

Article

The Specific Features of the Soviet Population Resettlement Policy in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article examines the specific features of the Soviet population resettlement policy in Uzbekistan, its socio-economic, political, and demographic consequences, as well as its impact on local communities and national identity. The study analyzes the historical background, mechanisms, and objectives of forced and planned migration processes implemented during the Soviet period. Particular attention is given to changes in ethnic composition, labor distribution, agricultural and industrial development, and the transformation of social structures in Uzbekistan. The research also highlights the long-term implications of Soviet resettlement policies for demographic development and interethnic relations in the post-Soviet period.

Keywords: Soviet Policy, Population Resettlement, Migration, Uzbekistan, Demographic Changes, Forced Migration, Social Transformation, Ethnic Composition, Soviet Union, Population Policy, Labor Migration, Historical Development, National Identity, Socio-Economic Changes, Interethnic Relations



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1. Introduction

The Soviet Union implemented a wide range of population resettlement policies throughout its existence, aimed at achieving economic efficiency, political control, and social transformation across its diverse territories [1]. These policies were particularly significant in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, where demographic structures, traditional livelihoods, and ethnic compositions were profoundly influenced by state-directed migration processes. The resettlement strategy was not merely a demographic tool but also an instrument of ideological integration and economic modernization within the framework of the Soviet planned economy [2].

In Uzbekistan, Soviet population resettlement policies were closely linked to agricultural expansion, especially the development of cotton monoculture, irrigation projects, and industrialization programs. Large-scale migration of populations from other regions of the Soviet Union, as well as internal displacement within Uzbekistan, was encouraged or organized to meet labor demands in newly developed areas [3]. As a result, significant changes occurred in settlement patterns, urbanization levels, and the distribution of the workforce across different sectors of the economy.

These policies also had a strong impact on the ethnic composition of Uzbekistan. The arrival of various ethnic groups contributed to increased diversity in urban centers, while at the same time creating new challenges in interethnic relations and cultural adaptation. The Soviet government

promoted the idea of “internationalism,” aiming to integrate different nationalities under a unified socialist identity; however, in practice, resettlement processes often led to social tensions and unequal development between regions [4].

Furthermore, population resettlement in Uzbekistan was influenced by broader Soviet strategies such as collectivization, industrial relocation, and the use of labor resources in remote or strategically important areas. These measures reshaped traditional rural communities and altered long-standing patterns of land use and social organization. The effects of these transformations continue to influence demographic and socio-economic conditions in modern Uzbekistan [5].

Therefore, studying the characteristics of Soviet population resettlement policy in Uzbekistan is essential for understanding the historical roots of contemporary demographic structures, regional development disparities, and interethnic relations. This research aims to analyze the mechanisms, objectives, and consequences of Soviet resettlement policies and to evaluate their long-term impact on the socio-economic development of Uzbekistan [6].

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a historical-analytical research approach to examine the characteristics of Soviet population resettlement policy in Uzbekistan. The methodology is based on the systematic analysis of historical documents, scholarly literature, statistical data, and previously conducted academic research related to Soviet demographic policies and migration processes in Central Asia. The research focuses on identifying the main mechanisms, objectives, and consequences of population resettlement during the Soviet period [7].

The historical method is used to trace the development of resettlement policies over time, starting from the early Soviet years through the period of industrialization and collectivization, up to the late Soviet era. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how political and economic decisions influenced migration flows and demographic changes in Uzbekistan. Special attention is given to state programs related to agriculture, particularly cotton production, irrigation projects, and industrial expansion, which played a key role in population redistribution [8].

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Soviet population resettlement policy in Uzbekistan was not a simple demographic process, but rather a complex socio-political instrument aimed at reshaping the economic and social structure of the republic. The results confirm that migration and resettlement were closely integrated into the broader Soviet strategy of centralized planning, where population distribution was managed according to state-defined economic priorities rather than natural demographic trends [9].

