

From Sacred City to Managed Heritage: Cultural Continuity and Social Transformation in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Ulugbek Ochilov¹

¹*Bukhara State University*

*Corresponding Author: elnurbeast@gmail.com

Citation: Ochilov, U. (2025). From Sacred City to Managed Heritage: Cultural Continuity and Social Transformation in Bukhara, Uzbekistan. *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(3), 152–167. <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i3.2395>

Published: November 26, 2025

ABSTRACT

This paper explores whether Bukhara has been able to strike a balance between cultural continuity and social change in the transition that the city has made from being a sacred Islamic outpost to a moderated heritage site. Giving material to study from both scholarly literature and the application of the interdisciplinary approach, the analysis shows how Bukhara's transformation is one of resilience and vulnerability. The city preserves its cultural continuity through the mahalla system, religious institutions, and vernacular architecture and is heavily threatened by tourism commodification and a lack of legal frameworks and pressures by urban modernization. Through the comparative analysis with other Silk Road cities and the engagement with heritage theory, the current article shows that although Bukhara has managed to maintain many elements of its sacred identity, the sustainable heritage management needs to be more inclusive in governance, to be coupled with an enhanced involvement of the community and to employ policies that are sensitive in context and to the tangible and intangible heritage aspects.

Keywords: Bukhara, Cultural heritage management, Sacred cities, Urban transformation, UNESCO World Heritage, Cultural continuity, Central Asia.

INTRODUCTION

Bukhara is a unique place in the cultural geography of Central Asia, which has been a city for more than two thousand years. Since the inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993, the city has undergone deep changes that have brought into question the compatibility between the protection of heritage and the modernization of the city (Vileikis, 2023; Vileikis et al., 2019). The transition from sacred cities to managed heritage sites concerns not only the physical conservation and restoration of monuments, but also the renewing of cultural identity, social practices and the relationships of communities.

This transformation introduces new actors, discourses, and power relations into the management of Bukhara's cultural resources. This process takes place in the context of Uzbekistan's post-Soviet nation building, which is trying to balance Islamic legacy with secular modernity, local customs with global tourism markets (Rutkouskaya, 2012). The end result is a complex landscape in which sacred meanings coexist and, at times, are in conflict with the heritage commodification and urban development issues of imperatives.

Contemporary scholarship emphasizes understanding cultural heritage not as static collections of monuments but as dynamic processes, which involves multiple stakeholders, contested meanings and ongoing negotiations (Holtorf, 2018; Naheed and Shooshtarian, 2022). This view is especially pertinent in the case of Bukhara, where the Samanid, Timurid, Shaybanid and Soviet interventions led to a palimpsest of architectural and social forms (Baxtishod, 2025; Ulugbekovich and Sobirovich, 2025). The historic urban environment contains monumental Islamic architecture, traditional residential neighborhoods (mahallas), minority heritage sites and vernacular building traditions which form the living cultural fabric (Vileikis et al., 2019; Safarov, 2021).

The research problem is related to the conflict between cultural continuity and social change in heritage cities undergoing rapid modernization and incorporation into global tourism networks. Despite many of the traditional practices and urban forms being preserved in Bukhara, tourism development, infrastructure expansion and changing economic conditions present serious challenges to heritage authenticity and community cohesion (Allaberganov and Catterall, 2023; Kilichov and Olsavsky, 2023). The change from sacred cities, which are characterized by religious practices, to heritage sites that are managed by international standards of conservation raises questions about whose heritage is preserved, and for whom (Lak et al., 2020).

This article poses the following question: Has Bukhara managed to balance continuity of the cultural heritage and social transformation in its transition from sacred city to managed heritage site? The discussion is based on five dimensions that are interrelated, which are the historical backgrounds that have characterized the sacredness of Bukhara; how the cultural continuity has been maintained; social change and urbanization; the institutional framework of heritage management and documentation; and the theoretical implications of the interpretation of heritage authenticity and urban identity in the postcolonial context.

Bukhara's case shows what both can be achieved by modern heritage-management strategies as well as what happens when these can no longer be maintained and strengthened. The city shows great resilience in preserving cultural traditions with community-based institutions, adaptive reuse of historic structures and revival of religious practices after being restricted by Soviet rule (Jumaeva and Utaeva, 2019; Jumaeva and Utaeva, 2020). However, this continuity is increasingly subject to pressures of commodification, lack of legal protection and management approaches that are biased towards monumental architecture and away from cultural practices (Allaberganov and Catterall, 2025; Seila et al., 2023). Capturing this two-fold nature, resilience as well as vulnerability, is important to finding better heritage management strategies.

The importance of this research is not confined to Bukhara but applies more broadly to themes of heritage cities in the Global South in which international frameworks are intertwined with local contexts in a complicated way. Dayoub et al. (2024) illustrates that there is an interplay between preservation and development among a variety of historic cities that share the same pressures as Bukhara. The issues of community engagement, authenticity, and sustainable tourism that were found in Bukhara are similar to those in other cities in Central Asia (Brooks et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 2023).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SACRED FOUNDATIONS

The historical processes that give Bukhara its sacred character and urban form must be considered in order to understand its contemporary heritage challenges. The city's identification as a site of Islamic learning, pilgrimage, and cultural production has built strong associations of places, religious practices, and cultural identities across space over time, often influencing conceptions of conservation (Canbolat and Gultekin, 2025; Pickett, 2020).

