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Urbanization and Geo-Urban Situation in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article highlights the development of urbanization and cities in Uzbekistan. The role of functions in the formation and development of various categories of urban settlements of the republic is analyzed. The dynamics and current state of the urban structure are considered and the current geo-urban situation is highlighted.

Keywords: City, Urbanization, Functional Structure, Urban Structure, Geo-Urban Situation.

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INTRODUCTION

On the eve of the 21st century global urbanization is developing at a rapid pace. The urban population of the world grew by 50 million people in the first 50 years of the 19th century, and in the first half of the 20th century by 500 million, then over the last half century by 2.5 billion. On the world map are expanding the ranges of cities of millionaires, over-urbanized states, megacities with a population of more than 10 million people. Especially touching here is the fact that the Asian continent, which embraces a huge demographic potential, is turning into the center of this phenomenon. But, at the same time, paradoxically, urbanization is developing at a very slow pace or even declining in the Central Asian region, including in Uzbekistan, which is an urgent issue today for our country.

Paying attention to this process, in 2019 Uzbekistan adopted a Presidential Decree "On measures to radically improve the processes of urbanization" and outlined a number of tasks for the development of cities. At the same time, it was pointed out that "the current level of urbanization does not meet modern requirements and lags far behind global trends" (Узбекистан, 2019).

Historical Base of the Formation and Development of Cities in Uzbekistan

If urbanization considers as an increasing factor of cities in the development of society, then we can say

that this process evolved in the Central Asian region in the Middle Ages. That period this region was famous for unique, original cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, Shakhrisabz, Khiva and others.

Historical and geographical analyzes show us that the resettlement of the population in Central Asia is associated with the ancient riverine civilization. This evolution was determined primarily by natural and geographical conditions – relief, climate and hydrographic factors. Here was formed a dense network of rural-urban hybrid settlements on the fertile soils of the Amudarya, Syrdarya, Zeravshan, Chirchik-Akhangaran, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya valleys, on the cones of rivers in the Ferghana Valley. And the Great Silk Road and its branches connected these regions, and the ancient large cities which located on this way – Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Kokand, Tashkent and others developed as leading administrative, commercial, defensive and cultural centers. Samarkand was located at the Asian region crossroads, the flows of population and material and spiritual wealth of the East were directed towards it (Хидоят, 1992). According to some information Samarkand and Bukhara were largest cities in the world in 31 cities and each of them had more than 100 thousand inhabitants. All this means that Uzbekistan's cities also contributed to the list of "world cities" (Ата-Мирзаев, 2002). The vast majority of cities developed from rural settlements, in areas of irrigated

agriculture and it is one of the features of the Central Asian phenomenon of urbanization.

Settlements that used to be the centers of lower administrative units, as well as monofunctional ones that which performed handicraft or trading functions such as Chust, Mirzachul, Kaunchi, Gijduvan, Shakhrikhan, Kuva and many others have become small and medium-sized cities now.

Development and Improvement of City Functions

There appeared many new cities with the construction of railway stations, as well as with the reclamation of new lands, with the running of mineral deposits and the construction of power plants and as centers of agricultural regions after a long alteration, under the socialist system. In 1970-80 five or six cities appeared per year on average and real urbanization reached its peak of 42.3% in this period (in 1984).

Some of these cities, located in more favorable geographic locations, and which have adopted large-scale industrial production based on mining or on the processing industry, have turned into new large cities now (Navoi, Angren, Almalyk, Chirchik, Bekabad and etc.). There have emerged many new small towns which based on development of agriculture or in place of "resource cities". Some of them are developing as a district centers performing organizational and economic functions.

Here we can notice that modern regional centers have strengthened their "positions" due to the role of the administrative and managerial function.

Today with an increase in population of many of these cities exceeded 100 000 people, except for the center of the Syrdarya – Gulistan and the new center of the Tashkent region – Nurafshan.

Now Uzbekistan's capital – Tashkent takes place a special role in the Uzbek modern urban system, belongs to the capital. This city was actually even a regional center of Central Asia during the former USSR. But after independence, although it took the status of the capital of a sovereign state, Tashkent's importance did not overrun beyond the borders of the our republic. But in the last years, as a opening of state borders with neighboring countries, globalization, modernization, transition to the implementation of "capital city" functions gradually changes the image, place and role of Tashkent in economic and political life of country.

