

## Psychological Impact of Mixed-use Housing Commercial Activities for Residential Area: in the Case of District 11 Kabul City

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### ABSTRACT

The urban population is increasing rapidly in most developing countries. Kabul as the capital and largest city of Afghanistan has been facing undesired urban issues due to its rapid population growth. According to the master plan of 1968, Kabul city was designed for two million people, but after the evolution of 2001, the city encountered to unexpected rising in population which reached almost five million, living in this city. For this reason, most of the low-rise residential houses are transferring to commercial and residential mixed-use housing. These housings are facing a lack of privacy and a good correlation between commercial and residential spaces. Therefore, as a significant matter, this paper studies the correlation of commercial with residential space, in the quest to determine which activities are suitable to be allocated in this type of housing and which activities are inappropriate based on cultural and regional fit. Additionally, a list of activities based on their suitability is classified in this paper which helps to segregate unsuitable activities accordingly. This study draws insights from primary data collection using questionnaires for Post Occupancy Evaluation, semi-structured interviews, and fieldwork observations in the mixed-use housing apartments and from the analysis of secondary data such as government documents.

**Keywords:** *Kabul city, Mixed-use Housing, Commercial Activities, Privacy, Public Space*

### 1. Introduction

The urban population is increasing rapidly in most developing countries including Afghanistan. Although it is a rural country, is changing fast. People are moving to the cities, especially to the capital. Kabul being the capital and the largest city of Afghanistan

encountered many huge urban problems due to the recent population growth. Kabul dominates with an estimated 41% of the urban population [4]. Based on the master plan of the year 1968, Kabul was designed for a capacity of two million people but after the new regime took power in 2001 the population increased rapidly and currently almost five million people are living in this city. As a result, most of the low-rise residential houses are transferring to commercial and residential mixed-use housing. However, after the rapid increase in population, the city expanded and the government built a new style of housing including mixed-use [1].

In most cases, these houses were built with a lack of well understanding of people's culture and religion. Like many Islamic cities, the new architectural style and urban development in Kabul are pursuing the modernist style of architecture that does not provide the charm of traditional Afghan places and lacks much regional fit [2]. These housings are facing a lack of privacy and a good correlation between commercial and residential spaces. For this purpose, this paper studies the correlation of commercial with residential space, in the quest to determine which activities are suitable to be allocated in this type of housing and which activities are inappropriate based on cultural and regional fit. In the end, this paper recommends a list of activities which are suitable and segregates the improper ones.

### 1.1. Literature Review

So far, many researchers have studied Kabul city with different urban issues; each has a different attempt from this study. Some specific instances are the research by Nabizada and Kita (2013), which focused on the relationship between the spatial structure of open space and outdoor activities [6]. They conclude that the lack of private outdoor space in the new township has influenced the residents' cultural beliefs. J. Habib (2011) studied urban segregation based on ideology, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class [7]. Hashemi and Ogura (2018) conducted research on the historical trend of mixed-use housing in Kabul City. They categorized this housing according to history to the courtyard, detached and contemporary mixed-use housing. In the global context, Sohan (2016) researched the relationship between commercial land-use mix and residential burglary [3].

Based on previous studies, it can be stated that the study of commercial activities and their impact on mixed-use housing has been given little attention. Therefore, this study as the first attempt, focuses on the impacts of various commercial activities in mixed-use housing in Kabul City.

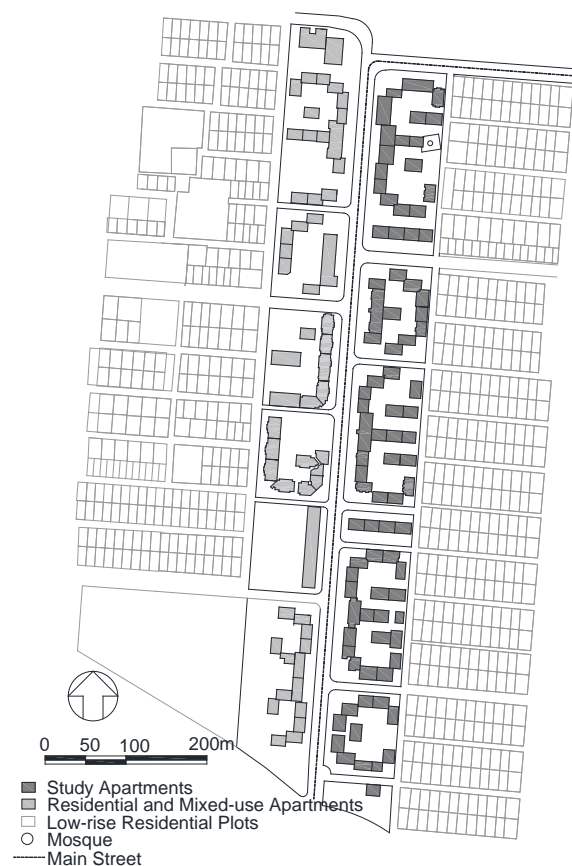


Fig.1. The study area map, Khair-khana.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This study draws insights from primary data collection using questionnaires for Post Occupancy Evaluation, semi-structured interviews, and fieldwork observations in the mixed-use housing apartments and from the analysis of secondary data such as government documents.

