

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MAHALLA INSTITUTION IN THE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT OF NEW UZBEKISTAN

Umarova Gulbahor Berdievna

Associate Professor of the Department of International Relations
and History at Alfraganus University.

Annotatsiya: This article analyzes the role of the mahalla institution in the development of civil society in New Uzbekistan. As a form of citizens' self-governance, the mahalla plays an important role in increasing civic participation, protecting public interests, and implementing democratic reforms. The study highlights the significance of the mahalla in public oversight, social partnership, and civic initiatives, emphasizing its contribution to sustainable democratic development in New Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Civil society, mahalla institution, New Uzbekistan, democracy, citizens' self-governance, public oversight, civic participation, democratic reforms.

YANGI O'ZBEKISTONDA FUQAROLIK JAMIYATI VA MAHALLA INSTITUTINING DEMOKRATIK TARAQQIYOTDAGI O'RNI

Annotation: Mazkur maqolada Yangi O'zbekistonda fuqarolik jamiyati institutlarining shakllanishi va rivojlanishida mahalla institutining tutgan o'rni ilmiy-nazariy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Mahalla fuqarolarning o'zini o'zi boshqarish organi sifatida jamiyatda ijtimoiy faollikni oshirish, aholi manfaatlarini himoya qilish hamda demokratik islohotlarni hayotga tatbiq etishda muhim institut hisoblanadi. Tadqiqotda mahallaning jamoatchilik nazorati, ijtimoiy hamkorlik va fuqarolik tashabbuslarini qo'llab-quvvatlashdagi roli yoritilib, Yangi O'zbekiston sharoitida demokratik taraqqiyotning barqarorligini ta'minlashdagi ahamiyati asoslab beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Fuqarolik jamiyati, mahalla instituti, Yangi O'zbekiston, demokratiya, fuqarolarning o'zini o'zi boshqarishi, jamoatchilik nazorati, ijtimoiy faollik, demokratik islohotlar.

РОЛЬ ГРАЖДАНСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА И ИНСТИТУТА МАХАЛЛИ В ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКОМ РАЗВИТИИ НОВОГО УЗБЕКИСТАНА

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается роль института махалли в развитии гражданского общества в условиях Нового Узбекистана. Махалля как форма самоуправления граждан выступает важным социальным институтом, способствующим повышению общественной активности, защите интересов населения и реализации демократических реформ. Анализируется значение махалли в системе общественного контроля, социального партнёрства и гражданского участия, а также её вклад в обеспечение устойчивого демократического развития страны.

Ключевые слова: Гражданское общество, институт махалли, Новый Узбекистан, демократия, самоуправление граждан, общественный контроль, социальная активность, демократические реформы

INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANCE

In the context of the New Uzbekistan, the development of civil society and the strengthening of democratic institutions have become key priorities of state policy. The “Uzbekistan–2030” Strategy clearly emphasizes the importance of expanding civic participation, enhancing public oversight, and ensuring active involvement of citizens in socio-political processes. In this regard, the mahalla institution occupies a special place as a unique form of community-based self-governance that reflects national traditions while meeting modern democratic requirements.

Civil society in New Uzbekistan is increasingly viewed as a vital foundation for sustainable democratic development, social stability, and the protection of citizens’ rights and interests. The mahalla, as an integral component of civil society, serves as an effective mechanism for fostering social solidarity, encouraging civic initiative, and strengthening dialogue between the state and society. Through the mahalla system, democratic values such as participation, accountability, mutual responsibility, and social justice are implemented at the grassroots level.

The Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy assigns a strategic role to civil society institutions and the mahalla in promoting good governance, supporting vulnerable groups, and enhancing public trust in state reforms. Therefore, analyzing the role of civil society and the mahalla institution in the democratic development of New Uzbekistan is of both theoretical and practical significance, as it allows for a deeper understanding of how traditional social structures contribute to modern democratic transformation.