Islamic and Persianate Origins

Bukhara became an important urban center during the age of Islam with the Samanid rule (ninth and tenth century). The Samanid period was a time of major urban and socioeconomic change, which made Bukhara a major cultural and economic center that had an impact on the rest of the Central Asian region for centuries (Baxtishod, 2025). Architectural legacy from these times including Samanid Mausoleum not only depicts aesthetic achievement, but also the articulation of Islamic and Persianate identities (Wenbo and Han, 2025).

Bukhara is known as Bukhoro-i Sharif ("The Noble Bukhara"), which means it is a center of Islamic scholarship and Sufi spirituality. The city's madrassas were filled with students from all over the Islamic world, and mosques and shrines became places of pilgrimage and religious devotion (Pickett, 2020; Welsford, 2015). This sacred geography is expressed not only through monumental architecture but also through the neighborhood's mosques, shrines of saints and ritual spaces by combining religious practices into the daily lives of people (Jumaeva and Olimovna, 2021).

The intertwined roles of Bukhara as a city with both sacred and commercial characteristics formed a special urban culture where religious scholarship and mercantile activity were intertwined. Silk bazaar and commercial areas have become the symbols of economic prosperity and cultural sophistication, where trade networks have enabled the exchange of ideas and artistic traditions along with material goods (Ulugbekovich and Sobirovich, 2025).

Archaeological and ceramic findings have shown that the cultural development of Bukhara is a process of complex interaction with the surrounding areas and changing patterns of influence over the years. Bruno and Puschnigg (2022) have shown that the Bukhara oasis preserved its own cultural traits while engaging in larger scale networks in the region, e.g., with a potential for cultural stability in the face of external influences, having implications for future heritage debates. Similarly, technological transitions, such as the bronze-to-brass transition

recorded by Park et al. (2021), are an indication of the city's insertion into medieval trade networks, but with a continuation of local crafts traditions as well.

Soviet Interventions and Reconfigurations

The period of the Soviet rule brought radical changes in the urban structure and the cultural sphere of Bukhara. The national territorial delimitation in the 1920s mainly changed the political position of Bukhara and its relations with the regional context (Sengupta, 2000). The efforts of the Soviet regime in planning and modernizing the city were indicative of its widespread ideological commitments to progress and rationalization and tended to denigrate traditional urban forms and practices in the face of a planned future. Rutkouskaya (2012) documents the development of new visions of Uzbekistan's "national heritage" by Soviet-era architectural professionals between 1965 and 1991, who tried to reconcile modernist planning principles with preservation of selected historical monuments.

Heritage conservation, paradoxically, was increased in the Soviet period, through documentation projects and archaeology, and religious restitution of cultural heritage, despite the disadvantages of the Soviet period with restrictions upon religious activities and some buildings adapted to become museums or secular buildings. Even though in an ideological context of national rather than religious importance, the emergence of systematic monument conservation laid out the technical and institutional foundations for later UNESCO era heritage management (Rutkouskaya, 2012).

Post-Independence Cultural Revival and UNESCO Designation

After the independence of Uzbekistan in 1991, there was a cultural revival in Bukhara which aimed at recovering the Islamic heritage and reaffirming those traditional identities that were repressed during the Soviet period. The inscription of Bukhara as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993 was both the international recognition of the outstanding universal value of the site and the start of new challenges in terms of tourism development and heritage management (Vileikis et al., 2019). During this period, the religious functions of some buildings were restored, traditional ceremonies were revived, and the Islamic architectural heritage was once again given its due attention (Jumaeva and Utaeva, 2020).

The post-Soviet context provided possibilities to rethink the story of the relations between sacred and heritage narratives in Bukhara. Rizoiev (2023) analyses the articulation of Jadid intellectuals and travelers of visions of Bukhara's place in both the Islamic tradition and the new formation of the modern world, and debates that have gained a new relevance in the era of independence. Figure 1 gives a plausible depiction of the main historical periods that have determined the transformation of Bukhara from its Islamic urban center to a managed UNESCO World Heritage site, indicating the key transitions that informed the sacred and heritage character of the site. The conflict between maintaining the sacred essence of Bukhara, and the need to develop it as a destination for tourism emerged more and more as international visitors came looking for "authentic" experiences, and economic pressure was a factor in commodifying cultural traditions (Allaberganov and Catterall, 2023).

At this time, the adaptation of Bukhara's sacred monuments has been the expression of larger bureaucratic discussions of religious power, cultural identity, and cities. Jumaeva and Olimovna (2021) document topographical changes carried out at sacred sites, and how physical changes to religious spaces reflect changing social and political priorities. The processes of restoration and reconstruction of Islamic monuments, while adding to cultural revival and revival, have also raised the questions of authenticity, historical accuracy and the difference between preservation and recreation (Turner and Gak-Vassallo, 2024).

Historical Transformation of Bukhara: From Sacred City to Heritage Site

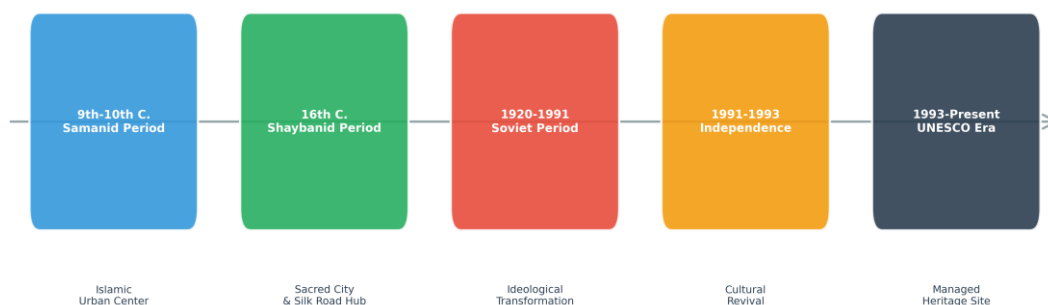


Figure 1. The Evolution of Bukhara: From a Sacred City to a Heritage Site.

