



Territorial And Social Factors Influencing The Historical Formation And Development Of Urbanization Processes In Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the historical stages of the formation of urbanization processes in the territory of Uzbekistan and their impact on urban development. Beginning with the emergence of ancient cities, the processes of urbanization during the medieval period, the era of industrialization, and the post-independence period are examined on a scientific basis. The research findings reveal that urbanization processes have developed in close connection with historical, economic, and transport factors, and substantiate the significant importance of historical experience in shaping modern urban planning policy

Keywords:

Uzbekistan, urbanization, urban planning, historical development, evolution of cities, agglomeration, territorial planning, industrialization, territorial factor.

Introduction

Urbanization is considered one of the most important socio-territorial processes in the development of human civilization. The concentration of population in urban areas, the centralization of economic activities, and the development of infrastructure create the foundation for the formation of cities. Since the territory of Uzbekistan has historically been located at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road, urbanization processes have developed gradually over a long historical period [1].

Today, urbanization is manifested not only as demographic growth but also as a complex process closely connected with territorial planning, transport systems, and economic integration. Therefore, studying the historical roots of urbanization is of significant scientific importance for understanding the development of modern urban planning.

The earliest urbanization processes in the territory of Uzbekistan date back to the pre-Common Era period. The development of

irrigation systems in the regions of Sogdiana, Bactria, and Khorezm led to the formation of permanent settlements. Ancient cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Termez, and Khiva developed as centers of trade, craftsmanship, and culture (Figure 1).

The formation of the Great Silk Road further increased the economic importance of cities and contributed to the emergence of urban centers along caravan routes. Historical sources confirm that urbanization during this period developed in close connection with trade activities and water resources.

During the 9th–15th centuries, the territory of Movarounnahr entered a new stage of urbanization as it became a major center of science and trade. Cities acquired a multifunctional structure, and a planning system consisting of the ark (citadel), shahrستان (inner city), and rabad (suburban area) was formed.



Figure 1. Map of the Sogdian State

During this period, urban development evolved around religious, administrative, and commercial centers, while public squares, markets, and madrasahs became the main elements of the urban environment. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of railways

provided a strong impetus to urbanization processes. New industrial centers and administrative cities were formed. During the Soviet period, urbanization developed on the basis of a planned economy, and new cities were established around industrial enterprises (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Opening of the Orenburg-Tashkent Railway Line (1906)

Residential complexes based on the microdistrict principle, wide streets, and functional zoning became the main characteristics of urban planning. The urbanization of this period was directly connected with industrialization.

After 1991, urbanization processes began to develop in a new direction under the conditions of a market economy. The economic role of large cities increased, and the service sector expanded. The modernization of transport infrastructure and the acceleration of

housing construction led to the expansion of urban territories [2].

In recent years, urbanization processes have entered the stage of agglomeration development, strengthening intercity integration. This situation is particularly evident in the Tashkent agglomeration and the Fergana Valley region.

Historical analysis shows that urbanization processes in Uzbekistan were formed in close connection with natural-geographical conditions, trade routes, industrialization, and transport development. Each historical stage has contributed to the formation of the modern urban planning system.

In general, it is also necessary to consider the territorial and social factors influencing urbanization processes. In Uzbekistan, the formation of urbanization processes has occurred under the influence of natural-geographical, economic, and social factors. First of all, the oasis culture based on irrigated agriculture ensured the stable settlement of population centers. Areas located near water resources had higher population density, which contributed to their transformation into early urban development centers [3].

The territorial location factor also played an important role in urbanization dynamics. The Zarafshan, Fergana, and Kashkadarya valleys historically developed as economically active regions, and cities emerged at intersections of transport routes. As a result, urbanization acquired an uneven territorial character.

Social factors, particularly labor mobility and the formation of educational and trade centers, increased the functional importance of cities. Especially in the twentieth century, the placement of industrial enterprises accelerated migration from rural areas to cities.

Urbanization processes also caused significant changes in the planning structure of cities. While ancient cities were characterized by compactness and defensive features, later stages introduced the division of urban territories into functional zones.

During the Soviet period, urban development was based on strict planning principles. The separation of residential,

industrial, and recreational areas contributed to the systematic organization of urban space. Although the microdistrict model aimed to bring social services closer to residents, it also resulted in a heavy load on centralized transport systems.

In the post-independence period, the territorial expansion of cities, the emergence of new residential areas, and the development of service centers led to the transformation of the urban structure. As a result, monocentric development gradually began to shift toward a polycentric system [4].

In recent years, urbanization has transitioned from the development of individual cities to the formation of agglomeration systems. This process is explained by daily labor migration, increased transport mobility, and the expansion of economic connections.

Agglomeration development is characterized by the following features:

- strengthening functional connections between the central city and satellite settlements;
- formation of linear urbanization along transport corridors;
- territorial distribution of service and production centers;
- intensification of suburbanization processes in peri-urban areas.

This situation requires a new approach in urban planning — an integrated territorial governance system [5].

At the same time, accelerated urbanization is generating several challenges:

- traffic congestion and increased travel time;
- environmental pressure and air pollution;
- deterioration of engineering and utility infrastructure;
- social disparities between urban and rural areas.

To address these issues, the following directions are considered important:

1. introduction of urban planning models for cities forming agglomerations;
2. development of public transport systems;

3. increasing the share of green areas;
4. implementation of territorial planning at the agglomeration scale.

General analysis indicates that urbanization processes in Uzbekistan have developed through historical evolutionary stages; urban growth has been closely linked with trade routes, irrigation systems, and industrialization factors. At the present stage, urbanization is transitioning toward an agglomeration development model, and urban planning serves as an effective mechanism for ensuring sustainable territorial development.

Conclusion

Urbanization processes in Uzbekistan have formed as a result of centuries-long historical development, with each period creating a new stage in the urban planning system. Urbanization has evolved progressively from ancient irrigation-based settlements to the modern stage of agglomeration development. Implementing urban planning strategies that take historical experience into account is an important factor in ensuring sustainable territorial development.

Cities founded on ancient irrigation culture later transformed into trade centers, became production centers during the industrial era, and at the modern stage have evolved into elements of agglomeration systems.

Therefore, considering historical experience in managing urbanization, along with applying principles of territorial integration and polycentric development, will ensure the sustainable development of cities in Uzbekistan.

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