

FORMATION AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF KARSHI CITY

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Abstract

This research article provides a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the historical changes that occurred in the social life of the city of Karshi between 1924 and 2024. The study covers issues of Soviet-era administrative-territorial reforms, industrialization processes, the activities of cultural and educational institutions, the demographic composition of the population, and the formation of social strata.

Keywords: Karshi, social development, historical analysis, urbanization, demographic processes, Soviet era, independence ears, mahalla institution, social transformation, territorial development.

Introduction

Between 1924 and 2024, the social life of Karshi city underwent profound and large-scale transformations. Administrative reforms, industrialization processes, demographic growth, and accelerating urbanization served as decisive factors shaping the city's developmental trajectory. These structural shifts not only altered the socio-economic composition of the urban population but also redefined institutional frameworks and patterns of social interaction.

This article provides a scholarly examination of these transformations through a historically grounded analytical approach. Drawing upon principles of historical analysis and socio-structural assessment, the study seeks to identify the major stages, driving forces, and qualitative characteristics of social change in Karshi over the past century.

RESULTS

The research findings demonstrate that between 1924 and 2024, the social life of Karshi city underwent a multi-stage transformation. During the Soviet period, centralized administrative governance and industrialization processes exerted a substantial influence on the formation and consolidation of the city's social structure. These mechanisms shaped class composition, institutional organization, and patterns of socio-economic activity.

In contrast, the years of independence were characterized by the transition to market-based economic relations, the institutional revitalization of the mahalla (local self-governance community), and comprehensive infrastructure modernization. Together, these factors initiated a qualitatively new phase of social development grounded in decentralization and socio-economic restructuring.

Furthermore, sustained demographic growth, intensified urbanization, and the expansion of educational and cultural institutions contributed to the qualitative renewal of the urban social environment. These processes fostered structural diversification, increased social mobility, and



the progressive modernization of Karshi's socio-cultural landscape.

DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that the social development of Karshi city proceeded in a continuous yet substantively differentiated manner across distinct historical stages. During the Soviet period, the social system was shaped within the framework of centralized governance and a planned economy. While this model ensured a degree of structural stability and institutional coherence, it simultaneously limited local initiative and constrained the development of civic engagement and community-based agency.

In contrast, the post-independence period was marked by the introduction of market-oriented economic mechanisms, the expansion of the private sector, and the institutional strengthening of the mahalla (local self-governance) system. These transformations facilitated the reconfiguration of social relations on the basis of democratic principles, decentralization, and participatory governance.

Moreover, processes of urbanization and demographic growth substantially increased demand for social infrastructure, thereby generating qualitative improvements in education, healthcare, and cultural services. These dynamics indicate that, in the case of Karshi, the determinants of regional social development are interdependent and systemic in nature, reflecting the interaction between economic restructuring, demographic change, and institutional reform.

As the administrative, economic, and cultural center of the Kashkadarya region, Karshi has experienced complex processes of social transformation over the past century. Following the national-territorial delimitation carried out in Central Asia in 1924, the city began its development within a newly established administrative framework [1:52].

According to the data of the 1926 population census, the majority of Karshi's inhabitants were primarily engaged in agriculture and traditional handicrafts, reflecting the predominantly agrarian and artisanal character of the city's socio-economic structure during that period [2:18]. During the 1930s, policies of collectivization and industrialization were systematically implemented, resulting in the establishment of new industrial enterprises and production facilities. These structural transformations contributed to the emergence and consolidation of a working class within the city's social composition, thereby reshaping its socio-economic framework [3:140].

During the Second World War, the relocation of evacuated industrial enterprises to the region significantly strengthened its industrial capacity and production potential [4:201]. In the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, the construction of irrigation systems and major canals accelerated both agricultural development and urbanization processes [5:325]. Concurrently, the institutional network of education, healthcare, and cultural establishments expanded considerably, reflecting broader socio-economic modernization trends.

A more in-depth historical analysis of Karshi's social development indicates that irrigation policy and demographic transformation constituted decisive factors in the city's growth. In particular, during the 1950s–1970s, the construction of the Karshi Main Canal and the development of newly irrigated lands intensified labor migration into the oasis, leading to a sharp increase in the urban population [6:263]. This demographic expansion necessitated the enlargement of social infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, cultural centers, and residential



housing complexes, thereby reshaping the city's socio-spatial structure.

According to the 1989 population census, Karshi had developed into a multiethnic urban center, a factor that significantly diversified and enriched its socio-cultural environment [6:312]. In the post-independence period, both internal and external migration flows contributed to the restructuring of the city's social composition. These migratory dynamics influenced patterns of settlement, labor distribution, and social stratification, leading to a reconfiguration of the urban social structure within the context of broader political and economic transformation.

