traditional residential units due to their kinship relations and local networks, and instead of transforming these relations, the local authorities rather reproduced them.

Another reason behind the social segregation in Tashkent was the allocation system within the housing policy. Before the Khrushchev era, new residential units were built by the Soviet ministries for the citizens who worked in the same state office or factory. This residential unit was based on the homogeneous ideal Soviet citizen, which was something the Soviet regime desired. However, the *mikroraion* built after the Khrushchev era was a residential unit in which the old neighbors of transformed residential units would settle alongside citizens of different professions. Therefore, these *mikroraions* became living spaces in which cosmopolite and generally old social relations could be maintained in daily life (old neighbors bring old neighborhood relationships, and migrants from rural areas

bring traditional rural life styles), and so the Soviet regime failed in its attempt to create a new social life in line with its ideology.

The corruption in the housing allocation system created both social and spatial segregation in the living spaces of the city. Social groups who lacked connections with high-level managers responsible for housing allocation could not be allocated new houses, as some people would pay bribes to jump the waiting lists. This resulted in the people not working as officers or laborers in state factories or institutions preferring to stay in the old-type *mahallas*, or relocating their old *mahallas* and houses to the peripheral areas of Tashkent.

Another problem with the transformation of residential units was related to the legal loopholes taken advantage of by the local people, by which transformation became impossible. So, is there only one reason behind the (re-)production of old Tashkent's *mahallas* during the Soviet era? It is clear that this issue cannot be explained only with the hegemony of the Soviet regime. The interviews with Tashkent residents revealed that there were many reasons behind the survival of the old-type Tashkent *mahalla* during the Soviet era, one of which was the strategies of the native people against the housing policy of the Soviet regime. What follows is just one example that demonstrates the importance of local strategies in the transformation of urban residential units in Tashkent during the Soviet period, and relates to an A-3 *mahalla*, being one of the old *mahallas* located at the center of Tashkent near *Navoi Street*, which has connected the old and new parts of the city since the beginning of the Soviet regime. Around the *mahalla* there are many important state buildings, a university and a business center; however the *mahalla* lacks even basic sanitation and hot water infrastructure. This *mahalla*, as a residential unit in the capital city, is in a worse condition than the rural areas of Uzbekistan, and exists as an isolated, old and poor area within its modern surroundings. So, what is its main problem? Why were no changes made when everything around this *mahalla* gained a modern appearance during the Soviet and post-Soviet era, despite the fact that the *mahalla* has been determined as a transformation area in the Tashkent city plan since the 1950s?

In both the Soviet and Uzbek housing policy system, if any residential unit is to be transformed the state should provide housing accommodation to all its residents. The state provided two options to the community: either settle in new *mikroraion* or accept a grant to establish their own houses at the periphery of Tashkent in an area designated by the state. The amount of the money to be given and/or the size of the new flat were determined according to the number of people in the *prapiska*, and so a family living in a residential

unit in the transformation zone would attempt to register as many family members as possible in the *prapiska* so as to get a bigger flat or a larger grant. Therefore, people who left their families in this *mahalla* preferred to stay in the *prapiska* of the old house, and if the process of transformation of the area took a long time, the number of registered people in the *prapiska* increased. The story of this *mahalla* is a prime example showing the importance of local strategies in new housing allocation. The population of this *mahalla* (A 3) is now around 2,520, but there are only 651 houses, leading to the assumption that at least two families have registered in the *prapiska* for a single house. When interviewing the residents of this *mahalla* it could be observed that some houses had only two residents, but in the *prapiska* there are 20 people, and this strategy of the local people has prevented the transformation of the *mahalla* in both the Soviet and post-Soviet eras given the difficulties in (re-)settling such a high population. The *oqsoqol* of the A-3 *mahalla* explained this situation as follows: “After the 1966 earthquake, this *mahalla* was expected to be transformed, but nothing has changed for 50 years. In the old times, the *Raispalkom*, and now the *Hokimiyat* could not do anything because of the financial problems. The *Hokimiyat* should find a new place and build a new *mikroraion* for us, but they don’t have enough money to settle all of us due to the high population”.

Table 4.20 History of the *Mahallas* Surveyed in the Field Research

Types	Mahallas	Pre-Soviet		Soviet		
		Pre-Industrial Period	The Colonial Period	1917-1939	1940-1966	1967-1991
A (A 1, A-2, and A-3)		Urban <i>mahalla</i>	Non-intervention	Non-intervention	Non-intervention ¹¹⁵	Non-intervention
B (B-1 and B-2)		Collective agricultural area of urban <i>mahallas</i>	Non-intervention	Non-intervention	Traditional <i>mahalla</i> established by the community	Traditional <i>mahalla</i> established by the community
C (C-1, C-2, C-3)		Urban <i>mahalla</i>	Non-intervention	Non-intervention	Transformation projects planned	Turning into <i>mikroraion</i> for mass population ¹¹⁶
D	D-1	Collective agricultural area of urban <i>mahallas</i>	New residential unit established for the European people	Renewed residential unit for the Soviet elite	Planned as a <i>mikroraion</i>	New <i>mikroraions</i> established for the Soviet elite, especially engineers and planners
	D-2	Collective agricultural area of urban <i>mahallas</i>	Non-intervention	Non-intervention	Non-intervention	Planned as a <i>mikroraion</i> and completed by 1991
	D-3	Collective agricultural area of urban <i>mahallas</i>	Non-intervention	Traditional <i>mahalla</i> established by the community	Non-intervention	Planned as a <i>mikroraion</i> and completed by 1991
	D-4	Urban <i>mahalla</i>	New residential unit established for European people	Renewed residential unit for the Soviet elite	Planned as a <i>mikroraion</i>	Completely turned into a <i>mikroraion</i> by 1991

Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

¹¹⁵ A transformation project was planned in A-3 *mahalla*.

¹¹⁶ C-1 and C-2 *mahallas* were semi-transformed, whereas C-3 *mahalla* was completely transformed into a *mikroraion* in 1991.

CHAPTER 5

THE HEGEMONIC PROJECT OF THE UZBEKISTANI REGIME AND THE MAHALLA KENGASH

*Mahalla -kichi hokimiyat, kata oila*¹¹⁷

5.1 Introduction: The Hegemonic Project of Post-Soviet Uzbekistani Regime in the Structural Hegemony of Neo-Liberalism

The Uzbekistani state, like other post-Soviet countries, has built its political and administrative system around the creation of a nation state, the achievement of a decentralized administrative structure for democratization, and the adoption of a market-based economy, while also attempting to address serious socio-cultural problems during the transition era. In order to realize these three issues, the regime has followed several strategies in what is referred to in Uzbekistan as “*capital’s logic vocalized as a political programme and directive ideology*” (Barnett, 2005: 8), and is known as the “hegemonic project”. Having gained independence, the Uzbekistani state tried to establish a nation state based on the Uzbek identity of a conservative and paternalist social structure. The state recalled Uzbekistan’s pre-Islamic history in order to counter the emergent radical Islamist movements, and followed a path of gradual economic transition to a market-based economy that was dependent on the creation of an economic environment in which the individual and small businesses could flourish, while the vulnerable members of society, whose living standards had fallen sharply during the transition era, were also supported. In this regard this chapter aims to demonstrate the significance of the urban *mahalla kengash* in the attainment of the mentioned goals of the Uzbekistani state as part of its “hegemonic project”.

¹¹⁷ The *mahalla* is small local administration and a large family.

In this chapter, the dynamic, dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the *mahalla kengashes* of different Tashkent *mahalla* types and the central government of the new Uzbekistani regime is analyzed in detail by looking at the role of the *mahalla kengash* in the hegemonic projects of the regime. This relationship was affected by the conflicts that emerged at different political/economic scales, which, in the case of some types of *mahallas*, resulted in centralization. The center-local relationship is analyzed in the hegemonic project within a framework of three factors: (a) the state legacy of the *mahalla kengash*, in order to achieve the main aims of the new regime; (b) the different indigenous characters or power structures within the *mahalla kengashes*, which have resulted in various responses to the *mahalla*-scaled state policies; and (c) the responses and strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* that did not comply with the Uzbekistani state's vision of the *mahalla*, and reversed the state's decentralization strategy in the direction of centralism, leading to a conflict between the different policy aims of the Uzbek State. This chapter will make an analysis of the dialectical relationship between (a) the effects of the hegemonic project on the urban *mahalla kengash*, and (b) the different strategies and actions applied by *mahalla kengashes* while implementing their three functions in the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime: (1) to strengthen *o'zbekchiliq* in the nation state-creation process; (2) to implement urban social policy to ease the adoption of a market-based economy and to resolve the socio-economic problems of the transition era at a local scale; and (3) to control society on behalf of the central state.

As mentioned in the theory chapter, despite the global pressure for decentralization, the former Soviet countries, especially those in Central Asia, have developed centralist tendencies in their political structure under two particular dynamics of the transition era: 1) the lack of private property and a capitalist class in these countries ensured the states would be the central actors of the transition era; and 2) in the era of neo-liberalism, in which the global and local scales gain strength in the new political economic structure, these Central Asian states have to establish the nation-state based on the ethnic identity and modern state which were built by the Soviet regime. The structural hegemony of neo-liberalism resulted in two processes in local politics in post-Soviet Uzbekistan: the initiation of decentralized reforms in its administrative structure and the devolution of many duties to local governments (*mahalla kengash*); and the adoption of the *mahalla kengash* by the Uzbek regime for use as a hegemonic instrument in the establishment of the nation state, by which the *mahalla kengash* became an agent of the national state. While this strategy of the Uzbekistani regime elevated the local state to the status of "agent of the national state" (Cockburn, 1971), it showed that the new regime in Uzbekistan continued to follow many of

strategies put in place by the Soviet regime. In this chapter it argued that the Uzbekistani regime constructed an ideal *mahalla kengash*, and put it to work in urban areas as an instrument of its hegemonic project.

With the recognition of the *mahalla* as a self-governing body by the central government, a path has been cleared for the citizens to become closer to the central government. The use of the *mahalla* as a key element in the restructuring of the state is proof that the Uzbekistani State can be successively separated from the Soviet tradition. The central government is able to apply control over all houses and families through *mahalla* organization, as it has now become the “branch and eyes” of central government. As many social policies can now be realized by the *mahalla* organization, the state has rid itself of the responsibility of public service. The Uzbekistani state can act conveniently to the importance of the concept of localization by relying on the discourse of globalization by recognizing the *mahalla* as a body of self-government. In Uzbekistan, the nation has been created in the *mahallas*, where the urban *mahalla kengash* is able to reproduce traditions, create a national consciousness and adopt and implement neo-liberal policies at a local scale following the devolution of several specific policies and functions.

For the regime of Uzbekistan, the *mahalla kengash* has several functions, and the *mahalla kengash* as consequently taken on a number of different meanings. Historically, the *mahalla* is a socio-spatial unit in social life that has perpetuated into the present day, and after independence, the *mahalla* became a part of the administrative structure of Uzbekistan as a local political/administrative unit. In Uzbekistan, self-government is only possible through the *mahalla*. The Law of Community Self-Government, enacted in 1993 and revised in 1999, defines self-government as “*it whose structure and rights are guaranteed by the Uzbekistani Constitution, referring not only to national and local customs, but also to independent activities of mahalla citizens to resolve local problems*” (Pashkun, 2003: 52). There are many different meanings attributed to the Uzbekistani *mahalla* in literature, and different institutions interpret the *mahalla* in different ways (ICG, 2003: 345):

- According to the Mahalla Foundation (*Mahalla Jamgarmasi*) and the Uzbekistani state, the *mahalla* is the space in which Uzbek identity is created and Uzbek modernization is realized.
- According to Fundamentalist Islamic groups, the *mahalla* is a tool for rebuilding Islamic culture and politics in Uzbekistan.
- The Western world considers the *mahalla* as an NGO that aims to strengthen civil society in Uzbekistan. In addition, the European Union accept the *mahalla* as an

institution that provides an opportunity for the implementation of subsidiarity in Uzbekistan, rather than as the channel through which the state intervenes in civil society and the market economy.

- The Uzbek state sees the *mahalla* as a lifesaving instrument. Many social policies were implemented by the central government during the Soviet era, and so after independence the central government devolved many social policies to the *mahalla kengash*. In this respect, the Uzbekistani state also sees the *mahalla* as an organ for the implementation of social policy.
- Many gender-related projects call upon the *mahalla* and the gender committee of the *mahalla* organization when attempting to implement policies that provide opportunities for women to become actively involved in economic life. In particular, micro credits are distributed to women in the *mahallas* through the *mahalla kengash*. The state also uses the *mahalla* to support SMEs, and in some cases the *mahalla kengash* can itself be considered as an SME, opening such businesses as stationers and grocers using its own budget.

It needs to be pointed out that this localization of state power and hegemony is always realized in a dialectic way through local social relations. In other words, while localizing state power and hegemony always influences local social relations and local power, as well as the structure of the local state, the local state also affects the state power, strategies and hegemony through the implementation of its functions in urban policy. Therefore, like the nation state's hegemony, the local state has also its own hegemony (Jessop, 2008), which is shaped by elite local groups. When the local and national hegemonies and/or interests of the dominant class diverge, the local-central relationship enters into conflict (Duncan & Goodwin, 1988: 73). The Constitution (Article 105) and other laws recognize the *mahalla* as a body of self-government, based on the decentralization principle, and since 1992, Uzbekistan has made attempts to co-opt the *mahalla* into the governing structures. However, what I would like to emphasize in this chapter is that the *mahalla kengash* has become a hegemonic instrument of the Uzbek regime, just as it was for the Soviet regime, in the creation of a modern national identity, however this similar strategic choice of the two regimes is differentiated in terms of the structural hegemony and political/economic factors. In other words, while the Soviet regime used the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument in the creation of an ideal Uzbekness within a framework of class politics and identity politics; the Uzbekistani regime used it within a framework of identity politics in the structural hegemony of the new global discourse. Despite using the same strategy, the hegemonic projects of the two regimes were different, and by employing different cases of

urban policy functions, the conflicts between the local policy variations and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime in urban politics can be demonstrated. Accordingly, this chapter explains that the decentralization process has been reversed due to the strategy of the Uzbekistani state (centralist intervention into the *mahalla kengash*) on occasions when the different strategies and activities of the *mahalla kengash* have been out of conformity with the standard *mahalla* vision of the Uzbekistani state, or when conflicts is created between different aims of the Uzbek State. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, for the Uzbek state, *mahalla kengash* is an important instrument in the establishment of the national identity, adaptation to the new market-based economy, and control of the society. For these three aims together, it adapts different policies, strategies and practices. After the independence, one crucial policy of Uzbekistan government is to use the “*mahalla*” as a social and spatial unit for the aim of re-organization of the state. In this chapter these three issues will be analyzed under the title of (a) *o'zbekchiliq* and *mahalla* committee, (b) *mahalla* as a community based organization: state social assistance, and (c) *mahalla* as a civil society and state control over the society. I focus on these three issues in detail within the framework of the dialectic relationship between the Uzbek regime and the different types of *mahalla kengash*.

In addition, these three functions of the *mahalla kengash* in the hegemonic project of the regime show clearly the continuity in the state strategies from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era. Many institutional designers (national and international political and economic actors) in the post-Soviet transition period tried to develop a standard model of capitalism and democracy in the Central Asian geography, however, “*post-socialist trajectories are heavily dependent on a dense and complex institutional legacy, such that the (often invisible) remnants of previous economic and political orders still shape expectations and patterns of conduct*” (Hausner, Jessop & Nielsen, 1995: 4). The *mahalla* is also an example of this complex institutional legacy of the former regime, and it is necessary to examine the historical background of the *mahalla kengash* during the Soviet era to understand the recent relationship between the Uzbekistani regime and the *mahalla kengash*. Therefore, the reformation of the *mahalla* refers to both path-shaping and path-dependency, with the strategic choices of different urban *mahalla kengash* affected both path-dependently by the Soviet legacy and through the path-shaping of the new structural constraints of the neo-liberal transition. Although the historical perspective is crucial for analyzing the *mahalla kengash*, as explained above, the structural constraints of the transition era (nation state building, adaptation to the market-based economy, and resolving the socio-economic problems of transition) should not be ignored when analyzing the importance of the *mahalla*

kengash for the Uzbekistani regime. Considering this point, this chapter offers an analysis of the role of the *mahalla kengash* in the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime by making a comparison with the Soviet era. This historical perspective is crucial for two reasons: first, through the historical perspective, it is possible to understand to what degree urban politics in the Uzbekistani regime alters from its Soviet past; and second, this historical perspective gives an opportunity to argue that the failure of the Uzbekistani regime in its decentralization policy was caused not only by the Soviet centralist state structure, but also by the structural hegemony of the neo-liberal transition. This point also involves a critical view of the decentralization discourse of the neo-liberal hegemony.

In short, the *mahalla kengash* is a crucial instrument in the (re-)production of *o'zbekchiliq* as a national identity, while also being a crucial instrument for urban social policy during the transition era during which the central state was limited in its implementation of urban policy, unlike in the previous era. Finally, for the Uzbekistani regime, the *mahalla kengash* is a crucial instrument for strengthening civil society ahead of democratization. These factors demonstrate the strategy of new Uzbekistani state as being dependent on its Soviet heritage, although with different goals. Consequently, it may be argued that while the new regime followed the Soviet time in its choice of strategies, its aims were different. On the one hand, major changes occurred in the *mahalla* types that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime, while those that were unable to articulate to the Soviet regime saw little difference from the previous era.

5.2 Nation State Building and Urban *Mahalla Kengash*: *O'zbekchiliq*

In this section, the primary function of the urban *mahalla kengash* in the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani state is analyzed, being a key instrument in the creation of *o'zbekchiliq*. However, just as the state strategy and hegemony influenced the formation of the local state, so did the policy variation of the local state affects the state hegemonic project differently in each locality. In this section, the center-local relationship will be analyzed, taking into account three factors: (a) the state strategy to use the *mahalla kengash* to enhance its national identity – *o'zbekchiliq*; (b) the effects of different indigenous characters or power structures of the *mahalla kengashes* on the identity politics of the Uzbekistani regime; and (c) the responses and strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* (policy variations) that were not in compliance with the Uzbekistani state's envisioned *mahalla* design, and thus reversed the state's decentralist strategy in the direction of centralism.

This section accordingly makes an examination of two points: firstly, how the Uzbekistani regime used the urban *mahalla kengash* in its identity politics; and secondly, how different *mahalla kengashes* in Tashkent implemented state strategies differently. The central state's use of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument for the promotion of *o'zbekchiliq* is one of the most important continuities from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era, and this section demonstrates how this state strategy has changed or been sustained from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era.. For this purpose, two issues are necessary to be explained: (a) the opinions of officials employed in the *mahalla kengash* regarding the meaning of the *mahalla* for *o'zbekchiliq*; (b) in which situation the central state intervenes in the affairs of *mahalla kengashes* in terms of *o'zbekchiliq*, which is an indication of both the centralist tendencies of the Uzbekistani regime and the new excluded living unit (*mahalla*) for the new regime.

5.2.1 Continuity/Change in the State Strategy from the Soviet to the Post-Soviet Eras: The Mahalla Kengash as a Hegemonic Instrument

In this section, the significance of the *mahalla kengash* in the creation of a national identity and the ideal *mahalla* for the Uzbekistani regime is examined, showing how both the Soviet and the Uzbekistani regimes strategically used urban *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument in the creation and (re-)production of *o'zbekchiliq*. It will be shown that although the Soviet and the Uzbekistani regimes followed the same strategy in this regard, their visions of the ideal *mahalla* were quite different, along with their understandings of *o'zbekchiliq*.

5.2.1.1 The Strategic Selectivity of the Soviet Regime and Mahalla Committee: Korenizatsiia (National) Policy

“As in Moscow, local Petrograd officials moved immediately to clean up particularly the noxious neighborhood in the 1920s.” (Ruble, 1990: 42)

“In 1922, the Internal Affairs Commissioner of the Turkestan Republic gave orders to the Oblast Executive and Revolutionary Committees to establish the mahalla commission in each mahalla.” (Komilov, 1961: 24)

As mentioned in the historical background, the first time that the *mahalla* committee legally tied to the central power was during the Tsarist regime. Although the Tsarist regime did not intervene to the daily lives of the neighborhood, the autonomy of *mahalla* committee was reduced and after the rebellion of the local community against the policies of the Russian administration about the cholera epidemic in Tashkent; the chair of *oqsoqols* was abolished by the gubernator of Turkestan in 1892, and his responsibilities were delegated to the Russian *politseimeister* (Abramson, 1998: 69). Most of the functions, authorities, and

resources related to the urban policy processes were transferred from the *mahallas* and other local traditional institutions to the central Russian administration. Therefore, the *oqsoqol*, who once was the most *hurmatli* (respected) person in the *mahalla*, became dysfunctional for local people, and thus, was replaced to a position where he became a mediator between the local people and the Russian administration.

On the other hand, the Soviet regime with its new idea of a socialist society began to sharply intervene in all the sphere of the native community of the central Asia. The Soviet state's administration of the population has reconfigured many *mahalla* layouts, created *mahalla* committees with official functions and, in the early Soviet period, propagandistic agendas; and appointed *mahalla* heads who report to the city administration. These are all parts of the state's so called techniques of rule, intended to make the population amenable to visibility and control (Morgan, 2007: 80).

In central Asia, the Bolshevik Party had to achieve two main aims: to provide security in the region and solidarity within the whole Soviet Union. For the first aim, the Soviet government set up a new political, social, and economic form for each new national republic (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan), which was established according to its ethnic origin for impeding the Pan-Turkist and Pan-Islamic movements in the region. For the second aim, the Soviet power created a homogenic citizenship consciousness to integrate the central Asian people into the Union. This was the first time in the world history when one power tried to create various national identities and citizenship identity at the same time, which were different from each other. That is why the Soviet power, whose purpose was to create a standard society with equal rights, decided to establish the *mahalla* committee in each *mahalla* of the Turkestan Republic, instead of cleaning them up as it did in Moscow and Leningrad.

The concept of modern citizenship emerged from the nation-state, but in central Asia the Soviet government had to create five new nations as well as Soviet citizenship to provide security and solidarity in the Soviet Union. Clark (1999: 35) argued that "the formation of ethnic identity in central Asia was structured by the establishment of national republics and a process of cultural construction that favored a national consciousness based on the identification of the nation and with a specific territory and state administration". The *mahalla* committee in Uzbekistan was an important tool of this cultural construction. What is important here is the specific Bolshevik strategy in central Asia. Although the Bolsheviks were hostile to all traditional values, according to the new society of communism, in central Asia they never avoided using any type of hegemonic tool, even traditional institutions

(*mahalla*), customs, and norms. Therefore, unlike what the Bolsheviks did in Russia or in the Eastern European countries, because they lacked adequate political and social roots in central Asia, the Bolsheviks articulated the old traditional *mahalla* structure into the Uzbek Soviet state to steer this native community. Thus, it is possible to argue that the *mahallas* became an important tool in creating the national identity and the homogenic Soviet citizenship. On the one hand, the Soviet power preferred to use cultural values and symbols, which did not threaten the survival of the Soviet power in central Asia, for the creation of new national identities in central Asia; on the other hand, it used political and economic values to produce the homogenic Soviet citizenship. At this point, the Bolshevik power exerted effort to implement awareness-raising policies about the duties and obligations of a Soviet citizen. The *mahalla* played an important role in these policies. In 1924, the Central Committee of the Communist party of Turkestan encouraged responsible workers to attend GAP¹¹⁸ in the *mahallas* and led political discussions there. According to Abramson (1998: 71),

“Traditional social institutions such as gap, the choykhona (teahouse), and the bazaar were identified as useful spaces to promote policies aimed at indoctrinating Uzbeks with the values of the Communist party. These efforts represented an attempt to expand the sphere of state control by incorporating more and more of traditional social life into public sphere”

Also, in Arifhanova’s book, Ziyoyev, one of the *Besh Og`och mahalla* activists, claimed that during the Soviet period, the traditional GAP and the teahouse turned into the red GAP and the red teahouse. It is the GAP in which the communist ideology spread into the Uzbek community; however, this activity was realized as top-down. Therefore, in a GAP, a member of the Communist party related the idea of the Communist Party to the *mahalla* community. If one criticized the dominant ideology of the Communist party, somebody from the *mahalla* would inform on this resident to the central government, the local government, or the Communist party. This situation damaged the old spirit of solidarity among the mahalla residents and resulted in fear and distrust between each other; therefore, they hide everything between each other (Arifhanova, 2002: 34). Beginning with 1923, with the financial support of the state, a chain of red teahouses was set up around central Asia, especially in villages, as political and cultural propaganda centers. Naturally, the state turned its attention to the mahalla as an institution to monitor and regulate social activity (Noori, 53).

In addition, as an indispensable condition of the economic system of the Union, a work discipline became one of the most important aims of the Soviet government that they put forward through the principles of material and moral encouragement to raise the work discipline of Soviet citizens. According to the Soviet constitution (1936), to be moral Soviet

¹¹⁸ GAP is one of the mahalla activities in which the people of the neighborhood gathered and chatted

citizens, the people had to dedicate themselves to work. Thus, the most important condition to become a good Soviet citizen (*Homo Sovieticus*¹¹⁹) was to have a full work discipline. The mahalla in Uzbekistan became one socio-spatial unit in which the work discipline was imposed. According to Tohirov, the *mahalla* in the Soviet period was the place in which Soviet citizens were trained in work discipline in daily life to complete the training in the working place. The citizens adopt the communal way of life not only in the work place but also in their daily life in the *mahalla*. This meant that they discussed communist ideology with academicians and members of the Party from their *mahalla GAP* (Tohirov, 1971: 3).

The Soviet power's control of the community, its suppression of anti-communist movements, and the development of new citizen consciousness created a more interventionist system in the central Asia than in the other territories. Thus, the Bolsheviks were more careful in the central Asia when choosing their strategies to create a stable political system. The Soviet government inevitably had to cooperate with the existing local organizations and use local networks to get into the central Asian society. Thus, local networks and clan affiliations were preserved and also reorganized during the Soviet period (Roy, Shahrani, and Abramson). In her dissertation about the *mahalla*, Noori argues that although the Bolsheviks promoted social, institutional, political, and economic standardization; using traditional institutions sometimes prevented their standardization models from becoming ideal socialist values (Noori, 2002: 79). According to Arifhanova, the Bolshevik power had to use the *mahalla* to control the Uzbek society. Therefore, the officers of the *mahalla* commission who were already members of the Communist party were expected to inform the central and the local governments (*rayon* and *gorodgosudarstva*) about the *mahalla* residents' nonsupportive action towards the Communist party. Many Uzbek residents denounced their neighbors to the authorities (the *mahalla* commission) to their own benefits in order to become members of the Communist party (Arifhanova, 2002: 26). Furthermore, the Communist party shook the power of the old elite families (*oqsuyaq*)

¹¹⁹ One of the main aims of the USSR was to create a *Homo Sovieticus*, that is, a citizen charged with full state duties. Aleksandr Zinov'ev defines *homo Sovieticus* as a superman or superhero who could be an educated person, work full-time, and cope with all emotions. This program "was initiated in the early 1920s by Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin who wanted a new invincible human being insensitive to pain, resistant, and indifferent about the quality of food they ate" (Ozsoy, 2007: 74). On the one hand, *Homo Sovieticus* is represented by the Bolshevik superhero of the Socialist Realist canon. On the other hand, *Homo Sovieticus* is seen as a very ordinary, transparent, malleable, and submissive human being with primitive desires and few uncommon characteristics. This is a typical paradox of communist rule. "To gain popular support, the authorities strongly encouraged the Soviet population to become well versed in the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. However, to minimize the possible damage of independent thinking that could eventually lead to dissent in the ranks of those who were becoming well-read, the authorities had to filter all the available information in such a way that the masses could not learn more than they were supposed to" (Rogachevskii, 2002: 976).

of the *mahalla*. After establishing the *mahalla* commission in each city neighborhood, in 1922, the Communist Party appointed new officials from non-elite families to be on the *mahalla* commissions. The new officers of the *mahalla* commission, as agents of the Communist party, monitored the old elite people and reported their activities, including their communication, to the central and local governments to undermine the elite's social prestige. As a result of these reports, many Uzbek people were sent into exile, imprisoned, or executed (Arifhanova, 2002: 26).

According to Lefebvre, the Soviet revolution failed because the Bolsheviks thought that if the collectivization could be achieved, the revolution would be successful. He claimed that a revolution cannot be achieved unless it changes people's everyday lives (Lefebvre, 1973). Lenin who was under the same understanding decided to spread revolutionary consciousness among the native people to transform their daily life. The discussion among the Bolsheviks was not whether the revolutionary consciousness should or should not be spread, but how it could be spread, namely, which tools and strategies should be used. Thus, Lenin gave instructions for central Asia to spread Communist ideas by using all sorts of facilities such as local networks, local customs, and some traditional institutions. By using local institutions, networks, and customs for achieving Lenin's aim of bringing revolutionary consciousness to the local people made the relationship between the Soviet power and the natives more reciprocal (Abramson, 1968: 58). Not only were the locals sovietized by the Bolsheviks but also the Soviet institutions were changed by the local forms of organization, which was a form of reciprocation (Özataş, 1997: 50). As Bouchet claimed that the kolkhoz did not abolish tribalism, but rather became its context (cited in Kandiyoti, 1996: 537), in the same way, the *mahalla* commission also became the context of the traditional life rather than overturning it. In Uzbekistan, the strategies that the Bolsheviks used for providing security and spreading the revolutionary consciousness reversed from the Sovietization (revolutionary consciousness) of the native people to the localization of the Soviet (revolution). Therefore, the Soviet era was shaped in Uzbekistan by the traditional as well as revolutionary values.

The new regulations about the *mahalla* commission showed how strong the centralist regime was in Uzbekistan. This was the first time the *mahalla* directly related with the state. It became one of the most important strategic tools in the implementation of the radical policies of the Party in Uzbek society. Like other institutions, the *mahalla* was nationalized during the Soviet period and became an agency of the centralist Soviet State rather than an autonomous local government. Many of its old functions were transferred to several ministries of the central government and, thus, the *mahalla* commissions implemented these

functions with directives from above. The central government undertook all public services in the Soviet period (Arifhanova, 2002, 44). The *Oqsoqol* became a symbolic leader of the *mahalla* and was controlled by the local Communist Party. According to the 1932 Statute, one who was elected as an *oqsoqol* by the neighborhood had to be approved by the Communist Party to hold the position, but because the Party also had the right to appoint the *oqsoqol*, many were appointed rather than elected. As I mentioned above, the first condition to become an *oqsoqol* was to be a member of the Communist party.

The 1932 law expanded the 1922 memorandum about the establishment of the *mahalla* commission in the cities of the Turkestan Republic to the rural areas of Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic. (*Toshkent Okshomi*, 2001y, 18 iyun). The 1932 statute declared that *mahalla* committees were to be composed of three persons: a chairman, a deputy chairman, and a secretary (Abramson, 1997: 72). According to Arifhanova, Nojim Ata Salimov, the secretary of the *Sogban mahalla*, claimed that the *mahalla* commission was merely an *oqsoqol*, a secretary, and an active group at the beginning of the Soviet period. The secretary's salary was 30 som collected from the *mahalla*'s residents. Any kind of collective activities was made by the *mahalla* community under the control of *oqsoqol* (Arifhanova, 2002: 31). Elections for these posts were to be held every year, which must then be approved by the municipal or district level of the Soviet. A resident could participate in the *mahalla* election only if he/she was a member of the Communist party. If only 30% of the voters decided that the *mahalla* commission was not fulfilling its responsibilities, they could be dismissed. According to this statute, the misinterpretation of ideology and the misuse of power were sufficient reasons for dismissal. *Mahalla* committees were to have public meetings once every two months that was only valid if more than half of the voting population was present. Eventually, the 1932 statute realized many reforms in the Uzbek *mahalla*, and it gave a strong inspiration for all subsequent regulations in the *mahalla* in both Soviet and Independent time (Noori, 1997: 76).

The *mahalla* committee, on the one hand, became a hegemonic instrument for the Soviet regime to create new Uzbek national identity; on the other hand, it was used for fighting with the feudal social relations in Uzbek society. This is one of the most conflictual issues in the Soviet strategy in the central Asia. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, there was a political movement in the central Asia, known as *Jadid* which composed of small but powerful and effective elite group of central Asian community. *Jadids* came to be fascinated by the idea of the revolutionary transformation of the society. This group shared the common idea with the Soviet revolution's designers: it was necessary to fight with the feudal social relations in central Asia in order to set up a background for the October Revolution and

modern national identity. Thus, many reformist *Jadids* joined the new organs of the current center of power and *Jadid* intellectuals became the most important actors in the modernization process of Central Asia (Khalid, 2006). However, during the Stalin era, many intellectuals in central Asia were exiled or killed. By the time, the Soviet regime lost its crucial native supporter group in modernizing central Asia and thus, unavoidably its strategy began to change in fighting the feudal social relations in central Asia. The regime fell in a difficulty to find native collaborationist who was willing to destroy both feudal social relations and establish new modern national identity, and have proletarian consciousness.

The collectivization destroyed all properties of *waqfs* and *mahallas* as well as private ownership. For two reasons this was the most radical change in the daily lives of communities. First, a lot of collective farming areas and their production, which the *waqfs* donated to *mahalla* residents before the Soviet period, were confiscated by central government in the Soviet period. Second, with the abolishment of private properties, the elite families of *mahallas*, who were generally the leaders of a *waqf*, lost their economic power as well as their political power with the 1932 statute that changed all *mahalla* officers. Khalid argues that the institutionalization of bureaucratic control gave the state new avenues of regulation and made possible the ultimate confiscation of the *waqf* in 1928 (Khalid, 26: 470). There was class conflict in Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution, but there was both class and ethnic conflict in the central Asia. Therefore, the Bolsheviks implemented the collectivization to destroy class conflict, but it reproduced ethnic conflict in the central Asia because, as Morrison (1995: 435) claims, “the clearest division in central Asia was not that between proletarian and bourgeois, or peasant and aristocrat, but between European settlers and the Muslim population.” In addition, Roy claims that the situation that was born from the class conflict in Russia was transformed into ethnic conflict in central Asia, because the rural population was composed of Muslims and the workers and administrators were Russian. Therefore, Morrison claims, that in Tashkent, all Russian migrants, regardless if they were Mensheviks, Tsarists, or Bolsheviks, participated in the Soviet coalition and confiscated the properties of the Muslim population (Roy, 2000: 117).

The traditional life began to be destroyed in terms of all aspects. The collectivization and nationalization broke the old elite power and the religious institution, *waqf*. In addition, the cultural reforms that were implemented according to Lenin’s ideas had changed the local people’s life radically. In central Asia, there were two issues that the Bolsheviks focused on to destroy the traditional lifestyle and create a modern one: religion and gender. First, they made reforms in the religious institutions, which carried the traditional and religious lifestyle. *Qazi* (Islamic) courts were quickly suppressed and properties of *waqfs* were

nationalized. Thousands of *ulamas* (religious scholars) were arrested or killed and others were silenced (Khalid, 2006: 248). Second, the reforms included women and men as socially equal, and this policy was called the “*hujum*” policy. Although the Bolsheviks abolished the use of the *paranchi* in 1918, which is a head and face scarf that central Asian women wore, the fight against it had continued until the end of the 1930s. Muslim girls, who were not allowed to go to school under the influence of their religious lifestyle, were now required to have an official education. Muslim women and men began to work in the public area together (Arifhanova, 2002: 26). Apart from whether or not these reforms could succeed, the *mahalla* commission assumed an important role in these issues. Moreover, the Communist party used the *mahalla* commission to transform any kind of activity that belonged to the feudal regime. For instance, in 1924, the Party decided to call the wedding ceremony in the *mahalla* the *red* wedding ceremony, the *gap* the *red gap*, and the teahouse (*choikhona*) the *red* teahouse. That is why Abramson claimed that the *mahalla* commission monitored all communal and individual activities in the neighborhood (Abramson, 1998: 73). Therefore, its internal organization, its form of representation, and its functions were changed rather than abolished in the Soviet period.

The spatial arrangements of the new regime did not have a strong impact on the neighborhoods of the central Asian cities during the first years of the Soviet Union. The dual structure of the central Asian cities that emerged in the Tsarist period (old and new parts of the city) was one of the main areas that the Bolshevik power had to change according to its new Marxist-Leninist view. The creation of an equal society, according to this ideology, required an equal and holistic city structure. Therefore, the *Gosplan* (the Planning Institute of the Soviet Union) envisaged an urban plan that integrated the old with the new parts of the city. However, this plan was not implemented in central Asia because during the first years of the Soviet period, the Communist Party focused on the public areas rather than focusing on the residential units of the city in order to show the power of its ideology. Therefore, the spatial transformation was realized in the center of the city such as by the construction of the new magnificent public buildings and the new parking areas. The re-planning in the living spaces of the city was implemented during the post-World War II period. Therefore, although the Bolshevik power aimed to realize territorial justice within the city and establish a holistic city, it only began 30–35 years later in central Asia. However, to house newly commissioned *mahalla* committees public buildings were the only ones to be built in the center of a few *mahallas*. The most important public spaces within the *mahalla*, such as the local mosque, were generally destroyed and replaced by the *mahalla* commission (Noori: 68).

Similar neighborhood (kvartal) commissions already existed in the European quarters of the central Asian cities. As we saw earlier, the Tsarist power adopted the laissez faire policy for the native community's life. For example, in Tashkent, the Tsarist administration envisaged and formed the Russian/European side of the city with its infrastructure according to the urban plan whereas it ignored the old city and its *mahallas*. The administrative system was also different in the old and new Tashkent. In the European part, a new and modern local government was established; in the old part of the city, the administrative structure did not change during the colonial period except for the establishment of the *Politsiya Pristavi* to provide the security after the Cholera epidemic. This police system continued during the Soviet and the Independent period, but by different names. When the Bolsheviks decided to establish the *mahalla* commission in the old city in 1922, its administrative system became the same as it is in the neighborhood commission in the European part of the city. The old and new parts of the city were subjected to the same laws until 1929. Then, in 1934, a city Soviet was established by the Communist party and all districts of a city sent members to this Soviet. For example, the Tashkent districts, Lenin, Oktyabir, Stalin, and Proleterian (Arifhanova, 2002: 28), sent some members to the Tashkent Soviet.

In this section, I want to discuss the issue that under such circumstances, in the central Asia, the Soviet regime constructed a modern life style in the public sphere –at least its appearance was modern- and (re-)produced the feudal social relations in the private sphere as main features of Uzbek identity. Thus, in my opinion, despite the efforts to destroy the traditional life, the communist regime (re-)produced the feudal social relations in order to establish Uzbek identity. Although the *mahalla* committee was used by the regime to implement awareness-raising consciousness of the proletarian idea and although the elite of *mahalla* weakened through several policies such as collectivization of *waqf*; feudal social relations had survived in the daily life of *mahalla* and dual city structure of the colonial era continued. This was because the spatial intervention and urban planning of the regime was focused on the public space of central Asian cities.

Thus, the Second World War was one of the most important events that provided strong social solidarity for each Soviet citizen. For the central Asian people as well as all the other Soviet citizens, this war had the same meaning: the national honor war against fascism. Between the First and Second World War, the nationalization, collectivization, and intensive education policies helped to create a new central Asia that the Bolsheviks envisaged at the beginning of the October Revolution. In this new central Asia, the five Soviet republics had the common Soviet citizenship consciousness, but each of them had a different national identity; Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz etc. The consciousness of the Soviet citizenship and the

new national (Uzbek) identity brought a new and complex social structure to Uzbekistan. On the one hand, a traditional Uzbek identity could be preserved in the private sphere; on the other hand, a homogeneous modern Soviet citizenship identity was carried out in the public sphere. An Uzbek woman who works for a television station said, “*in the morning, we wore modern clothes and went to factories, and in the evening we wore atlas (traditional Uzbek) clothes and served our mother-in-law in our home.*” The traditional Uzbek and modern Soviet identity created a new political atmosphere that was mostly based on patriarchy, clientalism, and centralism. The traditional patriarchal structure and the modern rational bureaucratic system were integrated in a local institution, namely, the Uzbek *mahalla*.

To conclude, the localization of the Soviet state power as mentioned in chapter two had realized as well as the localization of the Soviet state hegemony through the *mahalla* committee. According to Noori, “decentralized administrative strategies figured prominently in Soviet efforts to govern and control Uzbekistan” (Noori, 2006: 535). However, these strategies did not only result in controlling Uzbek society. They also caused (re-)production of old social relations and through *mahalla* committee these reproduced social relations began to affect also the above mentioned strategies of the Soviet regime. As Lefebvre argues, the example of *mahalla* committee in the Soviet era shows clearly that the revolution was impossible only through realizing the economic policies such as collectivization, it is also necessary to achieve revolution in the daily life of the society. As mentioned earlier, there was a dialectic relationship between the Soviet state and the *mahalla* committee which shaped the Soviet power and hegemony in Uzbekistan. This articulation of *mahalla* with its social relations to the Soviet regime strengthened during the Khrushchev era when the *mahalla* committee was accepted as a civil society organization (*Jemoat Tashkiloti*) instead of a mere simple branch of the state organization as it used to be before¹²⁰. Related with this point, Abramson (1997, 227) argues that both “*modernity and tradition became the constituent parts of an ideology of modernism which the Soviet state employed to legitimize policies designed to change and control the social landscape of its territories in central Asia*”. According to Saroyan (1996: 138), “*traditional social identities that had been constructed around social categories such as class, clan, tribe, and local patterns of urban and rural residence gave way, under the Soviet policies, to a newer, overarching identity based on ethnicity*”. However, these pre-Soviets social categories survived under the Soviet

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policies within the dialectic relationship between the state power and local strategies. Tahirov, an Uzbek author, (1971: 12) defines the mahalla's role in the communist regime as:

"The mahalla committee led the residents of the neighborhood to work honestly and devotedly to reproduce the material and spiritual values of society and to protect the social order. The main principles of the mahalla life were collectivism, humility in social and individual life, helping each other in the mahalla community, and not to keep higher the individual interests than community and state interests (common interest). Moreover, the mahalla committee combated bad habits among mahalla community such as laizeness, ruffianism, imbalance, injustice, taking alcohol, addictive substances such as drugs. The mahalla committee paid important attention to the family. It supported to families to upbringing children to read and work. It tried to solve some problems among to family members, for example, if they wanted to divorce, the mahalla committee convinced them to improve their relations. Also, the mahalla committee created opportunities to protect some old traditions of the community that were useful and meaningful for the communist spirit and to adopt innovation and new tradition that promoted the society".

The mahalla committee was strictly dependent on the Communist party when it performed these activities, which were necessary for being a perfect Soviet communist citizen. According to Arifhanova, all these activities were shown as principles of communism during the Soviet period, but in fact, all these values were necessary for the social order (Arifhanova, 2002: 29). Cultural producers organized in the various creative unions often engaged in the invention and reinvention of traditions that would reinforce the position of the titular nation on the territory of each national republic. *"The hegemony of the titular nationality was reproduced in all spheres of cultural practice, from the publishing of books, periodicals, and newspapers to the activities of theater and folkloric song and dance ensembles"* (Saroyan, 1996: 140). According to Saroyan (1996: 139), in the national republics, the formation of the network of cultural administrations and the forms of cultural production they promoted, reflected the encouragement of nation-building within the context of Stalinist national-state formation. In the realm of culture, the inter-connection between the institutional form of the national republic and the program of nativization and nation-building became more apparent. At this point, the mahalla committee was the most crucial local cultural institution of the national-state formation in Uzbekistan during the Soviet era.

In the guidance of the local Soviet, the mahalla committee had to arrange the *lektsiya* (lecture) and the meetings in order to increase the resident's level of knowledge in some important area such as health, education, communist consciousness, and intellectual knowledge. The mahalla committee asked all the experts who lived in the mahalla to give speech in their expertise area such as doctors, academics, engineers, and artists. They were obliged to participate when the mahalla committee asked them (Rah'monov, 1970: 4). Also, the Communist party's members came and gave some speeches whenever they were asked,

and *mahalla* community had to participate in. According to *oqsoqol* of *Yangiobod mahalla* (*rais* Ubeydullah), between 1942 and 1967, the mahalla committee regularly arranged social activities such as the establishment of the *mahalla* club, the meetings, celebration, movie night, and seminars (Arifhanova, 2002: 29).

The *mahalla* committee was liable to provide that the *mahalla* women participated in the *mahalla* activities. It had to solve any problems of the *mahalla* women. It had to save the Soviet family and its culture and solve any problems within a family in the *mahalla*. The *hotun-kizlar komitasi* (the committee of the women) was responsible for training the women of the *mahalla* and finding solutions to their problems. It had to arrange regularly special meetings for only women and taught them how they could be ideal socialist women and discussed the recent political issues (Rah'monov, 1970: 5). It offered some courses for women, such as sewing, looking after children, and playing piano.... For instance, *qizil oktyabr* (red October) *mahalla* picked women up to cinema regularly (Komilov, 1961: 32).

The Soviet state left *mahalla* with its traditional functions and was only concerned with its ideological similarity to a Soviet institution. As such the *mahalla* was recognized by the state, and included in its structure and legalized. Owing to this, it survived in the Soviet time and even consolidated many aspects of it. Even in such a city as Tashkent where the traditional organization of space was broken and a significant part of the population was of different ethnic identity; about one third of the population lived in 1989 in *mahallas* and participated in the activities of the *mahalla* (Koroteyeva, 1999: 33). All these created the *mahalla* as a unique institution for Bolsheviks to achieve all their aims among the native population in Uzbekistan. This was the first time that the *mahalla* became a governing apparatus of the state with many functions.

5.2.1.2 Strategic Selectivity of the Uzbekistani Regime

Firstly, after independence the Uzbek identity and *o'zbekchilik* became a core issue in the establishment process of the nation state, having been selected as an alternative ideology¹²¹ for state hegemony and cultural authenticity as well as several traditional institutions (Rasanayagam, 2011: 120; Koroteyeva, 1999: 35). For the Uzbekistani state, the *mahalla* played a vital role in the (re)production of *o'zbekchilik* in daily life, and the President and

¹²¹ For differences between hegemony and ideology, see Joseph's "Hegemony: A realist Approach", 2002.

other high-ranking politicians used the term in every speech until it came to mean “being a good Uzbek through the retention of tradition”.

Urban theories started changing in the 1960s in parallel with the transformation of the global economy in an attempt to redefine urban politics in the neo-liberal system. In the globalized world, nation states have become less important, and increasingly been left as the local states of an international system. The experience of Uzbekistan provides a unique opportunity to test all these theories with their welfare and neo-liberal interpretation as well, as within this environment, the Uzbekistani state was also attempting to establish its nation state and carry out institution building under the neo-liberal concept. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Republic of Uzbekistan has gone through various political, social and economic transformations, and through these transformations, the Uzbekistani state has targeted the creation of a nation state and the creation of an Uzbek identity. As there was no Uzbek institutionalization that had been built on an Uzbek identity in the Soviet period, the leaders and social engineers decided to reorganize the *mahalla* as the core element of the Uzbek identity. Moreover, “*Uzbek government leaned Uzbek legitimating on Uzbek culture*” (Bektemirov, 2005, 165). This emerged in the era of “globalization,” and thereafter, “localization” and “the end of the nation state,” which was marked by the popularity of discussions framing social problems as “local and global issues” rather than issues related to the role of the national governments. The case of the strategies of the Uzbekistani state clearly demonstrates that, unlike the general argument, the nation state is not weakened, but rather is rescaled to adapt to the new global era with the help of hegemonic projects that are shaped by the political and economic leadership (elite) of the countries.

According to Carperntier (2005: 199), “*identities are over-determined by a diversity of discourses and subject positions that offer a multiplicity of identification points, thus guaranteeing the possibility of human subjectivity, agency and individuality*”. At this point, the Gramscian notion of hegemony provides an opportunity to explain theoretically how these identities gain stability within society. A regime should not only co-constitute economic structures, but also provide their rationale and legitimacy (Jessop, 1997: 56). According to Uzbekistani President Karimov, the development path of Uzbekistani society relies on its own identity (o'zbek),¹²² which supports the legitimization of the Uzbekistani regime – in other words, the hegemony of the ruling class – in economic life and civil society (Gadoyboev, 2004). Rasanayagam (2011: 108) emphasizes that “*the rationale of the Uzbek model is used to justify the government's continued direct control over many sectors*

¹²² o'zimizga khos va o'zimizga mos taraqqiyot yo'li.

of the economy, as well as the limited extent of democratic reforms”. Based on Gramsci, who resolved the Marxian problem in the reciprocal relationship between economic base and its politico-ideological superstructure, Jessop (1997: 56), argues that “*values, norms, vision, discourses, linguistic forms, popular beliefs are necessary for the realization of specific productive forces and relations of production*”. The strategy of the regime in Uzbekistan for the establishment of a national consciousness should be understood from this perspective, being based on the construction of *o'zbekchiliq* as a “*historically developed complex of distinctly Uzbek spiritual values and national personality traits, which are promoted as the basis for economic, political, and social life in the country*” (Rasanayagam, 2011: 106).

Indeed *o'zbekchiliq* was not something that was discovered by the Uzbekistani regime. As already mentioned in the previous section, the Soviet regime had also used *o'zbekchiliq* to establish an Uzbek nation in Central Asia. Moreover, the post-Soviet regime used the urban *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument in order to strengthen *o'zbekchiliq* among the local communities, and this had also been a strategy of the Soviet regime. Although the Uzbekistani state was attempting to rid itself of Soviet influence, the strategy of using the *mahalla kengash* to support the national consciousness shows a continuity in regime strategies that were passed on from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era. Consequently, it may be argued that *o'zbekchiliq* presented opportunities to both the Soviet and post-Soviet regimes to maintain its hegemony in Uzbekistan through the *mahalla kengashes*. In the next section, despite this continuity in employing the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument, the context and features of the national consciousness (*o'zbekchiliq*) differ from those of the Soviet era. Shortly, after the socialist era, the post-Soviet regime in Uzbekistan had to find an alternative ideology for its hegemony and strategically selected its own construction of Uzbekness (*o'zbekchiliq*) and cultural authenticity as well as several traditional institutions (Rasanayagam, 2011: 120; Koroteyeva, 1999: 35).

According to the Uzbekistani state, a national cultural hegemony had to be achieved for the maintenance of both the national ideology and the economic structure, which could be done in several ways. Cubitt (1998: 2) points out one such method, stating that the political elites needed to construct “*a conceptual language within which members of pre-existing ethnic, linguistic or political communities could express a sense of their collective being*” (dir. quot. Edenser, 2002: 8). At this point, the education system has become the most important issue since it is one of the strongest hegemonic instruments for the creation of a new national identity. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, schools and universities, as well as the language of education and text books, which were prominent tools for propaganda under the Soviet regime, started to change in line with the priorities of the new ideology. Related to

these developments, the number of students in primary schools with Uzbek as the language of instruction has increased, accompanied by a steady decline in the number of students attending Russian schools (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Number of Students in Primary Schools Offering Different Education Languages (n/%) (1995–2004)

n-(%)	1995	2000	2004
Total number	5,071,400	5,764,800	6,286,600
Students in Uzbek and other Turkish schools	4,405,200 (86)	5,137,800 (90)	5,661,200 (91)
Students in Karakalpakstan schools	136,400 (2)	152,900 (2)	153,300 (2)
Students in Tajik schools	137,300 (3)	139,900 (2)	128,000 (2)
Students in Russian schools	392,500 (9)	334,100 (6)	343,800 (5)
Students in other schools	-	0.1 (0)	0.3 (0)

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

The same patterns can also be observed for university students. As Table 5.2 shows, the ratio of university students in schools receiving education in the Uzbek language has increased from 70% to 80% between 1995 and 2004, while this proportion remained almost constant for universities teaching in Russian, dropping from 20% to 15% in the same period. There are two reasons why the Russian language is more popular in universities than in primary schools, one of which is the fact that many resources at the university level are available in the Russian language. Secondly, at the primary level there were already schools giving education in the Uzbek language in the Soviet Union.

Table 5.2 Number of Students in University (*Aliy okuv Yurtlari*) with Different Education Languages (n/%) (1995–2004)

n-(%)	1995	2000	2004
Total number	192,100	166,500	263,600
Students in Uzbek and other Turkish schools	138,000 (71)	125,000 (75)	213,300 (81)
Students in Karakalpakstan schools	8,600 (5)	6,200 (4)	9,000 (3.5)
Students in Tajik schools	500 (0.5)	800 (0.5)	500 (0.1)
Students in Russian schools	38,300 (20)	33,300 (20)	40,300 (15.3)
Students in English schools	-	300 (0.1)	500 (0.1)
Students in other schools	6,700 (3.5)	900 (0.4)	--

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

Besides, one of the main problems related to the national ideology is ethnic composition of Uzbekistani society since independence, i.e. from the post-Soviet area to the present day. In order to understand this issue, firstly, the ethnic structure of the population in Uzbekistan should be provided. According to the figures of the Republic of Uzbekistan Committee of

Nations¹²³ (Table 5.3), Uzbeks constituted 80% of the population in 2005. Nurettin Aka, the director of the Committee of Nations, stated in an interview that: “At the beginning of 1980s in Uzbekistan, while the ratio of Uzbeks population was 68%, in 1992 this ratio reached to 73%”. Brzezinski (1997: 181) gives the Uzbek population as 71.4% in 1995 in his book. This means that in approximately 20 years, the Uzbek population has increased by 12%. On the other hand, the ratio of Russians in the population was 8.3% in 1995 (Brzezinski, 1997: 181) and 4.2% in 2005 (Table 5.3). Moreover, as seen in Table 5.3, the ratio of Russian and Uzbek populations in Tashkent city are 24% and 61% respectively.

Table 5.3 Distribution of Population by Ethnicity (2005)

	Uzbekistan		City of Tashkent	
	2005	%	2005	%
Total	26.021.351	100	2.135.645	100
Uzbek	20.820.345	80	1.304.916	61
Karakalpak	567.074	2	5.637	0.2
Russian	1.103.366	4,2	511.053	24
Tajik	1.271.391	4,8	24.533	1.2
Oth. Turk. com.	1.619.529	6,3	165.291	7.7
Korean	157.341	0,8	48.988	2.3
Others	482.405	1,9	78.227	3.6

Source: Republic of Uzbekistan Committee of Nations

As the consequence of the policies and strategies implemented by the Soviet regime, all post-Soviet countries have struggled with ethnic problems to some extent. , Problems related to the forced emigration during the Stalin period have specifically emerged after the independence. In Uzbekistan, the strongest ethnic problem is related to the Tajik population, because: (a) the radical Islamic groups are mostly from the Tajik community; (b) Tajiks claim that Samarqand and Bukhara belong to the Tajik nation; and (c) the Tajik community is one of the largest ethnic groups in Uzbekistan. Mr. Nurettin, speaking about the ethnic problems, claims that:

“Our main ethnic problem is the Tajiks. They are different other ethnic communities... their feelings of nationalism are stronger...unlike the other ethnic communities they did not come during the Soviet period, they settled in earlier times. What is more, they have lived together with Uzbeks for centuries and as a result, on their birth certificates many

¹²³ The Institution of the Committee of Nations, answerable to both the president and the Council of Ministers, has been established to preserve the cultures of all ethnic communities living in Uzbekistan. Today, there are 140 cultural institutions belonging to different communities that come under the control of this Committee. One interesting program organized by the Committee is the “Sunday schools” (*Pazar Maktab*), in which the ethnic communities learn their own languages.

Tajiks are recorded as Uzbeks; even in the same family, one child is seen as Tajik in the passport whereas others are Uzbeks.”

The Uzbek government's national project is its creation of *o'zbekchiliq* at the local community level, which would bring about a “restoration of national traditions” as a component of the ideology of the new Uzbekistani national state (Koroteyeva, 1999: 30; Rasanayagam, 2011: 106), and would lead to the intervention of the central state into the urban *mahalla kengash* to ensure the creation of an ideal *mahalla* that complies with the identity politics of the Uzbekistani regime (*o'zbekchiliq*). The Uzbekistani state highlighted the traditional meaning of the *mahalla* and emphasized its importance for the creation of a new Uzbek identity, Uzbek citizens and the legitimization of the new hegemony of the Uzbekistani regime. “A traditional aspect of Central Asian society, the *mahalla*, is being recreated in independent Uzbekistan” (Robertson & Kangash, 2002: 266). The “Community self-Government” law, enacted in 1993 and revised in 1997, defines self-government as the *mahalla kengash* guaranteed by the Constitution and implemented independently local policies and issue of the community in the framework of “*national traditions and local customs*” (Pashkun, 2003, 52). In 1993, the most popular slogan in the country was “*the mahalla is our family, and the foundation and buttress of the state*” (Koroteyeva, 1999: 33). According to Noori (2006: 537), the *mahalla kengash* plays a significant role in enhancing the national consciousness of the local community, replacing the role of the Communist Party in the previous era. A similar statement is made by Koroteyeva (1999: 30), “*Using specific local institutions, the state thus simultaneously retains control over society and makes itself legitimate as a keeper of national tradition*”. Moreover, Hudaykulov (2003: 26) explains the importance of the *mahalla* in *o'zbekchiliq* through Karimov's speech on the 10th anniversary of the enactment of the Uzbekistani Constitution on December 5, 2002:

“We will devote 2003 to the mahalla, as the focal point of our life and administration. We turned the mahalla into a local governing body because every person and family are shaped within the mahalla life, and by its tradition and customs. Our administration system needs the mahalla to bring together all Uzbekistani citizens around the Uzbek identity”.

“*The example of the mahalla evidently shows how traditional Uzbek institutions have merged with Soviet structures, and how this heritage is being used by the modern Uzbek state*” (Koroteyeva, 1999: 31). The new Uzbekistani government began a campaign to restore the *mahalla* as the fundamental unit of Uzbekistani society. This campaign was part of a larger movement to recreate a unique Uzbek history and establish a set of Uzbek symbols. The *mahalla* was promoted as a traditional institution, with emphasis on the rights and obligations of local communities within the nation state. Slogans such as “*Your homeland begins from your mahalla,*” or “*If your neighbor is tranquil, you are tranquil, if*

your mahalla is tranquil, your country is tranquil,” were displayed on the streets and quoted in the press (Bogner, 2003: 6). A further slogan stated that the “*mahalla is a small hokimiyat and a large family,*”¹²⁴ and today, if asked for a definition of the *mahalla*, any *mahalla kengash* official will mention this slogan. This discourse of the Uzbekistani regime clearly demonstrates that the *mahalla kengash* is more than a body of local self-government, as defined in the Constitution of Uzbekistan. Practically, for the regime the *mahalla* is, on the one hand, a smaller version of the *hokimiyat* rather than a body of self-government, while on the other it can be considered as a larger version of the ideal Uzbek family. This clearly means that *mahalla* is a tool for social (re-)production through the construction of an ideal Uzbek family.

In a nutshell, the *mahalla* became a local unit in which the Uzbekistani nation was created. Indeed, the *mahalla kengash* was used as a hegemonic instrument by the Soviet regime as part of its *koranizatssia* policy, which is path-dependently implied by the Uzbekistani regime. As explained in the previous section, the Soviet regime (re)produced the urban *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit and used the *mahalla kengash* in the creation of the ideal Soviet citizen in Central Asia, instead of destroying them. The *mahalla kengash* was also used for the dissemination of the propaganda of the regime and for controlling society. The ideal Soviet citizen consciousness in Central Asia was constructed out of the socialist and communal spirit and ethnic identity (*o'zbekchiliq*), however it is important to note that the strong solidarity of the *mahalla* community was good also for the Soviet ideology, which was why the Soviet regime attempted to form the modern style of traditions rather than abolishing the tradition of the Uzbek society. Instead of viewing “traditions” as something to be eliminated from social life in order to build a new socialist society, the literature on the issue points out the need to “develop new contemporary traditions”. This switch suggests that the notion of tradition was regarded as a necessary vehicle for “*educating people in the spirit of communism*” (Rakhmanov 1970: 45; Fierman, 1991).

After independence, the same strategy was continued by the Uzbekistani regime for its own hegemonic project within the national identity. In the case study, almost all *oqsoqols* commented on the significance of their role in enhancing *o'zbekchiliq* after independence, however, today the ideal Uzbekistani consciousness consists of private property and entrepreneurialism under the national identity of *o'zbekchiliq*, and so it may be argued that the *mahalla kengash* in urban Uzbekistan has been used for social (re-)production under both the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes. That said, this social reproduction has been dependent

¹²⁴ *Mahalla kichi hokimiyat, katta oila.*

on very different socio-economic relations, which brought into existence a new excluded social group in Uzbekistan. The *mahallas* have received powerful support from the central government since the early stages of Uzbekistani independence, and the state considers their welfare to be essential for the stability of the republic. In his book *“Uzbekistan: National Independence, Economy, Politics and Ideology,”* President Karimov emphasizes that “an important feature of our society is that it is based on the idea of collectivism, the unity of communal interests and the priority of public opinion. Therefore, *mahallas* play a major part in democratizing society and realizing its main principles, foremost that of social justice. Today, there is no other entity more knowledgeable about the real financial situation of local families and their spiritual and cultural interests. *Mahallas* are *“the fairest and most credible mechanisms for social support of the population and should become a reliable support and an effective instrument of reform in our society”* (Bektemirov, 477). Karimov declared 2003 as the “Year of the *Mahalla*”. *“Under President Karimov, the Uzbek government has converted the mahalla committees from an autonomous expression of self-government to a national system for surveillance and control”* (Bogner, 2003: 2).

In the theory chapter, various definitions of the *mahalla* as a concept have been summarized and categorized under 2 main forms: the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit, and the *mahalla* as a political/administrative unit. The term “*mahalla*” is broadly used to refer to a “neighborhood” or “local community,” but in its historical meaning, *mahalla* has coordinated the interpersonal relationships and ensure that they manage themselves. *Mahalla kengashes* play a key role in the provision of social aid and advocating social benefits (Sievers, 2002: 132). According to Epstein (2004: 34), as a socio-spatial organization the *mahalla* brings together and integrates local people in solidarity. However, insofar as the *mahalla* is a part of the traditions of Uzbekistan, it has a far more layered structure of meanings, among which are its physical location, a network of social relations and a state administrative unit (Bogner, 2003: 5). Bektemirov (2004: 477) defines *mahalla* as *“representing a clearly defined socio-demographic, cultural and spiritual entity, as well as an administrative-territorial entity, in which people are united by traditions, customs and human, business and legal relationships”*.

In short, for the new Uzbekistani regime, the *mahalla* is not only a form of local self-government in the decentralized administrative system, but also a hegemonic instrument for the creation of the new nation state. In this regard, it embodies several meanings, being a *fuqoralar jomiyati* (civil society), a community-based organization and a socio-spatial unit in which the traditions, norms and customs of *o'zbekchilik* are re-produced. As mentioned in Chapter Three, local variations are important in the shaping of the legal regulations of the

state. The diverse characteristics of Tashkent's *mahallas*, which were shaped mostly during the Soviet era, have had a great influence on the structure of the present-day *mahalla kengash*, and also on the perceptions of the members of the *mahalla kengash* concerning the meaning of the *mahalla*. One of the main hypotheses of this thesis is that the *mahalla kengash*, as a political/administrative unit, is affected by the *mahalla*'s different socio-spatial characteristics and power relations. Many studies of the Uzbekistani *mahalla* argue that there is no difference between the Soviet and Uzbekistani regime in terms of their *mahalla* strategies (Noori, 2006; Baykal, 2007; Abramson, 1996; Bektemirov, 2004), however, while this is an accurate argument, it does not fully explain the *mahalla* structure in Uzbekistan. The reason for this lies in the fact that the different *mahalla* structures have affected the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash*, as well as the state regulations, in both the Soviet era and the period following independence. For this reason it is important to pay attention to the opinions of local officials on the state regulations regarding the *mahalla kengash*, and even how they define the *mahalla*. Do they agree with the definition of the state? As Noori (2006: 540) claims: "*On a symbolic level, the mahalla kengash plays a very important role in shaping public perceptions of the state's reach. However, much like the state's assumptions regarding the mahalla, this is largely a myth*". For instance, it is argued that the real Uzbekistani *mahalla* was born after independence with its traditional meaning. Is this really the case? As suggested by local official, are there significant differences between the Soviet and the independence periods in terms of the definitions of the *mahalla*. Chapter Four defines four types of *mahalla* that exist in Tashkent today, referred to as A (old part of Tashkent), B (relocated at the periphery of Tashkent during the Soviet era), C (transformed into *mikroraion* by the Soviet regime) and D (established by the Soviet regime as an ideal Soviet residential unit). In the following sections, the different types of *mahalla kengash* will be analyzed with reference to the issue of *o'zbekchiliq*.

5.2.2 *O'zbekchiliq* and Different Mahalla Types

In this section, the dialectic relationship between the Uzbekistani regime and the urban *mahalla kengash* is analyzed in two steps. First, the opinions of the *mahalla* officials on the differences between the Soviet and the post-Soviet *mahalla* policies will be analyzed to show how their opinions have changed regarding the meaning of *mahalla*. It is apparent that opinions regarding the meaning of the *mahalla* are shaped according to the Soviet experience of the respondent. Second, in some *mahallas* the strategies and responses of the *mahalla kengashes* are out of compliance with the ideal *mahalla* envisaged by the Uzbekistani regime. This results in a conflict in the urban politics of Uzbekistan and a subsequent

intervention by the regime in the *mahalla kengash* on a top-down basis, reversing the state's decentralist strategy in the direction of centralism.

5.2.2.1 The *Mahalla Kengash* from the Soviet to the Post-Soviet Era: *Fidoiliq*

As explained in the previous section, the Uzbek *mahalla* has many meanings that are sometimes opposite each other. Epstein and Winter explain these opposite meanings of *mahalla* as, “in public, the institution of the *mahalla* is evoked constantly as proof of the continuation of indigenous traditions and democratization, but in private the most democratic elements of the tradition are quietly repressed in the interest of national security” (Epstein-Winter, 2004: 51). Now, I will try to analyze how different types of *mahalla* react to these different meanings of *mahalla* in order to understand the reaction of local to the central government's one policy that changes the meaning of *mahalla*. For this aim, residents and officers of different *mahallas* were asked the following question: “What is your opinion about the meaning of *mahalla*?” Their answers reveal important issues to answer the main question of this dissertation.

The opinions of the *mahalla* officers from different *mahalla* types on the differences between the *mahalla* policies of the Soviet regime and the new Uzbekistani regime are central in understanding the different structures of *mahallas* in the present day. In addition, their opinions on the relationship between the *mahalla kengash* and the central government, mostly represented by the *raikom* or *raispalkom* during the Soviet era and by the district *hokim* in the period following independence, are also crucial. Thus, the following part is an important explanation for the current and next chapters. An analysis of the findings of these interviews facilitates an understanding of how and why these opinions differ regarding the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengash*. The *mahalla kengash* can be evaluated as either an obstacle or an agent of the central government (Cockburn, 1971; Jones, 1998) because of the inherently dual character of the local government.

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, although many scholars share the opinion that there was continuity in the relationship between the *mahalla kengash* and *hokimiyat* in the passage from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era, the case study findings reveal that the officers of Tashkent's *mahallas* have different views on the issue. In this part, these different opinions regarding the meaning of *mahalla* and, accordingly, their opinions about the Soviet *mahalla* policy will be presented and evaluated.

There is an apparent difference in the opinions of the *mahalla* officers of different *mahalla* types in their definitions of what a *mahalla* is now, and what it was during the Soviet era. The *maslahatchi* of A-1 *mahalla* said: “The *mahalla* has existed in our society for centuries, and the word ‘*mahalla*’ itself has existed since 970. Therefore, *mahalla* is part of our tradition and custom. Now our good President has given new meaning to the *mahalla*, which is *oz ozini bashkaruv*”. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* stated his belief that: “In Uzbekistan it is impossible to arrange daily life without the *mahalla*. The *mahalla* means daily life for the Uzbeks. Thanks to our President, the *mahalla* has now become also a small *hokimiyat*”. To sum up, for the officers in A-type *mahallas*, the *mahalla* has roots in pre-history, and represents the ideal instrument for the presentation of the Uzbek identity; and in this sense, some of the officers identified the *mahalla* with Islam, and defined it accordingly. Many of the definitions seemed to be mostly related with the socio-spatial meaning of the *mahalla*; however, the officers of the B-type *mahalla*, compared to those in the A-type *mahallas*, emphasized the importance of the *mahalla* for communal activity. B-type *mahallas* were established during the Soviet period by the communities who chose to live in a traditional *mahalla*, and who maintained a conservative Islamic lifestyle with traditional customs, especially in retaining their private property¹²⁵. Accordingly, in these *mahallas* the communal spirit was often mentioned by the residents and officers when they were asked to define the *mahalla*. For instance, the *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla* said on this point:

“We opened a chaikhona (teahouse), cleaned our roads, established the mahalla building and a polyclinic altogether through hashar. In the mahalla every resident helped in whatever way they could, and we did everything together in mahalla. The mahalla means that all of the neighborhood residents work together for their residential area. To be a mahalla, residents should take an interest in their mahalla”.

The main reason for the different responses of the *mahalla* officers in the A- and B-type *mahallas* is that they went through different experiences in their duties during the Soviet era. While the officers of B-type *mahallas* emphasized the resistance of the *mahalla* community to the Soviet regime when defining the *mahalla*, the officers of the A-type *mahallas* claimed that the Soviet regime mostly ignored the *mahalla*. For example, the secretary of A-1 *mahalla* said:

“The mahalla was very important. ... The mahalla sustained itself, although the central government paid no attention to it during the Soviet period. That’s why mahalla is still alive – due to the traditions and customs of the mahalla, the oqsoqols and the volunteers in the mahalla, like us. The Soviet regime never cared about the mahalla, but thanks to independence, our President gives due importance to the mahalla and so in the future, the mahalla will be more powerful”.

¹²⁵ As seen in Chapter Four, most of the residents of B-type *mahallas* had to settle in these residential units in order not to give up their traditional lifestyles, but lacked the networks with the state institutions that would allow them to obtain a new *kvartal* in the labor block.

In a similar fashion, the *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* explained the differences between the Soviet and the Uzbekistani regime about the *mahalla* policy as:

“During the Soviet era, there was the raikom in tuman and the gorkom in the city instead of the hokimiyat. There was also a mahalla kengash at that time, but it was a small officialdom of the raikom. Our only duty was sprafka during the Soviet era, and so it could not be described as local self-government. However today it is a small hokimiyat! Today it is a legal entity that has its own budget, laws and functions. We are more powerful today than in the Soviet times”.

For the officers of B-type *mahallas*, the *mahalla* was an area of resistance against the Communist Party during the Soviet era. The *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla*, talking on this matter, said: *“... these communal buildings, places, the garden of the mahalla were established by the community itself. Sometimes, the Party queried us on how we had established these buildings, where we had found the money; but we resisted against the Party and retained our community spirit”*. Responding to the same question, the *maslahatchi* of A-2 *mahalla* said: *“The Soviet state was not the enemy of the old city and its mahallas. Neither did we receive help like the new city did, but nor did it destroy us”*.

The most frequent response in the interviews with the *mahalla* officers of the B-type *mahallas* was that the Soviet regime was suppressive regarding the right to private property. As the interviews with the residents of B-type *mahallas* point out, the Communist Party put pressure on their lifestyle and their right to private property. However, since these residents were mostly self-employed (engaged in such fields as trade) the Party did not have the power to control them in the workplace. Therefore, when comparing the Soviet period and the current regime, the *mahalla* officers of B-type *mahallas* mostly explained that at the current time no state institution has control over them, and they can live in their *mahalla* freely. It can be inferred from this that the B-type *mahalla* citizens were the most content citizens. The below passage from the *oqsoqol* of a B-2 *mahalla* explains the issue very well:

“...the mahalla is a self-governing body today. All of our residents are free. We can participate in hashar freely, we can financially support our mahalla and wealthy residents can help their poorer neighbors. Nobody comes and asks why you help your mahalla or your neighbors, or where you found the money. Since independence, everything in our life has been regained. In the past, we could not repair our homes or our mahalla because we were afraid of the Party; but after the collapse of the Soviet regime our country became independent, our mahalla became independent, our citizens and residents became independent, people became independent. ... We can work wherever we want, we can earn as much money as we want, we can sell whatever we want, we can buy whatever we want for our children, we can give money to the mahalla kengash in whatever amount we want ... I remember when I was young, the residents organized hashar in order to repair our streets, plant trees and whitewash all of the buildings in the mahalla. The Party immediately came and took our oqsoqol, and asked our elders how they had managed these activities, where they had found the money, why they had done this

collectively, without the permission of the Party. Today, if we do these activities, our hokim appreciates our efforts ... Today there are lots of wealthy residents, businessmen who always help to the mahalla ...”.

In contrast, officers of the D- and C-type mahallas always refer to the political/administrative meaning of the mahalla to the extent that when they were asked about the mahalla; they always speak in terms of the mahalla kengash. For example, the oqsoqol of D-2 mahalla said:

“... under the initiative of our President, the mahalla has become ozuni ozi bashkarish (local self-government), after which it has begun to be accredited to mahalla by all institutions and people in Uzbekistan for 16 years. Because every year, laws are made about the mahalla, hokimiyat and the central government devolved their many functions and authority to the mahalla.”

In addition, according to the first oqsoqol of D-4 mahalla:

“The mahalla has a long history in Uzbekistan, but after independence it gained a legal status and its functions and authority were increased. Prior to that time there was no mahalla here; it only existed in the old city, where it had no authority. Today, mahalla has its own budget, legal status, a signet and oqsoqol and other salaried officers. Accordingly, the mahalla is now a local self-governing body in Uzbekistan and the only authority in the residential units.”

Related to this issue, and from a different perspective than the officers of the A- and B-type mahallas who emphasized the fidoiliq and the collective lifestyle (e.g. hashar) and the socio-spatial element of the mahalla; the common opinion among the mahalla officers of C- and D-type mahallas was that the functions of mahalla kengash, especially on social policies, had been devolved by the central government and implemented by the mahalla kengash in the mahalla community. The oqsoqol of C-2 mahalla raised this point as follows:

“As a local self-governing body, the mahalla kengash has great power in Uzbekistan. With the oqsoqol, secretary, maslahatchi, Jen-Soviet, posbon and uchaskavoy, the mahalla kengash deals with many local issues in the mahalla. Every year, the mahalla becomes more empowered compared to the previous year due to the vast number of new regulations introduced by our President. How? For example, first, the mahalla kengash gives financial assistance to poor families within the mahalla community and acquaints the community with all of the new laws made by the government. The central government declared us as a small hokimiyat, which means that all local issues should be resolved at the mahalla-scale. So, in a sense I am the hokim of the mahalla”.

Likewise, the oqsoqol of the D-2 mahalla said, “we resolve all our problems in the mahalla through the mahalla kengash. For example, in the last eight years we have not conveyed any problems in the mahalla to any other state institutions. I hope that in the future the mahalla kengash will have more power, and that it will not be necessary for any resident to contact upper state institutions to resolve problems in their daily lives”. There is another point that should be emphasized here. The residents of C- and D-type mahallas have similar opinions

with their *mahalla* officers. They also emphasized the political/administrative meaning of the *mahalla* and evaluated the *mahalla kengash* as a state institution that should be responsible for providing public services to the *mahalla* community. However, many residents of the A- and B-type *mahallas* consider the *mahalla kengash* also as an institution to which they should contribute for the well-being of their *mahalla*. There were also differences of opinion regarding the differences in the functions carried out by the *mahalla* during the Soviet and the independence eras. These will be analyzed in more detail in the next chapter.

The *mahalla* officers of C- and D-type *mahallas* emphasized the autonomy of the *mahalla kengash* while comparing the Soviet and the Uzbekistani states's *mahalla* policies, more so than their colleagues in A- and B-type *mahallas*. The *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* said: *"After independence, the mahalla kengash became a local self-governing body, which meant that the raikom (hokim) could not intervene in our business. If we disobeyed the law, the raikom could only amend our decisions with a court order. This is real self-government"*. I immediately interrupted him, and said *"I never heard such kind of comments; surely the hokim is so strong that he is able to intervene in all of the decisions of the mahalla kengash?"*, to which he replied: *"You are right, because the Soviet bureaucratic structure is still maintained. Many new regulations were made, but in practice people behave how they used to ... In the future they will change, I am sure"*. When asked what had changed since independence, he said:

"Our President knows the importance of the mahalla and believes that creating real Uzbeks is possible only through the Uzbek mahalla. Through the agency of the mahalla, the state can learn about all the problems of its citizens, the situation of its citizens, their opinions of the state and the politics of the new regime, and can resolve them through the mahalla kengash. Today, the mahalla kengash so helps our State that no one can. Our residents have learned how people should live in a mahalla and what a mahalla really means after independence".