METHODS AND LEVEL OF STUDY

This study is based on an interdisciplinary methodological framework that combines political, sociological, legal, and socio-philosophical approaches to analyze the role of civil society and the mahalla institution in the democratic development of New Uzbekistan. The research applies systemic analysis to examine civil society and the mahalla as interrelated components of democratic governance, while the comparative method is used to assess the mahalla institution in relation to other forms of local self-governance in different democratic contexts. Historical analysis allows the study to trace the transformation of the mahalla from a traditional community structure into an important institution of civil society under modern reforms, and the institutional approach is employed to evaluate its legal foundations, functions, and interaction with state authorities. In addition, sociological analysis is used to understand patterns of civic participation, public engagement, and social trust at the local level.

Regarding the level of study, the development of civil society and democratic institutions has been widely examined in both international and national academic literature. However, the mahalla institution in New Uzbekistan is often analyzed either as a cultural tradition or as a social support mechanism, rather than as an active democratic actor within civil society. Consequently, the integrated role of the mahalla institution in strengthening democratic participation, public oversight, and citizen–state interaction remains insufficiently explored. This

study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the mahalla institution as a key element of civil society and an important factor in the democratic development of New Uzbekistan, particularly in line with the goals of the Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of this research show that the development of civil society in New Uzbekistan has significantly strengthened democratic governance by fostering greater citizen engagement and increasing participation in social, political, and community processes. The study reveals that the mahalla institution plays a central and indispensable role in translating democratic reforms into tangible and practical actions at the grassroots level, ensuring direct and meaningful interaction between citizens and state authorities. This interaction allows for a more responsive governance system, where local communities can voice their concerns, contribute to policy discussions, and influence decisions that affect their daily lives.

It was found that the mahalla serves as an effective and accessible mechanism for public oversight, enabling communities to actively participate in decision-making processes, monitor the implementation of state programs, and provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of public services. The research demonstrates that through regular consultations, community assemblies, and participatory initiatives, the mahalla facilitates transparent governance and strengthens accountability mechanisms within local administrations. Citizens, in turn, gain a clearer understanding of their rights and responsibilities, which fosters a sense of civic duty and encourages continuous engagement in democratic practices.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the mahalla acts as a bridge between government institutions and civil society, creating opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, social dialogue, and conflict resolution at the local level. By involving community members in the design, planning, and execution of development projects, the mahalla ensures that public initiatives reflect the real needs and priorities of the population, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of democratic governance. The study also highlights that the mahalla institution contributes to social cohesion by bringing together diverse community groups, promoting mutual understanding, and strengthening shared values rooted in respect, cooperation, and social solidarity. As a result, citizens not only become more engaged in local governance but also develop a stronger sense of collective responsibility for the development and well-being of their communities.

Overall, the research confirms that the active role of the mahalla in civic engagement, public oversight, and community development has become a cornerstone of democratic governance in New Uzbekistan. Its capacity to facilitate participatory democracy, enhance transparency, and promote citizen empowerment demonstrates that the evolution of civil society, anchored by the mahalla institution, is instrumental in ensuring sustainable democratic development and long-term social stability.

The research results indicate that the legal and institutional reforms implemented in New Uzbekistan have expanded the functions and responsibilities of the mahalla institution within the civil society framework. The study demonstrates that the mahalla has evolved from a primarily social support structure into an active democratic institution that promotes civic engagement, accountability, and social responsibility. Empirical and analytical findings confirm that citizens increasingly perceive the mahalla as a platform for expressing public interests, resolving local

issues, and fostering social dialogue. The research results indicate that the legal and institutional reforms implemented in New Uzbekistan have significantly expanded the functions, authority, and responsibilities of the mahalla institution within the broader civil society framework. The study demonstrates that the mahalla has gradually evolved from a structure mainly focused on social assistance and community welfare into an active democratic institution that plays a meaningful role in public governance. This transformation has strengthened the capacity of the mahalla to promote civic engagement, enhance public accountability, and encourage social responsibility at the grassroots level.