Historical and geographical analysis of the functions of cities shows that the role of agro-industry and "resource" functions is still preserved in the development of small cities, while big and large ones have old industries and administrative functions.

DEMOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES

In addition, the Central Asian region stands out with its high demographic growth and it is one of major drivers of urban growth and development. In the 1970s, the annual growth of the urban population with its growth of 4.4 percent exceeded even the rural population growth. After independence, with the complication of political, socio-economic conditions and influence of global demographic trends, the transition of families from large to medium-sized, demographic growth sharply decreased, especially in cities also (0.8%). Currently, this index is 1.6 percent in urban areas and 1.7-1.8 percent in rural areas.

Since the 1960s, the population of some cities has grown with a very high rate: 24 times in Navoi, 11.5 times in Karshi, and 10 times in Jizzakh. The Tashkent, Angren, Margilan, Samarkand and Chirchik cities almost doubled.

In the previous years of country's independence, the population of Nukus, Karshi, Termez, Namangan, Jizzakh and Margilan grew especially rapidly (130-150% compared to 1989). And at the same period the population growth in Urgench, Almalyk, Bukhara and Tashkent amounted to 100-110%. But the population of some industrialized cities as Samarkand, Ferghana, Chirchik, Angren decreased because of various difficulties of the transition period, for example the migration of Russian-speaking peoples to their homeland, and a decrease in natural reproduction. Of course, this indicator varied in different cities, which small and medium-sized cities and towns, agro-industrial and rural district centers, such as Karavulbozor, Payarik, Bustan, Usmat's population average annual growth was 3.5-6.0%.

The Role of Administrative Changes in the Development of Cities

If the urbanization processes mainly occurred due to the spontaneously formation of new cities before the independence, then after, most of them arose because of the administrative changes in the republic. According to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers "About additional measures to improve the administrative-territorial structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan" in 2009, large villages (966) received the status of "urban settlement" and the level of urbanization in the country increased by 51.7 percent (Soliyev et al., 2018).

But last years, there is we can see again a downward trend (50.6% in 2021) due to the relatively high increase in the rural population than the urban one. And this gap doesn't shrink either by rural-urban migration (migration rate about 25 thousand per year), or by administrative changes. But, at the same time, we must emphasize that in recent years there has been a tendency for the enlargement of cities by incorporating

the territories of adjacent regions into the city and this experience generated imitative growth the urbanization rate. For example, 1039 hectares land from the Kasansay, Yangikurgan and Namangan regions are attached to Namangan city. The area of Karshi city was expanded from 9000 ha to 17000 ha, and the territory of Shakhrisabz enlarged from 3300 ha to 4900 ha, etc. (Ahborot, 2019). By 2030, Samarkand and Namangan is planned to take place in millionaire cities at the expense of the transformation of expanding their borders.

In general, it can be said that urbanization in the country is due to factors such as rapid population growth, the transformation of villages into cities, the formation of new cities and towns in newly developed areas, as well as the immigration of the Russian-speaking population to cities, scientific and technological progress, and others. And the rural-urban migration of the native-born population, as the main indicator of traditional urbanization, is very insignificant and is mainly directed to the capital.

URBAN AND URBAN-TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE

As a result, the following hierarchical system of cities was formed in terms of population: there are 18 cities out of 120 cities with a population of more than "100 thousand". These are the "pillars" of the republic and they are headed by the city of Tashkent. Namangan and Samarkand are the largest cities after Tashkent, which have population 500 thousand-1 million. They are as two "wings" supporting the only leader – Tashkent. But there is a very noticeable gap in size between these cities, amounting to a ratio of 5:1 till now. Five large cities (from 250 thousand to 500 thousand) are Andijan, Ferghana, Nukus, Karshi, Bukhara and the rest of them – 10 cities are large cities (with 100-250 thousand people).

Their territorial distribution is also very specific - three large ones in Tashkent (Angren, Almalik,

Chirchik, Bekabad is approaching this line), and three in the Fergana region (Fergana, Kokand, Margilan), two in Kashkadarya, and Syrdarya does not have a single large city.