The *oqsoqol* of D-1 *mahalla* used similar expressions when defining the *mahalla*:

"Our state is trying to establish a new system and structure ... and it is doing whatever it can to that end ... Every state passes through difficult times, and Uzbekistan is no different, but thank God, everything is improving. The policy, projects, politics and everything that our President is deciding upon and implementing are right and proper. For example, the mahalla has become a self-governing body. The main difference in the period since independence is that our residents have learned the real meaning of the mahalla, they have learned what the mahalla is. Thanks to our President and his speeches and decrees. Previously, we did not know what the mahalla was. In a real mahalla, people help and respect each other, engage in hashar, find work for an unemployed neighbor, attend the weddings and funerals of neighbors in their mahalla. Today, our residents are learning to build a real mahalla."

The D-type *mahallas* were the real labor block of the Soviet Union in terms of their spatial features, the occupations of the residents and the social status. So, for the officers of D-type *mahallas*, the *mahalla* was seen as a tool of the state to assist in the adaptation of the citizens to the new regime and to introduce them to the new state ideology, rather than having a controlling function. When asked for their opinions on the meaning of *mahalla*, all officers in the D-type *mahallas* claimed that the Uzbekistani state had difficulties in establishing a new system and regime in the country, and that the *mahalla* has been one of the most important auxiliary institutions in overcoming this situation.

The importance of the *mahalla* for the Uzbekistani state, emphasized by many of the officers of D-type *mahallas*, was never mentioned by the officers of C-type *mahallas*. Besides, while the residents of D-type *mahallas* had, according to the *mahalla* officers, learned the “real” meaning of the *mahalla* just after independence, the officers of C-type *mahallas* generally emphasized that the residents were engaged in traditional *mahalla* activities, and were maintaining their *mahalla* lives also during the Soviet regime. This constitutes one of the essential differences between the C- and D-type *mahallas*. Unlike the officers of D-type *mahallas*, those in C-type *mahallas* dwelled on two main points when discussing the meaning of the *mahalla* and when comparing the policies of the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes. First, like the officers of B-type *mahallas*, those working in the C-type *mahallas* emphasized the control function of the *mahalla*. In other words, in C-type *mahallas*, the control function that the *mahalla* has over the community through the local officers has become dominant over the other functions and meanings. During the Soviet period these *mahallas* were JEG, whose chair was appointed by the Communist Party to spy on the neighborhood community. So, for this reason the officers of this type of *mahalla* consider the *mahalla* as a tool of the state, allowing it to reach the community and society and to be kept informed. In addition, unlike D-type *mahallas*, C-type *mahallas* were transformed from A-types during the Soviet period without changing their socio-demographic structures. Therefore, for the Communist Party, this type of *mahalla* (the new *microraion*, i.e., the C-type *mahalla*) was different from the D-type in the sense that the residents preserved the old customs and traditions of the Uzbek community. For this reason the Communist Party paid more attention to control the C-type *mahallas*, while it concentrated on modernizing and changing the D-type *mahallas*. In this context, the *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla* said, when asked for his opinion on the meaning of *mahalla*:

The mahalla is a small hokimiyat today ... a kind of bridge for the state to get news from its citizens and to govern them. That's why, today the state pays more attention to the mahalla. For example, it knows who will go to work tomorrow, who will come home in the evening, who will do bad

things, etc... The state can learn everything about all of its citizens through the mahalla”.

Similarly, one of the old members of the Erk Party¹²⁶ said:

“The difference between the mahalla kengash of the Soviet times and that of today is that in the Soviet era there was a single spy of the Communist Party in the mahalla, whereas today there are more than 10 spies in the mahalla kengash ... Real mahalla life was destroyed when the Tsarist Regime occupied the country, and the Soviet regime was simply a follower of the Tsarist regime”.

A second comment made by the officers of C-type *mahallas*, that were home to less wealthy residents compared to D-types, was related to the increasing economic and material opportunities in the *mahalla* after the independence. On this issue, the *uchaskavoy noziri* of C-1 *mahalla* said:

“After independence, everything in our mahalla has developed; our women and young people are happy now; many new and large factories have been established; our mahalla officers are now paid; and financial support is given by the central government. In the past, we had a small and old mahalla building, but today, thanks to our President, we have a large new mahalla building”.

On the other hand, unlike the A- and B-type *mahallas*, the officers of C and D types gave similar accounts of the issue of voluntarism in the *mahalla* during the Soviet and the independence eras. The *Jen-Soviet* of D-3 *mahalla* said: *“In the Soviet era, voluntarism was more effective in the JEG. Now, there is no voluntarism, everyone just thinks for themselves. For example, my son went to the United States to earn money, but a real mahalla resident should not leave his/her country and mahalla”.* When asked whether she preferred the Soviet era or today, she answered:

“I cannot answer this question. After independence the state became our state. Before that, we lived as a colonial society. We could not pray during the Soviet era, we could not speak about Islam, but at that time there was community spirit. Indeed, the idea of making sacrifices for the community is inherent in both the Uzbek tradition and communism. Life is different now; no one trusts anyone anymore”.

The *posbon* of C-3 *mahalla* also spoke about the same issue:

“Unlike before, there is no voluntarism or respect today. Many people think that the real mahalla changed during the Soviet era, but indeed the real (hoqiqi) spirit of the mahalla – fidoiliq – disappeared after independence. Before (during the Soviet era), people worked for their mahallas without expecting any benefit, but now they engage in collective activities in the mahalla only if they see any benefit for themselves. The mahalla has been turned into a second job that the state pays salary for. It is not a real mahalla”.

¹²⁶ In the first years of independence, the ERK political party was one of the main opponents of Karimov. Like other opposition parties, such as the Birlik and Islamic Renaissance Parties, its leader was exiled.

In short, it is clear that the opinions regarding the meaning of the *mahalla* are shaped according to the Soviet experience of the respondent. Since the Communist Party ignored the A-type *mahallas*, today the officers of these *mahallas* refer to its socio-historical meaning when talking about the *mahalla*. Since the community established their houses and the *mahalla* as a whole had used their own resources during the Soviet period to maintain their traditional lifestyle; the Communist Party always treated the B-type *mahallas* with doubt and suspicion. The residents and the officers of B-type *mahallas* preserved their traditional lives and their private property through the *mahalla*, despite the attitude of the Communist Party. For this reason, today they still have lots to say about the communal activity and the resistance of the *mahalla* while defining it.

On the other hand the residents of the other two groups of *mahallas* (C- and D-types) see the *mahalla* from a completely opposite perspective to those of A- and B-types. While explaining the meaning of the *mahalla*, the residents of C- and D-types always associated with the *mahalla kengash*. That means that they view the *mahalla* not as a socio-spatial unit, but as an administrative/political unit. Since the social structures and the residents of C-type *mahallas* mostly remained unchanged during the Soviet era, they managed to retain their traditions and customs. This is their main divergence point from the D-type *mahallas*. The Communist Party used the JEG, *damkom* and *padezkom* to spy on the residents of the community of the C-type *mahallas*, and so today, when talking about the administrative/political meaning of the *mahalla*, they emphasize the controlling functions of the *mahalla kengash* over the community.

Lastly, it can be said that the D-type *mahallas* are a product of the Soviet regime, in that they represent exactly the socialist labor block of the Soviet apartment type in terms of their physical appearance and social structure. For this reason, when the residents of this type of *mahalla* define the *mahalla*, referring to its administrative/political meaning, like in the C-type *mahallas*, they emphasize the role of *mahalla kengash* in transforming the community in accordance with the state hegemony. As can clearly be seen, the different perceptions of the *mahalla* officers of different *mahalla* types were shaped mostly according to their different Soviet experiences.

5.2.2.2 State Intervention in the *Mahalla Kengash*

If the Uzbekistani *mahalla*, as a local institution, is the area in which the national identity is created or (re-)produced, then it should be also (re-)formed in line with *o'zbekchiliq*. There are many recorded cases in which the Uzbekistani state has tried to influence the *mahalla kengashes* in its new national traditional project of *o'zbekchiliq*. Thus, despite being legally

appointed as a body of self-government, the central government has intervened in the *mahalla kengash* in the urban area through the *hokimiyat*, aiming to restore national traditions. Therefore, not only is the community or civil society socially (re-)produced in line with *o'zbekchiliq*, but also the *mahalla kengash* is shaped according to this project. Moreover, if the structure of the urban *mahalla kengash* is not complimentary with the ideal *mahalla* vision of the Uzbekistani regime, the regime again does not hesitate in intervening and changing the structure of the *mahalla kengash*. This point is demonstrated in this section through two cases: (a) the ethnic background of the *oqsoqol*, and (b) election system of *mahalla kengash*.

The findings of the case study revealed that all *oqsoqols* in the surveyed *mahallas* were Uzbek, aside from one woman *oqsoqol* in D-3 *mahalla* who had an Uyghur mother and an Uzbek father, who said that there was no difference between being Uzbek and Uyghur. Some 30 *mahalla* officials in 12 *mahallas* were interviewed, among which only one male (*Uchaskavoy noziri*) was not Uzbek, having Tajik origins. It is common for *mahallas* to have mostly Uzbek residents, but in D- and C-type *mahallas* the residents were from more diverse backgrounds. For example, Russians were the predominant race in D-4, D-1 and D-2 rather than Uzbeks, however all three *oqsoqols* were of Uzbek origin. The *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* was not elected, but appointed by the *Hokimiyat* after the elected *oqsoqol* was rejected by the *Hokimiyat*. The *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* was working in the *Hokimiyat* (*Raispalkom* in the Soviet era) for many years, and thus was supported by the *Hokimiyat* over the other candidates. The *oqsoqol* of D-1 *mahalla* had been *oqsoqol* for at least 10 years after retiring from the state planning department. One 87-year-old Russian resident of D-1 *mahalla* said: “No Russian resident is interested mahalla affairs. The activist representing the residents elects the *oqsoqol*, and in our mahalla there is no Russian activist, meaning no Russian candidate. For this reason, I don't believe a Russian could be elected as an *oqsoqol*. Also, even if a Russian was elected, the *Hokimiyat* would object. ... I do not want be a candidate to be an *oqsoqol* because there is no power held by the mahalla kengash today in any area. ... There is construction in the middle of the mahalla on the site of our old mahalla garden. ... *Hokimiyat* gave this site to a company, and the mahalla kengash was powerless to prevent it”.

In addition, all *oqsoqols* but one is from Tashkent. A situation in which only one *oqsoqol* comes from outside of Tashkent creates the ethnic segregation in the *mahalla* that the Russian population dominates. For example, a Russian girl from D-2 *mahalla* said: “I came and settled in this mahalla recently, thus, I do not know about the mahalla kengash; however I do know many Russian neighbors who have lived in this mahalla for a long time who also

do not know the oqsoqol. ... We have no business with the mahalla kengash. My neighbor went to the mahalla kengash one time to request social assistance, and the woman from the mahalla kengash that deals with woman and family issues, said: "We do not know you, we have never seen you before –maybe you are not living in this mahalla. Not one day did you come to help the mahalla, how dare you now come to the mahalla for help!"

Despite the ethnic differences among the *mahalla* types, all residents share the same idea that the *mahalla* belongs to the Uzbek nation and, thus, that Russians or Russified Uzbeks are unable to manage *mahalla* affairs. The first *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* after independence, speaking about this issue, said: *"We have a lot of Russian families in our mahalla, and so in our mahalla, Russian culture is dominant. For example, he is Uzbek, his mother and father are Uzbek, but he is like a Russian, he knows and speaks Russian, he does not know any Uzbek traditions, he is Uzbek but he is not o'zbekchi ... our mahalla is different, in the Soviet era we became like Soviet citizens, and indeed became like Russians in my opinion, as to be a Soviet citizen meant being Russian during the Soviet time. All of our children went to Russian schools during the Soviet period and so nobody knows Uzbek. Therefore, we claim that if the oqsoqol is a good Uzbek, and know o'zbekchiliq, our children also can be nurtured to be good Uzbeks. For this reason, this oqsoqol is good, thanks be to God, the Hokimiyat appointed this oqsoqol, so he is a good Uzbek. In our mahalla Russian culture is dominant, and we should change this situation. We need to do many things as a mahalla kengash to achieve this. For example, we should organize a conference about being Uzbeks, about o'zbekchiliq, about Uzbek history, for our children"*. Although interviewees generally agreed that the *mahalla* belonged to the Uzbek nation and was a part of *o'zbekchiliq*, the function of the *mahalla kengash* to nurture ideologically the residents to become good citizens draws many parallels with the Soviet tradition and mentality. In this sense, although some believed that during the Soviet period, the *mahalla* was an area of resistance area for the Uzbeks and *o'zbekchiliq* against Sovietization and Russification, because of the Soviet policy, which was to protect the patriarchal and traditional *mahalla* control of the society, it returned to a Soviet institution.

Despite the fact that all but one *oqsoqol* in the 12 *mahallas* surveyed in the case study were of Uzbek origin, being an Uzbek alone did not guarantee appointment as an *oqsoqol*. Especially in the *mahallas* with predominantly Russian or Korean populations, elected Uzbek *oqsoqols* are not always approved by the *Hokimiyat*, and D-4 *mahalla* serves as a good example of this. The population of D-4 *mahalla* is mostly Russian and Korean, and an Uzbek man was elected as *oqsoqol* in the last *mahalla* elections in December of 2008. However, the *Tuman Hokimiyat* rejected his appointment because of his injured foot, and

appointed a recent *oqsoqol* who had lived in the *mahalla* for only 10 years. A Korean woman (retired worker, 54 years-of-age) in D-4 *mahalla* explained the last *mahalla* election as follows:

“Last year (2007), a rumor was circulating about the construction of a business center in Navoi Street¹²⁷ within the border of our mahalla that would require the demolition of a house and a green area. Our ex-oqsoqol started a petition among the residents to prevent this business center from being built, which she would hand to the district Hokimiyat.¹²⁸ Shortly afterwards, she was dismissed by the Hokimiyat amid claims of corruption. In the mahalla election this year (2008), we elected one person as an oqsoqol but the hokimiyat did not approve him and appointed a resident who had lived in our mahalla for only 10 years as oqsoqol. Now, there is a good relationship between the Hokimiyat and the oqsoqol, but there is no relationship between the oqsoqol and the residents. During the Soviet era, our JEG¹²⁹ worked for our mahalla; but today, the mahalla kengash works for Hokimiyat, and the Hokimiyat works to gain money, but not for the residents!”

As explained in the next chapter, according to Article 105 of the Constitution, and Article 20 of the Law of “Self-Governing Institutions,” elections to appoint the *oqsoqol* and *mahalla kengash officials* are to be held once every two-and-a-half years, and the elected candidates are to be approved by the district or city *hokim*. It is not clear in what situations the *hokim* has the right to appoint another person as an *oqsoqol* in the place of an elected candidate. In practice, the *Hokimiyat* regularly appoints the *mahalla kengash* chair, meaning that the elections are merely a formality. The recent *oqsoqol* of D4 *mahalla*, firstly, argued that he could not be *oqsoqol* with his injured foot. Then, I asked whether, or not, there is any arrangement about an injured person not being able to be an *oqsoqol*. He explained that

“No, there is no arrangement about this ... he was disabled and would not have been able to work well enough. How can he help the mahalla if he needs help himself? That is why the Hokim rejected his election. Moreover, even he doesn't even know Uzbeki, despite being of Uzbek origin, and he knows nothing about musulmanchiliq.¹³⁰ You should know that the mahalla is dependent on o'zbekchiliq, the mahalla is our Uzbek tradition. ... How can one become a leader without knowing about o'zbekchiliq? He is Uzbek but does not know Uzbek or Islamic tradition. If you want to be an oqsoqol, being an Uzbek is not enough by itself, you should also know o'zbekchiliq and Uzbek tradition. If he had been the oqsoqol, who would have respected him?”

The Soviet and the Uzbekistani regime shared many common points in their use of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument in the (re-)production of a national identity. However, national identity is hegemonically constructed by the regime within the context of

¹²⁷ Navoi street was established during the Tsarist period and is one of the main streets of the city center which connects old and new Tashkent

¹²⁸ In Uzbekistan, *mahalla kengash* has no right and authority in urban planning process, in which the city *hokimiyat* is the unique authority.

¹²⁹ It is an administrative unit under the control of *raispalkom* that provided the infrastructural service

¹³⁰ Muslim and Islam

the political economy. In this point, the components of *o'zbekchiliq* during the transition era are quite differentiated from the Soviet era. While *o'zbekchiliq* was based on such characteristics as *fidoiliq*, solidarity and communal spirit, recently the main components of *o'zbekchiliq* have changed, to become individualism and entrepreneurialism, necessary for a market-based economy. As a result, conflict emerged mostly in the Soviet-type residential units in Uzbekistan due to the ethnic structure of these *mahallas*; however the capacity of these *mahallas* to adapt to the market-based economy was another factor in this regard. *Muhtar Aka* (Uzbek), who served as Economy Minister during the Soviet era, has lived in D-4 *mahalla* for more than 40 years, and explained this point as:

“Our mahalla was an elitniy¹³¹ mahalla during the Soviet era. Many intellectuals and civil servants lived here, but after independence, many residents became poor and moved to the periphery of Tashkent, which is cheaper. Afterwards, many new businessmen moved here who were Uzbek, like me, but their mentality is quite different. For example, they want to build a new business center in our mahalla, arguing that we need money as a mahalla, and that our mahalla has a good opportunity for economic development because it is located in the center of the city. The new oqsoqol probably has a good relationship with them, and of course with the district hokim. He is also a new resident of our mahalla; that's why the hokim appointed him.”

While the intervention of *Hokimiyat* into the *oqsoqol* election and the internal structure of *mahalla kengash* gained legitimization through the establishment of a national identity in the *mahalla*, as will be seen in the next chapter, this intervention was practically realized due to its provision of many economic advantages to the *Hokimiyat* as well as the *mahalla* officials. As mentioned in theoretical chapter, Peterson (1981), who implemented public choice theory into urban politics, states that urban politicians and governing regimes are subordinate to the overall economic principles that force cities to compete to capture new investment and capital. He writes that the competitive nature of cities encourages the business elite and politicians to favor new development projects, concluding that successful cities require a local infrastructure that is supportive of the needs of business and economic development. On the other hand, the growth machine theory of Molotch & Logan (1987) argues that urban systems are not shaped only by the actions of the business and political interests – which is known as growth machine – as there is a third participant in the urban development process: the community residents and their concerns. The authors use the terms “use value” and “exchange value” to define the concerns of different interest groups in the urban system. Molotch & Logan argue further that the existence of competing values for the same place encourages development conflict, and describe how politicians and development officials formulate specific strategies to exclude community participation from all stages of the

¹³¹ Residential unit of the elite.

development process. As seen in the case of D-4 *mahalla*, when the conflict appears between the use value of the residents and the exchange value of business, the central state of Uzbekistan immediately discharges the elected *oqsoqol* of the residents, and its action is legitimized with *o'zbekchiliq*. This conflict between use and exchange value mostly emerged in the *mahallas* located at the center of the city, which are mostly ex-ideal Soviet type residential units, whose residents are predominantly non-ethnic Uzbeks.

In short, there is dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the state hegemony and the strategies of the *mahallas*. While the state uses the *mahalla* as a hegemonic instrument, the *mahalla* types (re-)produce spatio-temporally different strategies and policy variations. The local state is a form of local social relations. As Jessop mentioned, there is a hegemony at the local level, as well as the national level. The local elite also path-dependently and path shapingly choose some strategies. In Uzbekistan, especially in the Soviet-type *mahallas*, a conflict exists between the new elite's hegemony and that of the former elite, and D-4 *mahalla* is only one example of this. In Uzbekistan, there are many more examples of the decentralization policy of the regime reverting to centralism if the strategy of *mahalla kengash* is incompatible with the state hegemony. After independence, two functions of the *mahalla kengash* became dominant: social control and urban social policy. Noori (2006: 535) argues that the Uzbekistani regime achieved two main functions through the *mahalla kengash*: to control society, and to implement social policy. After summarizing the issue of the *mahalla* as a hegemonic tool in the creation of a national identity during the Soviet and post-Soviet era, these two issues are analyzed further through two cases so as to establish the role of the *mahalla kengash* in the establishment of the nation state based on *o'zbekchiliq* through secularism and conservatism, and the adaptation to the new market-based economy through entrepreneurialism. Saunders constructs a taxonomy of the functions of the local state by combining Cockburn's and O'Connor's typologies (Saunders, 1979: 147). According to Saunders, there are three main functions of the local state: sustenance of private production and capital accumulation; reproduction of labor power through collective consumption; and maintenance of order and social cohesion. In Uzbekistan, as a body of local self-government, the *mahalla kengash* is mainly concerned with the reproduction of labor power through collective consumption and the maintenance of order and social cohesion.

5.3 The Significance of the *Mahalla Kengash* in the Neo-Liberal Transition

According to Jessop (1997: 56): “*In the global era, it is harder to demarcate a relatively autonomous economic sphere. Since economies are always embedded in a wider ethico-political context, the stability of the ethico-political context also merits attention*”. The Gramscian notion of hegemony permits a theoretical explanation of how these identities gained stability within society. Any regime should not only co-constitute economic structures, but also provide their rationale and legitimacy. “*Identities are over-determined by a diversity of discourses and subject positions that offer a multiplicity of identification points, thus guaranteeing the possibility of human subjectivity, agency and individuality*” (Carperntier, 2005: 199). Based on Gramsci, who solved the Marxian problem of the reciprocal relationship between the economic base and its politico-ideological superstructure, Jessop (1997: 56) argues that “*values, norms, vision, discourses, linguistic forms and popular beliefs are necessary for the realization of specific productive forces and relations of production*”. Therefore, despite the continuous employment of the institution of the *mahalla kengash* in the construction of a national identity, the new accumulation strategies of the Uzbekistani regime have transformed both the components of the national identity and the intervention mode of the central state to the *mahalla kengash*. According to Macleod & Goodwin (1999: 516), the state strategies refer to a pattern of intervention in the economy and society that (a) favors the course of accumulation strategy and the flow of material benefits to the requisite social base; and (b) constructs representative forms that systematically favor key sectors and social groups.

Thus, although there is continuity in the employment of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument by the regimes of the Soviet and the Post-Soviet era, the context and features of the national consciousness (*o'zbekchiliq*) in the Post-Soviet era are different from those that existed during the Soviet era. A national cultural hegemony must have been achieved for the maintenance of the economic structure, as well as the national ideology. This section, has demonstrated how the Uzbekistani state's strategy of using the *mahalla kengash* was different from that of the Soviet state, being based on the new accumulation strategies of the Uzbekistani state, implemented during its adaptation process to neo-liberalism. These new strategies have led to a shift from class politics to identity politics, and from redistributive politics to representational politics. Hence, the second issue related to the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument is the adaptation to the new liberal economic system.

While the maintenance of social cohesion as a function of *mahalla kengash* reveals a continuity between the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, as another main function of the *mahalla*, the reproduction of labor power through collective consumption is an example of how things changed from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era. The basic similarities of all post-Soviet cities can be seen in their shifts from a communist political regime and a centrally planned economy to a pluralistic society and a market economy. The shift from central planning to the policy of decentralization has resulted in the transfer of authority to from central to the local government in the implementation of many social and economic policies (Andrusz, Harloe, Szelenyi, 1996; Enyedi, 1998; French, Hamilton, 1979; Stenning, 2005). As part of their accumulation strategies, post-Soviet countries devolved many social and economic policy functions to their local governments and/or the private sector in their adaptation to a market-based economy. The Uzbekistani state's transition in this regard was gradual, being dependent on the creation of an economic environment in which the individual and small businesses could flourish, while at the same time supporting the vulnerable sections of the society whose living standards had fallen sharply during the transition era. In both issues, the *mahalla kengash* has several functions, and thus was a part of both the accumulation strategy and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime. In this section, it is demonstrated that although the Uzbekistani regime devolved a number of economic functions to the urban *mahalla kengash* while making the neo-liberal transition, the *mahalla kengashes* of different types of urban *mahalla* (re-)produced different strategies and tactics, and implemented these functions in different ways according to their local hegemony, which had mostly been shaped during the Soviet era. It was for this reason that the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime, which was important for the stability of the ethico-political context, could not be realized in every urban *mahalla*. Accordingly, the ethico-political context and the hegemonic project need economic stability, just as the economic structure needs the stability of the ethico-political context.

Unlike in the Eastern European countries, there had been a feudal regime in Central Asia prior to the Soviet regime, and the power of the local leaders had ended with its abolition. After this, all public services came under the responsibility of the state under the socialist rule (Pomfret, 1997, 45). After independence, the new Central Asian states faced three main problems: (a) the transition from the socialist regime – or state capitalism – to a market-based economy and the creation of a national (Uzbek) bourgeoisie; (b) having to cope with the economic crisis and poverty associated with the restrictions on public spending; and (c) a restructuring the administrative system in a way to make it compatible with the global

market economy, which was briefly analyzed in Chapter Two and will be covered in more detail in the next chapter. In this section, the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the center and local states is analyzed in detail by looking into the role of the *mahalla kengash* in the accumulation strategies of the regime in terms of three factors: (a) the state legacy of the *mahalla kengash* in adapting to neo-liberalism; (b) the various responses of the urban *mahalla kengashes* to *mahalla*-scaled state policies; and (c) the state strategies in response to the various responses of the *mahalla kengashes* that did not complying with the projected vision. This section aims to show the significance of *mahalla kengash* in (a) supporting the vulnerable social groups of society whose living standards had fallen sharply during the transition era, and (b) the process of creating an economic environment in which the individual and small businesses could flourish. Thus, the role of urban *mahalla kengash* in dealing with socio-economic problems is explained through the *mahalla* functions in social policy, for which state financial assistance is given as an example. Additionally, the role of the urban *mahalla kengash* in the formation of the economic environment is analyzed through a study of the *mahalla kengashes*' efforts to encourage entrepreneurialism, for which the privatization process of the JEG's is given as an example. Both two cases show how these *mahalla*-scaled policies are implemented differently by different *mahalla kengashes*. Finally, the question of how and why the political shift from redistributive politics to representational politics affected each *mahalla kengashes* in Tashkent differently is answered. This final part also reveals why the political shift from class politics to identity politics affected the different *mahalla kengashes* of Tashkent in different ways, referring to the previous section.

5.3.1 Socio-Economic Problems during the Transition

Having gained independence, the Central Asian states have faced some significant social problems (EBRD, 2003) including income inequality, ethnic and religious discrimination, regional inequality, gender discrimination, unemployment and poverty, which have all prevented social cohesion,. Below is a summary of the main problems faced by Uzbekistan during the transition period, including indicators that will allow a comparison with the Soviet and the Post-Soviet eras. These indicators relate to the decreasing quality of life, poverty, regional disparities, ethnic segregation, unemployment, financial social assistance as well as the state's diminishing capacity in implementing social policies such as the provision of education and health services.

Table 5.4 Levels of Poverty and Income during the Transition Period (poverty line=\$4a day per capita at purchasing power parity)

Countries	% of Population under the Poverty Line	
	1987–1988	1993–1994
Lithuania	1	46
Latvia	1	23
Estonia	1	40
Ukraine	2	41
Belarus	1	23
Moldova	4	65
Russia	2	38
Kazakhstan	5	50
Uzbekistan	24	29
Kyrgyzstan	12	76
Turkmenistan	12	48

Source: World Bank (1996)

First of all, due to the economic crises and the problems associated with transition, especially the reduction in the state's provision of public services; poverty has emerged as a significant problem in the Post-Soviet era in all countries under transition. It can be seen in Table 5.4 that no sharp increase in poverty level is experienced in Uzbekistan if compared with the other former Soviet countries, although Uzbekistan was the second poorest country out of the 15 countries at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union collapse.

In line with its choice of gradual development rather than the shock treatment method, the Uzbekistani state targeted slow but balanced development. However, Table 5.5 shows that Uzbekistan ranks low among all countries in terms of average per capita income and purchasing capacity.

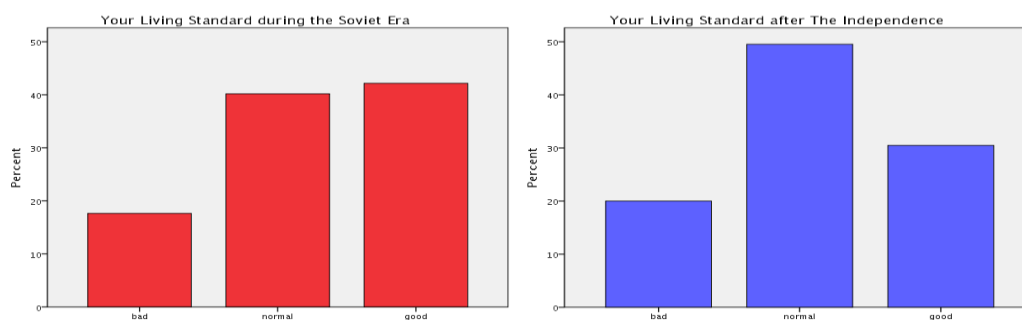
After the collapse of the Soviet Union, quality of life decreased sharply due to the emergent economic crisis. This resulted in high unemployment and a consequent mass migration to other countries (Baykal, 2004). Nowadays, the concept of quality of life is probably the most widely used theoretical framework for assessing the living conditions in a society. With regard to the empirical operationalization of the concept of quality of life, one can distinguish various approaches which reveal different aspects of the concept, and thus, highlight different components as relevant. A common feature of all empirical approaches is their focus on the individual, and different approaches converge on the conceptualization of quality of life on the basis of individual characteristics (Schmitt, 2000). In the case study of this thesis, the interviewees were asked to interpret their quality of life after independence.

Table 5.5 Average per capita Income and Purchasing Capacity of Some Countries in 2005 (dollar)

Countries	Average per capita Income (\$)	Range among Countries	Purchasing Capacity (\$)	Range among Countries
United States	42,101	8	41,399	3
Japan	35,787	15	30,615	16
Germany	33,922	18	30,579	17
China	1,710	110	7,024	84
Russia	5,369	61	11,041	62
Turkey	5,062	63	7,950	75
Kazakhstan	3,717	78	8,318	70
Turkmenistan	3,516	80	8,098	73
Azerbaijan	1,493	112	4,601	106
Uzbekistan	- - -	- - -	1,920	145
Kyrgyzstan	473	150	2,088	140

Source: Rahmetullah Çetin, IMF ve Dünya Bankası Verilerine Göre Bazı Ülkelerin Ekonomik Göstergeleri, turkibirdev@yahooogroups.com, 2007.

As seen in Table 5.5, 38 of the 116 people (32.8%) interviewed claimed that they had experienced no change in their quality of life after independence; while 34 people stated that their life quality had become unbalanced after the independence which used to be more stable during the Soviet era. The third biggest group (23 people, 19.8%) in the case study stated that their quality of life had decreased after the independence. Figure 5.1 allows a comparison between the perceptions of the interviewees concerning their quality of life during the Soviet and the post-Soviet eras.



*Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

Figure 5.1 Living Standards during the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras

Table 5.6 Quality of Life after Independence

		n	%
	Unchanged	38	32.8
	Unbalanced – with ups and downs	34	29.3
	Increased	18	15.5
	First decreased but then increased	2	1.7
	Decreased	23	19.8
	First increased then decreased	1	0.9
Total		116	100

**Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009*

Figure 5.1 shows that, while 28% of all interviewees rated their living standards as “good” during the post-Soviet era, this percentage was 40% in the Soviet era. There is a significant drop in the number of people who stated that their quality of life was good after the independence. On the other hand, the percentage of people who said that their living standard was bad is the same both for the Soviet and the post-Soviet era. Therefore, from an overall evaluation of the case study findings it could be argued that Uzbekistani people perceive their living standards have declined after independence.

Another problem of the transition era has been the increasing level of regional inequality in the country¹³². Although there was socio-economic segregation and territorial injustice

¹³² Uzbekistan is comprised of one autonomous republic (Karakalpakistan) and 12 Provinces (*viloyat*). In addition, for Tashkent city *Hokimiyat* is a special structure accepted as a province. Below are the population and land area figures for the Uzbekistan provinces:

	Area (km²)	Population
Karakalpakistan	166,600	1,560,300
Andijan	4,200	2,309,100
Bukhara	40,300	1,490,100
Cizzah	21,200	1,030,700
Kashkaderya	28,600	2,336,400
Nevoii	111,000	804,200
Namangan	7,400	2,042,500
Semerkand	16,800	2,826,100
Surhanderya	20,100	1,864,200
Sirderya	4,300	668,500

during the Soviet regime, as shown in chapter four, this problem has been exaggerated in the post-Soviet era. After the independence, inflation and unemployment increased in the country. According to the official sources, inflation in 2004 was 3.8% when compared to the previous year and unemployment was 5% of the total population (Dadabayev, 2004); however, in reality, these figures are far beyond the official evaluation.

According to Table 5.7, although there is a general unemployment problem, the ratio of unemployed people increases in certain regions, especially in Samarqand (with the majority of population consisting of Tajik people) and Karakalpakstan (an autonomous region). *Navoi*, which had the highest levels of unemployment in 1998 and 1999, was established by the Soviet regime as an industrial area, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union many of the state factories started to be shut down and as a consequence most of the population became unemployed.

Table 5.7 Unemployment Rates by Region (%)

	1998	1999	2000
Karakalpakstan	6.8	7.2	8.5
Andijan	2.2	2.7	2.4
Bukhara	1.1	1.4	1.5
Cizzah	0.7	1.2	0.8
Kashkaderya	1.5	1.5	1.9
Nevoii	9.3	8.9	3.4
Namangan	2.2	3.1	2.9
Semerland	2.9	4.2	4.1
Surhanderya	0.6	0.7	0.9
Sirderya	0.9	0.9	1
Tashkent	0.8	1.1	0.7
Fergana	1.2	1.2	2.1
Khorezm	1.6	2.3	2.5
Tashkent C.	1.5	2.7	2.7
Uzbekistan	33.1	39.1	35.4

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

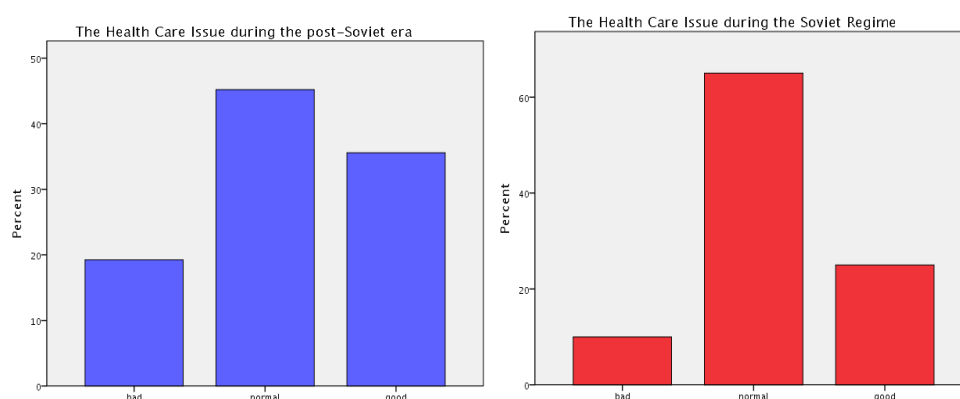
Moreover, the central government has on many occasions implemented social policies that have increased the regional imbalance. According to a UNDP research, *“the ratio of funds distributed to the regions is not proportional. For example, although the Andijan Regions are worse than the Tashkent and Semerkand regions in terms of income distribution, the*

Tashkent	15,600	2,430,400
Fergana	6,700	2,799,200
Khorezm	6,100	1,410,300
Tashkent C.	X	2,135,400
Uzbekistan	448.900	25,707,400

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

amount of social charge given to the Andijan Region is lower than all the others”. It is worthy of note that the strongest radical Islamic groups have detached from this region, and civil unrest stemming from the radical Islamic movement in Andijan has risen during this time.

After the independence, the economic crisis caused an apparent decrease in the quality of life in all post-Soviet societies, while the social policies implemented by the state were diminished. In response, the sections of society in which living standards decreased after the collapse of the Soviet Union have begun to tackle the problem of poverty more intensely in the absence of a national social policy. In the case study, the interviewees were asked two questions that allowed them to make a comparison between education and health policies of the state during the Soviet and the post-Soviet eras. In the previous literature review, it is generally argued that during the post-Soviet era, the health service was inadequate when compared to the Soviet period. However the findings of the case study in this thesis do not support this argument, but rather demonstrate another important point, which is the increasing level of social inequality. As seen in Figure 5.2, while 32% of the interviewees argued that health care was good during the post-Soviet era, this was only 21% for the Soviet era. However, the amount of people who believe that the health service is worse since the collapse of Soviet Union is 20%, whereas this constitutes 10% for the Soviet era. This demonstrates that the gap between social groups benefiting from the state social policy had been increasing during the Soviet era.

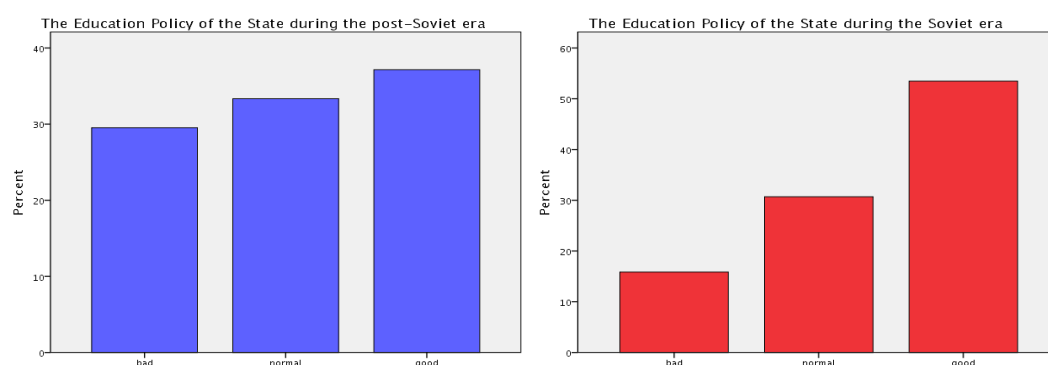


**Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009*

Figure 5.2 Health Care during the Soviet and Post-Soviet Era

Figure 5.3 shows that the majority of interviewees believe that education was better during the Soviet Period compared to the era of the Uzbekistani Republic. 32% of respondents are not satisfied with today’s education system, compared to the ratio of individuals unsatisfied

with the Soviet education system was just 15%. In addition, 55% of the interviewees found the education policy “good” during the Soviet era, while this figure goes down to 37% when the respondents were asked to evaluate the period since the independence.



*Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

Figure 5.3 Education Policy during the Soviet and Post-Soviet Era

As a 56 year-old Meskhetian Turk who had been a Parliament member in the past, *Ahmat Aka* describes the education system in Uzbekistan as follows:

“The main reason for the deterioration of the education system today is the ideology behind it. In this sense, all the books belonging to the Soviet Period have gradually been taken out of circulation, because of the new ideology of the Uzbekistani hegemony. During the Soviet Period there was the propaganda of Marxism and Leninism in all the text books. Presently, all the books are trying to be rewritten in Uzbek in order to keep this propaganda out, but naturally this is impossible in such a short period of time”.

An Example of Differentiated Strategies of Mahalla Kengash in the Privatization Process and Encouragement of Entrepreneurialism

The main function of *mahalla kengash* is the implementation of social policies. However, before analyzing this, it is necessary to briefly mention the significance of the *mahalla kengash* in the privatization process and encouragement of entrepreneurialism in the *mahalla* community during the neo-liberal transition. As mentioned in Chapter two, the economic policies of the Central Asian states after the independence was formulated mainly to promote a free market economy. Uzbekistan was the first country to put aside the central planning policy of the Soviet regime and develop strategies for the supposed economic transformation (Dadabaev, 2004, 152). The first area of economic reforms aimed at the privatization of state-owned enterprises for securing the development of the private sector and its dominance in the national economy. In 1991 the first privatization law was issued. By 2000 the Uzbekistani regime had enacted many new regulations to attract foreign capital, and the authority of the Committee of State Property was broadened to ease its implementation

(Baykal, 2006). In 2003, the state declared that 1,519 state units (firms, factories, kolkhozs, sovkhozs, etc.) had been privatized, raising revenue of 56.1 billion Sum (57 million U.S. dollars). Furthermore, since Independence, the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has increased. The best option for individuals attempting to survive the harsh economic conditions has been to start a small business. Although trade is the dominant sector for SMEs, the production of goods and services has also been popular among smaller businesses in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has the most developed SME structure in the region (EBRD, 2003).

Moving towards the establishment of a new economic system, most of the time the Uzbekistani state chose to implement new economic policies gradually and under considerable state control. The Central Asian countries have generally been categorized into two groups in terms of their economic policies and the transition to a market economy (Rao&Alam, 2005; Sagdeev&Eisenhower, 1995; Seidelmann&Giese, 2004; Yalçın, 2002): (a) states that applied shock treatment policies, like Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan; and (b) states that apply a transition policy gradually and under the control of the state, such as Uzbekistan. The Uzbekistani state chose not to privatize or close the factories that were built by the Soviet regime. Precious metals, petroleum, natural gas and telecommunications have been accepted as strategic sectors by the state, and thus, have been excluded from the privatization portfolio. Most of the time, this process has been interpreted as a reluctance of the new elite of the Uzbekistan to give up its control of the economic power it enjoyed that had roots in the Soviet bureaucratic tradition (Luong, 2002; Baykal, 2007; Ilkhamov, 2004; Carlisle, 2001; Turan, 2009; Kutmanaliev, 2009; Gallina, 2008; Steen & Ruus, 2002). Moreover, the members of government and business were so intermingled that this situation of weak representation and repressive government prohibited the transformation of the traditional Soviet bureaucracy. Thus, the private sector was still weak and dependent on the government after the independence. The primary obstacle for initiating economic reform in Uzbekistan was that the political elite had perceived “outsider businessmen” as a threat (Baykal, 2004; ICG, 2004: 20; Luong, 2003: 356).

Under the conditions, the *mahalla kengash* has important roles in the privatization process, and the encouragement of the SMEs. Many of the speeches of the President and other high bureaucrats refer the *mahalla* as a catalyst of entrepreneurialism amongst the community. Many *oqsoqols* claimed that their first function is to teach the community that today is different from the past, now all citizens should do everything themselves and should not wait anything from the state. If you work hard, you can be successful in everything. During the Soviet period, while the residents of some residential units were state labors or officers; the

residents of some *mahallas* were not articulated to the regime in terms of their occupation. These residents mostly worked in the bazaar as a craftsman or in the service sector as a mercantile. During the transition period from the state socialism to the market regime; old state labors or civil servants had financial difficulties and they could adapt neither to the market system nor to the old mercantile system.

Besides the funding received from the *Hokimiyat* and the central government, there are also revenues generated by the *mahalla kengash* itself. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, many *oqsoqols* interviewed in the case study emphasized that their two main duties after the independence were to teach the ideology of “*O‘zbekchilik*” to the community, and to encourage the community to adapt to a market economy. The Uzbekistani state has different policies for motivating the general public to adapt to a market economy, and the *mahalla kengash* is a strategic tool for this aim. As mentioned previously, while talking about their duties, the *oqsoqols* mostly stressed the importance of teaching the residents the principles and benefits of the market economy, and encouraging them to open businesses. In this respect, the *mahalla kengash* establishes its own small businesses, which brings a certain amount of revenue to the *mahalla* treasury. Epstein (2004: 58) claims that: “*Some mahallas also grow crops or operate small businesses (bakeries, barber’s shops, TV repairs, real estate, etc.), a practice that is officially encouraged and may represent a step away from a market economy. One mahalla in Tashkent reportedly earns over 1 million soms annually from commercial services. Other revenue-creating activities, such as rental of furniture and dishes for weddings and other ceremonies, are not uncommon*”. The *mahalla kengash* may also employ some of the unemployed residents in these *businesses*. Usmanova (2004: 16) writes in an article that in 5630 *mahallas* out of a total number of 10000 *mahallas* in Uzbekistan, approximately 15,500 small and medium companies has been established since independence. In order to encourage the establishment of new firms, the state had spent 1.745 billion soms and distributed micro credits to the value of 1.700 million soms to low-income families to open small firms. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said: “*We established a small magazine, and one of our unemployed residents took over its management and now pays us rent*”. The *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla* said: “*We also have our own firms – a small magazine and a chaikhona – that we earn money from. As the mahalla kengash, we established a small grocery – there was an unemployed man in our mahalla who was very poor, so we asked him to come and manage the grocery shop in return for rent. He accepted immediately and started work. Now he is working well and earns good money*”.

One of the examples of the *mahalla* function is the process of privatization of the old JEKs (*jilishno ekcpluatatsionnaya kontora* – housing operation office) in the *mahallas* that was

realized in the old Soviet type labour blocs. As mentioned in the introduction of the thesis, one of the sub-hypotheses of this dissertation was that *today on the one hand, the service of infrastructure in the mahalla types that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime is quite different from the Soviet times and a new system compatible with the liberal system has emerged, that is from homogenous citizens to heterogenic citizens in social policy through privatization process. On the other hand, the service of infrastructure in the mahalla types, that were not able to articulate to the Soviet regime, is the same with the Soviet era, which is implemented in a collective form.*

The JEKs is an old state institution which had offered infrastructure service to the residents in the Soviet era. Today, these JEKs have been privatized and they turned into *shirkot*. However, the *mahallas* (Types A and B) with the traditional Uzbek houses implemented the infrastructure service themselves collectively instead of JEKs as it used to be during the Soviet time and today. Therefore, one of the sub-hypotheses regarding the privatization of JEKs is that today the service of infrastructure in the *mahalla* types, that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime, is quite different from the Soviet times. In these *mahallas*, through privatization, a new social system compatible with the liberal system which refers to heterogenic citizens instead of homogenous citizens has been emerged. On the other hand, the infrastructure service in the *mahalla* types, that were not able to articulate to the Soviet regime, is the same with the Soviet era, where it was implemented in a collective form. In many of the speeches of the President and other high bureaucrats in Uzbekistan, the *mahalla* is referred to as a catalyst of the entrepreneurialism amongst the community and many *mahalla* officers argue that their first aim is “*to teach the community that today is different from the past; now a citizen should do everything himself and should not expect anything from the state*”.

However, at the time, the Uzbek state realized that this privatization process of the JEKs could not have been achieved without the state's financial support and began to establish new *shirkot* with the support of the city or district *hokimiyat*. Besides, historically, in the old traditional *mahalla*, the infrastructure service was realized by the communities themselves while the Soviet type labour bloc, a state institution, JEG offered the infrastructure service to the residents. Today, these *JEGs* have been privatized and their names are now *shirkot*. *Shirkots* are private firms that provide infrastructure service to the *mahalla* residents. Interestingly, many of the *shirkot* bosses come from the traditional *mahallas*. Many residents of the Soviet type residential unit do not want to work in the private firms because of their lack of capability and experience. On the other hand, many of the residents of the traditional

mahalla emphasize that this market economy or private sector is not now for the benefit of them.

5.3.2 The Significance of the *Mahalla Kengash* in Facing the Socio-Economic Problems and Implementing Social Policies

After the dissolution of the Soviet regime, the central government of Uzbekistan devolved many social policies that had been provided by the central authority to the urban *mahalla kengash* under the control of the *Hokimiyat* and following principles of decentralization and deconcentration. The urban *mahalla kengash* implements these urban policies under the authorization of the central government, and according to its representation capacity of the local community and its elite groups, and that is why the decision-making process in urban policy was never completed at a legal level. Accordingly, an urban policy analysis is one of the best means of understanding the reciprocal and dialectic relationship between the state and the *mahalla*. As a neighborhood unit, the *mahalla* can be seen as a socio-spatially living space in which public policy is executed (the *mahalla* as a locus of public policy), while on the other hand, it can also be considered as a local state, and in this regard the urban *mahalla kengash* is an institution that implements the national hegemonic and/or accumulation strategy of the nation state (*mahalla* as an implementation of public policy). In this section, first, the legal framework for *mahalla*-scaled social urban policy is summarized (the *mahalla* as a focus of public policy) in order to demonstrate the continuity/change in the *mahalla*'s role in implementing the social policies between the Soviet era and the present day. Here, it is argued that although new regime issued many laws to devolve social policy to the *mahalla kengash*, there is a level of continuity between the Soviet era and the present day in terms of capacity in the implementation of social policy by the *mahalla kengashes* of different *mahalla* types. This is due to their different levels of articulation to the Soviet regime, and the fact that they were affected at different levels during the transition period. This sub-hypothesis is tested both by summarizing the new legal framework on the role of the *mahalla kengash* in implementing the social policies, and by analyzing the opinions of residents from different *mahalla* types.

The urban *mahalla kengash* had implemented many social and economic functions during the Soviet era. Especially during the Khrushchev era, the new legal arrangement devolved many functions to the *mahalla kengash* (and *kvartelnye komitet*), which had been previously executed by the local Soviet (Komilov, 1961: 6). The 1958 statute summarizes the functions of the *mahalla kengash* (and *kvartelnye komitet*) in their own territory as follows (Komilov, 1961: 17–18):

- The *mahalla kengash* had the right to approve the certificate to take identity cards; and to divulge information about the residents to the local Soviet in matters relating to housing, the poor citizens in the *mahalla*, the social status of the residents, family details, and the number of unemployed residents to employ them in some working place.
- The public goods of the *mahalla* are established by the *mahalla kengash* with the support of the *mahalla* community. During the Khrushchev period, this function was heavily implemented. For example, in the *K'atortol mahalla* of Tashkent, the *mahalla* community and the *mahalla kengash* established *prokat punkt* (a stock of rental items) for the community, in order to use freely some foodstuffs and equipment such as glasses, dishes, etc. (Rah'monov, 1970: 4).
- The *mahalla kengash* also had functions related to the education and training of children, assisting schools and training institutions as required. Moreover, the *mahalla kengash* registered the children when they reached school age.
- The *mahalla kengash* was to provide assistance to health institutions in the event of an epidemic in the *mahalla*.
- The *mahalla kengash* was responsible for looking after the families of martyrs and veterans of World War II, and was to be kept informed about their situation and problems. Every year, the *mahalla kengash* was to prepare a ceremony on Remembrance Day. On occasions, the *mahalla kengash* would collect *hashar* from among the *mahalla* residents for the repair of the houses of the poorer residents, and to register their children in training institutions.
- The *mahalla kengash* in rural areas offered assistance to residents during the harvest in the *kolkhoz* and *solkhoz* (collective farming area).

Today, the main function of the *mahalla* is in the implementation of social policies in its traditional capacity as a body of local self-government. In addition to welfare payments, the *mahalla* has responsibilities to help school-age children, to provide a health service, to regulate family planning, and to deal with domestic security in the *mahalla*. The *mahalla's* duties in the social policy are as follows (Hujaev, 2006, 98; Matkarimov, 2005: 26; Hokimov, 2007: 49; Hudaykulov, 2003: 28; Pashkun, 2003, 39; Sievers, 2002; Noori, 2006):

- Authority in certain social policy issues has been devolved to the *mahalla*, which has been used to make more efficient and operative social programs.
- Some programs are still regulated by the central government, such as primary school services; however most of these programs, while decided upon at the level of central government, are implemented at the scale of the *mahalla* and *Hokim*.

- Social funds become more important in the transition period due to the high level of poverty in society. Accordingly, the third scale of local government (*Tumen Hokim*) and the *mahalla* decide on the ways of the fund. According to some observations, they don't adjust objective criteria.
- The *mahallab kengash* strengthens enterprise and the record in the education area and raises the awareness among families on the importance of education for children through collaborative programs with the schools and the Ministry of Education.
- Some traditional functions of the *mahalla* have continued, such as supporting poor families; redistributing wealth; regulation and coordination of ceremonies, festivals and public holidays; determination of wedding dates; cleaning and maintenance of the mosque and the tea house of *mahalla* with the help of the *mahalla* community at least twice a year.
- Resolving conflicts between *mahalla* residents as a judgment center in the *mahalla*, as well as resolving family problems and regulate the rules for divorce.
- Mediating in discussions related to property and other local issues.
- Providing for the continuation of social norms and rules.
- Providing security (*Posbon*).
- Looking after weaker residents of the *mahalla*, such as old people and handicapped children.
- Presenting certificates to residents or technical experts, as a former function of the *mahalla* in the Soviet period.
- Managing unemployment. The *mahalla kengash* approves residential position in the *mahalla*. Before being granted approval, residents or families must not have any public debt (tax). Also, regulating and approving working forms of citizens and keeping a record of the workplaces of the residents, allowing it to monitor unemployed residents. All these forms are prepared by the *Kotip* (second secretary) of the *mahalla* and then passed to the *Hokim*.

The two systems have devolved many functions and responsibilities to the *mahalla kengash*; however in the transition period, the budget deficiency of the central government and the shift from central planning to decentralization resulted in the transfer of authority in the implementation of some social policies from the central to the local government, in a marked change from the Soviet era. For this reason the *mahalla kengash* today has more responsibilities in social policies. “*The economic function of the mahalla corresponds to the basic directions of the state economic policy. During perestroika, especially in its later period, the mahalla would distribute vouchers for basic foodstuffs, such as flour, sugar and butter. Foodstuffs were distributed through local shops, which provided services to*

neighboring mahallas. In this way the mahalla authorities controlled supply, and restricted the flow of foodstuffs onto the black market” (Koroteyeva, 1999: 34)

Today, the central government has given the *mahalla kengash* a decision-making role in many social policy areas, leading to different results in each *mahalla* according to their previous experience under the Soviet regime. For example, the *mahalla kengashes* of the old Soviet type residential units (Types D and C) have trouble implementing social policies due to the lack of experience and limited capabilities of the *mahalla* officials, and the fact that they are used to receiving everything from the central government, as was the case in the Soviet era. On the other hand, the *mahalla kengashes* of the *mahallas* that were established around the periphery of city during the Soviet era by the local community as a traditional form (Types A and B), implement social policies better than other *mahalla* type as a result of the capacity and experience that was built up during the Soviet regime. At that time, these types of *mahallas* realized many policies on their own collectively owing to a lack of support from the Soviet administration. As a result of over-industrialization under the socialist regime, in certain *mahallas* poverty has risen rapidly as public enterprises have collapsed, particularly due to the absence of an effective social safety net. It is no surprise that many cities in Uzbekistan with the old regime’s emphasis on industrialization have become home to large concentrations of poor and unemployed people, particularly in the former sites of heavy industry. The *mahallas* that have been mostly affected by the demise of the Soviet Union are the old intellectual-dominated Soviet type residential units, and the former Soviet intellectuals and civil servants have become the weakest social group in the transition period due to the changes in state identity, state hegemony and ideology. Table 5.8 reveals this point clearly, showing that 57% of the residents of B-type *mahallas* are satisfied with the social policy implementation of the *mahalla kengash*, whereas this figure is only 18% in D type *mahallas*. It can thus be understood that the collapse of the Soviet Union did not affect equally all of the residential units of the post-Soviet city. Every former Soviet country and urban residential unit, as well as the different types of *mahallas*, have implemented new social policies differently due to their different social structures and histories; while the process of decentralization has brought different results and new forms of power relationships in the formation and the implementation of social policies in each *mahalla*.

Additionally, the collapse of the Soviet Union has not affected equally all residential units of the post-Soviet city. For example in Uzbekistan, some *mahallas* which were semi-articulated to the Soviet regime sustained many of their old traditions in the daily life. This kind of *mahallas* has been affected from the collapse of the Soviet Union less than the Soviet types of *mahalla* did. As a result of over-industrialization under the socialist regime, in the certain

mahallas of the Uzbek city; poverty has rapidly increased as public enterprises collapsed, particularly because of the absence of an effective social safety net. It is not surprising that many of the cities in the area, with the old regime's emphasis on industrialization, have become home to large concentrations of poor and unemployed people, particularly where heavy industry had been located. Moreover, the *mahallas* which have been mostly affected by the demise of the Union are the old intellectual dominated Soviet type's residential units. Many of the Soviet intellectuals and bureaucrats have become the weakest social group in the transition period because of the change in the state identity, the state hegemony and ideology. For example, Table 5.8 shows this point clearly. Accordingly, the 57% of the residents of B types are satisfied by the social policy implementation of the *mahalla kengash* whereas this ratio is only 18% in D type of *mahallas*.

Table 5.8 Are you satisfied with the social policy implementations of the *mahalla kengash*?

Types of Tashkent <i>Mahalla</i>	Yes	No	Total
Type A	21.1%	76.5%	100%
Type B	57.1%	42.9%	100%
Type C	21.9%	78.1%	100%
Type D	18.4%	81.6%	100%
Total	27.8%	72.2%	100%

*Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

Despite the claim of the central Uzbekistani state that devolving social policies to the *mahalla kengash* results in more efficiency in their implementation, complaints from the residents of all *mahalla* types have been increasing. This is because the *mahalla kengashes* in some *mahallas* (A and B types) carry out the redistribution of welfare with an elitist attitude – as covered in detail in Chapter Six – while others (C and D types) lack experience in the implementation of social policy due to their Soviet past. This has caused the failure of the Uzbekistani state in the social policy area in some Tashkent *mahallas*. As Noori (2006: 537) claims, “to devolve many policies to the *kengash* has many negative effects”.

Social policy is crucial for resolving the increasing problems of social tension, such as poverty and unemployment, in the transition period. Historically, the *mahalla kengash*, as a neighborhood administrative unit, has provided some social policies to its local community, and especially solidarity is important for the daily life of the local community. However, today the central government has devolved some important urban policies to the *mahalla*, different from the Soviet period. In Uzbekistan, the decentralization of social policies has affected the balance of power among different social groups and created new local elites in the community.

An Example of Differentiated Strategies of Mahalla Kengash in State Financial Assistance

The Uzbekistani state decided to implement its financial assistance policy at the *mahalla*-scale in order to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment, being also a convenient way of constructing an Uzbek identity and *o'zbekchiliq*. Social assistance is provided to low income families by the central government, however the authority to determine which families are eligible belongs to the *mahalla kengash*, and while this has become one of its most important functions (Sievers, 2002), it has led to problems of social exclusion, and ethnic and gender segregation among the neighborhood community. First, the legal framework related to state financial assistance after independence will be analyzed, after which the general problems faced with financial assistance will be clarified. In the next part, the differences between the Soviet and independence periods, in which the aid shifted from the workplace to the residential space, will be explained. In this part, four results of the change will be presented: checking daily life through the *mahalla*, social exclusion, clientalism and tackling unemployment. Finally, the consequences of the shift in responsibility in state financial assistance in terms of patriarchy and clientalism will be explained.

The *mahalla kengash* has, since independence, had the responsibility of distributing aid to poor families under the social protection program (Marnie & Micklewright, 1998: 21). The *mahalla kengash* has the right to decide on the basis of their local knowledge who are the neediest families in the community, and, within certain limits, how much support they deserve. According to Bogner (2003: 8):

“The tradition of community-based assistance acquired new forms and content once the government shifted its aims from universal social protection to support for the most vulnerable population groups. In a decision unprecedented elsewhere in the world, mahallas were charged with the distribution of certain government funds. This was designed to target social assistance more accurately, since mahallas are best placed to discern those in need of assistance, as well as to reduce administrative expenses”.

The *mahalla kengash* distributes aid in different ways. The state (the Finance Ministry) distributes aid to low-income families through the *mahalla kengash*, which also disperses the aid provided by the *Hokimiyat* and private companies, and the aid generated by the *mahalla kengash* itself. Three types of social protection are financed by the budget of the urban government through *mahalla* organizations (Marnie and Micklewright, 1998: 21):

- Assistance to ***unemployed mothers with children younger than two***: this began in 2003 and is distributed taking into account the total income of the family. If there is no father present, the mother receives assistance automatically.
- Assistance to ***families of low income or with temporary jobs***.
- Assistance to ***families of low income with children younger than 16***.

In the system of social welfare, the most important thing is the budget. In the present day, every *mahalla* takes the money for public charge from the central government. No *mahalla* can claim that the amount of money received is adequate. “... *this money is distributed not according to the ratio of poor families, but according to the population, so both the poor and wealthy mahallas receive the same amount of money if their populations are the same*”. (Pashkun, 2003, 31). The field survey revealed that 55% of respondents believed that the state considered the degree of opposition in the *mahalla* more than the number of poor families when allocating its budget. Another problem seems to be that the government (*Hokims*) allocates funds or resources to *mahalla kengashes* according to its popularity or power in the local community, the position of the *mahalla* organization in the community or its level of integration. Unfortunately, the rules covering the allocation of central funding are rather unclear. Funds are said to have been initially distributed to each *mahalla* on the basis of the number of households, reflecting an intention to target the poorest families within each separate *mahalla*, rather than the poorest in the country as a whole. On this basis, the *mahallas* in the richest areas receive the same funding per resident family as those in the poorest areas (Marnie and Micklewright, 1998: 6).

A further problem is related to how the *mahalla* organization distributes the money to the community, as it is up to the *mahalla kengash* to decide how to distribute the aid according to the objective criteria. The “*mahalla can ensure that truly needy individuals do not fall through the cracks, that local realities are not obscured by national standards, and that individuals who enjoy strong family support do not absorb funds more humanely spent on the truly needy*” (Eric W. Sievers, 142). Poor families in need of assistance apply to the *mahalla kengash*, after which the committee visits the family and looks at its income before deciding on the distribution of social assistance. If required, the *kengash* can communicate with the Labor Department to confirm the status of the families. Allocations are usually decided according to the income level and the number of children. Table 5.9 reveals that the knowledge level of residents regarding financial aid is different in the *mahalla* types. While 15 out of 39 residents in D-type *mahallas* have no idea about financial aid, this figure is only 2 out of the 23 residents interviewed in the A-type *mahallas*.

Table 5.9 The Role of *Mahalla Kengash* in the Distribution of Financial Aid

Types of Mahallas	Knowledge Level of Residents		Application of residents		Decision of MK	
	yes	no	yes	no	grant	refuse
A	21	2	13	8	7	6
B	16	5	3	13	2	1
C	24	8	12	12	5	7
D	24	15	11	13	2	9

**Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009*

How has financial assistance changed since independence with the devolution of power to the *mahalla kengash*? According to Article 5 of the Presidential Decree “On increasing the role of self-governing institutions in the provision of targeted social support for the population” of January 13, 1999, the *Hokimiyat* gives considerable freedom to the *mahallas* in the distribution of social aid. While this may (quite appropriately) make *mahalla kengashes* more accountable in the distribution of state welfare, it also provides the government with yet another level of control over them (Bogner, 2003:8). Many Uzbek authors have emphasized the significant role of the *mahalla kengash* in financial assistance (*Kam taminlangan oilalarga yordim*) (Matkarimov, 2005: 24; Hokimov, 2007: 49). According to Usmanova (2004: 16), in 2003, 1200 million som was distributed to 400,000 families; while Noori (2010: 540-541) claims that devolving financial social assistance to the *mahalla kengash* had two negative effects: first, the elite of the *mahalla* became even more powerful and discrimination between social groups increased; and second, many families did not apply for financial assistance as they did not want to decrease their prestige in the *mahalla*. Moreover, “the system of allocating central funds to each *mahalla* apparently barely takes their average living standards into account, hence the variation in the demand for benefit. If the households’ need for support were to be judged on the basis of a common absolute living standard applied across the country, the allocation system as described would result in errors both of inclusion and exclusion” (Marnie & Micklewright, 1998).

Guidelines were established instructing the *mahallas* on what indicators of living standards to take into account, but they were varied and no rigid formula was laid down (Marnie & Micklewright, 1998: 3). Due to the lack of certain criteria, each *mahalla kengash* could decide “who is poor” according to the socio-economic level of their *mahalla*. Moreover, the fact that each *mahalla kengash* set its own criteria according to its own socio-economic level led to different results, such as ethnic segregation or clientalist relationships based on *o’zbekchiliq*. If the decision of the *mahalla kengash* on the determination of low-income families in the *mahalla* is incompatible with the standard *mahalla* vision of the Uzbekistani state, based on *o’zbekchiliq*, the central government (city or *tuman hokimiyat*) intervenes and

appoints a new *oqsoqol*. Thus, different responses and strategies of the *mahalla kengash* which are incompatible with the aims of Uzbek state – traditionalism vs. modernism and *o'zbekchilik* vs. Russification – have resulted in a reversal of the Uzbekistani state's decentralist strategy in the direction of centralism. The central state intervenes mostly in the *mahallas* that had successfully articulated to the Soviet regime and which are populated mainly by non-Uzbek residents. In the *mahalla* types that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime, the profile of excluded social groups is today different to what it was under the previous regime. On the other hand, in the *mahalla* types that could not be articulated to the Soviet regime, the same social groups are still excluded.

Briefly, the distribution of financial assistance according to the decisions of the *mahalla kengash* has had many negative effects on the community, but what about the issue of representation in these organizations, and who has become excluded in society under these social policies? According to Marnie & Micklewright (1998: 19): *“The subjectivity of the procedure could result in discrimination against, for example, ethnic or religious minorities –either reflecting genuine majority preferences within the community that the central authority would like to suppress, or resulting from abuse of power by mahalla officials. The lack of any appeal mechanism against the mahalla's decision can be expected to aggravate all these problems”*. One young Russian woman in D-1 *mahalla* said: *“I am a poor woman, but they are never interested in me. I always apply but they never give me social assistance”*. Another Russian woman in D-4 *mahalla* said, *“I am also poor, but I don't know anything about social assistance and I don't know where the mahalla is”*.

Additionally clientalism would appear to be more important than ethnic structure in decisions related to the distribution of financial aid. Before expanding on this, as shown in Table 5.10, only in B-type *mahallas* did over half of the residents surveyed believe that the *mahalla kengash* was fair in its distribution of financial assistance. When asked in what ways the *mahalla kengash* was unfair, the most common response was that the *mahalla* officials tended to distribute financial aid to their friends and relatives, indicating a high level of clientalism. For example, an Uzbek man (37-year-old engineer) in D-2 *mahalla* explained: *“Our mahalla officials do not give financial aid to Uzbek residents either, regardless of what the Russians claim; they give only to their friends. I am also Uzbek, but they refused my application, why? Because I am Russian, no. It's because they do not know me”*. Finally, an Uzbek woman in D-4 *mahalla* commented: *“In the Soviet period we had not need to like this helping. In that period, assistance was provided at the workplace, not from the mahalla, and so the state could distribute assistance equally. Today, the oqsoqol does not distribute this aid equally; they only give to their friends”*. This demonstrates that changing the point of

distribution from the workplace to the residence had a negative effect on the distribution system of financial aid.

Table 5.10 Is the *Mahalla Kengash* fair in its distribution of financial assistance to the community?

Types of Tashkent <i>Mahalla</i>	Yes, it is fair	No, it is not	No idea	Total
Type A	23.5%	41.2%	35.3%	100%
Type B	57.1%	14.3%	28.6%	100%
Type C	26.7%	53.3%	20.0%	100%
Type D	23.1%	51.3%	25.6%	100%
Total	30.8%	43.0%	26.2%	100%

**Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009*

The financial-social assistance policy at the *mahalla*-scale in order to struggle with poverty and unemployment is also a convenient way to construct the Uzbek identity and *o'zbekchilik*. The social assistance is provided to the low income families by the central government but the authority to determine the low income family belongs to the *mahalla kengash*. Due to the lack of certain criteria, each *mahalla kengash* could decide “who is poor” according to the socio-economic level of their *mahalla*. Additionally, the fact that each *mahalla kengash* puts its criteria according to their socio-economic level leads practically different results such as ethnic segregation or clientalist relationships based on *o'zbekchilik*. If the decision of *mahalla kengash* on the determination of low income family in the *mahalla* is inconvenient with the standard mahalla imagination of the Uzbek state that is dependent on *o'zbekchilik*; the central government (city or *tuman hokimiyat*) intervenes and appoints a new *oqsoqol*. Different responses and strategies of the *mahalla kengash* which are inconvenient with the main aims of Uzbek state –traditionalism vs. modernism and *o'zbekchilik* vs. Russification- have reversed Uzbek state's decentralist strategy in the direction of centralism. Thus, the Uzbek state intervenes mostly to the *mahalla*'s which had successfully articulated to the Soviet Regime and which is populated mainly by non-Uzbek residents. In the *mahalla* types which were able to articulate to the Soviet regime, the profile of excluded social groups is today different from the previous regime. On the other hand, in the *mahalla* types which could not articulated to the Soviet regime, the same social groups are still excluded. In addition, since each *mahalla kengash* puts its criteria according to their will, there are different results of this social assistance programme. The old-traditional *mahalla* types, which have already *O'zbekchilik* consciousness and Uzbek identity,

determine the low income families or women according to clientalist relationships and most of the time they have chosen their relatives or familiar family. On the other hand, in the Soviet type *mahalla*, the ethnic segregation has become an important problem. Most of the *mahalla kengash* in the *mahalla* dominated by the Russian population has chosen the Uzbek family instead of the poor family from the Russian or other ethnic minority groups. The present-day *mahalla* finds its primary role in the arena of social policy, both as an agent of central state and as a representator of local social relations. However, as a 65 year old employee pensioner, *Oqsoqol* (director of *mahalla*) of A-1, said the following about the importance of *mahalla* in Uzbekistan; *“the importance of our mahalla is coming not from social policy but ethical responsibility. Oqsoqol knows every person in the mahalla and controls them. He tries to reduce social tensions in the mahalla. For example, he tries to dissuade married couples from divorce. In our mahallas, there is really solidarity and strong interpersonal relationships. For instance, the person does not know who live in the near mahalla but know everyone in their own mahalla...”*

5.3.3 From Redistributive (Class) Politics to Representational (Identity) Politics and Different Mahalla Types

“...our residential unit was one of the most beautiful mikroraions during the Soviet era. We had a green area in the middle of the mikroraion in which our children played and our women sat in the evening. Now it has been destroyed and a business center is being built. How is this possible? This was our public space. How can a business establish a building? Urban land is still under state ownership in Uzbekistan. The Tashkent hokimiyat rented out this area – the hokimiyat means the state and today, our state does not take care of its citizens, our state only pays attention to profit. Who knows, maybe someone in the hokimiyat has benefited from renting out this area. It is a big problem!”¹³³

“... thanks to God, immediately after independence a Turkish tokuv zavodu¹³⁴ was opened near our mahalla, and the many unemployed residents began to work in that factory. During the Soviet era we were unemployed; we tried to find a job in the bazaars. We did whatever we could during the Soviet era. Now, we can earn money. More importantly, we can spend our own money freely. Everything was different in the Soviet era. If we made anything to our mahalla or bought something new for our house the Communist Party would come and ask from where and how we had found the money to pay for it. This is the blessing of our state today!...”¹³⁵

The aim in this section is not to explain the effects of the economic, political and social transition on urban space in the post-Soviet era, as this goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹³³ An Uzbek woman – a doctor, aged 54, from D-1 mahalla.

¹³⁴ Textile factory.

¹³⁵ An Uzbek man – a retired engineer, aged 65 from B-2 mahalla.

The intention here is to examine how the residents of different types of *mahalla* have been affected by the urban change of the post-Soviet transition in their daily lives and in their living spaces. This would not be possible without first emphasizing the political/economic dynamics coming from the upper scales and their effect on urban space. In this regard, first, a summary will be made of the effects of the post-Soviet transition on the urban living space of post-Soviet cities, which will be compared with the residential units of Tashkent. This will be followed by a presentation of the opinions of interviewees in the case study on issues related to their daily lives and living spaces in the transition era. This thesis offers a critical evaluation of the transformation of local politics in Uzbekistan based on a study of the various paths of transition of different residential communities in the urban areas, and will attempt to uncover whether these divergent paths indicate a break from, or continuity with, their previous paths during the Soviet era. This section argues that various paths of transition of different residential communities in the urban area are caused from spatially different effects of the shifts between class and identity politics in the transition era. What is argued in this section is that many studies into the post-Soviet transition of the Soviet city are based on East European and Russian cities, and these do not allow a specific understanding of the transition in the livable spatiality of Tashkent. Moreover, many earlier studies discuss the general dynamics and characteristics of the transition of the Soviet city, which is inadequate when attempting to analyze the opinions of different residents in the different *mahalla* types of, in particular, Tashkent.



Figure 5.4 An Example of a Construction of Business Center at the Center of a D-type Mahalla

There have been many studies of the urban system in the Soviet and post-Soviet regimes, although most of them focus on East European and Russian cities (Alexander, Buchli, Humphrey, 2007; Lehmann, 1991; Strykiewicz, Ciesiółka, and Jaroszevska, 2011; Hughes, John, Sasse, 2002; Stenning, 2005, 2003, Balockaitė). The aim here is to compare the main principles of Soviet urban planning with the urban changes that occurred during the post-Soviet transition and I will put the differences of the urban change in Uzbekistan from the general suggestions in the literature about the post-Soviet urban change. While one of the main principles of the Soviet city was to create an egalitarian society and territorial equality in living conditions, many studies suggest that what actually came to be was a stratified society, social inequalities and growing differences in living conditions. However, for Tashkent and generally for Central Asian countries, during the Soviet era, there was already more socio-spatial segregation than in other Soviet or Eastern Bloc republics. What changed in Tashkent in terms of social inequality was that it became deeper than in the past. This kind of reductionist perspective falls far short of explaining the post-Soviet transition in Uzbekistani society, and the residents of neighborhoods representing numerous socio-economic levels put forward different opinions about the level of social inequality post-independence.

As discussed previously, a centrally planned economy and the priority given to “productive” economic development in the socialist regime brought about rapid conversion to a market economy (neo-liberal approaches), which meant exposure and openness to national and foreign investment and supranational institutions in many post-Soviet states. Related to this change, the priority of the new regime is now private rather than public property, and moreover the housing policy is no longer accepted as a social service but as a commodity (Strykiewicz, 2011). Lehmann (1991) argues that the socialist city was a compact city, a relatively homogenous functional area, and as such there was no suburbanization. On the other hand, with the transition to the market-based economy, suburbanization in post-Soviet countries emerged as a *“special form of the uneven development endemic in capitalism. The capital plays the key role in its development”* (Timar, 2001: 354). Timar argues that *“investing in the built environment in Hungary in the 1990s became a successful way of securing surplus value and realizing profits,”* which is also true for Uzbekistan, especially Tashkent. As Kosmarski (2009) argues, *“In the 1990s–early 2000s the city witnessed the processes common to the whole post-Soviet space – state-led national reconstruction of the symbolic landscape of the city and market-driven destruction of old residential districts to give space to luxurious hotels and villas”*.

The center of a socialist city was generally separated for the residential units, unlike in the capitalist city center, in which the commercial and industrial areas are co-located. After independence, the center of many post-Soviet cities became a key target for investment by the private sector, driving the construction of business centers, commercial areas, shopping centers, financial centers, hotels, tourism attractions, etc. The increasing tertiary-sectoral-functions of the post-Soviet city are clearly seen in Tashkent and during the field study of this thesis, this process was notable. Due to the strong demand of the private sector to invest in central Tashkent, the center has been transformed from a residential area to a commercial zone. This has of course had a big influence on the classic Soviet-type residential units located at the center of the city, as can be seen from the interview with the doctor from D-1 *mahalla* at the beginning of this section.

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, the Uzbekistani regime implemented a gradual transition to a market-based economy, which resulted in slow rather than radical change in the urban space, as was seen in many post-Soviet countries. This also affected government measures in the urban system in the transition from the Soviet to post-Soviet era. Soviet city planning was part of a centralized economic and regional policy, and the local Soviet had only a few responsibilities in the decision-making process. After the collapse of the Soviet Union many countries re-established and re-regulated city planning, giving more responsibility to the local governments, and this was also the case in Uzbekistan. After independence, the Uzbekistani regime gave more authority in city planning to the *hokimiyat*, however the status of the *hokimiyat* is significant here, being, as explained in Chapter Two, a branch of the central, rather than local self-government. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the *mahalla kengash*, as a level of local self-government, has no authority in urban planning. The total control of the state over the means of production and urban land also changed in many countries during the transition area; however in Uzbekistan the state is still the owner of the urban land, and the privatization of enterprises is achieved gradually.

At the beginning of the Soviet era, the regime gave more importance to the transformation of public space in Tashkent, which was followed by a dramatic change in the living space and public space, especially during the Khrushchev era. The Soviet regime had a strict and radical urban plan, which comprised both the physical and socio-spatial plan, through regulation of the socio-spatial relationship and the living-working place relationship, in order to establish its hegemony and create an ideal socialist society. The Uzbekistani regime, on the other hand, had no such radical urban plan when attempting to create its nation state and national consciousness. The Soviet regime tried to give Tashkent, as a capital of Central Asia, a unique flavor and European/cosmopolitan atmosphere, and after independence, the

center of Tashkent became the place with the best job opportunities, a consumer culture and the best urban amenities. Kosmarski (2011) defined this process in Tashkent as “undergoing transition from the creative locality towards consumer uniformity”.