The timeline shows five key periods in the evolution and development of Bukhara, from the Samanid Period (9th-10th century) when it became an Islamic urban center, the Shaybanid Period (16th century) when it became a sacred city on the Silk Road, the Soviet Period (1920-1991) when it underwent an ideological transformation, the Independence Period (1991-1993) when it entered a period of cultural revival, and the period of the World Heritage Site (1993-present) with its ongoing management for the benefit of the city. Each period has different political, cultural and management structures that have influenced the current heritage landscape of the city.

MECHANISMS OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY

Despite the Soviet and post-Soviet developments, Bukhara has preserved of the traditional culture through a number of social, spatial and institutional mechanisms. These processes are critical to determine the relative success of a city in balancing preservation and change. As Figure 2 shows, the six mechanisms that have contributed to ensuring the viability of Bukhara's cultural continuity in the face of radical political and social changes are the mahalla system, religious life and sacred traditions, vernacular architecture, oral tradition and intangible heritage, and minority heritage preservation.

Mechanisms of Cultural Continuity in Bukhara

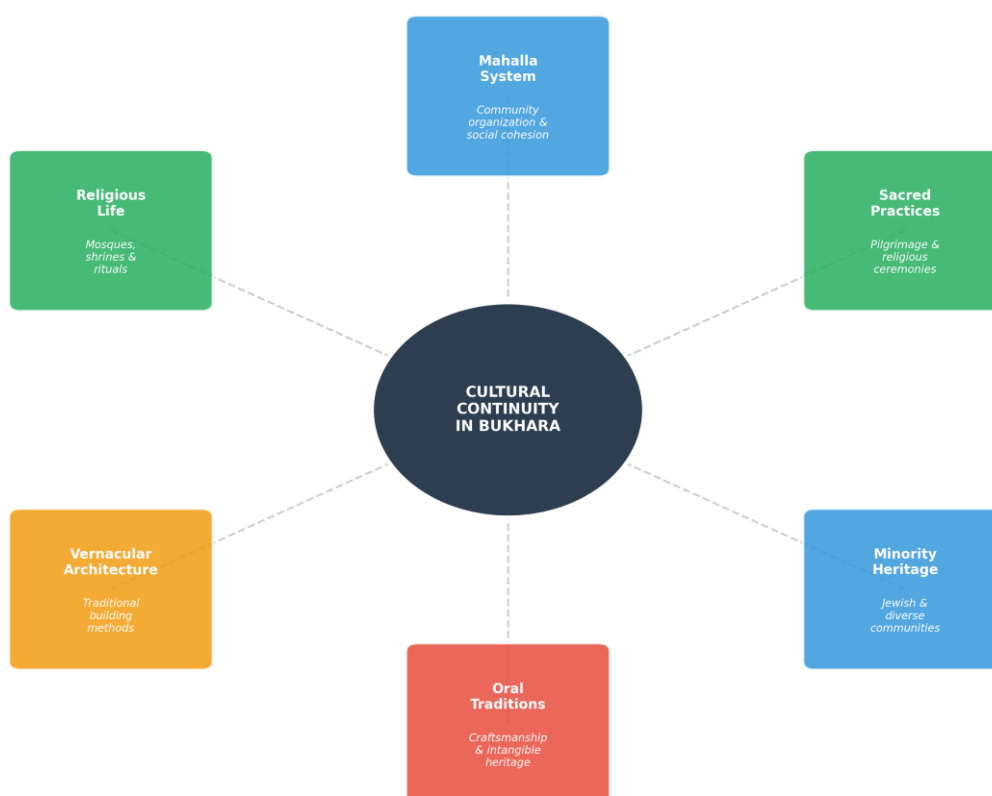


Figure 2. Mechanisms of Cultural Continuity in Bukhara.

The map that I've developed outlines six systems that intertwine, which have allowed Bukhara to maintain its cultural identity for hundreds of years after the dramatic political and social change in the area. Community organization and social cohesion is provided by mahalla system, religious life by the existence and maintenance of mosques, shrines, and rituals, vernacular architecture by the preservation of the traditional building methods, oral traditions by the preservation of craftsmanship and intangible heritage, a minority heritage by the Jewish and diverse communities, and sacred practices by the continuation of pilgrimages and religious ceremonies. These mechanisms are a system as a network supporting the cultural continuity of the city in spite of the pressures of modernization.

The Mahalla System and Social Cohesion

The mahalla (traditional neighborhood community) is one of the most significant cultural continuity mechanisms in Bukhara and in Central Asia. These residential quarters serve as not only space units, but also social

institutions that preserve collective identity, organize the community life, and pass on cultural traditions from one generation to another (Vileikis et al., 2019; Safarov, 2021). The fact that the mahalla system survived the process of Soviet modernization and the era of independence shows its flexibility and social importance.