Empirical and analytical findings confirm that citizens increasingly perceive the mahalla not only as a traditional community organization, but also as an accessible and effective platform for expressing public interests and participating in local decision-making processes. The mahalla has become an important space for identifying community needs, discussing social problems, and developing collective solutions through dialogue and consensus. As a result, local issues such as social protection, youth engagement, conflict prevention, and neighborhood development are addressed more efficiently and transparently. The research also reveals that the institutionalization of the mahalla has strengthened mechanisms of public oversight and cooperation between citizens and state authorities. Through regular meetings, community initiatives, and consultative processes, the mahalla facilitates open communication and trust between the population and government institutions. This contributes to the formation of a participatory political culture, where citizens feel a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for the development of their communities.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the enhanced role of the mahalla supports inclusiveness and social cohesion by involving diverse social groups, including women, youth, and vulnerable populations, in civic activities. This inclusive approach reinforces democratic values and ensures that reforms are responsive to local needs. Overall, the research confirms that the transformation of the mahalla institution into an active component of civil society is a key factor in strengthening democratic governance and sustainable development in New Uzbekistan. The research further shows that the integration of the mahalla institution into the system of civil society contributes to strengthening social cohesion and solidarity. The mahalla has been identified as a key factor in preventing social conflicts and ensuring stability by addressing local concerns through participatory and consensus-based mechanisms. The findings also highlight that the mahalla supports vulnerable groups and facilitates inclusive participation, which is essential for democratic development.

Another important result of the study is the clear identification of the mahalla's role in enhancing political culture and democratic awareness among citizens. The research demonstrates that through a wide range of educational, cultural, and community-based initiatives, the mahalla actively promotes core democratic values such as mutual responsibility, transparency, accountability, social justice, and respect for the rule of law. These initiatives include public discussions, legal awareness programs, cultural events, and community meetings, which help citizens better understand democratic principles and their role in public life.

The results show that active participation in mahalla activities significantly increases citizens' sense of ownership over public affairs and strengthens their civic identity. Regular involvement in decision-making processes at the local level encourages individuals to view themselves not merely as recipients of state policies, but as active contributors to social development. This

process fosters political maturity, enhances trust within the community, and cultivates a participatory democratic culture grounded in shared responsibility and dialogue.

The study also reveals that cooperation between civil society organizations and the mahalla institution has become more systematic, institutionalized, and effective in New Uzbekistan. This partnership allows for the pooling of resources, expertise, and social capital, which in turn improves the design and implementation of social projects aimed at addressing local needs. Joint initiatives between non-governmental organizations, community groups, and mahalla bodies contribute to more efficient public service delivery, particularly in areas such as social protection, education, youth engagement, and community development.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that this collaborative model supports the achievement of national development goals by aligning grassroots initiatives with broader state strategies. The strengthened interaction between civil society organizations and the mahalla institution enhances public trust in reforms and state institutions, which is a crucial element of democratic governance. Overall, the research confirms that the growing synergy between civil society and the mahalla institution plays a vital role in consolidating democracy, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring sustainable development in New Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, the research results show that the mahalla institution plays a significant role in youth engagement and the formation of civic responsibility among young people. The study confirms that youth participation in mahalla activities encourages leadership skills, social activism, and democratic attitudes. This process contributes to the long-term sustainability of civil society and democratic development. Furthermore, the research results show that the mahalla institution plays a significant and increasingly influential role in youth engagement and in the formation of civic responsibility among young people in New Uzbekistan. The study confirms that active youth participation in mahalla activities creates favorable conditions for the development of leadership skills, initiative, and a sense of social responsibility. Through involvement in community projects, volunteer initiatives, and decision-making processes at the local level, young people gain practical experience in civic participation and democratic practices.