When interviewees from different *mahallas* were asked what changes had occurred in their daily lives after independence, their answers focused generally on issues related to the socio-spatial transformation of the living space, with the most common issue being private property and the housing privatization. As the subject of housing privatization goes beyond the scope of this thesis, only the residents’ opinions of private ownership in urban housing will be discussed here. Most residents emphasized that in their daily lives the most important change was that they were able to choose where they live. The *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* expressed that: *“During the Soviet era, the citizens could not choose where they lived. The state appointed us to the mikroraion. Thanks to independence, now we can choose our housing and our mahalla ...”*. However, this view was not shared by many residents. An Uzbek man (39) living in D-2 *mahalla* who had lost his job after the factory near his *mahalla* closed down, said: *“We can choose our home today; people are free; however, it is not good. We had regular jobs during the Soviet era and the state gave us a home. Today, while we have our jobs, many people from the rural areas make money and come and settle in our beautiful mikroraion while we try to find cheap housing at the periphery of Tashkent. The urban culture is non-existent today; ignorant people from rural areas have occupied our city”*. There are many similar stories in Tashkent. For example, when he tells the history of the *mahalla*, the *oqsoqol* of A-3 *mahalla*, as mentioned in the previous section as an example of the continuity in local strategies against the urban renewal project of the state from the Soviet to post-Soviet regime, said:

“The ethnic structure of our mahalla was mostly based on Uzbek people; however, there were also lots of Jews and non-Asian people. After independence, many of these people sold their houses to the Uzbeks who migrated from the rural areas at an expensive price and returned to their country. Moreover, many residents who lost their jobs after the 1990s sold their houses at an expensive price, settled in the periphery of Tashkent, and began to deal with trade. It was expensive because our mahalla was at the center of Tashkent”.

Humphrey (2007: 185) commented on this issue by saying, *“the Soviet subjecthood, defined ... principally by occupation, is being metamorphosed into a subject status differentiated by wealth”*. The Soviet city was a city of the working class. The *“work place was turned into the main axis of organization of social life”* in the Soviet city (Stenning, 2005: 986). Baločkaitė (2010: 64) defined the Soviet urban settlements as *“the workers’ sites in the workers’ state ... and to construct new socialist subjectivities, i.e. to make a Soviet working class”*. Stenning (2005: 986) defined this ideal Soviet urban settlement as:

“The residents of these new spaces were created as worker-citizens whose ‘collective survival and individual status’ (Offe, 1996: 235) were founded almost entirely on the relationship to production. Social lives too were constructed through the workplace and, through the particular pattern of employment, housing and social mobility, domestic lives were shaped in large part by relations of production and work status (Ashwin, 2000; Kideckel, 2004; Kotkin, 1995, 1997; Stenning, 2005a, 2005b)”.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the transition to the market-based economy pushed post-Soviet countries to turn their urban settlements into a living space of entrepreneurialism rather than of the working class. Stenning (2005: 986) argued that behind this process of the end of the working class in post-socialist cities, and including the previous statement, there are wider social and economic shifts to be driven by two processes: “The material decline of industrial work....[lead to] the emergent centrality of a politics of representation, in contrast to an earlier politics of redistribution”. In short, while the politics of class are seen to be declining, identity politics and individualization are increasing. Therefore, this de-proletarianization process had a negative effect on the residents of D-type *mahallas* in Tashkent, which were ideal Soviet-type residential units. Baločkaitė, (2010: 66) argued in his studies that “research into the post-Soviet transformations in the planned Soviet towns focused, in contrast, on the particularities of transition, i.e. on specific communities that are resistant and reluctant to transition”. This argument is also true for the residents of D-type Tashkent *mahallas*, because the residents (workers) of the old planned town of the Soviet regime are similar to those in the D-type Tashkent *mahallas*, and moreover many of their characteristics are the same.

While establishing national consciousness, the Uzbekistani regime mainly based its *o'zbekchiliq* on tradition and customs. In many parts of social and political life, this Uzbek identity resulted in the (re-)production of conservative and paternalist social relations. As seen in the previous chapter, the Soviet regime also (re-)produced these social relations under the *o'zbekchiliq* in Uzbekistan, which resulted in spatial reflection of hegemony in the living spaces of Tashkent. This spatial reflection of the Soviet hegemony is one of the main reasons why the different strategies of different *mahalla* types emerged during the transition era. The different strategies of different *mahalla* types influenced the decentralization policy and hegemony of the Uzbek regime. In this section, different responses of the people in different *mahalla* types to the questions concerning the impacts of the post-Soviet transition period in Tashkent city space were presented. At the beginning of this section, two quotes from different interviews were given. In the first, taken from an interview with a doctor (an Uzbek woman, 54 years of age) from D-1 *mahalla*, exemplifies clearly this issue. The residents of D-type *mahallas* in Tashkent were very reluctant to transition; however, the

second quote, taken from an interview with a retired engineer (an Uzbek man, 65 years of age) from B-2 *mahalla* demonstrated an opposing opinion about the effects of transition. Indeed, as a general rule, it may be argued that the B type Tashkent *mahallas*, and to some degree the A type, do not face difficulties when adapting to the structural constraints of the transition era based on identity politics and politics of representation, as during the Soviet era these two strategies had been dominant in these *mahallas*. Therefore, many residents of the ideal Soviet residential units criticized the Uzbekistani regime's identity politics based on conservative and patriarchal social relations. Moreover, they compared the patriarchal characters of today and Soviet time when they explained their opinion of the Soviet regime regarding Uzbek traditions. An Uzbek woman (39) from D-2 *mahalla*, who is a teacher in a high school, depicted the Soviet policies towards Uzbek tradition with:

“today, our old traditions are re-born again, which were non-existent during the Soviet era. The Communist party, for example, gave a new husband-wife a new home from the new micro rayon. Aaa today, for example I got married in 1990 and still we are living with my mother and father-in-law. See, during the soviet times, the housing policy was better, even during the Soviet era, policies were for the citizen but today there is no policy for our benefit. (-I commented that “but living together with your mother-in-law is Uzbek tradition, isn’t it? She continued-) yeah, today, anything for the benefit of state is Uzbek traditon, O’zbekchiliq! The state could not accommodate enough housing so they are saying that we should live altogether, being a big family is kind of being a good Uzbek! Moreover, for example, the Communist party restrained the luxurious wedding ceremony through preventing wastefulness. Aa today, you see, parents who could not make it possible for their children to be educated because of their income, are making wedding ceremonies for their children with 10.000 dollars.”

Especially the women from these modern *mahallas*, emphasized the paternalist character when they explained the opinion of the Soviet regime about Uzbek traditions. According to them, the Soviet regime did not eliminate Uzbek tradition and *o’zbekchiliq* but it prevented some harmful feudal tradition, especially about gender and family affairs. Therefore, many women residents from D type *mahallas* complained about today’s conservative policies of the Uzbek state. For example, an Uzbek woman from C-3 *mahalla*, who is working on T.V. (54 years old) said that:

“In the Soviet era, the state struggled with old and harmful traditions and customs that were belonging to the feudal structure. For example, I got married when I was 27 years old in the Soviet time. I graduated and began to work, and earnt my money. After that I decided to marry. However, today, our old traditions are re-born because of an absence of state interference. My daughter (19) worries about becoming a spinster. She says that today is not like your time, mom. If I cannot get married by the age of 22, I can never marry.”

Briefly, this section clearly demonstrates that the transition era from class politics of the Soviet regime to the identity politics of the new Uzbekistani regime has had different effects on the urban *mahalla* types because some of them had been already shaped according to the identity politics of the Soviet hegemony. Moreover, this point also explains why the conflict and/or tension in center-local dialectical relationship have increased in some types of *mahalla* after the independence.

5.4 The *Mahalla Kengash* as a Civil Society: State Control over the Society

*“Kuchli davlatdan – kuchli
fukarolik jamiyati sari”¹³⁶”*
I. Karimov

As mentioned in the theory chapter, during the post-Soviet era the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism compelled the Uzbekistani regime to decentralize its administrative structure, based on the assumption that there is a strong relationship between decentralization and democratization. According to this pluralist perspective decentralization is a way of strengthening civil society against the state, but as this view was covered in the theory chapter, it will not be repeated here. However, it is necessary at this point, to mention the strategic choice of the Uzbekistani regime in the issue of democratization. The political elite in the Uzbekistani regime, who are the main actors in shaping the state hegemonic projects, believe that the only way to establish a strong civil society with the help of a strong state structure – “*Kuchli davlatdan – kuchli fukarolik jamiyati sari*”. This perspective is clearly opposed to the neo-liberal discourse of decentralization.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, all new nation states adopted the market-based economic regime, and during the transition it was thought that “*after the ending of the totalitarian Soviet regime, democracy would flourish in central Asia ... In contrast, the trend in Central Asia since the mid-1990s has been towards less democracy, intensive centralization, and tighter governmental control* (Clark, 1999: 43). It could be said that the continuity of the repressive Soviet political system was the reason for this lack of democratization. In this thesis, despite sharing the view that the Uzbekistani regime is less democratic and has a highly centralized administrative structure, it is argued that there is no relationship between either the market-based economy and democratization or decentralization and democratization. Moreover, in the entire capitalist world, during neo-liberalism, it may be argued that the centralist tendency of nation states increased according to the increasing degree of uneven development (MacLoad & Goodwin, 1999; Duncan &

¹³⁶ “from strong state to strong civil society” and/or “a strong civil society can be built only by a strong state”.

Goodwin, 1988; Gamble, 1994, Vogel, 2004). This section opens discussion on the point that civil society is a sphere on which the state hegemony is constructed, rather than one in which the rights of the citizens are protected against the state, and in Uzbekistan the *mahalla kengash* is an instrument for this aim, with state power localized through the *mahalla* (Noori, 2006) and state hegemony realized through the *mahalla kengash*.

One of the key functions of the *mahalla kengash* has been historically the maintenance of order and social cohesion within the *mahalla* community, and it would become an instrument for the control the native community during the Tsarist regime. This strategy was followed by both the Soviet regime and the independent Uzbekistani state through the *mahalla kengash*, and although the Uzbekistani state appointed the *mahalla kengash* as a body of local self-government unit and emphasized a break from the centralist Soviet tradition, it may be argued that the Uzbek and the Soviet states' decentralization policies were similar. The Uzbekistani regime argues that democratization can be achieved by strengthening the *mahalla*, as a representative of civil society, however this does not comply with its strategy to use the *mahalla kengash* for the control of the community. Does this represent the right of civil society against the state, or is it an instrument of state control for intervention into civil society? The *mahalla* is used by the state for realizing the functions of the state, therefore it may be argued that despite the claim of the Uzbekistani state, the strategy of the Soviet regime that favored increased decentralization and control over the *mahalla* has been adopted by the Uzbekistani state. Here, the intention is not to claim that decentralization resulted in more control by the state, as in the case of Uzbekistan, decentralization historically resulted in the localization of state power and hegemony. The first point to be mentioned here is the religious control of the Uzbekistani state over society through the *mahalla kengash*, and second point is the roles of the *maslahatchi*, *posbon* and *uchaskavoy noziri*,¹³⁷ being agents of the central government in the *mahalla kengash*. According to the new legal arrangement, the *mahalla kengash* has the right to determine and report residents who may be potentially involved with extreme religious movements, and this initiative is under the joint responsibility of the *uchaskavoy noziri*, *maslahatchi* and *posbon*. A further argument is made in this dissertation that this duty was undertaken in different ways by different *mahalla* officials according to their own world views, and as such the regulation results in non-standard implementations, contrary to the Uzbekistani state's vision for the *mahalla*.

¹³⁷ The *maslahatchi* is a woman from the *mahalla* community that is appointed by the *Hokimiyat* as a consultant for women and family issues; the *uchaskavoy noziri* is a policeman appointed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide security within the *mahalla*; and the *posbon* is an officer that helps the *uchaskavoy noziri* carry out some of his tasks.

The *mahalla kengash* had been a political/hegemonic instrument of the Soviet regime not only for strengthening the national identity, but for also for providing security in the neighborhood community and asserting to control over it in the Soviet era. As mentioned in the previous section, unlike in Russia, in Uzbekistan and Central Asia the Soviet regime (re-)established the *mahalla kengash* in each *mahalla* in the 1920s, and used them as hegemonic instruments. As Noori (2006: 75) points out, with the help of the *mahallakengash*, “the Communist Party created the image of being present everywhere, of knowing everything; it attempted to create a belief in the population that nothing they did could escape the grip of the party”. Briefly, the *mahalla kengash* represented a strengthening of the communist order and asserted the Soviet leadership in the control of society. Moreover, as the *maslahatchi* of C-2 *mahalla* commented, “There was *mahalla* in the past, but the *oqsoqol* was like a detective, giving information to the Communist Party about the *mahalla* community”. This state strategy has carried over into the post-Soviet era, with the Uzbekistani regime continuing to use the *mahalla kengash* for controlling society. For instance, a 49 years old, an old member of the Erk Party, claimed that, “In the past (the Soviet period), there was one detective in every *mahalla*, now there are 10”.

Thus, the *mahalla kengash* has been mobilized in both periods when the state needed to garner information about its citizens, and both the Communist Party and the Uzbekistani state have integrated this traditional institution into the structure of the state administration in different forms. While the Soviet regime accepted the *mahalla* organization as a social organization in Uzbekistani society, the Uzbekistani state has constitutionally attributed the status of local self-governing body to the *mahalla* organization. In this sense, the central government has appointed the *mahalla* as a practical extension of its authority and control (Rasanayagam, 2011: 113). According to the Mahalla Law, the *mahalla* has to assist in all state programs, orders visits to public officials and reports any *mahalla* citizens who are members of illegal religious groups to the state. Also, the *mahalla kengash* has responsibilities in the implementation of laws and the collection of taxes. For local governors, the *mahalla* is an extension of their own authority, a tool for monitoring and controlling the population and for fulfilling the directives handed down to them from the central government (Rasanayagam, 2011: 119); and in these ways, the institution of the *mahalla* is used as an instrument of surveillance and control over the population. Although the *mahalla kengash* is by law a self-governing institution with a locally elected leadership, Karimov’s government also intends to use local networks of social interaction and socialization to extend the reach of the central government (Noori, 2006).

The *mahalla kengash*, which has become the political tool for controlling the society since the beginning of the Soviet regime, is accepted as a local government by the Uzbekistani regime in its decentralization policy within the new structure of neo-liberal transition. The Uzbekistani regime, which is affected by the hegemonic discourse of the “civil society” of neo-liberalism, describes its new ideology as: “the creation of the convenient civil society for the service of democracy”. The Uzbekistani regime also puts the *mahalla* organization at the very center of its democratic civil society, as a tool of the control of each and every citizen, even in the private sphere. Although the reform of the Uzbekistani regime over the *mahalla kengash* was actively supported by international NGOs, both due to its secular status and the grassroots democratic organization of the *mahalla*, in the early 2000s, Noori (2006) claims that the “*mahalla just turned into an additional coercive instrument of the state*”. This section claims that the *mahalla kengash* has been used as a hegemonic instrument for the control of society through the decentralization policy, challenging the neo-liberal hegemonic discourse that constructs a direct relationship between decentralization and democratization with the concept of civil society, in that the local state does not always defend the rights of civil society against the state, and furthermore, there is no sharp dichotomy between the state and civil society. However, this argument does not support the instrumentalist Marxist perspective that accepts the local state as simply an agent of the central state. Instead, this thesis prefers to resort to the Neo-Gramscian approach that facilitates the explanation of the concept of decentralization through the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the central and the local state, which are seen as forms of social relations at the national and the local scale. According to Gramsci, civil society is an area in which the ruling class establishes its hegemony through the state (Anderson, 2007; Bobbio & Texier, 1982), which would appear to be appropriate for explaining the role of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument of the Uzbekistani regime, and accordingly the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime through the *mahalla* scale should be understood from this perspective. While re-configuring and re-scaling the state organization during the transition era, the main goal of the state has been the attainment of its hegemonic project; and at this point the decentralization policy became a hegemonic instrument or strategy.

In this regard, the *mahalla kengash* as a local state not only represents the local community, but is also an agent of the state, which is why local politics are defined as conflictual. In this section, from the perspective of dialectic and reciprocal relationship, although the Uzbekistani regime used the *mahalla kengash* to control society, the *mahalla kengash* of different *mahalla* types implemented this state strategy in different ways. Here, it is important to keep in mind that the local policy variations may sometimes contradict the

regime's vision or its hegemonic project; and decentralization, as a hegemonic strategy of the state, may also be in contradiction with the achievement of the hegemonic project of the ruling class at a national scale. Therefore, the liberal discourse that interprets the situation as a failure in decentralization and democratization remains quite inadequate for understanding the real dynamics of the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan, as well as in other post-Soviet countries.

In contemporary Uzbekistan the *mahalla* has been integrated into the governmental structure in important ways. While retaining some of its traditional functions, the *mahalla* today combines features of both local self-government and state administration; and as such, serves as perhaps the most significant instrument of government control, down below at the district level. The legislation of *mahallas* brings this entrenched institution into the official realm, making it more accountable to the center and limiting its potential as a source of opposition. These points raise the question: *To what extent are mahalla kengashes actually self-governing, and to what extent are they merely an extension of the state government's executive structure?* (Epstein, 2004: 63). The *mahalla*, in law, is a form of local self-government, while in practice it is an extension of the state administration at the neighborhood level. However, this thesis argues that the balance between these dual functions of the *mahalla kengash* is different in each locality. One example of this point can be seen in the state strategy related to fundamentalist Islamic movements in Uzbekistan.

An Example of Differentiated Strategies of Mahalla Kengash against the State Control: Fundamentalist Islamic Movements

After independence, one of the most significant political movements against the Uzbekistani regime came from fundamentalist Islamic groups, and so the state decided to suppress extreme religious groups in Uzbekistan. Thus, while trying to establish a nation-state based on the Uzbek identity, the Uzbekistani regime recalled the Uzbekistani history of the pre-Islamic era in order to counter emergent radical Islamist movements, and used the *mahalla kengash* in the fight against these movements. As Bogner (2003: 6) explained: *"In February 1999, five bombs exploded outside government buildings in Tashkent. The government immediately blamed the bombing on Islamic 'extremists' and began a wave of arrests and persecution of independent Muslims. As part of this campaign, the government enacted a new law, giving mahalla committees many more responsibilities, including the repression of unregistered religious organizations"*. Furthermore, the *mahalla kengash* is required to report to the Ministry of International Affairs any residents suspected in taking part in fundamentalist Islamic activities. Particularly since the attacks against the United States on

September 11, 2001, the *mahalla kengash* has been directed to hold more anti-terrorist meetings and seminars, and the *Hokimiyat* has required the *mahalla kengash* to collect and pass on statistics related to their area. According to Article 12 of the Mahalla Law, the *mahalla kengash* has to “take measures to stop the activity of non-registered religious organizations, to ensure observance of the rights to religious liberty of citizens, non-admission of forced spreading of religious views, and to consider other issues related to the observance of the legislation on freedom of conscience and religious organizations” (Bogner, 2003: 10). *Mahalla kengash* leaders are expected to act as spies of the government, and to constantly be on the look-out for anti-government sentiment among their residents (Rasanayagam, 2011: 113). Moreover, in Uzbekistan, one can make the pilgrimage to Mecca only if given permission by the *mahalla kengash*. The *maslahatchi* of A-1 *mahalla* explains this as follows:

“Throughout Uzbekistan, any resident who wants to make their pilgrimage should register their name with the mahalla kengash, and we prepare a document for them through the nurani komissiyasi.¹³⁸ They take this document to the Religious Affairs Administration (Islam Idarosi), and if there is a problem, we describe it in the document. For example, should a very old resident wish to make his pilgrimage, we would write that he could not go. Since independence, in Uzbekistan there has been fundamentalist terrorism and some residents have been using the pilgrimage as an excuse to go to Saudi Arabia and join Islamic groups. If we suspect anybody of this, we do not give a visa.¹³⁹ This system is the same for anyone wishing to go abroad, not just those wishing to make a pilgrimage”.

Despite this state strategy on Islamic groups, there is no discussion on the differences between the Soviet and the post-Soviet era in terms of religious freedom in Uzbekistan. When the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Soviet Union are compared, it can be argued that there is more religious freedom under the Uzbekistani regime when compared to the Soviet Union. The case study reveals that 80% of respondents believe that there is more freedom of religion today, with 95% claiming that freedom of religion was non-existent during the Soviet Period. In these statistics, age proved to be an important independent variable, with 75% of the younger respondents claiming that currently there is religious freedom in Uzbekistan, compared to 90% of the older respondents. The strategies of the Soviet and the Uzbekistani regimes are similar in their fight against radical Islamic movements. The *jen-Soviet* of C-2 *mahalla* commented that: “*The Soviet regime never did too much to destroy Islam in Uzbekistan. It used mahalla kengash. How? For example, the Party did forbid people from following Islam, but if you were a member of the Party you were expected to be an atheist. During the Soviet era, to reach a higher social status you needed to be a member*

¹³⁸ This sub-committee of the *mahalla kengash* registers residents who apply to the *mahalla* to make a pilgrimage.

¹³⁹ In Uzbekistan, citizens need to obtain a visa from the Uzbekistani government to go abroad.

of the Party, and thus everyone tried to become a member. The mahalla kengash controls each member of the Party in his/her daily life, and so can understand whether or not they follow a religion. For example, if you were caught praying at home, the mahalla kengash would immediately report you to the Party, and party would cancel your membership”. An Uzbek woman¹⁴⁰ (housewife, 37 years-of-age) in C-1 mahalla, discussing the same point, said: “Recently, if you apply for a job in the state, state officers come immediately to the mahalla kengash and ask about your lifestyle. If you are practicing Islam, then you will not be offered the job”. Likewise, a 29-year-old Uzbek citizen said: “When someone in the mahalla starts to work in the public sector, the mahalla government gives all their information to the state, such as his/her religion, ethnicity, civil organizations in which he/she participates, etc...”. In the field survey, the residents of the different mahalla types were asked about this point, and 63% of respondents expressed that the state makes inquiries from the mahalla kengash about all residents who apply for a job. However, as seen in Table 5.11, there is variation in the responses according to mahalla type. In A-type mahallas, the proportion of residents who agreed with this statement was 94.1%; while in the D-type mahallas it was only 47.4%.

Table 5.11 Does the state make inquiries about residents who apply for a job from the mahalla kengash? (%)

Types	Yes	No	Total
A	94.1	5.9	100
B	40	60	100
C	55.2	44.8	100
D	47.4	52.6	100
Total	63.7	36.3	100

*Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009

When analyzing the mahalla types, different opinions of mahalla officials about the strategy of the state for the mahalla are apparent. The mahalla kengash, especially the *maslahatchi* and *posbon*, are required to report to the Ministry of International Affairs about residents who engage in fundamentalist Islamic activities. However, according to the results of the current case study, the implementation of this function is different in each mahalla kengash of the different mahalla types, resulting in local policy variations. The modern Soviet mahalla (D type) has no religious problems, while the residents of especially A-, B- and C-type mahallas have a stronger tendency to participate in/be associated with fundamentalist Islamic groups. As seen from Table 5.12, in the A-type mahallas in the case study, 46 residents were registered as fundamentalists by the mahalla kengash, while in the D-type

¹⁴⁰ Whose husband was an imam, currently imprisoned.

mahalla, nobody was registered as such. When asked about the problems associated with fundamentalist Islam, the *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* said:

“There is no such problem in our mahalla. In our kind of mahalla the main problem is not Islam, but rather, Russification, and this is a more serious problem for Uzbekistan. Our residents do not know the Uzbek language or the Uzbek tradition. As a mahalla kengash, our first and most important function is to change this situation, and so we have arranged several conferences about Uzbekistan’s history and o’zbekchiliq. The fundamentalist movements are in the old mahallas, not in the new mahallas”

As the *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* emphasized, many *mahalla* officials in A-type *mahallas* focused on the fundamentalist movements when talking about their primary functions. The *maslahatchi* of A-1 *mahalla* explained the fundamentalist movements and their functions as follows:

“The community of old Tashkent continued to practice Islam during the Soviet era. After independence, thanks to our President, democracy and freedom came to our country, and now we can pray freely. However, with this new-found freedom, most of our residents became interested in learning more about Islam, and many fundamentalist Islamic groups came from abroad, such as from Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and began to make many activities in our society in order to gain political power in Uzbekistan. They teach Islam, and our residents try to go to their schools, buy their books, and attend their functions. We need to prevent them from doing that because these movements are against our government”.

Table 5.12 Number of Participants in Fundamentalist Islamic Groups

Types	Mahallas	Participants in Radical Islam
A	A-1	30
	A-2	13
	A-3	3
B	B-1	2
	B-2	0
C	C-1	3
	C-2	1
	C-3	3
D	D-1	0
	D-2	0
	D-3	0
	D-4	0

**Resource: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009*

In the case study, the officials from not only A type, but also B- and C-types *mahallas* emphasized their functions in the struggle against these movements. However, while some *mahalla* officials have chosen to protect citizens suspected of joining such groups in the past, others denounce citizens who have the potential to take part in such groups. For example, the *Jen-Soviet* of C-2 *mahalla* explained:

“One of our functions is to report residents who have the potential to participate to fundamentalist groups. For example, if a woman wears a

romal,¹⁴¹ we speak to her and ask her to remove it, and if she refuses, we have to report her. However, we are Muslims, and wearing a romal does not necessarily mean you are a fundamentalist, so rather than reporting her immediately, I prefer to convince her not to contact fundamentalist groups. There are five women in our community that wear a romal, and in three years I have not reported them. A more crucial problem in our society is that women are becoming more modern and are forgetting our tradition and Islam after independence”.

The *jen-Soviet* and *maslahatchi* are duty-bound to arrange conferences to raise the awareness of women in the community about fundamentalist movements. However, while conducting the case study, I was able to witness first-hand how these conferences sometimes turn into meetings at which women gather to read the *Quran* and discuss Islamic rites. In other *mahallas*, people declined to speak about issues related to Islam, such as the mosque, prayers, etc. while being interviewed.¹⁴²

Historically, once a decentralization policy is implemented, a new control mechanism over the *mahalla kengash* is also set in place. For example, the Tsarist regime did not touch the native community or the *mahalla kengash* during the colonial era, however, the chair of the *oqsoqol* in the old city began to be appointed by the Russian administration. After the rebellion of the local community against the policies of the Russian administration in Tashkent, the chair of the *oqsoqols* was abolished by the gubernator of Turkestan in 1892, and his responsibilities were delegated to the Russian *politseimeister* (Abramson, 1998: 69). As another example, it was in the Khrushchev era that many functions of the central government were first devolved to the local governments and the *mahalla kengash* under the principles of decentralization and deconcentration. In the same period, a new official position opened in some Uzbek *mahallas* – the *uchaskavoy noziri* – who was appointed by the central government from the police department to control the *mahalla kengash* and report back. After independence, this position became generalized to all *mahallas* in both rural and urban Uzbekistan, and today, in all *mahallas* of Uzbekistan, two *uchaskavoy noziri* are appointed to carry out all security and control duties. In addition, after independence two other positions were officially opened in the *mahalla kengash*: the *mahalla posbon* and the *dini, madani, and maarifiy ishlar boyucha maslahatchi*. In this way, the same mechanisms set in place during the Soviet regime as part of decentralization efforts, placing more control in the hands of local government, have been adopted by the Uzbekistani state. To begin with, the *mahalla posbon* provides the *oqsoqol* decision, and his main duty is to help the *uchaskavoy noziri* in matters related to security in the *mahalla*. Following on, the *dini*,

¹⁴¹ Head scarf.

¹⁴² When two elder Uzbek men in B-2 *mahalla* were asked how often they met with their neighbors, one replied “every morning, when we go to the mosque, we meet,” but he was interrupted by the other man, who said “do not say mosque!”

madani, and *maarifiy ishlar boyucha maslahatchi* are appointed by the *Hokimiyat*,¹⁴³ and is the second in command in the *mahalla kengash* after the *oqsoqol*. After independence, according to the Uzbekistan Constitution, the *oqsoqol* should be elected by the local community, after predominantly being appointed by the central government during the Soviet era. It may be possible to argue that the position of *maslahatchi* is intended to provide balance to the center -*oqsoqol* relationship. Moreover, although the *oqsoqol* is meant to be elected by the community, in practice, in many Soviet type *mahallas*, the *oqsoqol* is still appointed by the state. The state argues that if there is no candidate standing, the *Hokimiyat* can appoint one resident as an *oqsoqol*, however during the case I came across many situations in which the *oqsoqol* had been appointed by the *Hokimiyat*, even though there was a standing candidate. The power of the *maslahatchi* changes depending on the *mahalla* type, and in some types, especially the A and B types with elected *oqsoqols*, the *maslahatchi* wields more power than his/her counterpart in other *mahallas*.

In this section, it was summarized that the issue of *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic tool of the Uzbekistani regime is in control of the society and its citizens. This state strategy has an influence on the internal structure of the *mahalla kengash* as well as the position of the *mahalla kengash* in the political and social life. For this purpose, it followed three stages. Initially, how the *mahalla kengash* had been used by the regimes to control the society was explained. It tried to construct the relationship between civil society and state control through the local state discussions in the literature. This point is crucial for understanding the role of *mahalla kengash* as a local government. In this stage, from the critical perspective, the relationship between the civil society concept, decentralization, and local democracy in liberal theory was criticized. This part demonstrates that when the decentralization policy had been implemented over the *mahalla kengash*, new controlling mechanisms over the *mahalla kengash* had also been (re)-arranged in Uzbekistan. Both the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes, while implementing decentralization policy on urban *mahalla kengash*, (re-)configured the internal organization of *mahalla kengash* in order to control the *mahalla* community through the *mahalla kengash*. Thus, pen ultimately, in order to demonstrate how this state strategy has an influence on the *mahalla kengash*, new positions (officers) in the *mahalla kengash* –*maslahatchi*¹⁴⁴ and *posbon*- were explained. It is possible to argue that the *maslahatchi* and *posbon* are balancing officers between center-*oqsoqol* relations. Finally, one of the examples of state control the community through *mahalla* committee, that is the religious issue, was analyzed. The *mahalla* committee has to provide reports to the Internal

¹⁴³ The city governor.

¹⁴⁴ The formal form is *dini, madani, and maarifiy ishlar boyucha maslahatchi*, in this thesis, it is called shortly *maslahatchi*

Affairs Ministry about the residents who attend fundamentalist Islamic movements. However, according to the results of the case study, the implementation of this function and power of *maslahatchi* and *posbon* are differentiated by each *mahalla kengash* in different *mahalla* types of Tashkent city, which means local policy variation occurs.

This section has explained the clear dialectic and reciprocal relationship that exists between the central state and *mahalla kengash*. In each locality, this relationship has affected differently the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime, as well as the *mahalla kengash*. The main argument of this section is that the local government not only represents but also controls the local community, and that the balance between its representative and control functions is spatio-temporally changed in different *mahalla* types. Thus, whether the local government is a tool of the central government to control civil society, or to protect civil society against the state differs from one *mahalla* to another. The case of religious freedom, as covered in this section, supports this argument, in that some *mahalla* organizations are more compatible with the central government vision than others in its control.

Therefore, the center-local relationship is explained neither through the dichotomy between state and civil society as neo liberal perspectives argue; nor through the instrumentalist Marxist view that the local state is a simply agent of the central state. Rather, the center-local relationship is a dialectical and reciprocal one; thus, the center-local relationship can be spatio-temporally and socio-spatially differentiated, and can be conflictual and/or compatible. At this point, the question to be asked is “what defines or determines whether the center-local relationship is conflictual and/or compatible within this dialectical and reciprocal path?”. This thesis answers this question as “the dialectic relationship between center and local state becomes conflictual when there is inconsistency or dichotomy between the (national) ruling class and its hegemony at the national level and the (local) ruling class and its hegemony at the local level; and it becomes compatible when these two ruling classes and their hegemony are the same or similar.” This explanation is meaningful only if the central state is accepted or defined as a form of national social relations within the constraints of the structural hegemony of the ruling class (Joseph, 2002; Jessop, 2008); and the local state is accepted or defined as a form of local social relations within the constraints of the structural hegemony of the local ruling class. That is why, during the neo liberal transition era, in Uzbekistan, as a post-Soviet country, the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the central state and the urban *mahalla kengash* is conflictual in some *mahalla* types and compatible in others according to the degree of the conformity/ dissent capacity of the hegemony and the form of social relations at the local and national level. However, there is one more point that should not be forgotten. Both national and local ruling

classes' hegemony and strategies are shaped according to their capacity to conform/deviate to/from the Soviet regime path dependently and to the neo liberal structural hegemony path shapingly. Therefore, while the Uzbekistani regime has (re-)institutionalized and re-configured its institutional building; the regime achieves its decentralization policy as part of its hegemonic project and accumulation strategy within the constraints of structural hegemony of neo liberalism and the Soviet legacy path dependently. The urban *mahalla kengashes* as a local state (re-)produce different strategies and tactics against *mahalla*-scaled state policies according to their conformity/dissent capacity to the Soviet regime and the structural hegemony of local social relations. Thus, while in some *mahalla*-scaled policies or strategies of the Uzbekistani regime, the local-center relationship is conflictual spatio-temporally in some *mahalla* types; in other *mahalla* scaled-policy or strategy of the regime, the local-center relationship is conflictual in other *mahalla* types. In this section, it is clear that in the religious control strategy of the Uzbekistani regime as a part of its secular hegemonic project, the center-local relationship is conflictual in A, B, and C types of *mahallas* in which the local community preserved Islamic rituals during the Soviet era; while as seen in the previous section, the center-local relationship is conflictual especially in the D and C types of *mahallas* in the *o'zbekchiliq* policy of the regime in order to establish national identity because the Soviet regime had already implement the identity politics in A and B type of *mahalla* contrary to its class politics in C and D types of *mahallas*. The last state strategy as a part of the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani state during the transition era, which is to devolve the urban social policy to the *mahalla kengash*, will be explained in the next section. This strategy also demonstrates the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the central and local state is spatio-temporally differentiated in each *mahalla* types. Like the case of *o'zbekchiliq*, in this case (devolving social policy to the *mahalla kengash*) also, in the D and C type *mahallas* which were shaped by the Soviet regime according to redistributive politics, there is a conflictual relationship between central and local state.

CHAPTER 6

CHANGE/CONTINUITY IN DECENTRALIZATION POLICY: THE UZBEKISTANI LEGACY AND STRATEGIES OF THE *MAHALLA KENGASH*

In this section, the legal framework of the neighborhood committee, known as the *mahalla kengash*, will be summarized. Following Jessop's state analysis covered in the theoretical chapter, the internal organization and the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengash* will be analyzed. The third issue related with the *mahalla kengash*, being the mode of intervention, was analyzed in the previous chapter, focusing on the two main functions of the *mahalla kengash*: (a) control of the community and (b) urban social policy. It is necessary to add that in this chapter the *mahalla kengash* will be analyzed not only in terms of its legal framework, but also taking into account the perceptions of various officers and *residents* of different types of *mahalla* in Tashkent, which were categorized in the previous chapter.

The Uzbekistani regime, after independence, elevated the status of *mahalla kengashes*, making them a body of local self-government as part of the decentralization policy, which was one of the most important efforts of the Uzbekistani regime to distance itself from the centralist and totalitarian Soviet regime. In spite of this, as seen in Chapter Two, the Soviet regime and the new Uzbekistani administration had much in common in their use of the *mahalla kengash* as a tool for hegemony. In literature it is generally argued that there was a great deal of continuity between the Soviet era and the period after independence in terms of the internal structure and the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengash*; the regulations of the new regime on the *mahalla kengash* and the new economic system have a big influence upon the internal structure of urban *mahalla kengash* and its relations with the state. In chapters two and four, the various state policies (of both the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes) related to the *mahalla kengash* and the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit were summarized, highlighting importance of the *mahalla* in the hegemonic project of both the

Soviet and the new Uzbek regimes. Here, the internal organization of *mahalla kengash* and its relationships with the central government and the *hokimiyat* in comparison with the Soviet era will be analyzed. In making this comparison, the Soviet regulation of the *mahalla kengash* during the Khrushchev era is accorded particular importance due to the impact of the many policies implemented in this era, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Three policies from the Khrushchev period drastically changed the organization of the Uzbekistani *mahalla*: (a) decentralization; (b) rapid industrialization and urbanization in Central Asia; and (c) the decrease in pressure of the Soviet regime on the daily lives of native people.

The internal organization of today's *mahalla kengash* and many of its current functions emerged during the Khrushchev era as a result of his decentralization policy; and it was also at this time in the 1960s that the *mahalla* was spatially transformed into its current form as a socio-spatial unit under the Soviet regime's new interventions into Central Asian cities. The fact that Khrushchev adopted less oppressive strategies than Stalin to realize his policies was fundamental for Central Asian societies and the *mahalla* to protect and continue their own traditional values and daily life. During the 1960s, the *mahalla kengash* (and *kvartelnye komitet*) was included among the state's administrative structuring which is reflected in an observed increase in the legal arrangements regarding the *mahalla kengash* (and *kvartelnye komitet*). For this reason it is necessary to summarize the Soviet legal framework of the *mahalla kengash* during the Khrushchev era.

Analyses of the administrative system have generally examined only the legal framework, thus have been quite restricted in that they focus on the formal codes, while ignoring what is actually realized. In this thesis, the *mahalla kengash* structure is analyzed from an indigenous perspective so as to understand how the members of the *mahalla kengash* and the *mahalla* community evaluate the decentralization policy, the *mahalla kengash* structure and the *mahalla*-state relationship through data obtained during interviews. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, "*although restrained by central government and centrally imposed legal statutes, local government retains a degree of choice in its actions*" (Duncan & Goodwin, 1988: 5), and these actions are mostly shaped by the structural hegemony of local social and power relations. Accordingly, there are spatio-temporally different strategies and tactics in different *mahalla kengashes*. In this chapter the spatio-temporally different strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengashes* will be analyzed taking into account the different power and social relations at work within urban *mahalla* communities in different localities.

As seen in Chapter Four, Tashkent contains different types of *mahallas* with different localities due to the uneven development of the pre-Soviet urban structure, the Russian colonial city structure and the Soviet policies enforced upon the *mahalla* unit. The different socio-economic characteristics of Tashkent *mahallas* have influenced many features of their *mahalla kengash*, ranging from their capacity to carry out activities to their relationships with the central government or the *mahalla's* financial issues. After analyzing the legal framework of the *mahalla kengash*, an investigation will be made of how their internal organizations vary, and how their relationships with the central government differ, despite the implementation of many standard regulations by the new regime on the *mahalla kengash*.

Shortly, in this chapter, the dynamic, dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the *mahalla kengashes* of different Tashkent *mahalla* types and the central government of the new Uzbekistani regime is analyzed in detail by looking into the role of *mahalla kengash* in the decentralization policy as a part of hegemonic project of the regime. This relationship was affected by the conflicts that emerged at different political/economic scales which, in the case of some types of *mahallas*, resulted in centralization. The center (central government)-local (different *mahalla kengashes*) relationship is analyzed within the framework of three factors, as in previous chapter: (a) the state legacy of the *mahalla kengash*, in order to achieve the decentralization policy of the new regime; (b) different indigenous social and/or power structures of each *mahalla kengashes*, which resulted in various responses to the *mahalla*-scaled state policies; (c) the responses and the strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* that were not complying with the Uzbek State's aim of *mahalla* design and reversed the state's decentralization strategy in the direction of centralism, which led to a conflict between the different policy aims of the Uzbek State. These three points are discussed in this chapter to show the dynamic, dialectic, conflictual, and reciprocal relationship between the new state and the different *mahalla* types. This chapter is organised to analyze the dialectic relationship between (a) the effects of the decentralization policy on the internal organization and the mode of representation of urban *mahalla kengash*, and (b) the different strategies and actions applied by *mahalla kengashes* in the process of (re-)configuration of administrative structure of the Uzbekistani regime at local scale.

In this chapter, first, the legal framework of the *mahalla kengash* will be summarized and compared with the Soviet regulations. Second, in the section regarding the internal structure and the mode of representation in different *mahalla kengashes*, the opinions of the *mahalla kengash* members and the communities of different *mahalla* types will be evaluated. Initially, their opinions on the *mahalla* policy during the Soviet period will be compared with

that of the new regime to demonstrate that their perceptions on the meaning of the *mahalla* were mostly shaped during their Soviet experience rather than in the independent era. Third, as a main actor of the *mahalla* politics, the *oqsoqol* and his power in different *mahalla* types will be analyzed. By examining the *oqsoqols* of the *mahallas* in the case study, it is aimed to show how the power of the *oqsoqol* varies among the different *mahalla* types. Then, in the part regarding the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash*, the different motivations of residents to work in the *mahalla* in the different *mahalla* types will be discussed. This discussion will be based especially on data obtained during the interviews with the *oqsoqols* and the other *mahalla* officers, during which the different power resources of the *oqsoqols* in different *mahalla* types were learned. In the following section, how the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengash* differs among the Tashkent *mahalla* types will be evaluated. Local financial issues, together with the legal framework and its different structuring in each *mahalla* type will be examined following an evaluation of the different modes of representation in different *mahallas*. Lastly, as Duncan & Goodwin (1988: 5) emphasize, “*local government law is primarily concerned with powers rather than duties, and essentially established a legal framework within which local authorities are given discretionary powers to act,*” and so the relationship between the different localities of the *mahallas* and the power of the *oqsoqols* will be analyzed in order to show that the power of local governments is more influential than its devolved standard legal duties in implementing and reshaping many policies. The essential role of local governments in Tashkent will be shown through two cases: local finance and local networks in unemployment policy, and *hashar*. To sum up, the main argument of this chapter is that different *mahalla kengashes* feature different social relations in practice, despite the standard state regulations imposed, and that these local variations influence central-local relations, and vice versa.

6.1 The Legal Framework for *Mahalla Kengashes*

This section examines the legal framework for *Mahalla Kengashes* in both the Soviet and independent eras. For this purpose, first, decentralization policy of the Soviet regime during the Khrushchev era will be summarized. Then, in order to demonstrate how degree the Uzbekistani regime continued and/or changed from the Soviet regime in its decentralization policy, it will be explained the similarity and differentiation of internal organization of *mahalla kengash* and its relationship with the central state from the Soviet to post-Soviet era.

6.1.1 Decentralization Policy and *Jemoat Tashkilotlari*

As noted in the previous chapter, “in 1922, the Internal Affairs Commissioner of the Turkestan Republic gave orders to the Oblast Executive and Revolutionary Committees to establish a *mahalla kengash* in each *mahalla*” (Komilov, 1961: 24). After establishing the *mahalla kengash* in each city neighborhood, in 1922, the Communist Party appointed officials from non-elite families to the *mahalla kengashes* who, as agents of the Communist Party, monitored the old elite and reported their activities, including their communications, to the central and local governments, thus undermining the elite’s social prestige. As a result of these reports, many Uzbek people were exiled, imprisoned or executed (Arifhanova, 2002: 26). The 1932 law expanded the 1922 memorandum relating to the establishment of *mahalla kengashes* in the cities of the Turkestan Republic to the rural areas of the Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic. (*Toshkent Okshomi*, 2001y, 18 iyun), while also declaring that *mahalla kengashes* were to be composed of three persons: a chairman, a deputy chairman and a secretary (Abramson, 1997: 72).

The death of Stalin in 1953 was followed by an interim period in which all of the Stalinist policies continued to be implemented. The death of Stalin in March 1953 resulted in a power struggle that ended with the appointment of Khrushchev as First Secretary of the Communist Party in 1955 (Yalcin, 2002: 39). When Khrushchev came to power, he ignored the Stalinist period, choosing to look to the Lenin period (French, 1995: 72). The Khrushchev era had deeply affected Central Asian cities and had resulted in a new political, social and physical structure in the Uzbekistani *mahallas* through three policies: (a) the decentralization and reorganization of administrative system, (b) the reduction of political oppression in social life, and (c) the establishment of new urban residential unit, the *mikroraion*. In this respect, the 1960s was a more critical decade than the 1990s in the historical development of the *mahalla* in Uzbekistan.

Chapter Two contained a summary of how the decentralization policy of Khrushchev affected the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan. This policy had also direct effects on the urban *mahalla kengash* and its role in the administrative system. The economic reforms and political liberalization appeared to be serious attempts to decentralize power under Khrushchev (Yalcin, 2002: 39). Khrushchev endeavored to readjust administrative relationships to devolve many functions and thus grant greater flexibility and resourcefulness to lower administrative echelons (Swearer, 1962: 457; Frolic, 1970: 690). Because of the wide decentralization, many state functions were devolved to the *mahallas*, which thus

developed a new meaning and identity. Khrushchev accepted the Uzbek *mahalla* as a social organization rather than a mere branch of the state organization, and accordingly the *mahalla* became both an institution that brought its traditional elements into the Soviet political space/the Soviet state organism, while also bringing the Soviet ideology to Uzbekistani society. This case is a good example of the decentralization style of Khrushchev and the new political structure of the USSR.

As seen in the previous chapter, another crucial aspect of the Khrushchev period was the rapid industrialization and extensive urbanization that emerged on the European side of the Soviet Union before World War II, and on the Asian side after the war. In general, there were three main policies of the Soviet regime that affected the urbanization of the Soviet geography: industrialization, collectivization and the planned economy. As most of the population began to work in the industrial area, the urban population increased, and like the other capital cities of the Asian Soviet Republics, Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, began to develop into a modern city. The Soviet government began implementing a strong housing policy for the Central Asian cities that deeply affected the *mahalla*, some of which were transformed into the *mikroraions* – new/modern residential units for the dense population – while others continued to exist without any intervention from the state. In addition, a number of new/traditional *mahallas* emerged.

Finally, giving voice to the citizens in the political arena, Khrushchev decreased the level of intervention of the Soviet ideology into the daily lives of the native people. This era may be accepted as one in which Soviet power was relaxed in a bid to establish a modern Soviet society. In addition, Khrushchev's political strategies were also important for changing the position of traditions. Khrushchev played his most important trump card to prevent to strengthen the local and implemented a constant balance policy between the existing local interest groups. Khrushchev's balance policy was a means of retaining his power, in that some local groups were given priority and were supported, while others were excluded from local politics (Swearer, 1962: 462). Therefore, the existing clientalist relationships in Uzbekistan began to be used in local politics, especially because the struggle against the traditional way of life became weakness, the traditional features of the *mahalla* could be preserved and reproduced.

These three policies drastically changed the Uzbekistani *mahalla* organization. First, the internal organization of today's *mahalla*, and many of the functions that are now carried out in the *mahalla* emerged during the Khrushchev period under his decentralization policy. Second, the *mahalla* was spatially transformed into its present form as a socio-spatial unit

during the 1960s due to the interventions of the Soviet regime into Central Asian cities. It was the first time that the Communist Party had implemented radical urban plans for Central Asian cities, with the intention being to prepare the cities for dense population that would come with rapid industrialization and urbanization in Central Asia. Third, there were clear differences between the strategies of Stalin and Khrushchev in the transformation of society and its accordance to socialist principles. The fact that Khrushchev adapted softer strategies than Stalin was effective in Central Asian societies and the *mahalla*, in that the public were able to protect and perpetuate their traditional values and daily life. As a conclusion, although Soviet power aimed to create a socialist society, in three areas – political, social and spatial – the *mahalla* organization became stronger and more institutionalized under Soviet policies. The decentralization policy gave the *mahalla* more authority. According to Soviet law, the *mahalla* was a socio-spatial unit and a social organization rather than a unit of local government. In the Khrushchev era, the *mahalla*'s functions increased in parallel with the increasing role of the local soviet¹⁴⁵ in public policy. As more authority was granted to the local soviets, the *mahalla* also gained more authority, being under the control of the local soviets. The *mahalla kengash* was a small branch of the local soviet that democratically realized many functions within the *mahalla* community (Rah'monov, 1970: 4).

After Stalin's death, the private sector completely disappeared, and all power and capital was transferred into the hands of the state. Khrushchev launched programs to change this situation, implying that there was a need to pay attention to the development of social solidarity and associations as the next stage of communism, thus reducing state power. Soviet law recognized three types of social associations: social organizations, social movement organizations and social self-governing organizations (SSGO). Social organizations were consisted of fourth impossible elements; voluntary members, manifesto, assets and self-government, and included such bodies as trade associations; while the Soviet Peace Committee is an example of a social movement organization, with a budget provided by the state. These two organizational types were very similar to each other (Sievers, 2002, 120).

SSGOs, on the other hand, had a certain level of authority as an extension of the Communist Party or state. The main role of SSGOs was to advocate the rights of labor groups or local communities, and the *mahalla* was one of the best examples of an SSGO, with others being *druzhiny* and other residential areas (*domovye*, *ulichnye* and *kvartalnye komitety*),

¹⁴⁵ In the Soviet administrative system, as local government had the dual function of mayor and municipality, there were no local governments per se. There were several local governments in the USSR in accordance with the territorial levels, such as *obispolkom*, *gorispolkom*, *raispolkom*. For the purpose of this thesis, the broad term "local Soviet" will be used in all cases.

agricultural committees (*selskomy*) and family committees. According to Komilov, the *mahalla kengash*, which was a labor organization, was established in every city in Uzbekistan and carried out important functions related to economic and social problems in their own territories (Komilov, 1961: 7). As to what the Soviet authorities defined as social institutions, street committees occupied an ambiguous position relative to the state, but within the political geography of the Soviet state they were the closest thing to a civil society (Noori 74). In 1961, there were more than 1,000 *mahallas* in the Soviet Uzbekistan Republic (274 in Tashkent, 131 in Samarkand, 42 in Namangan, 41 in Andijan, 28 in Khokand, 25 in Margilan, 45 in Nukus, 65 in Bukhara, 14 in Yangiyol and 7 in Chimboy).

At the beginning of the Khrushchev period, the *mahalla*, which had lost many of its functions in the Stalin period, regained some of them under the decentralization policy. The reorganization of the administrative system led to the local Soviet being granted more authority. In fact, the amount of authority and tasks passed from the center to the local Soviets caused the *mahalla kengash* to delegate authority (Komilov, 1961: 7). The Party put immediate pressure on local state authorities to expand the scope of the state-authorized associational networks in their jurisdictions. Local soviets, both at the republic and oblast level, had an interest in increasing the density of associational activity, as well as the proportion of the population volunteering in these associations (Noori, 74). This caused the local Soviets to pay more attention to the *mahalla kengash* and its activities, as one of the social organizations in the Union, and reforms were made that were designed specifically to promote embeddedness, thereby enhancing state capacity, by increasing the frequency of contacts between the state and citizens of the Soviet Union.

In Uzbek cities there are two main residential units that were accepted as SSGOs: apartment committees (*kvartalnye komitety*) and neighborhood committees (*mahalla kengash*). The *kvartalnye komitety* was a social organization in the *mikroraion* that was composed of several apartment or labor blocks, while the *mahalla kengash* was a social organization of the traditional neighborhood that was composed of thousands of old traditional flats. The *mahalla* generally had a larger population than the labor block, numbering 3,000–5,000 people (Sievers, 2002, 120). An analysis of the laws related to *mahallas* showed that the same laws applied to both the *kvartalnye* and *mahalla kengashes* under the Uzbekistani Republic. It can be account the statute on the issue of the *mahalla* during the Soviet period, “the statute about the *mahalla (kvartalnye) kengash* in the cities of CCR Uzbekistan”:

- on 17 April, 1932, by the CCR of Uzbekistan central executive committee
- on 19 January, 1941, by the CCR of Uzbekistan the Soviet of ministries
- on 3 April, 1953, by the CCR of Uzbekistan the Soviet of ministries

As stated at the 1959 XXI Party congress, the intention was: “strengthening the role and broadening the functions of social organizations ... (and making) legal and possible the transfer of several functions of the executive committees of the Soviets to social autonomous organizations of workers, including the *mahalla* committee (Kamilov, 1961: 60). In 1960, the CCR of Uzbekistan the Presidium of the Superior Soviet approved the new statute about the *mahalla kengash*. This statute explained the rights, authority and functions of *mahalla* and how the new *mahalla* or *kvartalnye* committee could be arranged (Komilov, 1961: 8). The statute regarding the establishment of the *mahalla (kvartalnye) kengashes* in the cities, villages and provinces of the CCP of Uzbekistan was approved by the Presidium of the Superior Soviet on 30 August, 1961 (Rah’monov, 1970: 8), after which the *mahalla* and *kvartalnye* committee system was expanded from the urban area to include also rural areas. During the 1960s, in different *oblasts* (province, region) of Uzbekistan, 58 *mahalla* and *kvartalnye* committees were established (Komilov, 1961: 14).

The *mahalla (kvartalnye)* committee was the main subsidiary organizations of the local Soviet in the execution of state functions. The *mahalla kengash* encouraged the residents of the *mahalla* to carry out their economic and social duties, and solved any problems that may arise among the *mahalla* citizens. The *mahalla kengashes* were under the control of the executive committee of the city, district and provincial Soviet when executing their functions. The local executive committee inspected all activities of the *mahalla kengash*, intervened in their activities deemed unlawful, and guided them (Komilov, 1961: 5). Thus, at the local level, the most important organization was the executive committee of the city, *raion*, village or provincial local soviet, depending on the state and the Communist Party. As such, it was readily apparent that despite the decentralization policy, it was still centralism that dominated in the *mahalla* structure. As Koreteyeva (1999: 32) stated:

“the average community in the middle of the 1980s can be rightfully called a typical Soviet bureaucratic institution. It had a formally elected chairperson that was actually supervised by the regional party committee. It was helped by a mahalla committee, an invention of Soviet power, though very natural as a traditional form of community organization. A number of specialized commissions dealt with women’s problems, problems of veterans, organization of family and public celebrations. Ideological campaigns were held in mahallas, lectures of the international situation were read in recreation and reading rooms. Mahalla kengashes submitted a report on their activities to the superior soviet organs”.

In the next section the organizational structure of the *mahalla kengash* during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras will be compared, and so only the general decentralization policy of the Khrushchev era has been summarized here.

6.1.2 The Internal Organization of the *Mahalla Kengash* in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Era

By 1992, the Uzbek government had developed a crucial policy to use the *mahalla* as a social and spatial unit in the re-organization of the state. The main difference between the Soviet and independent era in the *mahalla kengash* structure was its legal position. While in the Khrushchev era the *mahalla kengash* was accepted as a social organization,¹⁴⁶ after 1992 it was recognized as a body of local self-government (*oz ozini baskaruv*) with a constitutional guarantee. What was the difference? As mentioned in Chapter Three, in the Soviet Uzbekistani cities, the residential units were considered as SSGOs (social self-government organizations), whose main role was to advocate for the rights of labor groups or the local community. Within the political geography of the Soviet state they could be identified as a form of civil society (Noori, 2006: 74); however it is essential to note that their existence stemmed from the existing authority area as an extension of the Communist Party or the state. In other words, during the Soviet era, the SSGOs were under the control of the *raikom* (*goikom*) and *raispolkam* (*gorispalkom*). For example, in 1958, the ministries of the Soviet of Uzbekistan CCR accepted a new statute that rearranged the functions of the *mahalla* (and *kvartelnye*) committees and gave them the right to use the *pechat* (state seal) for the first time. With this arrangement, the *mahalla kengash* became a definite link between the *mahalla* community and the local Soviet. On the other hand, the *mahalla kengash*, as a body of local self-government, came under the control of the city and the *tuman hokimiyat* after independence, and began to be accepted as a bridge between the *mahalla* community and *hokimiyat*. As such, one of the differences between the *mahalla kengashes* in the two periods was in their functions and the authority accorded to them by the state. The Soviet regime prohibited them from carrying out any economic activity, such as buying, selling, renting or construction, and they were given no central government duties, while the new Uzbekistani regime gave them the right to enter into any economic activity they wanted. During the Soviet period many economic activities were among the functions of the executive committees of the local Soviets (Arifhanova, 2002: 26), however according to the Constitution (Article 105) and a special law enacted in 1993 entitled “the local self-

¹⁴⁶ According to the statute that was approved in 1961, the *mahalla* committee was accepted as a voluntary social organization rather than as an incorporated body or legal personality.

governing body of the neighborhood community,”¹⁴⁷ the *mahalla* became a representative of the state at the residential unit level and had the right to own property, received a budget and engaged in self-organization, all of which were not afforded in the Soviet era (Arifhanova, 2002: 26). With the enactment of the 1993 law, each *mahalla* had the right to open small companies, to support the community in opening companies, to find jobs for its residents and to provide financial and moral aid to the community. Hudaykulov (2003: 27) makes a comparison between the Soviet and post-Soviet periods regarding this issue, claiming that the 1961 law did not allow the *mahalla* to become engaged in any kind of economic activity, “*but today, thanks to the new economic system (an open-market, liberal economic strategy), the mahalla kengash now has all the opportunity to implement its own policies*”.

One important change that the new regime brought was a re-organization of the residential units in the country. There were various types of residential units that existed during the Soviet era, as categorized into four types in Chapter Four. Legally, the residential units were divided into two types by the Soviet regime: apartment committees (*kvartalnye komitety*) and neighborhood committees (*mahalla kengash*). After independence, the first policy of the new regime was to standardize all as *mahallas* and to establish a *mahalla kengash* in all residential units. “*The institution of the mahalla has been standardized as a residential sub-district with a leader and a set of personnel with defined duties. It has been imposed in areas with no such experience before, and variations in local forms of social organization have been regularized through the now-official structures*” (Rasanayagam, 2011: 119). Related with this issue, Noori (2006: 535) said that “*while mahallas were traditionally an Uzbek urban phenomenon, they have now been generalized to be infused into new urban developments of apartment blocks and ethnically diverse rural areas ... what was an ad-hoc and poorly institutionalized organization has been standardized*”. Thus, “*all districts in Uzbekistan have organs of self-governing bodies of citizens, and in common parlance, all Uzbekistani citizens live in a mahalla*” (Masaru, 2006: 352). Koroteyeva (1999: 33) calls this policy *mahallaziation*, and argues that the *mahallaziation* policy started in the fall of 1992 when the newspapers printed the presidential resolution on the establishment of the so-called “*mahalla*” fund, with president Karimov as its head. According to her, one of the main tasks of the newly established organization was to ensure the “*mahallaziation* of the Republic of Uzbekistan,” as stated by one of the national officers of the fund, which implies the dissemination of the *mahalla* and *mahalla* activity (Koroteyeva, 1999: 33). In short, everyone in Uzbekistan belongs to at least one such citizen assembly (Winter & Epstein, 2004: 52). “*During this period, the government began to confer more authority upon the*

¹⁴⁷ *fukaralarning ozuni ozu baskarish organlari togrisida*

mahalla kengashes and made sure that all areas of the country had mahalla units. Borders were redrawn and the entire country was divided up into new administrative mahalla units. There are now approximately 12,000 mahallas in Uzbekistan, each containing between 150 and 1,500 households” (Bogner, 2003: 6).

Today, *mahallas* have assumed their functions and are developing into bodies of local self-government. In April 1999, the Uzbekistani government, seeking to take control of the *mahallas* and bring them into the state structure, adopted a law governing the operation and activities of the *mahalla kengashes*. The recently acquired formal status of the *mahalla kengashes* as an important component of the state is reflected in the Regulation on *Mahalla Committees in Cities, Villages and Kishlaks* (Bektemirov, 2004: 477). The main legal arrangement in this sense is Article 105 of the Constitution of the Uzbekistan Republic. According to this article the *fuqoralar yigini* (the *mahalla kengash*) in rural areas, districts, *shahrcha* and cities has been defined as the body of local self-government, and the *oqsoqol* and his advisers are elected by the community for two-and-a-half years. The election system of the *mahalla kengash* and its functions are arranged according to the related laws. The laws concerning the duties and responsibilities of local government and the election process of the *Oqsoqol* and his advisers were accepted on 14 April, 1999. Amendments were made to the existing law and new laws were enacted in 2003, 2004 and 2008. Today, there are three laws constituting the main legal framework of the *mahalla kengash* in Uzbekistan.

“The organs of self-governing bodies of citizens (oz ozunu baskaruv) now specially consist of citizen meetings of the mahallas in cities, settlements, villages and ovul, and citizens’ meetings of towns, villages and ovuls” (Masaru, 2006: 351). As outlined in the law on “self-government,” enacted in April 1999, and in other legislation, a mahalla’s inhabitants as a whole constitute a type of citizens’ assembly (Winter & Epstein, 2004: 52). In other words, according to the Law on Institutions of Self-Government of Citizens (Article 17), the general meeting of citizens within the mahalla is the “supreme body of self-government of the citizens,” with the power to make decisions on behalf of the mahalla (Bogner, 2003: 6). Kirgizboyev (2007: 49) defines oz ozunu bashkaruv as a decentralization of the state’s executive functions, since the mahalla is an autonomous branch of the state in its election process and the fulfillment of local policy. Umarova (2007: 78) argues that oz ozunu bashkarish organi is independent of the formal administrative structure, as it is not defined within the Hokimiyat organization. According to Epstein & Winter (2006: 351), “while similar community organizations were given legal status within a hierarchy of local self-government in other countries, the extent of their formal integration into state structures distinguishes Uzbekistani mahallas from similar bodies in other former Soviet republics”.

Bogner (2003: 6) explained the new regulation of the Uzbek central government related to the *mahalla kengash* as follows:

“On December 5, 2002, President Karimov declared 2003 ‘the Year of the Mahalla’. The government adopted a program of action, and announced its intent to adopt yet more regulations covering the activities of mahalla kengashes and to expand their powers. The local press began to print articles about mahallas, once again using promotional slogans such as ‘Mahalla – the stronghold of calm,’ ‘Native mahalla ... leading us peacefully to life’s mooring,’ ‘Mahalla – the heart of spirituality and upbringing, and a place where everyone comes for help, and receives kind advice and real support’.”

As a political/administrative unit, the *mahalla kengash* typically has around 15 members: the *oqsoqol* (chairman), the *kotib* (secretary) and advisers on specific matters, such as religious affairs, community health, education etc. There are also advisers for secondary and more traditional functions, such as wedding planning and coordination of ceremonies. (Epstein-Winter, 2004: 52). This structure is almost the same as in the Soviet era. For example, Hudaykulov explained the *mahalla kengash* in the Soviet era as follows: “according to law, the *mahalla kengash* was composed of *oqsoqol* (a president of the *mahalla kengash*), *kotib* (secretary), vice-president, *sostovni* (the number of members filling this position was determined according to the population size, other members of the *mahalla kengash*), and various voluntary members. Two further posts were added to the *mahalla kengash* by the new regime: the *Posbon*¹⁴⁸ and the *Dini, Maarifiy ishlar boyicha Maslahatchi*¹⁴⁹ (Slova, 2002, 23; Winter & Epstein, 2004: 52). The position of *posbon* was created by the *Posbon Law*, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in April 1999, while the position of *maslahatchi* was defined in the *president fermani*¹⁵⁰ numbered 34-34 in 2004. According to Bogner (2003: 7), the main function of the *posbon* is to assist the local police (*uchaskavoy noziri*) in the prevention of crimes, to maintain public order, and to strengthen the social and moral environment. It can be inferred that one of the new policies of Khrushchev, to appoint the *uchaskavoy noziri* and his assistant as local police in order to provide the security in the *mahalla*, continued after independence. The number of *posbon* in each *mahalla* depends on the size of *mahalla*, and the head of the *posbons* in the *mahalla* is called the *sardor*. The second new office, *Dini, Maarifiy ishlar boyicha Maslahatchi*, to be appointed by the central government, was created in 2004 after a suicide bombing by one of the fundamental Islamic groups known as *Hizb-ul Tahrir* in the biggest bazaar of Tashkent. The main function of the *maslahatchi* is to educate the residents of the *mahalla* about Islam and to report any residents believed to have a tendency towards fundamental Islam. The main function of both *posbon*

¹⁴⁸ The neighborhood guardian.

¹⁴⁹ Religious and educational advisor.

¹⁵⁰ Presidential decree.

and *maslahatchi* is to control the community in the name of the central government. These two offices and their main duties are important in the balance of power between the *mahalla kengash* and the central government, as will be analyzed in more detail in the next chapter.

One notable difference between the *mahalla kengash* of the Soviet era and that of the recent regime is that after independence, the *mahalla* leaders (as well as the secretaries, the *posbon* and the educational advisor) became paid employees of the state, with their salaries and pensions determined centrally (Epstein, 2004: 57). However, this was not a newly introduced regulation by the independent Uzbekistani regime. Indeed, during Perestroika, as Koroteyeva (1999:33) argues, “*the public functions of the mahalla were strengthened; the chairs and secretaries of the committees were then paid state salaries, and the mahallas themselves could attain the status of a legal entity and open a bank account*”.

According to Kirgizboyev, the *mahalla kengash* resembles a small municipality in terms of its organizational structure and functions. The *mahalla kengash* deals with every problem of the *mahalla* community within the *mahalla* border, and its members are elected by the *local people* (Kirgizboyev, 2007: 48). According to the Law of Community of Self-Government, the responsibilities of the *mahalla* can be listed (Pashkun, 2003, 57) as being: (a) to elect the chair, the committees of the *mahalla* and some members of the commissions; (b) to elect the controlling and administrative commissions; (c) to determine, approve and implement social policies related to local health; (d) to control and observe whether or not *mahalla* citizens adjust to the provisions of acts arranged by the central government; (e) to elect members to be sent to Parliament and local councils; (f) to overview the decisions of local governments (*Hokims*) related to the *mahalla*; (g) to draw up and manage the local budget, to preserve properties and to establish firms; (h) to control and manage public space, to help poor families and citizens, to collect and accept voluntary assistance from citizens to restore buildings in the *mahalla*; and (i) to coordinate institutions and citizens to develop a social *mahalla* substructure, and to this end, to collect money.

Similarly, Hudaykulov (2003: 27) explains the main duties of the *mahalla kengash* as being “*to arrange economic and social life according to the state instructions, to repair anything (buildings, gardens, road etc.) within the mahalla borders, to implement the city plan of the mahalla prepared by the Hokimiyat, and to check whether or not any construction within the border of the mahalla is in compliance with this plan*”. In addition, according to the law of “*fuqoralarining ozunu ozi bashkarish organlari togrisida*”¹⁵¹ enacted in 14 April, 1999, the *mahalla kengash* became responsible for implementing any policies put into practice by the

¹⁵¹ The law on local self-government.

state in social, economic, political and cultural areas within the *mahalla* borders (Usmanova, 2004: 16).

The *mahalla kengash* fulfills these functions through the sub-commissions formed within their bodies, in which many volunteers participate and implement the required policies for managing *mahalla* affairs. One adviser among the members of the *mahalla kengash* becomes the chair of each *mahalla* sub-commission, which are responsible for improving living conditions in the *mahalla*; organizing ceremonial events; maintaining public order, housing stock and finances; and overseeing issues concerning women, the young, war and veterans (Bektemirov, 2005: 477). As for the *oqsoqol elections*, the community votes for the *oqsoqol* and his 15 *maslahatchi*, and within 10 days the elected *oqsoqol* should distribute the functions and sub-commissions among his advisers. Each month, all advisers prepare and submit an activity report to the *oqsoqol*, and in this way the *oqsoqol* is responsible for all the activities of his/her advisers and their commissions. For example, the *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla* described the role of sub-commissions in the *mahalla*:

“The mahalla is now a small hokimiyat; as the hokimiyat governs us, we govern our mahalla through ozuni ozi bashkarish. We have 15 sub-commissions. Some of them are yarashtirish, nurani, sport, hatun kızlar komissiyasi, erler bilan sugullanish komiissyasi, yashlar komissiyasi, kam taminlangan ailelerge nafaka tayinleş komissiyasi, toy merakelerini otkazish, maneviyat meseleleri boyucha,¹⁵² etc...”

The structure of these sub-commissions is exactly the same as the *sektors* (committee) of the *mahalla kengash* during the Soviet era. According to Wesson (1964: 231), there were several *sektors* under the *mahalla kengash* that executed different public policies related to *mahalla* affairs. The responsibility of the each *sektor* was given to one member of the *mahalla kengash*, and the number of *sektors* increased in parallel with the increase in functions of the *mahalla kengash*. Thus, after the Khrushchev era, several *sektors* came into being, including: street, apartment, Jen-Soviet (gender committee), education and training, health services, social inspectors, social bureaus of local soviets, comrade courts, maintenance of the social order, *obodanchiliq*, finance, social assistance, school affairs, juvenility, parent, cultural affairs, women’s affairs, wedding ceremonies and sanitary committees.

¹⁵² “*Yarashtirish*” - securing peace between bride and groom.

“*Nurani*” - giving permission to residents who want to go to *Hac*.

“*Sport komissiyasi*” - strengthening sporting activities in the mahalla.

“*Hatun kızlar komissiyasi*” - helping train local women.

“*Erler bilan sugullanish komiissyasi*” - helping train local men.

“*Yashlar komissiyasi*” - assisting in the training of the local youth.

“*Kam taminlangan ailelerge nafaka tayinleş komissiyasi*” - giving social assistance to poor families.

“*Toy merakelerini otkazish*” - performing wedding ceremonies.

“*Maneviyat meseleleri boyucha*” - dealing with ethical and moral issues.

Behind these officers were many volunteers from the *mahalla*, the most important being the *kucha boshi* (chair of roads) in traditional *mahallas* (A and B types), being responsible for anything in their own street, and the *damkom* and *padezkom* in the modern *mahallas* (C and D types), responsible for anything in their own apartment or block. These volunteers are assisted by the *mahalla kengash* in resolving problems related to the *mahalla* community, and mediate between the community and the committee. For example, they are responsible for fighting juvenile crime and other forms of delinquency, fostering political education and general morality, ensuring that children go to school, keeping watch over buildings, encouraging householders to maintain the sidewalks and pay rent, acting on complaints, bringing any necessary matters to the attention of the authorities, and exerting moral pressure on violators of the rules of good conduct and the proper use of buildings.

The positions of *kuchaboshi* and *padezkom-damkom* also existed in the Soviet era, however the role of *mahalla* volunteers in the *mahalla* saw significant change after independence. During the Soviet regime, all people who worked for their *mahalla*, from the *oqsoqol* to the *damkom*, were volunteers, but after 1992 some *mahalla kengash* members began to be paid by the central government, while others did not. This change brought a widening of the gap between the *mahalla kengashes* of different *mahalla* types in terms of working capacity, the meaning of the *mahalla kengash* for the community, and the will and motivation in choosing to work in the *mahalla kengash*. These points will be elaborated in the next section, highlighting the differences among the *mahalla kengash* of different *mahalla* types.

The final issue to be covered regarding the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash* is the election system. According to Article 105 of the Constitution, and Article 20 of the law of “self-governing institutions,” elections to appoint the *oqsoqol* and other advisors in the *mahalla kengash* are to be held once every two-and-a-half years, and the elected candidates are to be approved by the district or the city *hokim*. The first *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* after the independence, who is a lawyer, explained the working order of the *mahalla kengash* as follows: “Elected for two-and-a-half years, delegates of the *mahalla* community meet at least once a month to form the assembly and discuss local issues on the agenda of the *mahalla*”.

An electoral commission divides the *mahalla* up into *sektors* (blocks in C- and D-type *mahallas*, or streets in A- and B-type *mahallas*). Each *sektor* chooses a representative to participate in the election (Winter & Epstein, 2004: 52-53), who is generally the *kucha boshi* or the *damkom-padezkom*. There are two crucial points which can be evaluated as casting a shadow on the democratic election process of the *oqsoqol* and *mahalla kengash*. First, as

mentioned above, since only representatives can participate in the elections, the level of community participation is low.¹⁵³ This representative structure is one of the main differences from the Soviet era. Unlike today, during the Soviet regime, any *grajdan* (resident) who lived in the *mahalla* and who had the right to vote could take part in the elections. It was accepted that the candidates who took over half of the residents' votes became *sostavi* (members) of the *mahalla kengash*. According to the law, elections are only valid if participated in by at least half of the residents; however in practice this rule is rarely implemented in many *mahallas*, as generally less than half of the residents participate in the elections. For example, an election for the *Komuna mahalla kengash* in 1959 in one particular *mahalla* of 700 *grajdan* saw only 72 votes polled (Komilov, 1961: 11).

The second problem related with the *oqsoqol* elections is the power of the district *hokim* in the election process, which is – contrary to the representative system – exactly the same as in the Soviet era. Although the chair and members of the *mahalla kengash* are elected by the *mahalla* residents, the winning candidate must meet the approval of the respective *hokim*, giving the president a direct line of control over the *mahallas*. In practice, the *hokimiyat* regularly appoints the *mahalla kengash* chair, and thus the elections are merely a formality (Bogner, 2003: 13). According to Epstein & Winter (2004: 53), “*district hokims apparently fire and appoint oqsoqols at will, without waiting for their term to end. The basic mechanism for this is to put pressure upon them to leave office. Therefore, it can be said that there is always some kind of deviation from the state policy in providing welfare assistance. Often other laws are also broken inadvertently in one way or another*”. Indeed, the legally defined role of the local governor (*hokim*) as *mahalla kengash* chairman is to approve the list of candidates for the elections.

¹⁵³ In the case study of this thesis, there appeared clear differences among the *mahalla* types with respect to the ratio of participation in the *oqsoqol* elections. The officers of three *mahallas* in the A type and two *mahallas* in the B type claimed that 100% of the representatives had participated in the last election; while in the C and D types of *mahallas*, the responses varied. Especially in wealthy *mahallas*, the officers complained about the low degree of participation. The *oqsoqol* of D-3 *mahalla* said: “*Our mahalla is a modern mahalla, our grajdans (residents-citizens) are not interested in the mahalla's issues. Most of the time, we choose the representatives for the election. Even if, for example, in last election only 60-70% of the total representatives participated in the election*”. On the other hand, a resident of D-4 *mahalla* (a Korean woman who is a retired worker) said, “*in the last election, all representatives participated, but the hokimiyat did not approve our elected oqsoqol*”. The main reason for this difference is that if the modern *mahalla* has lost its old prestige and elite position, than the *mahalla kengash* and the social policy implemented at the *mahalla* level become important for the residents. This explains why the residents of some ex-Soviet type *mahallas* became more interested in *mahalla* affairs after the independence.

In conclusion, although not legally defined, the powerful role of the local *hokims* in the election of the *oqsoqols* is presented here as an example of a deviation from state policy. The same criticisms regarding the election of the *oqsoqol* were raised during the Soviet era, with Rah'manov (1970: 6) emphasizing that: “*The executive committee of the local Soviets was the only organization responsible for this mahalla election. It arranged the election, called the grajdan, controlled the whole election process, and evaluated the results of the election. They must be approved by the executive committee of the local Soviet, or the committee appointed a new one. Many executive committees prefer to appoint a new oqsoqol instead of approving the elected one*”.

In short, although the *mahalla kengash* is by law a self-governing institution with a locally elected leadership, and is outside the government administrative hierarchy, in practice it is directed by centrally appointed local governors (*hokim*) as an extension of their own personal authority (Rasanayagam, 2011: 112). However, the authority of the *hokim* on the *mahalla kengash* is not the single source of power acting upon this local socio-spatial unit. In the following section, concerning the center-local relationship, the changing relations between the *hokimiyat* and the *mahalla kengash* from the Soviet to post-Soviet regime will be analyzed in more detail, with the aim being to demonstrate the importance of the *hokimiyat* in local politics in Uzbekistan and to discuss to what extent the *mahalla kengash* could represent the *mahalla* community.

6.1.3 The Center-Local Relationship from the Soviet to the Post-Soviet Era, and the Importance of the *Hokimiyat*

The 1999 law on self-governing institutions defines the *hokimiyat* at all administrative levels – district, city and province – as a unique authority in all activities of the *mahalla kengash*. The *hokimiyat* inspects all activities of the *mahalla kengash*, intervenes in their activities if they act unlawfully, and guides them. These expressions stated in the law are no different to the Soviet regulations defining the relationships between the *mahalla (kvartalniy) kengash* and the local executive committee of the Soviet. The *mahalla kengashes* came under the control of the executive committee of the city, district and provincial Soviet when carrying out their functions (Komilov, 1961: 5). Thus, at a local level, while the most important organization was the executive committee of the city, *raion*, village and provincial local Soviet, depending on the state and the Communist Party during the Soviet era, in the new regime the *hokimiyat*, at a local level, has become the most important organization depending on the state and the HDP instead of the Communist Party. In this sense, many members of the *mahalla kengash* were members also of the local Soviet or the Communist

Party. For example, as Komilov (1961: 39) showed, 10 out of 15 *oqsoqols* in the city of Margilan were also the members of the city Soviet (*gorispolkom*); and 13 were members of the Communist Party. Likewise, five of the *oqsoqols* interviewed in the field study of this thesis are members of the HDP, as well as many other state offices.