Safarov (2021) addresses the problem of the role of Bukhara's guzars in the socio-economic life, documenting the role of these spatial-social units in the support of local economies, the regulation of social relations and the maintenance of community cohesion. The mahalla system has a number of functions such as conflict resolution, social welfare, celebration of life-cycle events, and collective maintenance of neighborhood spaces. This multifunctional character enables the continuity of mahallas despite shocks in the political and economic environment.

Narrow lanes, courtyard houses and communal spaces are some of the physical features of mahalla quarters that support social practices that make them different from modern residential developments. Traditional Bukhara houses with their introverted orientation and the hierarchical organization of space are a legacy of cultural values on privacy, family structure, and gender relations that still affect residential preferences and social organization (Vileikis et al., 2019).

However, the mahalla system is under pressure due to pressures of urban development, changing social aspirations and generational changes in lifestyle preferences. While mahallas are important in providing social support networks and cultural continuity, they need to be responsive to the needs of the modern world in terms of infrastructure, services, and improvements in housing quality (Seila et al., 2025).

Religious Life and Sacred Practices

The revival of religious life after Soviet restrictions is another mechanism of cultural continuity of Bukhara of great importance. The restoration of mosques, madrassas and shrines for religious purposes and the revival of Islam rituals, ceremonies and pilgrimages have reasserted the sacred dimension of Bukhara's identity (Jumaeva and Utaeva, 2020). This religious revival was characterized by complex interactions between the traditional practices, modernist expressions, and government interference in expressions of religion.

Traditional ceremonies and celebrations marking the cultural calendar continue to take place in Bukhara, so offering reasons for gathering the community, cultural knowledge and the affirmation of collective identity. Jumaeva and Utaeva (2020) write about traditions concerning Bobodehkan, showing how agricultural and religious traditions continue and evolve in modern contexts. Malikov (2020) is an analysis of Nowruz celebration in Bukhara and Samarkand, and how the pre-Islamic festival has been sustained through changing political regimes and continues to serve important social and cultural functions.

The institution of pilgrimage represents another form of religious continuity, linking Bukhara to larger networks of Islamic piety while also connecting to tourism of Bukhara. However, the nature of the relationship between religious pilgrimages and heritage tourism, which generates tensions over the appropriate use and management of the sacred spaces (Omirbay, 2024). While pilgrims are motivated by spiritual experiences and religious merit, tourists tend to approach the same sites as cultural attractions for commodification and photography.

The rise of interest in Arabic language learning in Bukhara is part of general trends in Islamic revival and the urge to get closer to religious texts and traditions (Bahodirovna et al., 2024). This cultural continuity in the use of the same language not only assists in religious practices, but also in scholarship and cultural linkages to the larger Islamic world.

Vernacular Architecture and Minority Heritages

Bukhara's vernacular architecture is an important part of the cultural heritage, and it is not limited to monumental buildings, but also includes residential buildings, craft workshops, and neighborhood infrastructure. The continuity of traditional construction methods, spatial configurations and material traditions are both material evidence for historical evolution and evidence for the continuity of contemporary cultural practices (Vileikis et al., 2019; Ruziyev and Bobomurotov, 2024).

Traditional construction methods use locally available materials and adapt to climatic conditions through sophisticated ventilation techniques, solar orientation and thermal mass management. These building traditions are the accumulated environmental knowledge and cultural preferences that are still relevant to contemporary sustainable architecture (Chahardowli et al., 2020). However, the use of traditional techniques for the maintenance and repair of historic structures requires skilled craftspeople that have been lost and/or marginalized during the Soviet period.

Bukhara's cultural landscape has been formed not only by the majority contents (i.e. the Muslim population) of the republic, but by the presence of significant minority communities as well, such as the Bukharan Jewish community. The history and culture of Bukharan Jews is an important aspect of the city's heritage which challenges straightforward narratives of Islamic sacred space and questions whose heritage is acknowledged and preserved

(Cora et al., 2025). The majority of Bukharan Jews have emigrated since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Uzbekistan, leaving heritage problems with the maintenance of synagogues and other Jewish cultural sites with no living community to take care of them.

The cultural diversity of historic Bukhara was not limited to religious differences, but also included different ethnic and linguistic groups, whose interactions gave rise to the cosmopolitan character of the city. The complex ethno-linguistic geography of Central Asia is expressed in the Persian (Tajik) cultural and linguistic heritage of Bukhara, which is different and at the same time overlaps the Uzbek identity (Bahodirovna et al., 2024). More inclusive approaches involve focusing on different voices, acknowledging different heritage narratives and involving different communities in heritage decisions.

Oral Traditions and Intangible Heritage

In the midst of stones and cobblestones, Bukhara's physicality, the continuity of its cultural legacy seems to lie far more so in its immaterial capital, in the social knowledge and practices of oral tradition, of artisanship, ritual, memory. Even though the intangible dimensions are more fragile compared to the physical forms, they at the same time are of great importance in preserving cultural identity and the transmission of tradition across generations (Naheed and Shoostarian, 2022; Pranskuniene and Zabulioniene, 2023).

Textile production, metalworking, ceramics and woodworking are forms of intangible heritage, which comprise technical knowledge, aesthetic traditions and economic livelihood. Craft workshops in Bukhara, together with artisans' quarters being documented by Malimov (2025), is found to have an economic and cultural role in the city where the legacy of knowledge is being passed down through apprenticeship and family. The renaissance of traditional crafts in the post-Soviet era has been promoted both for heritage maintenance and economic reasons through sales of tourism.