The research was conducted in Kabul city, in District 11 (Khair-khana) northern part of the city center. Eighty-five apartments were studied during a period of two years from 2021 until 2022. In the year 2021, the primary data such as physical measurements were completed. Buildings, streets, and shops were measured. Furthermore, in the year 2022, data was collected using a questionnaire format from residents; 360 persons out of 3850 people based on the Morgan table from all apartments were interviewed in the study area. Besides, semi-structured interviews were conducted with some related governmental organizations, particularly with the Ministry of urban development affairs and Kabul municipality.

## **3. The study area**

### **3.1. Background**

District 11 is located in the northwest part of the city center. The total population of the district was 1,150,000 in a land area of 17.42 km<sup>2</sup> with a population density of 661/ha in 2011 [5]. This district has six planned residential areas of which four of them were planned in the 1975 master plan, and two of them are planned recently. In the southern part of this city for the first time, the carpet shop started the activity. In the southern part, most of the apartments are mixed-use (Fig.1.).

The study area is located in the southern part of this district, and it is the first part of Khair-khana. Refer to figure 2.



Fig.2. The mixed-use apartment in Khair-khana.

### **3.2. Typology of Apartments**

In this research, the existing apartments are classified into seven categories. Type-1 is a building that has two stories or less than two stories, the owners of these buildings rent all the

building to rent for commercial purposes. Different types of shops exploit these buildings, but dominant examples are mechanical and electronic repair shops and photo studios. Type-2 are apartments that are used only for residential purposes and have no commercial activity in these apartments. Type-3 apartments that have commercial spaces on the first floor and upper floors used for residential are built without a basement. Type-4 apartments have commercial spaces on the first floor, with offices and residential spaces on the upper levels. Usually, the offices pertaining to some small construction companies. Type-5 apartments have a basement, and the basement is rented for some sports clubs or learning centers. Type-6 is a three or more than three stories building that are used only for commercial purposes. Type-7 is the under-construction building in the study area.

In most cases, the mixed-use apartments are more than three stories in the study area where the ground and basement levels are used as supermarkets and the upper level for residential purposes [1].

#### 4. Commercial Activities Inside Mixed-use Apartments

##### 4.1. Types of Commercial Activities

The ongoing commercial activities in such areas consist of; grocery shops, pharmacy stores, learning centers, small restaurants, fast foods shops, snooker clubs, bodybuilding clubs, athletics clubs, clinics, tailor shops, house agencies, offices, barbershops, women's beauty salon, bakery shop, carpenter shop and butchery shop. These activities are located on the first floor and basement of the apartments.

The owner of the apartment is usually the one who decides to rent his apartment for any