Moreover, the authority of the local Soviet and the *hokimiyat* is seen to be almost the same in terms of their ability to establish and abolish a *mahalla kengash*, to increase the role of the *mahalla kengash* on the *cemoatchiliq* (civil society), to apply administrative tutelage on whether or not the *mahalla kengash* has executed its activities in accordance with the law, to eliminate any problems or obstacles in implementing state functions in the *mahalla* (*kvartalnye*) territory, to arrange the general election and to check whether or not the *mahalla* election was realized in accordance with the law, to approve new *sostavni* (members) of the *mahalla kengash* according to the statute, to arrange and approve the budget of the *mahalla kengash* once in a year, to arrange seminars and meetings to increase the knowledge of the *mahalla oqsoqol* and *sostavni*, to control the activities of the *mahalla kengash*, to inspect each *mahalla* individually and to solve specific problems of each *mahalla*. A good example of how the *mahalla kengash* operated in a similar way under the both the new regime and the Soviet regime can be seen in the organization of a competition among the *mahallas* related to *obodanchilik* (the activity of cleaning and making the *mahalla* more beautiful). The winning *mahalla* was given a red flag as an award in the Soviet period, whereas they are now given “*president mukafati*”.¹⁵⁴

The Uzbek regime made many new regulations to strengthen the power of *hokim* over the authority of the *mahalla kengash*. The law on Self-Governing Institutions in 1999 is one of the most important of these, strengthening the power of the *hokim* as a local executive branch over the *mahalla kengash*. Indeed, these legislations especially gave the *hokim* more extensive authority than in the Soviet period. According to Hudaykulov (2003: 29), the 1999 Law on Self-Governing Institutions divides the functions of the local executive branches (especially the district *hokim*), the local council and the *mahalla kengash*. Thus, the executive branch today has the legal grounds for fulfilling its functions more rapidly and effectively than during the Soviet era. Moreover, recently it has become more powerful in the local level. As mentioned before, two new positions – *posbon* and *maslahatchi* – were created in the *mahalla kengash*, and both receive salaries from the central government. A *maslahatchi* is appointed by the *hokim* to each *mahalla kengash* to educate the *mahalla* residents on Islam and other moral issues. The *posbon* helps the *uchaskavoy noziri* and

¹⁵⁴ Award of the President.

maslahatchi to provide security in the *mahalla*. Every six months “a fight against terrorism” is declared, and the *posbon* and *maslahatchi* prepare a report about residents’ perceptions of Islam, pointing out any citizens who may have fundamentalist leanings. The position of *maslahatchi* was created after the increase in terrorism in the country so as to turn the balance of power between the *oqsoqol* and the central government in favor of the latter.

After independence, two new institutions were established that are central to the relationship between the *mahalla kengash* and the *hokimiyat*. The *Mahalla Foundation (Mahalla Jamgarma)* was established in 1992 and “was recognized as an NGO, albeit it is not independent and works with the central government. It signs and approves the decisions of the central government about the mahalla organization and the community. However, this institution is far from transparent, and has members appointed in a top-down approach” (Earle, 2006, 23). The main duties of the *Mahalla Foundation*, with about 230 local offices at the district/city level, are to unify the *mahallas* and control them under local administration bodies, and to identify families in need and provide them with financial aid. (Masaru, 2006: 351). According to the chair of the Foundation, the organization is not supported financially by the central government, and operates mostly with the donations of its own members (Earle, 2006, 23). Second, according to Article 17 of the 1999 Law on Self-Governing Institutions, a Republican Council of *Oqsoqols* of Citizens’ Assemblies, or in other words *mahalla* coordination councils, can be established at the city, district and provincial levels. Its main function is defined as being to mediate between the *hokimiyat* and the *mahalla kengashes* and to make decisions on matters that concern the entire town or village, such as building a common cemetery or a community center that will be used by all the residents. Another important function of these local assemblies is to make budgetary requests directly to the district financial department without passing through any intermediate body, and to monitor the expenditures of the *mahalla kengashes* within their borders (Bektemirov, 2004, 67). Unlike, the *mahalla* foundation, the Coordination Councils is currently financed by districts budgets, and the membership of both institutions comes from the *mahallas*. Based on Article 17 of the Law on Self-Governing Institutions, the assemblies of *mahalla* citizens each send a representative (generally the *oqsoqol* himself) to form village coordinating councils (also called *kengashes*). In turn, each village *kengash*, as well as the town and village citizens’ assemblies, send representatives to a coordinating council at the district level, and this representation structure goes up to the Republic level within the administrative hierarchy. The district or city level coordinating councils meet once a quarter, though may be gathered more frequently upon the decision of the corresponding deputy *hokim*.

As mentioned previously, *Mahalla* Foundations are officially classified as NGOs, generally with reference to the traditional “*waqf*,” and the *mahalla* coordination councils are classified as social organizations; however both institutions are established by the district, city and province *Hokimiyat*, who often have one deputy *hokim* in charge of coordinating *mahallas* (i.e., citizens’ assemblies) (Epstein, 2004: 54), and so are ultimately under the control of the *hokimiyat* at every administrative level (Bektemirov, 2004: 67). The local governments generally take the lead role in coordination of the *mahalla*, especially as they wield the power to reject the elected chairperson. For example, Article 10 of the 1999 law states that the citizen assemblies (a category that includes *mahallas*) have the right to hear the quarterly reports of the heads of the district, city and regional *hokimiyats* on the activities of the self-governing institutions. In short, through these two institutions, the *hokimiyat* – at each territorial scale – and the central government control all *mahalla kengashes* and have access to all information about them and their residents.

Beyond his/her direct intervention in *mahalla kengash* elections, approving members of the *kengash*, appointing the *maslahatchi* in the *mahalla kengash* and in other local institutions – the *mahalla* foundation and *mahalla* assembly – the *hokim* at the district, city and provincial level has more authority regarding the activities of the *mahalla kengash*. According to Article 6 of the *Mahalla* Law, state bodies must not interfere in the activities of *mahalla kengashes*, but should render them assistance, but it is clear, however, that this is not observed in practice. *Mahalla kengashes* are subject to apparent interference from the highest to the lowest levels of government. The *mahalla* chair acts under the instruction of the district *hokimiyat* in directing *mahalla kengash* activities, and each year the *hokimiyat* issues a booklet to the *mahalla kengashes* outlining the program it must fulfill. According to the Law of Self-Governing Institutions, the *mahalla kengash* must assist in all state programs, such as in hosting and organizing the local visits of state officers, pointing out any resident who may be members of Islamic groups or organizations that are acting against the Uzbekistani state, helping in the collection of taxes in the *mahalla*, and being responsible for implementing all regulations set by the central government at a *mahalla* level. Another example of tutelage over the *mahalla kengash* is covered in Article 5 of the Presidential Decree “On increasing the role of self-governing institutions in the provision of targeted social support for the population” (enacted on 13 January, 1999) which gives the *hokimiyat* considerable freedom to oversee the distribution of the social aid among the *mahalla* residents. As can be seen, despite acting independently in such traditional matters as organizing wedding celebrations, in areas of key government policy the *mahalla kengash* is

obliged to carry out government instructions passed down from the *hokimiyat* (Epstein, 2004: 57).

“Representatives of the mahalla kengashes speak frankly about their role in implementing the government instructions at the local level” (Early, 2003: 11). Thus, the *oqsoqol*s regularly meet with *hokims* as employees of the state structure. *Hokimiyats* have the power to abolish, found, merge, split or change the borders of a *mahalla*. In addition, the elected *mahalla kengash* members, including the *oqsoqol*, must be approved by the *hokim* in order for them to legally hold these positions. Furthermore, each year the committee is obliged to present its program of activities to the office of the district or city governor for approval (Rasanayagam, 2011: 112). The *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* explained his relations with the district *hokimiyat* as follows:

“...the mahalla kengash is a self-governing body, thus it is free in its affairs. The President, with his decrees, protects our independence against the hokimiyat; however this does not mean that we can behave against or in contradiction to the state affairs and regulations. We have to implement state policy on time. Actually, our power comes from the power of the hokimiyat and the state. They can get any information about any mahalla resident from us, such as what are their problems, how are their living standards, what do they think about the state activities, and what is their political opinion...”

When asked his opinion on the relationship between the *hokimiyat* and *mahalla kengash*, the *maslahatchi* of C-2 *mahalla* said:

“Our relation is good with hokimiyat ... I have to go to the hokimiyat every Thursday, but more often I go there two or three times a week. We have to report on our activities to the hokim and he gives us new duties. The hokimiyat regularly controls our work; indeed I have to meet with the hokim more often than the oqsoqol, as his main duty is to provide services to the mahalla community, while I am liable to the hokim – not to the community like the oqsoqol – due to the fact that the hokim appointed me”.

According to the Law on Self-Governing Institutions, the *oqsoqol* and other officers of all *mahalla kengashes* in a district should attend a meeting of the *Mahalla Jamgarma* (Mahalla Foundation) of the district *hokimiyat* at least once a week. Moreover, all decisions of the *mahalla kengash* should be approved by the district *hokimiyat* before being implemented by the *mahalla kengash*. Each year, the *rais* of each sub-committee presents two reports to the concerned department of the *Mahalla Jamgarma* within the district *hokimiyat*. The first report includes a list of activities and their planned costs for the next year. The second report is related to the jobs performed in the previous year. Known as a *hisobat*, this report must explain the duties undertaken by the sub-committee and the amount spent. The *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla*, describing his relationship with the district *hakimiyat*, said: *“I go to the hokimiyat at least once a week to take part in the general meeting of the oqsoqol council. However, in*

practice, I go to hakimiyot whenever they call – generally three or four times a week”. The *oqsoqol* of C-3 said: “Every Tuesday there is a *majlis* for the *oqsoqol* and the *maslahatchi* in the *tuman hakimiyot*. We are obliged to attend this”.

Concerning this issue, it was argued earlier that the Soviet style center-local relationship in Uzbekistan continued into the post-Soviet era; however in the case study of this thesis there were various responses from among the *mahalla kengashes* of different *mahalla* types in terms of the political attitudes of both the Soviet and present-day regime towards the *mahalla*, which will be analyzed in detail under the title dealing with the importance of the *hokimiyat* in this chapter.

One of the continuities between the policies of the Soviet and the post-Soviet regimes is related to the police institution, the *uchaskavoy noziri*,¹⁵⁵ responsible for the security of the *mahalla*. The *uchaskavoy noziri* is not a member of the *mahalla kengash*, being appointed by the Security Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for each *mahalla*. This position emerged in *mahallas* after the 1960s, although at the time it was not defined in legal documents until a commission known as *uchastkavoy* was established by the executive committee of the local Soviet, without authority in any law or regulation. During the Soviet era, the members of the *uchastkavoy* were not elected by the residents and had no responsibility to the residents. This commission helped the executive committee of the local Soviet and guided the *mahallas*. Today it supports the *mahalla kengash* and reports any security problems to the central government, such as residents who are suspected of being members of fundamentalist Islamic groups or information on old criminal residents. During the Soviet era they had an important role in the election process and over the financial issues of the *mahalla*, and moreover carried out the mandates of the executive committee within the *mahallas*. Komilov argues that the *uchastkavoy noziri* carried out the functions of the

¹⁵⁵ One of the results of Khrushchev’s policies related to the *mahalla* was the appointment of the *uchaskavoy noziri*, responsible for the security of the *mahalla*. Although unlawful, the post emerged in *mahallas* after the 1960s. *Uchastka* is an organization that falls under the control of the police or *uchastka noziri* – a police officer who is appointed by the police organization. This commission was established by the executive committee of the local Soviet without precedence in law or regulation. The *uchastkavoy* was not elected by the residents and had no responsibilities for them. The *uchastka* was a police officer who was appointed by the police organization. In the beginning, only a few *uchastkavoy* were appointed, but in time they spread to every *mahalla*. During the Soviet period, a number of *uchastka* were responsible for all the *mahallas* in a city, while after independence one *uchastka* was established in each *mahalla*. In 1960, in Andijan city there were five *uchastkas* to control the totally 41 *mahallas* of Andijan, but today, there are 225 *uchastkas* in 225 *mahallas* of Andijan. The *uchaskavoy noziri* was not a member of the *mahalla kengash*. This commission helped the executive committee of the local Soviet and guided the *mahallas*. During the Soviet era they had an important role in the election processes and financial issues of the *mahalla* and carried out the mandates of the executive committee in the *mahallas*. Komilov argues that the *uchastka* executed the function of executive committee on the *mahalla kengash*, but interestingly the *uchastka* performed only such functions as punishment, and reporting *mahalla* members who were not behaving in accordance with the laws and communist principles. There was no example that *uchastkavoy* exercised any educational activities which were also under the responsibility of the local executive committee (Komilov, 1961: 40).

executive committee in the *mahalla kengash*, but interestingly he/she only handed down punishments and reported *mahalla* residents who were not behaving in accordance with the laws and the communist principles. There is no evidence of any educational activities being carried out by the *uchastkavoy noziri*, which were also under the responsibility of the local executive committee (Komilov, 1961: 40).

As mentioned previously, during the Soviet era there were the *ortaqliksud'u* (communal social court), *agitpunkt* and *halq drujinachilari*¹⁵⁶ (organization for communist propaganda) in each *mahalla*, established by the Communist Party, charged with maintaining the communist principle and laws, and ensuring social order. These posts were abolished with the disappearance of the Communist Party, although as spies of the Party in each *mahalla* they provided for the control of the neighborhood community by the Party, at least as other institutions of the *mahalla*, and ensured the balance of power in the community against the *mahalla kengash*. Today, all of the power in the neighborhood lies with the *mahalla kengash*, except the *shirkot*,¹⁵⁷ which is clearly an indication of a more centralist approach concerning *mahalla* organization after independence than in the Soviet era. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said that “the *mahalla kengash* is the biggest and most unique institution in the

¹⁵⁶ As a socio-spatial unit, the *mahalla* or *mikroraion* had other communal social associations, such as *ortaqlik sud'u* (communal social court), *halq drujinachi*, and *agitpunkt* (organization for communist propaganda), which were established by the Communist Party. These organizations not only existed in the *mahalla* or *mikroraion*, as they appeared in any public space, such as state factories, school, universities, etc. The *Halq drujinachi* was founded by a decision of the central committee of the Communist Party and the ministries of the USSR – “The participation of laborers in the protection of the civil society”. Social associations had to fight crime in society for the protection of the socialist society. One state function that was devolved to the social organizations was to deal with people who broke socialist laws, committed crime or behaved in opposition to the communist ideology. *Halq drujinachi* was a volunteer that helped the police, prosecutors and courts to deal with guilty parties. According to Khrushchev in his speech in the USSR XXI meeting, the Soviet social associations had responsibilities, as well as the Soviet police, prosecutor and court to deal with guilty people. The first time that a *halq drujinachi* was established in Uzbekistan was in 1958 in industrial facilities. In the *mahalla* or *mikroraion*, a youth *halq drujinachi* was responsible for the protection of security and order among the *mahalla* community (Rah'monov, 1970: 7). Khrushchev said in the XIV Komsomol meeting that today, lots of youths were *halq drujinachi*, and made certain contributions to fight with guilty. We need to increase their rights. For example, in 1962, the Presidium of the USSR High Soviet decided that if any person inhibited the job of the *halq drujinachi*, he would be imprisoned for fifteen days. If anyone person said bad words to the *halq drujinachi*, he would be imprisoned for ten days, or fined, or ordered to carry out one year of community service without pay. If any person killed a *halq drujinachi*, he would be exiled for five–ten years, or for fifteen years strict his freedom (Ubeydullaev, 1962: 20).

Agitpunkt was a social organization in which approximately 30-40 volunteers worked to increase the socialist consciousness among the *mahalla* community. It gave communist lectures, seminars and meetings, and established a library and *mahalla* club. Another organization was the *ortaqliq sud'u*, which tried suspected criminals in front of the *mahalla* community. The *ortaqliq sud'u* was generally 11 or 12 people. For example, in *Ilgar mahalla*, *yoldash* Azimov was an alcoholic and a gambler who was tried by the *ortaqliq sud'u* under the leadership of the *oqsoqol* in front of the *mahalla* community. The residents had complained about him and the *ortaqliq sud'u* had warned him. He was made to apologize and promise that he would mend his ways. If required, if moral pressure proved to be insufficient, miscreants would be turned over to the state authorities (Wesson, 1964: 233). In the *tekinh'ur* case, this communal social court has the power to exile somebody him from the *mahalla*. These three important social organizations worked with volunteers, however, while they would appear to be autonomous organizations, they had to work with the *mahalla kengash*, and the *oqsoqol* was always responsible for them as the chair of the social court (Komilov, 1961: 31; Rah'monov, 1970: 7; Ubeydullaev, 1962: 20).

¹⁵⁷ A *shirkot* is a kind of low-level entrepreneur that offers only infrastructural services to the residential units.

mahalla, and became a local self-governing body (suhod grajdan). If the biggest administrative institution was the Communist Party during the Soviet era, today, it is the mahalla. The mahalla kengash is the Communist Party of the mahalla!”

The Uzbekistani regime managed to achieve decentralization in the administrative system and recognized the *mahalla kengash* as a unique local self-governing body. One of the main characteristics of the decentralized administration system is the autonomous position of the local government vis-à-vis the central government. The center-local relationship established by the Soviet regime has had a special impact on local governments in the autonomy of the post-Soviet countries. In the Soviet regime, the local Soviets were always a vital part of central power. In other words, after independence the most important feature inherited from the Soviet political tradition was the strong dependence of the local governments on the central government. As explained in Chapter Two, *hokimiyats* are now directly accountable to the central government, and the President directly appoints and dismisses the regional *hokimiyat* leaders (*hokims*), exactly as the local Soviets did in the past. As a local institution that is fully dependent on the central government, the *hokimiyat* has total control over the *mahalla kengash*. Accordingly, it can clearly be seen that despite the post-independence decentralization policy, centralism still dominated in the *mahalla* structure in terms of the center-local relationship. In some issues, the new regime is seen to have an even more centralist approach than the Soviet regime. The main contradiction of the new system is that the Uzbekistani regime has created a sphere of civil society, 50% of which is directly tied to the state authority, although the regime legally recognizes them as NGOs and social organizations (Sievers, 2002, 132), meaning that the autonomy of the *mahalla* is quite disputable. Despite a large degree of local executive influence on the self-governing bodies, *mahallas* are still seen as an important outlet for mass participation. Moreover, “*the relationship of the mahalla leaders, both with the state authorities and the local residents, is, to a large extent, a product of the official duties and practical power bestowed by the government*” (Rasanayagam, 2011: 119).

As the legal grounds of the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash* and its relationship with the central government (*hokimiyat*) are summarized under this title, it becomes clear that the legal framework encapsulating the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime falls short of explaining the real structure of the *mahalla kengash* and the actual local political processes going on in Uzbekistan. In this sense, without dispute the *hokimiyat* has a strong hold over the *mahalla kengash*. According to the legal framework, the *mahalla kengash* is a self-governing body today, but the *hokimiyat* has a right of tutelage in many *mahalla* issues as all decisions of the *mahalla kengash* should be approved by the district

hokimiyat, and the *oqsoqol* attends a meeting at the *hokimiyat* at least once a week. These are only two examples of the legal power of the *hokimiyat*, however there is a more informal/practical relationship between the formal institutions that shows the real dynamics of the relationship between the local and center. The *hokimiyat* holds a de facto power over the *mahalla kengash* besides its “de jure” power that came to light during the interviews with community leaders. The *mahalla kengash* is an institution that allows the *hokim* to establish its economic and political power. First, besides the legal regulations for the election system, all *mahallas* act as a propaganda tool of the *hokim* and his local council during election periods. There is strong cooperation between the local council and the *oqsoqols*. In city or district local council elections, many candidates try to make agreements with *mahalla* officers to try and obtain the support of their *mahalla* community, and the same support will then be given from the *hokimiyat* to the *mahalla kengash* in the *mahalla* elections. This situation, as will be seen in the next chapter, explains one of the reasons for the intervention of the *hokimiyat* into the *mahalla* elections.

Second, and more importantly, the *mahalla kengash* presents an opportunity for the *hokim* to increase his economic benefits. While conducting the field survey in Tashkent, it was observed that the *mahalla kengash* gives financial assistance to the *mahalla* community, especially for ceremonies or on special days such as *Navruz*. The level of this financial support differs from *mahalla* to *mahalla* and takes many forms, such as clothing, food, household goods, etc., however there is also regular financial assistance that is made every month. During the case study period, the *mahalla kengashes* offered poor families cotton oil at a cheap price every month in a regular and systematic manner in every Tashkent *mahalla*. When asked about the established system of the oil assistance, the *maslahatchi* of A-2 *mahalla* explained:

“This oil came from the store to the mahalla kengash. We notified all of the kucha boshi (damkom) and they made arrangements for its distribution to the mahalla community. It is not free, but it is cheaper than in the shops. Only residents who register in the prapiska can buy it. We distribute it among the mahallas according to the number of family members, and each receives 680 gr of oil”.

When asked where the oil came from, she said: “From the store. We collect money and send it to this store. We distribute oil twice a month”. I asked why the store would give them cheap oil, and the *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla* said: “It is the job of *hokimiyat*; we do not know the details, we just receive a document from the *hokimiyat* about the oil. The *hokimiyat* makes a contract with an oil firm and then this firm sells us the oil at a cheap price”.

As learned from the *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla*, the oil is distributed systematically by the *mahalla kengash* under the guarantee of the contract made between the *hokimiyat* and the concerned firm. A *damkom* from D-4 *mahalla*, commenting on the oil assistance, said:

“For example, this year is oil year, before that it was gosh (meat) year! Every year it changes. We are lucky because after the oil firms went bankrupt, the hokimiyat probably made them sell their products at below market price to make up for their losses. Go to other cities of Uzbekistan and ask the mahalla kengashes. They do not distribute oil to the community. Why? Because this firm is a Tashkent firm and the Tashkent hokim made a contract with this firm”.

I asked: “So, the *hokim* helps this company, right? Why?” He continued:

“Probably, this company has a network or connection with a high civil servant in the Tashkent hokimiyat. It is likely that the boss of the company suggested to this civil servant that he make a contract with the hokimiyat to sell its products cheaply in the name of the state and to give impart as well. It would seem that this civil servant accepted his proposal and distributed the oil to the mahalla kengash for the community to purchase. That is the real system of Uzbekistan in the transition to a market-based economy”.

Also the *posbon* of C-3 *mahalla* explained that:

“The mahalla kengash is a local self-governing body in Uzbekistan today, however they only follow the directives of the hokimiyat. This is the real duty of the mahalla kengash. In Uzbekistani cities the Hokim is everything, he is like a king to the city. He decides on everything and the oqsoqols only implement his decisions. This oil comes from a single company. Why? Because the boss of this company is a relative of the Tashkent hokims. If, for example, next year a company goes bankrupt whose boss is a relative of our district, city or provincial hokim, we, and all the mahallas in Tashkent will buy the bankrupt stock from the state. In Uzbekistan, as a company, if you have a good connection with the state, you never fall on evil days; if you have no such connections you will not grow. This is our actual economic system. Of course, the oqsoqols know this structure, however they can do nothing because all their power depends on the power of hokim ... If they refuse to take this oil, next year they will not be the oqsoqol”.

As seen from the above, there are many examples of the strong relationship and cooperation between the bureaucracy and private firms in Uzbekistan, which supports the claim regarding the continuity of the power of the Soviet *nomanklature* made in the third chapter. Moreover, the relationship between private sector firms and state officials clearly indicates how the transition to a market-based economy affected the center-local relationship and increased the power of the *hokim* in local politics. Such collaborations take place at all administrative scales, from the central government to the *mahalla*. While conducting the interviews I heard several stories about the daughters of the President. An Uzbek man who was an old member of the Erk Party said: “Our economic system after independence is not a real market-based economy ... If the daughter of the President opens a clothing firm, all small companies have to buy and sell her products. It is the same also for the hokims in

Uzbekistani cities. For instance, the daughter of the tumen hokim establishes a firm, then the hokimiyat buys all of the required oil from this firm and distributes it to the mahallas”.

The legal framework regarding the local administrative structure and the effects of the Soviet regime on the *mahalla kengash*, as the main actor of the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime, is analyzed in this part of the chapter. However, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, the locality is important in shaping local politics, and discussed in Chapter Four. Besides, the different *mahalla* types that were shaped during the Soviet era have very differently structured *mahalla kengashes* and different relationships with the central government. What follows is an explanation of how the internal structure of the *mahalla kengash* and its relationship with the central government, as well as the features of the local finance system, differ from *mahalla* to *mahalla*.

6.2 Continuity and Change in the Internal Organization of Different Mahalla Kengashes: The Case of Oqsoqol Power

*“Kervansiz yol bolmas,
oqsoqolsiz el bolmas”¹⁵⁸*

This section will provide a historical background of the *mahalla kengashes* of different *mahalla* types and their influence in shaping the decentralization process through an analysis of the power of the *oqsoqols* and his/her role in the *mahalla* community. Here, the main hypothesis is that although the Uzbekistani state clearly specifies the authority, meaning and duties of the *oqsoqol* and the *mahalla kengash* in local self-government law, the power of the *oqsoqol* – and thus the power of the *mahalla kengash* – in different *mahalla* types differs depending on the articulation capacity of different *mahallas* to the mode of production of the previous regime. As Stewart (1983: 3) argues, the key point is that local government, by being laid open to local interests, causes policy variations and different levels of service provision. Although restrained by the central government and centrally imposed legal statutes, local government retains a degree of discretion in its actions. Therefore, it can be claimed that the local government law is primarily concerned with defining powers rather than duties. Goodwin & Duncan (1988: 5) explained this issue as:

“The local authority has much more than administrative discretion, and it is not directly subordinate to the departments of the central government. The degree of variation differs from service to service in both the amount of resources devoted to services and in their form. There are significant differences between one authority and another that are not accidental, but inherent in the nature of local government. This derives from local

¹⁵⁸ “There is no way without *kervan*, there is no place without *oqsoqol*” (Tuyçiyeva, 2004: 12)

choice, separating the local government from the local administration. The potential for variation marks the significance of local authorities in the government of communities. The local authority can express or shape the particularity of the locality”.

In short, in spite of the standard legal regulations mentioned in the previous section, the pattern of internal organization differs from *mahalla* to *mahalla*, and this will be demonstrated in the following section. First, some differences in the socio-economic status of the *oqsoqols* identified during the case study will be presented, after which issues related to the *oqsoqols* will be discussed, including their sources of power in different *mahallas*, the motivations behind becoming *oqsoqols*, the advantages of holding such a post, etc. The findings from the interviews with *oqsoqols* in different *mahallas* will be evaluated alongside the opinions garnered from other local officers regarding the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash* and its power, the meaning of the *mahalla*, and the different working capacities and levels of volunteerism (*fidoiliq*) in different *mahallas*. The main hypothesis of the next section is that these local variations in the power of the *mahalla kengashes* in different *mahalla* types are outcomes of their Soviet experiences.

In this respect, first, the opinions of the *mahalla* officers about the differences between the Soviet and the post-Soviet eras in terms of *mahalla* policies should be remembered. As discussed in the previous chapter, it can be clearly understood that opinions regarding the meaning of the *mahalla* are shaped according to the Soviet experience of the respondent. Since the Communist Party ignored the A-type *mahallas*, today the officers of these *mahallas* refer to its socio-historical meaning when talking about the *mahalla*. Because the community established their houses and the *mahalla* as a whole using their own resources during the Soviet period so as to maintain their traditional lifestyle, the Communist Party always treated the B-type *mahallas* with doubt and suspicion. The residents and the officers of B-type *mahallas* preserved their traditional lives and their private property through the *mahalla*, despite the attitude of the Communist Party. For this reason, still today they talk at length about the communal activity and the resistance of the *mahalla* when defining it.

On the other hand the residents of the other two groups of *mahallas* (C- and D-types) see the *mahalla* from a completely opposite perspective to those of A- and B-types. When asked the meaning of the *mahalla*, for the residents of C- and D-types it was always the *mahalla kengash* that came to mind, which means that they see the *mahalla* not as a socio-spatial unit, but as an administrative/political unit. Since the social structures and the residents of C-type *mahallas* mostly remained unchanged during the Soviet era, they managed to retain their traditions and customs, which is their main divergence point from the D-type *mahallas*. The Communist Party used the JEG, *damkom* and *padezkom* to spy on the residents of the

community of the C-type *mahallas*, and so today, when talking about the administrative/political meaning of the *mahalla*, they emphasize the controlling functions of the *mahalla kengash* over the community.

Lastly, it can be said that the D-type *mahallas* are a child of the Soviet regime, in that they represent exactly the socialist labor block of the Soviet apartment type in terms of their physical appearance and social structure. For this reason, when the residents of this type of *mahalla* define the *mahalla*, referring to its administrative/political meaning, like in the C-type *mahallas*, they emphasize the role of *mahalla kengash* in transforming the community in accordance with the state hegemony. As can clearly be seen, the different perceptions of the *mahalla* officers of different *mahalla* types were shaped mostly according to their different Soviet experiences.

6.2.1 The *Oqsoqols* of the Tashkent *Mahallas* in the Case Study

In the pre-Soviet, Soviet and independent periods, following tradition, the leader of the *mahalla* was known as the *oqsoqol* or *rais*. The *oqsoqol*, as chair and the most powerful person in the *mahalla kengash*, is the official representative of the *mahalla* community. The *oqsoqol* and *oqsoqol kengashi* deals with all problems related to the local community's daily life. For example, a document found in *Kuchuktepe* and *Kiziltepe* dating back to 3 B.C. indicates that many services, and sometimes (when the central state is absent) state functions, were realized by the *oqsoqol kengash*, such as mobilizing the community to engage in community affairs, deciding on tax proportions, declaring a state of war to the community and arranging local laws (Umarova, 2007: 83). In the present day, the *oqsoqol* is still the person who initiates communal activities in the *mahalla*, while also organizing circumcision, wedding or funeral ceremonies, overseeing the care of orphans and widows, mediating in internal conflicts, and arbitrating in inheritance matters (Masaru, 2006: 345). In addition, he/she helps the central state to legitimize its projects in the eyes of the local community and ensures the community becomes mobilized to participate in such projects. After independence, with the constitutional guarantee, the *oqsoqol*'s power became more and more visible and effective; however, as will be seen, the level of power held by the *oqsoqols* in different types of *mahalla* could vary considerably. To analyze this issue, the power sources of *oqsoqols* in different types of *mahalla*, as well the motivations to become an *oqsoqol* and the expected benefits, will be examined in this section. First, however, it would be beneficial to summarize the basic features of the *oqsoqols* in the 12 *mahallas* covered in this study. Since the *oqsoqols* are also the members of the *mahalla* community, information about the *oqsoqol* given above can also be generalized for the *mahalla* community.

All of the recent *oqsoqols* in the 12 *mahallas* were interviewed, except for those of the C-1, B-1 and D-4 *mahallas* (one was a recent *oqsoqol*, while the other two are former *oqsoqols*, since the independence period). In most cases the *oqsoqols* were men, with only three female *oqsoqols* interviewed, in the C-3, D-3 and D-4 *mahallas*. According to Epstein (2004: 53), gender roles are changing as the *mahalla* becomes a formal organ of government, and these days it is not unheard of for citizens' assemblies to have female *oqsoqols* – a term that literally means “white beard,” and traditionally refers simply to the “elderly”. In the case study, the interviewees generally stated that the number of women *oqsoqols* had increased after independence, as in the Soviet period there had actually been no women *oqsoqols*. The reason for this, the D-3 *oqsoqol* said, was that “*in the Soviet era, these residential units were not mahallas, only in the old city were there mahallas. ... In the old city it was only the elder men who could become oqsoqols, following tradition*”. She continued:

“As a word, this (oqsoqol) means white beard, but it was used for the elders of the mahalla, without segregation of gender, referring to the most experienced people in the community. However, in practice in the old city, only men become oqsoqols. Having said that, we were trained with the Soviet ethic and so we became a modern mahalla, and in our mahalla women and men have equal status. During the Soviet period we could not be organized as a mahalla and therefore we had no oqsoqols, but since independence and the emergence of this kind of modern mahalla, the number of women oqsoqols is increasing. That said, in the old city, still only men can become oqsoqols while women can only become oqsoqols related with gender and family issues”.

The *maslahatchi* of A-1 *mahalla*, on the other hand, stated:

“The oqsoqol is a resident who is the most experienced elder and a respected person in the mahalla. Indeed, yes, oqsoqols are elected from among men, but I am a maslahatchi, meaning that I am the oqsoqol of women and family. In women, family and childhood issues, everybody comes to me, not to the oqsoqol, to resolve their problems; so, there are two oqsoqols: me, and the oqsoqol”.

It can be understood from the answers of the *mahalla* officers which types of *mahalla* were affected by the Soviet system, and to what extent. After independence, the idea that it was necessary to elect men as *oqsoqols*, but delegate responsibility in women and family issues to women leaders, thus making a separation between general affairs and gender and family issues, is still valid in the A- and B-type *mahallas*. This situation in these *mahallas* decreases the *maslahatchi*'s power against the *oqsoqol*. On the other hand, in C- and D-types *mahallas*, under the effect of Soviet modernization – according to the interviewees – the number of women *oqsoqols* is increasing, which the *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* explained as follows:

“Now, 115,000 som (an oqsoqol's salary) is not enough money for one family. This means that the man does not have a well-paid job, and so it is difficult to find male oqsoqols in mahallas like ours. In recent times, the state and hokimiyat have been unable to find oqsoqol candidates in the modern mahallas as men need to find better jobs. For example, in our

tuman, 40% of the oqsoqols are women, and their salaries are considered as a supplement to the husbands' wages for household income. Some 90% of women oqsoqols are housewives”.

The second issue related with the position of the *oqsoqol* concerned the word's literal meaning, referring to age. It became apparent during the case study that there were no *oqsoqols* below the age of 50, aside for one woman *oqsoqol*. According to a report of the *Mahalla Foundation*, *oqsoqols* are younger than in previous periods, and many are below the age of 50 (Pomfret, 1997, 37; Epstein, 2004: 53), however the findings of the case contradict this, in that the average age of the 12 *oqsoqols* interviewed was 64.

The power they retain within the *mahalla* community seems to depend more on their length of residency in the *mahalla* than their age. Moreover, their sense of belonging to the *mahalla* is directly proportional to their period of residence in the *mahalla*. As can be seen in Table 5.1, in the three A-type *mahallas*, all *oqsoqols* were born and raised in their *mahalla*, meaning that they spent their whole lives in the same *mahalla*. In the B-type *mahallas*, two *oqsoqols* had been living in their *mahallas* for 39–40 years, however, these *mahallas* were established 40 years ago, meaning that the *oqsoqols* have lived in their *mahallas* since they were established. Related with their periods of residence in their *mahallas*, the *oqsoqols* of the A- and B-type *mahallas* share a common situation in this regard. It can be seen that in C- and D-type *mahallas*, this situation is different, in that in both *mahalla* types, the residential periods of the *oqsoqols* in the *mahallas* were generally shorter than in the A- and B-types, while *oqsoqols'* residences in the *mahallas* of the C-types were longer than those in the D-types. For example, the *oqsoqols* of D-2 and D-4 *mahallas* had lived in their *mahallas* since independence, while another two *oqsoqols* had lived in their *mahallas* for 20 and 30 years respectively. These two *oqsoqols* who had migrated to their current *mahalla* after independence were asked why they had moved, and came up with significantly different answers. The *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* said:

“My socio-economic situation was better in the Soviet time than after independence, when I was living in a mikroraion in the center of the city. However, after independence, my economic situation declined and I had to find a new and cheaper house. This mahalla is an old fabric mikroraion, located at the periphery of the city. Just prior to independence, in 1991 almost 90% of the residents were of nationalities other than Uzbek. These residents became unemployed after independence, and began to migrate to their own countries or to areas of Tashkent with cheaper rents. After the closing of the state factory in the period following independence, despite the opening of a new factory, these apartments began to lose value and became quite cheap. It was then that I decided that it would be in my best interest to settle in this mahalla, given my current economic situation”.

The story of the D-4 *mahalla oqsoqol* was quite the opposite: “*I retired and my children were married in exactly the first years of independence. My wife and I wanted to move to a more beautiful house in a location closer to the center of the city. This mahalla was the mikroraion of Soviet civil servants and intellectuals and was quite expensive. In particular, the intellectuals wanted to migrate to cheaper locations since their economic situation had become worse in the independent period, and so they moved to the periphery of the city. At that time, we realized that we could buy this house, which we did, and this is how we moved to this apartment and settled in this mahalla*”. In both *mahallas*, the Russian population still outnumbers the Uzbek population, since the Russian residents had inhabited these *mahallas* for a long time. It is worthy of note that it is the people who have been living in these *mahallas* for a relatively shorter period who are becoming *oqsoqols*.

A third issue regarding the *oqsoqols*’ personal attributes is related to their level of educational. The most common opinion regarding the Soviet regime is that every citizen would achieve a certain level of education. All of the *oqsoqols* interviewed during the case study had been educated during the Soviet era, and all but two were university graduates, while some also had masters and doctoral degrees as well. The two *oqsoqols* that had graduated only from high school were from the A-type *mahallas*. The educational levels of all interviewees are shown in Table 6.1. As can be seen in the table, all interviewees from the B-, C-, and D-type *mahallas* graduated from university, while the *oqsoqols* with masters and doctoral degrees are mostly from C- and D-types. In short, the *oqsoqols* were in general quite well-educated, while it is worthy of note that those who started but failed to finish their university education all came from the A-type *mahallas*.

Table 6.1 Personal Information of the *Oqsoqols*

<i>Mahalla</i> Type	<i>Mahalla</i>	Age	Duration of residence in the <i>mahalla</i> (in years)	Education	Occupation	Duration in the <i>Oqsoqol</i> position (in years)	Ethnic background
A	A-1	63	63	High school	Worker (1962–1966), soldier (1966–1990)	3	Tashkent/Uzbek
	A-2	56	56	University	Director of an Institute (continue)	6	Tashkent/Uzbek
	A-3	59	59	High school	Soldier, unemployed (1998– +)	7	Fergahan Valley/Uzbek
B	B-1	68	40 (from eskishahar)	University	Trade	5	Tashkent/Uzbek
	B-2	80	38 (from eskishahar)	2 universities	Academics and trade	5	Tashkent/Uzbek
C	C-1	53	30	University-master	Engineer (in Soviet), house wife (1991– +)	Six months	Tashkent/Uzbek
	C-2	48	28	University	Geolog, director of state factory, unemployed (1992– +)	01.May	Tashkent/Uzbek
	C-3	67	45	University	Housewife and unemployed	2	Tashkent/Uzbek
D	D-1	73	30	University	Engineer, unemployed (1993– +)	10	Tashkent/Uzbek
	D-2	79	12	University	Officer in <i>raispalkom</i> , academics (1989–1997)	10	Tashkent/Uzbek
	D-3	50	25	Economy university	Officer in <i>prafsayuz</i> , unemployed (1992– +)	02.May	Tashkent/Uygur
	D-4	72	10	University	Officer in state television, unemployed (1996– +)	Two months	Tashkent/Uzbek

*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

Regarding their previous occupations, it can be seen that the *oqsoqols* of the A-1 and A-3 *mahallas* became soldiers during the Soviet period after finishing high school. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* was an academician, and was the only *oqsoqol* who was still employed at the time of the case study. Two *oqsoqols* in the B-type *mahallas* were engaged in trade activities during the Soviet era, which is in line with the way the B-type *mahallas* had articulated to the Soviet regime. As may be recalled from previous chapters, the B-type *mahallas* were established by the community during the Soviet era at the periphery of the city and followed Uzbek traditions, and in this sense the residents of these *mahallas* had quite similar lifestyles in terms of occupation, daily lives, etc. to the pre-Soviet era. They were mostly self-employed through their engagement in trade activities, unlike the D- and C-type residents, who were mostly state officers or laborers. For example, in the case study, all *oqsoqols* of the C- and D-type *mahallas* were engineers in state factories or civil servants, and most became unemployed after independence. Therefore, it is quite understandable that the residents of C- and D-type *mahallas*, which were able to be articulated and integrated into the Soviet system more than those of other *mahallas*, faced more severe unemployment problems following independence. In connection with this point, the data shows clearly that working in the *mahalla kengash* is considered a source of income for the residents of C- and D-type *mahallas*.

6.2.2 Different Power Sources of the *Oqsoqols* and the Continuity/Change of the Internal Organization of Different *Mahalla Kengashes*

There is an apparent difference among *mahalla* types in terms of the sources of the *oqsoqol*'s power. As seen in Table 5.2 below, there is family continuity between previous and recent *oqsoqols* in the A-type *mahallas*. In other words, the recent and previous *oqsoqols* of the A-1 and A-3 *mahallas* come from the same family (the recent *oqsoqols* of the A-1 and A-3 *mahallas* are respectively the cousin and son of the previous *oqsoqols*). It was learned that the *oqsoqol* of the A-2 *mahalla* was actually appointed by the *hokimiyat*, who used his special privilege. The reason for this is that the economic condition of the residents of A-2 *mahalla* is quite poor, meaning that nobody wanted the job. In the rest of the *mahallas*, it can be seen that there are family relationships between past and present *oqsoqol*, meaning that clientelist relationships based on family power are valid only in the A-type *mahallas*. The *oqsoqol* of A-3 said: “I do not know why the community elected me. Maybe it is because my father was an *oqsoqol* and community trusted him so much”. The secretary of the same *mahalla* said: “I did not want to be the *oqsoqol*, but the community insisted. My father had been the *oqsoqol* for 30 years in the Soviet time”.

Another source of *oqsoqol* power in the A- and B-type *mahallas* is wealth. Especially in the poorer A- and B-type *mahallas*, during elections to appoint an *oqsoqol* the community shows clearly a preference for wealthy candidates. This issue will be discussed in more detail under the next title looking at financial issues of the *mahalla*, but it is important to note here that in the A- and B-type *mahallas*, the main source of revenue is donations from the wealthy individuals (*homi*) of the *mahalla*, and it is for this reason that the neighborhood communities in poorer *mahallas* tend to elect wealthy people as *oqsoqols*, in the hope that a wealthy *oqsoqol* will make or attract donations to the *mahalla*. For example, an Uzbekistani resident of B-1 *mahalla* said, “We elected this *oqsoqol* because he is the biggest *homi* of the *mahalla*”. Also, an activist in A-1 *mahalla* said, “Our *oqsoqol* is one of the biggest *homis* of our *mahalla*, so everybody likes him in our *mahalla*”. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in many *mahallas* of the A and B types, the *oqsoqol* is not wealthy, however he may have a separate source of capital in being able to convince the wealthy people in the community to donate to the *mahalla*. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* explained this issue as follows:

“Today, the duties of the oqsoqol are so heavy that being rich alone is not enough. A person who is seeking only to benefit themselves should not be an oqsoqol; you should be a fidoi for your mahalla. It is not so important to be rich, as long as you are respected. If you are respected, everyone, including rich people, will do what you say. So if you are respected and are a fedai, you can find good financial assistance for the mahalla. Now, think. You become oqsoqol and nobody knows you and nobody respects you; you should find donations for your mahalla and so you go to the door of many rich people. If the person is not recognized or respected by them, they would most probably say ‘I do not know you and I will not give any money to you’”.

In contrast, in C- and D-types *mahallas* the main source of financial assistance is the revenues obtained from the firms established within the borders of the *mahalla*. For this reason it is not necessary to elect a wealthy and/or respected person as an *oqsoqol*, and in these types of *mahallas* there is another motivation for taking an administrative role. During the first years following independence, the first law on the organs of the self-government of citizens was adopted, stating that core actors be paid a small salary from the state, determined as the chairman, secretary, *maslahatchi* and *posbon*. In a move to further promote the *mahalla* administration, a Presidential Decree on Support to Community Self-Governing Bodies, adopted on 23 April, 1998 raised the salaries of both the chairman and the secretary, and assigned a full retirement pension to the chairman (Masaru, 2006: 351; Bektemirov, 2004: 477). Before independence, the members of the *mahalla kengash* (*kvartel'niy*) worked voluntarily, like the other residents, but now that the *mahalla kengash* has become a local self-governing body, the *mahalla* officers have become salaried public

workers. A 69-year-old Uzbek woman in A-3 *mahalla*, who migrated from *Tahtapul mahalla*,¹⁵⁹ explained the different periods:

“During the Soviet period, mahalla affairs were dependent on voluntary work. If a citizen wanted to work in the mahalla as a volunteer, she/he could do so. There is an idiom in Uzbek society that says ‘the mahalla looked after me, and now it is my turn, I should look after my mahalla because I am an elder now’. Therefore, during the Soviet regime, residents would work for their mahalla without thinking twice about sacrificing their money or time; but now, I do not know. The state gives salaries to residents to make them work for the mahalla”.

As a result of the legal regulations mentioned above, voluntarism is currently not the motive behind the participation of *mahalla* members in collective works for the sake of their *mahalla*, as can be seen from the comments of the recent *oqsoqols* of the C-2, C-3 and D-3 *mahallas*, all of whom stood as candidates for the *oqsoqol* position in order to solve their unemployment problem. The *oqsoqol* of C-2 *mahalla*, explains his motivation as follows:

“Why I have become the oqsoqol?... I was working in the state factory when the factory was privatized, and I remember two powerful men fighting to become the boss of the factory. It was such a difficult time in the 1990s when the Soviet Union collapsed. Everything was privatized, and so in every place there was someone striving to secure his/her properties. To solve the problem, the court decided to close the factory for two years. At the time I was co-director of the factory, and suddenly I was unemployed. I thought to myself ‘I should wait for these two years to pass, and then maybe I can then again be the co-director. In the mean time, I can be the oqsoqol of my mahalla and I can get a salary’. Times were so hard that we were even keen to get the oqsoqol salary! Since becoming unemployed, I have been the oqsoqol (smiling sarcastically)”.

¹⁵⁹ One of the old *mahallas* in Tashkent.

Table 6.2 Sources of *Oqsoqol* Power

Types	Mah.	<i>Oqsoqol</i> Position		
		Relation with previous <i>oqsoqol</i>	Reason for becoming <i>oqsoqol</i>	Source of power
A	A-1	Cousin	Fidelity	Family
	A-2	No relation	Fidelity	Distribution of power and status
	A-3	Son of previous <i>oqsoqol</i>	Fidelity	Family and distribution of power
B	B-1	No relation	Fidelity	<i>Fidoi</i> in <i>mahalla</i> for a long time, experience
	B-2	No relation	Fidelity	Economic status (the best financial sponsor of <i>mahalla</i>)
C	C-1	No relation (recommendation of <i>Hokimiyat</i>)	Economic	<i>Hokimiyat</i>
	C-2	No relation	Until finding a new job	No other candidate
	C-3	No relation	Economic	No other candidate
D	D-1	No relation (recommendation of <i>Hokimiyat</i>)	Good job for an elder to earn money	<i>Hokimiyat</i> , education background and occupation
	D-2	No relation (recommendation of <i>Hokimiyat</i>)	The best resident, knowing <i>mahalla</i> affairs	<i>Hokimiyat</i> , occupation, and <i>fidai</i> in <i>mahalla</i> for a long time
	D-3	No relation	Good job for an elder to earn money	Resident of the <i>mahalla</i> for a long time
	D-4	No relation, (recommendation of <i>Hokimiyat</i>)	No reason, employed by force by the <i>Hokimiyat</i>	<i>Hokimiyat</i>

*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

The first *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* talked about the independence era as follows:

“I was working in a state office of Raikom during the Soviet regime; then, as the privatization movement began, our director purchased our institution and it became a private workplace. I thought: ‘That’s ok, it is time that they make me redundant, what I can do... Although the director said that I can continue to work, I know that they will make me redundant anyway, but maybe just a bit later’. I also thought that it would not be easy for me to work in a privately owned company, as I was used to working in a state factory. In short, I resigned from that job and was unemployed for two months until I became the oqsoqol of our mahalla. I think that it is not good for a man to sit at home. As I am old, it is better for me to work in the mahalla ”.

It was also understood that in the C- and D-type *mahallas*, to become an *oqsoqol* you did not need to be respected or wealthy, as in many cases success would be tied to your relationship with the *hokimiyat*. The first *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla*, speaking about this issue, said:

“For two months I was unemployed, then one of my friends mentioned the oqsoqol position, and suggested that the oqsoqol would become more powerful. He encouraged me to apply, saying that I was a good member of the Party and such. One day I went to the mahalla kengash building and saw the kotib and the previous oqsoqol. I chatted with the kotib and found out that the kotib also wanted to be the oqsoqol. Then, I found one of my friends from my old workplace who was working in the Party as one of the kotibs of the mahalla. He took me to the Raikom and said to him. ‘This man wants to be a candidate for the oqsoqol position in our mahalla’. The Raikom called the majlis (committee) to arrange a meeting and they immediately made me the oqsoqol. Since then, for ten years or more, I have been the oqsoqol.”

The recent *oqsoqol* of the same *mahalla*, who had been appointed rather than elected, related how he became got the post: *“I have lived in this mahalla for 10 years. Our grand oqsoqol (the first oqsoqol) proposed me to the Hokim after the hokimiyat had rejected the elected oqsoqol”*. The *oqsoqol* of D-3 *mahalla* commented that: *“I was unemployed and I wanted to be the oqsoqol. I took classes to improve my knowledge of law because there are lots of sub-commissions in the mahalla kengash, and you should know how these work to be a good oqsoqol. After this, the hokimiyat said ‘ok, you can be a candidate now,’ and that was how I was able to become the oqsoqol”*. Finally on this issue, one of the residents of the C-3 *mahalla*, speaking about their *oqsoqol*, said: *“She is a decent oqsoqol; but it is not enough to be good in Uzbekistan, you should also know or be familiar with the people in Hokimiyat. For example, I know that the chair of Jen-Soviet in the mahalla Jamgarma is a friend of our oqsoqol. That’s how she can be the oqsoqol”*.

It is apparent in the C- and D-type *mahallas* that unemployed residents can stand for the position of *oqsoqol*, and if he/she has any connections with the *Hokimiyat*, he/she can easily become an *oqsoqol*. Thus, the clientalist relationship is dominant, and mostly depends on being in the right network rather than being based on kinship. This disconnection with

kinship is a good example of the Soviet bureaucratic tradition and *aparatchilik*. The first *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* clarified this point when relating how he had taken up the position. He said that he had a friend who had a good relationship with the *raispalkom*, and therefore it can be said that the same tradition perpetuates; only replacing the *raispalkom* with the *Hokimiyat*. For example, while the *oqsoqol* of C-2 *mahalla* considered himself to be the *hokim* of the *mahalla*, the *oqsoqol* of A-1 *mahalla* argued that he was more respected than any *hokims* in Uzbekistan: “*There is a Uzbek proverb saying that you could not live in a mahalla if the oqsoqol did not want you there, even if you were let into Uzbekistan by the President*”.

The *oqsoqols* and other officers of the *mahalla kengashes* in the C- and D-type *mahallas* emphasized that residents who wanted to become *oqsoqols* should have a working knowledge of the legal arrangements and laws; while those of the A- and B-types stressed the importance of knowing about Uzbek tradition and a familiarity with the *mahalla* and all its residents. For example, the *maslahatchi* of D-2 *mahalla*: “*Our oqsoqol has been elected three times because he works very well, he knows everything about the affairs of the mahalla. He worked in the Hokimiyat for a long time, and therefore our community likes him and would like him to remain as the oqsoqol*”. The *oqsoqol* of the D1 *mahalla* said: “*I have been the oqsoqol for at least 10 years. The community always re-elects me because I was an engineer during the Soviet era and worked in the construction and planning department for a long time, where I was also a legal practitioner*”.

Finally, it is important to mention the special resources of the *oqsoqol* of B-type *mahallas*. Established by the native community of residents of the old *mahallas*, whose houses and *mahallas* were transformed into Soviet-type labor blocks (C-type *mahallas*) at the periphery of Tashkent in the 1950s and 1960s, the B-type *mahallas* aimed to embrace the neighborhood community spirit. Consequently, to be an *oqsoqol* in these *mahallas* it was important to be willing to carry out voluntary work (*fidoi*) for the *mahalla*, and to have access to financial support (*homilik*). As the subject of financial resources has already been covered, here, I would like to give some examples about voluntary work in the *mahalla*.

To be a *fidoi* is so important that the power of all the *oqsoqols* in B-type *mahallas* is tied to the elder and the first *oqsoqol* of their *mahalla*. The *kotib* of B-1 *mahalla* said: “*We had an oqsoqol during the Soviet era for 30 years who almost built this mahalla from scratch by himself. He was such a big and respected person and was the biggest volunteer in our mahalla. Therefore, after the independence the state named the mahalla after him; and like him, our current oqsoqol is also a very regular volunteer to our mahalla*”. Likewise, the

oqsoqol of B-2 *mahalla* explained: “The community likes me because I have been a good volunteer in our *mahalla* for a long time. I am trying to be like our grand elder *oqsoqol*! He was *oqsoqol* for 30 years during the Soviet period, and now our *mahalla* bears his name. I arranged seminars about him after I became *oqsoqol*, and I teach the young people in the *mahalla* about his life”.

According to Baykal (2006), in modern Uzbekistan the *mahalla* leaders are associated with four different sources of power: 1) Stemming from his/her legal authority. The *oqsoqol* or *rais* is the chair of the *mahalla kengash*; and following the new legal arrangements of 1999, the procedure for becoming an *oqsoqol* is purely defined and thus now this process does not take place in a single and particular way. Sometimes the *oqsoqol* is appointed by the district *Hokimiyat*, while in other cases he is elected by the *mahalla* community; 2) According to informal authority. People who become *oqsoqols* with the consensus of the community on the basis of the candidate’s age and wisdom; 3) Wealth. *Oqsoqols* generally come from the wealthiest and the most powerful families in the community, and 4) Chairing the Women’s Commission – considered as a significant position of power in the *mahalla* (Baykal, 2006).

Different *mahalla* types in Tashkent call for different sources of power in their *oqsoqols*. In the C- and D-type *mahallas*, the first source in Baykal’s (2006) classification takes precedence; while being from an elite family improves the chances of becoming an *oqsoqol* in A-type *mahallas*. To be the oldest person in the *mahalla* is an advantage in especially B-type *mahallas*, but also in A-types. However, according to Baykal (2006), in Uzbekistan, which has a highly clientalist character in its socio-political relations, these loci of power in the *mahalla*, being state power, wealth and women’s power, cannot be separated from each other, and most of the time they are concentrated in the hands of a single family, however the findings of the present case study do not support Baykal’s argument. In the course of the research, no *mahalla kengash* was identified in which the relatives of the *oqsoqol* were working, and on no occasion was a family relationship found among the *maslahatchi*, *Jen-Soviet*, *kotibe* and *oqsoqol*.

At the local scale, on the other hand, acquaintanceship and friendship were found to be more significant than kinship, this being observable in all types of *mahalla*. For example, a 61-year-old Uzbek man from A-3 *mahalla* said: “No, there are no relatives of the *oqsoqol* in the *mahalla kengash*, but he has friends and acquaintances there. For example, the *posbon* is friend of our *oqsoqol*, and that’s how he could become the *posbon*. He could earn money from being a *posbon* only because he is a friend of our *oqsoqol*”. This situation was also observed in other types of *mahallas*. An Uzbek man from B-2 *mahalla* who was working in

Korea at the time of the interview said, *“The oqsoqol has no family in the mahalla kengash, but all of them are his friends or acquaintances”*.

Carrying out voluntary work in the *mahalla kengash* was considered a good indication of a proletarian that voluntarily supports and helps the socialist regime. Thus, during the Soviet era, by working in the *mahalla kengash*, one was afforded a higher social status, and thus more opportunity to become networked with, and even a member of, the Party. After independence, this motivation was lost, with different results in different *mahalla* types. The motivation of the *mahalla* officers in the A- and B-type *mahallas* is quite different from those in C- and D-types. This issue was researched in two main ways. First, the *oqsoqols* were asked why they chose to take on the role, and what were advantages did it bring them; after which the same question was directed to other *mahalla* officers.

Dealing first with the motivations for becoming an *oqsoqol* in Uzbekistan, the A- and B-type *mahallas* and C- and D-types form two different groups in terms of the sources of power of the *oqsoqol*. Related with this issue, the second important point for discussion is the advantages of becoming an *oqsoqol*, in which the initial answers of the local officers seemed quite diverse. The *oqsoqols* of A-type *mahallas* generally said that their only benefit was spiritual satisfaction; while those in B- and C-type *mahallas* mostly emphasized that they gained respect among the community after being an *oqsoqol* and *fidoiliq*. Finally, the *oqsoqols* of D-type *mahallas* stressed on the relationship between their income and the *oqsoqol* position, while also mentioning that it was good to do something for the community.

In this respect, the *oqsoqol* of A-1 *mahalla* said: *“Now, work has no earthly use for me. The salary is so low, and while there are lots of jobs in the mahalla, there is no career in this work. It is the task of elder residents to work for the mahalla. If you do this, you will be rewarded”*. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said:

“There is no benefit for me in being an oqsoqol, it is for the benefit of the mahalla. The state educated me and made me a good citizen, so now, it is time for me to offer the mahalla everything that the state gave me during my training. I grew up in this mahalla. If I am good citizen and have good qualifications, the reason behind it is this mahalla; so now that I am an elder and I should repay my debt to the mahalla. The oqsoqol, thus, should be wealthy both materially and spiritually”.

On the other hand, the *oqsoqol* of C-2 *mahalla* said, *“Before I became the oqsoqol, nobody knew or respected me; but after I became the oqsoqol everybody began to stop me in the street and ask about my health”*. The *oqsoqol* of B-1 *mahalla* said: *“Since becoming the oqsoqol I have done many things for the mahalla, but the mahalla has also rewarded me and has done several favors for me. For example, because I am the oqsoqol, the state sent me to*

Haj and after that, after I became Haji, everybody in the mahalla showed more respect to me". Finally, speaking on this issue the first oqsoqol of D-4 mahalla said: "I have benefitted spiritually from becoming an oqsoqol. To work for your community through fedailik – it fosters your heart. For example, I help poor families, we gave them money and other financial assistance. Since becoming an oqsoqol I have become more powerful in the spiritual realm of my being".

When going into details, a main benefit of being an oqsoqol begins to emerge that is common to all types of mahalla, and that is the ability to reach the higher levels of government and the President. The state offers various seminars for improving the knowledge levels of oqsoqols, while also handing out awards. The oqsoqol of A-2 mahalla said:

"I met our President at a meeting attended by all of the important and powerful civil servants. Here is a photo of me with our President. Also, the Tashkent Hokim arranges large meetings where he/she gives out presents and various remunerations to active oqsoqols in Tashkent. As an oqsoqol, I can meet all of the senior civil servants, and this is the real benefit of being an oqsoqol. By holding the position of oqsoqol, the state (the Hokimiyat) trains us, offers us courses and gives us certificates in different areas. The President himself gave us a certificate in the meeting I mentioned. This is another benefit of being an oqsoqol –to be able to meet the highest civil servant in our state in person. In addition, I have received lots of remunerations; everybody knows me and respects me in the mahalla kengash".

A similar benefit which was voiced in other types of mahalla is admissibility. For example, the oqsoqol of D-1 mahalla said: *"I have been oqsoqol for 10 years. You will not find another oqsoqol like me in the new mahallas of Tashkent. Our President rewarded me for my good performance at a large meeting held for the 16th Anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence. We have the chance to meet the President at this event every year; and that is one of the benefits of being an oqsoqol".* Related with this award, one oqsoqol from a B-type mahalla said:

"In Uzbekistan, hard work is respected by everyone; the work ethic is a principle of O'zbekchilik. If you do a lot of work for the mahalla and the community, then your respectability increases correspondingly. As an oqsoqol, I have lots of opportunities and rights to contribute to the mahalla. For example, I can arrange meetings for almost everything. It is possible to open firms and polyclinics, etc., and as long as you give to the mahalla, the President rewards you".

The last advantage of being an oqsoqol mentioned by all of the interviewees in the different mahalla types was the opportunity for promotion from the post of oqsoqol to the position of hokim or chair of the mahalla jamgarma. The oqsoqols were asked whether they would stand again in the next election, to which the oqsoqol of A-2 mahalla replied, *"I do not want to be an oqsoqol in the next period, I am tired, and now I need to solve some family problems".*

When asked how he would react if the *Hokimiyat* asked him to become the *rais* of the *mahalla jamgarma*, he replied: *“They did ask me. They said ‘Please Amaka, be the rais of the mahalla jamgarma,’ but I refused, as in our tuman there are 58 mahallas and it would be very difficult to solve the many problems that exist there. I want to solve all of the problems, but I know that I cannot”*. When I asked whether he would consider the position of *Hokim*, he said: *“Maybe I will be the Hokim in the future, who knows? I would really like that ... because if you are the Hokim, you are very strong and powerful, but if you are the rais of the mahalla jamgarma, you are only an ordinary officer in the Hokimiyat. In addition, the salary of a Hokim is very high, and indeed you don’t even need a salary if you are the Hokim because this position offers you everything to make their own business work”*. When asked the same question, the *oqsoqol* of C-2 *mahalla* commented that:

“Everyone wants to be Hokim, that’s why many of the oqsoqols try hard to get into the Hokimiyat. The oqsoqol position is a doorway to the Hokimiyat. There are lots of examples of this, for instance our recent rais of the mahalla jamgarma in our tuman was previously the oqsoqol of his mahalla. If you go to, for example, shahar mahalla jamgarmasi, you can understand that every officer in the mahalla jamgarma was previously an oqsoqol. However, do not mix the hokimiyat and the mahalla jamgarma. Many oqsoqols can walk into the mahalla jamgarma, but it is very difficult to transfer to other departments of the Hokimiyat. The Tashkent shahar mahalla jamgarma raisi is an exact case related with your question. He was first the oqsoqol of his mahalla, then he joined the mahalla jamgarma raisi in the tuman Hokimiyat; and finally he became the rais of the mahalla jamgarma in the city Hokimiyat”.

Accordingly, the *oqsoqol* position opens opportunities for employment in the *Hokimiyat*, but only in the *mahalla jamgarma*. The state prefers to accept previous *oqsoqols* and sometimes other officers of the *mahalla kengash* as officers in the *mahalla jamgarma*, as they have experience in *mahalla* affairs, and then they may become the *rais* in the *mahalla jamgarma*. The *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* said: *“My situation is a good example for your question. I was the oqsoqol of my mahalla before, then I became the rais of the mahalla jamgarma, responsible for 49 mahallas”*.

The research findings have shown that in some *mahallas*, especially those with exceptional economic conditions, i.e., the poorest and richest, finding somebody to fill the post of *oqsoqol* is difficult, and the *Hokimiyat* often struggles to find even a single candidate. There are, however, two main privileges of becoming an *oqsoqol* that may encourage people to take this position. First, anybody who becomes an *oqsoqol* can continue to draw his/her pension; and according to the law, although the *oqsoqols* are state officers, an *oqsoqol* may be able to continue their existing job in another state institution, and thus draw two salaries from the state at the same time. These two privileges have motivated many residents to become candidates for the *oqsoqol* position. For example, the first *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla*

said: *“There was a decision of our President by which if you began to work in another job, your pension would decrease by 50%. However, if you are an oqsoqol, your pension will not be cut. This exception only applies to oqsoqols”*. On the other hand, the oqsoqol of D-2 mahalla said:

“I know this issue well because I worked in the Hokimiyat for a long time as the rais of mahalla jamgarma. Now, we have some modern mahallas whose residents have a very high socio-economic level; and nobody wants to be an oqsoqol in these mahallas because they already have well-paid jobs. What is the point he leaving his job to become an oqsoqol? In these cases the Hokimiyat can offer one resident the oqsoqol position and allow him to continue his/her existing job. This arrangement is a privilege for some mahallas and residents, and was made in order to ease the work of the Hokimiyat in filling the oqsoqol positions in such mahallas”.

The interviewee was asked why he became an oqsoqol after being the rais of the mahalla jamgarmasi, to which he replied: *“I am still the rais of the mahalla jamgarma, and the Hokimiyat expect me to be also the oqsoqol of this mahalla. So it is my right ... we have a new arrangement about this, the oqsoqol can continue his job in some cases, and so do both jobs”*. The first oqsoqol of D-4 mahalla said: *“The salary of an oqsoqol is 115,000 som, which is so low that a man would be unable to look after his family on it. For this reason, the state has difficulties in finding candidates for the oqsoqol position as people prefer to work in other jobs if they can find one. Therefore, the state made new legal arrangements that would allow a person to continue drawing a pension while serving as oqsoqol; and now the oqsoqol position can also be held together with another office position”*.

The main distinction between the different mahalla types regarding the designation of the is that while in A and B types, the community proposes and supports the oqsoqol candidates, in the C and D types the community is not involved in putting forward names for the position. The maslahatchi of A-1 mahalla said: *“Our oqsoqol is such a humanist that he gives all of his money to anyone who needs it, and so the community elected him for a second term with 100% of the vote. He did not actually want to continue for a second term, but the community would not let him leave; they insisted, and even begged”*. Similarly, the oqsoqol of A-2 mahalla said: *“I did not want to be an oqsoqol, but my community, in a way, forced me. Every day they visited me and insisted I take charge as an oqsoqol in the mahalla”*. Speaking about their current oqsoqol, the secretary of B-1 mahalla said that *“We would not leave him alone; we told him time and time again that we wanted him as the oqsoqol. He is a very nice person and the biggest homi of our mahalla”*.

In contrast, the oqsoqol of C-2 mahalla said: *“Did they propose me? No, of course not. Nobody knew me before I became oqsoqol. After becoming the oqsoqol, they got to know me and now they respect me. It is possible that they will want me to stand again in the oqsoqol*

elections for a second time". Relating his own story, the *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla* said: "I was a *maslahatchi* when our previous *oqsoqol* quit his job, after which the *Hokimiyat* appointed me as the temporary *oqsoqol*, and when the elections came I become a candidate. There were more than two candidates, but since the community had seen how I worked while I was the temporary *oqsoqol*, I had earned their respect, and as a result they chose me rather than the other candidates".

Similar to C-type *mahallas*, in D-type *mahallas* the community knows very little about the candidates for the *oqsoqol* position, and never proposes a candidate of their own. However, different from C-type *mahallas*, the *oqsoqol* has difficulty in gaining the respect of the community. The reason for this is that while in C-type *mahallas*, where the residents managed to protect their old traditions during the Soviet era, the *oqsoqol* position is still respected as a part of these traditions, but in D-type *mahallas* the *oqsoqol* position is perceived as being an ordinary governmental institution, and thus is currently discredited. A more determining reason behind this difference is that the socio-economic levels of C-type *mahallas* are lower than D-type *mahallas*. In other words, the communities in C-type *mahallas* are still dependent on the *oqsoqol* in terms of joining social networks or getting donations from the wealthy, and participating in the distribution of welfare among different social groups. The D-type *mahallas*, on the other hand, have maintained the socio-economic level they gained during the Soviet period, because as the impoverished older residents moved on to other *mahallas* they were replaced by wealthier newcomers. As such, although they have not retained the welfare level reached during the Soviet era, their residents still belong to some important networks, not only within the *mahalla*, but outside the *mahalla* as well, that enable them to sustain their socio-economic level. In terms of their spatial quality, these *mahallas* were not downgraded, and did not turn into deteriorated residential units, and so have become attractive as a new rentable area in the city. In short, in D-type *mahallas* the *oqsoqol* is not central for pursuing the interests of their residents as they already take part in several networks and in this sense do not need *oqsoqol's* assistance.

Although the *oqsoqols* of D-type *mahallas* did not mention this matter, the responses from the community back this argument. The *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* said, "My community insisted I become the *oqsoqol*," while an Uzbek man (36) from the same *mahalla* said, "We do not know anything about our latest *oqsoqol*; I heard his name, but I never go to the *mahalla kengash*". A Russian girl (22) in the same *mahalla* said:

"I came to this mahalla a few months ago, but I have neighbors who have lived here for a long time. Even they do not know the oqsoqol. We have no connections with the mahalla kengash. One day, one of my neighbors went to the mahalla kengash and asked for financial assistance, but the

committee said that they did not know her and suspected that she was from outside the mahalla. My neighbor told me that the committee members had said that she had not helped the mahalla kengash in mahalla affairs, and thus found her request inappropriate”.

On the same issue, the *Jen-Soviet* of D-3 *mahalla* was asked whether, or not, the community had proposed her. She answered: “No, never. The community has no idea who we are before we become a *Jen-Soviet* or an *oqsoqol*”. The *oqsoqol* of the same *mahalla* said: “Nobody respects us, or the *mahalla* institution. They regard us as mere officers. The real meaning of the *mahalla* is respect and helping one another”.

As can be seen, there are huge differences among the types of *mahallas* in terms of the respectability and credibility of the *oqsoqols*. In the A- and B-type *mahallas*, the residents know and respect the *oqsoqol* before he/she takes up the position. The *oqsoqol* generally comes from a local elite or wealthy family, or he is the biggest *homi* in the *mahalla*. In C-type *mahallas*, it is mostly unemployed residents who are in need of employment that are willing to be the *oqsoqol* of the *mahalla*, and as Uzbek traditions are still influential in these *mahallas*, that person gains power and respectability, as well as traditional authority upon taking up the post. The *mahalla kengash*, as a local institution, is still important in the distribution of welfare to the citizens in C-type *mahallas*, where there are many residents with a low socio-economic status. Another distinction from A- and B-type *mahallas* is that *oqsoqols* in C-type *mahallas* gain the status of state officer.

Lastly, in D-type *mahallas*, like in C-types, unemployed residents are eager to become *oqsoqol*, but after taking up the post the power and influence of the person over the community does not change at all. He/she gains no traditional respectability, and few residents, other than those who are interested in *mahalla* affairs, know him/her well; however they surely gain status and power as state officers. Indeed, *oqsoqols* may have different assets to offer to the *mahalla* community, whether it be economic capital, by coming from an elite family; social capital, which may be useful in getting access to financial support as the biggest *homi* of the *mahalla*; or symbolic capital in the form of political power. Therefore, the traditional meaning of the *oqsoqol* as the eldest and respectable *mahalla* resident is only one dimension. Today, *oqsoqols* have different meanings and sources of power, depending on the type of *mahalla*. In some *mahallas* it is not important to be rich, but to be *fidoi*, while in others it is the connections with higher civil institutions (*hokimiyat*) that are important for becoming an *oqsoqol*.

There were also clear variations in the responses of the *mahalla* officers to the question of why they chose to work in the *mahalla kengash*. The secretary of A-1 *mahalla* said:

“Everybody respects me in the mahalla. If you work hard, then you feel better and you live your life better. A person can feel fulfilled, not with money, but with the hard work and the respect of others. The jemoat ishlari (working for society or mahalla) is an example of this. If I work in the mahalla, I feel better, I have a sense of achievement and my social position gets higher. Previously I had put a lot of effort into looking after my family, but then I thought that it was time to work for my mahalla. Lastly, I work in the mahalla kengash because, for instance, a decent younger generation can only grow up in a good mahalla; and so it is the responsibility of the parents to work for the mahalla and make it a better place for their children”.

The secretary of B-1 mahalla explained why she chose to work in mahalla kengash by stating: *“In the beginning, the mahalla kengash could not find anyone who was able to handle the paperwork. Since I was familiar with legal documents they asked me come and work in the mahalla kengash. I had wanted to work in the mahalla, everybody gets to know you this way; they respect you when you work in the mahalla. The fact that you can help everybody makes you happy”.*

After making similar comments as the mahalla officers in the C- and D-type mahallas at the beginning of the interview, they highlighted completely different reasons for their presence in the mahalla kengash. For example, the oqsoqol of C-3 mahalla demonstrates this point in this extract from our face-to-face interview:

O/C-3: *I am the oqsoqol, she is maslahatchi, and others are the Jen-Soviet. He is the posbon, we made some changes in the existing division of labor last week.*

Interviewer: *Why did you change?*

O/C-3: *The previous posbon found a new job and asked us to dismiss him, since his new job was far better than being a posbon.*

Interviewer: *So do your officers change frequently?*

O/C-3: *If you compare with other mahallas, yes, because we have many unemployed residents. They try to find temporary jobs, but if they cannot, we appoint them as officers in the mahalla kengash.*

The Jen-Soviet of D-3 mahalla supported the statements of the oqsoqol of the C-3 mahalla:

“I got really bored at home after I retired, and my son and his family went abroad. I thought about what kind of job I could find as a primary school graduate and an elder person. There was actually no job for me in the market, but I thought maybe it would be possible to work for the mahalla. The mahalla volunteers and the members of the mahalla kengash saw my situation, and thought I was a lonely, older person with little money. They offered me a paid job in the mahalla kengash and I accepted, and began to work in the mahalla kengash. Now I draw a salary”.

She also made important comments about the differences between the real and artificial mahallas:

“This mahalla was established during the Soviet period as a JEG, and became a mahalla after independence. However, although our name is “mahalla,” we actually do not resemble a real mahalla. For example, we

get paid for working for the benefit of the mahalla, but in real mahallas people choose to work in the mahalla because of the fidoiliq, not for money. Our mahalla is not like this at all, there are hardly any volunteers”.

On this point, different responses were given by the *mahalla* officers of the C-and D-type *mahallas*. The *Jen-Soviet* of C-2 *mahalla* said:

“Do you want to live in a bad mahalla? If your mahalla is bad, your children will be mean. Now we are older, now it is our turn to serve the mahalla. When we were young the mahalla provided us with many services, ensuring that we grew up as decent and smart people. These were the gift of our mahalla to us, and now we are repaying our debt to the mahalla, like a son or a daughter. The mahalla is our extended family and a small Hokimoyat! Also, we (Uzbeks) have a tradition. If a guest drops in to your house in the evening, you offer them whatever beautiful things you have to show the pleasant and wealthy life you live and the proper family you have. The same logic works for the mahalla. If your mahalla is beautiful, it shows to an outsider that your family and your life are also nice, decent”.

It could be observed in the C-type *mahallas* that this situation is changeable. If the current social structure of the residents in C-type *mahallas* still follows the old style, their answers seem to resemble those from the A- and B-type *mahallas*. On the other hand, if their social structure has changed, and especially if the socio-economic conditions of the *mahalla* are generally low, they see work in the *mahalla* as a source of income and a possible solution to their unemployment problems. The D-type *mahallas* resemble C-types in many ways, but these similarities will be covered in more detail in the next chapter as the variations among the power sources of the *oqsoqols* are explained. The *maslahatchi* of A-1 *mahalla* summarized this issue perfectly:

“I know this matter very well. During the Soviet period the rais (leader) of the mahalla and the kvartalnyi committee were elected by the community. However, in the kvartalnyi residential unit (mikroraion) nobody wanted to be the rais because the Communist Party did not pay salaries to residents who worked for the mahalla. Working for the mahalla during the Soviet era was voluntary, and therefore, generally the Raikom chose a resident from the mahalla to be the rais or oqsoqol. Those that were transformed into modern labor blocks (mikroraion) from the old mahallas, for example the Sebzor, were not like this, because in this kind of mikroraion the mahalla kengash worked well. In the mikroraions located at the center of the city, which were transformed into modern labor blocks in the past or just after the October Revolution, or were established during the Soviet era, residents neither believed in, nor were they interested in their local committee ... because these mikroraions were mostly inhabited by Russians, who unlike the Uzbek is, were not used to the communal living style. In the old mahallas and mikroraions, like the Sebzor, older residents could become the rais of the mahalla without any intervention from the raikom”.

The level of voluntarism in a *mahalla* impacted upon on the efficiency of the *mahalla kengash*, and this also varied considerably among the different types of *mahallas*. In the A-

and B-types *mahallas*, the *mahalla kengashes* work actively. The *maslahatchi* of A-2 *mahalla* said: *“Here they are, the oqsoqol, secretary, uchaskavoy noziri, sardor. We are always in the mahalla building and working for our residents, from morning till night. In addition, we have lots of volunteers who want to work for their mahalla”*. The Jen-Soviet of A-1 *mahalla* said: *“In some modern mahallas, the mahalla building is closed on some days, but in our mahalla it is open every day and we are working. At least seven or eight residents come to consult me every day”*. This was supported by personal experience. While conducting the research, I visited the *mahalla* building in a particular D-type *mahalla* every day for two weeks, and never found it closed. In the C- and D-type *mahallas*, the situation is different, with the *mahalla kengash* working actively in some, while not in others. For example, the D-1 and D-2 *mahalla kengashes* are more active than those in D-3 and D-4. The *oqsoqol* of D-1 *mahalla* said: *“In our mahalla, other than me, there is the maslahatchi, the Jen-Soviet, the secretary, the posbon, the uchaskavoy and many active volunteers. We are a vigorous mahalla kengash. We are working every day to organize communal activities; the mahalla building is open from morning till night every day”*. Similarly, the *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* commented that:

“There is one more thing about the mahalla kengash; the oqsoqol, the secretary, the maslahatchi and the sardor draw their salaries from the state. Also, there is the rais of the Jen-Soviet committee. The uchaskavoy is responsible for the security of mahalla, and there is mahalla naulugovoy, who is responsible for the collection of local taxes. There is a sun meditsiyan, who is responsible for the cleaning and repair (remont) of the mahalla space. Together we are the mahalla kengash, along with other mahalla volunteers. This is an active mahalla”.

