

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE GEOURBANISTIC SITUATION OF UZBEKISTAN

*Kasimov Khasanboy*

*Yusupov Khasanboy*

*Independent researchers of the Department of Geography  
Andijan State University*

**Abstract.** This article covers the development of the geourban situation in Uzbekistan during the years of independence, focusing on urbanization policy and geourban processes during this period.

**Keywords:** geourbanization, cities, periods, gross domestic product.

In general, recent urbanization trends vary across the country and its regions, often with differences in content, quantitative and qualitative characteristics, and geographical landscape.

In 2019, a presidential decree set a goal of increasing the level of urbanization in Uzbekistan to 60% by 2030. In recent years, urbanization has been carried out not intensively, but extensively. In particular, the area of the city of Tashkent has expanded by 40%. In this process, the population of the cities of Samarkand and Namangan is being increased by expanding their area to 1 million.  
[1]

The development of cities in Uzbekistan during the years of independence has had various characteristics. This past period can be divided into 4 stages:

**The crisis period - 1991-1999.** In the early years of independence, the process of emigration of Russian-speaking peoples to their homeland was observed. The political, economic, and social changes that took place also had an impact on urbanization. The demographic indicator of urbanization was 40.4 percent in 1991. The natural movement of the general population slowed down, the natural growth of the population in urban areas was 1.5 times lower than in rural areas, which became the second main reason for the decrease in the level of urbanization, that is, the number and share of the urban population decreased due to both natural and migration. The level of urbanization decreased by 0.5-0.6 percent per year. The economic potential of cities decreased sharply. The main

reason for this is the collapse of large-scale industrial production, which is the basis for the development of cities. This process especially affected large and large cities. However, despite this, positive changes were also observed in the urban structure of the regions of the republic. In particular, by the time of independence, there were a total of 123 cities and 104 towns. In 1992, 17 towns were formed. They were Zarbdor and Zafarabad (in Jizzakh region), Mirbozor (Samarkand), Dostlik (Syr Darya), Yangi Chinoz (Tashkent region), Nuristan (Kashkadarya), Kazanketken Akshaloq (Republic of Karakalpakstan). Surkhandarya region, which was lagging behind in urbanization, achieved significant indicators. The network of regional cities expanded to the towns of Angor, Dostlik, Saryk, Hurriyat and Elbayan, which is explained by the development of modern transport and other infrastructure in the region. However, cities and towns such as Gurlan, Khanka, Shavot and Khazorasp in the Khorezm region fell into the category of cities and towns. By 1994, Payariq in Samarkand region, and in 1995, Shafirkan in Bukhara region, were granted city status as district centers.

**The period of stagnation of cities.** By the 2000s, the country's economy had stopped growing, emigration had decreased, and a state of stagnation had set in. This, of course, also affected cities. Only two towns had emerged until the new urban reforms in 2000-2008. In 2004, the ancient Karmana was separated from the city of Navoi and registered as a town. After the establishment of the town of Elabad in the Kungrad district, no changes were noted in the geography of Uzbekistan's cities. [3] The urban network of Karakalpakstan decreased by two towns in the same year. The satellite towns of Nukus, Kizketkan and Pristansky were merged into its capital. In 2008, the level of urbanisation continued to decline, falling to 35.8 per cent. Although urbanisation is decreasing in quantity, great attention has been paid to its qualitative development, to the improvement, construction and architecture of cities, to the preservation and restoration of their rich historical and cultural heritage. The anniversaries of the cities of Bukhara, Khiva, Termez, Shahrisabz, Karshi, and Margilan were celebrated on an

international scale. In particular, in 2007, the 2750th anniversary of the city of Samarkand was widely celebrated. In 2008, the 2200th anniversary of the city of Tashkent was celebrated.

**A number of administrative reforms were implemented in the period 2008-2016**, which was a period of urban growth. In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 13, 2009, "On additional measures to improve the administrative-territorial structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan", the network of cities in our country increased by 965 settlements.

The transformation of villages into towns marked a new stage in the urbanisation of the Republic. In 2008, the urban population was 9.6 million, while in 2009 it increased to 14.3 million, reflecting a 51.7 per cent rise in the level of urbanisation. [3] The highest figure was observed in the Namangan region, at 64.6 per cent, followed by the Fergana region at 58.7 per cent, and the Andijan region at 53.1 per cent. Previously, the Navoi and Tashkent regions of the Republic of Karakalpakstan led in urbanisation, but recently they have been surpassed by the Fergana Valley, known for its large and densely populated areas. The primary reason for this shift is that the Fergana Valley contains many large villages with substantial populations [2].