Oral traditions, such as historical stories, religious tales, and local place-name legends, add to the importance of the attachment of residents to specific sites and spaces. Zokirov (2020) examined the microtoponymy of Bukhara, and reveals how place names have maintained historical memory and cultural associations that would otherwise have been lost. These toponyms express knowledge of historical events, distinguished inhabitants, economic activities, and spatial relations that augment our knowledge of the past in our city.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND URBAN CHANGE

While Bukhara has enjoyed a great deal of cultural continuity, it has at the same time undergone considerable social change due to modernization, economic reorganization and incorporation into global tourist networks. Figure 3 illustrates the scale of the current threat level in comparison to management capacity across five key challenge areas, which shows that there are serious gaps in Bukhara's management capacity to tackle the threat of tourism commodification, pressures of urban modernization, and infrastructure development, as well as poor legal frameworks and displacement of communities.

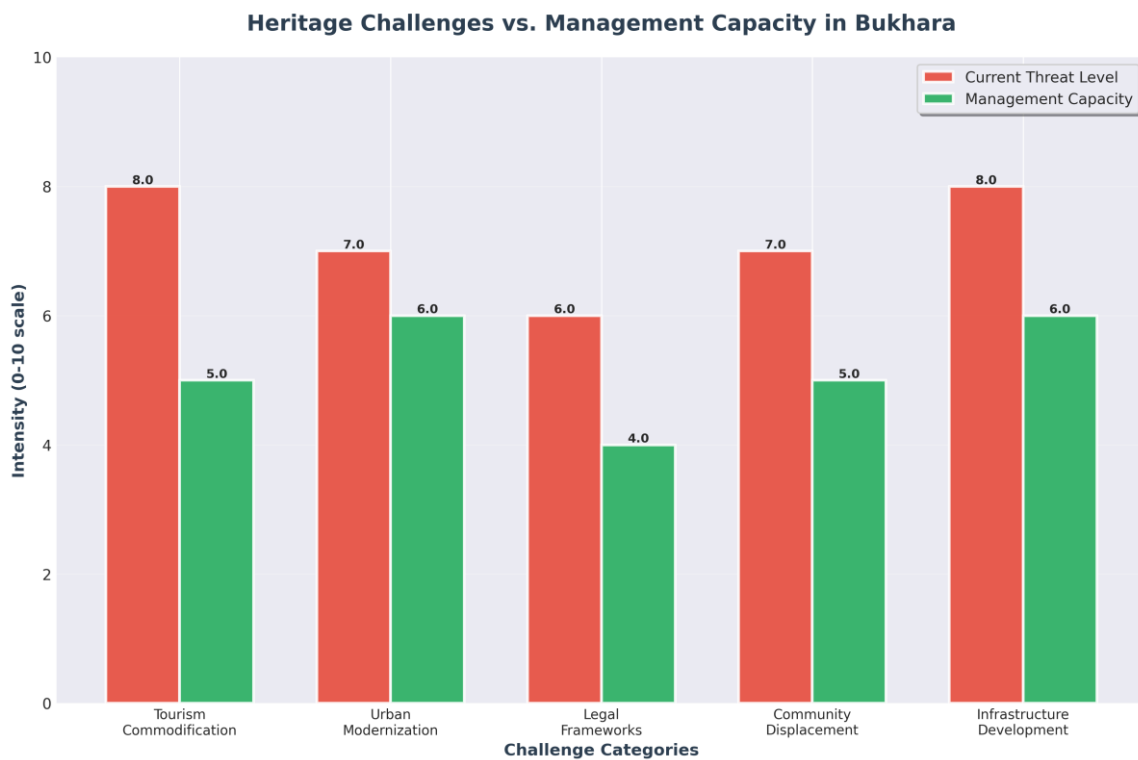


Figure 3. Heritage Capacity versus Management Capacity in Bukhara.

Red bars show the relative level of threat currently facing each of five challenge areas; green bars show the relative level of management capacity that exists in each area. The data shows a high level of threat capacity gap especially in the areas of tourism commodification (8.0 threat vs. 5.0 capacity), urban modernization (7.0 vs. 6.0), legal frameworks (6.0 vs. 4.0), community displacement (7.0 vs. 5.0), and infrastructure development (8.0 vs. 6.0). These disparities underscore the need for improved institutional capacity, legal protections, and management strategies to address mounting pressures on Bukhara's heritage.

Urban Modernization and Infrastructure Development

Post-Soviet projects of urban development in Bukhara were characterized by a major infrastructure improvement, as well as by new buildings and reconstruction of historic areas to meet present-day needs. The pressure to provide modern services, improve transportation networks and develop tourism facilities has created tension with heritage preservation objectives (Vileikis et al., 2019; Seila et al., 2025).

Infrastructure improvements such as utilities, roads, and public facilities are needed to enhance the quality of life for the residents and economic viability of the city. However, the installation of modern infrastructure in historic areas can damage archaeological resources, disrupt traditional building forms and change the visual characteristics of heritage zones (Vileikis et al., 2019). The challenge is designing infrastructure interventions to meet the needs of the present and respect the heritage values and minimize the physical impacts on the historic fabric.

New constructions on the periphery of the historic core of Bukhara led to sharp contrasts in traditional and modern urban forms. While this spatial segregation can help to protect the historic center from incompatible development, it can also lead to social and economic divisions between those who live in different zones (Imangulov and Kuksin, 2023). Moving beyond the pure frameworks of aesthetics and technique in the process of heritage and development debates, Turner and Gak-Vassallo (2024) document the post-Soviet responses to the Soviet modernism of Central Asia.