The *oqsoqol* of D-3 *mahalla* explained their lack of activity:

“We are a new mahalla kengash, so, we have no experience of the problems of the mahalla. The mahalla kengash is a state institution and we are paid by the central government. I admit that we are not so active, but we are doing whatever we can”.

Finally, the *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* made similar comments:

“We are a new mahalla, the mahalla kengash has been newly established. The state gives us a salary, and we will gain power step-by-step. At the moment we do not have much power to apply our authority. Now the secretary, maslahatchi, uchaskavoy and I are working in the mahalla kengash. We have not yet been able to appoint a Jen-Soviet or posbon, and as yet we do not have enough volunteers to work in our sub-committees”.

In the D-1 and D-2 *mahallas* there are 10–15 sub-committees are working actively, and while in the D-3 *mahalla* there are a few sub-committees, there are no sub-committees in the D-4 *mahalla*. The main reason for this is related to the different social structures of the *mahallas*. Put differently, the D-1 and D-2 *mahallas* gained more distinctive characters during the Soviet time than the D-3 and D-4 *mahallas*. The residents of the D-1 and D-2

mahallas were housed according to their occupations and workplaces during the Soviet period, and so these *mahallas* consisted of people who shared the same profession. Therefore, although there was an apparent decrease in this commonality among the residents after independence, the residents still recall the spirit of communal activity and share common social values, which form the nucleus of modern life in the *mahalla* rather than traditional values or social relations.

The D-3 *mahalla* was established as a *mikroraion* in 1960s within the *rabochnik garadok (ischler shaharchasi)*,¹⁶⁰ and had residents engaged in different occupations and from different professions during the Soviet era who had come from different *mahallas* and cities (for example, not only from one particular type of *mahalla*). For this reason the D-3 *mahalla*, or the *mikrorayon* during the Soviet period had no traditional form, nor did it become a typical Soviet residential unit, and thus the D-3 *mahalla* lacked a community spirit and sense of tradition. Accordingly, the residents and officers of D-3 *mahalla* generally considered the *mahalla* to be a new institution for them, and for this reason they were unable to organize well. Lastly, D-4 *mahalla* is unique in its social composition during the Soviet era, in that it was built as a *mikrorayon* to house senior civil servants, professionals and families. The dominance of intellectuals in D-4 *mahalla* allowed social mobilization to be realized more quickly than the other *mahallas* after independence. During the transition period, the most quickly impoverished social group was the Soviet intellectuals, but after independence most of the old residents of D-4 *mahalla* moved to other residential units, mostly in the periphery of Tashkent, while new residents came from other districts of Tashkent and from other cities in Uzbekistan; and these new residents became the new elite group of the new Uzbekistan Republic. For this reason, the collective memory and communal spirit in this *mahalla* has rapidly disappeared, and so for the officers of D-4 *mahalla*, the *mahalla* is a new concept, and as a consequence is currently not very powerful.

In the A- and B-type *mahallas*, officers of the *mahalla kengash* work in the *mahalla* as they feel it is their duty to help the community when they get older. They believe that if their *mahalla* is nice, it will be reflected in their children. They consider the *mahalla* to be like one big family. On the other hand, in C- and D-type *mahallas*, the officers of the *mahalla kengash* see working in the *mahalla* as a source of income and a solution to their unemployment problem. Accordingly, they work in the *mahalla* until they can find another job. However, in wealthier *mahallas*, the C and D types, residents prefer to work in *mahalla* for their own satisfaction or to put their free time to efficient use. It is also apparent that in

¹⁶⁰ Labour district

some wealthy *mahallas*, nobody wants to work in the *mahalla*, and in such cases, generally the *hokimiyat* appoints one resident as the *oqsoqol* and gives him/her the right to continue working in his/her existing job.

In short, in terms of the sources of power of the *oqsoqols*, the A- and B-type *mahallas* share many common features, but with one significant difference – the residents of B-type *mahallas* prefer to have richer residents in the position of *oqsoqol*, while in A-type *mahallas*, the residents pay more attention to the fidelity of the *oqsoqol* candidates. The discussion on the source of power of the *oqsoqols* has demonstrated well the differences between C- and D-types of *mahallas*, which are very dissimilar aside for the fact that generally unemployed or poor residents become *oqsoqol*. The *oqsoqol* has symbolic capital in almost all C-type *mahallas*, but political and formal capital in D-type *mahallas*. Uzbekistani citizens generally categorize *mahallas* under two types: the traditional-old (A); and modern-new *mahalla* (D).¹⁶¹ In this respect, some of the interviewees mentioned the characteristics of C- and B-type *mahallas*. For example, the Jen-Soviet of D-3 *mahalla* explained the difference between the old and new *mahallas*:

“You are saying that the oqsoqol should be respected, and the eldest resident, but this is true only for the old mahallas. For example, if residents in old Tashkent, see the oqsoqol in the street, they immediately stop him and ask about his health. Moreover, they ask how they can help him/her for the sake of the mahalla. On the other hand, in our mahalla, in the new mahallas established during the Soviet period, the residents do not know anything about the oqsoqol or the other officers of the mahalla kengash. We became a mahalla after independence, so we are a new mahalla. Indeed, we are not a real mahalla”.

The posbon of C-3 *mahalla* said:

“You see that in many old mahallas, the residents generally respect their oqsoqols, and our mahalla is also like this. Our mahalla was established a long time ago, and although the Communist Party transformed it into a mikroraion, its community tried to save and protect itself. For this reason, some of our traditions are still alive. For example, when a resident becomes the oqsoqol, the community respects him in our mahalla, like in the old mahallas. However, if you go to a new-modern mahalla that was established during the Soviet era, you can see that nobody respects the oqsoqol and nobody even knows who he is. The oqsoqol in these new mahallas is generally unemployed. The Hokimiyat gives jobs to the unemployed and poor residents in the oqsoqol office and other positions in the mahalla kengash. Today, appointing people to the oqsoqol position is a strategy of the state to cope with the unemployment problem”.

¹⁶¹ They do not recognize the B- and C-type *mahallas*; and when mentioning the differences between the old and new *mahallas* they associate the *mahallas* of the old city with the term “old”, and the ones established during the Soviet period as modern apartment buildings with the term “new”. Therefore, when presenting interviewees’ opinions about the differences between the different types of *mahallas*, note that they only refer to A- and D-type *mahallas* among the categories identified by the author.

In conclusion, it is apparent that there is a clear difference between the types of *mahallas* in terms of their internal organizational structure and the operational style. Due to the strong collective memory in the communities of A- and B-type *mahallas*, the *mahalla kengash* is able to work intrinsically and efficiently, and more volunteers participate and give their time. Most of the time the *mahalla kengashes* in A- and B-type *mahallas* are engaged in activities that are not even under their responsibility. In C-type *mahallas*, the collective memory and social solidarity (semi-transformed or completely transformed), and socio-economic situation largely affects the power of their internal organization. In poorer *mahallas* with weak social solidarity and collective memories, nobody wants to work in the *mahalla kengash*, or prefer to work only temporarily. In the D-3 and D-4 *mahallas*, the destruction of traditional relations and the fact that they had not been fully articulated to the Soviet system (or faced a rapid loss of the stability they enjoyed during the Soviet era after independence) resulted in a weakened internal organizational structure in the *mahalla kengash*, leading to less communal activity. Lastly, because the D-1 and D-2 *mahallas* were able to secure the socio-economic conditions they had gained during the Soviet period by being fully articulated to the Soviet system, the organizational structure of the *mahalla kengashes* seems to be more rational, modern and more civil-minded. In addition, due to the commonalities in the residents' professional backgrounds, a common behavior pattern is observed also in the *mahalla kengashes* of the D-1 and D-2 *mahallas*.

However, for the realization of *mahalla* activities, the *mahalla kengash* still needs the contributions of the volunteers. All sub-committee leaders, who are advisers of the *oqsoqol*, and members of the *mahalla kengash* need to get residents involved if they are to fulfill their duties. Masaru (2006: 350), speaking on this situation, says: “Daily activities were conducted by unpaid volunteers. Members of the committee and sub-committees consisted of a few pensioners and those regularly employed in other work. A labor force made up of local residents built a mahalla clubhouse, graveled the streets and planted trees in the area”. During the Soviet era, there was no hierarchy of *mahalla* officers and volunteers, whereas today, since the *mahalla kengash* members have become paid state officers, a clear distinction has emerged between them and the volunteers. Moreover, as Earle (2006: 54) discovered during his research, in one of the *mahallas* in a large city in Ferghana Valley, the level of participation in the activities of the *mahalla* was in decline. Different reasons for this were given, but most were connected with the transition from socialism to a market-oriented economy. Some respondents in his research stated that people needed to spend more time earning money, in contrast to the Soviet era when almost everyone had a stable job and regular income.

Combining Earle's research findings with those of the case study of this thesis, it would appear that patterns of social interaction in the *mahallas* are changing. For example, while in the past most of the men would gather at the tea house in the evenings to socialize; now there is a larger variety of a leisure option available. Women are meeting less frequently, but for different reasons, among which, most important are the increased concerns regarding the generation of income and reproductive work. While conducting the case study of this thesis, many comments were heard supporting this argument. An elderly Azerbaijani woman from D-3 *mahalla*, who was a university graduate, said: "... *during the Soviet era we had community spirit, which provided fidoiliq for the community. This sense of duty exists both in the communist ideology and the Uzbek tradition. However, today is different; today, nobody trusts anybody else*".

The main volunteer group in the *mahalla* is the *kucha boshi* or *damkom-padezkom*, as detailed below. The issue of electing or deciding upon the *kucha boshi* is undefined in legal documents, and so I asked to the *mahalla* officers how the *kucha boshi*, *damkom* is arranged. The *oqsoqol* of the B-2 *mahalla* said:

"Yes, for example, we have damkom, padezkom, kucha boshi. Residents choose them as volunteers through an election, or only by saying to them 'be volunteers!'" For instance, residents or families from a padezkom choose their padezkom. Generally, 14 families live in a padezkom and the 14 leaders of the families choose their padezkom from among their group by deciding on who is the most suitable for the position, who has more free time and who can work better for the mahalla. Most of the time people are talking in gatherings about potential volunteers; they say 'you are an active person, you can work better for the mahalla, and you should be the padezkom'. If he/she agrees, he/she becomes the padezkom. Then, for example, in one dom there are five padez, and the five padezkom choose one damkom from among themselves. The same process is applied for the kucha boshi in the traditional mahalla. For each road, one kucha boshi is responsible; so the families of each road choose the kucha boshi from among themselves. These kucha boshlari help us".

There are important distinctions between the types of *mahallas* in terms of their residents' participation as volunteers in *mahalla* affairs. A- and B-type *mahallas* rarely have problems finding a *kucha boshi*; however in many C- and D-type *mahallas*, nobody wants to be a volunteer. Why is this case? The *posbon* of C-3 *mahalla* says:

"Our economic condition, as a mahalla, is not so good; there are lots of people struggling with unemployment. They want to volunteer, as many assistant positions opened by the central state are distributed by the mahalla kengash, and if you can get close to the members of the mahalla kengash, you are likely to get a job as a paid assistant. But, for example, if you are wealthy, you do not need these positions, and you have no interest in mahalla affairs. In this mahalla, however residents and families are in need of these positions".

In the A- and B-type *mahallas*, with or without state help, the *mahalla kengash* has always distributed resources to the community, during both in the Soviet and post-Soviet era. The communities of A- and B-type *mahallas* have historically solved many issues in their daily lives at the local scale, without having to appeal for aid from the central state, a point which is elaborated in Chapter Four. Therefore, in A- and B-type *mahallas*, being close to the *mahalla kengash* gives one the opportunity to enhance the well-being of the community, and one such way of doing this is to become a volunteer in the *mahalla*.

In contrast, for the residents of C- and D-type *mahallas*, the services provided by the state were much more important than the *mahalla kengash* in daily life. The *mahalla kengash*, or *kvartel'niy komitet* in the Soviet regime, was simply an agent of the government in the residential units, charged with carrying out several ordinary official jobs. In some *mahallas* of C- and D-types, in which the residents' socio-economic levels decreased sharply during the transition period, resulting in unemployment and poverty, and the division of welfare and social services at a local scale began to gain importance, especially with the disappearance of the state as an actor in the field of social policy. In these residential units, local institutions and politics have become more important in recent years; and thus in the C- and D-type *mahallas*, if the socio-economic level is low, then, residents are more likely to become volunteers; but, if the socio-economic level is high, being close to the *mahalla kengash* offers no real advantages.

One important change in the C- and D-type *mahallas* since independence was explained by the *oqsoqol* of D-1 *mahalla*:

"In the Soviet era there were two institutions: the JEG and damkom/padezkom. The JEG provided infrastructure services to the mahallas under the control of the raispalkom; but after independence the JEGs were abolished and new regulations were created for the provision of infrastructure services. Now, all infrastructure services in the residential units are offered by the shirkots, who act as private firms. It is a good thing for the adaptation of the society to the market-based economic regime. Moreover, all damkom/padezkom had been under the direct control of the raispalkom, which did not function well. After independence, our government took another good step by establishing the mahalla kengash in our residential unit. Now, the damkom/padezkom are under the responsibility of the mahalla kengash".

As can be seen, many residents of different *mahalla* types define the *mahalla* with reference to their Soviet experience, however these definitions somewhat different to the one made by the Uzbek state. The important thing is that some *mahalla* residents emphasize the social *mahalla*, while others speak more of the administrative *mahalla*. Sievers (2002) suggested the administrative *mahalla* may be incompatible with the social *mahalla*. "Might expanding administrative functions and state salaries gradually effect a change in perceptions,

gradually transforming mahalla into state agencies unable to mobilize the local community without dangling state funds and no longer able to authoritatively mediate neighborhood affairs?” (Sievers, 2002: 123). Another important point is that, as Masaru (2006: 350) emphasized, “Mahalla kengashes are entities in which the inhabitants themselves served as active members. For that reason, the mahalla was not just another quasi-official unit in support of the Soviet bureaucracies, but one of the bases of the totality of power relations aside from places of work and families, etc.” As presented and discussed under this title, there are major differences among the mahalla types, supported by both Sievers’ and Masaru’s arguments. This is due to the fact that the local officers in each mahalla think differently about the primacy of the administrative or social character of the mahalla, and that some mahallas really serve as social units in which power relations can directly be observed.

6.3 The Relationship between *Hokimiyat* and the Different *Mahalla Kengashes*

After independence, the Uzbek state implemented a standardization policy for all residential units in the country, and established the *mahalla* as a living space. Following the enactment of these regulations, the new regime declared the *mahalla kengash* as a local self-governing body with a legal guarantee provided by the Constitution. As mentioned earlier in the theoretical chapter, the Uzbekistani regime came up with the idea of an eastern type of democracy, and the *mahalla kengash* was given a pivotal role due to its reference to the concept of “civil society”. However, besides the variety of power sources in the *mahalla kengashes* in different types of *mahalla*, there are also variations among *mahalla* types in terms of the functions carried out by their *mahalla kengashes*. In this section, based on the responses to several questions directed to the interviewees about local self-government, democracy, decentralization and autonomy of the *mahalla kengash*, the perceptions of the *mahalla* communities on their *mahalla kengash*’s relations with the *hokimiyat* will be discussed. In other words, the differences in the mode of representation of the *mahalla kengash* in each type of Tashkent *mahalla*, which demonstrates the power of the *mahalla kengash* in the community and in local politics, as well as its degree of autonomy, will be explained.

This section aims to present the changes in the perception of the *mahalla* communities in different *mahalla* types concerning the importance of the *mahalla kengash* and its functions since the independence. In order to understand the knowledge level of the local communities regarding their *mahalla kengashes* it was first asked whether they know the name of their *mahalla* and their *oqsoqol*. Second, several residents from different *mahalla* types were

asked what changes they had observed in the *mahalla kengash* after independence. Third, they were asked when they last participated in any *mahalla* activity, and whether there had been any change in their level of participation in *mahalla* activities since the *mahalla kengash* became a body of local self-government. Finally, the residents were asked whether they knew who represented their *mahalla kengash* (community) or the central government.

Table 6.3 Do you know the name of your *mahalla*? (n-%)

Types of Tashkent <i>Mahallas</i>	Yes	No	Total
Types A and B	43–100.0%	0–0%	43–100%
Types C and D	59–83.1%	12–16.9%	71–100%
Total	102–89.5%	12–10.5%	114–100%

*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, for the Uzbekistani regime, the *mahalla* is the most viable institution for the state in increasing the level of democratization in society. In this respect, the residents were asked their opinions on the relationship between the *mahalla kengash* and democracy. Second, they were asked whether the central government should control the *mahalla kengash*, since after independence many regulations had been made by the Uzbekistani regime devolving many duties and responsibilities to the *mahalla kengash*. Third, they were asked whether they thought these regulations could be implemented, and if not, why not?

As seen in Tables 6.3 and 6.4, there are wide differences between the *mahalla* types in terms of the community's knowledge of their *mahalla kengash*. While in the A and B types, all of the community members knew the name of their *mahalla*, 12 out of the 71 interviewees (16.9%) in the C- and D-type *mahallas* did not. Moreover, it appeared that the level of ignorance increases when it comes to knowing the name of their *oqsoqols*, as 25.3% of the interviewees stated that they did not know the name of their *oqsoqol*.

Table 6.4 Do you know the name of your *oqsoqol*? (n-%)

Types of Tashkent <i>Mahallas</i>	yes	no	Total
Types A and B	41–95.4%	2–4.6%	43–100%
Types C and D	53–74.7%	18–25.3%	71–100%
Total	94–82.5%	20–17.5%	114–100%

* Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

The background of the question “When did you last participate in any *mahalla* activity?” is based on many studies, in which it has been argued that the residents of modern blocks in Uzbekistan do not have a good relationship with their *mahalla kengash*, while the residents of so-called traditional *mahallas* took part in many collective activities. However, as shown in Table 6.3, the case study findings in this thesis paint a different picture. In this case, it can be argued that the division of urban *mahallas* into two categories, being modern and traditional, is not valid. The responses of the residents in B-type *mahallas*, being traditional *mahallas* that generally fall under the same category as A-type *mahallas*, indicated that they tended to participate in *mahalla* activities more often than those in A-type *mahallas*. Moreover, the responses of the residents in C-type *mahallas*, which are modern *mahallas* that are generally put in the same category as D-type *mahallas*, indicated that they engaged in *mahalla* activities more often than those in D-type *mahallas*, and even more than the residents of the A-type *mahallas*.

Table 6.5 The last time you participated in any *mahalla* activity?

Types of Tashkent <i>Mahallas</i>	Never	A long time ago	More than a year ago	In this year	Total
Type A	27.8%	11.1%	5.6%	55.6%	100%
Type B	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	71.4%	100%
Type C	20.8%	0%	8.3%	70.8%	100%
Type D	47.4%	2.6%	10.5%	39.5%	100%
Total	29.7%	5%	8.9%	56.4%	100%

* Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–2009.

As seen from Table 6.5, 47.4% of the interviewees in D-type *mahallas* said that they never participated in any *mahalla* activities, whereas this figure decreases to 20.8% in C-type, 27.8% in A-type and 9.5% in B-type *mahallas*. On the other hand, the ratio of interviewees who stated that they had participated in *mahalla* activities this year was around 70% in the B- and C-type *mahallas* and 50% in A and D types. As mentioned before, this result goes against many of the findings of previous studies that divide the Uzbekistani urban *mahallas* into modern and traditional categories.

In addition, the interviewees were asked whether the new regulations that made the *mahalla kengash* a body of local self-government had encouraged them to increase their participation in *mahalla* activities. From Table 6.6, it can be seen that many interviewees in B-type (18/21) and C-type (19/32) *mahallas* claimed that they engaged more often in *mahalla*

activities today than in the past, while most respondents from A-type (15/19) and D-type (32/39) *mahallas* said that there had been no change in their participation level.

Table 6.6 Has there been any increase in your level of participation in *mahalla* activities after the *mahalla kengash* became a local self-governing body?

Types of Tashkent <i>Mahalla</i>	Yes	No	Total
Type A	23.5%	78.9%	100%
Type B	85.7%	14.3%	100%
Type C	59.4%	40.6%	100%
Type D	17.9%	82.1%	100%
Total	43.2%	56.8%	100%

*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

Nulifar, a 42-year-old Uzbek woman who had always lived in an A-type *mahalla*, said of this issue: *“There has been no change in our mahalla activities, nor in our level of participation. During the Soviet era, there was ahilli (solidarity and loyalty), and ahilli still exists, but today our state pays more attention to the mahalla; they accept the importance of the mahalla in developing society, whereas the Soviet regime did not. However this does not change anything in our daily life, nor our relationship with our mahalla kengash and neighbors”*. Many residents of the D-type *mahallas* also emphasized that there had been no change in their relationship with the *mahalla kengash*, however these responses should be interpreted considering the fact that the relations among the community and the *mahalla kengash* were already weak before independence, and thus today they are worse. For example, an Uzbek woman from D-2 *mahalla*, who refined cotton oil together with her neighbors, said: *“Nothing has changed in our mahalla after independence. Nothing has been made in our mahalla”*. On the other hand, the residents in B- and C-type *mahallas* claimed that they participated in *mahalla* affairs more today than during the Soviet era, but again by referring to the weak character of the existing relations. For example, an Uzbek man whose daughter was divorced in B-1 *mahalla* explained:

“We were afraid of engaging in mahalla activities during the Soviet era because if we did, the Communist Party would label us as enemies of the socialist regime. Today we can take part; there are differences between the past and today. We know that our government today supports us in joining these communal activities and appreciates us, unlike the Communist Party”.

An Uzbek woman named Zarife Apa from C-3 *mahalla* argued that:

“Today, we have to take part in mahalla activities; if we do not, then, we get nothing from the mahalla kengash, such as oil, bread, meat ... The mahalla kengash calls us to participate in the hashar. If we do not go,

then, when something is distributed to the community, the oqsoqol immediately says, 'Why did you not attend to the hashar, go, and come later seeking to benefit from another service?'

As seen from the tables and responses of the interviewees, and contrary to many existing studies, dividing the urban *mahalla* into the two categories of modern and traditional leads to incorrect assumptions. The responses of the residents of A- and D-type *mahallas* bear similarities, and converge on the opinion that nothing has changed regarding the participation level of the residents in *mahalla* activities since independence. On the other hand, in B- and C-type *mahallas*, the participation level of the community in *mahalla* activities has increased since independence, but for different reasons. While the residents of the B-type *mahallas* generally claimed that the new regime allowed them to take part in *mahalla* activities, most of the residents in the C-type *mahallas* argued that they had to participate if they were to benefit from the assistance of the *mahalla kengash*.

Another difference between the different types of *mahallas* is that in the C and D types, many residents stated that they were unsatisfied with the devolution of many responsibilities in urban social policy to the *mahalla kengash*, whereas the residents in the A and B types made no comment on this issue. For example, a 52-year-old retired Uzbek man in D-2 *mahalla* who used to work in a state factory said:

"During the Soviet era, the state helped every citizen; the citizens knew that the state would always keep them safe. We had no worries about our futures. Today it is different; when we go to bed we always wonder how we are going to manage to earn bread for our families the next day. In the Soviet era, if we had any problems we could immediately go to the raispalkom and they would try to solve our problems. Today, when we go to the Hokimiyat, they send us to the mahalla kengash instead of solving our problems themselves. What can the mahalla kengash do? It is so small and powerless. Today, the Hokimiyat has devolved many functions to the mahalla kengash in order to escape from its responsibilities".

A similar comment was made by an Uzbek woman who runs a *chaikhona* and lives in C-1 *mahalla*: *"During the Soviet era, the mahalla kengash only did what it was ordered to do by the state. However, today, for example, financial assistance is distributed by the mahalla kengash. The mahalla kengash is the only an authority that determines who needs money in the mahalla. Is not it better and more just if the state decides who will receive the financial assistance? I am not happy that the mahalla kengash is self-governing".* Also dissatisfied was an Uzbek woman in D-1 *mahalla* who works in the *mahalla kengash* as a secretary: *"There is a woman who comes every day and sells milk in the street at a cheap price. Every evening her rubbish is left on the street where our children play. Several times we have been to the Hokimiyat to complain, but they always send us to the mahalla kengash, which has done nothing about it. I do not know, but this woman is probably a friend of the maslahatchi*

or the Jen-Soviet, and that's probably why they never touch her". From the same mahalla, a Tatar woman said:

"Our apartment is old, many of its parts such as the water carriage, the elevator, the electric cables, are worn. They do not work anymore. In the past, our raispalkom repaired everything in our flats and apartments, but today we go to the hokimiyat, but they do not care, they always tell us to go to the mahalla kengash and find a solution within the mahalla. The hokimiyat does nothing for its residents today".

As mentioned before, in some of the C- and D-type mahallas, nobody wants to work in the mahalla kengash, and in such situations generally the district hokimiyat appoints one resident as the oqsoqol. In these mahallas, the Hokimiyat has provided many urban social and infrastructural services despite legally devolving them to the mahalla kengash. One Uzbek woman in D-4 mahalla explained this issue:

"In our mahalla, the mahalla kengash has no experience in implementing social policies, yet these policies were devolved to the mahalla kengash after independence. We had got used to getting these services from the central government or the raispalkom during the Soviet regime, we still waited for everything from the Hokimiyat, but today the Hokimiyat does not want to deal with the problems of the residents, as in the old times. In many mahallas the Hokimiyat is obliged to solve many problems that are defined as being the duty of the mahalla kengash in law".

Related with the issue of the representation of the mahalla kengash, several questions were asked about the relationship between the Hokimiyat and the mahalla kengash to both the ordinary community members and the mahalla officers in all mahalla types. First, the interviewees were asked whether the mahalla kengash represented the community or the Hokimiyat. The Jen-Soviet of A-2 mahalla said:

"Now we are called a self-governing body, but in practice we represent the Hokimiyat more than the community. However, lots of regulations are currently enacted in order to strengthen the mahalla kengash and thus in the near future, when the mahalla kengash becomes more powerful, we will become a real small hokimiyat, and then, we will be better able to represent our community and look after it. We will be an actual self-governing body".

The residents of B-type mahallas concurred. For example, the secretary of B-1 mahalla said: *"We are elected by the community, not appointed by the hokimiyat. That's why we represent our community, and we should, because we are indebted to our community".* An interesting comment on this issue came from the oqsoqol of B-2 mahalla:

"You should understand one point. There is no difference between representing the community and the Hokimiyat. If you asked this question during the Soviet regime, I would have answered that we represented our community. However, today, our state also represents their citizens, today there is independence. The Hokimiyat also works for our community and also for us as state's local officers. Our state knows the importance of the mahalla for the state, as well as for society. Thus, if you have a good family, you have a good mahalla; if you have a good mahalla, you have a

good society; and what makes a strong state is a good society. That's the Uzbekistani mentality today".

On the other hand, the oqsoqol of D-1 mahalla said:

"Of course, central state politics are more important for us. The Hokimiyat works also for the benefit of the fuqora, thus the instructions of the Hokimiyat are important for us. If the hokimiyat has no problems and works well, the community in turn becomes happier. That said, the Hokimiyat and its officers cannot see and resolve all of the problems of a local community, and this is the reason for the existence of the mahalla kengash. The state can get all necessary information about its residents through the mahalla kengash".

When I interviewed my two neighbors in C-3 mahalla, a part of our conversation was about the mahalla kengash's transformation into a self-governing body. Below is the related part of the conversation:

Neighbor 1: *After independence, the mahalla kengash has become a branch of the state. Before, it was a social organization; it was independent from the government. Today it works for the Hokimiyat.*

Interviewer: *But it is self-government?*

Neighbor 1: *See, you say yourself, it is government, it does not matter if it is self or not ...*

Neighbor 2: *It is important to be autonomous, but it is necessary for the community to be interested in mahalla affairs in order for it to be self-governing. In our mahalla the residents do not get involved in any mahalla affairs; that's why we are not a real self-governing mahalla. For example, if you go to the old mahallas you can see that they are real mahallas and are self-governing. They can solve all their problems themselves. Here, still everything is resolved by the Hokimiyat".*

An Uzbek woman in D-1 mahalla, who was a Jen-Soviet before, and continues in the role today, said:

"The community elects the mahalla kengash, and so it should represent the community and protect it. However, today it does not work like this. Before independence the mahalla kengash really worked to increase our benefits; however today it represents and works for the Hokimiyat instead. Indeed, it also previously worked for the state, but during the Soviet era the state and the mahalla kengash worked towards the same goal, which was the betterment of society. That is the problem with the current period. Today, the state does not care about our interests. For example, look here, there is construction in the middle of our mikroraion. Why? Because the Hokimiyat wants to make money. The hokimiyat cares only about money, nobody thinks of the residents. How can we live with this huge building in the middle of our mahalla, built on the site of our old green park?"

Another interesting answer came from the oqsoqol of D-2 mahalla:

"We serve as a mediator between the community and the Hokimiyat, but we mainly work for our hokimiyat. Yes, we are self-governing, but why? Because our state is trying to establish a new regime, it is not able to manage all issues in the country, like the previous regime, and so the mahalla kengash, as a self-governing body, tries to resolve any local issues within the mahalla. We help our state today. If our state is strong, then our hokimiyat will be strong; if the hokimiyat is strong, then the

mahalla will be strong; and if the mahalla is strong, society and family will be strong”.

Table 6.7 Does the *mahalla kengash* represent the community or the central government?

Types of Tashkent Mahallas	The <i>mahalla</i> community	The central government	Have no idea	Total
Type A	64.7%	5.9%	29.4%	100%
Type B	61.9%	14.3%	23.8%	100%
Type C	38.7%	48.4%	12.9%	100%
Type D	15.4%	59.0%	25.7%	100%
Total	38.9%	38.9%	22.20%	100%

* Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

Clearly, the statement of the *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla* is in complete contrast with that of the *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* in terms of its core mentality, in that the former prioritizes the family, while the latter emphasizes the state. Other results from the field survey indicate similar differences among the *mahalla* types. As seen in Table 6.7, more than 60% of the A- and B-type *mahalla* community believes that the *mahalla* organization represents the community, while only 38.7% and 15.4% of the residents in C- and D-type *mahallas* respectively claim that it represents the community.

According to the Constitution, and supported in law, the *mahalla kengash* is a local self-governing body with its own budget, however different responses were received from different *mahalla* communities regarding the autonomy of the *mahalla kengash*, as briefly discussed above. Even if communities in all *mahalla* types think that the *mahalla kengash* should represent the community, they also emphasized the power of *Hokimiyat* upon the *mahalla kengash*. That said, the ratio of residents who believe that the *mahalla kengash* represents their community in A- and B-type *mahallas* is higher when compared with C and D types.

Most of the interviewees in the A- and B-type *mahallas* emphasized that both the *Hokimiyat* and the *mahalla kengash* worked for their benefit; while the majority of interviewees in the C and D types thought that the state, and accordingly the *mahalla kengash*, did not work for society. This constitutes another significant difference among the different *mahalla* types. As seen from the above quotations, the power of the *Hokimiyat* is perceived to be dominant in local politics in Uzbekistan, and the opinions of the residents about the *mahalla kengash* are shaped according to their opinions of the *Hokimiyat*.

Table 6.8 Does the increasing power of the *mahalla kengash* contribute to the democratization process in Uzbekistani society?

Types of Tashkent Mahallas	Yes, it contributes to the enhancement of democracy	No, it has negative effects on the democratization process	There is no correlation between these two issues	Have no idea	Total
Type A	69.6%	4.3%	21.7%	4.3%	100%
Type B	95.2%	0%	4.8%	0%	100%
Type C	37.5%	18.8%	43.8%	0%	100%
Type D	37.5%	10%	52.5%	0%	100%
Total	54.3%	9.5%	35.3%	0.9%	100%

* Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

The Uzbekistani state recognizes the *mahalla kengash* as a body of local self-government, and claims that democratization process will be accelerated in Uzbekistani society through self-government, as mentioned in the theoretical chapter. To gain insight into this issue, the *mahalla* communities were asked to discuss the relationship between the *mahalla kengash*'s increasing power and democratization, and there were some clear differences in the responses. According to Table 6.8, many of the responses that were positive about the current state discourse came from the B-type *mahallas* (95.2%), whereas 18.8% of the respondents from C types claimed that the increase in the power of the *mahalla* had had a negative effect on the democratization process. Moreover, 52.5% of the interviewees from the D-type *mahallas* thought that there was no correlation between the two issues. Although the Uzbek regime has sited the *mahalla kengash* at the center of civil society and sees it as an essential tool for enhancing democracy, approximately half of the respondents in the case study argued that the *mahalla kengash* does not contribute to the establishment of democracy in society. As identified previously, an essential point is that the degree of satisfaction in the *mahalla kengash* of the *mahalla* community is shaped according to their level of contentment with state policies in general, and the comparisons they make between the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes have a significant impact on their opinions. In other words, if the respondent is happy with the current regime, then he is probably satisfied with his *mahalla kengash*, and vice versa. This situation demonstrates clearly the role of the *mahalla kengash* and the *Hokimiyat* in local politics, and will be analyzed in more detail in the next chapter under title of “civil society and state control over society”.

In addition, as mentioned above, the residents of the C-type *mahallas* are generally unsatisfied with the new regulations of the Uzbekistani regime regarding the *mahalla kengash*, while the majority of residents of B-type *mahallas* think that there are positive changes after the declaration of the *mahalla kengash* as a self-governing body. On the other

hand, the D-type *mahallas*, as ideal Soviet-type residential units that were generally inhabited by the upper levels of Soviet society did not experience significant changes in the social composition of the *mahalla* after independence due to the state control of migration. Thus, aside from a few examples, the D-type *mahallas*, especially those in which the Soviet civil servants lived, are still host to the upper classes of Uzbekistani society. Therefore, although they criticize the new regime in many aspects, they have not been affected by the *mahalla kengash*'s new status, which is actually a reflection of their strong networks and high incomes. On the other hand, C-type *mahallas* were established especially for the working class, and so after the independence their economic levels and living standards have fallen sharply after losing their old status in political, economic and social life. Consequently, they have been directly affected by local level policies, through which they receive social assistance of different forms that was offered previously by the state under the Soviet regime. Accordingly, many of the responses from C-type *mahallas* show that the residents are dissatisfied with the new regime due to several urban policies, and recall the Soviet era with a sense of nostalgia, like the residents of D-type *mahallas*. However, unlike the residents of the D-type *mahallas*, most of the residents of C types look to the *mahalla kengash* for their survival. Thus, in C-type *mahallas*, problems related with the distribution of welfare have increased at a local level, and thus a much more conflicting situation has emerged in the power relations at the *mahalla* scale. This is the main reason behind the discontent of many residents in C-type *mahallas* in the officers that have been working in the *mahalla kengash* since independence. It is worth noting that contrary to the revealed discontent of the residents of C-type *mahallas*, the residents of D-type *mahallas* have no interest in the officers working in the *mahalla kengash*. An old retired worker who had been employed in the state factory in the Soviet era, and an Uzbek woman in C-3 *mahalla* gave their views on this issue:

“After independence our living standards got worse; we became unemployed, and the problem of poverty arose. As you know, the social assistance provided by the mahalla kengash is so little that rich families are not in need of them; but at the beginning of the independence era we could not even find bread for our children. For this reason, aid from the mahalla kengash is crucial for us”.

As seen in Table 6.9, 46.7% of the total respondents of C-type *mahallas* thought that the *mahalla kengash* should be controlled by the *Hokimiyat*, while this ratio falls to 23.1% in D-type *mahallas*. An Uzbek woman who runs a *choikhona* from C-1 *mahalla* said: *“It should be controlled by the Hokimiyat because many mahalla officers work for their own benefit. The Hokimiyat protects our interests against the mahalla officers”*. On the other hand, as mentioned above, the residents of D-type *mahallas* are the most unsatisfied with the current

regime, and many of them argued that the *mahalla kengash* should not be controlled by the central government, or at least in some issues the *mahalla kengash* should be allowed to decide for itself, without intervention from the *Hokimiyat*. For example, the views of a Russian woman who has lived in D-1 *mahalla* for 50 years and worked as an academician in the field of political science are completely opposite to those of the Uzbek woman in C-1 *mahalla*:

“If the mahalla kengash is self-governing, it should preserve our rights against the central government and should be autonomous, but in Uzbekistan it does not work like this. With the self-government issue, the Uzbekistani regime is just showing off, as in reality it works completely in favor of the central government. For example, only a resident approved by the district hokimiyat can become the oqsoqol of the mahalla kengash. This is not self-government. It must not be under the control of the central government in order to secure our rights against it”.

Table 6.9 Should the *mahalla kengash* be controlled by the *Hokimiyat*?

Types of Tashkent Mahallas	Yes, it should be controlled	Yes, but it should also have autonomy vis-à-vis the central government	No, if it is self-governing, it should not be controlled	Have no idea	Total
Type A	35.3%	47.1%	0%	17.6%	100%
Type B	38.1%	42.9%	19%	0%	100%
Type C	46.7%	36.7%	13.3%	3.3%	100%
Type D	23.1%	59%	25.7%	28.2%	100%
Total	34.6%	28%	23.4%	14%	100%

**Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.*

The difference between generations is also an important independent variable, having an impact on the residents’ opinions regarding the issue of the control of the *hokimiyat* over the *mahalla kengash*. Below is an excerpt of an interview in which people of different age groups gave their opinions. I lived with an Uzbek family in Tashkent for eight months during my field research, and this passage is a part of a discussion between my host (H-54) and her daughter (HD-17) in which they were asked whether the *hokimiyat* should control the *mahalla kengash*:

H: *Of course it should control it. If the hokimiyat did not control them, all mahalla kengashes would break the law.*

HD: *Mom, you do not understand. The mahalla kengash is defined as self-government today, but it does not mean it is independent from the state. It means that the mahalla kengash is independent from the central government. If the hokimiyat did not control them, there is law in the country mom. If the mahalla kengash does something against the law, you can apply to the court. This is the real self-government, is it not?*

Interviewer: *Exactly!*

HD: *This institution is a legal entity mom. Today we do not live in the Soviet era. During the Soviet era all of the organizations in the country were under the control of the Party and the government, which was unjust. Today, the mahalla kengash is a self-governing body. It should secure our rights against the central government. If any citizen or any central state institution thinks that the mahalla kengash does not act in accordance with the law, it should not intervene directly, but apply to the court.*

H: *Why? There is no difference between the Hokimiyat and the court. Both of them are parts of the state.*

HD: *No mom, there is difference. For example, you said that the mahalla kengash is not fair in the distribution of material aid, for example oil, to the community. So what are you doing? You complain to the Hokimiyat, however the state institution that gives this oil to the mahalla kengash to distribute to the community is the Hokimiyat itself. So, who do you complain to mom? If you complain to the Hokimiyat, you will get no response because the only concern of the Hokimiyat is to distribute this oil, it does not care whether it is distributed fairly or not.*

A- and B-type *mahallas* were generally excluded residential units or those having difficulties in articulating to the regime during the Soviet period; and so most of their residents stated that they were satisfied with the new regime. In particular, the residents of B-type *mahallas* formed a social group which was exposed to the highest level of pressure by the Soviet regime, and so their *mahalla kengash* was the loci of resistance against the Soviet regime. Accordingly, many of these residents thought that they had gained freedom after independence. In both A- and B-type *mahallas*, most of the residents do not see any consistency between the *mahalla kengash* and the current regime, and so they raised no objection to the full-control of the district *hokimiyat* over the *mahalla kengash*. An Uzbek man in B-2 *mahalla* whose daughter is a divorcee argued:

"Of course it should be under the control of the Hokimiyat. If it were not, how could the Hokimiyat help, how would the hokimiyat learn many information about its citizens? And also, how would the mahalla kengash be able to help to the Hokimiyat if it were not under its control?"

From the same *mahalla* two Uzbek men stated that:

"We are self-governing as a mahalla kengash, so it is not necessary to be under the control of the central government. However, you should not forget one thing – our state is also self-governing today. We can draw ourselves away from Moscow. Both of them (the mahalla and the Uzbekistani state) are free today, so they complete each other in solving all of the problems in the community. The mahalla kengash governs our daily life and the state governs our working, economic and political lives. You must not separate them".

Almost the same opinion was voiced by an Uzbek man who lived in A-2 *mahalla*:

"Both of them secure our rights and work for the benefit of the citizens; there is no difference between them. To be a good society it is necessary that as a person you respect your family, the family should respect the mahalla, the mahalla should respect the Hokimiyat, and the Hokimiyat should respect the President!"

As can be seen, in A- and B-type *mahallas*, the residents generally believe that the *mahalla kengash* is a tool for carrying the strong patriarchal elements that are inherent in social life in the *mahallas* into the Uzbek political arena. At the very least, it is an important feature of the circle that begins with the ordinary individual citizen, up to the president, and back again.

Moreover, it is possible to understand the high level of satisfaction of the residents of A- and B-type *mahallas* from the answers they gave to the question of whether the laws that have been made by the Uzbekistani regime to increase the power of the *mahalla kengash* have been implemented or not. According to Table 6.10, 24 out of the 39 residents interviewed in the A- and B-type *mahallas* argued that all the laws had been implemented, while 49 out of 68 respondents in the C- and D-type *mahallas* claimed that these laws were far from being properly implemented. In addition, most of these thought that despite the many regulations that define the *mahalla kengash* as a self-governing body, the central government (*hokimiyat*) never allows the *mahalla kengash* to utilize its legal authority in practice, and always intervenes in the *mahalla kengash*'s realm of responsibility. This was cited as one of the main problems concerning the relationship between the *Hokimiyat* and the *mahalla kengash*. According to Robertson (2002), as mentioned in Chapter Two, one of the key reasons behind the devolution of many policies to the *mahalla kengash* by the Uzbekistani regime was to reduce the power of the *hokims* at every level (province, city and district), and in particular to prevent tendencies towards regionalism. In 2000, President Karimov made a point of insisting especially the district *hokim* devolve more responsibility to the *mahalla kengash* (Noori, 2006: 536).

Table 6.10 Are the laws related with the *mahalla kengash* implemented?

Types of Tashkent Mahallas	Yes, these laws are implemented	No, they remain on paper	Total
Types A and B	61.5%	38.5%	100%
Types C and D	27.9%	72.1%	100%
Total	40.1%	59.9%	100%

* Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

All of the responses to these questions show clearly the power of the *Hokimiyat* in local politics. In this sense, many people in Tashkent believe that the *Hokimiyat* has great influence over the *mahalla kengash*, and most of the time they see the *mahalla kengash* as merely a branch of the district *hokimiyat*, despite its new meaning, i.e., as a body of self-government, and as the eyes and ears of the central government and the *Hokimiyat*. As will be analyzed in the next chapter, many functions are devolved to the *mahalla kengash* from the *Hokimiyat*, and the *mahalla kengash* implements them in the name of the *Hokimiyat*.

In the previous section of this chapter, the power of the *Hokimiyat* in *mahalla* politics was analyzed, while we concentrate in this section on the perceptions in the *mahalla* community of the role of the *mahalla kengash*. In this sense, their opinions on whether it is really a local self-governing body or simply a branch of the *Hokimiyat* were presented. Thus, this section is designed in such a way that a background will be provided for a discussion of the role of the *mahalla kengash* in bridging the hegemony of the Uzbekistani regime and its decentralization policy, which was discussed in the previous chapter, through the functions of *mahalla kengash*. In this chapter, firstly, the legal framework of the Uzbekistani state regarding the *mahalla kengash* was analyzed. Then, the variations in the internal organization and the center-local relationship among different types of Tashkent's *mahallas* were demonstrated. The opinions of both *mahalla* officers and ordinary residents related to those issues were analyzed. The data from the interviews revealed clearly the centrality of *Hokimiyat* power in each of the *mahalla* types. The Uzbekistani state declared the *mahalla kengash* as a body of local self-government with a constitutional guarantee, and saw this declaration as a big step forward in the decentralization of the Uzbekistani administrative system. In this sense, as mentioned in the theoretical chapter, in order to grasp the (re)structuring of the state and the nature of local politics, it is necessary to elaborate on the *mahalla kengash*, since in Uzbekistan the locality, local variations and different strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* are important in shaping decentralization policy, as well as the central government's other regulations and strategies. Through this discussion, hopefully, more light will be shed on the local-center relationships in today's Uzbekistan.

The importance of locality will be analyzed based on an analysis of the *oqsoqol*'s power as the leader of *mahalla kengash*. However, before that, as one final important issue regarding the decentralization policy, the financing of *mahallas* will be summarized in terms of its legal framework, which will also show the importance of the *Hokimiyat* in economic matters. How the financial systems differ in different *mahalla* types will also be analyzed in order to demonstrate the significance of local actors in the different financial systems in the *mahallas*.

6.4 Mahalla Finance in Different Types of Tashkent Mahallas

One of the main indicators of the level of decentralization of any administrative system how local budgeting (other indicators are the functions assigned and the level of administrative tutelage) is dealt with; thus the local financial system can give important clues as to whether the *mahalla kengash*, as a level of local government, is decentralized or not. Today, as a local self-governing body, the *mahalla kengash* is subject to its own laws and budget.

However, neither the budget nor the financial system of the *mahalla kengash* is precisely regulated in Uzbekistan, and there are still serious deficiencies in the legal arrangements in this regard. After independence, the *mahalla kengash* was given more power in terms of its financial capabilities. For example, the central government now permits them to engage in any economic activities and to establish industrial enterprises, canteens, shops or other facilities, a certain share of whose profits are transferred to the *mahalla* funds. Additional funding comes from *hokimiyat*, which provides some financial support to the *mahallas*, typically allocating one percent of the sales value of real estate; while donations made by the residents go straight to the *mahalla* budget, stemming from a custom based on the social principle of “those who are better off share their wealth with their neighbors” (Bektemiory: 477; Bogner, 2003: 13). Despite these supposed resources, all *mahalla kengash* officers in all types of *mahalla* claimed in the case study that getting access to financial resources was their biggest problem. All of them cited the same two problems related to local finance, the first being inadequate revenues of the *mahalla*. The *oqsoqol* of A-3 *mahalla* said:

“Our main problem, I think, is finance. We do not have enough money to carry out our duties. Neither the financial assistance given by the Hokimiyat (Mahalla jamgarma) and the central government, nor the donations from our community members is enough. Moreover, we have no private firms within the border of our mahalla. That is the biggest problem related with our job”.

In addition, according to Epstein (2004: 57), “*In interviews, mahalla kengash chairpersons and their advisers often complained that they did not have enough resources to perform the duties defined by law, much less to take advantage of their proximity to the community and help it mobilize as a true social organization. Many felt that the resources they receive from the budget further restrict them by making the accountable to local financial organs and the hokimiyat*”.

The second problem with the *mahalla* budget cited by the *mahalla* officers was related to the lack of standards in the legal regulations and the consequent uncertainty, as well as the legal regulations related to the social aid to be given to low-income families and women. It is not clear exactly how much revenue should be transferred to the *mahalla kengash*, how the *mahalla kengash* is to get financial support from firms, and how the community should make donations to the *mahalla kengash*. For example, the *maslahatchi* of A-2 *mahalla* said: “*You cannot learn exactly what your budget is, because we do not have stable budgets. When we need to organize a ceremony or activity, we try to find the money from firms, the Hokimiyat or the residents*”. Accordingly, the *mahalla kengash* tries to find separate resources for each activity. Hudaykulov summarized the expenditures of a *Tuman Hokimiyat* for its *mahallas*: “*Since 2003 was declared as an ‘obad mahalla yili,’ the Hokimiyat of X Tuman in Tashkent*

set aside significant funds for its *mahalla kengashes* for the 2003–2004 financial year (169 billion and 500 million soms). This is 65% of the total *mahalla* budget of X tuman, and the rest of the budget (35%) is to come from firms, NGOs and residents (Hudaykulov, 2003: 27).

According to the Constitution and the law on local self-government, the financial resources of a *mahalla* budget can be listed as: (a) transfers from the *Hokimiyat* and the *Mahalla Jamgarma*; (b) transfers from the Ministry of Finance for poor families; (c) allocations from the rents of firms within the *mahalla*; (d) profits made by *mahalla* firms; (e) donations from wealthy residents of the *mahalla*; (f) revenues obtained from *sprafka*;¹⁶² and (g) funds raised by citizens' assemblies through the collection of payments for communal services.¹⁶³ These revenues of *mahalla* budget can be categorized under two headings: allocations from the central government and the *Hokimiyat*; and equity capital that includes donations from wealthy residents of the *mahalla* and allocations from the rents of the private firms within the *mahalla*. In this section I will summarize the legal arrangements relating to the items on the *mahalla* budget, especially those transferred from the central government and some locally collected revenues, such as from *sprafka* and the profits of the *mahalla* firms. Donations from wealthy residents of the *mahalla* and allocations from the rents of the private firms within the *mahalla* will be analyzed in the next section, looking at the *oqsoqol*'s role in *mahalla* finances, in order to show both the importance of the *oqsoqol*'s power and the differences among the *mahalla* types regarding local financing.

Mahallas receive some funding from the district/city budgets. First, the *mahalla* leaders (as well as secretaries, the *posbon* and the educational advisor), as state officers, are paid by the state, and their salaries and pensions are determined centrally, not locally. The *oqsoqol*, *kotib* (secretary) and the *posbon* receive a full standard salary; while the pedagogical worker receives a half salary. All other functions in the *mahalla* are carried out on a voluntary basis (Epstein, 2004: 57). I initially analyzed the differences between voluntary and paid work, both of which are considered to be activities for the benefit of the *mahalla*.

Mahallas receive third-tier LGU funds from the appropriate budget for distribution to low-income families and unemployed mothers with fewer than two children. While the *mahalla kengash* determines the recipients, the physical disbursement is carried out by the banks (Epstein, 2004: 57). This issue was analyzed in more detail when discussing the social aid

¹⁶² Documents carrying information of a residents' identity.

¹⁶³ This must be used to pay off the communal service debt and to help low-income families to pay for communal services. In this sense, it is not usually counted as a source of funding for the activities of citizens' assemblies; indeed, the payment collection in most of Uzbekistan is not administered by the citizens' assemblies at all (Epstein, 2004: 58).

provided by the *mahallas* in Chapter Five. It is necessary to mention here that social aid generally comes from the Ministry of Finance, but some revenues for low income families and unemployed mothers with fewer than two children under the age of 18 also come from the *Mahalla Jamgarma*. According to Usmanova (2004: 16), in 2003 social aids totaling 4.12 billion soms was paid to 58,000 families by the central government. In the same year, the *mahalla jamgarma* set aside 509 million soms for low-income families. Some 24,000 children of low-income families were sent on holiday in the summer using this budget. The *oqsoqol* of the B-2 *mahalla* said: *“The central government financially helps low-income families and unemployed mothers of children under two or 18. However, the Hokimiyat, I mean the Mahalla Jamgarma in the Hokimiyat, also gives financial assistance to low-income families”*.

One of the main revenue items transferred from the central government belongs to the *Hokimiyat*, that is, the *mahalla jamgarma* under the district *hokimiyat*. This is the main financial resource after the social aid transferred from the Ministry of Finance. Leaving aside the social aid, the Ministry of Finance transfers only a small amount to the *mahalla* for some infrastructural services; and on the other hand, the district (*Tuman*) *Hokimiyat* allocates an amount of money to the *mahalla kengash* for infrastructural services, although this is not clearly defined in law. The legal arrangements give the *mahalla jamgarmasi* the right to decide what should be done and how much money should be distributed in each *mahalla* through the assembly of the *mahalla jamgarma*. Therefore, the amount of revenue transferred from the *Hokimiyat* to the *mahalla kengash* changes depending on the relations between the *mahalla kengash* and the *Hokimiyat*. If the *mahalla kengash* has good relations with the *Hokimiyat*, it will take more money than other *mahalla kengashes* whose connections with the *Hokimiyat* are weaker. This clearly results in a tendency for residents to elect candidates with closer ties to the *Hokimiyat*. The secretary of B-1 *mahalla* explained this issue as follows:

“The mahalla jamgarma is the part of the Hokimiyat that is responsible from all mahalla affairs, as well as the revenues distributed to the mahallas. Thus, we have to have a good relationship with the Hokimiyat. If we need some money to do something, we prepare a document to request the money and send it to the mahalla jamgarma. The mahalla jamgarma of the district Hokimiyat checks the document and sends it to the mahalla jamgarma of the Tashkent city Hokimiyat. Only after that do they send us the necessary amount of money”.

When asked whether or not the *mahalla jamgarma* helped them financially, the *oqsoqol* of D-1 *mahalla* smiled sarcastically, and said: *“The mahalla jamgarma? Of course not, the hokimiyat never sends us any money; we try to find money from different institutions and*

citizens”. The *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla* made a similar comment, “*The Hokimiyat does not give us money, we need to find our own money*”.

During the case study, no official document came to light concerning the distribution of revenues to different *mahallas* from the *Jamgarma*. In the *mahalla jamgarma* there is only information relating to the total amount of financial aid. For example, the *Sobir Rahimov Tuman mahalla jamgarma* made social aid payments totaling 5,856,500 som to its *mahallas* in 2006 (Hokimov, 2007: 50). In addition, Epstein (2004: 58) argued that there is no report containing clear accounting of the diverse revenues passing through the *mahalla* (the share in communal service collections, income from business activities, donations and social protection payments it administers).

For this reason, the only source of data when trying to understand this distribution mechanism was the interviews. As revealed in the interviews with the *oqsoqol* of D-1 *mahalla*, the *oqsoqol* of A-1 *mahalla*, and the secretary of B-1 *mahalla* presented above, although the level of financial aid made by the *Hokimiyat* is different for different types of *mahalla*, all *mahalla kengashes* complain about the inadequacy of the financial aid received from the *Hokimiyat*.

Moreover, in terms of decentralization, the tutelage of the central government over the budget of local government is a crucial point. The *hokimiyat* gives an amount of money to *mahalla kengashes* for use only in the provision of certain services. In addition, “*Financial activities are monitored by the district financial department’s supervision and auditing administration. The prosecutor’s office also monitors mahalla activities, checking all documentation of appropriation decisions and making sure that official guidelines are followed in the administration of social assistance payments*” (Epstein, 2004: 58). Lastly, although Article 10 of the law on self-governing institutions stresses on the accountability of the *mahalla kengash*, in practice it is the appropriate district *hokim* who is accountable, whose approval is required to confirm the election of any *kengash* chair (Epstein, 2004: 59).

Therefore, inspections by the central government and the control of the *Hokimiyat* over the *mahalla* budget are prominent features of local finance. According to the local government law, the *mahalla* budget comes into operation only if it is approved by the *Hokimiyat*. Also, at the end of a financial year, all *mahalla kengashes* should present their annual report to their *tuman Hokimiyat*. As mentioned above, during the financial year, the *Hokimiyat* (*Mahalla Jamgarma*) gives some funds to the *mahalla kengash* only for certain activities, and should inspect whether or not the money has been spent in accordance with its allocation purpose. In spite of this close control of the *mahalla* budget, clear information regarding the

mahalla budget does not exist due to legal loopholes. According to the local self-government law, the *mahalla kengash* gets funds or financial aid from firms within the boundaries of the *mahalla* only through official documents. After donating money to the *mahalla kengash*, the income tax of the firms is decreased, however in the case study, only in D-4 *mahalla* did firms make official donations, recorded on official documents, while the rest of the *mahallas* made no mention of the official processing of such donations. Accordingly, it may be assumed that in many *mahallas*, companies illegally donate funds to the *mahalla kengash*. This raises two crucial questions: Why would a company make a donation without demanding the legal documents that would allow them to pay lower taxes; and why would the *mahalla kengash* not prepare the legal documents? An Uzbek woman (a *mahalla* activist, 59) in C-3 *mahalla* clarified the situation:

"I know this issue well because I used to be a secretary in the mahalla kengash. In Uzbekistan, (she requested this part of the interview remain off-the-record) there is a big problem, and that is bribery. If the mahalla kengash demands financial aid from firms with legal documents, then they have to record this donation in the annual report. This stops them from pocketing this money".

When asked why the firms did not demand official documents, the *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* said:

"In Uzbekistan, tax rates are very high. If you establish a firm, you should immediately resolve this tax problem. All of the bosses of the firms have good relations with the Hokimiyat, and so they do not need to make donations to the mahalla kengashes to decrease the amount of income tax they pay. The tax break is really small, and the firms can gain bigger advantages when they make donations to the mahalla kengash outside the legal process. The mahalla kengash supports and promotes them. This is more important for them".

The bribery problem exists at every level of social and political life in Uzbekistan. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said: "Also at the *mahalla* level there is bribery. For example, I do not trust even my officers in the *mahalla kengash*, and so I check and record all financial issues of the *mahalla* myself. I have heard that some officers in some *mahallas* accept donations that are meant to be distributed to the *mahalla* community, and put it in their pocket. It is a sin and a crime".

Although the *mahalla kengash*, as a local self-governing body, has its own law and budget, and although the Uzbekistani regime claims that the *mahalla kengash* has become financially empowered after independence, there are many problems in the existing system of *mahalla* financing. What is significant is that due to the lack of standard regulations, the *mahalla kengash* is financially dependent on the *Hokimiyat*. In this sense, I asked all *mahalla kengashes* what had changed between the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes in terms of the financial aid supplied by the *Hokimiyat* and *Raispalkom*; and there was a wide variation in

the responses of the residents of different types of *mahalla*. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said: “In the Soviet era the Raispalkom helped to mikroraion and the JEGs, but the raispalkom never gave financial aid to old mahallas like ours. Today, there is justice”. The *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla* said:

“I do not know, maybe the Communist Party helped their own mahalla (D and C types) but I know exactly what our situation was. The Communist Party never helped us, even if somebody intended to help our mahalla (donation), the Communist Party would immediately prevent it. Thanks to our President and the independent Uzbekistani state, now, the Hokimiyat and the state support us financially, and the residents are allowed to donate funds to the mahalla kengash”.

On the other hand, an Uzbek man (87) from D-2 *mahalla* explained the differences between the Soviet regime and today as follows: “In the Soviet era, the Communist Party and the State supported us financially, but today the community and the mahalla kengash have to create their own budget. Now, for example, wealthy residents and big firms make financial donations to the mahalla kengash rather than the state.” The *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla* said: “In the Soviet period the state gave us enough money, but now we have to find what we need from sources other than the state, because we are now *ozuni ozi bashkarish*”. The second *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* made a similar point. According to her:

“During the Soviet era we were not a mahalla, but there were JEGs. The Communist Party did everything for us, paid for from the central budget. For example, on Navruz or the ceremony for World War II, the Raispalkom came to our mahalla and helped us. The Communist Party sent us food, clothes and books, and toys for our children. Today, the state gives us nothing”.

As can be understood from the above interviews, whereas the Communist Party supported C- and D-type *mahalla*, and ignored A and B types, the Uzbek state gives more financial aid to the A and B types than the C and D types, or at least it can be inferred that the *mahalla kengashes* of the C and D types lost the level of financial support they enjoyed during the Soviet era. This is why today the *mahalla kengashes* of A- and B-type *mahallas* are satisfied with the state’s financial support, while the residents of C and D types yearn for the Soviet era.

In short, the revenues transferred from the *Hokimiyat* and the central government differ with regard to different types of *mahallas*. Aside from social aid, which will be analyzed in the next chapter, the revenue transferred from the center to the *mahalla* comes from mostly the *tuman mahalla jamgarma*, and the amount of financial aid distributed to each *mahalla kengash* is an initiative of the *mahalla jamgarma*. From the interview data gathered during the case study, it can be understood that *tuman mahalla jamgarmas* are not impartial when donating financial aid to the *mahalla kengash*. The interviews in the A- and B-type *mahallas*

revealed that the *mahalla jamgarma* financially supported the *mahalla kengashes* in these *mahallas*; while in C and D types it would seem that no such aid is received. It is important to note that some of the interviewees in the A- and B-type *mahallas* stated that they were unable to get the necessary financial support from the *mahalla jamgarma*. Moreover, there are also differences among *mahalla* types in terms of the differences in aid perceived by the residents between the Soviet and Uzbek regimes. The respondents in the *mahalla kengashes* of the A- and B-type *mahallas* claimed that the Soviet state supplied no financial aid to them; while those of the C- and D-types claimed that during the Soviet era, the entire *mahalla* budget came from the central administration, but that now they received no support from the state. Regardless of all the above, the common belief shared by all types of *mahallas* is that the financial aid furnished by the *mahalla jamgarma* is not enough.

Besides the financing received from the *Hokimiyat* and the central government, there are also revenues generated by the *mahalla kengash* itself. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, many *oqsoqols* interviewed in the case study emphasized that their two main duties after independence were to teach the community the ideology of “*O’zbekchilik*”, and to encourage the community to adapt to a market economy. The Uzbekistani state has different policies for adapting the general public to the market economy, and the *mahalla kengash* is a strategic tool for this aim. As mentioned previously, when talking about their duties, the *oqsoqols* mostly stress the importance of teaching the residents the principles and benefits of the market economy, and encouraging them to open businesses. In this respect, the *mahalla kengash* establishes its own small businesses, which brings a certain amount of revenue to the *mahalla* treasury. Epstein (2004: 58) claims that: “*Some mahallas also grow crops or operate small businesses (bakeries, barber’s shops, TV repairs, real estate, etc.), a practice that is officially encouraged and may represent a step away from a market economy. One mahalla in Tashkent reportedly earns over 1 million soms annually from commercial services. Other revenue-creating activities, such as rental of furniture and dishes for weddings and other ceremonies, are not uncommon*”. The *mahalla kengash* may also employ some of the unemployed residents in these *businesses*. Usmanova (2004: 16) wrote in an article that in 5630 *mahallas* out of a total 10000 *mahallas* in Uzbekistan, approximately 15,500 small and medium companies had been established. In order to encourage the establishment of new firms, the state has spent 1.745 billion soms and distributed micro credits to the value of 1.700 million soms to low-income families to open small firms. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said: “*We established a small magazine, and one of our unemployed residents took over its management and now pays us rent*”. The *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla* said: “*We also have our own firms – a small magazine and a chaikhona – that we earn money*

from. As the mahalla kengash, we established a small grocery – there was an unemployed man in our mahalla who was very poor, so we asked him to come and manage the grocery shop in return for rent. He accepted immediately and started work. Now he is working well and earns good money”.

Lastly, in Uzbekistan there are several non-budget sources of *mahalla* financing. According to Epstein (2004: 57), “Mahallas in some localities collect communal service fees on behalf of the public utilities and get to retain up to 10 percent of the gross revenues collected for their own activities; however, funds collected in this manner must first go to paying back the communal service debts and helping needy families pay their utility bills”. In addition, the *mahalla kengashes* collect fees for some civil servant jobs, such as *sprafka*. Speaking on this matter, the *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said “Every day, the residents come and demand *sprafka* or other documents, and we earn from this. For each *sprafka* a resident should pay 500–1,000 soms, and we can use this money for *mahalla* affairs”. Other resources of revenue for the *mahalla* include the rents of the companies with businesses in the *mahalla* and donations from residents, known as *homilik*. These two financial resources are analyzed in detail in the next section, in which the importance of the *oqsoqol*’s power will be analyzed. It should be highlighted that the differences observed in the financial situations of different types of *mahallas* gives an important clue to the variations in the level of power wielded by the *oqsoqols* and *mahalla kengashes* over society.

6.5 Change and Continuity in the *Oqsoqol*’s Role in Local Finance and Local Networks: The Importance of Locality

Earlier in this chapter, the different structures of *mahalla kengashes* and the relationship between the *mahalla kengash* and the *Hokimiyat* have been explained. It is argued that the main differences between the structures of the different *mahalla kengashes* are based on their distinct Soviet experiences and their different levels of articulation to the previous regime in political, economic and social terms. This argument also includes the claim that the historically different socio-economic structures of the different *mahalla* types influence the internal organization and representation mode of their *mahalla kengash*. However, there exists a dialectic relationship between the *mahalla* as a socio/spatial unit and the *mahalla kengash* as a political/administrative unit. In other words, while the socio-spatial and socio-economic structure of the *mahalla* and its historical experience can shape the structure of its *mahalla kengash*, the *mahalla kengash* as a body of local self-government, can also act upon the local structure of the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit. As mentioned at the beginning of the section entitled “Continuity and Change in the Internal Organization of Different

Mahalla Kengashes: The Case of Oqsoqol Power,” Duncan & Goodwin (1988: 5) argued that “*policy variation is not accidental, but inherent in the nature of local government. It derives from the exercise of local choice marks local government off from local administration. The local authority can express or can shape the particularity of the locality*” (Duncan, 1988:5). The main argument in this section is that the different characteristics of different *mahalla kengashes* have largely affected some of the *mahalla*-scaled state policies. Related with the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash*, the different positions of *oqsoqols* and their different levels of power over the neighborhood community provides one of the best examples of the local authority’s effects upon the implementation of official state policies at the *mahalla* scale. For example, the new *mahalla*-scaled unemployment policy and the *mahalla* financial policy of the state have been implemented in various forms in different *mahalla* types, depending on the different capital forms of the *oqsoqols*. These results prove that although the legal arrangements of the new state regarding the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash* are different from that of the Soviet regime, today, many *mahallas* continue to (re)-produce the same strategies and tactics as in the Soviet era. In this sense, the implementation of the unemployment policy and the *mahalla* budget in different *mahalla* types will be analyzed in this chapter in order to demonstrate that the inherent characteristics of local organization (different capital forms of *oqsoqols*) have been influential on the state’s regulations.

6.5.1 The *Oqsoqol*’s Role in Local Finance

The legal framework related to the *mahalla* budget and the revenues transferred from the central government to localities were analyzed in the previous section, where the sources of revenue for the *mahalla* were discussed. This will be elaborated upon in this section to show how the different power levels of *oqsoqols* influence local financial issues. According to the law of self-government, any firm that is established within the border of the *mahalla* should pay rent to the *mahalla kengash*, and this is one of the revenue sources of the *mahalla* budget. Because of the lack of standardization in the revenues transferred from the central government and the *Hokimiyat* among the different *mahallas*, the rents obtained from local companies is a vital source of income for the *mahalla*. The *posbon* of C-2 *mahalla* said: “*If I want to open a firm I have to get permission from both the Hokimiyat and the mahalla kengash. Then, I need to prepare all the documents required and submit them to the Hokimiyat and the mahalla kengash. After establishing the firm, I need to pay income tax to the Hokimiyat and rent to the mahalla kengash for the premises. The amount of the rent is not determined by the mahalla kengash, as that is defined by the Hokimiyat beforehand*”. However, when a company is established on a plot of land owned by the entrepreneur, it is

not necessary to pay rent to the *mahalla kengash*, however they may donate an amount of money to the *mahalla kengash* as a way of increasing or preserving prestige in the *mahalla* community. As most of the customers of the business would be residents of the *mahalla*, any promotion made on the behalf of the business by the *mahalla kengash* would be important for sales.

The regulation regarding the collection of rents from companies actually causes a serious imbalance among the *mahallas*. A *mahalla* with a large number of businesses within its boundaries will obviously generate more revenue for the *mahalla kengash* than a *mahalla* with few commercial enterprises. Speaking on this issue, the *oqsoqol* of A-1 *mahalla* said: “Yes, there are few small stores (magazines) in the *mahalla*, but they do not contribute much because they are in difficulty; they barely make enough money for themselves”. Similarly, the *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said: “We do not have any firms in our *mahalla*, and so we don’t have that financial resource that other *mahallas* do”. In addition, the *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla* said: “There are few firms in our *mahalla*, and they help us in whatever way they can, especially during festivals or ceremonies etc. However, they do not support us so much financially. They generally offer us their products free-of-charge instead of giving money”.

In contrast, the *posbon* of C-2 *mahalla* said: “We get quite a lot of money from the firms in our *mahalla*. There is a good revenue because we have a hotel, lots of large restaurants, magazines etc. in our *mahalla*”. The *oqsoqol* of C-3 *mahalla* said: “Our biggest revenue comes from the firms founded within the border of our *mahalla*. We have lots of firms in our *mahalla*”. On the other hand, the *oqsoqol* of D-1 *mahalla* said: “Yes, there are food shops, furniture shops, and many other firms in our *mahalla*. They help us financially, but not on a regular basis. For example, on special ceremony days like the Independence Day, Navruz, the anniversary of World War II, they do not give money, but rather supply us with some necessary equipment, like chairs, tables, crockery and food, and some of them let us use their premises as venue for events”. The *oqsoqol* of D-3 *mahalla* said: “We have lots of *homi* in our *mahalla*, and mostly they are the bosses of the firms in our *mahalla*. Sometimes, when they earn a large amount of money, they donate part of it to us. We cannot demand financial assistance from them, but we can ask for other kinds of support during special days, such as Navruz, Independence Day etc. They may also give us their products for free, which we give to the poor, elderly and lonely residents as gifts”. The *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* said:

“Within the borders of our *mahalla* there are lots of firms, as our *mahalla* is located at the center of the city. We get obtain rents from them, as defined in the law; and according to the law, businesses can also make donations to the *mahallas*, as the citizens’ assembly and its committee members have a considerable degree of oversight in relation to economic activities. The *mahalla kengash* prepares a legal document requesting

money or material assistance from a company, and if the company makes a donation to the mahalla kengash, their income tax is decreased. For this reason, the firms who donate to the mahalla kengash also benefit”.

As we have seen, there is an apparent inequality among different *mahallas* in terms of their budgets that depends largely on their location. While the *mahallas* located at the center of the city have many firms that donate to the *mahalla kengash*, those located at the periphery of the city or in the old city that are in a poor condition have trouble attracting companies for investment, and thus take very little revenue from company donations. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla*, which is located in the center of old Tashkent and has no private firms within its borders, highlighted the problems of this inequality: “*We cannot generate any income from firms because we do not have any ... Our location is so bad that nobody wants to come to establish a firm here. There are lots of firms in the mahalla in which you live because its location is perfect. We have only one small store and a chaikhone. In the modern mahallas there are lots of firms, and they get money from them*”. Similar comments were made by the recent *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla*: “*Our mahalla is rich because there are lots of businesses here, and our residents have mostly a high income profile. Some poor mahallas, especially those at the periphery of Tashkent, have real trouble finding revenues to supplement their budget*”. When I asked about the poor *mahallas* in the old city, he said:

“They, too, do not get money from the firms because they do not have many; however their residents provide lots of material assistance to their mahalla, and also the Hokimiyat supports these kinds of mahallas financially. However, the mahallas in the worst condition today are the newly established ones, and those have mostly been transformed from the kolkhoz. The crucial thing about our budget policy is that if you are already a rich mahalla, you can get richer, but if you are currently a poor mahalla, you can even get worse”.

One of the most effective sources of revenue in local politics and for the *mahalla* budget is *homiliq*. According to local government laws, residents can make any kind of donation to the *mahalla kengash*, and residents of the *mahalla* who donate money to the *mahalla kengash* are known as *Homi*. There are significant differences among the different types of *mahallas* in terms of *homiliq*. In A- and B-type *mahallas* there are few firms, and the proportion of revenue from these firms is so low that most of the money for the *mahalla* budget comes from the *homi*. Accordingly, the neighborhood community is quite interested in the administration of *mahalla* affairs. For example, Matkarimov (2005: 26) explained that the bulk of the budget of an old *mahalla* in Tashkent came from the *homi* in the *mahalla*, and that the *mahalla kengash* gives many gifts to poor families from the donations. The *oqsoqol* of A-1 *mahalla* said: “*The Hokimiyat gives us financial support, but it is not enough. Also, we have a serious problem in that there are no firms in our mahalla, and so we do not get any assistance from company donations. However, we are lucky because of our community.*

The residents are rich in this mahalla and they know o'zbekchiliq and so they donate to the mahalla kengash. I say to the rich and good residents that we have this and that problems and ask them to donate money, and they immediately agree. Sometimes I do not even have to ask, they help us anyway". The secretary of B-1 mahalla said:

"We do not ask for money or other kinds of support, since our residents are very fidoi. Our mahalla was established during the Soviet era and o'zbekchiliq and our traditions were preserved. Helping the mahalla is one of the most important duties of a good Uzbek, and so our residents support their mahalla kengash in whatever way they can. For example, on Navruz, on Independence Day, and on the day commemorating World War II, our rich families present lots of gifts to the poor families in the mahalla. They do not only have to give money, as they can also help the mahalla kengash by contributing in other ways".

While interviewing the oqsoqol of B-2 mahalla, a resident came into the oqsoqol's office and asked: "What can I do for the mahalla? What are you doing for the mahalla at the moment, and how can I help you?" The oqsoqol replied, "My son, we are repairing our mosque now," and he answered: "Ok, can I help? Do you need money or labor? Here is some money, take it and spend it for our mosque". After he left, the oqsoqol turned me and said: "You see? This answers your question. He is a real Uzbek; he always comes and asks if he can give a hand to the mahalla kengash; he regularly gives money".

On the other hand, the C- and D-type mahallas are in a different situation. The interviews in these mahallas indicated that the residents were reluctant to engage in mahalla affairs, unlike those in the A and B types. This greatly effects the position and power of the oqsoqol in the mahalla. Since in these mahallas the main source of revenue is the central government and the Hokimiyat and the firms within the mahalla, the oqsoqol and the mahalla kengash have only a limited role in the formation of the budget. Concerning the contributions of the residents, the oqsoqol of D-4 mahalla said: "Our mahalla is a modern one. No resident, even the wealthy ones, give financial assistance to the mahalla. That is the main difference between our mahalla and the old mahallas (A-type mahallas). While we cannot get any money from our residents, in the old mahallas the oqsoqols ask their residents for money". The oqsoqol of D-3 mahalla said: "I cannot ask money or help from our residents. It is shameful for us. We are a mahalla and the old mahallas are also mahallas. All of us are mahallas, but the oqsoqols of the old mahallas can ask money, it is normal and traditional. However, we cannot ask money, it is considered shameful".

As mentioned before, a significant result of the financial aid donated by businesses to the mahalla budget is the gap it creates among the different mahallas. As shown in Table 6.11, in the surveyed A- and B-type mahallas (five in total) there are 11 firms, but for the C- and D-type mahallas (seven in total) this number is 91, leading to the understanding that for C-

and D-type *mahallas*, local businesses are a significant source of revenue for the *mahalla*, while in the A- and B-type *mahallas* this financial resource is almost non-existent. After the withdrawal of state financial assistance to the residential units, the contributions of private businesses have become a crucial source of revenue for the *mahallas*. However, as the location of a *mahalla* affects the number of firms within its borders (*mahallas* around the city center are more attractive for investment than those located at the periphery), there are serious revenue differentials among *mahallas* regarding the aids obtained from the private firms.

Table 6.11 Sources of Mahalla Budgets

Types	Mahallas	Number of firms in the mahalla	Main source(s) of the mahalla budget
A	A-1	2	Community
	A-2	1	Community
	A-3	2	Community
B	B-1	3	Community
	B-2	3	Community
C	C-1	6	Donations from Businesses
	C-2	11	Donations from Businesses
	C-3	7	Donations from Businesses - Community
D	D-1	15	Donations from Businesses
	D-2	15	Donations from Businesses
	D-3	17	Donations from Businesses
	D-4	20	Donations from Businesses

* Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

On this matter, the *oqsoqol* of B-2 *mahalla* said: “They (the C- and D-type *mahallas*) have lots of money because they developed during the Soviet era. Now ... the state has withdrawn from financially supporting these *mahallas*, but there were lots of state firms established during Soviet times within their boundaries. Even though these firms were privatized, they still contribute to the *mahalla budget*”. Moreover, because of the locational advantage of these *mahallas*, there is a tendency for more private firms to set up business in these *mahallas*, and thus the socio-spatial segregation among the *mahallas* will deepen (Hokimov, 2007: 49). To address this issue, it is necessary for the state to provide incentives to the private sector to locate at the periphery of the city.