**The period of growth of new cities.** As a result of reforms in the country, particularly from 2017 to the present, special attention is given to urbanisation processes. According to data for 2023, 51.0 per cent of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan will reside in urban areas. Analyses indicate that the overall urbanisation rate in our country is decreasing. Changes in the level of urbanisation depend on factors such as the specialisation of the regional economy, the development of city-forming industries, the emergence of new urban settlements, natural population growth, and external migration.

In 2016-2023, there will be changes in the level of urbanisation. The most urbanised region in the republic is the Namangan region (64.9%), which increased

by 0.5 per cent compared to 2016 due to the expansion of Namangan city. Fergana (56.9%) and Andijan (52.2%, a decrease of 0.2 per cent) also have significantly higher shares of the urban population than the national average. The regions with lower levels of urbanisation compared to the national average include Khorezm, Surkhandarya, Samarkand, and Bukhara regions. From this perspective, the new urban potential of some regions (the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Navoi) does not accurately reflect the real situation. During the new economic conditions from 2016 to 2023, structural changes in cities are due to the expansion and enlargement of their territories.

The largest number of cities still belongs to the Fergana region (423), which accounts for 35.1% of the urban settlements of Uzbekistan. The Southern, Zarafshan and Tashkent economic regions are also relatively well-supplied with the number of cities. At the same time, the Lower Amu Darya and Mirzachul regions, whose economies have an agro-industrial orientation, have a poorly developed urban network. Since the republic's economy is mainly specialised in the production of agricultural products and their processing industry, more than 4/5 of the cities are small towns.

**Table 1**

**Share of cities of the republic by category**

<b>№</b>	<b>City type</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Share of total cities %</b>	<b>Share in population %</b>
1	Millionaire cities	1	0,8	15,4
2	Large cities	7	6.7	17.5
3	Big cities	11	8,3	9,2
4	Medium cities	22	20	9,6
5	Small cities	89	64,2	10,9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>62,6</b>
6	Towns	1067	89%	37,4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*The table was compiled by the author based on statistical data.*

In 2023, there will be 1,091 small cities and towns, which is 90.1% of the total urban population. The number of medium-sized cities will be 20, 1.6% of the total urban population. The number of large cities in the republic is 7 (Samarkand,

Namangan, Andijan, Karshi, Nukus, Bukhara, Fergana), 11 large cities, 22 "medium" cities, and 89 small towns [4].

If in the previous stage (until 2009) the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Navoi and Tashkent regions were the leaders in terms of urbanisation, in the recent period they have been replaced by the densely populated Fergana Valley. The main reason for this is that the Fergana Valley has a large population of people living in large villages, and they have been given the status of cities [5].

The above analysis shows that in Uzbekistan, the development of cities in geourban processes is mainly due to structural changes, expansion of their territories, and partly through internal migration. The share of cities in the level of urbanisation should be high. The number of cities in our country has remained almost unchanged in recent years. However, among the towns, there are several towns with more than 7 thousand inhabitants according to the Urban Planning Code. 78 of them also perform the function of district centres. Since 42 of these 78 towns are considered non-agricultural in terms of industrial production and population employment, it is appropriate to grant the status of a city to these towns [6].

But at the same time, some problems of urban development are being faced. In particular:

- The rate of increase in the number of cities in our country has remained almost unchanged since independence.

- Uzbekistan ranks 154th among the countries of the world in terms of urban population, and the share of urban population is 51.0%.

- The proportion of urban population is due to the fact that many small cities and towns were formed by administrative decisions, which do not meet the requirements of urban planning.

- In recent years, cities have been increasing their population mainly extensively, that is, by changing the area and boundaries of the city.

-Urbanisation in the country is developing mainly in the form of "false urbanisation".

As can be seen from the above, circumstances negatively affect the development of our country's cities. To eliminate these circumstances, it is necessary to study the development of cities from economic and geographical perspectives.

The Republic of Uzbekistan ranks 154th out of 203 countries in the world in terms of urbanisation level, indicating that the urbanisation index of the Republic of Uzbekistan lags significantly behind that of other countries.

In geourban processes, the development of cities in Uzbekistan mainly results from structural changes, territorial expansion, and, to some extent, internal migration. The share of cities in the urbanisation scale should be substantial, yet the number of cities in our country has remained almost unchanged in recent years. However, among the towns, there are 194 with a population exceeding 7 thousand, according to the Urban Planning Code. Of these, 78 also serve as district centres. Among these 78 towns, 42 are considered urban based on the volume of industrial production and the level of employment, with the majority of the population engaged in non-agricultural activities. This will contribute to an increase in the number of towns.

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