

The History Of The Formation Of Andijan's Neighborhoods (Mahallas)

Yunusova Zarifakhon Abduvakhobovna
Lecturer, Andijan State Pedagogical Institute
z.yunusova@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article explores the long-term historical development stages of the mahalla system in Andijan. Utilizing existing literature, historical records, and archaeological research, the study examines the ancient forms of mahalla governance. Additionally, the article presents a comparative analysis of factual materials regarding the *mahalla* form of governance found in the correspondence, geographical reports, and written accounts of Russian scholars and travelers who were interested in and conducted research on the history of the Fergana Valley, particularly Andijan.

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 8th July 2026
Accepted: 7th August, 2026

KEY WORDS:
Makhalla, mavze (district), daha (quarter), aqsaqal (elder), rais (chairman).

The mahalla is a system that has been preserved for centuries as a distinct form of governance in the history of the peoples of Central Asia. In the East, the mahalla has served to unite the population, form a cohesive homeland, strengthen friendly relations, and foster kinship ties. Every mahalla has stood out for its unique rules, traditions, customs, and ethnic dynamics. Although the organizational structure of the mahalla system is uniform, there are regional differences in public attitudes and specific traditions across various areas. In Andijan, the earliest urban-style residential complexes have been determined to date back to the 6th–3rd centuries[1].

Andijan holds a unique place in the history of Central Asia. Since ancient times, the city has served as a trade, economic, and cultural center connecting Central Asia with the great Chinese Empire. In 138 BCE, the envoy Zhang Qian, who traveled to the ancient state of Dayuan on the instructions of the Chinese emperor, noted that there were nearly 70 large and small cities in this region. Zhang Qian stated that the Great Fergana state bordered Kangju to the north, Great Yuezhi to the west, Bactria to the southwest, Wusun to the northeast, and states like Dandon and Khotan to the east [2].

In the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE, the state of Dayuan and its capital city of Ershi emerged around the Mingtepa fortress, bringing together the cities and villages of the ancient Fergana Valley. The inner sections of the city naturally consisted of local neighborhood units.

Archaeological research conducted in Andijan reveals that the earliest phase of urban culture began to form in Dalvarzin approximately 2,900–2,700 years ago [3].

The subsequent stage of urbanization in ancient Fergana was also reflected in the monuments of the Eylaton culture (7th–6th to 3rd centuries BCE). Research carried out in the 1930s by an expedition led by B.A.

Latinin established that during the Early Iron Age, Eylaton was surrounded by a double line of defensive walls and exhibited all the characteristic features of a city-type settlement [4].

While the history of cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand, and Tashkent, along with their mahallas, has been studied by scholars like N.G. Mallitskiy, M. Masson, O. Sukhareva, O.D. Chekhovich, and R. Muqminova [5], the ancient history, economic, and cultural potential of Andijan located in the easternmost part of the

Republic of Uzbekistan has been researched by numerous scholars, including Ya. Gulyamov, A.K. Pisarchik [6], B. Abdulghozieva [7], G. Dadaboev [8], Yu.A. Zadneprovskiy [9], and S. Jalilov [10].

Subsequent research was carried out by B. Matboboev and A. Anorboev [11], who collected extensive material on the history of cities from the Late Bronze Age to the Middle Ages. Archaeological scholar Boqijon Matboboev from the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan proved that 3,200–2,800 years ago, during the Bronze Age, Andijan was one of the earliest and largest cities in Central Asia [12]. Alongside collecting data about the Turkestan region, many Russian researchers, travelers, and geographers who visited Central Asia provided information on the role of the mahalla in the lives of the region's peoples, general descriptions of mahallas in certain cities, and aspects of the population's collective lifestyle (mahalla traditions, neighboring relations).

During this historical period, details regarding the lifestyle of the local population including tribal matters, community affairs, family and marriage, and neighborhood dynamics appeared in articles by the researcher A.P. Khoroshkhin, published at the time in the newspaper *Turkestanskije Vedomosti* [13].

During his visits to the Zarafshan Valley in the early 1870s, L.N. Sobolev traveled through a number of cities in the region specifically Paishanba, Kattaqurghan, Yangiqurghan, Dahbed, and Ofarnikent providing valuable information regarding their mahallas, guzars, residents, households, caravanserais, markets, mosques, and madrasas [14].