There is a lack of medium-sized cities in the country, which are cities "second order" cities at the regional level. There are 24 medium-sized cities and 5 of them are located in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, but Jizzakh region has none. Most of medium-sized cities are monofunctional: Zerafshan, Urgut, Yangiyul, Bekabad, Kuva, Takhiatash, Turtkul, Asaka, Kuvasay are industrial centers, Kagan – traffic hub, most of them also (Kasan, Khiva, Asaka, Denau, Chust, Chartak, Kasansay, Kuva, etc.) functions as regional centers.

There was adopted a resolution of the President of the country "On measures to implement the project "comprehensive development of medium-sized cities" with the participation of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development" in 2019. It was planned to modernize the cities of Yangiyul, Chartak and Kagan, improve living conditions, enhancing the functional structure and create jobs in the incentive level. And in the next stage, they were planned development of cities in different geographical regions, starting with the cities of Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions. IBRD is investing in these works in the amount of 100 million US dollars (Tashtaeva & Yokubov, 2020).

Small towns and urban settlements are experiencing great difficulties now. Because except for "resource" and regional centers, even a city-forming base has not been formed; they provide only local organizational and economic needs of the population. And the issues of development of new "agro-towns", which were accepted into this category in 2009, didn't find its solution.

The dynamics of the growth share of various categories of urban settlements were listed below (Table 1)

Table 1. Urban Structure of Uzbekistan by Category of Urban Settlements

Category of Urban Settlements	1989		2008		2009		2020	
	Amount of Cities and its Share of the Total %	Share of the Population of the Total Urban Population, %	Amount of Cities and its Share of the Total %	Share of the Population of the Total Urban Population, %	Amount of Cities and its Share of the Total, %	Share of the Population of the Total Urban Population, %	Amount of Cities and its Share of the Total %	Share of the Population of the Total Urban Population, %
Big and large	16 / 7.2	59.5	17/7.3	57.3	17/1.4	40.9	18/1.5	40.4
Medium-sized	7/3.1	5.5	16/7.3	11.1	16/1.3	9.1	20/1.7	8.4
Small	101/45.7	25.6	86/36.9	21.0	86/7.2	11.4	82/6.8	12.5
Township	97/44.0	9.4	114/48.9	10.6	1079/90.1	38.6	1071/90.0	38.7

The table was compiled by the author on the basis of statistical data of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Large and large cities, which make up only 1.5% of the total number of cities, fall on for 21.1% of the country's population and 40.4% of the urban population. This figure was even higher with 59.5 percent in 1989. If in the period before 1979 country's urbanization developed mostly at account of large cities, in recent years the growth is associated with smaller cities. In general, according to the principle of development of urbanization according to J. Gibbs, the population and the proportion of large cities should increase, while small ones should decrease.

It is known that the traditional urbanization in the west was a mass migration of unemployed peasants to the cities and their simultaneous coverage in the cities by high labor costs. And in the Republic of Uzbekistan, in a market economy with the closure of large-scale industrial production formed the appearance of large farms, large numbers of unemployed. And the migration vector was shifted to foreign countries – to Russia, South Korea, Kazakhstan and others, due to the lack of demand for a worker or low-paid working in these cities. This shows that the development of the cities of the republic is not at the high level, they are not ready to receive the rural population.

CONCLUSION

In general, the entire population of the republic (35 million people) is distributed as follows: big and large cities (21.6%), small and medium-sized cities (10.3%), urban settlements (18.7%), rural settlements (49.4%). All types of settlements form a single resettlement system. There are each level or city has its

own functions, its own place and role. They stimulate each other's development, exchange labor force, material and spiritual resources, complement each other. Large cities are the main driving force of urbanization, the "upper pole", while small cities are the "lower pole". This is due to the fact that large cities have "high" sectors – innovative, science-intensive, high-tech types of manufacturing (Сигов, 1985). And small ones serve the local needs of the population. Rural manufacturing provides cities with labor resources, food, raw materials. Therefore, it is advisable, in the process of urban development, in its management and regulation or limitation, we must consider the interconnectedness, mutual proportionality of these various categories of settlements.

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