Tourism Economy and Heritage Commodification

This fact resulted in the development of tourism as a powerful economic driver which influenced Bukhara's heritage landscape, social structure, and cultural practices. While tourism provides economic benefits and sometimes assist conservation as is the case of entrance fees and the creation of jobs, it nevertheless introduces pressures toward commodification, staging of authenticity and displacement of residents from historic areas (Allaberganov and Catterall, 2023; Kilichov and Olsavsky, 2023).

Allaberganov and Catterall (2023) used social exchange theory to analyze the responses of residents to heritage tourism in Samarkand and Bukhara and found that the attitude of residents is significantly dependent on their perception of benefits and costs. While some residents value the economic opportunities and cultural promotion

of tourism, there are others who view tourism as a nuisance to everyday life by causing congestion, commercialization, and loss of community character. These different responses point to the importance of inclusive planning processes for the concerns of residents and an equitable distribution of tourism benefits.

The conversion of historic buildings to hotels, restaurants, and shops is an example of adaptive reuse, conservation, and the potential displacement of residential and traditional commercial functions. When heritage buildings are only used for tourism services, they can become isolated from the daily lives of resident communities (Lak et al., 2020).

The Belt and Road Initiative and other development frameworks have impacted the development patterns of tourism along Silk Roads, bringing new sources of investment and new development models. Reviewing the impacts, Dayoub et al. (2024) offer a systematic review of the impacts, finding both prospects of heritage preservation due to increased resources and threats of unsustainable development under economic agendas.

The commodification of cultural heritage is not only of physical spaces, but also of intangible traditions that are transformed into tourism performances. Traditional crafts, ceremonies and cultural practices can be modified or performed for tourist consumption in ways that change their meanings and social functions (Allaberganov and Catterall, 2023).

Shifting Social Identities and Economic Transitions

Social change in Bukhara is not just physical and economic, but also in terms of changing identities, aspirations and value systems, especially among the younger generations. The conflict between traditional and modern ways of life, religious and secular orientations, and local and global cultural influences define residents' relations with heritage sites and their vision of the city's future (Imangulov and Kuksin, 2023).

Generational differences in attitudes towards traditional culture, religious practices and urban development are indicative of the larger processes of social modernization and cultural change. The younger generations may perceive some of the traditional practices as restrictive or outdated while at the same time looking for ways to preserve their cultural identity and resist homogenizing globalization (Imangulov and Kuksin, 2023). Heritage management strategies that emphasize tradition and staticity, or that involve prohibitions that do not provide a concrete advantage, threaten to distance younger generations younger generations, who are necessary to ensure its long-term viability;

The post-Soviet change of the economic system from a planned to a market-oriented economy radically changed economic structures and livelihood opportunities in Bukhara. The privatization of the housing and commercial properties, the development of new economic sectors, among them tourism, and the decline of some traditional industries have created both opportunities and vulnerabilities for the residents (Malimov, 2025).

The revival of handicraft production is one of the ways to establish a strategy for connecting economic development with heritage preservation as traditional crafts can satisfy tourism markets and preserve skilled practices and cultural knowledge. Malimov (2025) records the development of private handicraft workshops in the post-Soviet period and how entrepreneurial activity can help to support craft revivals. Agricultural and rural development in the wider Bukhara region impacts on the heritage landscape of the city through migration patterns, use of resources and economic links between urban and rural areas. Ravshanovich 2025 The prospects of the development of Kagan district as a tourist destination Bobokalonov 2024 Projects of developing Afshona village: The expansion of heritage and tourism development strategies beyond the historic core of Bukhara.

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

The management of heritage in Bukhara needs policy frameworks and institutional structures, systematic documentation, technical capacity and cooperation between various stakeholders.

Documentation Technologies and Digital Heritage

Systematic recordation of the heritage assets of Bukhara has been identified as being essential for informed decision making regarding the conservation of the heritage and for monitoring the changes and responding to threats. Vileikis (2023) introduces a comprehensive strategy by using heritage documentation to manage change in the history center of Bukhara, as an example of the use of photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information system to support heritage management. These technologies allow detailed recording of current conditions, tracking of changes over time and analysis of threats and opportunities.

The creation of a GIS database for Bukhara and other Uzbekistan World Heritage Cities represents an important achievement in heritage documentation. Vileikis et al. (2017) present the methodology and database structure, which combines data on individual buildings, urban morphology, infrastructure and management zones. This systematic approach facilitates a more complete understanding of heritage assets, for example, better

coordination among stakeholders and evidence-based decision making about the conservation priorities and interventions.

Digital documentation technologies are not only opportunities for technical recording, but also for general engagement with heritage sites. Digital heritage applications can facilitate public education and tourism interpretation as well as community involvement in heritage stewardship (Vileikis and Khabibullaeyev, 2021). The use of digital heritage documentation for condition surveys and change monitoring allows more proactive heritage management that detects issues early and monitors the success of interventions (Vileikis and Khabibullaeyev, 2021).

UNESCO Collaboration and Policy Frameworks

UNESCO designation and the resulting World Heritage framework has had a profound impact on the heritage management in Bukhara in terms of conservation standards, technical support and international presence. Vileikis et al. (2019) document the use of the Historic Urban Landscape approach in Bukhara to show how international frameworks can facilitate more holistic and integrated heritage management beyond individual monuments to include urban systems, cultural practices and sustainable development.