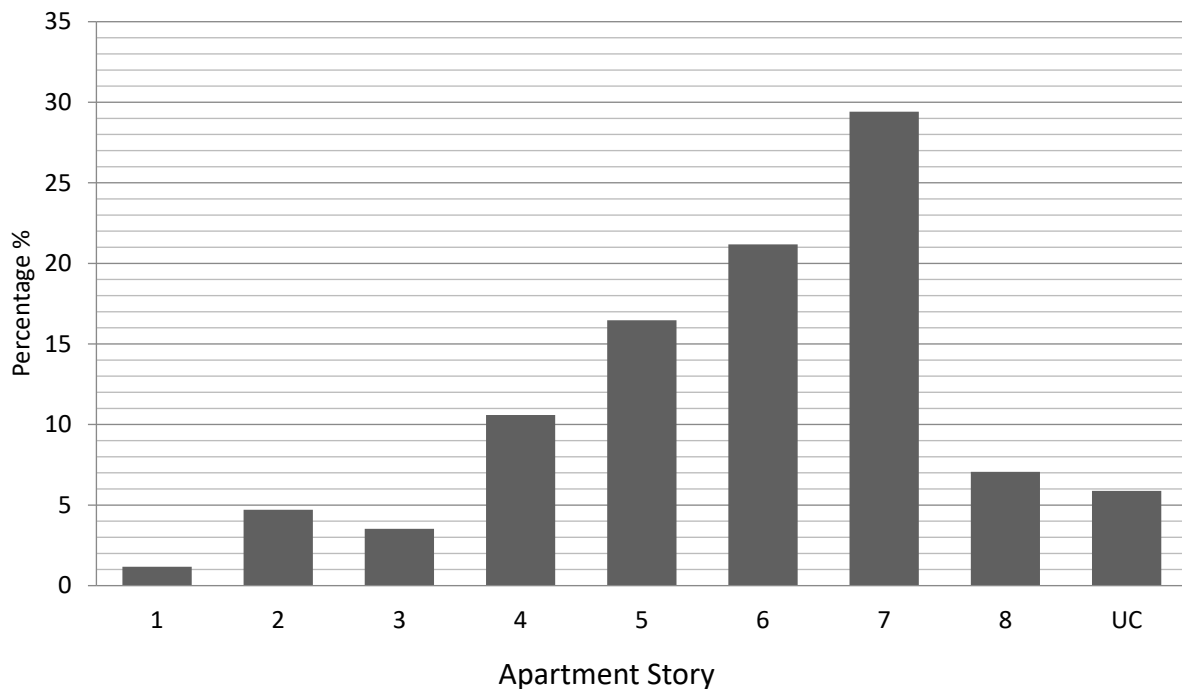


Fig.3. Typology of apartments in the district 11 of Kabul city (First part of Khair-khana).

commercial activity. In some cases, it happened that the shopkeeper even changes the type of commercial activities.

	Description	Total No.s	Apartment No.s
T1	Two or less than two story building, which is use only for shops and other commercial purposes	4	A-FPK (1, 2, 6, 80)
T2	These are residential apartments and there is no any commercial activities. These apartments are usually more than three stories.	8	A-FPK (22, 27, 43, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72)
T3	Residential and commercial mixed-use apartments. The first floor of these apartments are used for commercial activities such as, tailor shop, grocery or etc.	19	A-FPK (23,24, 25, 28, 32, 35, 36, 38, 42, 44, 45, 46, 49, 53, 56, 57, 61, 64, 73)
T4	Residential and commercial mixed-use apartments which has offices in upper levels, such as construction companies offices or other types.	7	A-FPK (10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 50, 58)
T5	Residential and Commercial Mixed-use apartments which has basement and the basement is used for activities such clubs, learning centers and others.	30	A-FPK (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 31, 33, 39, 40, 41, 48, 51, 52, 54, 55, 65, 68,71,74)
T6	These are commercial complexes, which all the building is used for commercial.	12	A-FPK (31, 37, 59, 60, 62, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 85)
T7	Under construction buildings.	5	A-FPK (34, 47, 63, 75, 84)
<p>T1, Building type one in the study area, Total No.s = The total building according the typology, A-FPK-1 = Apartment No.1 in the First Part of Khair khana,</p>			

Fig.4. Typology of apartments Percentage in the district 11 of Kabul city (First part of Khair-khana).



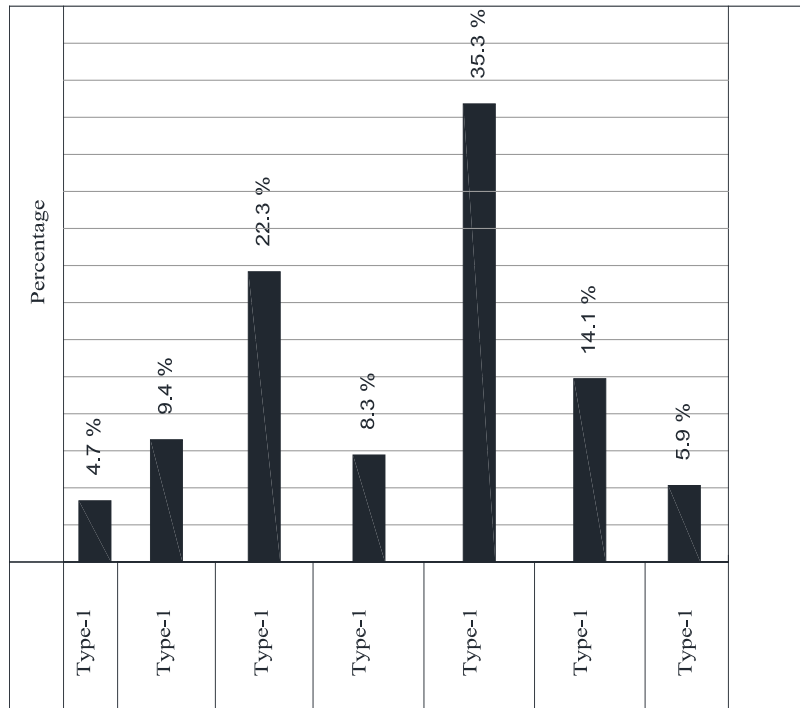
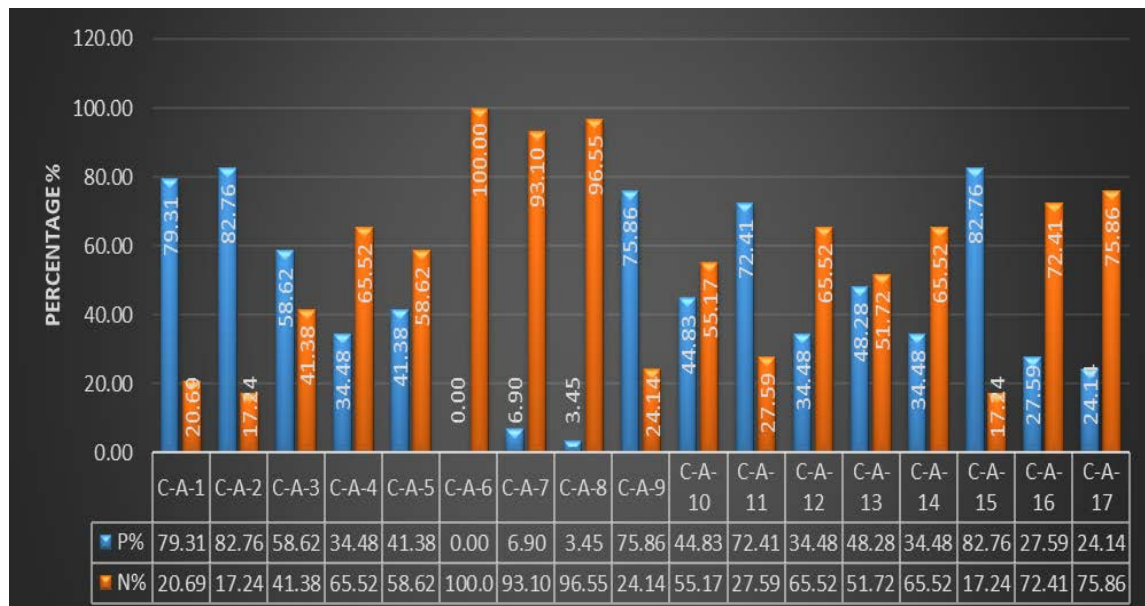


