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ISSUES OF TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN SAMARKAND REGION DURING THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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Abstract: This article examines the issues of territorial organization and demographic development in the Samarkand region during the years of Uzbekistan’s independence. The study analyzes changes in the administrative-territorial structure of the region, population growth dynamics, migration processes, urbanization trends, and the distribution of population across urban and rural areas. Particular attention is paid to the impact of socio-economic reforms on demographic indicators and regional development. The article also explores the relationship between territorial management, settlement patterns, and population development in the context of modernization and sustainable regional growth. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the demographic transformations and territorial development processes that have taken place in the Samarkand region since independence.

During the years of independence, the development of urban planning in Uzbekistan was elevated to the level of state policy. First and foremost, important decisions and laws were adopted and implemented regarding the role, structure, and classification of cities within the administrative-territorial system of the republic.

Samarkand region is located in the central part of the Republic of Uzbekistan, within the Zarafshan River basin, surrounded by the Turkestan and Zarafshan mountain ranges. It borders Jizzakh region to the northeast, the Republic of Tajikistan to the east, Kashkadarya region to the south, and Bukhara region to the west. The region covers an area of 16.8 thousand hectares, accounting for 6.3% of the country’s total land area. The population density is 159.5 people per square kilometer[1].

The region includes 2 cities under regional jurisdiction, 9 district-level cities, 88 urban settlements, 125 rural citizens' assemblies, 1,100 neighborhood citizens' assemblies, and 1,829 rural settlements[2].

The administrative center of Samarkand region, the city of Samarkand, currently covers a total area of 0.12 thousand square kilometers, accounting for 0.7% of the region’s total area. Samarkand is not only the historical city and administrative center of the region but also one of the most important economic and industrial hubs of the republic. The city borders the districts of Samarkand, Pastdargom, Jomboy, Tayloq, and Oqdaryo. There are 191 neighborhood citizens' assemblies in the city[3].

Today, the old and new parts of Samarkand are developing in harmony. The old part of the city is divided into several mahallas and guzars, which hold a significant place within the city's territorial structure. Some guzars have preserved their ancient names to this day. Among them are Suzangaron, Kavarzor, Bog‘i Baland, Bog‘i Maydon, Toshkandiy, Urgutiy, Termiziy, Andijoniy, Oq Machit, Kaftarxona, and others[4].

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In 1939, according to the initial administrative-territorial division of Samarkand, three city districts were established: Bog‘ishamol, Siyob, and Temiryo‘l. Bog‘ishamol district was located in the central part of Samarkand, covering an area of 200 hectares. The district included various industrial and sports facilities, such as the Dynamo and Spartak stadiums, Krasny Dvigatel, Superphosphate Plant, Bread Factory, Wine Factory (Khovrenko), 8th March Factory, Morozov Printing House, and more than 20 other enterprises [5].

Siyob district encompassed the historical part of the city. It housed several important facilities, including the "Gelion" plant, "Hujum" factory, Siyob bazaar, the Institute of Archaeology of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, and other significant establishments [6].

Temiryo‘l district was located in the western part of the city and included several industrial enterprises such as the Kinap, porcelain, refrigerator, and elevator manufacturing plants, as well as a tea packaging factory, several food production enterprises, and construction organizations[7].

These districts were abolished in 1950 and re-established in 1976. During the years of independence, in accordance with the decision of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on December 12, 2003, the Siyob, Bog‘ishamol, and Temiryo‘l districts were abolished[8].

Until 2017, the city had three urban settlement districts named Kimyogarlar, So‘lim, and Farhod, which were administratively subordinate to the Samarkand city administration[9]. The Kimyogarlar urban settlement was established in 1951. Within its territory, there were six neighborhood citizens' assemblies named Madaniyat, Chorbog‘, Nurafshon, Nurli Kelajak, Shukrona, and Darg‘om. The settlement included 120 multi-story residential buildings and 318 individual courtyard houses, along with a total of 16 social infrastructure facilities[10].

Farhod urban settlement is located 6 km away from the center of Samarkand city, on the right bank of the Zarafshan River. It was established in 1981 as a posyolka (settlement) within the Jomboy district[11]. Since 1994, Farhod urban settlement has been included in the administrative structure of Samarkand city. The settlement is home to reinforced concrete slab production, asphalt and gravel processing plants, and joint ventures such as UzBAT (Uzbekistan-UK-USA, producing tobacco products) and an Uzbekistan-Turkey textile manufacturing enterprise. Additionally, it houses the Water Management Construction Supply Administration, an auto enterprise, and a mechanized drainage cleaning unit, along with various social and cultural institutions.Furthermore, Farhod urban settlement includes three neighborhood citizens’ assemblies: Shirin, Bunyod, and Chuponota. The area consists of 33 multi-story buildings, 6 single-family homes, 113 farmsteads with household plots, and four social infrastructure facilities [12].