While investigating the lifestyle of the local populations, including the administrative and political structures of the region as well as the local governance system, K.K. Pahlen highlighted the activities of the *aqsaqals* (elders) who governed the *mahalla*, village, and *avul* (nomadic settlement) communities in his inspection reports on the Turkestan region [15].

A.I. Dobromyslov [16], who conducted scientific research in the region, also provided valuable information regarding the history of the cities, their administrative divisions, the spatial characteristics of the *mahallas*, and the socio-economic and cultural life as well as the craftsmanship of the population.

Scholar Olga Sukhareva deeply analyzed the history of Bukhara's mahallas, categorizing their development into five distinct periods: the 12th–13th centuries, the 13th to the first half of the 16th century, the second half of the 16th century to the 17th century, the 18th to the first half of the 19th century, and the second half of the 19th century to the early 20th century [17].

During the Russian Empire period in Uzbekistan, the mahalla remained a vital form of local governance. It was precisely during this period that the establishment of legal foundations for the mahalla system was initiated for the first time. Mahalla elders (*aqsaqals*) were required to carry out state-mandated duties and execute various fee and tax collections from the population.

In his work *"Tashkentskie Mahalla i Mauza"* ("Tashkent Mahallas and Mauzas"), published in 1927, Professor N. Mallitskiy provided a list of Tashkent's mahallas while also offering commentary on the publications of Russian scholars produced up to that period [18]. A similar organizational division applied to other regions, districts, and cities across the republic as well.

Continuing her specialized research in Bukhara, O.A. Sukhareva sought to comprehensively study the local form of governance and analyze social life within the mahallas. The ethnographer scholar notes that residents of Bukhara's mahallas cleaned the streets and carried out landscaping work collectively. Furthermore, each mahalla possessed its own shared inventory, which included large cauldrons (*qozon-o'choq*) and other utensils used for weddings and community celebrations (*tuy-hasham*) [19].

S.S. Gubaeva, who thoroughly studied the ethnic composition and lifestyle of the population of the Fergana Valley, also observed that the *mahalla* governance system was enriched by the long-standing experience of the local population [20].

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Andijan was divided into four *dahas* (districts): Soy (northern section), Uylik (eastern section), Olaylik (southern section), and Kirlik (eastern section). In the residential areas, there were 20 *guzars* and 150 *mahallas* [21].

Up until the 1920s, a mahalla typically comprised 50–60 households, and in urban areas, these were incorporated into *dahas* (larger city quarters). The mahalla was led by an elected *elligboshi* (*aqsaqal* or elder). The *elligboshi* performed crucial duties, including overseeing real estate transactions, managing wedding and

memorial rites, organizing community work drives (*hashars*), and resolving local disputes. Every Uzbek mahalla had its own teahouse (*choykhona*), central square (*guzar*), market, and local service amenities [22]. Korean researcher Yu Shin Ne attempted to analyze the historical overview of the mahalla system relying on comparative methods in her scientific research [23]. In analyzing the similarities and differences between the community institutions of the Uzbek and Korean peoples, the researcher posited that the *mahalla* and *maeul* communities resolve social relations in the daily lives of both populations. She asserted that while assisting and serving every individual within the collective, these institutions foster a sense of mutual responsibility, duty, cooperation, and the establishment of kinship ties. Russian scholar S.N. Abashin [24], who conducted research in the Fergana Valley in the late 20th century, studied social relations in modern Uzbek villages based on materials from the Fergana Valley, placing special emphasis on the *mahalla* community.

In summary, the mahalla system of governance has become a traditional, long-standing institution of the Uzbek people, aimed at managing the daily life and socio-economic affairs of the local population while serving as a vital pathway for promoting unity and solidarity. It was a unique social framework for preserving key values and traditions such as collective labor, overcoming hardships together, and fostering strong neighborhood relations. Even during the Soviet period, the administration recognized the immense potential of the mahalla and fully understood the advantages of preserving this system. Ultimately, mahalla governance not only guided people toward peaceful coexistence, but also served as an essential channel for passing down core moral values—including mutual understanding, patriotism, a sense of unity, and empathy—across generations.

References.

