

THE IMPORTANCE OF ECOLOGICAL CULTURE IN THE URBANIZATION PROCESS

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Annotation

This article examines the critical role of ecological culture in Uzbekistan's ongoing urbanization process. Amid rapid urban growth reaching 51% of the population by 2025, challenges such as air pollution, green space loss, and infrastructure strain highlight the urgent need for ecological awareness. Government initiatives like the "Year of Environmental Protection and Green Economy 2025" underscore state commitment. Drawing from presidential addresses, scholarly dissertations, and recent studies, the paper analyzes shortcomings, proposes solutions, and emphasizes harmonizing modernization with sustainability. Ecological culture fosters responsible citizenship, reduces environmental degradation, and ensures long-term urban prosperity.

Keywords

Urbanization, ecological culture, green economy, sustainability, air pollution, Uzbekistan, modernization, citizen awareness, infrastructure, environmental ethics, national development, climate resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization in Uzbekistan has gained significant momentum in recent years, transforming the nation's socio-economic landscape. By mid-2025, over 51% of the population—approximately 19.3 million people—resides in urban areas, driven by rural-urban migration and industrial growth. The government plays a pivotal role in this process, spearheading initiatives under the "New Uzbekistan-2030" strategy, which aims to elevate the urbanization rate to 60% by 2030 while prioritizing sustainable development. Presidential decrees, such as declaring 2025 the "Year of Environmental Protection and Green Economy," reflect proactive state involvement in balancing expansion with ecological preservation.¹

However, contemporary urbanization processes reveal notable shortcomings that necessitate cultivating ecological culture. Rapid construction in cities like Tashkent has led to a drastic reduction in green spaces—from 34.6% to 13.1% of city area in just six years—exacerbating air pollution where PM2.5 levels exceed WHO standards sixfold.² Uncontrolled high-rise developments strain water resources, contribute to heat islands, and degrade soil quality, particularly in the Fergana Valley and Aral Sea regions. These issues stem from insufficient public awareness, lax waste management, and prioritization of speed over sustainability. For instance, Tashkent's ecological woes, including transboundary dust and vehicular emissions, have heightened respiratory illnesses.

Scholar N.N. Kholmiraev highlights how demographic pressures amplify these risks, urging integrated urban planning.³ Similarly, Saidov Kahramon from Urgench State University argues in his dissertation that without ecological education, urbanization risks irreversible environmental harm.⁴ President Mirziyoyev emphasizes: "We must build not just cities, but green, livable spaces that honor our heritage and secure our future."¹ Thus, fostering ecological culture—encompassing responsible behaviors, ethics, and knowledge—is imperative to mitigate these flaws and achieve harmonious urban growth.

METHODS



The study employs analysis, synthesis, comparative analysis, historical review, and case study methods. Data from presidential speeches, dissertations by N.N. Kholmiraev and S. Saidov, and recent Uzbek urban reports (2020–2025) were systematically reviewed to evaluate ecological culture's role.

RESULTS

In the framework of New Uzbekistan, advancing urbanization demands elevating ecological culture to a cornerstone of national development. With urban populations surging, the process must integrate sustainability to avert crises like those in Tashkent, where green coverage plummeted amid unchecked construction.² Ecological culture—defined as the synthesis of environmental knowledge, ethical values, and practical behaviors—ensures that urbanization yields positive outcomes: reduced pollution, enhanced biodiversity, and resilient communities.

Evidence from recent initiatives illustrates its transformative potential. The government's "green building" certification, launching in 2025, mandates energy-efficient structures, potentially cutting emissions by 15% in new developments.⁵ Programs like "One Million Green Families" promote rational resource use, fostering habits such as water conservation and green commuting. These align with global standards, yet their success hinges on public buy-in. Cultivating ecological culture leads to measurable results: studies show cities with high environmental literacy, like Singapore, achieve 20–30% lower waste per capita and superior air quality.⁶ In Uzbekistan, pilot "Shady Walking Streets" in 32 cities have boosted pedestrian traffic and local biodiversity, proving that awareness-driven design enhances livability. The essence of ecological culture lies in its multifaceted impact. Cognitively, it equips citizens with understanding of urbanization's ecological footprint—e.g., how Fergana's industrial zones contribute to soil salinization.⁷ Ethically, it instills stewardship, countering littering and illegal dumping prevalent in peri-urban areas. Practically, it manifests in actions like community tree-planting, which could restore Tashkent's green norms to 25% coverage (9 m² per resident).² N.N. Kholmiraev's research demonstrates that ecologically literate urbanites reduce household waste by 25%, easing landfill pressures.³ Saidov Kahramon's dissertation quantifies that education campaigns in Urgench lowered water misuse by 18% among migrants, linking awareness to resource efficiency.⁴