Fig.5. Apartment story in the study area. (UC= Under-construction buildings)



P%= The positive percentage of an activity which has positive impact on residential spaces, N%= The negative percentage of an activity which has negative impact, C-A-(No.)= Commercial Activity No., C-A-1= Grocery shops, C-A-2= Pharmacy store, C-A-3= Learning Center, C-A-4= Small Restaurants, C-A-5= Fast Foods shops, C-A-6= Snooker Clubs, C-A-7= Bodybuilding Clubs, C-A-8= Athletics Clubs, C-A-9= Clinics, C-A-10= Tailor shops, C-A-11= House agencies, C-A-12= offices, C-A-13= Barber shop, C-A-14= Women beauty salon, C-A-15= Bakery shop, C-A-16= Carpenter shop, C-A-17= Butchery shop

Fig.6. The types of commercial activities and their impact on residential area. (Residents Perception)

## **4.2. The Impact of Commercial Activities on Residential Area**

Based on the survey, which was conducted on the site, it was found that some activities which are located in these apartments are not proper. In the field of environmental criminology, mixing commercial and residential land use has been considered to escalate the risk of crime [3]. However, it depends on the type of shop activity. As the segregation of males and females in Islamic culture is significantly considerable, the privacy of families is momentous, but the owners of the apartments usually do not pay attention to this issue. Generally, those activities which caused the gathering of young men even from other neighborhoods, are not proper for instance, a space that is used for some sports facilities caused the gathering of young people in front of the apartment entrance. Likewise, the security and safety of the area are important as people coming from other areas, need to be considered. Consequently, some of the activities have a negative impact on residential areas. For more details of analyses refer to Fig.5.

In contrast, there are some activities which caused to prevent crime and bring security to the site. The dominant examples are pharmacy stores, which are active for several periods of time. Not only do the residents get the advantage of its service, but also it helps the security of the site. As a result, the activity is positive for the site.

## **5. Conclusions**

It is a fact that in Islamic cultures the segregation between males and females is remarkable. Thus, the privacy and security of the residents are as important as to be considered well. Obviously, apartment with commercial activities attracts more people to the area than those without such space. In the field of environmental criminology, mixing commercial and residential land use has been considered to escalate the risk of crime. However, this study based on analyses, suggests that there are three types of commercial activities; one of which is positive. Second activities, are negative and have a detrimental impact on site security and safety. The last one consists of activities that got an average score and have room for improvement.

Grocery shops, pharmacy stores, clinics, house agencies and bakery shops, are proper activities that can be located in the residential area. Restaurants, fast food shops, snooker clubs, athletics clubs, bodybuilding clubs, carpenter shops and butchery shops are improper and have a negative impact on the site. The rest of the activities are in the third category which needs improvement.

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