1. Матбобоев Б., Машрабов З.. Андижан: городская культура и этапк ее развития (историко – археологическое исследование) // Ўзбекистон тарихи. 2007/04. -Б.47.
2. Хўжаев А.. Фарғона тарихига оид маълумотлар (Қадимий ва илк ўрта аср хитой манбаларидан таржималар ва уларга шарҳлар) Тошкент: Фарғона нашриёти, 2013 34-б.
3. Матбобоев Б.Х., Машрабов З.З. Андижон тарихи: (кадимги даврлардан XX аср бошларигача). Ўзбекистон Республикаси ФА, академик Я. Г. Гуломов номидаги археология институти, З.М. Бобур номидаги халқаро жамоат фонди. - Т.: Шарқ, 2014. 19 - б.
4. Латынин Б.А. Эйлатанская расписная чаша. // КСИИМК. Вып. 80. М.: 1960. С. 90-92.
5. Малицкий. Н. Ташкентские маҳалля и мауза. Ташкент, 1927; Массон М.Е. Прошлое Ташкента.// Известия АН УзССР. Ташкент.1954; О.А Сухарева. Квартальная община позднефеодалного города Бухары (В связи с историей кварталов). Москва. Наука, 1976. -293 ст; Чехович О.Д. городское самоуправление в Ташкенте XVIII в.// история и культура народов Средней Азии. Москва. Наука. 1976.; Муқминова Р., Филонович М. Ташкент на перекрёстке истории. –Ташкент Фан. 2001.
6. Писарчик А.К. Некоторые данные по исторической топографии городов Ферганы// ТИИАЭ АН Тадж ССР.1956 Том. XLII
7. Абдулгазиева Б. Андижон Бобур даврида. Андижон. 1993.
8. Дадабоев Г. Отчет Андижанского археологического отряда по составлению свода археологических памятников Андижанского области. Архив Институти археологии АН Руз.
9. Заднепровский Ю.А. Городище Эйлатан (К вопросу о датировке памятника).//СА. Москва. Издательство академии наук СССР. 1960, 30-45 ст; Тот же. Типология и динамика развития городских поселений древней Ферганы // Древний город Средней Азии. – Л., 1973. – С. 17-20;
10. Жалилов С. Бобур ва Андижон. Тошкент. 1993.
11. Матбобоев Б., Машрабов З. Андижан: городская культура и этапк ее развития (историко- археологическое исследование)// Ўзбекистон тарихи. 2007. 4-сон, .35-40 бет; Шу муаллиф. Қадимги Фарғонада илк давлатчилик илдишлари // О‘zbekiston tarixi, 2002. – № 1. – Б. 3-11;
12. Анарбаев А. О раннем городе Ферганы // Ош и Фергана в исторической перспективе. – Бишкек, 2000. Вып. 3. – С. 70-71

13. Хорошхин А.П. Историко-этнографические этюды. Народы Средний Азии // Туркестанские ведомости. 1871, №1.
14. Соболев Л.Н. Список населенных мест Зерафшанского округа // Туркестанский сборник, Спб., 1873, Ташкент: – С. 117.
15. Пален К.К. Отчёт по ревизии Туркестанского края, произведенной по высочайшему повелению Се-на-торомъ Гофмейстеромъ К.К Паленомъ. // Сельское управление: Русское и туземное. – Спб., 1910. – С. 4-5.
16. Добромыслов А. И. Ташкент в прошлом и настоящем. – Ташкент: 1912. – С. 80-420.
17. Сухарева О.А. Квартальная община позднефеодалного города Бухары (В связи с историей кварталов). Москва. Наука, 1976. -293 ст.
18. Маллицкий Н. Ташкентские маҳалля и мауза. Ташкент, 1927.
19. Сухарева О.А. Квартальная община позднефеодалного города Бухары. – Москва: Наука, 1976.
20. Губаева С.С. Этнический состав населения Ферганы в конце XIX-начале XX в. Монография . - Ташкент : Фан, 1983.
21. Жалилов С. Андижон. Тарихий ўлкашунослик очерки –Т.: 1989. – Б. 42.
22. Чориев З. Тарих атамаларининг қисқача изоҳли лўғати. Тўлдирилган иккинчи нашри “Академия ” нашриёти. Тошкент, 2002. 144-б
23. Юи Шин Не. Глобаллашув жараёнида маҳалла институти ва миллий анъаналар трансформацияси (Ўзбекистон ва Жанубий Корея мисолида). Тар. фан. фал.доктори дис. Автореферати. -Тошкент, 2017.
24. Абашин С.Н. Социальные взаимоотношения в современном узбекском кишлаке (по материалам Ферганской долины). Автореф. дис. ... канд. истор.наук. – Москва, 1997. – С. 6-22.