Sulim (Kishrav) urban settlement is located 7 km from the center of Samarkand city on the right bank of the Dargom canal. It was established in 1951 [13]. The settlement is home to the "UzElectroConstruction" mechanized column, the Kishrav HPP cascade, a transport workshop, a sewing atelier, a farmers' market, and various social and cultural institutions. Additionally, it includes the Navruz, Yoshliq, and Chilkuduk neighborhood citizens' gatherings, 1 multi-story building, 1,040 individual courtyard houses, 788 households with homestead plots, and 5 social sector facilities[14].

In accordance with the February 2017 decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, these settlements were abolished and incorporated into the administrative structure of Samarkand city. With the attainment of state sovereignty, the process of establishing the foundations of independent statehood led to comprehensive reforms in urban governance, alongside state administration. The constitutional foundations for the establishment of the hokimiyat (governance) institution were firmly enshrined in Chapter XXI of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, forming the legal basis for public administration[15].

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City administrations operate in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Law "On Local State Authority." According to these legal documents, the city administration is responsible for governing state, economic, and socio-cultural development within its respective territory. It also approves socio-economic development plans and the local budget, while overseeing the activities of subordinate enterprises, organizations, and institutions. Additionally, the administration ensures compliance with laws, maintenance of public and social order, and protection of citizens' rights. During the years of independence, Uzbek cities have developed a unique governance system that takes into account historical experience, national traditions, and international practices. Currently, the structural organization of the Samarkand city administration consists of the city mayor, deputy mayors in different sectors, their secretariats (each including two specialists), an organizational control group, an information service, a general department, and an administrative affairs department.

Samarkand ranks second in the republic after Tashkent in terms of population. In 1991, the population of Samarkand city was 391.5 thousand people [16]. According to statistical data, as of January 1, 2016, the population of Samarkand amounted to 519,914 people. Specifically: 17,079 individuals resided in Kimyogarlar settlement, 5,614 individuals in Farhod settlement, 4,910 individuals in Sulim settlement, 492,311 individuals in the remaining part of Samarkand city. By January 1, 2017, the total population of Samarkand had increased to 523,818 people, reflecting a steady demographic growth [17].

The urban population of the region has been increasing year by year, influenced by birth rates, natural population growth, and migration processes. In 1994, the population density in Samarkand was 4.2 thousand people per square kilometer, while by 2016, this figure had risen to 4.4 thousand people per square kilometer. This trend can be attributed to the expansion of the city’s territory. Additionally, in 2009, the administrative inclusion of several rural settlements from neighboring districts into Samarkand’s territory contributed to both the city's expansion and its population growth. Specifically, 8 villages from Oqdaryo district, 3 villages from Bulung‘ur district, and 8 villages from Samarkand district were incorporated into the city. This administrative adjustment significantly accelerated urbanization processes in Samarkand[18].

Migration processes hold a significant place in the demographics of Samarkand, as population migration is a social phenomenon directly linked to the distribution of productive forces and population growth. Additionally, migration plays a crucial role in shaping population distribution and territorial composition. During the early years of independence, Samarkand experienced a high rate of emigration. In 1994, a total of 179.2 thousand people left Uzbekistan, while only 38.0 thousand people migrated into the country. This trend reflects the socioeconomic transformations occurring during that period, which influenced migration dynamics[19].

During the final years of the Soviet era, escalating economic and social challenges prompted the mass migration of various ethnic groups from Uzbekistan. Among them were Crimean Tatars, Germans, Koreans, Armenians, Poles, Jews, Meskhetian Turks, Russians, and others, who relocated either to their historical homelands or other countries. The largest share of emigrants consisted of Jews and Russian-speaking populations. A particularly notable demographic shift occurred in Samarkand’s Old City, where nearly all residents of the Jewish Mahalla, who belonged to the Jewish ethnic community, emigrated to Russia, the United States, and Israel, the latter being regarded as their ancestral homeland. At the same time, during the 1990s, political and economic instability in neighboring countries led to an influx of refugees into Samarkand. In particular, displaced persons from Tajikistan and Afghanistan arrived in the city and began settling there. It is important to

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emphasize that Uzbekistan provided assistance to migrants in need, in accordance with agreements within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and international human rights laws[20].

Currently, Uzbekistan's migration relations extend to several foreign countries, including the United States, Israel, Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece, South Korea, Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Australia[21].

According to data provided by relevant organizations, a total of 84,465 people (approximately 16%) from Samarkand's population of 536,234 between 2004 and 2019 have been residing abroad for an extended period. Specifically, in the "Gur-e-Amir" neighborhood, 300 out of 2,685 residents (around 11%), and in the "Panjab" neighborhood, 389 out of 2,662 residents (nearly 15%) are living abroad. However, the majority of them are still officially registered as residents of Samarkand city[22].

In conclusion, significant changes have been observed in the administrative-territorial structure and demographic indicators of Samarkand during the years of independence. The establishment of new districts, improvement of infrastructure, and population growth indicate an active urbanization process. Demographic analyses have highlighted the impact of natural population growth and migration on the city's development. Additionally, economic and social reforms have enhanced Samarkand's attractiveness, making it one of the most important cities in the country. Therefore, further improvement of administrative governance and the development of social infrastructure will play a crucial role in the city's future growth.

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