After 1991, the transition to market-based economic relations and the expansion of the private sector led to the structural transformation and renewal of the social system. These reforms altered patterns of ownership, employment, and social stratification, thereby reshaping the city's socio-economic landscape. The adoption of the 1993 Law "On Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies" established the legal framework for the mahalla institution, formalizing its status within the system of local governance and strengthening community-based mechanisms of social regulation [7:78].

Between 2000 and 2024, the city's infrastructure underwent comprehensive modernization. Large-scale housing construction projects were implemented, the urban transport system was upgraded, and the activities of higher education institutions expanded significantly, contributing to the consolidation of the city's institutional and socio-economic capacity [8].

Within the framework of reforms initiated after 2017, regional development programs generated qualitative transformations in the social sphere. These initiatives enhanced public service delivery, improved living standards, and strengthened the institutional foundations of sustainable urban development [9:15].

Moreover, the increase in the number of higher education and vocational training institutions strengthened youth social engagement and contributed to the formation of an intellectual and human capital-oriented urban environment [10]. The expansion of educational opportunities enhanced professional mobility and supported the development of a knowledge-based social structure. Overall, the social life of Karshi city evolved in an evolutionary manner through the dynamic interaction of historical factors, state policy, and demographic processes. This multidimensional interplay shaped the city's institutional transformation and long-term social development trajectory.

The formation of the healthcare system in Kashkadarya region began in 1924 with the establishment of the first regional health department. Initially, this small administrative unit focused on opening feldsher (paramedic) stations and outpatient clinics, preventing infectious diseases, and implementing sanitary-educational initiatives. As the regional administrative center, Karshi became the principal organizational hub of these public health activities. Particularly during the period from the 1930s to the 1980s, the establishment of a central hospital, a maternity hospital, and specialized medical departments significantly expanded the city's social infrastructure and institutional capacity in healthcare provision.

By 1991, 680 physicians were practicing in the region, of whom 118 had completed advanced professional training courses. By 2010, the number of physicians who had upgraded their qualifications had reached 548. These indicators demonstrate a gradual improvement in the quality of medical services in Karshi. The experience gained by doctors in leading central clinics facilitated the introduction of modern diagnostic and treatment technologies within the region.



Beginning in 1992, systematic reforms were implemented to develop specialized medical care. Notably, the establishment of dialysis (“artificial kidney”) units at the Regional Hospital No. 1 and the Kitab District Central Hospital marked a critical advancement in the treatment of patients with severe renal failure. Furthermore, the creation of the Regional Diagnostic and Consultation Center in Karshi—equipped with modern medical technologies and among the first of its kind in the republic—signaled a new phase in the institutional development of the regional healthcare system.

As of 2023, the presence of more than four Doctors of Science, over twenty Candidates of Science (PhD-equivalent), and more than one thousand highly and first-category qualified specialists in the region clearly demonstrates the strategic importance of the healthcare system within the social sphere of Karshi. These developments are regarded as key indicators of the city’s broader social progress.

During the years of independence, the labor and social protection system in Kashkadarya region became a central component of regional social policy. The Regional Department of Labor and Social Protection, in cooperation with various institutions and organizations, implemented comprehensive measures aimed at promoting employment, reducing unemployment, and supporting socially vulnerable groups. Karshi occupied a pivotal position in these processes.

In particular, the activities of the city labor exchange emerged as an important institutional mechanism for ensuring youth employment. In the mid-1990s, amid economic transformation, there was a potential risk of temporary unemployment and dependency attitudes among young people. In response, the Karshi City Labor Exchange introduced a structured “Labor Market” program designed to engage youth in socially productive employment, provide vocational guidance, and organize retraining initiatives.

According to statistical data, in 1996, 1,320 young individuals applied to the labor market services in the city; 692 of them secured permanent employment. Additionally, 115 young people completed retraining programs and acquired new professional qualifications. The creation of 1,720 new jobs specifically for youth further demonstrates the practical effectiveness and targeted nature of employment policy during this transitional period [11:7].

In the case of Karshi city, these indicators confirm that social policy acquired a proactive and targeted character, effectively strengthening social stability among youth through employment generation and labor market integration. The emphasis on structured vocational guidance and job creation contributed to mitigating socio-economic vulnerability during the transition period. Overall, between 1924 and 2024, the social life of Karshi city followed a complex yet consistent trajectory of development. The industrial and social infrastructure established during the Soviet period was subsequently modernized in the years of independence and restructured in accordance with market-based economic principles and the institutional framework of the mahalla system. As a result, a stable and progressively evolving social environment was consolidated within the city, reflecting both historical continuity and institutional transformation.

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