Technical support, capacity building and inputs for documentation and management of the project have been provided through international partnerships with the University College London and other institutions (Vileikis et al., 2017; Vileikis, 2023). These partnerships enable knowledge transfer, the introduction of international best practices and the development of the local heritage management capacity.

Effective heritage management requires strong legal frameworks that clearly delineate protected areas, govern what activities are allowed to take place and include a system of enforcement. However, studies have found that gaps in legal protection are a major challenge for heritage conservation in Bukhara and other heritage sites in Central Asia (Seila et al., 2025). Lack of legal frameworks can lead to inappropriate development, poor maintenance and loss of heritage value, even though they are protected areas.

Integrated management plans that work with heritage conservation and urban development, tourism management and community needs are important policy tools. However, the success of management plans is conditional on the capacity for implementation, interagency coordination and political support. The combination of national heritage policy, local government and international heritage regimes brings a complex institutional background for heritage management. Seila et al. (2025) point out that the lack of coordination between various government agencies, unclear responsibilities, and inadequate resources are some of the factors that contribute to ineffective heritage management.

Community Participation and Sustainable Management

The recognition that heritage management must involve the participation of communities is an important shift from the expert-driven conservation to more inclusive approaches that involve diverse stakeholders. Li et al. (2020) give a systematic literature review comparing Chinese and international practices in community participation in cultural heritage management, identifying principles and practices relevant to places including Bukhara. The inclusion requires not only consultation, but also real involvement in decision-making and the value of community knowledge and priorities. Figure 4 shows the relative power and interest of heritage management in Bukhara among various stakeholders, with government agencies, UNESCO, and the tourism industry being identified as players with high power and interest and local residents and mahalla committees having high interest but lower institutional power.



Figure 4. Stakeholder Power-Interest Matrix: Management of Bukhara Heritage.

This matrix is used to map the key stakeholders based on their relative power/influence (x-axis) and interest/engagement (y-axis) in the heritage management processes of Bukhara. Key actors (high power, high interest) include government agencies, UNESCO, tourism industry and heritage experts who have to be closely involved in management decisions. Mahalla committees and the local residents show a high interest and a low institutional strength, which means that there is a need for more advanced participatory mechanisms. Religious institutions take a middle position, and developers have high levels of power but a lower concern for heritage values. Circle size indicates relative impact on heritage outcomes.

The mahalla system in Bukhara offers existing structures of the community basis to help participatory approaches of heritage management. However, effectively engaging mahalla organizations in heritage stewardship requires clarification of roles and responsibilities, the provision of resources and capacity building, and the participation processes needed to ensure that different community members, including women, youth and minority groups, are included (Safarov, 2021).

Residents' concerns about the impacts of tourism, development pressures and heritage regulations are important inputs for heritage management that are often marginalized in favor of expert or official perspectives. Allaberganov and Catterall (2023) showed the importance of knowing the response of residents to heritage tourism, including the benefits they value and the costs they incur. Brooks et al. (2023) go on to highlight the need for heritage management to be connected with community health and wellbeing, and suggest that heritage should be viewed as a resource for community flourishing, not simply as a conservation goal.

The sustainability of heritage management approaches is fundamentally dependent on the capacity of the local management, including technical skills, institutional resources and community engagement. Capacity building, such as professional training, technical assistance and knowledge transfer, is necessary for the establishment of sustainable management systems that can operate effectively over time (Vileikis et al. 2019). Financial sustainability is a crucial issue for heritage management since conservation and maintenance need to be supplied by financially continuous resources that are often larger than what is available from public funds. Tourism can be used in raising revenue through entrance fees and economic multiplier effects to ensure that the revenue generated from tourism is sufficient for heritage conservation through appropriate policy frameworks and revenue allocation mechanisms (Kilichov and Olsavsky, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The transformation of Bukhara from a sacred city into a managed heritage site shows both the opportunities and the shortcomings for heritage management practices today and given the changing character of contemporary societies. This chapter draws from the above discussion in order to answer the main research question: Has Bukhara managed to strike a balance between cultural continuity and social change?

Resilience and Vulnerability in Cultural Continuity

Through the mahalla system, the religious institutions, vernacular architecture and traditional practices that have endured the Soviet constraints and post-Soviet changes, Bukhara shows great resilience in ensuring cultural continuity (Vileikis et al., 2019; Jumaeva and Utaeva, 2020; Safarov, 2021). Resilience is an outward expression of the adaptive capacity of cultural traditions and social institutions that are still meaningful to residents and serve as frameworks for dealing with community life.

However, the continuation of this culture is increasingly threatened by the commodification of tourism, urbanization, of generational renewal and of economic reorganization (Allaberganov and Catterall, 2023; Seila et al., 2025). The commodification of heritage for tourism risks turning cultural traditions into performances that empty them of substance while preserving the surface forms. While new construction and infrastructure development are necessary to meet legitimate needs, they can also have a negative impact on the historic fabric and traditional urban patterns.

There is a concept of cultural resilience developed by Holtorf (2018) that offers a useful framework to understand this dynamic. Rather than perceiving heritage as fixed and under threat from any form of change, cultural resilience focuses on the ability of communities to hold on to their identity and traditions they value and hold dear, whilst adapting to new conditions. From this angle, the question is not if Bukhara has been changed - clearly, it has not been - but whether alterations have taken place in particular ways and ways that preserve cultural meaning and community agency.