Returning to the *homi* issue, especially in traditional *mahallas* (A and B types), the fact that the residents donate funds to their *mahalla kengash* has crucial outcomes. Before summarizing these, it is important to note that the *homiliq* is a traditional concept in the Uzbekistani *mahalla* that was maintained during Soviet times as well. In the residential units that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime (C and D types), *homiliq* practice has

gradually died out, since the Soviet state satisfied all of the needs of the residents in these *mahallas*. In contrast, the *mahallas* that could not be articulated to the Soviet regime (A and B) had to perpetuate the *homiliq* concept due to the lack of state support, and so the persistence of the *homiliq* tradition should be seen as a necessity rather than a mere attempt at the conservation of culture. The *homiliq* concept also enabled the continuation of many customs rooted in pre-modern times and related with the patriarchal social structure in these *mahalla* communities.

One of these customs is the centrality of the *oqsoqol*'s power in daily life in A- and B-type *mahallas*, while they lost their importance in the Soviet-type residential units (C and D types). One of the reasons behind the continuation of the traditional and patriarchal power of the *oqsoqol* in these *mahallas* has been the lack of financial and social aid from the Soviet state, which is why it may be argued that one of the sources of the *oqsoqol* power is material wealth. Generally, it is the biggest *homi* that is elected as the *oqsoqol* in these *mahallas*, while being from an elite family and having close relations with high-level civil servants and the central government, may also be an advantage, as one of the main duties of the *oqsoqol* and the *mahalla kengash* is to find alternative resources for the *mahalla* budget. In contrast, in C- and D-type *mahallas* these above-mentioned sources of power are not a prerequisite for an *oqsoqol*, as encouraging financial donations from the community and/or institutions is not a primary duty of the *mahalla kengash*, since they already receive significant financing from the firms within their *mahallas*. Therefore, in these Soviet types of *mahallas*, as power is not a necessary criteria for an *oqsoqol*, it is mostly unemployed and low-income residents that fill the post. The *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* argued that: “

In our mahalla, there is no homi among our residents because all of us have low-level incomes. Moreover, there are no firms within our mahalla and the financial aid from the mahalla jamgarma is not enough. Therefore, as an oqsoqol I have to find financial aid from outside of our mahalla. For this reason, an oqsoqol has to be wealthy or have good relationships with rich and powerful people, such as civil servants and businessmen. If the oqsoqol is a hurmatli (respected) person, these people are more likely to accept his financial demands, as they trust him. Accordingly, the community should elect hurmatli residents as oqsoqols. This is the reason why the oqsoqol is so important in Uzbekistan and in daily life. On the other hand, in the Soviet type mahallas (C and D types), the position of oqsoqol is not so important, since they have already developed and have lots of firms within their borders that support them financially”.

Besides its effect upon the *oqsoqol*'s power, another important issue related to the *homi* is that the power of the elite and wealthy residents increases in the decision-making process in the *mahalla kengash*. Therefore, in A- and B-type *mahallas*, the elite residents can sustain their power in social life. An Uzbek woman (48) from A-3 *mahalla* said:

“I do not know, but if you are wealthy, you can donate money to the mahalla kengash, and thus the mahalla community becomes grateful and respects you. Moreover, as they have donated the money, these people can decide what should be done in the mahalla. You are asking which one is more powerful in the mahalla, the hokimiyat or the elites of the community, right? I think, if you are wealthy you become the elite, and if you are elite, of course you have good relations with the Hokimiyat. They are intertwined, the elite are also effective in the Hokimiyat”.

By donating money to the *mahalla* the power of the *homis* increases in the decision-making of process of the *mahalla kengash*, while also reproducing the patriarchal social structure, and thus preventing a transition to a rational-modern and individualist social structure. For this reason, social pressure and social exclusion are more severe in A- and B-type *mahallas* than in C and D types. A young Uzbek man from B-2 *mahalla* who works in Korea said: *“Wealthy residents donate money to the mahalla kengash, and in this way they also gain some advantages. For example, businessmen donate money to the mahalla and the oqsoqol, in turn, finds cheap labor for him”.*

There is one more important result related to the power of the *oqsoqol* in C-type *mahallas*, where, unlike in D types, a person becomes powerful and gains respectability after becoming *oqsoqol*. Therefore, it can be argued that in C-type *mahallas* it is not necessary to have any source of power to become an *oqsoqol* – unlike in A and B types – as the *oqsoqol* position is itself a source of power – unlike in D types. This situation is unique to C-type *mahallas*, where the *oqsoqol*, who gains power and prestige in the community after being elected, can ask for money from the community. Moreover, in these *mahallas* people consider the position of *oqsoqol* to be source of power, and so abuse of this power for personal interests is seen in most *oqsoqols*. The residents of C-type *mahallas* often stated that the *oqsoqol* was engaged in bribery, and that they distributed all welfare and resources to their relatives and supporters.

The reason for the *oqsoqol*'s necessary power in these *mahallas* is that they lack strong relationships with the state or any other supra-local institutions (local refers here the *mahalla* scale), and that they were largely ignored by the Soviet state in terms of financial support. For this reason they were obliged to enhance their social capital, and it is in this sense that they preserved many of their traditional characters. In other words, the residents of these *mahallas* had to solve their own problems at the local level, and so when a resident had good contacts with senior civil servants, the central government or the Party or when he/she was wealthy, it was seen as an opportunity to access external financial resources.

In contrast, today, the fact that the Uzbekistani state has reduced public support and restricted social policy has resulted in an increasing reliance on the old traditional

relationships in all residential unit types (A, B, C and D). In a way, the patriarchal lifestyle began to fill the vacuum left by the state in some areas of service provision in the transition period, and the Uzbekistani state sublimates the traditional patriarchal social structure as the basis of the Uzbek identity, with A- and B-type *mahallas* held up as representing the ideal Uzbekistani social life. As I will be analyzed in the next chapter, many characteristics of this patriarchal social structure are being reproduced by the state through social policies. For example, after independence, the state and the *tuman Hokimiyat* brought the *homiliq* concept to the agenda also in the C- and D-type *mahallas*, indicating an intention to bring the traditional-patriarchal social structure that developed in some *mahallas* during the Soviet era. In this regard it may be argued that in attempting to create a nation state, the modernity project in Uzbekistan is reversed. The last issue related with the *mahalla* budget is that after independence there was a clear widening of the income gap between *mahallas*. Explaining this issue, the *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla* said:

“Because the main sources of the mahalla budget are donations from the businesses and residents, in Uzbekistan, underdeveloped mahallas become more underdeveloped, while the developed ones become more developed. Do you know why this is? After independence, the residents of the old mahallas who got rich migrated to the more developed mahallas, mostly to the Soviet-style mahallas (D type), while families with low incomes continued to live in the same, old mahallas. Moreover, after independence, the impoverished residents migrated from well-developed mahallas to our old and under-developed mahallas. In this way the old and poor mahallas, like ours, gets poorer. During the Soviet time, because of the strict migration policy, poor and rich residents had to live in the same mahalla, but today the socio-spatial segregation is rapidly increasing”.

6.5.2 Local Networks and Oqsoqol Power in Different Types of Mahalla

The local social network capacity of the *oqsoqol* is important in other local issues, besides just local finance. In different *mahalla* types, the different degrees of need for a strong *oqsoqol* power shape the power of the *oqsoqol*. This is a key factor for outsider donors, who partly depend on the power of the *oqsoqol* to initiate their projects in the community. For example, related with international donors seeking to realize projects at the *mahalla* level in Uzbekistan, Earle (2006: 38) argues that: *“Donors have realized the importance of dialogue with the oqsoqols before their projects are initiated ... Their inclusion (the oqsoqol) is seen both to help legitimise the project in the eyes of the villagers and to ensure that they will be mobilised to participate in it. Often, the authority of the oqsoqols is needed to persuade the community members to contribute their labour and/or money to a particular project”.* However, Earle’s argument is not valid for all *mahallas*, nor for all the *oqsoqols*. As mentioned below, especially in C- and D-type *mahallas* the *oqsoqols* lack the power to mobilize the residents. In this section, the different power levels of the *oqsoqols* in local

networks in different *mahallas* will be analyzed through an investigation of the issues of unemployment and *hashar*.

The sharp increase experienced in unemployment rates in Uzbekistan after independence was explained in Chapter Five. The Uzbek government implemented two policies to cope with the unemployment problem at the *mahalla* scale. To begin with, the employees of the *mahalla kengash* were given the status of state officers, leading to many unemployed residents to begin seeking work in the *mahalla kengash*. Today, there are more than 10,000 *mahallas* in Uzbekistan, with at least three or four residents (*oqsoqol*, *maslahatchi*, secretary and *posbon*) drawing a salary from the central government. This means that at least 4,000 unemployed residents have been put to work in the *mahalla kengashes* around the country, and thus the *mahalla kengash* has become an important source of employment and income. Related with this issue, an Uzbek girl (17) from C-3 *mahalla* said: “Look at our *mahalla*! Many residents who were unemployed before are now working in the *mahalla*. This is the real situation in the *mahallas* of Uzbekistan. The *mahalla kengash* has become a workplace for these unemployed guys”. Another important point related with the same issue was emphasized by the *oqsoqol* of A-2 *mahalla*:

“Since independence, we have become state officers and the government pays us a salary. It is such a small amount that it is not an important part of our income. We are, in fact, still working in the mahalla kengash as fidai. However, this amount is important for our national budget because the government gives salaries to at least 7,000 mahalla officers. It is a huge amount! Our President is so clever; he immediately merged a lot of mahallas into a single mahalla. For example, after independence, our mahalla was re-established with the merging of seven mahallas. If this had not been done, the government would have had to give salaries to 42 officers instead of seven. The government implemented this regulation in many mahallas around the country”.

The second policy adopted by the government at the *mahalla* scale to fight unemployment was to make it the responsibility of the *mahalla* officers to find jobs for the unemployed residents in their *mahalla*. Matkarimov (2005:25), who explains the functions of the *mahalla kengash* in Horazm province, specified the role of the *mahalla kengash* in the unemployment problem: “In 2004, the total number of unemployed people in Horazm was 8,752. In the same year, the number of residents who found jobs through the *mahalla kengashes* was 3,916. This proportion is not low”. Moreover, Botirhanova (2007:3) argues that today, the *mahalla kengash* is the first auxiliary institution helping the central government to cope with unemployment.

Table 6.12 shows the number of unemployed residents in the different surveyed *mahallas*, and was compiled from the *passport malumotnamasi*¹⁶⁴ of each *mahalla kengash*. As seen in the table, unemployment in A- and B-type *mahallas* is higher than in C and D types. The real reason behind this is that the residents of A- and B-type *mahallas* prefer to apply to the *mahalla kengash* to find a job, or the *mahalla kengash* have proper records about their unemployed residents (*fuqoralarning ahvoli*), while the residents of C and D types mostly rely on other means when looking for a job. Indeed, unemployment is a more serious problem in C- and D-type *mahallas* than in A and B types, which will be explained in detail later. In an interview with two neighbors in the C-3 *mahalla*, I asked whether they applied to the *mahalla kengash* to find a job. The Tatar woman (32, working as a waitress) said:

“I have been unemployed since 2006. I have applied many times to the mahalla, but they have never replied to me. Only one time did they find me a job, but it was not so good. Then, I found this job. This job pays better than the job that the mahalla found for me”.

Table 6.12 Collaboration with *Birje* and Unemployment in *Mahallas*

Types	<i>Mahallas</i>	Collaboration with <i>Birje</i>	Number of Unemployed Residents
A	A-1	-	365
	A-2	-	154
	A-3	-	250
B	B-1	-	86
	B-2	-	81
C	C-1	-	274
	C-2	+	12
	C-3	+	92
D	D-1	+	20
	D-2	+	75
	D-3	+	50
	D-4	+	11

*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

Then, the Uzbek woman (54, working in a TV channel) interrupted her, and said:

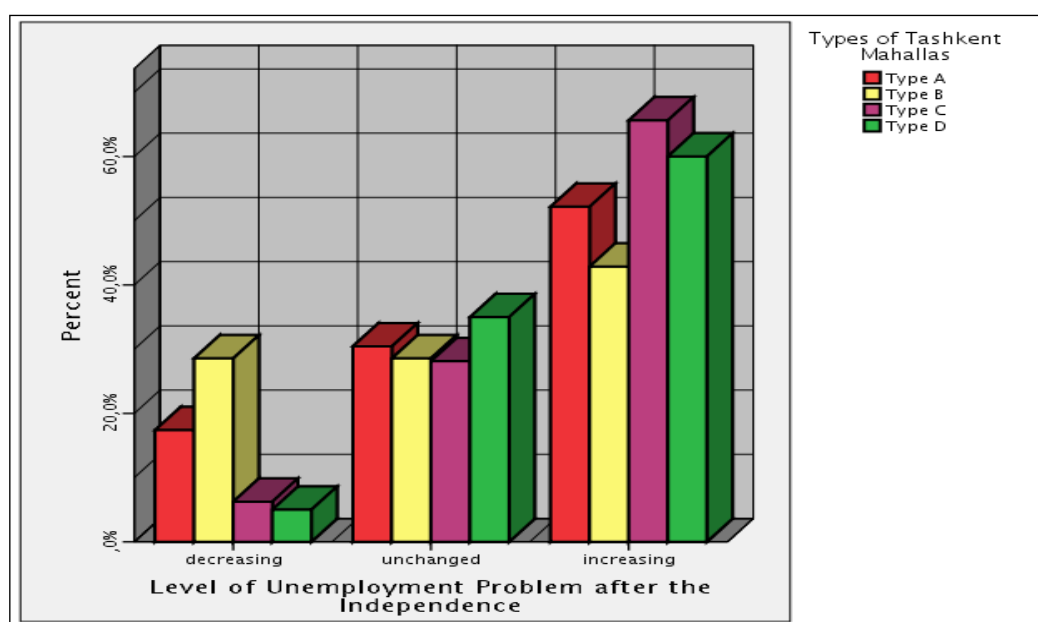
“Do you know why this happens? It is because our mahalla kengash is not very powerful. Two years ago I made a TV show about old mahallas, in which the oqsoqols are in contact with many people and can easily find jobs for their residents; but in our mahalla the oqsoqol was himself unemployed, and so how can he be expected to find jobs for other residents. They could not find one for themselves”.

As seen from these statements, there are significant variations among the different *mahalla kengashes* related with this duty. During the interviews, most of the *oqsoqols* said that dealing with unemployment was one of their primary duties, however the responses of the *oqsoqols* varied depending on their *mahalla* type. The *oqsoqols* of A- and B-type *mahallas*

¹⁶⁴ Document containing information about the residents of the *mahalla* (look at Appendix D).

only mentioned the unemployment issue as an example of their duties, while many *oqsoqols* in the C and D types said that it was the biggest problem that they had to cope with. For example, the *Jen-Soviet* of A-2 *mahalla*, after talking about the duties of the institution, said, “There is one more duty that the *mahalla kengash* has to achieve – to try to find a job for our young residents who have finished their training”. On the other hand, the *oqsoqol* of D-2 *mahalla* said: “Our biggest problem is unemployment, and many young residents have had difficulties in finding a proper job. They graduate from university and find a job, but in a place that is a long way away from their residential units. All of their salaries are spent on travel cost, while in the past, travel was free. Thus, we are obliged to find them employment in more appropriate workplaces”. The *maslahatchi* of the same *mahalla* said:

“There used to be a traktor zavod (agricultural machinery factory) near this mahalla. Indeed, this microraion was built for its workers, but now, it is closed. Most of our residents have become unemployed, but our government tries to find jobs for them. For example, if the government opens a new small firm with the help of Birje, the government informs us about the business and asks us to direct any currently unemployed residents to work in this business. Besides this, we send a list of unemployed residents to Birje”.



*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

Figure 6.1 Level of Unemployment since Independence

In addition, there is also variation among *mahalla* types in terms of facing the unemployment problem after the independence. Although many interviewees (57%) believed that unemployment had increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the opinions of the residents in different *mahallas* about the rise of unemployment from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era are quite different from each other. In other words, there is a socio-spatial

differentiation in the perception of citizens about the emergent unemployment problem since independence. Whereas in the D- and C-type *mahallas*, approximately 60% of residents claimed there had been a recent rise in unemployment, this ratio is 52% in A-type *mahallas* and only 41% in B-type *mahallas*. In addition, there is a divergence of opinion whether unemployment has decreased since independence, with 30% of residents B-type *mahallas* being of the opinion that unemployment was decreasing, while only 4% of the residents of D-type *mahallas* thought this was the case (See Figure 6.1).

The main reason behind this divergence is the occupational backgrounds of the residents of different *mahalla* types during the Soviet era. On the one hand, the craftsmen that were dominant in the A-type *mahallas* were out of work in the socialist era, while the tradesmen, who were a majority in B-type *mahallas*, were tried to be closed by the Soviet regime. Thus, many of residents of A- and B-type *mahallas* lacked the state's guarantee to secure their jobs during the Soviet era. On other hand, residents of the C- and D-type *mahallas* (in the new part of Tashkent) had the chance to find jobs in state factories as laborers or in the state sector as civil servants, but after independence many of these residents became unemployed due to the privatization of the state factories. In contrast, after independence, since the citizens in the old part of Tashkent, especially in the B-type *mahallas*, could benefit from credits to establish SMEs, both from the state and from international institutions through *mahalla* organizations, and so leapt at the opportunity to improve their jobs and skills (Ismoilova, 2003: 37). The residents of C- and D-type *mahallas*, on the other hand, knew little about trade or any other jobs requiring entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, while being used to utilizing informal social networks during the Soviet era due to a lack of articulation to the Soviet regime in both social and economic terms, the residents of A- and B-type *mahallas* had many opportunities to find work. On the other hand, after losing their jobs in the state sector, the residents of the C- and D-type *mahallas* found it difficult to cope with unemployment in the absence of a state-dominated economic structure, since they had no informal connections outside the formal sphere of the state.

The interviews have clearly demonstrated that opinions related to unemployment after the independence differs according to age and gender, as well as the *mahalla* of residence. For example, a 48-year-old Uzbek man in D-2 *mahalla* who works in a private firm as a *bugaltir*¹⁶⁵ explained the differences between the Soviet and the post-Soviet eras regarding unemployment:

“In the past, our jobs, workplaces and salaries were secure. Work was seen as a virtue in society. We did not have to think about tomorrow in

¹⁶⁵ Accountant

the past ... but today that is not the case ... One day is not the same as the other ... The factories are closed, they are downsized and the workers are dismissed. My dad worked as a laborer in a factory for a long time until one day he lost his job, without anything in his hands ... We settled in this mikroraion because it was close to the factory where I worked. Several years ago, our boss discharged half of the workers and I became unemployed ... We try to find jobs every day, and every evening I cannot sleep and I worry about how I will buy bread to feed my children tomorrow ... Do you know what the worst thing is? Working is not a respected value in our society today. If you work without a high salary, people look at you as if you are stupid – gaining lots of money in a short time without putting any real labor power into it is more respected than working tooth and nail”.

An Uzbek woman from C-3 mahalla also made a comparison of the Soviet and the post-Soviet eras, but with a different perspective:

“What has changed today ... is that a person who works and a person who does not are now discernible. The Soviet regime was so cumbersome that hardworking and laziness could not be separated from each other. Everyone was an officer or worker in the state sector, but some did not go to work regularly, for example my husband. So it was a bad time. Now if you do not work, you cannot earn bread, justice came to Uzbekistan after independence”.

On the other hand, many residents of B-type mahallas do not believe unemployment has changed since independence. An 89-year-old Uzbek man said: “We were working in the bazaar. We brought many raw materials to Tashkent from rural areas and sold them in the bazaar, and today we still do the same thing, however we can now work freely without the control of the Party”. On the other hand, a young 26-year-old Uzbek man that works in the, evaluated the new era differently from his elder neighbor:

“The state does not find any jobs for its citizens, unlike under the Soviet regime. So, I said to myself that if the state does not care about me I can find a job myself. I found a job in Korea ... and began preparing to depart ... Oh, boy! This preparation period was really troublesome, I need to take a sprafka from the mahalla kengash, and I had to go the Hokimiyot to get permission to go abroad. They asked me several questions in order to learn why I was going to Korea: What will I do there? Did I try to find a job in Uzbekistan? Did I bring official confirmation of my workplace in Korea? etc. ... It was crazy ... So the difference between the past and present is that the Soviet state saved its citizens, it found them a job and requested the assistance of the residents. The new regime does not help its residents to find work, in fact it does not do anything for its citizens, but always requests assistance from them through fidoiliq ... it is not a good thing. During the Soviet era it was impossible to go abroad, but you did not need to go abroad to earn a living. Today, in a sense we have to go abroad because there are hardly any jobs in Uzbekistan”.

A 76-year-old Uzbek man from an A-type mahalla who is retired from the army claimed: “There is no difference. During the Soviet era we used our greatest effort, like we do today, due to O'zbekchiliq. It is an essential part of Uzbek culture to work, and it is the most important characteristics of our society. Everyone should know his duty. For an Uzbek man,

the main duty is to bring money to his family; and for an Uzbek woman, the main duty is to look after her children, to get up at 5 a.m. and clean the house, even if she works elsewhere during the day". As can be seen below, the statements from interviewees indicate that the age and sex of residents are significant factors in shaping their opinions on unemployment.

In particular, unemployment has hit the hardest in the *mahallas* established for the Soviet state factory workers and for the intellectuals from the previous era. Many workers in these *mahallas* became unemployed after the closing of the state factories during the transition to a market economy, and many Soviet intellectuals lost their strong position in society. This problem is nowhere more apparent than in the D-2 and D-4 *mahallas* identified in the case study. The *maslahatchi* of D-2 *mahalla* said: *"In the past there was a state factory close to our mahalla, and many of our residents worked there. After independence it was closed, and 80% of the residents of our mahalla became unemployed. Thus, our biggest problem is unemployment"*. The first *oqsoqol* of D-4 *mahalla* explained the story of his *mahalla*: *"Our residents were authors, painters, artists and academicians during the Soviet era, when our mahalla was one of the most prestigious. However, many of our residents became unemployed after independence, and today the state can no longer care of its intellectuals. A strong state can only be established by a group of strong intellectuals, not by a group of businessmen"*. The *oqsoqol* of A-1 *mahalla* speaking on the issue said: *"Unemployment is a big problem in Uzbekistan now, but if you are asking only about our mahalla, I need to say that unemployment today is the same as it was in the past. In fact, we can find jobs more easily since independence"*. The main reason for the different responses is that the residents of the A- and B-type *mahallas* were already working in self-employed jobs during the Soviet era.

According to the law, the *mahalla kengash* should cooperate with the *Mihnet Birje*¹⁶⁶ in employment matters, however there is also a differentiation among *mahalla* types regarding their level of cooperation with the *Mihnet Birje*. As seen in Table 5.12, most of the *mahalla kengashes* in C- and D-type *mahallas* cooperate with this state organization, unlike those of A and B types. Interviews with the residents demonstrate that the *mahalla kengash* uses other channels to find jobs for their residents, especially in the A- and B-type *mahallas*. A 26-year-old Uzbek man from the B-2 *mahalla* who works in Korea said:

"Our oqsoqol finds jobs for us, but only small jobs within the mahalla borders. For example, they were building a choykhoina in the mahalla, and our oqsoqol told us to go and work there without pay. Besides this, he finds us jobs, but they are very badly paid – 10 soms for a day. What kind of a job is this? Our oqsoqols just want to find cheap labor for their boss"

¹⁶⁶ An organization responsible for finding jobs for the unemployed, under the control of the central government.

friends! He does not find a good job for us. I have been working in Korea where I earn 500 dollars a month”.

This statement offers a good indication of the power relations at a local level among the local elites, as mentioned also by Duncan & Goodwin (1988: 42-43) “... *farmers and landowners can maintain a cheap local labour force via their domination of many rural local governments, through the provision of a stock of council housing*”. In addition, Earle (2006: 43) states: “*As has been seen in the case of Village A, the oqsoqol did not act in the interests of the village as a whole. He was concerned to influence the project to ensure maximum gains for his sons. This example would suggest that it is therefore unwise to believe that respected members of the community are necessarily situated outside of local power struggles*”. Such situations also increase the importance of the power of the elite residents or families in the *mahalla* community. As presented below, many *oqsoqols* try to find cheap labor for the *homi* in the *mahalla*, in other words, there is collaboration between the *oqsoqols* and the *homes* in the *mahalla*. The *maslahatchi* of D-2 *mahalla* said: “... *the manager of the old state factory has been a deputy. He helps the unemployed residents a lot. Whenever there is an opening he calls us and tells us to send an unemployed resident to take the job*”.

Another issue related to unemployment that is similar to the problem of social assistance, as will be mentioned in the next chapter, is that the public are generally reluctant to apply to the *mahalla kengash*. An Uzbek man (30 years old, worked in a state factory until it closed, now unemployed) from D-2 *mahalla* explained this issue as follows:

“We could not ask for any help from the mahalla kengash because I am a 30-year-old man. I am ashamed to ask. It is Uzbek tradition, O'zbekchiliq. If I ask, I know that they will get angry with me, tell me that I am a young man and criticize me for not working, and instead coming to them and asking for help. Thus, we generally do not ask the mahalla kengash for help for ourselves, but we can offer our assistance if anything needs to be done in the mahalla. If there is a job, the mahalla kengash calls us and says 'You will work tomorrow, you will get this amount money for a day'. But these jobs are not good and they are generally only temporary. The mahalla kengash has not yet found me a good job. What the mahalla kengash does is act as a mediator between the unemployed residents and the Birje”.

This situation not only occurs in C- and D-type *mahallas*, but also in A and B types, with the *mahalla kengash* identifying the unemployed residents. Despite the fact that residents in A- and B-type *mahallas* are reluctant to apply to the *mahalla kengash* for employment, the *mahalla kengash* has a certain level of information about the unemployed residents. The secretary of B-2 *mahalla* said of this issue: “*Our residents, especially men, are ashamed to come and tell us that they are unemployed. However, we know every family who is struggling with the unemployment problem, who is poor. So, when a job opportunity opens up we just call them and tell them*”. For example, an Uzbek woman from A-2 *mahalla* said: “*When my*

son graduated from high school he could not immediately find a job. I told him several times to go and ask the help of the mahalla kengash, but he never did. Finally, I went and talked with the mahalla secretary, who found a job and called him. My son has been working in this job for two years”.

As can be seen, many *mahalla* officers prefer to use their social and political networks rather than cooperate with the *Birje*. The *oqsoqol* of A-*mahalla* 2 explains the reason for this: “We try to work with *Birje* but they could not find jobs. I, myself, try to find jobs for my residents using my own networks”. The *oqsoqol* of A-3 *mahalla* emphasized:

“In our mahalla, especially many young residents are unemployed. They work generally as temporary workers in construction. For example, near our mahalla there is a construction firm. If this firm needs workers they come here to collect them and put them to work on building sites. My role in this issue is that when these firms come and ask us for labor, we call our unemployed residents and say there is work paying this amount per day. If this firm had not known us, they would not come and ask. Only we know who really needs the job in the mahalla, however such jobs are temporary and, thus, are not very good. Nevertheless, should we have no relations with the firms we would lose all our power in finding jobs for our unemployed residents. In Uzbekistan, unemployment is the biggest and most serious problem today”.

Related with this issue, my host from C-3 *mahalla*, a 54-year-old Uzbek woman who works at a TV station, said: “Our *oqsoqol* finds job for the residents but the problem is that whether cooperating with the *Birje* or not, the *oqsoqols* find jobs only for their friends not for all the community residents. For this reason, you need to have a good relationship with the *oqsoqol* as you may need their help at some point”. Therefore, similar to the issue of generating income for the *mahalla*, the *oqsoqol* should have a strong social network both within and outside the *mahalla* it he/she is to find a job for the residents. That said, there are two policies of the Uzbekistani central administration that clash most of the time. While in poor *mahallas*, generally the C and D types, unemployed residents try to become *mahalla* officers in order to get a salary; especially in A- and B-type *mahallas*, residents try to elect elite people to the *mahalla kengash* with strong networks and economic capital, which may be utilized in finding jobs for the community, as well as reaching other opportunities.

In short, there is a difference among the *mahalla* types in terms of how the unemployment problem is approached. The C- and D-type *mahallas*, which had a strong capacity to articulate to the Soviet regime, were faced with worse unemployment, since many of the residents, who had been state workers or civil servants during the Soviet era became unemployed after the privatization of the state facilities. On the other hand, the residents of the A- and B-type *mahallas*, which had been unsuccessful in articulating to the Soviet regime, at the time had to find employment without the support of the Soviet state. As a

consequence, after independence they were less affected by the transition economy and the new state policies as they were more able to adapt to the market-based economy due to their Soviet experience. A second variation among the *mahallas* emerged regarding the level of success of the unemployment policy implemented by the *mahalla kengash*. Integrated into the regime during the Soviet era, the *mahalla kengashes* of C- and D-type *mahallas* prefer to work with the *Birje* and *Hokimiyat*, while the *kengashes* of A- and B-type *mahallas* use their social capital both in and outside the community to fight the unemployment problem. This situation brought about a requirement for a powerful *oqsoqol*, whose power has increased since independence, and so the residents of A- and B-type *mahallas* tend to elect *oqsoqols* from elite families in their communities. Their relations with local political leaders also provided the local elite with an important source of cheap labor in some localities, as Duncan & Goodwin (1988) emphasize. Thus, it may be argued that particularly in some *mahallas* the process of local politics is explicitly characterized by class-politics, indicating that local level relationships are essential in the reproduction of existing social relations.

It is necessary to mention a further issue, which is the most important point regarding the nature of local politics in A- and B-type *mahallas*. Although many interviewees in these *mahallas* emphasized that there was pressure on their daily lives during the Soviet era, they stressed a negative point that was not mentioned by the residents of C- and D-type *mahallas*, being the position of the local elite after independence. This can be exemplified by a statement taken from an interview made in B-2 *mahalla*, which demonstrates how the power of the local elite increased in local politics after independence:

“In the past, as members of a community, we did lots of thing for our mahalla together. For example, we made hashar, and all of the residents participated in this activity. However, today, the situation is different. The rich families in the community donate any money that the mahalla kengash needs, and so the mahalla officers do whatever these families want. They contribute to the mahalla budget, but in this way they also use the mahalla kengash to satisfy their own interests. For example, if they have a good relationship with the oqsoqol, the oqsoqol can find them cheap labor – he comes to us and says that he has found jobs for us. If we did not do this job, these rich bosses, who make donations to the mahalla kengash, would have to employ people at a higher cost. Moreover, these families donate money and do not attend to hashar. This is pure inequality, it is just unfair. If the mahalla is our mahalla, why there is inequality among the residents. During the Soviet era all of us were equal; but today, if you have money, you have the power to decide on everything in the mahalla”.

As can be seen from this statement, in A- and B-type *mahallas* there is a strong collaboration between the elite families and the *mahalla* officers that has increased the power of the elite families in *mahalla* politics after independence. The Uzbek man who made this statement gave the example of *hashar* in order to demonstrate how the local elite has gained more

power in *mahalla* politics since independence, as *hashar* is generally organized to realize something for the benefit of the whole community, such as building a *chaikhano*, cleaning the *mahalla*, planting trees and repairing houses, and is performed as a collective activity. For example, the entire community will help a single family to repair their house. Generally, the *oqsoqols* are the leaders of the *hashar* and organize the process. The *hashar* is a pre-Soviet tradition in Uzbek society that survived the Soviet era; however, as can be understood from the above statement, after independence its form has changed considerably. Many researchers have a tendency to romanticize the practice of *hashar* as an ideal way of local interaction and engagement, buying into the “myth of the community” (Guijt & Shah 1998, quoted by Earle, 2006). According to Earle (2006: 46):

“What has become clear is that the nature of hashar as practiced currently differs to that of the Soviet times. Community assistance to just one family is now much rarer. This has been attributed by the local NGO to the negative effects of the transition in Kyrgyzstan. The introduction of the market system since independence has brought notable economic divisions within communities. The polarization of income levels has reduced the extent to which individuals in communities are willing to provide their labour to others for free. Some members of the local NGO remarked the decline of the supportive role of the extended family as the economic situation has worsened. This is a moot point however, since it is often in times of economic difficulty that family members become more reliant on each other for livelihood strategies”.

However, Earle (2006: 47) in his studies related with *hashar* in rural Uzbekistan, organized by the international organizations, argued that although family-oriented *hashar* is in decline, community *hashar* is on the increase after independence, and gave examples of many mosques built through *hashar*. As the main reasons for this, he asserts the decline in the provision of services by the government and the large number of donors in the area; however, as mentioned before, the most essential finding about the changing *hashar* is not the increase in its community form, but rather, due to the market-based economy, the increase in polarization among the community members and the influence of the local elite on the *mahalla kengash* and the decision-making process in *mahalla* politics after independence. An Uzbek woman in A-3 *mahalla* summarized this issue perfectly:

“Hashar is our tradition, an Uzbek tradition. We have preserved it even during the Soviet era. The main meaning of hashar is to support community in a collective way and with a voluntarist spirit; however after independence, some people in the mahalla began to give directions and push people to participate in hashar. This is not real hashar. Today, we are frightened into attending hashar. If we do not participate, the mahalla kengash will not help us, they would exclude us from the community. However, all hashar that is organized by the mahalla kengash is for their own benefit or for particular families, not for the whole community. This is not real hashar. Everything has changed. The Uzbek tradition has begun to disappear”.

Despite opinions such as this, many researchers see *hashar* as one of the main tools for improving capacity-building in community-based development. In particular, many Western-oriented international organizations who organize many *hashar* projects in Uzbekistan have commented that many community members remained passive in the *hashar* projects as a result of the state-oriented urban social policies of Soviet times. However, projects that have been successfully implemented through *hashar* have shown the villagers their own potential, and have stimulated them into thinking of new ways to improve their lives (Earle, 2006: 45). That said, such an evaluation clearly overlooks the existing discrepancies in the distribution of welfare within the *mahalla* community. As seen from the above statement, the problem with *hashar* is that rather than showing the *mahalla* members their own potential, since independence it has become something utilized not for the common good of the whole *mahalla*, but for the welfare of a small elite group. Noori (2006: 532) argues that *hashar* has caused ostentatious contributions of the local elite.

Earle (2006: 47) argues through his studies in rural Uzbekistan that: “*Villagers had at first been waiting for help from the state. They had been reluctant to believe that the community could solve its problems on its own*”. This is based on the assumption that all citizens were used to waiting for everything from the state during the Soviet era; however, as the case study of this dissertation has clearly shown, even in Tashkent, one of the biggest cities of the Soviet Union and thus a major beneficiary of central state help, many residents in the old city who were not articulated to the Soviet regime did not have this kind of tendency. In B-type *mahallas* in particular, there was a strong collective resistance that resulted in significant capacity-building of the community against the Soviet regime. As manifested in most of the interviews, many residents in A- and B-type *mahallas* had already learnt not to wait for help from the state during the Soviet regime, and accordingly, this claim of the international donor organizations remains quite naïve and superficial.

It should be pointed out that especially since the 1980s, with the perestroika policy, *hashar* as a collective action has gained popularity in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek regime has tended to increase *hashar* practices, especially in the new *mahallas* (C and D types). According to Hudoykulov (2006: 28), the district hokimiyat in *Mirzo Ulugbek raion*¹⁶⁷ of Tashkent organized *hashar* in many *mahallas* in 1996; however, although the *hashar* has been encouraged by both the central government and international organizations at the *mahalla*-scale as a community-based development, the transition to the market-based economy has unavoidably had negative effects on *hashar* practices in many Tashkent *mahallas*, causing a

¹⁶⁷ A Tashkent district in which many D-type *mahallas* are located.

polarization among the community members and resulting in the financial dependence of *mahalla* officers on the local elite.

Referring again to the power of *oqsoqol* and the elite families in *hashar* and unemployment in A- and B-type *mahallas*, as a last question the members of different *mahalla* communities were asked whether they believed the *hokimiyat* or the elite families held more influence over the *mahalla kengash*. As shown in Table 6.13, while 28 out of 39 respondents (71.8%) in A- and B-type *mahallas* said elite families, 42 out of 56 responders (75%) in C- and D-types opted for the *hokimiyat*. As discussed in the previous part of this chapter, this table proves that in A and B types, the *oqsoqol*'s power depends primarily on the elite families, while in C- and D-type *mahallas*, in contrast, it is believed that the *mahalla* officers' power comes from the *hokimiyat*, in that many *oqsoqols* in C and D types have a good working relationship with the *hokimiyat*. This result has important reflections on the discussion of *hashar*. It may be remembered that some residents were reluctant to participate in *hashar*, as claimed by Earle (2006: 47), as Uzbek citizens had got used to waiting for urban services from the state due to the strict centralist attitude of the Soviet regime. However, it would appear that many residents of A- and B-type *mahalla* believe that the *mahalla kengash* is under the control of the local elite rather than the *hokimiyat*.

Table 6.13 Which actor holds a more influential position over the *mahalla kengash* in the organization of *hashar*?

Types of Tashkent <i>Mahallas</i>	Elite families	The <i>hokimiyat</i>	Total
Types A and B	71.8 %	28.2%	100%
Types C and D	25%	75%	100%
Total	44.2%	55.8%	100%

*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

For example, an Uzbek man with a divorcee daughter in B-2 *mahalla* said: “Neither the *hokimiyat* nor the elite families should have influence over the community. I mean, all the residents should be equal in the *mahalla*; that is the real meaning of *mahalla*. Today, wealthy people donate money to the *mahalla kengash*, and in this way they become exempt from taking part in the *mahalla*'s collective activities. It is not justice”. In contrast, two Uzbek men (83 and 78 years-of-age) in B-2 *mahalla* commented that, “The elite family should have influence over the *mahalla kengash* because they donate money to the *mahalla*”. An interviewee in C-3 *mahalla* said of the influence of the elite families over the *mahalla kengash* and the *hokimiyat*: “It is real in Uzbekistan. I heard that our *oqsoqol* has a friend of the leader of Jen-Soviet in the *tuman mahalla jamgarma*”. The interviewee's daughter added, “In Uzbekistan, the *mahalla kengash* is under the influence of the *hokimiyat* and the

hokimiyat is under the influence of the elite and wealth family". Finally, an Uzbek man who is a cook in A-3 mahalla said:

"Of course, some people have the power to affect the decisions of the mahalla kengash. For example, the elite family donates money to the mahalla kengash, after which he can propose to the oqsoqol that something be done through hashar. Generally, if they need something, the oqsoqol declares hashar, and everyone in the mahalla helps him. In short, he can find free labor for his job".

In conclusion, the strong local power held by the officers of the *mahalla* and/or the local elite families, patriarchal relationships are not given characteristics in some localities, as this kind of capital is (re-)produced in order to fill some gaps in the system. The Uzbek *mahalla* in both the Soviet and the independent eras is a good example of this. The final point that should be remembered is that two dynamics – the power of *oqsoqols* and the local finance and network structure of the *mahallas* – feed one another. Neither the differences in local finance and network structures, nor the different local networks and local finance structures of the *mahallas* alone determine the strength of *oqsoqol* power. What is certain is that different degrees of *oqsoqol* power and different local finance and network structures have emerged out of the diverse needs of the localities, and that these different needs are, most of the time, shaped by the relationship with the central government. This is all too apparent from the existence of the different forms and intensities of the relations between the *mahallas* and the central government, both under the Soviet and the new Uzbekistani regimes. In previous literature it has been generally the presence of a powerful *oqsoqol*, local networking capacity and self-financing of the *mahalla kengash* that are cited to indicate a traditional *mahalla* structure; however the reason these kinds of characteristics have emerged in some localities while not in others is that different relationships were built between the Soviet state and the different residential units, i.e. the different *mahallas*. If the old *mahallas* (A and B types) had been articulated to the Soviet regime like the C and D types, would they have been able to sustain this traditional donation system? And if this donation system had not been maintained during the Soviet era, would the power of the *oqsoqol* still have been continued?

It could be argued that despite the existence of standard regulations set by the central government, different policy implementations are made by local governments based on historically and practically different relationships to the one that exists between the center and local. Moreover, the different attitudes and their impact on the different strategies and power levels of local managers are shaped mostly by this differentiation in center-local relationships.

Table 6.14 Internal Organization of the *Mahalla Kengash*

Periods		Internal Organization of <i>Mahalla</i>			
		Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D
Pre-Colonial		<i>Oqsoqol, Imam, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari</i>	---	<i>Oqsoqol, Imam, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Imam, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari, or: ---</i>
Colonial		<i>Oqsoqol, Imam, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari</i>	---	<i>Oqsoqol, Imam, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Imam, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari, or: --- or: Kvartalniy</i>
Soviet	1917–1940	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Jen-Soviet, kucha boshlari</i>	---	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Jen-Soviet, kucha boshlari</i>	<i>Kvartalniy</i>
	1940–1964	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Jen-Soviet, kucha boshlari</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Jen-Soviet, kucha boshlari</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Jen-Soviet, kucha boshlari</i>	<i>+ JEGs (Rais and Jen-Soviet, secretary) + Damkom, Padezkom</i>
	1964–1990	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Jen-Soviet, kucha boshlari + Uchaskavoy</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Jen-Soviet kucha boshlari, + Uchaskavoy</i>	<i>+Uchaskavoy, + JEGs (Rais and Jen-Soviet, secretary), + Damkom, Padezkom</i>	<i>+Uchaskavoy + JEGs (Rais and Jen-Soviet, secretary) + Damkom, Padezkom</i>
Post-Independence		<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari + Uchaskavoy + Maslahatchi and Posbon</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, kucha boshlari, + Uchaskavoy, + Maslahatchi and Posbon</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip, Hatun kızlar, + Damkom, Padezkom + Uchaskavoy + Maslahatchi and Posbon</i>	<i>Oqsoqol, Kotip Hatun kızlar, +Damkom, Padezkom + Uchaskavoy + Maslahatchi and Posbon</i>

*Source: Field Survey in Tashkent, October 2008–April 2009.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: THE PROCESS OF DECENTRALIZATION IN DIACLECTICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE AND MAHALLA

*“Today, the state means everything, like in the old era. What Karimov says is performed at once in our country. That’s all. Even Independence Day is celebrated every year on a different day when Karimov wakes up and declares it. However, he is a dummy device at the top of the state. In our country, there is a minority nomenklature which still retains power in political and economic life. There are the elites of each province and city. They govern our country, our cities and our provinces; and Karimov acts as a balance amongst them. They feed one another”.*¹⁶⁸

There is little doubt that the political regime in Uzbekistan is quite authoritarian and has strong centralist tendencies, and spending only three days in Uzbekistan gives one a clear understanding of just how authoritarian the state is. The political regime is clearly dominated by the President, with all media, political, economic and social institutions, including non-governmental organizations (NGO), and even the *Oliy Majlis* (Supreme Council) directed by the President through the presidential system. Criticism of the government or the President in any public or private space is forbidden, and every book, journal or article published in Uzbekistan should start with a quote from the President. Although the centralist tendency of the state is a key factor in this study, there is an intention to challenge studies that explain the centralist and the authoritarian state structure of the political regime in Uzbekistan through a presupposition of the sharp dichotomy between civil society and the state. It is argued here that such an approach can explain neither the position of the President at the center of the economic and political elite in Uzbekistan, nor the role of the state in the political economic

¹⁶⁸ Interview with a former *Erk Party* member during the preliminary research in August, 2006, when asked about the new regime and President Karimov.

structure. As old members of the *Erk Party* stressed during our discussions, the political regime in Uzbekistan is actually based on the self-interest of political groups. Poluntzas (1978) argues that the state is a social entity, and that the political actors act as mediators between the economic and political actors within both the capitalist and non-capitalist elements of civil society (Jessop, 2008: 119). The contradiction that arises here is that if the state is defined according to the social relations embedded in the political and economic structure and civil society rather than itself, how is it possible to discuss centralist power and an authoritarian regime? Can the state's centralist tendencies be defined only in terms of the concept of decentralization if it refers to the political or the administrative decentralization realized between the different levels of the state apparatus?

Both the local and the central state are social formations, and the power relations in both changed under the structural dynamics of the transition era, becoming more explanatory than the functional and/or financial divisions at the legal level between the central and local government when attempting to understand the dialectic and reciprocal center-local relationship. Each neighborhood committee (*mahalla kengash*), as an agent of the nation state and a representative of the local community, has affected the strategies of the central state and the power relations of the community, while also being affected by them. State strategies and the power relations in the community are in a state of constant change under the influence of both path-dependency and path-shaping policies within the new political-economic context of the neo-liberal transition. This dissertation has put forward the argument that the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime and its hegemonic project had affected the internal organizational structure, the mode of representation and the mode of intervention of urban *mahalla kengashes*; however it is also argued that the decentralization policy and the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani state were shaped by the different policy implementations of the *mahalla kengashes* that resulted from their diverse socio-spatial and socio-economic structures as well as their distinctive power structures. In other words, the decentralization policy and hegemonic projects of the post-Soviet regime are spatio-temporally shaped by the dialectic, reciprocal and dynamic relationships between the central government and the different types of *mahalla kengashes*. In addition, this relationship is affected by the conflicts that emerge both at the national and local levels of the political/economic environment, so much so that in certain types of *mahallas* the decentralization policies of the post-Soviet Uzbekistani regime have resulted in further centralization.

This thesis has aimed to examine the various paths and policy implementations of different *mahalla kengashes* in urban Uzbekistan during the neo-liberal transition, and to reveal

whether these divergent paths indicate a break from, or continuity with, their previous paths in the Soviet era. Focus has been on the historical background of the dialectic relationship between the *mahalla kengash* and the state, as well as the effects of the neo-liberal transition on this relationship, within which the state strategies of both the Uzbekistani regime and the different *mahalla kengashes* have changed. As a result, the central and local state, as well as their dialectic and reciprocal relationships warrant closer analysis in a historical-political-economic context.

In short, this dissertation has focused on the continuity/change in local politics in Uzbekistan during the post-Soviet era, studying how different *mahalla kengashes* in Tashkent (re-)produced various strategies and tactics in the context of the decentralization policy and the new hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani government during the neo-liberal transition. In focusing on the change/continuity in local politics it became necessary to understand what form local politics took before the neo-liberal transition, and not just their current shape. Adopting a historical perspective to analyze the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the *mahalla* and the state, two questions were sought to be theoretically and practically answered: (a) In the neo-liberal transition, how has the Uzbekistani government (re-)structured the local administrative system in the institution-building process? Does this new local administrative system indicate a break from, or continuity with, the previous local administration system in the Soviet regime; and (b) how and why have the *mahalla kengashes* of different urban *mahalla* types (re-)produced different strategies? Do these divergent strategies point to a break from, or continuity with, their strategies in the Soviet era?

First, the structural hegemony of the neo-liberal transition pushed the Uzbekistani regime to launch a decentralization of their administrative system, as was the case in much of the post-Soviet geography and in all capitalist state structures in the globalization era. There are many suggested theories as to why this occurred, including those related to new localism, glocalism, hollowing out of the nation state, rescaling of the state, and governance (MacLoad & Goodwin, 1999; Duncan & Goodwin, 1988; Brenner, 1999; Jessop, 1993; 1994; 1995; 1997; 2008; Gamble, 1994; Smith, 2002; Bird & Wallich, 1994; Swyngedouw, 1997; Wetzels, 2001; Tiebout, 1956; Oates, 1972; Libman, 2008; Vogel, 2004; Wolman, 2003; Suraszka, 1996; Stenning, 1996). All of the above authors attempt to explain the dynamics, reasons and results of the decentralization or localization processes during the globalization era, while also emphasizing how changes have occurred in local politics under the structural hegemony of globalization. According to Jessop (2008: 179), globalization has both

structural and strategic elements, which is clearly multi-causal¹⁶⁹ and multi-form,¹⁷⁰ making globalization a relatively unintended chaotic outcome of interactions of various strategies to shape or resist globalization in a complex, path-dependent global society. Within this process the nation state has a central role in the management of economic relations in the new neo-liberal regime, and thus has been restructured, with much of its authority and power being localized. The nation state has also been responding to and dealing with the “*crisis in traditional forms and bases of national citizenship*” (Jessop, 2008: 196). In these processes the activities of the national state have raised some controversies, becoming at the same time both decentralized and centralized. At this point, each nation state has determined and selected its own state strategy from within the structural and controversial constraints of neo-liberalism. Many examples of this can be found in different geographies, despite the wealth of discourse related to decentralization in neo-liberalism; and this demonstrates that the economic system of neo-liberalism bringing about an increase in the centralist tendencies of capitalist states over the local state. This is especially the case if local government is unable to attract national or international capital, or achieve economic development. Accordingly, the pressure of decentralization on the administrative structure of states is only a contemporary hegemonic discourse of neo-liberalism during the globalization era, which is why Jessop defined globalization as a “*moment*”; and furthermore, each nation state has selected its own strategy to deal with the contradictions of neo-liberalism, which is what led Jessop to define globalization as multi-causal and multi-form. In other words, the nation state, as an agency, affects the imposition of the structural hegemony of globalization in its territory and socio-economic relations through its “strategic selectivity”. Accordingly, decentralization should not be understood merely as an administrative concept (meaning the division of function, finance and authority between different administrative scales), but rather within the political economic context as part of the hegemonic project and the accumulation strategy of the nation state.

How can these views be carried over to the explanation of the *mahalla* and its relations with the state? There were some continuities in the state structure during the transition period and the *mahalla kengash* is a good example of this continuity. The *mahalla* went through some changes in function and organizational structure, while also attracting more interest from the state. In addition, the stakeholder groups represented in the *mahalla* also started to penetrate into the state. As a result of these processes, the *mahalla* began to develop differently to

¹⁶⁹ In that it results from the complex and contingent interaction of many different causal processes and contexts, and can be realized through different strategies

¹⁷⁰ In that it assumes different forms in different contexts, and can be realized through different strategies – neo-liberal globalization being only one, requiring complementary and flanking strategies even where it manages to take root.

what had been envisaged by the central government, while the urban social policies devolved to the *mahalla* started to affect the implementation processes with the *mahalla*. In short, the old structure of the *mahalla* and the power relations within the local community has changed simultaneously, in the transition period. Accordingly, the historically dynamic position and role of the *mahalla*, as both a local institution and a form of governance serving urban social policies, offers the best example of this continuity in transition, and is also useful for understanding the continuity of the ever-changing relations between the *mahalla* with the central government in each period. This results in two conclusions concerning urban policy in the *mahalla*: that the stories of urban policy in the Soviet era and the period following independence acquired quite a different character under state-socialism and neo-liberalism; and that there was a resemblance to clientalist relations due to the tacit knowledge and path-dependency in the locality. Therefore, both the central state and the *mahalla kengash*, as a local state choice, engaged in strategies and actions that under the effects of both (a) the Soviet legacy and Soviet institutional structure, and (b) the structural constraints of the neo-liberal transition. For this reason, the historical perspective is quite important in an analysis of the institutional change at the local level in Uzbekistan, just as it is crucial to understand the significance of the *mahalla kengash* in the hegemonic project and the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime.

The main question of the dissertation was formulated to reveal how the *mahalla* is able to sustain itself today, and it is understood that this has been achieved as a result of its reciprocal relations with the state and the central government. The modern state tries to establish hegemony over society using different channels, one of which is through its relations with informal institutions in local areas that play a crucial role in the regulation of local community life. These relations provide the state with control over society and strengthen its power, while also providing informal local institutions and elite groups with access to state resources and the use of state strategies to raise interest – in this way, the reciprocal relations between the state and local institutions are established. That said, this reciprocal relationship brings with it more than just these two results. Neither the state nor the informal local institutions are static, and so the relationship changes as the institutions change. The *mahalla*, as a social institution, has perpetuated until today on the strength of its constant and reciprocal relationship with the state apparatus, and culminated in the *mahalla* becoming a formal as well as informal local institution. In other words, the *mahalla* has always been a political tool for the state to control society; however this does not fully describe their function, in that they also influence the state. Although the state used this institution, the *mahalla* and its interest groups, especially the local elite, were also able to

enter into the state and influence the political structure as part of this reciprocal relationship, which has always been double-sided. This in turn caused the *mahalla*'s internal organization, interaction model and representation mode to change through the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and the post-Soviet periods. This dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the central power and the urban *mahalla kengash* may be analyzed from a historical perspective, covering both the Soviet and post-Soviet eras.

Some dynamics at both the national and local level that have created conflicts in the recent center-local relationship are also dynamics of the Soviet regime. The historical background of the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan is crucial, along with the recent political/economic and socio-spatial transformation in the shaping of the center-local relationship. This historical background covers the main characteristics of center-local relationships in each period in Uzbekistan: pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods. The main intention in **Chapter Two** is to show how the state formation in Uzbekistan has gradually become more centralist, right up until today's formation. Moreover, when analyzing historically the center-local relationship and local politics in Uzbekistan, the political and economic dynamics of both the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes, as well as their hegemonic projects to shape local politics and urbanization, are under consideration. In other words, the historical background is crucial for an examination of urbanization and the local politics of Uzbekistan, in that several states in the region, having developed their own strategies, politics and hegemonic projects, have created their own local political formation, and urbanization, as well as socio-spatial relationships, which have also influenced the political formation, local politics, hegemonic projects, socio-spatial relationship and urbanization of the following regime. A review of the history of local politics in Uzbekistan not only provides a sufficient understanding of the *mahalla* today, but also reveals that many of the intricacies and legacies of contemporary local politics can be traced back to the pre-Soviet and Soviet times. The importance of the Soviet regime for the Uzbekistani state and society can be summarized with the following three points, all of which influenced urban politics in Uzbekistan and the *mahalla*-state relationship: 1) the establishment process of the autonomous Uzbekistani SSR by the Soviet regime, which in theoretical and practical terms was the first emergence of a modern state containing the marker "Uzbek," and indeed the first "Uzbek" nation; 2) the Soviet regime's radical intervention into the social sphere in order to create a new Uzbek nation; and 3) after this process, especially after Khrushchev, the strengthening of the Uzbekistani state and nation as a result of the decentralization process of the Soviet regime. Indeed, these three points were all related to the control of the

region by the Soviet regime and its attempts to establish its hegemony in a region with a colonial past.

In the explanation of the historical background of the Soviet era, the two meanings of the *mahalla* were used. First, the *mahalla* as a political/administrative unit was analyzed, where the first sub-hypothesis, that the Soviet regime accepted the *mahalla kengash* as a social institution (*jemoat tashkilati*) as a means of controlling society and providing security in the local native communities, rather than destroying its traditional structure to create an ideal classless and equal Soviet urban structure, was tested. At this point, first the *mahalla kengash* in the pre-Soviet period was summarized. Afterwards, the Soviet legacy on the *mahalla kengash* was examined in the three different periods to detail the changing relationship between the *mahalla* and the regime in Central Asia and Uzbekistan. Before analyzing the Soviet regulations regarding the *mahalla kengash* during these three periods, the October Revolution and the establishment process of the Uzbek SSR was summarized, after which the Soviet legacy was analyzed in three different periods: the *korenizatsiia* policy and the *mahalla*, related with the first years of the Uzbek SSR; the decentralization policy and *jemaot tashkilotlari*, related with the Khrushchev era; and the *perestroika* period, related with the dissolution process of the Soviet Union. Finally, the regulations related to the *mahalla* in the period following independence were summarized. Thus, Chapter Two demonstrates that any regulation of a local institution by the state cannot be described without a broad overview of local politics and the state (under the Soviet regime, Uzbekistan as a federal Soviet Republic, and the new regime).

In the post-Soviet geography, different states saw different dynamics at work in the transition from one regime to another and the formation of the state structure, and as a result, these states faced more controversies and conflicts in the institution-building process when compared to the nation states in the capitalist geography. Consequently, the structural and controversial constraints of neo-liberalism upon the state – both the decentralized administrative structure, and the centralized position of the nation state in the management of the economic system of neo-liberalism – have become more conflictual, pushing the post-Soviet states, including Uzbekistan, to adopt a more centralist state structure rather than a decentralist one. What is important for post-Soviet countries is their attempt to create a capitalist economy and the necessary social relations, state structure and capitalist class in the era of globalization. This has necessitated a decentralization of administrative and political power in the nation states, putting the state in a central position in the transition era. The post-Soviet states tried to establish their institutional structures following a decentralization strategy, devolving some authority to the local governments and making

them financially and functionally autonomous; while local governments became regulated in line with the new neo-liberal capitalist social relations in terms of private property and the capitalist class. However, the local authorities most of the time defined their strategies and policy implementations according to their social and power relations, which may be described briefly as a local hegemony that was shaped mostly during the Soviet era, rather than according to the new structural hegemony of neo-liberalism. At the same time, the new central regimes were attempting to establish their nation state structure and national identity, as well as a neo-liberal capitalist economic system, which came into direct conflict with the establishment of a decentralized administrative system and centralist intervention into local government. This resulted in policy variations that were not up to the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism, and brought about the failure of the decentralization strategy in the post-Soviet geography. Blame for the failure has been laid at the door of the centralist Soviet regime, with particular emphasis on the continuation of the power of the political elite (Soviet *nomenklature*) or the concept of path-dependency in the institutional structure of these states.

The aim of this thesis was not to analyze the degree to which the Uzbekistani regime became decentralized through the *mahalla kengash* according to the dominant hegemonic scientific approach, but rather how the internal structure of the *mahalla kengash* and the relationship between the *mahalla* and state were shaped as a result of the tension and conflicts in local politics. The effects of this tension upon the *mahalla kengash* were analyzed through a comparison of the Soviet and Uzbek eras. In short, it is argued that different *mahalla kengashes* were shaped mostly by the Soviet *mahalla* policy, that their eventual structures deviated substantially from the expectations of the Uzbekistani state, and that the local variations influenced center-local relations, and vice versa.

In the face of restraint by the structural hegemony of the new economic regime, the Uzbek state, like other regimes, has relative autonomy in the establishment of its hegemonic project and retains a degree of choice in its strategies. As Duncan & Goodwin (1988: 5) argue, although restrained by the central government and centrally imposed legal statutes, local governments retain a degree of choice in their actions. This study explores how the different types of urban *mahalla kengash* of Tashkent (re-)produce various strategies, tactics, paths and policy implementations in the Uzbekistani regime's hegemonic project of nation state-building and the decentralization policy that are shaping the central and local state (the *mahalla kengash*) with a specific institutional form, regime of representation, and mode of intervention within the neo-liberal transition era from Soviet to Post-Soviet. It is suggested that the new structural hegemony of the global neo-liberal system not only shapes spatio-

temporally the strategies of the Uzbekistani regime, as is the case with other post-Soviet regimes, but also shapes the different strategies and tactics of *mahalla kengash* according to their capacity to articulate to the strategies of class and/or identity politics of the former regime.

To this end, the theoretical framework of the thesis (**Chapter Three**) is constructed in two stages conveniently the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the Uzbekistani regime's strategies and the strategies and tactics of the urban *mahalla kengash*; to explain the dynamics that caused tension in local politics in Uzbekistan at a national and local scale. This study has asserted that critical realism theory is the most suitable methodology for explaining the dialectic relationship between the state's policies and the different actions of the *mahalla kengashes*. The theory chapter opened a discussion on three issues: (a) the effects and importance of the Soviet *nomenklature* in the transition from the Soviet to post-Soviet era; (b) the global discourse of "decentralization" in transition countries; and (c) the role of the state in the post-Soviet transition. The main source of tension in the center-local relationship in local politics in Uzbekistan occurred as a result of the pressure of the global discourse of decentralization and the centralist tendency of the Uzbekistani regime in its administrative/political system. There have been many studies that focus on decentralization in the administrative structures of post-Soviet countries, with particular emphasis on the centralist tendencies of these countries (Hadiz, Vedi R.; 2008: 527; Steen & Ruus, 2002; Turan, 2009; Humprey, 2007; Ilkhamov, 2004; 2007; Clark, 1999; Noori, 2006; Baykal, 2006; Epstein & Winter, 2004; Bektemirov & Rahimov, 2004; Earle, 2006; Masaru, 2006); however, many claim that it is the Soviet heritage in their political regimes that is to blame for the centralist tendencies. In different chapters of this thesis the Soviet legacy has been analyzed in three different periods: the era of the *korenizatsiia* policy and the *mahalla*, corresponding to the first years of the Uzbekistani SSR; the period that saw the decentralization policy and *jemoat tashkilotlari*, related with the Khrushchev era; and the *perestroika* period, related with the dissolution process of the Soviet Union. The above hypothesis embraces crucial and critical findings concerning (a) whether or not the Soviet administrative structure in Uzbekistan was centralist, as is claimed in literature of the Soviet regime; (b) at which point the new regime, contrary to its claim, acquired a different character from the Soviet regime in the urban politics; and (c) to what extent does the recent centralism in the Uzbekistani political economy stem from the Soviet past.

Despite of the strong bureaucratic power and the centralist administrative structure of the Soviet regime, there are many examples of localization in the Soviet history of Uzbekistan, when the Soviet regime was committed to achieving the "Sovietization of Uzbekistani

society”. For this reason it is necessary also to discuss the centralist Soviet regime in Uzbekistan so as to understand to what degree the Uzbekistani regime followed the Soviet centralist tendency in urban politics. In brief, it is argued here that the centralist tendency of the Uzbekistani regime existed despite the decentralization policy. This centralist tendency is due not only to the Soviet heritage, but also the original dynamics of the transition era from the socialist regime to the market-based economy, and the shift from politics of class and redistribution to politics of representation and identity in the process of nation state building. This issue was examined in terms of the effects of a nation state on the imposition of globalization from the concept of “strategic selectivity” of Jessop’s analysis.

This thesis then analyzed the importance of locality as a secondary dynamic of the tension in the center-local relationship, for which it was necessary to discuss several theories of urban politics to identify a theoretical framework that could best explain the recent crisis in the center-local relationship in capitalist states. To achieve this, an analysis was made of the effects of local government on the policies and regulations of the nation state.¹⁷¹ Related to the main hypothesis of this thesis, an attempt was made to integrate actor-based approach into the structural arguments in order to demonstrate the dialectic relationship between the agency and actors in post-Soviet countries and the original structural conditions of the era of transition from a socialist regime to a market-based economy. This is important for understanding the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the *mahalla* managers and the Uzbekistani regime in the issues of both decentralization policy and state hegemony.¹⁷²

A historical analysis of the *mahalla* as both a socio-spatial unit and a political/administrative body in local politics in Uzbekistan allows a clear understanding of the dialectic relationship between the center and local. From one perspective, the *mahalla* takes a spatio-temporal form, differentiated by the strategic selectivity of the Soviet regime; however from another angle, the *mahalla* may be viewed from the perspective of the different *mahalla kengashes*, with their different social formations and power relations, as producers of different responses and strategies to the Uzbekistani regime. This results in different center-local relationships in each locality, with local politics in each locality taking shape regardless of the standard regulations of the central regime in its decentralization policy and hegemonic projects.

In this thesis, the *mahalla*, as a socio-spatial and political/administrative unit, was analyzed in order to explain the institution building and/or institutional change in the Uzbekistani state

¹⁷¹ In Chapter Four, an analysis was made of how the different types of urban mahalla in Tashkent were shaped with their different social and power relations in the Soviet era as a result of the dialectic relationship between the Soviet hegemony and the resistance or strategies of the native communities.

¹⁷² In Chapters Five and Six the effects of different mahalla types, as an agency, upon the decentralization policy of the Uzbek regime and its hegemony were examined.

organization using the concepts of path-dependency and/or path-shaping. This was done paying heed to the dialectic center-local relationships from the perspective of critical realism theory and at the general scale of the politico-economic transition of Uzbekistan from a socialist economy to a market-based economy under the structural constraints of the neo-liberal discourse of decentralization. Accordingly, in this study it is argued that the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime and its new hegemonic projects have been shaped both by the dialectic relationship between different types of urban *mahalla kengash* and by standard state regulation. This dialectic relationship between the center and local came into conflict due to the dynamics of the transition era, when the actual strategic choices of the actor (political elite and institution) were made as part of path-dependency and/or path-shaping approaches at both a national and local scale. There is a wealth of literature on the issue of transition in post-Soviet countries and Central Asia (Allworth, 1994; Roy, 2000, Carlisle, 2001; Saroyan, 1996; Collins, 1999; Markowitz, 1998; Luong, 2003; Alexander, Buchli & Humphrey, 2007; Andrusz, Harloe & Szelenyi, 1996; Enyedi, 1998; Ashwin, 2000; Fiermann, 1991; Fish, 1998; Clark, 1999; Synder, 2000; Rahul, 1979; Rumer, 2002; Radntz, 2003; Masaru 2006; Ilkhamov, 2004; Khalid, 2006; 1998; Abramson, 1997; Noori, 2006; Sievers, 2002; Coudouel, 1998; Kamp (2008), Morgan Liu (2002), Dadabayev (2006), Baykal, 1997; Shahrani; Fugere, 2005; Baykal, 2007; Hanks, 2007; Kandiyoti, 1996; Peshenkova, 1996; Robertson, 2003, Spechler, 2007; Dadabayev, 2004; Humphrey, 2007; Stenning, 2005; Hisao, Saxena & Dadabaev, 2005; Ilkhamov, 2007; Ruziev, Ghosh & Dow, 2007; Shadeo, 2000; Stronski, 2003; Musil, 1980; Kotkin, 1995; Domanski, 1994; Kideckel, 2004; Hamilton, 1995; Sýkora, 2000; Kostinskiy, 1994; Stenning, 2005; Baločkaitė, 2010; Kotkin, 1997; Ashwin, 2000; Kideckel, 2004; Adams, 2008). This thesis contributes to post-Soviet transition literature in its description of the institutional change in Uzbekistan through the case of the “urban *mahalla*” within the dialectic relationship of the structure and strategic action. More specifically, three dynamics that caused conflict in the center-local relationship in Uzbekistani local politics and thus shaped the decentralization policy and the new state hegemony are put forward:

1) *Conflicts between path-dependency and path-shaping at both national and local scale:*

Several institutions and actors in the Uzbekistani regime have path-dependently continued to maintain old habits, customs and behaviors in the period of institution building, at both national and local levels; however it is not the centralist tendency that has been carried forward, but rather the center-local relationship form based on negotiation and bargaining. This center-local relationship in Uzbekistan during the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods was analyzed in Chapter Two.

2) ***Conflicts between the structural constraints related with the new accumulation strategy and the nation-state building processes related with the hegemonic project:*** To begin, there are the structural constraints of the new era, which are defined as neo-liberal by the nation state, and the path-shaping of the new institutional structure of the administrative system according to neo-liberalist thought. This new institution building, which is part of the accumulation strategy of the neo-liberal market-based economy, is based mainly on a decentralized administrative system. To continue, in order to establish a nation state and to create a suitable economic environment for the transition to a market-based economy, the new hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime accommodates conflicting elements within the accumulation strategies of the neo-liberal system. Through spatio-temporal strategic selectivity, the Uzbekistani regime accepted the urban *mahalla* as a body of local self-government in 1999, aiming to create both a decentralized administrative structure, which is necessary for the accumulation strategy of neo liberalism, and a national consciousness, deemed vital for its new hegemonic project. In this way, the *mahallas* became both local self-governing bodies and tools of hegemony.

3) ***Conflicts between the strategic choices of the Uzbekistani regime¹⁷³ and the different strategies and tactics of mahalla kengash because of their differential spatio-temporal characteristics:*** In other words, the conflicts between the state accumulation strategy and hegemonic projects and local variations of the *mahalla kengashes*. These different strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengashes* spatio-temporally contradict the state accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects.

To explain these three dynamics, three case chapters have been included in this thesis. The first explains how and why local variations – or spatio-temporal differences – emerged that brought different responses, strategies and tactics from different *mahalla kengashes*. The reasons for this were given in the first part of the case study (Chapter Four) from the perspective of the dialectic relationship between the spatio-temporally strategic selectivity of the Soviet regime and the local representation of the Soviet regime, which in the case of Uzbekistan means the urban *mahalla*. This dialectic relationship between the centre (the Soviet regime) and the local (the Uzbekistani *mahalla*, as a socio-spatial institution) was analyzed in terms of the (re-)production of urban space and the Soviet hegemony over the Central Asian geography for the case of Tashkent. Jessop's methodology was adopted as a crucial tool, in that its strategic-relational approach overcomes some necessary historical sequences in the development of a structure and agency or a mandatory order of presentation

¹⁷³ *Mahalla* as a local self-governing body and a tool of the hegemonic project.

for empirical analysis. At this point, it was claimed that the recent tactics and strategies of different types of *mahalla kengash* were based on the dialectic relationship between the Soviet regime and different urban communities of Uzbekistan.

The *mahalla*, as a socio-spatial unit of urban Soviet Uzbekistan, was analyzed alongside a sub-hypothesis that argued that the mode of intervention of the Soviet regime to the socio-spatial structure of urban Tashkent through the implementation of certain policies of economics, urban planning and housing led to the emergence of today's different types of *mahallas* in Uzbekistan, and a different urbanization process when compared to cases in Eastern Europe and Russia. Concerning this, the thesis argues that the intervention of the Soviet regime included policies of ignorance (non-action), transformation, establishment and reproduction when it came to the residential units of Central Asian cities. Through these policies, the production modes of local communities became articulated to the state structure in different levels and forms, in a departure from what the Soviet regime had designed for these local communities. As a result of the different levels of articulation, inequality and uneven development between different Central Asian cities, and between cities and regions in the Soviet geography, emerged. To address this issue, first, the urban structure of Central Asia and Eastern Europe in the pre-Soviet era was discussed, showing that the urban structures of Central Asia and Eastern Europe had already developed unequally by the time the Soviet Union was established. Second, the dynamics of the reproduction of the urban space by the Soviet regime was discussed, giving instances of Soviet policies, such as industrialization and planned economy, collectivization and immigration policy, and urban planning and housing policy, with the intention being to show how uneven development at an urban scale was reproduced in the Soviet geography. Third, the urbanization process of Soviet Tashkent was examined in three periods in which the living space of the city was deeply affected: the first years of the Revolution; the period from World War II to the 1966 earthquake; and the period of rapid *mikroraion* construction in Tashkent in the wake of the 1966 earthquake. The development of Tashkent in different periods demonstrates how different residential units emerged, and gave an idea of their different socio-economic structures.

The initial aim of this dissertation was to research the dynamics of how and why the *mahalla* as a socio-spatial unit in Uzbekistan has sustained itself until today. Despite two major social transformations (during the Soviet regime, and following independence), the *mahalla* was able to sustain itself thanks to its ability of self-articulation to the central power and its position between state and the society. This sustainability and self-articulation created dynamism in the *mahalla* that led to a change in its structure, however not all *mahallas*

underwent the same changes, with some changing radically during the Soviet period, others changing more slowly, and some that did not change at all. In addition, some new residential units were established during the Soviet period. Accordingly, *mahallas* today have a dynamic structure, and different types have developed with different spatial characteristics, and different levels of social interaction, economy and education. As a consequence, an attempt has been made to classify Tashkent's *mahallas* according to their period of change and their spatial differences, however further distinctions can be made in their level of self-articulation to the Soviet system and to the state structure, their resilience to, and means of, social and political transformation, and their responses to state social policies. This leads to the understanding that, in contrast to the claims made in recent transformation literature about Central Asia, there was no standard transformation in Uzbekistani society, in that different social structures exist in society that deal with the adaptation to the new structure of the Uzbekistani state in different ways. The individual types of *mahalla* are merely different forms of a social structure in Uzbekistan that affect the people's capacity for resilience to the new environment of social tension, social crisis and economic instability. These different types of *mahallas* are derived from their different levels of self-articulation to the former regime rather than from their cultural characteristics. Thus, an analysis of *mahallas* types is crucial for understanding how the standard social policies of the state turned into different practices at the local level in the different types of *mahallas*.

In **Chapter Four**, the main hypothesis put forward was that the different types of urban *mahalla* in Uzbekistan had emerged out of the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between (a) the Soviet legacy of the *mahalla kengash* and the urban space in Uzbekistan, and (b) the inherent characteristics of the Uzbekistani *mahalla*. In this respect, it is impossible to categorize the urban *mahallas* under *traditional* or *modern* headings, in that their different recent strategies and tactics have been shaped mostly according to their capacity for social, economic or political articulation to the Soviet regime, which is determined according to the relationship between the spatio-temporal choices of the administrative structures (the Soviet regime) and the differential spatio-temporal horizons and action capacities of the individual and/or institution (the urban *mahalla* community). The criteria for the selection of the *mahallas* to be analyzed in the field survey was established using some socio-economic parameters, in which the characteristics of the different *mahalla* types were defined in detail and the preconditions of the dissertation's main hypothesis were put forward. Tashkent's *mahallas* were categorized into four groups according to their Soviet experience: A, B, C and D types. The four types of urban *mahallas* – being non-articulated, articulated, semi-articulated, with spatial transformations, and semi-articulated with re-located *mahallas* to the

regime during the Soviet period – offer an eclectic mix of the Soviet local politics and new local politics. During this categorization process, the *mahalla* was (re-)structured as a political/administrative unit under regulations applied by the Soviet regime to the *mahalla kengash*. Also, the Soviet legacy on the *mahalla kengash* cannot be examined separately from the political structure of the Soviet Uzbekistan. Central Asia, and Uzbekistan in particular, was a special part of the Soviet Union. The Soviet regime, at least up until the Khrushchev era, had tried to establish security and hegemony in the region to counteract the lack of experience with capitalism in the nation states in the region; and in this regard, the urbanization process and urban politics in Central Asia differed greatly from that witnessed in Eastern Europe. A direct relationship exists between the national policy of the Soviet regime for Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan, and the (re-)structuring of the *mahalla kengash*. This was covered in Chapter Four, in which a summary was made of the Soviet policies in Central Asia and the laws enacted related to the *mahalla kengash* during the Soviet era. One of the sub-hypotheses of this dissertation is that the Soviet regime appointed the *mahalla kengash*, as a social institution (*jemoat tashkiloti*), to act as a control mechanism over society and to provide security in the native local communities, rather than destroying the traditional *mahalla* structure in order to create an ideal classless and equal Soviet urban structure.

The second (b) and third (c) questions were related to how the strategies and tactics of different *mahalla kengashes* contradicted the state accumulation strategies and the hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime, and were explained in Chapters Five and Six. First, the hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime and the functions of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic tool were analyzed referring to three important issues: *o'zbekchiliq*; state control of society; and state financial assistance, which are referred to as important roles of the *mahalla kengash* in the nation state-building process, its importance as a civil society, and as a community-based organization in the transition era from the Soviet regime to the market-based economy. In this chapter, the *mahalla kengash* was analyzed in terms of its mode of intervention,¹⁷⁴ and it was demonstrated how the transition in Uzbekistan was

¹⁷⁴ Jessop's (2008) analysis of the capitalist state in three levels provides a beneficial analytical tool for this study:
 - The capitalist state's internal organization: "... its internal organization expressed through the distribution of powers among different parts of the state system, considered both territorially and functionally. In addition to the obvious issue of the relative weight of the legislative and executive branches of government, it is also important to investigate the relative weigh of different parts of the administrative apparatus, the role of the law and money in its internal organization and the form and extent of its administrative unity".
 - Its representation mode: "... in the various forms of representation and their articulation into a representational regime, among the relevant forms of representation we can include territorial and functional representation, pluralism, clientalism, *raison d'etat*, and populism. Also relevant here would be the roles played by political parties, various types of corporatist body, social movements and state managers".

realized along different paths under the dialectic relationship between the structural choices and the different strategies and tactics of the *mahalla kengash*. Moreover, it is shown which urban communities were most able to be articulated to the new accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects of the state. In short, during the transition era the effects of the political shift of the regime, from class politics to identity politics, and from redistribution politics to representative politics in the urban *mahalla* differed according to the different articulation capacities of the *mahalla* to the previous regime's class and redistribution politics. Second, the decentralization policy that the Uzbekistani regime adopted within the structural constraints of the neo-liberal system was analyzed and compared with the different strategies and responses of several *mahalla kengashes* in Tashkent, and in Chapter Six, the internal organization and the mode of representation of the different *mahalla kengashes* were also analyzed. These two chapters offer a clear indication that there a dialectic and reciprocal relationship exists between the central state and the *mahalla kengash*, and that in each locality, this reciprocal and dialectic relationship affected the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani regime, as well as the *mahalla kengash*, in different ways. The main argument put forward in this section is that the local government not only represents, but also controls the local community, and that the balance between the representative and control functions is spatio-temporally altered in different *mahalla* types. Thus, whether the local government is a tool of the central government for the control or the preservation of civil society against the state differs from one *mahalla* to another.