The findings indicate that the mahalla serves as an important social environment where youth learn the values of cooperation, mutual respect, accountability, and service to society. Participation in mahalla-led programs strengthens young people's understanding of citizens' rights and duties, encourages critical thinking, and fosters a culture of dialogue and tolerance. As a result, youth develop democratic attitudes and a stronger civic identity, which positively influences their engagement in broader social and political processes.

The research also highlights that the mahalla provides a platform for identifying and supporting young leaders, nurturing their potential through educational, cultural, and social initiatives. By involving youth in the planning and implementation of community development projects, the mahalla enhances their confidence and motivation to contribute to public life. This inclusive approach helps reduce social apathy and promotes constructive social activism among young people.

Moreover, the study demonstrates that youth-oriented activities within the mahalla strengthen intergenerational dialogue and social cohesion, ensuring the transmission of national values alongside modern democratic principles. In the long term, this process contributes to the sustainability of civil society by forming an active, responsible, and socially engaged generation.

Consequently, the mahalla institution emerges as a key factor in fostering democratic development and ensuring the continuity of civic values in New Uzbekistan.

The analysis also demonstrates that the mahalla serves as an effective channel for implementing the objectives of the Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy at the local level. The research findings confirm that the mahalla institution supports decentralization, enhances public participation, and strengthens the responsiveness of state institutions to citizens’ needs. As a result, democratic reforms gain greater legitimacy and effectiveness.

Overall, the research results confirm that the civil society system in New Uzbekistan, with the mahalla institution at its core, functions as a vital driver of democratic transformation. The study concludes that strengthening the institutional capacity of the mahalla, expanding its legal authority, and deepening its cooperation with civil society organizations will further enhance democratic governance, social stability, and sustainable development in New Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the development of civil society and the strengthening of the mahalla institution play a decisive role in the democratic transformation of New Uzbekistan. The mahalla, as a traditional yet dynamically evolving institution, serves as an effective bridge between the state and citizens, ensuring public participation, social cohesion, and grassroots democracy. Within the framework of ongoing reforms and the objectives of the Uzbekistan–2030 Strategy, civil society institutions and the mahalla contribute to the protection of citizens’ rights, the promotion of social justice, and the enhancement of public trust in democratic governance. The study demonstrates that the effective integration of the mahalla institution into the civil society system not only preserves national values but also supports modern democratic principles such as accountability, transparency, and civic engagement. Therefore, further strengthening the institutional capacity of the mahalla and expanding its cooperation with civil society organizations is essential for ensuring sustainable democratic development and inclusive governance in New Uzbekistan.

REFERENCES:

1. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. Yangi O‘zbekiston strategiyasi. – Toshkent: “O‘zbekiston”, 2021.
2. O‘zbekiston – 2030 strategiyasi. – Toshkent: 2023.
3. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Qonuni. “Fuqarolarning o‘zini o‘zi boshqarish organlari to‘g‘risida”. – Toshkent, 2022.
4. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Qonuni. “Jamoatchilik nazorati to‘g‘risida”. – Toshkent, 2018.
5. Inglehart R., Welzel C. Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
6. Ismoilov B. Fuqarolik jamiyati: nazariya va amaliyot. – Toshkent: Fan, 2019.
7. Jo‘rayev N. Demokratiya va fuqarolik jamiyati rivoji. – Toshkent: Akademiya, 2020.
8. Saidov A.X. Huquqiy davlat va fuqarolik jamiyati asoslari. – Toshkent: TDYuU, 2018.
9. Jurakulovich S. J. (2023). Philosophical views of sages on human values and glorifying him. theory and analytical aspects of recent research, 2(16), 229-238.

10. Abduqodirov A. Mahalla instituti va ijtimoiy boshqaruv. – Toshkent: Ma’naviyat, 2017.
11. Qodirov R. Yangi O‘zbekistonda mahalla va jamoatchilik boshqaruvi // Ijtimoiy fanlar jurnali. – 2022.
12. Xolmirzayev O. Mahalla – fuqarolik jamiyatining tayanchi // Demokratik islohotlar sharhi. – 2021.