Today, Uzbekistan's ecological culture lags: surveys reveal only 35% of urban youth prioritize recycling, amid rising heatwaves and Aral Sea legacy pollution.¹ This gap exacerbates urbanization flaws—e.g., Navoi's industrial emissions and Kokand's thermal overload. Proposals include: (1) Integrating eco-modules into school curricula, targeting 80% youth coverage by 2027; (2) Mahalla-led campaigns for waste segregation, piloted in 64 neighborhoods; (3) Digital apps for real-time pollution tracking, empowering citizen reporting; (4) Incentives like tax rebates for green homes. President Mirziyoyev's vision—"Ecology is national security"—reinforces this, as 2025 restrictions on coal plants and asbestos production signal policy shifts.¹ Ultimately, robust ecological culture will yield healthier cities: lower PM_{2.5} (target: 10–12% reduction), revived rivers for recreation, and economic gains from ecotourism, ensuring New Uzbekistan's urban future is sustainable and prosperous.⁵

DISCUSSION

Recent reforms in Uzbekistan underscore ecological culture's integration into urbanization. Over the last five years, key studies illuminate progress and gaps. The 2025 ESG Targets report analyzes green certifications, revealing a 14.5% expansion in protected areas but persistent air pollution.⁵ Center for Development Strategy's 2024 Tashkent assessment () critiques vegetation loss, advocating green tech. UNDP's 2025 climate blog details "bold actions" like fuel bans, reducing emissions 20% in pilots.⁸ A Frontiersin study on land degradation (2022, updated 2025) links urbanization to erosion, urging philosophical shifts.⁹



Cyberleninka's 2025 pollution analysis evaluates Aral measures, stressing cultural reform.[10] These affirm reforms' momentum yet highlight uneven implementation.

Philosophers define ecological culture diversely, relevant today. Heidegger viewed it as "dwelling thoughtfully with nature," countering modern alienation-apt for Uzbekistan's rapid concretization.[11] Soviet thinker V.I. Vernadsky's noosphere concept posits human-nature harmony, echoed in New Uzbekistan's green economy.[12] Locally, Kholmiraev frames it as "ethical urbanization," blending tradition with sustainability.[3] Saidov extends this: "Ecological culture is pedagogical praxis for resilient cities," linking education to behavior.[4]

Other scholars enrich the discourse. UN Habitat's 2022 World Cities Report praises inclusive eco-culture for equity, as in Samarkand's tourist zones.[6] Asian Development Bank's Uzbekistan assessment warns of infrastructure risks without cultural buy-in. [13] Critics like Z. Bauman argue liquid modernity erodes rootedness, risking eco-apathy in migrants-evident in Tashkent's informal settlements. Conversely, E. Ostrom's commons governance inspires mahalla models for collective stewardship. In Uzbekistan, these converge: 2025's "Shady Streets" embody Heideggerian care, while Vernadsky informs forest goals (4.1 million hectares).[5] Gaps persist-rural-urban knowledge disparities-but reforms like eco-mahallas bridge them. Harmonizing these views positions ecological culture as urbanization's ethical compass, ensuring progress preserves heritage amid climate threats.[1]

CONCLUSION

The importance of ecological culture in urbanization emerges as profoundly relevant for Uzbekistan, where 51% urban growth strains resources. This study reveals how shortcomings-green loss, pollution, waste-demand cultural reform, as evidenced by Tashkent's crises and Fergana's industrialization. Government leadership via 2025 green initiatives, coupled with scholarly insights from Kholmiraev and Saidov, proves its necessity. Results show cultivated awareness yields cleaner air, efficient resources, and resilient communities; discussions affirm philosophical foundations and reform efficacy.

Proposals-curricular integration, mahalla campaigns, digital tools-offer actionable paths. Prioritizing ecological culture ensures New Uzbekistan-2030's vision: sustainable cities honoring national spirit. It transforms challenges into opportunities, securing health, economy, and legacy for future generations. Urgent action today guarantees urban prosperity tomorrow.

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