In **Chapter Five**, the origins of the strategic selectivity of the Uzbekistani regime was analyzed, focusing on the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic tool in political history. One of the most original aspects of Uzbekistan among the post-Soviet countries is that the modern state and the modern national identity were established during the Soviet regime. In other words, while in many countries, including many in the post-Soviet geography, the modern nation identity emerged coincidentally with capitalism, in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, the identity of the modern nation emerged under the socialist regime of the Soviet era. This situation created many anomalies in the post-Soviet transition of Central Asia; however what has been important for the center-local relationship in Uzbekistan is that many institutional and political structures and characteristics are still based on the Soviet regime. Several East European countries and Russia were able to establish their new regimes easily as a result of their pre-Soviet institutional structure, but for the Uzbekistani regime, it

- Its intervention mode: "... its various forms of intervention in civil society and the capitalist economy. This concerns not only the state's role in demarcating the changing boundaries between public and private, but also the specific institutional mechanisms available for intervention".

meant it was able to carry forward many strategies and institutions from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era, for example, the use of the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument, due to the notion of “Uzbek” being formulated during the Soviet era and not prior to it. At the national level, it may be argued that there was strong continuity in the Uzbekistani political strategy regarding the *mahalla kengash* from the Soviet to post-Soviet period due to the fact that *o'zbekchiliq* had not been discovered by the Uzbekistani regime; while the Soviet regime used *o'zbekchiliq* to establish the Uzbekistani nation in Central Asia. While accepting the *mahalla kengash* as a body of local self-government after independence, the Uzbekistani regime, like the preceding Soviet regime, imposed many functions on the *mahalla kengash* in its hegemonic project. The post-Soviet regime used urban *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument to strengthen *o'zbekchiliq* among the local communities, which had also been a strategy of the Soviet regime. Although the Uzbekistani state had tried to rid itself of the Soviet influence, the strategy to use the urban *mahalla kengash* to support the national consciousness indicated a continuation of the strategies inherited from the Soviet era. Accordingly, it may be argued that *o'zbekchiliq* presented opportunities to both the Soviet and post-Soviet regimes to maintain its hegemony in Uzbekistan through the *mahalla kengash*.

The Uzbek government's national project involves the propagation of *o'zbekchiliq* at the level of local communities, aiming at a “restoration of national traditions” as a component of the ideology of the new Uzbekistani national state (Koroteyeva, 1999: 30; Rasanayagam, 2011: 106). At this point, the Gramscian notion of hegemony presents an opportunity to explain theoretically how these identities gain stability within society. A regime should not only co-constitute economic structures, but also provide their rationale and legitimacy (Jessop, 1997: 56). “Identities are over-determined by a diversity of discourses and subject positions that offer a multiplicity of identification points, thus guaranteeing the possibility of human subjectivity, agency and individuality” (Carperntier, 2005: 199). In the post socialist era, the regime in Uzbekistan had to find an alternative ideology for its hegemony, for which it strategically selected its own construction of Uzbekness (*o'zbekchiliq*) and cultural authenticity, as well as several traditional institutions (Rasanayagam, 2011: 120; Koroteyeva, 1999: 35). This leads to the intervention of the central state into the structure of the urban *mahalla kengash* in order to create an ideal *mahalla* that complies with the identity politics of the Uzbekistani regime (*o'zbekchiliq*). However, despite this continuity in employing the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument, the context and features of the national consciousness (*o'zbekchiliq*) differ from the Soviet era. Based on Gramsci, who solved the Marxian problem of the reciprocal relationship between the economic base and its political-

ideological superstructure, Jessop (1997: 56), argues that “*values, norms, visions, discourses, linguistic forms, popular beliefs are necessary for the realization of specific productive forces and relations of production*”. The strategy of the regime in Uzbekistan for the establishment of a national consciousness should be understood from this perspective. A national cultural hegemony needed to be achieved for the maintenance of both the national ideology and the economic structure. Therefore, despite the continuity in using the *mahalla kengash* in the establishment of a national identity, the new accumulation strategies of the Uzbekistani regime altered both the components of national identity and the intervention mode of the central state to the *mahalla kengash*. In Chapter Five, several cases were put forward to demonstrate how the Uzbekistani state’s strategy of using the *mahalla kengash* differed from the Soviet state strategies due to the new accumulation strategies of the Uzbekistani state in its neo-liberal adaptation, which entailed a shift from class and redistributive politics to identity and representational politics. The second main issue related with the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument is the adaptation to the new liberal economic system, in which the *mahalla* was required to play a key role in addressing the many economic problems that could not be resolved by the central government in the neo-liberal era. In many of the speeches given by the President and other high-level bureaucrats, the *mahalla* is referred to as a catalyst of entrepreneurialism within the community; and many *oqsoqols* claim that their primary function is to teach the community that today is different from the past, and that now all citizens should do everything for themselves, and should not wait for anything from the state. “If you work hard, you can be successful in everything”. During the Soviet period, while certain residential units were exclusively for state laborers or for civil servants, the residents of *mahallas* were not always engaged in the same occupation. These residents mostly worked in the bazaars as craftsmen or as a mercantile. During the transition period from state socialism to the market economy, former state laborers and civil servants entered into financial difficulties, being unable to adapt either to the market economy, or to the old mercantile system.

As a first case, the Uzbekistani state decided to implement a social assistance policy at the *mahalla*-scale in order to tackle the problem of poverty and unemployment, which was also a convenient way to construct an Uzbek identity and *o'zbekchiliq*. Social assistance was provided to the low income families by the central government, but the authority to determine just which families were low-income was given to the *mahalla kengash*. In the absence of fixed criteria, each *mahalla kengash* could decide who was poor according to the socio-economic level of their *mahalla*. Additionally, the fact that each *mahalla kengash* set its criteria according to the socio-economic level of the locality led to ethnic segregation or

clientalist relationships based on *o'zbekchiliq*. If the decision of the *mahalla kengash* on the determination of low-income families did not conform to the standard *mahalla* ideal of the Uzbek state, which is dependent on *o'zbekchiliq*, the central government (city or *tuman hokimiyat*) would intervene and appoint a new *oqsoqol*. The different responses and strategies of the *mahalla kengash* that did not conform with the main aims of Uzbekistani state – traditionalism vs. modernism, and *o'zbekchiliq* vs. Russification – reversed the Uzbekistani state's decentralist strategy in the direction of centralism. In this way, the Uzbekistani state intervened mostly in the *mahallas* that had most successfully articulated to the Soviet regime, and which were populated mainly by non-Uzbek residents. In the *mahalla* types that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime, the profile of excluded social groups is today different from that witnessed under the previous regime; while in the *mahalla* types that could not articulate towards the Soviet regime, the same social groups are still excluded. In addition, since each *mahalla kengash* decided upon its criteria according to their own will, the level of success of the social assistance program was varied. In the old-traditional *mahalla* types, which already had an *o'zbekchiliq* consciousness and an Uzbek identity, the low-income families or women were determined according to clientalist relationships, with family members often drawing the most benefit. On the other hand, in the Soviet type *mahalla*, ethnic segregation became a significant problem, in that most of the *mahalla kengashes* in the *mahallas*, which were dominated by Russians, chosen the Uzbek family instead of the poor family from the Russian or other ethnic minority groups.

The second case was the privatization of the old JEKs (*jilishno ekpluatatsionnaya kontora* – housing operation office) in the *mahallas*, which consist of old Soviet-type labor blocks. As introduced in the first chapter of the thesis, one sub-hypotheses of this dissertation is that today, on the one hand the provision of services and infrastructure in the *mahalla* types that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime was quite different from the Soviet times, and that a new system that is compatible with the liberal regime has emerged, that is from “homogeny citizens to heterogenic citizens” in social policy through privatization. On the other hand, the service infrastructure in the *mahalla* types that were unable to articulate to the Soviet regime remains the same as it was in the Soviet era, being implemented as a collective effort. In this regard, particular focus has been on the role of *mahalla kengash* in the adaptation process to a market-based economy, which depended on entrepreneurialism. The JEK is an old state institution that offered infrastructure services to the residents in the Soviet era, but today these JEKs have been privatized, and have become *shirkots* (private-sector service providers). However, in the *mahallas* containing traditional Uzbek houses, infrastructure services have been implemented collectively by the residents, rather than by

JEKs, as it was during the Soviet era. Therefore, one of the sub-hypotheses regarding the privatization of JEKs is that today infrastructure services in the *mahalla* types that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime are quite different from the Soviet times. As mentioned before, in many speeches of the President and other high bureaucrats in Uzbekistan, the *mahalla* is referred to as a catalyst of entrepreneurialism in the community. However, at the time, the Uzbek state realized that the privatization of the JEKs could not be achieved without the financial support of the state, and began to establish new *shirkot* with the support of the city or district *hokimiyat*. Historically, in the old traditional *mahallas*, the infrastructure services were realized by the communities themselves, while in the soviet-type labor blocks, infrastructure services were provided by the JEK. Today, these JEKs, now known as *shirkots*, being private firms that provide infrastructure services to the *mahalla* residents, with many of the *shirkot* managers coming from traditional *mahallas*. Residents of the Soviet-type residential units are reluctant to work in private firms due to their lack of ability and experience. On the other hand, many residents of the traditional *mahalla* emphasize that this market economy or private sector is no longer for their benefit.

Chapter Five contains an explanation of how the *mahalla kengash* has been used by subsequent regimes to control society, and an attempt has been made to define the relationship between civil society and the state through discussions of the local state in previous literature. This point is crucial for understanding the role of *mahallakengash* as a local governing body. The relationship between the concept of civil society, decentralization and local democracy in liberal theory was questioned from a critical perspective, demonstrating that the implementation of a decentralization policy in the *mahalla kengash* leads to a new control mechanism over the *mahalla kengash* in Uzbekistan. Both the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes, while implementing their decentralization policies in urban areas, have (re-)configured the internal organization of the *mahalla kengashes* in order to retain control of the *mahalla* community. In order to demonstrate how this state strategy has influenced the *mahalla kengash*, the appointment of new positions in the *mahalla kengash* – those of the *maslahatchi*¹⁷⁵ and *posbon* – was explained, with the suggestion that the two posts provide the balance between the central administration and the *oqsoqol*. In addition, the state strategy related to fundamentalist Islamic movements, as a mechanism of state control in the community through the *mahalla kengash*, was analyzed, revealing that the *mahalla kengash* must provide details to the Ministry of International Affairs on any residents who are involved in fundamentalist Islamic movements. According to the results of the case

¹⁷⁵ The formal form is *dini, madani, and maarifiy ishlar boyucha maslahatchi*, referred to in this thesis in its short form –*maslahatchi*

study, however, the implementation of this function and the power of *maslahatchi* and *posbon* differ in each of the *mahalla kengashes* in the different *mahalla* types in Tashkent, resulting in local policy variations.

This chapter showed that the center-local relationship is conflictual in A-, B- and C-type *mahallas* in terms of religion, in that these *mahallas* have preserved their Islamic traditions throughout the Soviet era; while the conflict in D- and C-type *mahallas* can be found in the *o'zbekchiliq* policy to establish a national identity, in that the Soviet regime had already implemented identity politics in A- and B-type *mahallas*, in contrast to the class politics implemented in the C and D types. The final strategy in the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani state during the transition era was to devolve the implementation of urban social policy to the *mahalla kengash*. This strategy demonstrates that the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the central and local state is spatio-temporally differentiated in each *mahalla* type, and therefore the decentralization concept falls short of explaining the center-local relationship. In the *mahallas* in which the local community preserved its Islamic traditions during the Soviet era, the center-local relationship is conflictual, especially in the D- and C-type *mahallas* in the *o'zbekchiliq* policy of the regime in order to establish national identity because the Soviet regime had already implemented identity politics in the A- and B-type *mahallas*, contrary to the class politics in C and D types. The last strategy in the hegemonic project of the Uzbekistani state during the transition era was to devolve the implementation of urban social policy to the *mahalla kengash*. This strategy also demonstrates that the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the central and local state is spatio-temporally differentiated in each *mahalla* type. Similar to the case of *o'zbekchiliq*, in this case (devolving social policy to the *mahalla kengash*) too, in the D- and C-type *mahallas*, which took form under the Soviet regime according to the redistributive policies, there is a conflictual relationship between the central and local state.

Additionally, although the central state devolves the control of the fundamentalist Islamist movement in the community to the urban *mahalla kengash*, many *mahalla* officers commented that the real danger for Uzbekistani society is not fundamentalist movements, but rather Russification and modernization. This point demonstrates clearly that the hegemonies of the national and local ruling classes are different from each other. Moreover, Chapter Five has demonstrated that the main conflict that emerged in the center-local dialectic relationship in Uzbekistani urban politics was observed in the ex-Soviet ideal neighborhood community, which was shaped mostly by the class politics and redistributive politics of the Soviet regime (D type). This means that the D-type *mahallas* are incompatible with the hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime as they could adapt neither to identity

politics (*o'zbekchiliq*) nor to the representation politics that replaced the old redistributive politics. On the other hand, the A- and B-type *mahallas* could easily adapt to *o'zbekchiliq* as a new national identity in that it spatially affects more from nationality policy of the Soviet regime than other living space whose residents could be controlled in the working space.

A- and B-type *mahallas* differ in their levels of adaptation to the market-based economy. As marginal living spaces of the Soviet regime, the residents of A-type *mahallas* were on the whole unemployed and uneducated, generally holding only temporary positions, and after independence, their socio-economic levels saw no dramatic change. It is important here to point out that, for A- and B-type *mahallas*, the *mahalla* was reproduced by the community, and the community or residents were expected to make sacrifices for their *mahalla*. This was based on the attempt of the community to continue their traditions, customs and lifestyles without the Communist Party's support, and even sometimes despite the Communist Party's block. On the other hand, for C- and D-type *mahallas*, the community was reproduced by the *mahalla kengash* (and the state), which should serve the community because the D- and C-type *mahalla* communities were more articulated to the Soviet regime, which is why they grew to expect all public services to be provided by the state. Regarding these cases, it may be argued that the transition from the Soviet welfare state to the new liberal regime that saw the devolution of many social policies to the *mahalla kengash* and the private sector brought many socio-economic problems to all *mahalla* types. The *mahalla* types that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime have since been in a difficult situation due to the lack of their ability in the implementation of social policy; while, the *mahalla* types that were unable to articulate to the previous regime appear to be more successful in implementing social policy, having got used to sourcing many social services themselves during the Soviet regime due to a lack of the support at the time.

In brief, in Chapter Five it was suggested that if identity is hegemonically established power, then any regime can fill the social, economic and political components of this identity. The Soviet regime hegemonically produced an ethnic identity with different socio-economic components, and today's Uzbekistani regime has filled this identity gap, with both regimes using the *mahalla kengash* as a hegemonic instrument. However, the local strategies and tactics were produced to these components of national identity. The different Uzbekistani *mahallas* today have produced different strategies to the state hegemonic project, and most of the time these strategies have been dependent on the Soviet experiment rather than the recent era. Thus, the main conflicts in urban politics emerged in the many Soviet-type neighborhood communities rather than in the A- or B-type *mahallas*.

In **Chapter Six**, the vision of the ideal *mahalla* of the Uzbekistani state and the new regime's legal reforms of the *mahalla kengash* for decentralizing its administrative system were analyzed through texts and interviews with officials of different *mahalla kengashes*. In this chapter, the main hypothesis stated that although the *mahalla kengash* had become a body of local self-government (*ozuni ozi bashkarish*) and the Uzbekistani state claimed that power and authority had been devolved to the *mahalla kengash* in order to implement social policies, there are many legal regulations restricting the autonomy of the *mahalla kengash*. It is apparent that the decentralization policy of the new regime has many similarities with that of the Soviet regime, and that the Uzbekistani state's intention was not only to empower the *mahalla kengash* to achieve several aims, but also to create a "standard and ideal Uzbekistani *mahalla*". Thus, there is little agreement among the *mahalla kengashes* in terms of their level of autonomy. To test this hypothesis, Chapter Six put forward several sub-hypotheses, the first of which claimed that although the new regime aimed to design a standard and ideal Uzbekistani *mahalla*, due to the different opinions about how *mahallas* should be among different *mahalla* types, decentralization was perceived differently among them. This hypothesis was analyzed in terms of the change/continuity in the decentralization policy from the Soviet regime to the new regime. The second sub-hypothesis put forward was the new legislation related to personnel structure and the scheme of the inner-workings of *mahalla kengash* that was introduced by the Uzbek state was implemented in different ways in different *mahalla* types. The third sub-hypothesis states that although the Uzbekistani state clearly defined the *mahalla kengashes* as bodies of local self-government, the *hokimiyat*, and in particular the *raion* (district) *hokimiyat*, had strict tutelage over the *mahalla kengash*. Another sub-hypothesis, there is differentiation among *mahalla* types in the issue of financial autonomy. Finally, although the new regime enacted many laws to devolve social policy to the *mahalla kengash*, continuity between the Soviet and recent times exists in terms of the implementation capacities of social policy by the *mahalla kengashes* in different *mahalla* types, which was already analyzed in Chapter Five.

Unfortunately, most transition studies concerning the decentralization of the administrative system idealize existing local governments in modern Western Europe, and suggest creating similar a political structure in Uzbekistan (Masaru: 2006); however what is more important is seeing how local people at both a national and local levels understand decentralization and center-local relations. For this reason it is necessary to research the concept of decentralization "from within" (national or local). Most studies tend to analyze the *mahalla* issue in Uzbekistan focusing solely on the constitutional order and the state institutions – within the narrow definition of local politics – which is based only on a legal framework

that, most of the time, camouflages the important power relations that exist between the center and local, embedded in the practices of both social and political actors, which is the main subject of this study. Thus, besides the legal framework, the locality is important in shaping local politics, which means the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between center-local. Therefore, in chapter six, the decentralization policy was also analyzed within the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between the *hokimiyat* and *mahalla kengash* in the cases of the internal structure of the *mahalla kengash* and its relationship with the central government, as well as the features of the local finance system and local network issue. In spite of the standard legal regulations, the pattern of internal organization differs from *mahalla* to *mahalla*. Therefore, it can be seen that the *mahalla* was quite successful in transforming itself in the face of new legal regulations, and adapted well to the new conditions, which impacted upon its internal organization, representation and intervention modes. However, this transformation had some unforeseen results on the policies implemented for the transformation of the political, social and spatial structures of Uzbekistani cities and *mahallas*. To conclude, I would like to examine how much is a local institution effective in rising social transformation that was different from destination of the state.

Chapter Six contained also an explanation of the influence of the historical background of each *mahalla* type in shaping the decentralization process. This was explained through an analysis of the *oqsoqol*'s power and responsibilities in the *mahalla* community. Here, the main hypothesis was that although the Uzbekistani state clearly specifies the level of authority and the duties of the *oqsoqol* in local self-government law, the power of the *oqsoqol* in different *mahalla* types changes according to the articulation capacity of the different *mahallas* to the mode of production of the previous regime, and for this, the *oqsoqol*'s roles in the neighborhood community in both the Soviet and post-Soviet eras were summarized. The different levels of power of the *oqsoqol* in different types of *mahalla* were analyzed through a study of the ethnic background of the *oqsoqols*, the resources available to them and the advantages of the position. The different power levels of the *oqsoqols* of different *mahallas* depend on the local finance and networks in the *mahalla* communities. The implementation of unemployment policy and the *mahalla* budgets of different *mahalla* types were analyzed as case studies in this chapter in order to demonstrate that the inherent characteristics of local organization have been influential in the state's regulations.

Therefore, the powers and responsibilities of the *oqsoqol* in the different *mahalla* types were analyzed in order to show the different levels of importance attributed to the *mahalla kengashes* of different communities. This is an important factor in many of policies

implemented by the *mahalla kengash* in the *mahalla*, particularly those related to finance and unemployment. The working capacity of the *mahalla kengash* in different *mahalla* types was also studied, and will be commented on shortly. Finally, the different relationship capacities between the *mahalla kengashes* and *hokimiyats* in different *mahalla* types were explained. Addressing the issue of work capacity, the different financial resources of different *mahalla kengash* were assessed, and finally, the conflict between the state hegemony and decentralization policy was explained through some examples. The main argument put forward was that while the *mahalla kengashes* of different *mahalla* types were unevenly shaped, mostly under the Soviet regime, this led to many functions of policy and power being devolved under the decentralization policy of the Uzbekistani regime. The tension between the center-local relationship depended on the level to which the socio-economic structure ran in parallel with the state hegemony, and the level of intervention of the state into the *mahalla kengash* changed accordingly.

Related with the change/continuity in internal organization of the urban *mahalla kengash* in the legal framework, the results could be summarized as follows. First of all, the main difference between the Soviet and independent era in the *mahalla kengash* structure was its legal position.¹⁷⁶ One important change that the new regime brought was to standardize all urban residential units as *mahallas* and to establish a *mahalla kengash* in all residential units. The *mahalla kengash* typically has around 15 members: the *oqsoqol* (chairman), the *kotib* (secretary) and advisers on specific matters, such as religious affairs, community health, education etc. (Epstein-Winter, 2004: 52). Behind these officers were many volunteers from the *mahalla*, the most important being the *kucha boshi* (chair of roads) in traditional *mahallas* (A and B types), being responsible for anything in their own street, and the *damkom* and *padezkom* in the modern *mahallas* (C and D types), responsible for anything in their own apartment or block. These volunteers are assisted by the *mahalla kengash* in resolving problems related to the *mahalla* community, and mediate between the community and the committee. This structure is almost the same as in the Soviet era. One notable difference between the *mahalla kengash* of the Soviet era and that of the recent regime is that after 1992, the *mahalla* leaders (as well as the secretaries, the *posbon* and the educational advisor) became paid employees of the state, with their salaries and pensions determined centrally (Epstein-Winter, 2004: 57). This new regulation affected the positions of *kuchaboshi* and *padezkom-damkom*. The residents are less willing to work as volunteer because some *mahalla kengash* members began to be paid by the central government, while

¹⁷⁶ While in the Khrushchev era the *mahalla kengash* was accepted as a social organization, after 1992 it was recognized as a body of local self-government (*oz ozini baskaruv*) with a constitutional guarantee.

others did not. This change also brought a widening of the gap between the *mahalla kengashes* of different *mahalla* types in terms of working capacity, the meaning of the *mahalla kengash* for the community, and the will and motivation in choosing to work in the *mahalla kengash*. The final issue to be covered regarding the internal organization of the *mahalla kengash* is the election system. According to Article 105 of the Constitution, and Article 20 of the law of “self-governing institutions,” elections to appoint the *oqsoqol* and other advisors in the *mahalla kengash* are to be held once every two-and-a-half years, and the elected candidates are to be approved by the district or the city *hokim*. After the independence, since only representatives can participate in the elections, the level of community participation is low. Unlike today, during the Soviet regime, any *grajdan* (resident) who lived in the *mahalla* and who had the right to vote could take part in the elections.

Related with the mode of representation of the urban *mahalla kengash*, it was necessary firstly to remark the legal status of the *hokimiyat*. In Uzbekistan, the *hokimiyat* is not exactly a local self-governing body, but rather governorship at a provincial, city and district level. The 1999 law on self-governing institutions defines the *hokimiyat* at all administrative levels – district, city and province – as a unique authority in inspecting all activities of the *mahalla kengash* (Pashkun, 2003, 37). The *Hokim* as a leader of *hokimiyat* is now directly accountable to the central government, and the President directly appoints and dismisses the regional *hokimiyat* leaders (*hokims*), exactly as the local Soviets did in the past. As a local institution, the *hokimiyat* is fully dependent on the central government. The *hokimiyat* intervenes in their activities if they act unlawfully, and guides them. These expressions stated in the law are no different to the Soviet regulations defining the relationships between the *mahalla (kvartalniy) kengash* and the local executive committee of the Soviet. The *mahalla kengashes* came under the control of the executive committee of the city, district and provincial Soviet when carrying out their functions (Komilov, 1961: 5). Thus, at a local level, while the most important organization was the executive committee of the city, *raion*, village and provincial local Soviet, depending on the state and the Communist Party during the Soviet era, in the new regime the *hokimiyat*, at a local level, has become the most important organization depending on the state and the HDP instead of the Communist Party. Moreover, the authority of the local Soviet and the *hokimiyat* is seen to be almost the same in terms of their ability to establish and abolish a *mahalla kengash*, to increase the role of the *mahalla kengash* on the *jomoatchiliq* (civil society), to apply administrative tutelage on whether or not the *mahalla kengash* has executed its activities in accordance with the law, to eliminate any problems or obstacles in implementing state functions in the *mahalla*

(*kvartalnye*) territory, to arrange the general election and to check whether or not the *mahalla* election was realized in accordance with the law, to approve new *sostavni* (members) of the *mahalla kengash* according to the statute, to arrange and approve the budget of the *mahalla kengash* once in a year, to arrange seminars and meetings to increase the knowledge of the *mahalla oqsoqol*, to control the activities of the *mahalla kengash*, to inspect each *mahalla* individually and to solve specific problems of each *mahalla*.

However, the Uzbek regime made many new regulations to strengthen the power of *hokim* over the authority of the *mahalla kengash*. The law on Self-Governing Institutions in 1999 is one of the most important of these, strengthening the power of the *hokim* as a local executive branch over the *mahalla kengash*. Indeed, these legislations especially gave the *hokim* more extensive authority than in the Soviet period. For example, a *maslahatchi* is appointed by the *hokim* to each *mahalla kengash* to educate the *mahalla* residents on Islam and other moral issues. The *posbon* helps the *uchaskavoy noziri* and *maslahatchi* to provide security in the *mahalla*. Moreover, the Mahalla Foundation (*Mahalla Jamgarma*) was established under the authority of the *hokimiyat* in 1992 to unify the *mahallas* and control them under local administration bodies, and to identify families in need and provide them with financial aid (Masaru, 2006: 351). All this power of *hokimiyat* upon the *mahalla kengash* made informal/practical relationship between the formal institutions that shows the real dynamics of the relationship between the local and center. The *mahalla kengash* is an institution that allows the *hokim* to establish its economic and political power. First, besides the legal regulations for the election system, all *mahallas* act as a propaganda tool of the *hokim* and his local council during election periods. There is strong cooperation between the local council and the *oqsoqols*. Moreover, the *mahalla kengash* presents an opportunity for the *hokim* to increase his economic benefits. There are many examples of the strong relationship and cooperation between the bureaucracy and private firms in Uzbekistan and the *mahalla kengash* is a kind of bridge between private firms and *hokimiyat*. Moreover, the relationship between private sector firms and state officials clearly indicates how the transition to a market-based economy affected the center-local relationship and increased the power of the *hokim* in local politics. Such collaborations take place at all administrative scales, from the central government to the *mahalla*.

Accordingly, it can clearly be seen that despite the post-independence decentralization policy, centralism still dominated in the *mahalla* structure in terms of the center-local relationship. In some issues, the new regime is seen to have an even more centralist approach than the Soviet regime. For instance, even if communities in all *mahalla* types think that the *mahalla kengash* should represent the community, they also emphasized the power of

Hokimiyat upon the *mahalla kengash*. One crucial result related with this point is that the ratio of residents who believe that the *mahalla kengash* represents their community in A- and B-type *mahallas* is higher when compared with C and D types. Most of the interviewees in the A- and B-type *mahallas* emphasized that both the *Hokimiyat* and the *mahalla kengash* worked for their benefit; while the majority of interviewees in the C and D types thought that the state, and accordingly the *mahalla kengash*, did not work for society. This constitutes another significant difference among the different *mahalla* types. The power of the *Hokimiyat* is perceived to be dominant in local politics in Uzbekistan, and the opinions of the residents about the *mahalla kengash* are shaped according to their opinions of the *Hokimiyat*. Although the Uzbekistani regime has sited the *mahalla kengash* at the center of civil society and sees it as an essential tool for enhancing democracy, approximately half of the respondents in the case study argued that the *mahalla kengash* does not contribute to the establishment of democracy in society. An essential point is that the degree of satisfaction in the *mahalla kengash* of the *mahalla* community is shaped according to their level of contentment with state policies in general, and the comparisons they make between the Soviet and Uzbekistani regimes have a significant impact on their opinions. In other words, if the respondent is happy with the current regime, then he is probably satisfied with his *mahalla kengash*, and vice versa.

One of the main indicators of the level of decentralization of any administrative system how local budgeting (other indicators are the functions assigned and the level of administrative tutelage) is dealt with; thus the local financial system can give important clues as to whether the *mahalla kengash*, as a level of local government, is decentralized or not. Today, as a local self-governing body, the *mahalla kengash* is subject to its own laws and budget. However, neither the budget nor the financial system of the *mahalla kengash* is precisely regulated in Uzbekistan, and there are still serious deficiencies in the legal arrangements in this regard. After independence, the *mahalla kengash* was given more power in terms of its financial capabilities (Hudaykulov, 2003; Epstein&Winter, 2004; Pashkun, 2003). However, despite these supposed resources, all *mahalla kengash* officers in all types of *mahalla* claimed in the case study that getting access to financial resources was their biggest problem. All of them cited the same two problems related to local finance, the first being inadequate revenues of the *mahalla*. Another of the problems with the *mahalla* budget cited by the *mahalla* officers was related to the lack of standards in the legal regulations and the consequent uncertainty. It is not clear exactly how much revenue should be transferred to the *mahalla kengash*, how the *mahalla kengash* is to get financial support from firms, and how the community should make donations to the *mahalla kengash*. For example, one of the main

revenue items transferred from the central government belongs to the *Hokimiyat*, that is, the *mahalla jamgarma* under the district *hokimiyat*. The legal arrangements give the *mahalla jamgarmasi* the right to decide what should be done and how much money should be distributed in each *mahalla* through the assembly of the *mahalla jamgarma*. Therefore, the amount of revenue transferred from the *Hokimiyat* to the *mahalla kengash* changes depending on the relations between the *mahalla kengash* and the *Hokimiyat*. If the *mahalla kengash* has good relations with the *Hokimiyat*, it will take more money than other *mahalla kengashes* whose connections with the *Hokimiyat* are weaker. This clearly results in a tendency for residents to elect candidates with closer ties to the *Hokimiyat*. Moreover, in terms of decentralization, the tutelage of the central government over the budget of local government is a crucial point. The *hokimiyat* gives an amount of money to *mahalla kengashes* for use only in the provision of certain services. Therefore, inspections by the central government and the control of the *Hokimiyat* over the *mahalla* budget are prominent features of local finance. According to the local government law, the *mahalla* budget comes into operation only if it is approved by the *Hokimiyat*. Also, at the end of a financial year, all *mahalla kengashes* should present their annual report to their tuman *Hokimiyat*.

Related with the significance of locality (local hegemony which means power relations in *mahalla* community) in shaping decentralization policy and implementation of the urban social policy, as mentioned before, differentiation of *oqsoqol* power among different *mahalla* types were analyzed in this thesis. One of these customs is the centrality of the *oqsoqol's* power in daily life in A- and B-type *mahallas*, while they lost their importance in the Soviet-type residential units (C and D types). One of the reasons behind the continuation of the traditional and patriarchal power of the *oqsoqol* in A and B types of *mahallas* has been the lack of financial and social aid from the Soviet state, which is why it may be argued that one of the sources of the *oqsoqol* power is material wealth. Generally, it is the biggest *homi* (donor) that is elected as the *oqsoqol* in these *mahallas*, while being from an elite family and having close relations with high-level civil servants and the central government, may also be an advantage, as one of the main duties of the *oqsoqol* and the *mahalla kengash* is to find alternative resources for the *mahalla* budget. In contrast, in C- and D-type *mahallas* these sources of power are not a prerequisite for an *oqsoqol*, as encouraging financial donations from the community and/or institutions is not a primary duty of the *mahalla kengash*, since they already receive significant financing from the firms within their *mahallas*. Therefore, in these Soviet types of *mahallas*, as power is not a necessary criteria for an *oqsoqol*, it is mostly unemployed and low-income residents that fill the post. The reason for the *oqsoqol's* necessary power in these *mahallas* is that they lack strong relationships with the state or any

other supra-local institutions (local refers here the *mahalla* scale), and that they were largely ignored by the Soviet state in terms of financial support. For this reason they were obliged to enhance their social capital, and it is in this sense that they preserved many of their traditional characters. In other words, the residents of these *mahallas* had to solve their own problems at the local level, and so when a resident had good contacts with senior civil servants, the central government or the Party or when he/she was wealthy, it was seen as an opportunity to access external financial resources.

Returning to the *homi* issue, especially in traditional *mahallas* (A and B types), the fact that the residents donate funds to their *mahalla kengash* has crucial outcomes. It is important to note that the *homiliq* is a traditional concept in the Uzbekistani *mahalla* that was maintained during Soviet times as well. In the residential units that were able to articulate to the Soviet regime (C and D types), *homiliq* practice has gradually died out, since the Soviet state satisfied all of the needs of the residents in these *mahallas*. In contrast, the *mahallas* that could not be articulated to the Soviet regime (A and B) had to perpetuate the *homiliq* concept due to the lack of state support, and so the persistence of the *homiliq* tradition should be seen as a necessity rather than a mere attempt at the conservation of culture. The *homiliq* concept also enabled the continuation of many customs rooted in pre-modern times and related with the patriarchal social structure in these *mahalla* communities. Today, the fact that the Uzbekistani state has reduced public support and restricted social policy has resulted in an increasing reliance on the old traditional relationships in all residential unit types (A, B, C and D). In a way, the patriarchal lifestyle began to fill the vacuum left by the state in some areas of service provision in the transition period, and the Uzbekistani state sublimates the traditional patriarchal social structure as the basis of the Uzbek identity, with A- and B-type *mahallas* held up as representing the ideal Uzbekistani social life. Many characteristics of this patriarchal social structure are being reproduced by the state through social policies. For example, after independence, the state and the *tuman Hokimiyat* brought the *homiliq* concept to the agenda also in the C- and D-type *mahallas*, indicating an intention to bring the traditional-patriarchal social structure that developed in some *mahallas* during the Soviet era. In this regard it may be argued that in attempting to create a nation state, the modernity project in Uzbekistan is reversed.

It is necessary to mention a further issue, which is the most important point regarding the nature of local politics in A- and B-type *mahallas*. Although many interviewees in these *mahallas* emphasized that there was pressure on their daily lives during the Soviet era, they stressed a negative point that was not mentioned by the residents of C- and D-type *mahallas*, being the position of the local elite after independence. In A- and B-type *mahallas* there is a

strong collaboration between the elite families and the *mahalla* officers that has increased the power of the elite families in *mahalla* politics after independence. The *hashar* is a good example in order to demonstrate how the local elite has gained more power in *mahalla* politics since independence, as *hashar* is generally organized to realize something for the benefit of the whole community, such as building a *chaikhano*, cleaning the *mahalla*, planting trees and repairing houses, and is performed as a collective activity. Generally, the *oqsoqols* are the leaders of the *hashar* and organize the process. The *hashar* is a pre-Soviet tradition in Uzbek society that survived the Soviet era; however, after independence its form has changed considerably. Many researchers have a tendency to romanticize the practice of *hashar* as an ideal way of local interaction and engagement, buying into the “myth of the community” (Guijt & Shah 1998, quoted by Earle, 2006). However, after the independence, the *hashar* became as a kind of tool that the *mahalla* leader mobilize the *mahalla* community to work for the *mahalla* elite.

One more crucial result analyzed in chapter six is the role of *mahalla kengash* in unemployment problem. There is a sharp increase experienced in unemployment rates in Uzbekistan after independence. The Uzbek government implemented two policies to cope with the unemployment problem at the *mahalla* scale. To begin with, the employees of the *mahalla kengash* were given the status of state officers, leading to many unemployed residents to begin seeking work in the *mahalla kengash*. Today, there are more than 10,000 *mahallas* in Uzbekistan, with at least three or four residents (*oqsoqol*, *maslahatchi*, secretary and *posbon*) drawing a salary from the central government. This means that at least 40,000 unemployed residents have been put to work in the *mahalla kengashes* around the country, and thus the *mahalla kengash* has become an important source of employment and income. Secondly, the urban *mahalla kengash* is a mediator for unemployed residents to find a job. In the case study, the unemployment in A- and B-type *mahallas* seems higher than in C and D types. The real reason behind this is that the residents of A- and B-type *mahallas* prefer to apply to the *mahalla kengash* to find a job, or the *mahalla kengash* have proper records about their unemployed residents (*fuqoralarning ahvoli*), while the residents of C and D types mostly rely on other means when looking for a job. Indeed, unemployment is a more serious problem in C and D types *mahallas* than in A and B types. In particular, unemployment has hit the hardest in the *mahallas* established for the Soviet state factory workers and for the intellectuals from the previous era. Many workers in these *mahallas* became unemployed after the closing of the state factories during the transition to a market economy, and many Soviet intellectuals lost their strong position in society. This problem is nowhere more apparent than in the D-2 and D-4 *mahallas* identified in the case study.

According to the law, the *mahalla kengash* should cooperate with the *Mihnet Birje*¹⁷⁷ in employment matters; however there is also a differentiation among *mahalla* types regarding their level of cooperation with the *Mihnet Birje*. Most of the *mahalla kengashes* in C and D type *mahallas* cooperate with this state organization, unlike those of A and B types. Many *mahalla* officers prefer to use their social and political networks rather than cooperate with the *Birje* in A and B types. This statement offers a good indication of the power relations at a local level among the local elites, as mentioned also by Duncan & Goodwin (1988: 42-43) “... *farmers and landowners can maintain a cheap local labour force via their domination of many rural local governments, through the provision of a stock of council housing*”. Such situations also increase the importance of the power of the elite residents or families in the *mahalla* community. As presented below, many *oqsoqols* try to find cheap labor for the *homi* in the *mahalla*, in other words, there is collaboration between the *oqsoqols* and the *homis* in the *mahalla*. Therefore, similar to the issue of generating income for the *mahalla*, the *oqsoqol* should have a strong social network both within and outside the *mahalla* if he/she is to find a job for the residents. Shortly, there are two policies of the Uzbekistani central administration that clash most of the time. While in poor *mahallas*, generally the C and D types, unemployed residents try to become *mahalla* officers in order to get a salary; especially in A- and B-type *mahallas*, residents try to elect elite people to the *mahalla kengash* with strong networks and economic capital, which may be utilized in finding jobs for the community, as well as reaching other opportunities.

In conclusion, the strong local power held by the officers of the *mahalla* and/or the local elite families, patriarchal relationships are not given characteristics in some localities, as this kind of capital is (re-)produced in order to fill some gaps in the system. The Uzbek *mahalla* in both the Soviet and the independent eras is a good example of this. The final point that should be remembered is that two dynamics – the power of *oqsoqols* and the local finance and network structure of the *mahallas* – feed one another. Neither the differences in local finance and network structures determines the strength of *oqsoqol* power, nor the strength of *oqsoqol* power determines the different local networks and local finance structures of the *mahallas* alone. What is certain is that different degrees of *oqsoqol* power and different local finance and network structures have emerged out of the diverse needs of the localities, and that these different needs are, most of the time, shaped by the relationship with the central government. This is all too apparent from the existence of the different forms and intensities of the relations between the *mahallas* and the central government, both under the Soviet and the new Uzbekistani regimes. In previous literature it has been generally the presence of a

¹⁷⁷ An organization responsible for finding jobs for the unemployed, under the control of the central government.

powerful *oqsoqol*, local networking capacity and self-financing of the *mahalla kengash* that are cited to indicate a traditional *mahalla* structure; however the reason these kinds of characteristics have emerged in some localities while not in others is that different relationships were built between the Soviet state and the different residential units, i.e. the different *mahallas*. If the old *mahallas* (A and B types) had been articulated to the Soviet regime like the C and D types, would they have been able to sustain this traditional donation system? And if this donation system had not been maintained during the Soviet era, would the power of the *oqsoqol* still have been continued?

Therefore, it is possible to argue that in Uzbekistan various local hegemonies at urban *mahalla* scale are mostly shaped according to the hegemonic projects of the Soviet regime and has resulted in local policy variation during the transition era. This variation has an effect on both accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime as well as decentralization policy and center-local relationship. Moreover, unlike many studies on the urban *mahalla* in Uzbekistan, dividing the urban *mahalla* into the two categories of modern and traditional leads to incorrect assumptions. For example, the results related with the participation degree of residents to *mahalla* activities as seen in chapter six demonstrated that there is a similarity between A and D types of *mahallas* and B and C types. The responses of the residents of A- and D-type *mahallas* bear similarities, and converge on the opinion that nothing has changed regarding the participation level of the residents in *mahalla* activities since independence. On the other hand, in B- and C-type *mahallas*, the participation level of the community in *mahalla* activities has increased since independence, but for different reasons. While the residents of the B-type *mahallas* generally claimed that the new regime allowed them to take part in *mahalla* activities, most of the residents in the C-type *mahallas* argued that they had to participate if they were to benefit from the assistance of the *mahalla kengash*. However, the residents of the C-type *mahallas* are generally unsatisfied with the new regulations of the Uzbekistani regime regarding the *mahalla kengash*, while the majority of residents of B-type *mahallas* think that there are positive changes after the declaration of the *mahalla kengash* as a self-governing body.

In addition, when compared with C type, the D-type *mahallas*, as ideal Soviet-type residential units that were generally inhabited by the upper levels of Soviet society did not experience significant changes in the social composition of the *mahalla* after independence due to the state control of migration. Thus, aside from a few examples, the D-type *mahallas*, especially D-1 *mahalla* -those in which the Soviet civil servants lived, are still host to the upper classes of Uzbekistani society. Therefore, although they criticize the new regime in many aspects, they have not been affected by the *mahalla kengash's* new status, which is

actually a reflection of their strong networks and high incomes. On the other hand, C-type *mahallas* were established especially for the working class, and so after the independence their economic levels and living standards have fallen sharply after losing their old status in political, economic and social life. Consequently, they have been directly affected by local level policies, through which they receive social assistance of different forms that was offered previously by the state under the Soviet regime. Accordingly, many of the responses from C-type *mahallas* show that the residents are dissatisfied with the new regime due to several urban policies, and recall the Soviet era with a sense of nostalgia, like the residents of D-type *mahallas*. However, unlike the residents of the D-type *mahallas*, most of the residents of C types look to the *mahalla kengash* for their survival. Thus, in C-type *mahallas*, problems related with the distribution of welfare have increased at a local level, and thus a much more conflicting situation has emerged in the power relations at the *mahalla* scale. This is the main reason behind the discontent of many residents in C-type *mahallas* in the officers that have been working in the *mahalla kengash* since independence. It is worth noting that contrary to the revealed discontent of the residents of C-type *mahallas*, the residents of D-type *mahallas* have no interest in the officers working in the *mahalla kengash*.

There is one more important result related to the power of the *oqsoqol* in C-type *mahallas*, where, unlike in D types, a person becomes powerful and gains respectability after becoming *oqsoqol*. Therefore, it can be argued that in C-type *mahallas* it is not necessary to have any source of power to become an *oqsoqol* – unlike in A and B types – as the *oqsoqol* position is itself a source of power – unlike in D types. This situation is unique to C-type *mahallas*, where the *oqsoqol*, who gains power and prestige in the community after being elected, can ask for money from the community. Moreover, in these *mahallas* people consider the position of *oqsoqol* to be source of power, and so abuse of this power for personal interests is seen in most *oqsoqols*. The residents of C-type *mahallas* often stated that the *oqsoqol* was engaged in bribery, and that they distributed all welfare and resources to their relatives and supporters.

These two case study chapters have demonstrated that the decentralization process has been reversed as a result of the strategies of the Uzbekistani state (centralist intervention into the *mahalla kengash*) when the different strategies and responses of the *mahalla kengash* do not conform with the *mahalla* imagined by the state, or when the different aims of the state are in conflict. Shortly, the case chapters of this thesis showed that during the transition era, the political regime shifted from class politics to identity politics and from redistributive politics to representational politics. The urban *mahalla kengash* of *mahalla* types in Tashkent city differently adapted to these both two shifts. The urban *mahalla kengashes* of *mahalla* types

(A and B types) which were already shaped according to identity politics and representational politics during the Soviet era could be easily adapted the new regime whereas the urban *mahalla kengashes* of *mahalla* types (C and D types) which were shaped according to class politics and redistributive politics during the Soviet era has fall in difficult situation in the adaptation process to the new regime. As a conclusion, despite focusing on the change/continuity in the *mahalla kengash* as a local state within the reciprocal and dialectic relationship with the central state, this thesis has also examined the spatial continuity/change of the *mahallas*, the power relations in the *mahallas* and the *mahallas*' role in the implementation of social policy in Tashkent.

Finally, this thesis has argued that the decentralization policy and hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime have been shaped by the dialectic relationship between the state and *mahalla kengash*, as well as by the dialectic relationship between the path-dependent institutional behavior of the Uzbekistani regime and the *mahalla kengash*, and the path-shaping of the new structural hegemony of the global economic system. In other words, any institutional reform may be formed in a dialectic relationship between the path-dependency and path-shaping of the agency in a structural hegemony. This conclusion brings together the theoretical implications of this study for the local politics literature in question. What do these cases say about the tools, level of analysis, hypotheses and overall explanatory power of these long-competing theoretical paradigms – the transition and precondition approaches? While these cases are certainly not ultimate judges of these big theories of transition in local politics and decentralization, they are an important test of our theories, and their conclusions are at least noteworthy. This final chapter has argued that the standard theoretical paradigms for understanding transition in local politics and decentralization in the post-Soviet urban geography are less globally generalizable than previously thought; and consequently, this thesis has been a critical study of whether decentralization can be an explanatory concept in the examination of new institution-building in urban Uzbekistan – a country in the post-Soviet geography. It has also been argued that despite the continuity in the strategies of the *mahalla kengash* from the Soviet to post-Soviet era, the structural hegemony of the neo-liberal transition has had a strong influence on the Uzbekistani state's strategies regarding the *mahalla kengash*. This has been analyzed in several ways, referring to the accumulation strategy and hegemonic projects of the Uzbekistani regime within the context of decentralization. Moreover, the Uzbekistani state declared the *mahalla kengash* as a body of local self-government with a constitutional guarantee, and saw this declaration as a big step forward in the decentralization of the Uzbekistani administrative system. In this sense, as mentioned in the theoretical chapter, in order to grasp the (re)structuring of the state and the

nature of local politics, it is necessary to elaborate on the *mahalla kengash*, since in Uzbekistan the locality, local variations and different strategies of the *mahalla kengashes* are important in shaping decentralization policy, as well as the central government's other regulations and strategies. Through this discussion, hopefully, more light will be shed on the local-center relationships in today's Uzbekistan.

Therefore, the center-local relationship is explained neither in terms of the dichotomy between the state and the civil society, as the neo-liberal perspective argues; nor through the instrumentalist Marxist view that the local state is a simple agent of the central state. Rather, the center-local relationship is considered here as being dialectical and reciprocal, and thus can be both spatio-temporally and socio-spatially differentiated, while also conflictual and/or compatible. At this point the question needs to be raised of what defines or determines whether the center-local relationship is conflictual and/or compatible within this dialectical and reciprocal relationship. It is the claim of this thesis that dialectic relationship between the center and local state becomes conflictual when there is inconsistency or dichotomy between (a) the (national) ruling class and its hegemony at the national level, and (b) the (local) ruling class and its hegemony at a local level; and that the relationship becomes compatible when these two ruling classes and their hegemonies are the same or similar. This explanation is meaningful only if the central state is accepted or defined as a part of national social relations within the constraints of the structural hegemony of the ruling class (Joseph, 2002; Jessop, 2008); and the local state is accepted or defined as a part of local social relations within the constraints of the structural hegemony of the local ruling class. This is why, during the neo-liberal transition era in Uzbekistan, as a former Soviet country, the dialectic and reciprocal relationship between the central state and the urban *mahalla kengash* is conflictual in some *mahalla* types, while being compatible in others, according to the level of conformity/dissent with the hegemony and form of social relations at a local level. Finally, there is one more point that should be emphasized. The hegemony and strategies of both the national and the local ruling classes are shaped according to their capacity for conformity/dissent with the Soviet regime path-dependently, and to neo-liberal structural hegemony path-shapingly. Therefore, while (re-)institutionalizing and re-configuring its institution building, the national Uzbekistani regime has achieved its decentralization policy path-dependently as part of its hegemonic project and accumulation strategy within the constraints of the structural hegemony of neo-liberalism and the Soviet legacy. The urban *mahalla kengashes*, as a local state, (re-)produce different strategies and tactics to address *mahalla*-scaled state policies according to their conformity/dissent capacity to the Soviet regime and the structural hegemony of local social relations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MAHALLA COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

To Whom It May Concern;

This sample survey has been prepared to find out in which level the “Mahalla” organization that is important in legal and tradition provides the social cohesion and the adoption of globalization. In this study, it has been aimed to comprehend the “Mahalla” organization as a focus of public policy, as a locus of public policy, and as an implementation of public policy.

I have been a PhD student and Research Assistant at the program of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments, Middle East Technical University. My Ph.D. is about “The Transformation of The Local Politics, Local Actors and Local Governments in Uzbekistan Republic after The Soviet Period”.

Date:

Notes of survey taker:

Шаҳар:

Туман:

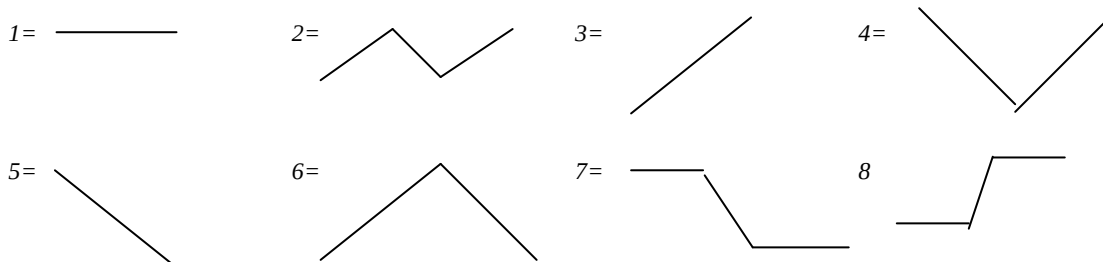
Маҳалла:

1. Гувоҳнома Саволлари

1.1.	Жинсингиз:	1= аёл	2= эркак
1.2.	Ёшингиз:		
1.3.	Оилавий аҳволингиз:	1= бўйдоқ 3=оилали	2= бева
1.4.	Маълумотингиз:	1=олий маълумотли 2=ўрта маълумотли 3= ўрта-махсус маълумотлиман 4= бошланғич мактабни битирганман 5 = лицейни битирганман 6= илмий даража эгасиман	
1.5.	Касбингиз (Хусусий-Давлат сектори):		
1.6.	Мустақилликгача сиз қандай касб билан шуғуллангансиз?		
1.7.	Сиз ҳозир қандай касбда ишлайсиз?		
1.8.	Ҳозир Сиз бошқа иш қила оласизми?	1= ҳа	2= йўқ
1.9.	Туғилган жойингиз:		
1.10	Агар бошқа ерда туғилган бўлсангиз нима мақсадда Тошкентга кўчиб келгансиз?	1= Ўқиш учун 2= иш учун 3= маълум бир қийинчилик сабабли 4= оилам билан бирга келганман 5= бошқа...	
1.11	Қачон кўчиш қилдингиз?		
1.12	Миллатингиз:		
1.13	Сиз турган уй ўзингизнинг уйингизми?	1= ҳа	2= йўқ
1.14	Агар ўз уйингиз бўлмаса қимнинг уйида турибсиз?	1= ижарада 2= давлат томонидан берилган уйда 3=қариндошларимининг уйида	

		4= бошқа...
1.15	Бугунгача қанча марта уй жойингизни ўзгартирдингиз?	

1.16. Мустақилликдан кейин бугунги кунгача бўлган даврдаги сизнинг яшаш даражанинг меёрлари қуйида келтирилган графикларнинг қайси бирига мос келади?



2. Маҳалла ҳақида умумий маълумот

2.1. Бу маҳаллада яшаётганингизга қанча вақт бўлди? ...

2.2. Бу маҳаллада яшаётганингизга хурсандмисиз?

1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.3. Хурсанд бўлмасангиз нима учун? ...

2.4. Сиз аввалги анъанавий хонадонларда (қўп қаватли уйларда) яшашни хоҳлайсизми?

1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.5. Маҳаллангизнинг номини биласизми?

1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.6. Маҳаллангизнинг оқсоқолини танийсизми?

1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.7. Маҳаллангизда қанча қўшнингизни танийсиз? ...

2.8. Маҳаллангиздаги одамлар билан қанча вақтда учрашасиз?

1= Икки-уч кунда бир марта ёки кўпроқ

2= Ҳафтада бир марта

3= 15 кунда бир марта

4= Бир ойда бир марта ёки камрақ

2.9. Маҳалланинг ўзини ўзи бошқариши қўни-қўшничиликка қанча таъсир қилди?

1= яхшироқ бўлди 2= ёмон бўлди

3= Ўзгармади

2.10. Қўшнилариңизга ишонасизми?

1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ 3= баъзиларига ишонаман

2.11. Яшайдиган маҳаллангизда қариндошлариңиз борми?...

2.12. Маҳаллага бирор иш билан мурожаат қилганмисиз?

1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.13. Қандай масалалар юзасидан маҳалла башкарувига кўпроқ мурожаат қиласиз?

1= иқтисодий масалаларнинг ҳал қилиниши (ишсизлик, озиқ-овқат ёрдамлари, хисса қўлиши ва саноат)

2= миллий байрамларда

3= моддий етишмовчилик бўлганида (ижтимоий ёрдам)

4= маҳаллада қандайдир бир камчилик тўғрилигидан

5= марказ ёки ҳокимиятга мурожаат этишда

6= таълим ва соғлиқ ҳизматларида

7= маҳалланинг қўриқлаши ва ободонлигида

8= бошқа ...

2.14. Сизнинг фикриңгизча маҳаллангиздаги асосий муаммолар нималардан иборат?

1= маблағнинг озлигида

2= турмушдаги етишмовчиликлар

3= малакали кадрларнинг камлигида ва таълимнинг-тарбия даражасини пастлиги

4= ишсизлик

5= миллий қадриятларнинг унутилиб бораётганлиги

6= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.15. Сизнинг фикриңгизча маҳалла бошқаруви энг қўп қайси соҳада ёрдам кўрсатади.

- 1= миллий байрамларда
 2= моддий этишмовчилик бўлганида (ижтимоий ёрдам)
 3= маҳаллада қандайдир бир камчилик тўғрилиганда
 4= марказ ёки ҳокимиятга мурожаат этишда
 5= таълим ва соғлиқ хизматларида
 6= маҳалланинг кўримаси ва ободонлигида

2.16. Сизнингча маҳалланинг бу ёрдами етарлими?

- 1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.17. Охирги марта маҳалла фаолиятида қачон қатнашдингиз?

2.18. Маҳалланинг ўзини ўзи бошқарув бўлганлигидан кейин маҳаллангизда бўлган фаолиятларга қатнашингизда ўсиш бўлдими?

- 1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.19. Айтингчи, сизнинг фикрингизча, маҳаллалар фаолиятини ривожлатириш орқали демократияга эришиш мумкинми?

- 1= ҳа, маҳаллаларнинг ривожланиши ортган сайин демократиялашув ҳам ортиб боради
 2= йўқ, маҳалла кучайган сайин демократик бошқарув кучи салбийлашади
 3= икковининг ҳам бир бири билан алоқаси йўқ
 4= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.20. Ҳозирда маҳаллаларда ўз-ўзини бошқарув тизими қабул қилинган. Сизнинг фикрингизча, Ўзбекистондаги маҳаллалар, маҳалла жамоасини ҳимоя қиладими ёки Марказий Ҳукуматни?

- 1= маҳалла ўз жамоасини ҳимоя қилади
 2= марказий ҳукуматни ҳимоя қилади
 3= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.21. Қонунга кўра оқсоқоллар аҳоли тарафидан сайланади. Лекин баъзан улар ҳоким ёки ҳукумат таъсири натижасида ҳам сайланиши мумкин. Сизнингча маҳалла фаоллари қандай сайлангани маъқул?

- 1= халқ томонидан сайланиши
 2= марказий ҳокимият томонидан тайинланиши

2.22. Сизнинг фикрингизча ўз-ўзини бошқарув идораси бўлган маҳалла давлат томонидан назоратда бўлиши зарурми?

- 1= ҳа, марказ тарафидан қаттиъян назорат остида бўлиши керак
 2= ҳа, назорат остида бўлиши керак аммо эркинлиги ҳам ҳисобга олиниши керак
 3= йўқ, агар эркин бир бошқарув эса маҳалла халқини тамсил қилади, шунинг учун марказий бошқарув тарафидан назоратда бўлишига ҳожат йўқ
 4= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.23. Маҳалланинг ривожланиши борасида охирги йилларда кўпгина қонунлар эълон қилинди. Сизнинг фикрингизча, бу қонунлар амалиётда қониқарли тарзда амалга оширилмоқдами?

- 1= ҳа, буларнинг ҳаммаси ҳам амалиётда жорий қилинмоқда
 2= йўқ, буларнинг ҳаммаси фақат қонуний равишда амалга оширилмоқда, амалга оширилмақда
 3= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.24. Агар мумкин бўлмаса нима учун?

- 1= жамғармамиз йўқ
 2= кучимиз йўқ
 3= вазифамиз ҳақида етарли маълумотимиз йўқ
 4= марказдан руҳсат йўқ
 5= бошқа...

2.25. Ажрашмоқчи бўлган келин ва кўёвни ярашиштириш учун оқсоқоллар ҳаракат қилади.

Сизнинг фикрингизча бу керакми?

- 1= Ҳа 2= Йўқ

2.26. Ишсиз одамларга маҳалла кўмагида иш топса бўладими?

- 1= ҳа, маҳалла оқсоқоли орқали иш топиш мумкин
 2= йўқ, маҳалла оқсоқоли орқали иш топишни имкони йўқ
 3= маҳалла орқали ойлик маоши яхши бўлган ишни топиш қийин

2.27. Бирор бир фуқарони давлат ташкилотларига ишга олинанишидан аввал ушбу шахс маҳалла орқали сўраб-суриштириладими?

- 1= ҳа, синчиклаб кўрилади
 2= йўқ, ортикча суриштирилмайди

2.28. Баъзиларнинг фикрига қараганда “маҳалла ташкилотининг муҳим лавозимларида шахарнинг тасирли оилалари вакиллари ёки Тошкент Ҳокимининг одамлари эгалик қилмоқдалар” сизнингча бу тўғрими?

- 1= ҳа қўйиламан 2= йўқ қўйилмайман

2.29. Сизнинг фикрингизча маҳалла ташкилоти кимларнинг тасири остида?

- 1= бой оилаларнинг 2= ҳокимият вакиллари

3= ҳеч кимнинг

2.30.Сизнинг фикрингизча ҳукумат томонидан бериладиган
ёрдам пулларини маҳалла адолатли равишда тақсимлайдими?

1= ҳа адолатлидир

2= йўқ адолатли эмас, базиларига кўпроқ базиларига эса озроқ беради

3= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.31.Адолатли бўлмаса, нима учун?...

2.32.Маҳаллангизнинг қанча сантехник иши қилган ширкат бор, биласизми?...

2.33.Уйингизда бир муаммо пайдо бўлса маҳалла ширкатларига борасизми? Ёки бошқаларига борасизми?

1= маҳалла ширкатларига

2=Йўқ, бошқоларига

2.34.Бошқоларига борсангиз қайси қурулишларга?...

2.35.Маҳаллангизнинг сантехникларнинг қилган ишларидан хурсандсизми?

1= Ҳа

2= Йўқ

2.36.Нима учун?...

2.37. Маҳалла ширкатларида ишлайдиган кишилар орасида қариндошлик борми? ёки оқсоқолнинг қариндошлари борми?

1= ҳа, кўпи

2= ҳа, баъзилари

3= йўқ

4= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.38. Маҳаллада ишлайдиган кишилар орасида оқсоқолнинг қариндошлари борми?

1= ҳа, кўпи

2= ҳа, баъзилари

3= йўқ

4= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.39.Маҳалланинг ўзини ўзи бошқарув бўлганлигидан кейин маҳаллада ишлайдиган одамларнинг сони кўпайиб кетти. Бу сизни хурсанд қиладими ёки қилмаяптими?

1= Ҳа

2= Йўқ

2.40.Нима учун?...

2.41. Маҳаллангизнинг берилмакта бўлган мадди (озқ-ҳовқат, мой, нон...) ёрдимдан фойдоланмақтасизми?

1= Ҳа

2= Йўқ

2.42. Бу ёрдимлардан хурсандсизми?

1= Ҳа

2= Йўқ

2.43. Нима учун?...

2.44. бу ёрдимлар маҳаллага адолатли равишда тақсимланадими?

1= ҳа адолатлидир

2= йўқ адолатли эмас, базиларига кўпроқ базиларига эса озроқ беради

3= ҳеч қандай фикрим йўқ

2.45. Маҳаллангизда ишлайдиган пўстбони танийсизми?

1= Ҳа

2= Йўқ

2.46. Бу кишидан хурсандсизми?

2.47. Нима учун?...

3. Сизнинг фикрингизча қуйида келтириладиган турмуш-тарзи хусусиятларининг савияси қай даражада?

(6→ ўта яхши, 1→ ўта ёмон)

3.1. турмуш-тарзи меёрлари						
А)Ҳозирги савияси	6	5	4	3	2	1
В)Совет давридаги савияси	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.2. Таълим тизими						
А)Ҳозирги даражаси	6	5	4	3	2	1
В)Совет давридаги савияси	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.3. Иш жойингиз шарт-шароитлари						
А)Ҳозирги даражаси	6	5	4	3	2	1
В)Совет давридаги савияси	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.4. Соғлиқни сақлаш соҳаси						

<i>А)Хозирги даражаси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>В)Совет давридаги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.5. Маъмурий-бошқарув органлари фаолияти						
<i>А)Хозирги даражаси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>В)Совет давридаги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.6. Маҳалла бошқаруви билан алоқаларингиз						
<i>А)Хозирги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>В)Совет давридаги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.7. Уйингиздаги коммунал хизмат проблемаларни ҳал қилиш						
<i>А)Хозирги даражаси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>В)Совет давридаги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.8. Кам таъминланган оилаларга пул ёрдами						
<i>А)Хозирги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>В)Совет давридаги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.9. Маҳалла ичида ҳар хил керак бўлган нарсаларни топиш						
<i>А)Хозирги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>В)Совет давридаги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
3.10. Қўшниларингиз билан алоқаларингиз						
<i>А)Хозирги даражаси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>В)Совет давридаги савияси</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX B: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MAHALLA OFFICERS

—1. Гувоҳнома Саволлари

- Жинсингиз,
- Ёшингиз,
- Маданий ҳолингиз,
- Маълумотингиз,
- Касбингиз, (Ҳозир ва совет даврида),
- Ҳозир мутахассислигингиздан бошқа касбда ишласизми?
- Туғилган жойингиз?
- Қачон Тошкентга келгансиз ва нима мақсадда келгасиз?,
- Миллатингиз,
- Яшаётган уйингиз хусусий ўз уйингизми ёки ижарада турасизми?
- Мазкур маҳаллада Сизнинг қариндошларингиз борми?...
- Бугунгача қанча уй ўзгартирдингиз?,
- Бу маҳаллада яшаётганингизга қанча вақт бўлди? ...
- Яшайдиган маҳаллангизда қариндошларингиз борми?...
- Мустақилликдан кейин бугунги кунгача бўлган даврдаги сизнинг яшаш даражангиз меёрлари қандай ўзгарди?

—2. Маҳалла Ҳақида Умумий Маълумот

—2.1. Маҳалла Ташкилотининг Тузилиши

- Совет даврида Ўзбекистон'да маҳаллалар бўлганми?
- Маҳаллангизнинг аҳолиси қанча? Маҳаллангизнинг ижтимоий ва иқтисодий даражаси қандай?....
- Маҳаллангизда яшовчи аҳолининг миллий-этник таркиби қандай?
- Маҳаллангизда ҳозирги пайтда нечта комиссия мавжуд? Уларнинг номи ва иш фаолиятлари қандай?.....
- Айтингчи, маҳаллада ишлайдиган одамлар қандай усул билан ишга олинади?
- Маҳаллада ишлайдиган одамлар орасида қариндошлик борми?...
- Маҳалла кенгашининг сўнгги йиллардаги фаолитини қандай баҳолайсиз?...
- Охирги маротаба маҳалла оксоқолини сайлашда маҳалланинг қанча фоиз аҳолиси иштирок этган?
- Сизнинг фикрингизча маҳаллангиздаги асосий муаммолар нималардан иборат?
- Айтингчи, сизнинг фикрингизча, маҳаллалар фаолитини ривожлатириш орқали демократияга эришиш мумкинми?

—2.2. Маҳаллий Ўз-Ўзини Бошқарув Органларининг Вазифалари

- Маҳалланинг ривожланиши борасида охирги йилларда кўпгина қонунлар эълон қилинди. Сизнинг фикрингизча, бу қонунлар амалиётда қониқарли тарзда амалга оширилмоқдами? Агар мумкин бўлмаса нима учун?
- Ҳозирда маҳаллаларда ўз-ўзини бошқарув тизими қабул қилинган. Сизнинг фикрингизча, ҳозирги маҳалда, Ўзбекистондаги маҳаллалар, маҳалла жамоаси учун ваколат қиладиларми ёки Марказий Ҳукумат учун-ми?
- Маҳалла аҳолиси қандай масалалар юзасидан сизга кўпроқ мурожат қилади? Сизнинг фикрингизча маҳалла бошқаруви энг кўп қайси соҳада ёрдам кўрсатади. Сизнингча бу етарлими?
- Маҳалла аҳолисидаги кичик тадбиркорлар ва кина фирмалар фаолитини қуллаб қувватлаш борасида маҳалла амалий ёрдам кўрсатадими?

- Маҳалла аҳолиси орасидаги ишсиз одамларга маҳалла кўмагида иш топса бўладими?
- Бирор бир фуқорони давлат ташкилотларига ишга олинишидан аввал ушбу шахс маҳалла орқали сўраб-суриштириладими?

—2.3. Бошқа Муассасалар Билан Аълоқа Қилиш ва Шаҳар Сиёсати

- Сизнинг фикрингизча, «Маҳалла Жамғамасы» ва «Оқсоқоллар йишилиши» бугунги кун учун зарурми? Нима учун?
- Хорижий ва халқаро муассасалар (NGO'лар) билан алоқангиз борми? Уларнинг лойиҳаларига қатнашмоқчи бўлганингиз борми?
- Сизнинг маҳалла ташкилотингиз марказий ҳукуматдан ва Тошкент Ҳокимиятидан энг кўп нимани талаб қиладилар?
- Сизнинг фикрингизча марказий ҳукумат ва Ҳокимият (туман, шаҳар, вилоят) сиздан кўпроқ нимани талаб қиладилар?
- Қонунга кўра оқсоқоллар аҳоли тарафидан сайланади. Лекин баъзан уларнинг ҳоким ёки ҳукумат таъсири натижасида кам сайланиши мумкин. Бунга Сиз қандай қарайсиз?... Сизнингча маҳалла фаоллари қандай сайлангани маъқул?
- Маҳалла ташкилотининг сайланишида партияларнинг таъсири борми? Умум ва ҳоким сайловида маҳалла ташкилотининг таъсири борми?
- Сизнинг фикрингизча ўз-ўзини бошқарув бўлган маҳалла давлат томонидан назоратда бўлиши зарурми?
- Маҳалла ташкилотининг қарорлари ҳокимлар тарафиданми ёки м Маҳалла Жамғамасы тарафидан мақуллиниши керакми?

—2.4. Маҳалла Бюджети

- Сизнинг Бюджетингиз бошқа муассаса тарафидан тасдиқландими?
- Маҳалла бюджетингиз бошқа бир ташкилот тарафидан тасдиқланиши керакми?...
- Бюджетингизнинг қанча миқдори марказдан ва ҳокимдан келган пуллардан ва қанчаси оз сармоядан ҳосил бўлади? ...
- Маҳалла ташкилотининг вазифаларни ижро этишда бюджет (пул) масаласи қийинчилик туғдирадими?
- Сизнинг кичкина фирмаларингиз борми? Булардан пул (фойда) келади ми? ...

—2.5. Маҳаллада Кам Таминланган Оилаларга Пул Ёрдами

- Озгина маҳалладаги кам таминланган оилаларга пул ёрдами ишидан сўхбат қилсоқ бўладими?
- Сизнинг фикрингизча ҳукумат томонидан бериладиган ёрдам пулларини маҳаллаларга адолатли равишда тақсимлайдими? Адолатли бўлмаса, нима учун?...
- Сизнинг маҳаллангизда нечта ёрдам фондлариз бор, буларни кимларга берасиз?...

—2.6. Маҳаллада Сантехниклар ва Ширкатлар

- Озгина маҳалладаги сантехник ишидан сўхбат қилсоқ бўладими?
- Маҳаллангизнинг қанча сантехник иши қилган ширкат бор?...
- Маҳаллангизнинг сантехникларнинг қилган ишларидан хурсандсизми? Нима учун?...
- Уйингиздаги сантехник проблемаларни хал қилиш мураккабликтан кейинми яхши бўлди ёки Совет давридами?
- Ширкатларда ишлайдиган одамлар орасида қариндошлик борми?...
- Айтингчи, ширкатларда ишлайдиган одамлар қандай усул билан ишга олинади?

— 2.7. Маҳаллада Мадди Ёрдиملар

- Маҳаллангизнинг қанча ёрдим берилмакта? Булар нималардан иборат? Булар қайси вақтларда берилмакта?
- Булар маҳаллаларга қайердан келмакта?
- Бу ёрдиملардан озгина сўхбат қилсоқ бўладими? Булар аҳолига қанага ўсўлда берилмакта?
- Булар маҳаллада яшайдиган ҳамма адомига берилмакта? Булар пўл биланми сотилмакта?
- Буларни маҳаллада ким беради?

— 2.8. Маҳаллада Пўстбон ва Маҳалланинг Қўримаси

- Сизнинг маҳаллангизда қанча пўстбон ёки сардор ишлайди?
- Буларнинг вазифаларидан сўхбат қилсоқ бўладими?
- Буларнинг ишга олиниш ўсўллари қанага бўлипти? Буларни ким ишга алоди? Буларнинг ўзлари милициями ёки фуқорамми?

APPENDIX C: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MAHALLA RESIDENTS

—1. Гувоҳнома саволлари

- Жинсингиз,
- Ёшингиз,
- Маълумотингиз,
- Касбингиз, (Ҳозир ва совет даврида),
- Ҳозир мутахассислигингиздан бошқа касбда ишласизми?
- Туғилган жойингиз?
- Қачон Тошкентга келгансиз ва нима мақсадда келгасиз?,
- Миллатингиз,
- Яшаётган уйингиз хусусий ўз уйингизми ёки ижарада турасизми?
- Сизнингча, ҳозирда ёшлар кўпроқ қандай касбларни танлашмоқда?
- Ҳозирги маҳаллангизда яшаётганингизга қанча вақт бўлди? ...
- Мазкур маҳаллада Сизнинг қариндошларингиз борми?...
- Мустақилликдан кейинги давр бугунги кунгача бўлган даврдаги Сизнинг яшаш даражангиз қандай ўзгарди?

—2. Маҳалла ҳақида умумий маълумот

—2.1. Маҳалла фаолиятларингизга қатнашиш ва маҳаллада ваколати муаммоси

- Маҳалланинг ўзини ўзи бошқарув жорий қилинганидан сўнг маҳаллангизда бўлган фаолиятларга қатнашишингизда ўсиш бўлдими?
- Маҳаллангизнинг номини биласизми?
- Маҳаллангизнинг оқсоқолини танийсизми?
- Охириги маротаба маҳалла оқсоқолини сайлашда иштирок этгансизми?
- Энг сўнгги бора қачон қатнашдингиз?
- Охириги марта маҳалла фаолиятида қачон қатнашдингиз?
- Сизнинг маҳалла бошқаруви билан алоқаларингиз совет даврида ёки мустақиллик йилларида яхши бўлдими?
- Маҳалланинг ўзини ўзи бошқарадиган бўлганлигидан кейин маҳаллада ишлайдиган одамларнинг сони кўпайишига Сиз қандай мунособат билдирасиз?...
- Айтингчи, сизнинг фикрингизча, маҳаллалар фаолиятини ривожлатириш орқали демократияга эришиш мумкинми?
- Ҳозирда маҳаллаларда ўз-ўзини бошқарув тизими қабул қилинган. Сизнинг фикрингизча, ҳозирги маҳаллада, Ўзбекистондаги маҳаллалар, маҳалла жамоаси учун ваколат қиладиларми ёки Марказий Ҳукумат учун-ми?

—2.2. Маҳаллада нетворк ва ижтимоий сармоя

- Айтингчи, Сиз бу маҳаллада яшаётганингизга хурсандмисиз?
- Хурсанд бўлмасангиз нима учун? ...
- Сиз аввалги анъанавий хонадонлар ёки кўп қаватли уйларда яшашни хоҳлайсизми?
- Маҳаллангизда қанча қўшниларни танийсиз? ...
- Сиз маҳаллангиз фуқоролари билан қанча вақтда учрашасиз?
- Маҳалланинг ўзини ўзи бошқаруви Сизнинг қўшниларингиз билан алоқаларингизга қандай таъсир килди?
- Қўшниларингизга ишонасизми?
- Маҳалладаги ишсиз одамларга маҳалла кўмагида иш топса бўладими?
- Бирор бир фуқорони давлат ташкилотларига ишга олинishiдан аввал ушбу шахс маҳалла орқали сўраб-суриштириладими?

- Ажрашмоқчи бўлган келин ва куёвни ярашиштириш учун оқсоқоллар ҳаракат қилади. Сизнинг фикрингизча бу керакми?
- Кўшнилариингиз билан алоқаларингиз мустақилликдан кейин яхши бўлдики ёки олдин Совет даврида ҳам яхшимиди?

—**2.3. Маҳаллада кам тامينланган оилаларга моддий ёрдам кўрсатиш**

- Сизнинг фикрингизча ҳукумат томонидан бериладиган ёрдам пулларини маҳаллаларга адолатли равишда тақсимлайдими? Агар адолатли бўлмаса, бунинг сабаби нимада?...
- Сизнинг фикрингизча маҳалла томонидан бериладиган ёрдам пулларини маҳалла аҳолисига адолатли равишда тақсимлайдими? Адолатли бўлмаса, нима учун?...
- Оқсоқол бу пуллари тақсимлаганда маҳаллада яшайдиганларни ажраштирмоқчи бўладими? Мисол учун танишларига пул берадими? Ёки жудаям кам таъминланган оилаларга берадими?
- Кам таъминланган оилаларга пул ёрдами мустақилликдан кейинки ёки Совет даврида яхши бўлдики?

—**2.4. Маҳалладаги коммунал хизматлар ва ширкатлар фаолияти**

- Уйингизда бир муаммо бўлса коммунал хизмат кўрсатувчи ширкатларга борасизми? Ёки бошқаларга мурожаат этасизми?
- Бошқаларга борсангиз кимга мурожаат этасиз?...
- Маҳаллангиз коммунал хизматлардан Сиз қониқасизми? Агар қониқмасангиз нима учун?..
- Уйингиздаги содир бўладиган коммунал муаммоларни ҳал қилиш мустақилликдан кейинки яхши бўлдики ёки Совет давридаки?
- Маҳалла ширкатларида ишлайдиган кишилар орасида қариндошлилик борми? ёки оқсоқолнинг қариндошлари борми?

—**2.5. Маҳаллий ўз-ўзини бошқарув органлари ва уларнинг вазифалари**

- Маҳалла кенгашининг сўнгги йиллардаги фаолиятини қандай баҳолайсиз?...
- Сизнинг фикрингизча, маҳаллангиздаги асосий муаммолар нималардан иборат?
- Маҳаллада ишлайдиган одамлар маблағ олиб иш қиладиларми?
- Сиз ўз маҳаллангизга бирор бир иш билан мурожаат қилганмисиз?
- Сиз қандай масалалар юзасидан маҳаллага мурожаат этасиз?
- Маҳалла ичида ҳар хил керек бўлган нарсаларни топиш мустақилликдан кейинки яхши бўлдики ёки Совет давридаки?
- Маҳаллада ишлайдиган кишилар орасида оқсоқолнинг қариндошлари борми?
- Ёки маҳалла фаоллари ишлайдиган кишилар орасида қариндошлари борми?
- Сизнинг фикрингизча маҳалла кимларнинг таъсири остида? Маҳалла ташкилотларида ишлайдиган кишиларнинг оилалари қандай оилалар?