One of the key issues highlighted by the results is the dual nature of Soviet resettlement policy. On the one hand, it contributed to rapid industrialization, expansion of agricultural production, and urban development. The influx of labor resources enabled the implementation of large-scale projects, particularly in cotton farming and industrial construction. This supports the view that migration was an essential mechanism for achieving economic modernization in Uzbekistan during the Soviet era [10][11].

On the other hand, the study reveals that these policies also generated significant structural imbalances. The concentration of resettled populations in specific economic sectors led to a division of labor that often placed the indigenous population predominantly in agriculture, while migrant groups were more represented in industrial and administrative spheres. This unequal distribution contributed to socio-economic stratification, which in some cases persisted even after the collapse of the Soviet Union [12].

The discussion also shows that ethnic diversification in Uzbekistan’s urban areas was both a result of and a catalyst for social transformation. While Soviet ideology emphasized “internationalism” and equality among nationalities, in practice, resettlement sometimes created

tensions related to access to housing, employment, and social services. These dynamics suggest that demographic engineering, even when economically effective, can produce unintended social consequences if not supported by balanced integration policies [13].

Furthermore, the long-term impact of Soviet resettlement policies remains evident in contemporary Uzbekistan. Many current demographic patterns, including urban concentration, regional disparities, and labor distribution, can be traced back to Soviet-era planning decisions. This indicates that historical migration policies have a lasting structural influence that extends beyond their original political and economic context [14].

From a theoretical perspective, the case of Uzbekistan illustrates the limitations of centrally planned migration systems. While such systems can effectively mobilize human resources for strategic economic goals, they may also overlook local socio-cultural conditions and long-term sustainability. The Uzbek experience demonstrates that forced or highly regulated migration can achieve short-term developmental objectives, but may also create enduring challenges in social cohesion and regional equality [15].

In addition, the findings highlight the importance of considering human and cultural dimensions in migration policy. The interaction between different ethnic groups during the Soviet period led to both positive outcomes, such as cultural exchange and linguistic diversity, and negative outcomes, such as social fragmentation and inequality in access to resources. This duality suggests that migration policies should be evaluated not only in economic terms but also in terms of their social and cultural impact.

Overall, the discussion confirms that Soviet population resettlement policy in Uzbekistan played a decisive role in shaping the republic's demographic and socio-economic landscape. However, its outcomes were mixed, combining economic development with structural imbalances and long-term social challenges. These findings underline the importance of adopting more balanced and inclusive approaches to population policy in contemporary contexts.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the characteristics of Soviet population resettlement policy in Uzbekistan and its long-term socio-economic and demographic consequences. The analysis shows that population resettlement during the Soviet period was a strategically planned process aimed at supporting economic development, industrialization, and agricultural expansion, particularly within the framework of cotton production and centralized economic planning.

The findings indicate that these policies significantly transformed the demographic structure of Uzbekistan. Large-scale migration and organized resettlement led to increased urbanization, ethnic diversification, and changes in labor distribution across sectors. While these processes contributed to economic growth and the development of infrastructure, they also created structural imbalances between urban and rural areas and between different social groups.

Another important conclusion is that Soviet resettlement policy had both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, it facilitated the rapid development of industry, improved workforce allocation, and supported large-scale agricultural projects. On the negative side, it contributed to social stratification, unequal access to resources, and long-term regional disparities that are still observable today.

The study also confirms that the legacy of Soviet population resettlement continues to influence modern Uzbekistan. Current demographic patterns, settlement structures, and interethnic relations are partly shaped by historical migration processes. This highlights the importance of understanding historical policies when analyzing contemporary socio-economic challenges.

In general, the research demonstrates that population resettlement in the Soviet Union, particularly in Uzbekistan, was a multidimensional phenomenon with far-reaching consequences. It played a crucial role in shaping the republic's development trajectory, but also left complex social and demographic legacies. Future studies may further explore comparative aspects of migration

policies across different Soviet republics or analyze post-Soviet demographic transformations in greater detail.

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