—**2.6. Бошқа муассасалар билан аълоқа қилиш ва шаҳар сиёсати**

- Қонунга кўра оқсоқоллар аҳоли тарафидан сайланади. Лекин баъзан уларни ҳоким ёки ҳукумат таъсири натижасида ҳам сайланиши мумкин. Бунга Сиз қандай қарайсиз?... Сизнингча, маҳалла фаоллари қандай сайлангани маъқул?
- Сизнинг фикрингизча ўз-ўзини бошқарув бўлган маҳалла давлат томонидан назоратда бўлиши зарурми?
- Маҳалла ташкилотининг қарорлари ҳокимлар тарафиданки ёки маҳалла жамғармаси томонидан мақуллиниши керакми?
- Маҳалла бюджетингиз бошқа бир ташкилот тарафидан тасдиқланишига зарурар борми?...
- Баъзан одамлар орасида “маҳалла ташкилотининг муҳим лавозимларида шаҳарнинг нуфузли оилалари вакиллари эгаллик қилмоқдалар” деган гаплар юради. Сиз бунга қандай қарайсиз. Бу тўғрими?

— **2.7. Маҳаллада моддий ёрдам кўрсатиш**

- Маҳаллангизда қандай ёрдамлар берилмоқда? Ёрдам қайси вақтда берилмоқда ва қандай ёрдам кўрсатилмоқда?
- Сиз ҳам маҳалла томонидан бериладиган ёрдамдан фойдаланганмисиз?
- Маҳалла томонидан бериладиган ёрдам учун сиз маблағ берасизми?
- Берилаётган ёрдамдан хурсандмисиз. Қолаверса берилаётган ёрдам етарлими?
- Маҳалла фуқороларига кўрсатилаётган ёрдам асосан қаердан келмоқда?
- Маҳаллага кўрсатилаётган ёрдам қандай усулда ва қандай тартибда берилишидан Сиз хабардормисиз?
- Маҳалла учун бериладиган моддий ёрдам маҳалланинг барча фуқоралари учун бериладими ёки айрим тоифадаги кишиларгагина бериладими?

- Буларни маҳаллада кимлар беради?

— **2.8. Маҳаллада постбон ва маҳалла қўмитаси**

- Сизнинг маҳаллангизда қанча постбон ёки сардор бор?
- Сиз билан уларнинг вазифалари борасида суҳбатлашсак бўладими?
- Маҳалла посбони ва сардори қандай тартибда ишга олинади ва уларни ким ишга олади? Улар собиқ ички ишлар вакилларми ёки оддий одамларми?
- Сиз маҳаллангиз посбонини танийсизми? Агар танисангиз Сиз у кишидан хурсандмисиз?...

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLES OF PASSPORT MALUMATNOMASI

- сон « _____ » номли маҳалла

П А С П О Р Т И

24.08.2006 йил

№	МАЪЛУМОТЛАР РУЙХАТИ	МАЪЛУМОТЛАР СОНИ
1.	Уйлар <i>қўн қаватли</i>	16
2.	Хонадонлар <i>- хонадонлар</i>	584
3.	Аҳоли	$1645 + 1607 = 3252$
4.	Оилалар	1001
5.	Хотин-қизлар	1821
6.	Эркаklar	1531
7.	Меҳнатка лаёқатли эркаklar	913
8.	Меҳнатга лаёқатли аёллар	1088
9.	Нафақахурлар	418
10.	Ногиронлар	2
11.	Ногирон болалар	11
12.	Ишсизлар	10
	Улардан : аёллар	3
	эркаklar	7
13.	Қўп болали оилалар	288
14.	Ёлғизлар	1
15.	Нотинч оилалар	
16.	Ёрдамга муҳтож оилалар	215
17.	Улуг Ватан уруши катнашчилари	13
18.	Байналминалчилар	4
19.	Меҳнат fronti катнашчилари	40
20.	Мактаблар	1
21.	Богчалар	1
22.	Туйхоналар	1
23.	Нонвойхоналар	6
24.	Дуконлар	16
25.	Ошхоналар	6
26.	Маиший хизмат идоралари	8
27.	Мавжуд булган спорт майдончалари	
28.	Барча турдаги корхоналар сони	36

« _____ » Фуқуrolар
йигини раиси

Профилактика нозири

Маҳалла номи _____ паспорти

1.	Аҳоли сони	2706
2.	Оилалар сони	1491
3.	3 ёшгача булган оилалар сони	42
4.	3-16 ёшгача булган болалар сони	453
5.	Маҳаллада ишсизлар сони	26
6.	Нафақахурлар сони	790
7.	УВУ катнашчилари ва ногиронлар сони	27
8.	Каровга мухтож ёлғиз яшовчилар сони	2
9.	Маҳалладаги кучалар сони	1
10.	Куп каватли уйлар сони	30
11.	Куп каватли уйлардаги хонадонлар сони	-
12.	Куп каватли уйларда яшовчи аҳоли сони	1472
13.	Куп каватли уйларда яшовчи оилалар сони	2706
14.	Якка тартибдаги хонадонлар сони	1493
15.	Якка хонадонларда яшовчи аҳоли сони	-
16.	Якка тартибдаги хонадонларда яшовчи оилалар сони	-
17.	Нотинч оилалар сони	2
18.	Жазо муддатини утаб келганлар сони	10
19.	Жазо муддатини утаётганлар сони	2
20.	Балогатга етмаганлар билан ишлаш инспекцияси ҳисобида турувчи ёшлар сони	-
21.	Кам таъминланган оилалар сони	10
22.	Моддий ёрдам сураб ариза ёзганлар сони	8
23.	Моддий ёрдам олган оилалар сони	8
24.	16 ёшгача болалар нафақасини оладиганлар сони	7
25.	2 ёшгача болалар нафақасини оладиганлар сони	-
26.	2003 йилда содир этилган жиноятлар сони	2
27.	2004 йилда содир этилган жиноятлар сони	13
28.	2005 йилда содир этилган жиноятлар сони	5
29.	Диний экстремизмга мансуб шахслар сони	-
30.	Маҳалла ҳисобида турувчи, лекин номалум сабабларга кура маҳаллада яшаймайдиганлар сони	-
31.	Маҳалла ҳисобида турмайди, лекин маҳаллада яшовчи фуқаролар сони	17
32.	Маҳалладаги чет эл фуқаролари сони	10
33.	Маҳалладаги мактаблар сони	2
34.	Мактаб уқувчилари сони	907
35.	Мактабгача тарбия муассасалари сони	2
36.	Мактабгача тарбия муассасаларида тарбияланувчилар сони	305
37.	Масжидлар сони	-
38.	Саноат корхоналари сони	-
39.	Маданият муассасалари сони	3
40.	Спорт иншоотлари сони	2
41.	Олий ва урта махсус уқув юртлари сони	1
42.	Согликни сақлаш муассасалари сони	5
43.	Маҳалладаги маиший чикиндилар тупландиган жойлар сони	3
44.	Маҳалладаги сартарошхоналар ва косибчиқ шаҳобчалари сони	5
45.	Маҳалладаги кичик ва урта бизнес фирмалар сони	10
46.	Маҳалладаги савдо ташкилотлар сони (нонвойхона, нон дукони)	2

Маҳалла оксоколи

APPENDIX E: AN EXAMPLE OF MAHALLA HISTORY

Ўтмишсиз келажак бўлмайди

МАҲАЛЛАНИНГ ТАРИХИ

Юнусобод туманидаги маҳалла. Аҳолиси асосан Хитойнинг ғарбий қисмидаги Қашқар (Кашгар) шаҳридан 1830 йилларда Қўқон хони Мухаммад Алихон қўчириб келтирилган қашқарликлардан, бир қисми ўзбеклардан иборат бўлган. Қашқарликлар кўп бўлгани учун бу ерни (Қашқар) маҳалла деб аталган.

Аҳолиси асосан савдо-сотиқ, шаҳар ташқариси (Оққўрғон, Бўз, Яланғон ва бошқа мавзелар)даги ерларида деҳқончилик ва боғдорчилик билан шуғулланган. XX аср бошларида маҳаллада тўртта карвонсарой, бозор, масжид, баққолчилик дўконлари бўлган.

Тошкентнинг ўн икки дарвозасидан биттаси — Қашқар дарвозаси маҳалланинг шарқий чеккасида бўлган. Черняев бошлиқ рус қўшинлари дастлаб 1864 йил 4 октябрда Тошкентга шу томондан ҳужум қилган, лекин кўп талофатга учраб, чекинган. 1865 йилда рус қўшинлари Тошкентни босиб олгандан кейин Қашқар маҳалладаги эгасиз қолган хонадонларга рус зобитлари жойлашиб олган. Бу ерда атоқли шоир, драматург, композитор, режиссер ва жамоат арбоби Ҳамза Хакимзода Ниёзий мактаб очиб, озроқ вақт ишлаган. Маърифатчи ва адабиётшунос олим Миёнбузрук Солихов ҳам шу маҳаллада яшаган.

1966 йил 26 апрелдаги Тошкент зилзиласи эпицентри Қашқар маҳалласида бўлган. Иморатлар вайрон бўлган. Қашқар маҳалла ўрнида Ўзбекистон ҳалқлари дўстлиги уйи, “Жасорат” комплекси, Россия шаҳарларининг қурувчилари ёрдамида 1966-1968 йилларда турар жой мавзеси барпо этилган.

II Жаҳон уруши ногирони Тоҳир Зокирович Қурбонов ташаббуси билан 1969 йил 19 апрелда “Марказ-4” мавзесида “Марказ-4” маҳалласи ташкил этилди. 1990 йил 14 майда Тошкент шаҳар ижроия маҳкамасининг 225/7 қарори билан маҳаллага “Қашқар мавзеси” деган ном берилди. Маҳалла фаолларидан II Жаҳон уруши қатнашчилари Тоҳир Қурбонов, Абдулла Сатторов, Тоҳир Зуфаров, Юсупжон Мақсудов ҳамда ўша вақтдаги Ўзбекистон Олий Совети депутати Равшанжон Файзуллаевларнинг ҳаракатлари билан район ижроия маҳкамасининг 1990 йил 15 февралдаги 41а-сонли қарорига асосан ҳозирда амал қилиб турган клуб ва идора хоналари маҳаллага ажратиб берилди.

1994 йил августда маҳаллага муҳр ва штамп берилди. Оқсоқол ва котиб (а)га маош тайинланди. Шу вақтдан эътиборан Қашқар маҳалласи расмий ишлаб турибди.

Маҳалла қўмитаси раислари (оқсоқоллари)

1969-1986 йилларда Эргаш Холиқов

1986-1987 йилларда Собиржон Самигов

1987-1992 йилларда Абдулла Сатторов

1992 йил апрелидан 1992 йил сентябргача Юсупжон Мақсудов

1992 йил сентябрдан 1994 йил сентябргача Абдулла Сатторов

1994 йил 26 сентябрдан 2005 йил 1 апрелгача Ўғлон Шокиров

2005 йил 1 апрелдан Сония Кинджаева.

Маҳалла раиси

APPENDIX F: VIEWS FROM TASHKENT MAHALLA KENGAHSES



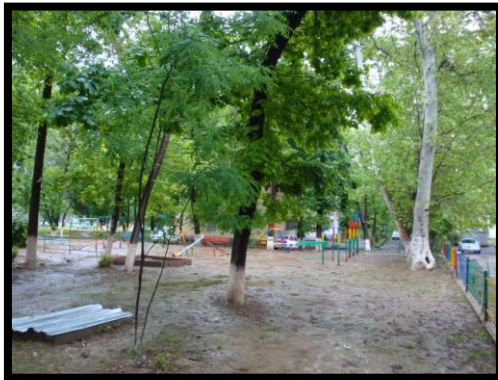




APPENDIX G: VIEWS FROM TASHKENT AND ITS RESIDENTIAL UNITS







APPENDIX H:

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Kavuncu, Ayşe Çolpan
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EDUCATION

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MS	Gazi Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	1999
BS	A.U. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi	2002
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WORK EXPERIENCE

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2004- Present	METU, Department of Urban Policy Planning and Local Government	Research Assiss.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Fluent Uzbek

PUBLICATIONS

1. Ayşe Kavuncu, “Özbekistan’da Geçiş Döneminde Sosyal Uyumun Sağlanması Ötündeki Engeller”, Global Strateji, Winter 2007, 2: 8, pp 126-142
2. Ayşe Kavuncu; “Ütopya ya da Toplumsal Teori olarak Marksizmde Mekan”, Bilim ve Ütopya, , sayı 72, Yıl. 14, Ekim 2008, 57-68

APPENDIX I:

TURKISH SUMMARY

1980'lerin sonlarından itibaren dağılmaya başlayan Sovyetler Birliği'nin ardından ortaya çıkan yeni devletler, özellikle Orta Asya devletleri, neo-liberal ekonomik sisteme adapte olurken hızlı bir şekilde sosyal, politik ve ekonomik dönüşüm yaşamışlardır. Çoğu zaman yaşanan bu dönüşümün merkeziyetçi, katı bürokratik Sovyet yapısından açık piyasa ekonomisine geçişle beraber, daha adem-i merkeziyetçi ve daha demokratik bir kurumsal yapılanmaya doğru gerçekleşeceği varsayılmıştır. Söz konusu devletler, neo-liberal dönemin hegemonik baskısının da etkisiyle, kurumsal yapılarında bu anlamda adem-i merkeziyetçiliğe geçiş için yasal düzeyde önemli reformlar gerçekleştirmiştir. Daha adem-i merkeziyetçi ve demokratik bir kurumsal yapılanma için gerekli olan yasal reformların başında ise yerel yönetimleri güçlendirerek daha özerk yapılar haline getirmek vardı. Ancak yaşanan deneyimlerin çoğu, yerel yönetimlerin pratikte güçlenmesi yerine merkez-yerel ilişkisinde merkezi devletin vesayetinin yüksek olduğu merkeziyetçi bir yapı ortaya çıkarmıştır. Diğer bir deyişle, bu ülkelerde özellikle yeni ulus devletlerin eski totaliter rejimin ardından daha demokratik bir yapıya sahip olacağı, sivil toplumun özerk yerel yönetimler aracılığı ile politik hayatta daha fazla temsil edilebileceği, serbest piyasa ekonomisine geçişle beraber daha piyasa odaklı bir ekonomik yapıya sahip olacakları, eski dönemin elit "*nomeklatura*"sının ve kurumlarının yerine daha açık, esnek, daha yerel, daha demokratik, daha etkin kurumsal-inşa süreçlerinin yaşanacağı varsayımlarının aksine her post-Sovyet ülkesinin kendi özgün koşulları ve yeni neo-liberal dönemin yapısal zorunluluklarının etrafında, ortaya konan düzenlemeler (yasal reformlar –ekonomik, politik reformlar vb.), toplumsal yapıda süregelen (path-dependency) ve yeni oluşan (path-shaping) güç ilişkilerinin etkisiyle öngörülenden ya da varsayılandan daha farklı formlar ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Çoğu zaman, açık piyasa ekonomisine geçişle beraber özellikle orta Asya ülkelerinin idari yapılarında daha özerk yerel yönetimler yaratamaması ve buna bağlı olarak

demokratikleşmenin gerçekleşmemesinin temel sebebi olarak büyük oranda Sovyet geçmişinin etkisi öne sürülmüştür. Bu çalışmada temel olarak, gerçekten orta Asya devletlerinin kurumsal yapılanmalarında adem-i merkeziyetçilik ve özerk yerel yönetimler aracılığı ile demokratikleşmenin gerçekleştirilememesinin tek sebebinin Sovyet geçmişi olup olmadığı sorgulanmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, bu tez, neo-liberal hegemonik söylemin bir parçası olan demokratikleşme ile yerelleşme (özerk yerel yönetim) ve hatta açık piyasa ekonomisi ile demokratikleşme arasındaki doğrudan ilişkinin önkabulüne dair eleştirel bir çalışmadır. Bu ise, ampirik olarak bir post-Sovyet Orta Asya ülkesi olan Özbekistan'da Taşkent örneği üzerinden merkez-yerel (merkezi devlet-kentsel mahalle organları) ilişkisinin hem yasal hem de pratik düzeyde derinlemesine incelenmesi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Sovyetler Birliği yıkıldıktan sonra, 1992'de bağımsızlığını ilan eden Özbekistan Cumhuriyeti'nin hedeflerinin başında yeniden kurumsallaşmasında yönetsel yapısını daha adem-i merkeziyetçi bir forma sokma geliyordu. Bu anlamda, yeni rejim birçok idari yetkisini, özellikle sosyal politika uygulamalarını kentsel alanda *mahalla kengash* olarak bilinen mahalle yönetimlerine devretmiştir. 1990'lı yıllar boyunca, Sovyet rejimi boyunca var olan tüm farklı kentsel yerleşim alanlarını (*mikroraion, garadok, massiv, mavzi, mahalla*) yeniden düzenleyerek standartlaştırma gerçekleştirmiştir ve tüm yerleşim birimlerinde mahalle yönetim birimlerini kurmuştur. 1999'da Özbekistan rejimi anayasal güvence ile kentsel mahalle yönetimlerini özerk yerel yönetim ilan etmiş ve bu düzenlemeyi daha adem-i merkeziyetçi bir yönetsel yapısı için en büyük adım olarak görmüştür. Bu yönetsel reform bir taraftan her mahalle birimini farklı şekilde etkilerken, reformun kendisi de farklı sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-mekansal yapılara sahip mahalle yönetimleri tarafından farklı şekilde uygulanmaya başlamıştır. Bu noktada, Özbek rejiminin iddia ettiği gibi söz konusu reformun gerçekten yönetsel anlamda bir özerkleşme yaratıp yaratmadığı sorusu ise belirsiz kalmıştır.

Özbek devleti, diğer post-Sovyet devletler gibi, politik ve yönetsel yapısını, ulus-devlet yaratma ve piyasa ekonomisine uyum süreci kadar geçiş döneminin yarattığı sosyo-kültürel ve ekonomik sorunlarla başetme çerçevesinde yeniden inşa etmiştir. Bağımsızlıktan sonra, söz konusu rejim, kurmakta olduğu yeni ulus-devletini muhafazakâr ve paternalist sosyal ilişkiler etrafında tanımlanan Özbek kimliğine dayandırmıştır. Dahası söz konusu Özbek kimliği rejim tarafından çoğu zaman pre-İslami döneme ait referanslar etrafında inşa edilerek, mevcut radikal İslami hareketlerin önü alınmaya çalışılmıştır. Diğer taraftan, Özbekistan devleti açık piyasa ekonomisine aşamalı bir şekilde geçmeyi stratejik olarak seçmiştir. Bu durum bir yandan geçiş döneminin yarattığı hızlı ekonomik ve sosyal çöküntü

ile mücadele ederken diğer yandan devletin özel sektörün gelişmesi için uygun ekonomik ortamı yaratması ile gerçekleştirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu tezde, geçiş döneminde Özbekistan devletin bu amaçları küresel neo-liberal ekonomik sistemin yapısal hegemonyası çerçevesinde hegemonik projeler olarak tanımlanmıştır. Tüm bu hedefleri gerçekleştirirken, Özbek rejimi ideal mahalle yönetim birimleri tasarlamaya çalışmış ve kentsel yerleşim alanlarındaki bu mahalle yönetimlerini adem-i merkeziyetçi politikasının bir hegemonik aracı olarak kullanmıştır.

Söz konusu yerleşme politikası yeni Özbek rejiminin kurumsal yapılanmasında oldukça merkezi bir konumda yer almaktadır. Sonuçta, Özbek rejiminin bir özgünlüğü olarak mahalle yönetim birimleri hem yerleşme politikasının hem de devletin hegemonyasının temel aracı haline gelmiştir. Özbek toplumunun en temel yerleşim birimi olan mahallelerin yönetim birimlerinin özerk yerel yönetim olarak ilan edilmesi, Özbek rejiminin aynı zamanda Sovyet döneminden post-Sovyet döneme geçişte yerel siyasetindeki en büyük sürekliliği olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Sovyet rejimi için, stratejik bir seçim olarak kentsel mahalle birimleri hem toplumsal kontrolü sağlamada bir araç, hem de rejimin ideal proleter sınıfını iş ve yaşam alanlarında yaratmada hegemonik bir araç iken, bu durumun kendisi, Özbekistan’da Sovyet dönemi boyunca geleneksel kentsel mahalle birimlerinin var olmasına ve yeniden üretilmesine sebep olmuştur. Diğer bir deyişle, her ne kadar Sovyet rejimi yaşam alanlarında ideal işçi sınıfı yaratma amacına sahip olsa da, Orta Asya’ya özgü milletler politikası sebebi ile, Özbekistan’da farklı formda kentsel mahalleler ortaya çıkmıştır ve çoğu zaman bu formlar Sovyetlerin ideal kentsel yaşam alanlarından farklı yapılara sahip olmuştur. Sovyet sonrası dönemde ise, yeni Özbek rejimi, mahalle komitelerini tüm kentsel yaşam alanlarında kurarak özerk yerel yönetim olarak kabul etmiş ve bu kez mahalle komiteleri rejimin ideal Özbek yurttaşlık bilinci yaratmasında hegemonik bir araç haline dönüşmüştür.

Ancak, Sovyet rejimi boyunca farklı yerel yapılara sahip olarak şekillenen farklı mahalle tipleri, bugünkü yeni rejimin hem adem-i merkeziyetçi politikasına, hem de hegemonik projelerine farklı stratejiler üretmektedirler ve bu çoğu zaman Özbek rejimin ideal mahalle kurgusu ile çelişmektedir. Bu noktada, bu tez, Özbekistan’ın Sovyet sonrası yeni kurumsal yapılanmasının analizinde “adem-i merkeziyetçilik”in teorik olarak açıklayıcı bir kavram olup olmadığına dair eleştirel bir çalışmadır ve sonuç olarak post-Sovyet coğrafyada kentsel siyasetin dönüşümünü anlamada standart merkez-yerel ilişkisi öne süren herhangi bir teorik paradigmanın yetersiz olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Kısaca, bu tez, Taşkent örneği üzerinden, kentsel alanda mahalle topluluklarının birbirlerinden farklı dönüşüm tecrübelerine dayanarak

Özbekistan'daki kentsel siyasete dair eleştirel bir analiz sunmayı hedeflemektedir ve bu farklı yerel tecrübelerin Sovyet döneminden yeni döneme bir kırılma mı yoksa süreklilik mi arz ettiğini incelemeyi hedeflemiştir. Bu yüzden, kent siyasetinin temel konularından biri olan merkez-yerel ilişkisi bağlamında, bir taraftan post-Sovyet Özbekistan'ın politik ve ekonomik dönüşümünün yapısal dinamikleri ve bunun yerel politikaya ve kentsel mahalle topluluklarının gündelik yaşamına etkileri, diğer taraftan farklı mahallelerin devletin politikalarının etkisine ne tür farklı strateji ve cevaplar ürettiği incelenmiştir. Kısaca, bağımsızlık sonrası geçiş dönemi açık bir şekilde göstermiştir ki Özbek rejiminin adem-i merkeziyetçilik politikası ve hegemonik projeleri, standart yasal reformlara ve düzenlemelere rağmen, farklı tipteki kentsel mahallelerin mahalle yönetimleri ile merkezi devletin diyalektik ilişkisi tarafından şekillenmektedir. Bu noktada, söz konusu çalışma merkezi devlet ile yerel mahalle yönetim birimleri arasındaki bu diyalektik ilişkiyi devletin hegemonik projeleri ve adem-i merkeziyetçilik politikası çerçevesinde incelemeye çalışmıştır.

Özerk yerel yönetimler olarak mahalle birimleri ile merkezi devlet arasındaki diyalektik ilişkinin incelendiği bu tezin alan çalışması, Ağustos 2008-Mayıs 2009 tarihleri arasında Taşkent mahallelerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Alan çalışmasının gerçekleştirildiği Taşkent'in 12 farklı mahallesi araştırma yapılan 21 mahalle içerisinde seçilmiştir. Söz konusu 21 mahalle, çeşitli istatistiki datalar ile tarihsel geçmişleri incelenerek tespit edilmeye çalışılmış ve farklı sosyo-ekonomik yapılar, farklı tarihsel geçmişlere, farklı etnik yapılar ve farklı mekânsal yapılar sahiptir. Söz konusu 12 mahallede hem mahalle halkına anket uygulanmış, hem de hem mahalle halkı hem de mahalle yöneticileri ile derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Alan çalışmasının gerçekleştirildiği 12 mahalle dört farklı kategori altında sınıflandırılmıştır. Bu anlamda Taşkent mahallelerinin birbirinden farklı dört gruba ayrılabilceğinin iddia edildiği bu tezde mahalleler bu kategoriler altında A,B,C ve D olarak kodlanmıştır.

A tipi mahalleler, eski şehirdeki mahalleleri ifade etmektedir ve genellikle Rus Çarlığı'nın bölgeyi işgal etmesinden önce var olan eski Tashkent'te kalan mahallelerdir. Her üç mahallede de bir veya birkaç tane küçük market dışında herhangi bir ticari kuruluş yer almamaktadır. Mahalle halkı genellikle serbest meslek ile uğraşmaktadır. Özellikle geçici işçiliğin yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. Mahallelerin sosyo-ekonomik düzeyinin bağımsızlıktan sonra fazla değişmediği görülmektedir. Nitekim anket sonuçlarına göre, mahalle sakinleri sosyo ekonomik düzeylerini Sovyet döneminde düşük olarak tanımlarken,

bağımsızlıktan sonrasında da ayı şekilde tanımlamışlardır. Etnik olarak 3 mahallenin de %90'dan fazlası Özbektir. Komşuluk ilişkilerinin güçlü olduğu mahallelerdir. **A-1 mahallesi**, Ruslardan önce kurulmuş, Çarsu pazarının yanındaki mahallelerden biridir. Ortaya çıkışı ile ilgili bilgiler 14. yy'a kadar uzanmaktadır, ama kesin olarak Çarsu pazarına bağlı olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Eski şehrin merkezindeki mahallelerden bir tanesidir. Sovyetler zamanında hiçbir şekilde devlet müdahalesine uğramamıştır. 1992'de resmi olarak mahalle adını almıştır ve devlet mührü kullanma yetkisi verilmiştir. 1996'daki düzenleme ile, Çarsu etrafındaki 4 mahalle birleştirilerek alanı ve nüfusu genişletilmiş ve bugünkü mahalle sınırlarına ulaşmıştır. Tamamen bahçeli evlerden oluşan mahalleye bağlı sadece bir tane apartman vardır. Şehir dışından Çarsu pazarına gelip geçici olarak çalışanlar genellikle bu apartmanda ikamet etmektedir. Nüfusu 5583 olup 778 hanede 998 aile yaşamaktadır. **A-2 mahallesi**, yine eski şehrin merkezindeki mahallelerden biridir. Ortaya çıkışı ile ilgili bilgiler 15. yy'a kadar dayanır. Sovyetler zamanında hiçbir şekilde devlet müdahalesine uğramamıştır. Tarihi medrese olan Hastı İmam yanında kurulan mahalle, 1992 yılında resmi olarak devlet mührünü kullanma yetkisine sahip olmuştur. 1998 yılında 7 mahallenin birleştirilmesi ile bugünkü alanına ve nüfusuna sahip olmuştur. Tamamen bahçeli evlerden oluşmaktadır. Nüfusu 6590 olup 712 hanede 1586 aile yaşamaktadır. **A-3 mahallesi** de eski şehrin kenarında kalan bir mahalledir. Eski tarihlerde Yahudi mahallesi olarak bilinmektedir. 15.yy'a kadar tarihi uzanmaktadır. Yeni şehir ile eski şehir arasında kalan mahalle, 1950'lerden beri tüm şehir planlarında dönüşüm alanı olarak belirlenmesine rağmen henüz dönüşüm gerçekleşmemiştir. Sovyetler zamanında herhangi bir müdahaleye maruz kalmayan mahallenin bağımsızlıktan sonra dış çevresinde yıkıma başlanmıştır. 1992'de kanunen özerk yerel yönetim kabul edilen mahalle, 1996'daki düzenleme ile 5 mahalle birleştirilerek bugünkü halini almıştır. Nüfusu 2520 olup 271 hanede 651 aile yaşamaktadır.

D tipi mahalleler: Sovyet döneminde farklı zamanlarda mikro rayon şeklinde inşa edilen bu gruptaki mahalleler, ya eski bağ bahçe üzerine sıfırdan inşa edilmiştir, ya da kökten yıkımla oluşan, eski ahalisinin tamamen (özellikle kulak döneminde) yok olduğu, tam anlamıyla Sovyet kentsel yerleşim alanlarını temsil eden, halkının Sovyet döneminde yeniden oluşturulduğu mahallelerdir. A tipi mahallelerin aksine, D tipi mahalleleri, halkının çoğunluğunun devlet memuru, bürokrat ve devlet kurumlarında işçi olduğu mahallelerdir. D tipi mahallelerin tamamında sosyo-ekonomik düzeyin bağımsızlıktan sonra düştüğü tespit edilmiştir. Nitekim alan çalışmasındaki D tipi 4 mahallenin de halkının büyük oranda kendilerini Sovyet dönemi toplumsal yapının üst grubunda tanımladığı görülürken,

bağımsızlık sonrası çoğunlukla orta sınıf olarak tanımlamışlardır. A tipi mahallelerin aksine, D tipi mahallelerin tamamı apartmanlardan (işçi blokları) oluşmaktadır ve her bir mahallede küçük, orta hatta büyük ölçekli iş yerlerinin sayısının en az 15 olduğu görülmektedir. Son olarak etnik yapısını incelendiğinde D tipi mahallelerin ortalama %50'sinin Özbek olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Daha da çarpıcı bir durum bu mahallelerde, Sovyet zamanı Özbek nüfusunun oranının sadece %16 civarında olduğunun tespit edilmiş olmasıdır. **D-1 mahallesi**, 1864'te Ruslar Taşkent'i işgal ettiğinde, Rus askerler ve devlet adamları için inşa edilmiş ilk konut alanlarından biridir. Öncesinde bağ olarak eski şehrin kollektif tarım alanı olarak kullanılmaktaydı. Daha çok Rus Yahudileri yerleşmiştir. Sovyet devriminden hemen sonra Kulak paytında tüm buradaki çarlık yanlısı devlet görevlileri ve askerler sürülüp, yerlerine her çeşit milletten komünist parti üst görevlileri yerleştirilmiştir. 1950'lerden sonra mikro rayon işçi bloklarının inşası farklı aralıklarla devam etmiştir ve son olarak 1970 yılında tüm alan işçi bloklarına dönüştürülmüştür. 1950'lerden sonra yerleşim alanında doğrudan Raykoma bağlı JEG birimi kurulurken. 1960'lardan sonra kooperatif haline gelen JEG'de özellikle devlet mühendisleri ve jeologları yaşamıştır. Alanında herhangi bir oyna yapılmadan 1993 yılında ise resmen mahalle haline dönüşümü gerçekleşmiştir. Mahallenin nüfusu 1320 olup 684 aile yaşamaktadır. **D-2 mahallesi**: Söz konusu mahalle 1980'lere kadar Taşkent vilayetinde kolhoz (kollektif tarım alanı) olarak vilayete bağlı idi. 1987 yılında tüm alanda mikro rayon inşa edilmiştir. Bölgede kurulan fabrikada çalışacak işçiler için inşa edilmiş bu mikro rayonda tüm halk 1987 yılından sonra yeni yerleştirilmiştir, her milletten olan bu halk tamamen devlet fabrikasında işçi olarak çalışanlardan oluşmuştur. Jeg olarak 4 yıl devam eden yerleşim alanı, 1991 yılında 2 yerleşim alanı birleştirilerek bugünkü mahalle adını almıştır. Nüfusu 4909 olup 1205 hanede 1413 aile yaşamaktadır. **D-3 mahallesi**, 1960'lara kadar geleneksel avlulu evlerden oluşan eski mahalle şeklindeki alan 1960'larda, içinde bulunduğu bölgenin *rabochnik garadok* (işçi bölgesi) olarak planlanmasından sonra, dönüşmüştür ve eski halkı tamamen başka alanlara gönderilmiştir. Bölgedeki devlet fabrikalarında çalışan işçiler mikro rayonlara yerleştirilmiştir. Bu anlamda 1960'lardan sonra her tür farklı etnik yapıdan oluşan halkının ortak noktaları aynı fabrikalarda işçi olmalarıdır. 1992 yılında resmen bugünkü mahalle haline dönüştürülen alan eskiden JEG birimi olan alandır ve mevcut yıl içerisinde bu alanla ilgili herhangi bir düzenleme gerçekleşmemiştir. Demografik özellik olarak nüfusu 3028 olup 1052 hanede 1249 aile yaşamaktadır. **D-4 mahallesi**, eski ve yeni şehrin arasında yer alan mahalledir. Söz konusu mahalle, ilk olarak 1830'larda yerleşim alanı haline gelmiştir. Hokand hanının bölgeye Uygurları yerleştirmesiyle oluşmuştur. 1864'te Rusların Taşkent'i işgaliyle, söz konusu yerleşim

alanına Rus zabitler yerleştirilmiştir. Bu durum zamanla dönüşmüş ve Taşkent'in ilk Avrupa tarzı yerleşim alanlarından birisi haline gelmiştir. Sovyet devrimi ile beraber tüm çarlık yanlısı ve eski ceditçiler bölgeden sürülmüştür, yerlerine komünist parti üst düzey görevlileri yerleştirilmiştir. 1966 depreminden sonra tüm bölgedeki yerleşim alanları yıkılmıştır ve yerine yeni konut alanları yapılmıştır., Bu konutlara ise çoğunlukla Özbek Sovyetlerin ileri gelen bakanları, üst düzey komünist parti üyeleri yerleşmiştir. Ayrıca sanatçılar, yazarlar, ilim adamları da bu konutlara ağırlıklı olarak yerleşmiştir. Bu anlamda D-4 mahallesi Sovyet döneminde Taşkent'in üst düzey yerleşim alanlarının başında gelmiştir. Bağımsızlıktan sonra, 1994 yılında alanında hiçbir yeni düzenleme gerçekleştirilmeden bölge resmen mahalle adını almış ve devlet mührünü kullanma yetkisine sahip olmuştur. Nüfusu 2706 olup 1493 hanede 1494 aile yaşamaktadır.

B tipi mahalle grubunda iki mahalle yer almaktadır. Bunların ortak özelliği, her iki mahallenin de Sovyetler zamanında kent çeperinde kurulmuş eski şehir mahalle formundaki mahalleler olmalarıdır. Sovyetler zamanında dönüşüm alanlarındaki ailelere; inşa edilen yeni apartman dairelerine yerleşmeleri veya devlet tarafından belirli miktar para verilerek, şehir dışında devlet tarafından tahsis edilen alanlarda kendi konutlarını inşa edebilmeleri biçiminde iki seçenek sunulmuştur. B tipi mahalleler şehir dışında halkın kendi gücüyle kurduğu mahallelerdir. Bu mahalle tipi Sovyetler zamanında kurulmuş olmalarına rağmen geleneksel mahalle formundadır. Herhangi bir meslek temelleri olmadığı gibi, Sovyet sistemindeki devlet işçiliği ya da memurluğundan da paylarını çoğu kez almamışlardır. Yani gerek yaşam alanı olarak, gerekse de iş alanı olarak Sovyet sisteminden oldukça uzak kalmışlardır. İlginç bir şekilde Sovyetler zamanında devlet desteğinden faydalanmadan yaşamaya çalışan bu mahallelerde bağımsızlıktan sonra giderek Özbek nüfus azalmaya başlamıştır ve yeni dışlanan azınlık gruplarının nüfusu artmaya başlamıştır buralarda. Bu gruptaki mahallelerin sınırlarında bağımsızlıktan sonra herhangi bir değişim olmamıştır. Komşuluk ilişkileri yine güçlü olan bu mahallelerde de %90'dan fazla nüfus etnik olarak Özbek'tir. İki mahallede de bir veya birkaç tane küçük market, restoran ve ticari kuruluş yer almaktadır. Mahalle halkı genellikle serbest meslek ile uğraşmaktadır. Mahallelerin sosyo-ekonomik düzeyinin bağımsızlıktan sonra eskiye göre yükseldiği görülmektedir. Nitekim anket sonuçlarına göre, mahalle sakinleri sosyo-ekonomik düzeylerini Sovyet dönemi düşük olarak tanımlarken, bağımsızlıktan sonra orta düzey olarak ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca, A tipi mahallelerdeki gibi konutların neredeyse tamamı bahçeli geleneksel ev formundadır. Bu anlamda fiziksel görünüm olarak A tipi mahallelerine oldukça yakın olan B tipi mahalleleri

çoğu zaman literatürde A tipi mahalleler ile beraber geleneksel mahalle olarak ifade edilmektedir. Oysa bu mahalleler hem sosyo-ekonomik yapı ve hem de Sovyet deneyimleri bakımından A tipi mahallelerden oldukça farklıdır. A tipi mahalleler, Sovyetlerin eski şehir tarafında kalan mahallelere hiç müdahale etmediği mahalleler iken, B tipi mahalleler bizzat Sovyet zamanı kent çeperinden devletin yaşam alanı olarak tahsis ettiği mahallelerdir. Bu anlamda B tipi mahalleler alt yapı hizmetlerinin oluşturulduğu planlı mekânlar olmakla beraber, eski şehirde A tipi mahallelerde yaşayan halkın kendi rızasıyla yeniden geleneksel formda kurdukları mahallelerden oluşmaktadırlar. B tipi mahalleler Sovyet rejimi tarafından bu anlamda A tipi mahalleler gibi ihmal edilmiş değildir, tam tersine yeniden kurulmuş eski mahalle yapılarıdır. Ayrıca, sosyo-ekonomik düzey bu mahallelerde A tipi mahallelere göre daha yüksektir ve söz konusu mahalleler, Sovyet zamanı genellikle küçük ölçekli ticaretle uğraşan halkın yaşadığı alanlardır. B tipi mahallelerin bağımsızlıktan sonra açık piyasa ekonomisine geçişte diğer mahalle tiplerine göre yeni rejime daha kolay adapte oldukları gözlemlenmiştir. Diğer yandan Sovyet zamanı en fazla devlet tarafından denetlendiklerini ve baskı gördüklerini ifade eden mahalle sakinleri de bu mahallelerden çıkmıştır. **B-1 mahallesi**, Sovyet devrimine kadar eski şehir halkının kolektif tarım alanı 1950'den itibaren, devlet tarafından imar geçirerek yeni yerleşim alanı haline dönüştürülmesiyle kurulmuştur. Devletten ev kurmak için para alan aileler, farklı tarihlerde buraya gelerek söz konusu mahalleyi oluşturmuşlardır. Alanlara bölünüp dağıtılmaya başlanan parsellerde evler kurulmuştur ve geleneksel formda bildiğimiz mahalle yapısı ortaya çıkmıştır. Mahalle içerisinde bir tane 9 katlı apartman vardır. Bağımsızlıktan sonra Özbek dışı grupların nüfusunda ufak bir artış görülmüştür. Taşkent'in içinden gelen halk tek bir mahalden değil farklı mahallelerden gelmiştir. Fakat genel olarak eski şehir mahallelerinden gelmişlerdir. Nüfusu 3020 olup 610 hanede 620 aile yaşamaktadır. **B-2 mahallesi**, 1966 depreminden sonra hashar (halkın kolektif olarak gerçekleştirdiği faaliyetler) ile kurulmuştur. Bu zamana kadar Taşkent vilayetine bağlı kolhoz (kolektif tarım alanı) olan bu alan, 1966'dan sonra Taşkent vilayetinin yeni mahallelerinden biri olmuştur, daha sonraki dönemde ise Taşkent şehrine dahil edilmiştir. 2004 yılına gelindiğinde günümüzdeki adını alan mahallenin yönetim organı, bağımsızlıktan sonra 1992 yılında resmi olarak özerk yerel yönetim birimine dönüştürülmüştür. Zaman içerisinde de Rus nüfusun sayısının arttığı tespit edilmiştir. B-1 mahallesindeki gibi nüfusu yine belirli bir mahalleden gelmemiştir. Meslekleri de birbirinden farklıdır. Mahalle halkının tek ortak yönü eski şehirden olmalarıdır. Nüfusu 3460 olup 651 hanede 768 aile yaşamaktadır.

C tipi mahalle grubundaki mahallelerin ortak yönü eski şehirde yer almaları ve Sovyet dönemi boyunca farklı dönemlerde dönüşüm alanı olarak ilan edilmesine rağmen, bir kimsi dönüşmüş bir kısmı dönüşmemiş alanlardır. Bunların B tipi mahallerden farkı, dönüştükten yani mikro rayon haline geldikten sonra da halkının bir kısmının halen eski mahalle halkı olmasıdır. Öyle ki mahalle halkının bir bölümü bu bölgedeki apartmanlara yerleşmiştir. Bundan dolayı bu mahallelerde Sovyet döneminde eski geleneksel mahalle ilişkisi tarzları devam etmiştir. C tipi mahallelerinde D tipi mahallelerde olduğu gibi halkın çoğunluğunun devlet memuru ve işçisi olduğu görülmektedir. D tipinden farklı olarak bu mahallelerde üst düzey bürokrat sayısı oldukça azdır. C tipi mahallelerinin en önemli özelliği Sovyet zamanı Khrushchev döneminde kurulmuş mikro rayonlar olarak devlet fabrikalarının işçilerinin barındığı alanlar olmalarıdır. Bu anlamda D tipine göre sosyo-ekonomik düzeylerinin daha düşük olduğu görülmektedir. Nitekim D tipinde olduğu gibi, mahalle halkı çoğunlukla bağımsızlık sonrası sosyo-ekonomik düzeylerinin düştüğünü ifade ederken, D tipinden farklı olarak bu mahalledekiler çoğunlukla Sovyet zamanı orta sınıf olduklarını ifade ederken bağımsızlık sonrası sosyo-ekonomik düzeylerini alt sınıf olarak tanımlamışlardır. Ayrıca, D tipinden en büyük farklılıkları, C tipi mahallelerinde mahalle sakinlerinin daha karmaşık yapıya sahip olmasıdır. Özellikle Khrushchev dönemi kurulan mikro rayonlara aileler kitleler halinde yerleştirilmiş ve ortak çalışma alanlarından gelmemektedirler. Dahası bazı C tipi mahalle halkının topluca eski şehir mahallelerinden yerleştirildiği tespit edilmiştir. Bu durum doğal olarak D tipi mahallerine göre komşuluk ilişkilerinin daha güçlü olduğu sonucunu doğurmaktadır. C tipi mahallelerin etnik yapısı incelendiğinde Özbek nüfusun D tipi mahallelere göre nispeten daha yüksek olduğu (%70) ortaya çıkmaktadır. Sovyet zamanı ise bu oranın %60'larda kaldığı görülmektedir. Son olarak C tipi mahallelerde apartman ve bahçeli geleneksel konut dokularının bir arada olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca özel firma sayısı da D tipine göre görece daha azdır. **C-1 mahallesi:** tarihsel olarak Orta Çağ'a kadar uzanmaktadır. Tahtapul bölgesinin (eski şehirde bulunan bir bölge) bir kısmını kapsamaktadır. Sovyetler zamanında ara ara dönüşüme uğramıştır. Günümüzdeki haliyle yarı apartman yarı avlulu evlerden oluşan mahalle diğer iki mahalleye göre biraz daha şehir dışında kalmaktadır. Apartmanların inşa edildiği alanlarda hem eski mahalle halkından aileler, hem de yeni göçle gelen Sovyet yurttaşları yaşamaktadır. Bağımsızlıktan sonra Rus ve diğer etnik nüfusların oranı mahallede içerisinde artmaya başlamıştır. Özellikle apartmanlara bu etnik gruplar gelmeye başlamıştır. Eski mahalle kısmı ise hala eski mahalle ailelerinden oluşmaktadır. Nüfusu 4803 olup 1600 hanede 1920 aile yaşamaktadır. **C-2 mahallesi:** 1966 yılında meydana gelen deprem ile beraber dönüşüme başlamış olmasına

rağmen mahallenin yaklaşık yarısı hala eski şehir mahalle özelliğini korumaktadır. Mahalle genelindeki dönüşüm 1966-1985 arasında gerçekleşmiştir.. Dönüşen alanlarda daha çok yeni nüfus yoğunudur. Özellikle Özbek dışı milletler ve herhangi bir mesleki temele dayanmayan nüfus yoğun olarak yerleşmiştir. Eski şehir kısmında ise mahalle aynen eski şehir ahalisiyle günümüze kadar gelmiştir. Yeni şehir tarafında oturan eski halkın bir kısmı şehir dışına çıkarak aynı isimle fakat başına yeni sözcüğünü ekleyerek mahallelerini Sovyetler zamanında tekrar kurmuşlardır. 1995 yılında 4 mahalle alansal olarak birleştirilerek, günümüzdeki ölçeğine ulaşmıştır. C-1 mahallesi gibi yarı dönüşmüş, yarı dönüşmemiş haliyle Sovyet kent tip ile eski şehir kent tipi arasında karmaşık bir yapıda kalmıştır. Nüfusu 3627 olup 1142 hanede 1252 aile yaşamaktadır. **C-3 mahallesi:** Taşkent'in en eski yerleşim alanlarından birisidir. Eski şehrin kapılarından bir tanesidir. 1966 Taşkent depremine kadar avlulu evlerden oluşuyorken, depremden sonra yavaş yavaş dönüşmeye başlamıştır. Ancak bu mahalle herhangi bir meslek dalının kooperatifi olarak ya da bir fabrikanın yaşam alanı olarak planlanmadığı için, mahallenin eski ahalisinin büyük bir kısmı yine mahallede yaşamaya devam etmiştir. Yeni göçle gelenlerde de herhangi bir mesleki ortaklık olmadığından, ortak yaşam alanından yaşama mahallenin tek ortak yönü olmuştur. 1966 yılı sonrasında Rus ve Koreli nüfus artmıştır. Bağımsızlıktan sonra ise vilayetten gelen Özbeklerle Özbek nüfus oranı yükselmiştir.. Çoğunlukla dönüşmüş bir mahalle tipi olmasına rağmen mahalle içerisinde hala eski mahalle halkından yaşayanlar mevcuttur. Nüfusu 4500 olup 1462 hanede 1900 aile yaşamaktadır.

Yukarıda teorik çerçevesi, temel sorunsalı ve alan çalışmasının kısaca özetlendiği bu çalışmanın temel hipotezi ise şu şekilde özetlenebilir; Özbek rejiminin hegemonik projesi ve adem-i merkezîyetçilik politikası, kentsel mahalle komitelerinin organizasyon yapısını, temsiliyet özelliklerini ve yetkilerini şekillendirirken, mahalle yönetim birimleri ise farklı yerel sosyal ilişkilerin bir formu olarak farklı politika uygulama özellikleri dolayısıyla, merkezi devletin hem politikalarını hem de yeniden ölçeklenmesi ve kurumsallaşmasını etkilemektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, devletin yeniden kurumsallaşması ve ölçeklenmesi, mekânsal ve zamansal olarak farklılaşan merkez-yerel arasındaki sürekli, diyalektik ve karşılıklı ilişkiye göre şekillenmektedir. Bu merkez-yerel ilişkisi ise hem ulusal hem yerel düzeyde ortaya çıkan politik ve ekonomik yapıdaki birçok çatışma alanından etkilenmektedir. Bundan dolayı, belirli tipteki kentsel mahalle alanlarında, devletin adem-i merkezîyetçilik politikası daha da fazla merkezileşme yaratabilmektedir. Buna göre, tezin temel sorusu ise merkez-yerel ilişkisini etkileyen yerel ve ulusal ölçekte ortaya çıkan çatışma

alanlarının kaynaklarının ne olduğudur. Dahası bu çatışma alanları devletin temel politikalarını her yerellikte nasıl farklı şekilde etkilemektedir.

Bu çalışma, Sovyet rejiminden post-Sovyet rejime geçiş dönemi boyunca mahalle birimlerinin stratejilerindeki değişim/sürekliliğin incelendiği bir çalışma olarak iki aşamalı bir analizi barındırmaktadır: (a) Sovyet rejimi boyunca yerel politik/yönetimsel ve sosyo-mekansal kurum olarak mahallelerin ortaya çıkması; ve (b) Sovyet sonrası dönemde, mahallelerin yeniden yapılanması. Buna göre, tezin bazı hipotezleri tarihsel olarak Sovyet dönemi ile ilgiliyken, bazıları Sovyet sonrası dönem ile ilgilidir. Bu hipotezler ise, mahalle ölçeğindeki belirli politikalara ait örnek konular üzerinden merkezi devletin Sovyet ve Sovyet sonrası dönemdeki mahalle politikaları ve düzenlemeleri ile farklı mahalle tiplerinin mahalle yönetim birimlerinin farklı strateji ve taktikleri arasındaki diyalektik ilişki test edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu tez, Sovyet sonrası neo-liberal dönüşümün yapısal hegemonyasını ortaya koyma amacı ile Taşkent mahalleleri üzerinden (a) Sovyet sonrası sosyo-ekonomik dönüşümün ve Özbek rejiminin stratejik seçimlerinin (adem-i merkeziyetçilik politikası ve hegemonik projeleri) kentsel mahalle birimlerine etkileri ile (b) farklı sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-mekansal yapılara (yerel hegemonya) sahip mahalle komitelerinin farklı stratejileri arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiyi incelemiştir. O halde bu çalışmanın bulgularını üç noktada özetlemek mümkündür: (a) yerel birimler olarak kentsel mahalle yönetimleri neden farklı stratejiler üreterek sonuçta farklı politika uygulamaları gerçekleştirmektedir; (b) yeni rejimin adem-i merkeziyetçi yerel yönetim reformlarının kapsamı nedir ve söz konusu yerel farklılığa sahip mahalle birimleri, Özbek rejiminin kurumsal yapılanmasının inşasına bu doğrultuda yerel yönetim reformlarına ne gibi farklı stratejiler üretmektedir; (c) ulus-devlet ve ulusal bilincin yaratılması ile yeni ekonomik rejime adaptasyon sürecinde Özbek devletinin hegemonik projelerinde ve birikim stratejilerinde mahalle birimlerinin önemi nedir ve farklı yerel yapılara sahip mahalle birimleri devletin bu stratejilerine ne gibi farklı stratejiler üretmektedir.

Bu noktada tezin üçüncü bölümü, çalışmanın metodolojisinin ve teorik çerçevesinin sunulduğu bölümdür. Küresel söylem “adem-i merkeziyetçi” baskısının olduğu bir dönemde Sovyet rejiminin yıkılmasıyla, Sovyetlere borçlu olduğu “Özbek” ulusal kimliğine dayalı Ulus-devlet kurumsallaşmasını sağlamak ve açık piyasa ekonomisine geçmeye çalışan yeni Özbek Devleti’nin mahalle yönetimlerini bu amaçlar için stratejik olarak hegemonik araç olarak kullanması ile tarihsel olarak birbirinden farklı sosyo-ekonomik yapılara sahip oldukları ve yeni geçiş döneminden kaçınılmaz olarak farklı şekilde etkilendikleri için

mahalle komitelerinin hem dönüşüm sürecine hem de devletin yeni kurumsallaşmasında mahalle yönetimlerine yönelik gerçekleştirdiği düzenlemelere farklı stratejiler üretmeleri, devlet ile mahalla (merkez-yerel) arasındaki sürekli, dinamik ve karşılıklı ilişkiyi Post-Soviet dönemde hiç olmadığı kadar gerilimli hale getirmektedir ve mahalleler üzerinden gerçekleşen adem-i merkeziyetçi politikası tüm bu gerilimler sonucunda şekillenmektedir. O halde kavramsal çerçeveyi sunacağımız teorik bölüm 2 ölçekteki (ulusal ve yerel) farklı dinamikleri incelemeyi zorunlu hale getirmektedir. Yerel bir birim olan mahalle üzerinden devletin adem-i merkeziyetçiliği gerçekleştirme(-me)sinin ve bunun dinamiklerini ortaya koymanın yolu birçok ölçekten konuya yaklaşımı gerekli kılmaktadır.

İlk olarak Özbek Devleti post-Sovyet bir ülke olarak basitçe devlet sosyalizminden açık piyasa ekonomisine sahip bir yapıya geçmiştir. Ancak bu geçişin küresel dönemde gerçekleşmesi beraberinde uluslararası düzeyde devletlerin kurumsallaşmasına yön veren çeşitli baskıları doğurmuştur. Bu üst ölçekten gelen baskı açık piyasa ekonomisine geçişte elbette gerekli olan devletin yeniden kurumsallaşmasında etkisi büyük olmuştur. Dünya ekonomisine eklemlenmeyi hedefleyen bu yeni devletler kapitalizmin küresel dönemdeki yeni politik-ekonomik yapısı ile karşı karşıya kalmış ve adaptasyon noktasında belirli reformları gerçekleştirmek zorunda kalmıştır. Bu üst ölçekte, devletin küçültülmesi, devlet fabrikalarının özelleştirilmesi, merkezi devletin özellikle Sovyet döneminden kalan güçlü merkezi yapısının değiştirilmesi ve bu anlamda yerel otoritelere belirli gerekçelerle yetki ve görev aktarılması, böylelikle demokratikleşmenin gerçekleştirilmesi, sivil toplumun yerel yönetimler üzerinden güçlendirilmesi istenen ve beklenen durumlar olarak sayılabilir. Ancak açık piyasa ekonomisine geçen bu devletler, ekonomik ve toplumsal yapılarında var olmayan özel mülkiyet ve yeni kapitalist sınıfı (özel sektörü) bizzat kendisi gerçekleştirmek zorunda kalmıştır. Her geçiş dönemi içerisinde olan ve yeni kurumsallaşmaya başlayan devletlerin kaçınılmaz olarak merkeziyetçi yapıda olma eğilimleri ile bu küresel baskı post-Sovyet ülkelerinde sürekli var olan bir merkez-yerel gerilimi doğurmaktadır. Teorik kısımda ilk olarak post-Sovyet ülkelerde ve özelde Özbek Devleti'nde karşılaşılan bu gerilim incelenmiştir.

Literatürde sürekli olarak post-Sovyet ülkelerinin demokratikleşme ve decentralizasyon politikalarının başarısız oldukları şeklinde yorumlanmış ve bu durumun faturası eski Sovyet merkeziyetçiliğine çıkarılmıştır. O halde bu üst ölçekle ilgili sorulması gereken ek ve önemli bir soru şudur, “gerçekten Sovyet sistemi merkeziyetçi miydi ve yeni açık piyasa ekonomisine geçiş devlet düzeninde adem-i merkeziyetleşmeyi ve demokratikleşmeyi

zorunlu olarak yaratmayı mı gerektiriyor?”. O halde, geiş lkelerinin yeni sisteme adapte olmalarında bakılması gereken ilk ve en nemli yer kapitalist sistemde devlet ve alt yerel devletin rol, varlık sebepleri, ve nemidir. Teorik blmde ilk olarak makro dzeyde geiş lkelerinin kapitalist sisteme geile beraber adem-i merkeziyet srelerini hızla balatmalarının altında yatan dinamikleri ortaya koyulmuştur. Neo liberal dnemde ileri kapitalist lkelerde adem-i merkeziyetilik syleminin hızla ykselmesine raėmen merkeziyeti eėilimlerin arttıėı aıka grlmektedir. Bylesi bir durumda, post-Sovyet lkelerinin geiş dneminde merkeziyeti devlet yapılarının artmasının tek sebebi Sovyet gemii deėil bizzat kapitalist sistemde devletin ve yerel devletin varlık sebebidir. Bu noktada kapitalist sistemdeki adem-i merkeziyetilik ve merkeziyetilik ile ilgili teorileri incelemek gerekmektedir. Aslında adem-i merkeziyetilik ve merkeziyetilik ynetsel kavramlardır. Ancak oėu zaman ynetsel yapıya bakarak gerekletirilen analizler yetersiz kalmaktadır. Politik ekonomik faktrlerin bu lkelerin ynetsel yapılarını ekillendirdikleri aıktır. O halde, meknsal anlamda toplumsal dnmn kendisi analiz edilirken, bunu etkileyen farklı leklerde farklı sosyo-ekonomik ilikilerin sz konusu olduėunu ileri srebiliriz. Bu blm temel olarak bu lkede ynetsel anlamda adem-i merkeziyetilik politikasının karsısında merkeziyetiliėi besleyen dinamikler zerinde durmaktadır. Bu blmde bu perspektiften post-Sovyet devletleri merkeziyeti yapan unsurları ele alınmıştır. Bu noktada tezin teorik erevesinin ilk blmnde farklı yerel siyaset teorilerindeki merkez-yerel ilikisi ve adem-i merkeziyetilik tartiřmaları zetlendikten sonra, tezde temel olarak zbekistan zeline post-Sovyet dnmde adem-i merkeziyetilik tartiřması kavramsal olarak neo-liberal dnemin yapısal hegemonyası ile devletlerin hegemonik projeleri noktasında ele alınmıştır.

Nitekim Sovyetlerin yıkılması ile yeni kurulan zbek Devleti’nin merkez-yerel ilikisinde gerilimini arttıran diėer geiş lkelerinden farklı ve zgn olan durumlar sz konusudur ve bu durumlar en iyi ekilde yukarıda kavramları sunan Neo-Gramscian yaklařım tarafından aıklanabilmektedir. Bu noktada, zbek Devleti’nin yerel ynetim olarak ilan ettiėi Mahalle ynetimlerini, ulusal kimlik olan zbekilik ve zbek yurttařlık bilincini arttırmak iin hegemonik bir ara olarak kullanması zerinde durulmuştur. Bu durum, genel post-Sovyet lkelerinde merkez-yerel ilikisinde gerilim oluřturan merkezi devletin yeni sistemi oluřturmada temel aktr olması dolayısıyla merkeziyeti eėilimde olması ile kresel sylem olan adem-i merkeziyetiliėi yaratmaya alıřması arasındaki eliřkiye ek olarak ulus bilincini oluřturmaya alıřan zbek devleti ile mahalle arasındaki gerilimi daha da

arttırmaktadır. Geçiş ülkelerinde genel olarak yaygın olan adem-i merkeziyetçilik gerekçeleri ve özellikle sosyal politika konusunda birçok yetkinin yerel otoritelere aktarılmasından farklı olarak Özbekistan’da mahalle, tıpkı Sovyet döneminde olduğu gibi Özbekçiliği yayma açısından ve hatta Özbekçiliğin yegane sembolü olarak devletin hegemonik bir aracı olmaya devam etmektedir. Özellikle geleneksel vurguların baskın olduğu ve geleneksel yaşam tarzının temsilcisi olan mahallelerin hegemonik araç olarak kullanılması devlet tarafından gündelik hayattaki patriarkal ilişkilerin kamusal alana taşınmasına ve bireylerin gündelik hayatından kamusal alanlarına kadar bir kontrol mekanizması kurulmasına imkan vermektedir. Kısaca, Özbekistan özelinde yerel devletin varlık sebeplerinden bir diğeri olan sosyal düzen sağlama ve hegemonik araç yaklaşımı ile söz konusu devlette mahallenin bir yerel birim olma açısından hem Sovyet rejiminde hem de yeni sistemde mahallenin toplumsal kontroldeki işlevinin sürekliliği ve bunun önemi açıklanacaktır.

İkinci alt başlığımız, merkez-yerel ilişkisinde gerilim yaratan adem-i merkeziyetçi politikasının temel aktörü olan üçüncü ölçek ve tezin iddiasının merkezi noktası olan yerel birimler olarak mahallelerdir. Devlet bir üst ölçekteki siyasal-ekonomik dinamiklerin etkisiyle yeni rejimini kurarken adem-i merkeziyetçi politikasına dair yasal kararlar alarak ve düzenlemeler yaparak adem-i merkeziyetçi politikayı üst ölçekte şekillendirirken, mahalleler de yeni düzende üstlerine düşen işlevleri gerçekleştirirken kendi tarihsel ve sosyo-ekonomik yapılarının etkisi ile kendi inisiyatiflerini kullanırken, bu politikaya karşı aynı zamanda farklı cevaplar da üretmektedirler. Devlet belirli nedenler ve itkiler ile adem-i merkeziyetleşme sürecine dair kararlar alırken, yerel birimler de pratikte bunlara farklı şekilde cevaplar vererek en az devletin kendisi kadar adem-i merkeziyetçi politikasını etkileyen bir aktör olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. İşte söz konusu tezde de temel iddia, yeni piyasa ekonomisi koşullarına yönelik devletin kurumsallaşmasının bir ayağı olan adem-i merkeziyetleşme süreci devlet ile bu yerel birimler arasındaki dinamik ve karşılıklı ilişki tarafından şekillenmektedir. O halde yerel farklılık ve yerel politika farklılığı teorik olarak tartışılması gerek son konu olmuştur. Yerel farklılığın sebepleri üzerine literatürde birçok teorik yaklaşım söz konusudur. Ancak bunların çoğu kapitalist sistemde yerel farklılığı açıklamaktadır. Bu teoriler arasında, yerelin sosyo-ekonomik yapısındaki farklılığını temel alan, yerel yöneticilerin farklı politika seçimlerini temel alan, ya da kapitalist sistemde eşitsiz gelişmeyi temel alan yaklaşımlar başta gelmektedir. Ancak Özbekistan gibi farklı kentsel mahalle yapılarının ortaya çıkmasını Sovyet geçmişine borçlu olan bir ülkedeki yerel farklılığı açıklamada tüm bu çalışmalar yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bu noktada bu tezde temel

olarak Özbekistan’da mahalleler arasındaki farklılık Sovyet rejiminin Orta Asya’ya özgü hegemonik projesine ve daha genel olarak Sovyet zamanı ortaya çıkan kentsel segregasyona dayandırılmaktadır. Bundan dolayı tezin dördüncü bölümü, Sovyet zamanı Taşkent mahallelerin tarihçesi üzerine oluşturulmuştur.

Dördüncü bölüm Taşkent örneği üzerinden yukarıda özetlediğimiz farklı mahalle tiplerinin tarihsel olarak hangi dinamikler ile şekillendiği incelenmiştir. Bu bölümde, bugün farklı stratejiler üreten mahalle komitelerinin birbirlerinden farklı strateji üretmelerinin kaynağı olan mahallelerin sosyo-mekânsal özellikleri incelenmiştir. Şüphesiz birçok neden olsa da farklı mahalle yapılarının ortaya çıkmasında, Sovyet deneyimi yaşamış olan Özbekistan için en büyük neden merkezi planlama anlayışına sahip olan Sovyet rejiminin toplumsal hayata planlama aracılığıyla müdahale etmesidir. Bu bölümde günümüzde Taşkent’te var olan mahalle tiplerinin şekillenmesinde Sovyet kent planlamasının etkisinin büyük olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Bölüm içerisinde bu nedenle Taşkent’in yerleşim birimlerinin Sovyet dönemi şekillenmesini incelenmektedir. Sonuç olarak, dördüncü bölümde tezin birinci iddiası olan sosyo-mekansal olarak farklı mahalle tiplerinin ortaya çıkmasında üç önemli nokta tespit edilmiştir. Birincisi Sovyet kentleri genel olarak yaşam alanlarında sosyal segregasyonun ortaya çıktığı birimlerdir. Özellikle toplumsal hayatta Sovyet nomenklatürası ile ortaya çıkan toplumsal statü farkı kentsel yaşam alanlarında açık bir şekilde segregasyon doğurmuştur. İkinci bir neden, Orta Asya’ya özgü olarak Çarlık döneminin yarattığı sömürge kent yapısındaki ikili kent yapısı Sovyet zamanı tamamen ortadan kaldırılamamıştır. Son olarak da Sovyet hegemonyasının Orta Asya’da kurulmasında önemli bir nokta olan milletler politikasının (sadece ideal Sovyet yurttaşı değil aynı zaman da Özbek milleti) Orta Asya kentlerine özgü daha derin bir segregasyon doğurmasıdır. Bu nokta eski tip mahalle yapılarının günümüze kadar feodal sosyal ilişkilerinin patriarkal güç ilişkisi ile beraber devam etmesinin en büyük sebebidir.

Yukarıda özetlediğimiz 4 farklı kentsel mahalle alanlarının mahalle birimleri günümüzde devletin hem adem-i merkezîyetçi politikalarına, hem de hegemonik projelerinin bir parçası olan ulus kimliğinin yaratılması ve açık piyasa ekonomisine, adaptasyon stratejilerine farklı stratejiler üretmiştir. Beşinci bölüm, bu noktada Özbek rejiminin hegemonik projesinde mahalle birimlerinin rolüne dair merkez-yerel arasındaki diyalektik ilişkinin incelendiği bölümdür. Bağımsızlıktan sonra Özbek rejiminin hegemonik projeleri içerisinde üç noktada mahalle birimleri önemli hegemonik araç olmuştur: (a) ulus-devlet inşasında; (b) açık piyasa ekonomisine adaptasyon sürecinde; (c) neo-liberal dönemin hegemonik söylemi olan sivil

toplumun yerel yönetimler aracılığı ile güçlendirilmesi yoluyla demokratikleşme sürecinde.. Bu üç alanda da mahalle birimleri Özbek rejimi için temel aktör haline gelmiştir. Özbek devleti bağımsızlık sonrası, tıpkı Sovyet rejiminin uyguladığı gibi, mahalle birimlerini ulus bilincini arttırmada önemli araçlar olarak kullanmıştır. Bir anlamda Özbeklik mahallelerde yaratılmaktadır. Bu anlamda mahalle birimlerinin kendisi de Özbek kimliğine uygun olarak şekillenmektedir. Bu noktada farklı mahalle tiplerinin, rejimin bu hegemonik projesine karşı farklı stratejiler ürettiğini görmekteyiz. Bu noktada beşinci bölümde ilk olarak “Özbekçilik” kavramının farklı mahalle yönetimleri tarafından nasıl farklı algılandığı incelenmiştir. İkinci olarak, mahalleler, hem yeni neo-liberal döneme uygun olarak girişimci yurttaşlık bilincinin halka kazandırıldığı kurumlar haline gelirken hem de geçiş döneminde ortaya çıkan sosyal ve ekonomik sorunlarla mücadelede temel birim haline gelmiştir. Bu anlamda Sovyet zamanı devlet tarafından sunulan sosyal politikaların hızla mahallelere aktarıldığını görmekteyiz. Bu noktada alan çalışmasında, mahallelere bağımsızlık sonrası aktarılan sosyal yardımların dağıtılması meselesi incelenmiştir ve farklı mahalle tiplerinin mahalle yönetimlerinin bu fonksiyonu uygularken oldukça farklı stratejilere sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Son olarak, neo-liberal hegemonik söyleme uygun olarak Özbek rejimi için mahalle yönetimleri bugün sivil toplumun en önemli temsilcisidir. Tıpkı Sovyet rejiminde olduğu gibi, yeni Özbek rejimi de mahalle birimlerini toplumsal kontrolü sağlamada kullanmaktadır. Bu noktada, liberal söylemdeki sivil toplum kavramsallaştırılmasına Gramsci’nin sivil toplum hegemonya tanımları üzerinden eleştirel bir yaklaşım sunulmuştur. Temel olarak bu tartışmada örnek olay olarak, Özbek rejiminin bugün mahalle birimleri üzerinden toplumsal hayatta radikal İslami hareketleri kontrol etmesi incelenmiştir. Mahalle birimleri bağımsızlıktan sonra, mahalle halkı arasında radikal islami hareketlere katılan ya da katılma potansiyeli olan yurttaşları İçişleri Bakanlığı’na rapor etmekle görevlidir. Ancak yine alan çalışmasında, farklı mahalle yönetimlerinin bu fonksiyonu farklı şekilde uyguladığı görülmektedir.

Altıncı bölümde ise, yine merkez-yerel arasındaki diyalektik ilişki, devletin mahalleleri özerk yerel yönetim olarak ilan etmesi üzerinden incelenmiştir. Burada üç temel başlık üzerinden adem-i merkeziyetçi politika incelenmiştir. Birincisi, merkezi devletin mahalleleri özerk yerel yönetim ilan etmesi ile beraber mahalle yönetimlerinin organizasyon yapısında ne tür değişikliklere ya da sürekliliklere sebep olduğu ve bu değişim/süreklilik alanlarına farklı mahalle tiplerinin mahalle yönetimlerinin nasıl farklı yanıtlar ürettiğidir. Bu noktada örnek olay olarak yeni Özbek rejiminin mahalle çalışanlarını devlet memuru olarak

düzenlemesi ve maaşa bağlamasının farklı mahalle tiplerinin mahalle yönetimleri tarafından nasıl farklı değerlendirildiği incelenmiştir. İkinci olarak yeni rejimin mahalle birimlerini özerk yerel yönetim ilan etmesinin mahalle birimlerinin temsiliyet özelliklerinde ne gibi değişim ya da süreklilik yarattığı ve farklı mahalle tiplerinin bu değişim ya da sürekliliğe nasıl farklı yaklaştıkları incelenmiştir. Burada da örnek olay olarak hem merkezi devlet (hokimiyat) ve mahalle yönetimi ilişkisi idari vesayet üzerinden hem de mahalle birimleri ile mahalle halkı arasındaki ilişki temsiliyete dair seçim meselesi mahalle aktivitelerine katılım meselesi gibi konular üzerinden incelenmiştir. Son olarak, yeni Özbek rejiminin, mahalle birimlerini özerk yerel yönetim ilan etmesi ile mahallenin fonksiyonları ve yetkilerine dair ne gibi değişimler getirdiği ve bunlara farklı mahalle tiplerinin yönetim birimlerinin nasıl farklı stratejiler ürettiği incelenmiştir. Bir önceki bölümde sosyal yardım, radikal İslami hareketleri kontrol gibi meseleler incelendiği için mahallenin fonksiyonlarına dair çok detaylı bir analizden ziyade, tüm bu fonksiyonların farklı mahalle tiplerinde nasıl farklı derecede uygulanıp uygulanmadığı mahalle lideri olan aksakalın mahalle içerisindeki güç ilişkisinin analizinden hareketle incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Burada aksakalın farklı mahalle tiplerindeki farklı güç pozisyonlarının yerel ağ ve yerel finans gibi meselelerde nasıl farklı stratejiler doğmasına sebep olduğu incelenmiştir.

Bu iki bölümden çıkan en önemli bulgu ise şudur; geçiş dönemi boyunca, Özbek politik rejiminin sınıf politikasından kimlik politikasına ve dağıtım stratejisinden temsiliyetçi demokrasiye dayanan bir yapıya geçtiğini göstermektedir. Diğer taraftan, bu iki politik değişime de Taşkent'teki her bir kentsel mahalle tipinin mahalle yönetimlerinin farklı şekilde uyum gösterdiği görülmektedir. Sovyet rejimi boyunca kimlik politikasına ve temsiliyetçi politikaya göre şekillenmiş kentsel mahalle tiplerinin (A ve B) mahalle yönetimlerinin yeni rejime daha kolay adapte olduğu görülürken, Sovyet rejimi tarafından sınıf ve dağıtım politikasına göre şekillenen kentsel yaşam alanlarının (C ve D) bugünkü yerel yönetim birimlerinin yeni rejime uyum sağlarken zorlandığı tespit edilmiştir. Kentsel mahalle yönetimlerinin stratejileri ve cevapları devletin ideal mahalle kurgusu ile uyum göstermediği zaman veya devletin farklı politika amaçları ile çelişki içine girdiği zaman adem-i merkezîyetçi süreci Özbekistan Devleti'nin stratejileri (mahalle yönetimlerine merkezîyetçi müdahale stratejileri) sonucu tersine dönmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, tezin temel hipotezine dönersek; tez içerisinde metodolojik olarak eleştirel realizmin kullanıldığı bu tez, yapısal argümanlar ile aktör odaklı yaklaşımları entegre etmeye çalışmış ve bu yolla bir post-Sovyet ülkesi olan Özbekistan'daki yerel siyasete dair

dönüşümü ya da sürekliliği, neo-liberalizmin yapısal hegemonyası ile paralel olarak merkezi devletin hegemonik projesi ve kurumsal yapılanmasındaki adem-i merkeziyetçi reformları ile bir aktör olarak mahalle yönetimleri arasındaki diyalektik ilişki üzerinden yeniden okumaya yapılmıştır. Özetle, bu tür bir yeniden okuma sonucu, bu çalışma, post-Sovyet ülkelerindeki dönüşüm sürecinde, kent siyasetine dair merkez-yerel ilişkisinde çelişki yaratan dinamikleri –ki bu dinamikler devletin adem-i merkeziyetçileşmesi ve hegemonik projelerini şekillendirmektedir- şu şekilde belirlemiştir;

1) hem merkezi hem de yerel ölçekte Sovyet rejiminden beri süregelen (path-dependency) ve neo-liberalizmin yapısal hegemonyası ile yeniden şekillenen (path-shaping) aktör ve kurum stratejileri ve taktikleri arasındaki çelişki.

2) yeni birikim stratejisinin doğurduğu yapısal kısıtlılık ile hegemonik projenin bir parçası olarak ulus-devlet kurma süreci arasındaki çelişki.

3) Özbek rejiminin stratejik seçimleri ile mekânsal ve zamansal olarak farklılaşan mahalle yönetim birimlerinin taktikleri arasındaki çelişki.

Bugün, Özbek rejiminin oldukça otoriter ve merkeziyetçi olduğuna dair çok az şüphe vardır ve üç gün Özbekistan’da yaşayarak bunu açıkça görmek mümkündür. Politik, sosyal ve ekonomik hayatta devlet başkanı neredeyse tek otorite durumundadır. Bu çalışma, böylesi otoriter bir devlet yapısına dair merkeziyetçilik- adem-i merkeziyetçilik tartışmasını incelemesine rağmen, bilinçli bir şekilde söz konusu devletin bu otoriter yapısından bahsetmekten kaçınmıştır. Çünkü bu çalışma böylesi bir önkabule dayanarak zorunlu olarak sivil toplum devlet ayrımının net bir şekilde çizildiği dahası sivil toplum ile devleti ayrı kutuplarmış gibi kabul eden ve bu noktada yerel yönetimleri devlete karşı sivil toplumun temsilcisi olarak kabul eden liberal söylemi reddetmektedir. Tam tersine bu tez, böylesi bir yaklaşımın Özbekistan’daki ne cumhurbaşkanının bu merkezi pozisyonunu ne de politik elitlerin pozisyonunu açıklamada yeterli olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Devlet ve onun politik elitleri bu noktada sivil toplumun karşısında değil tam tersine, Poluntzas’ın (1978) iddia ettiği gibi, sosyal ilişkilerin tam da kendisidir. O halde, eğer devlet kendine içkin ve sivil toplumun karşısında duran bir tanımlama ile değil, sosyal ilişkilerin bir formu ve bu noktada yerel devlet, yerel sosyal ilişkilerin bir formu olarak tanımlanıyorsa bu tezde, merkezi devlet ile yerel devlet arasındaki güç paylaşımına dayalı yönetsel bir kavram olan adem-i merkeziyetçilik ve bir devletin merkeziyetçiliği nasıl tartışılmalıdır?

Sonuç olarak, bu tez şunu iddia etmektedir, merkez-yerel ilişkisi teorik olarak, ne devlet-sivil toplum arasında keskin bir ayrım ortaya koyan neo-liberal perspektif ile, ne de yerel yönetimi basit bir şekilde merkezi devletin uzantısı olarak gören araçsalci yaklaşımlar ile açıklanabilir. Merkez-yerel ilişkisi diyalektik ve karşılıklı bir ilişki tarzı olarak sosyo-mekânsal ve sosyo-zamansal olarak değişiklik arz etmektedir ve bundan dolayı kentsel siyasetin doğası bazen uyum bazen de çelişki arz etmektedir. Bu tez temel olarak şunu iddia etmektedir; diyalektik merkez-yerel ilişkisinde çelişki ya da uyumun ortaya çıkması, merkezi düzeyde ulusal hakim sınıf ve onun hegemonyası ile yerel düzeyde yerel hakim sınıf ve onun yerel hegemonyası arasında uyum ya da uyumsuzluğa bağlıdır. Bundan dolayıdır ki; Özbekistan'da, neo-liberal geçiş döneminde, mahalle yönetimleri ile devlet arasındaki diyalektik ilişki bazı mahalle tiplerinde çelişkili iken bazılarında uyumlu bir şekilde gerçekleşmiştir. Hem merkezi hem de yerel hakim sınıfların stratejileri ve hegemonyaları, hem Sovyet rejimine uyum ya da uyumsuzluk kapasitelerine göre hem de neo-liberalizmin yapısal hegemonyasına uyum ya da uyumsuzluk kapasitelerine göre şekillenmektedir. Sonuç olarak Özbekistan rejiminin hegemonik projeleri ve bu projelerin bir parçası olan adem-i merkezîyetçi politikası, merkezi devlet ve kentsel mahalle yönetimleri arasındaki diyalektik ilişki tarafından şekillenmektedir.

APPENDIX J:
TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	☐
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	☐
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	☐
Enformatik Enstitüsü	☐
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı: Kavuncu

Adı: Ayşe Çolpan

Bölümü: Kentsel Politika Planlaması ve Yerel Yönetimler

TEZİN ADI: Socio-Political Transformation in Uzbekistan: A Study of Urban *Mahallas* in Tashkent

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

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