The fragility of intangible heritage elements such as craftsmanship, oral traditions and ritual practices should be given more attention. Unlike physical monuments, which can be restored after damage, intangible heritage relies on continuous transmission and practice. When a transmission chain is broken due to migration, economic transformation or a change in societal priorities, intangible heritage may be irretrievably lost (Naheed and Shooshtarian, 2022).

Authenticity, Commodification and Heritage Values

The conflict between the heritage authenticity and commodity of tourism is a fundamental issue in Bukhara's transformation. UNESCO's focus on authenticity is a reflection of concerns that heritage sites should not be simulations but should maintain real historical characters (Holtorf, 2018). However, the meaning of authenticity in the context of living heritage is still contested as all cultural traditions change over time.

Tourism development in Bukhara has been characterized by adaptive reuse, which has been supportive of conservation and commercialization, and threatening of authenticity. The restoration of historic buildings for tourism can help to provide economic viability for buildings that might otherwise deteriorate, while tourism revenues can help to fund wider conservation efforts (Kilichov and Olsavsky, 2023). However, when heritage areas become the main tourism areas, they may lose the diversity of functions and authentic daily life that make up living heritage rather than just historic preservation (Lak et al., 2020).

The use of cultural traditions to be presented in a staged way represents a process of tourist consumption, which presents the question of who owns heritage presentation, what stories are told and what aspects of cultural heritage are emphasized and which are marginalized. Allaberganov and Catterall (2023) record tensions between the experience of locals and expectations of tourists, indicating that heritage management is all about keeping visitors happy, at the expense of those who live in the place.

Heritage commodification is not limited to physical spaces, but also to intangible traditions that are turned into tourism performance. While some form of adaptation is to be expected when traditions are performed for visitors, commercialization may lead to a superficialization of traditions in which they are dissociated from their deep meaning and social practices. Malikov (2020) documents the ways in which traditional celebrations in Bukhara have social functions beyond tourism performance, suggesting the importance of supporting traditions in their community contexts.

Comparative Perspectives and Heritage Theory

Situating Bukhara in comparative perspective with other heritage cities of the heritage of the Silk Road reveals common patterns and distinctive features of heritage transformation processes. Samarkand, also located in Uzbekistan, has much the same history of Islamic civilization, Soviet intervention and post-independence heritage

development as Bukhara, but it has experienced somewhat different trajectories in tourism development and urban transformation (Allaberganov and Catterall, 2023).

A different model is offered by the third of the great cities of Uzbekistan, Khiva, whose historical center has become a kind of open-air museum, with a small population. While this approach ensures good preservation of historic fabric, it raises questions about living heritage and continuity of the community that are less problematic in Bukhara, where the historic center is still a functioning residential and commercial area (Vileikis et al., 2019).

Regional comparisons which go beyond Uzbekistan are an additional perspective. Chahardowli et al. (2020) discuss sustainable regeneration in historic and cultural centers of different cities, and identify common issues such as infrastructure shortfalls, conflicting interests of stakeholders, and balancing preservation and development. The Silk Roads Heritage Initiative promoted by the Tourism UNESCO provided a fabric for the regional cooperation and common learning among the heritage cities (Dayoub et al., 2024).

Theoretical engagement with heritage studies, urban geography and postcolonial theory highlights the politics of heritage designation, construction of cultural narratives and power relations contained within the heritage management. The designation of Bukhara as a World Heritage site brings into its heritage management internationally recognized frameworks and expertise to create relationships that can be interpreted through postcolonial frameworks that are sensitive to asymmetries of power and knowledge hierarchies (Turner and Gak-Vassallo, 2024).

The dialectic between the view of heritage as the expression of outstanding universal values, and on the one hand, local meanings of heritage linked to sacredness and community identity, highlights wider discussions about whose heritage is being preserved for whom (Lak et al., 2020). While the UNESCO frameworks stress the importance of heritage to all humanities, the practical management of heritage sites inevitably involves specific stakeholders, whose interests and perspectives may be different.

The construction of national heritage discourses in post-Soviet Uzbekistan was accompanied by the selective highlighting of certain periods in history and of certain cultural traditions that served the nation-building agenda of the time. The accentuation of Timurid legacy and the valorization of such figures as Amir Timur as national heroes are the result of these contemporary political projects and not neutral historical interpretations (Rutkouskaya, 2012). Understanding heritage as innovatively socially constructed rather than inherited allows a critical reading of how particular pasts are remembered and other pasts are forgotten or marginalized.

The concept of the Historic Urban Landscape advocated by UNESCO and implemented in Bukhara is a step forward from monument-centered approaches by focusing on urban patterns, intangible heritage and sustainable development (Vileikis et al., 2019). However, the implementation of this approach requires not only the adoption of the concept, but also the development of governance mechanisms, planning tools and participatory processes that bring about its holistic vision. The lack of coherence between policy rhetoric and realities of implementation is still large in many settings including in Bukhara (Seila et al., 2025). Figure 5 is an integrated heritage management framework that identifies physical, intangible and living communities as three pillars to be underpinned by sound legal frameworks, community engagement, systematic inventory and monitoring, sustainable tourism management and capacity building amidst constant threats like commodification, urbanization, displacement, resource scarcities, and power imbalances.

Integrated Heritage Management Framework for Bukhara

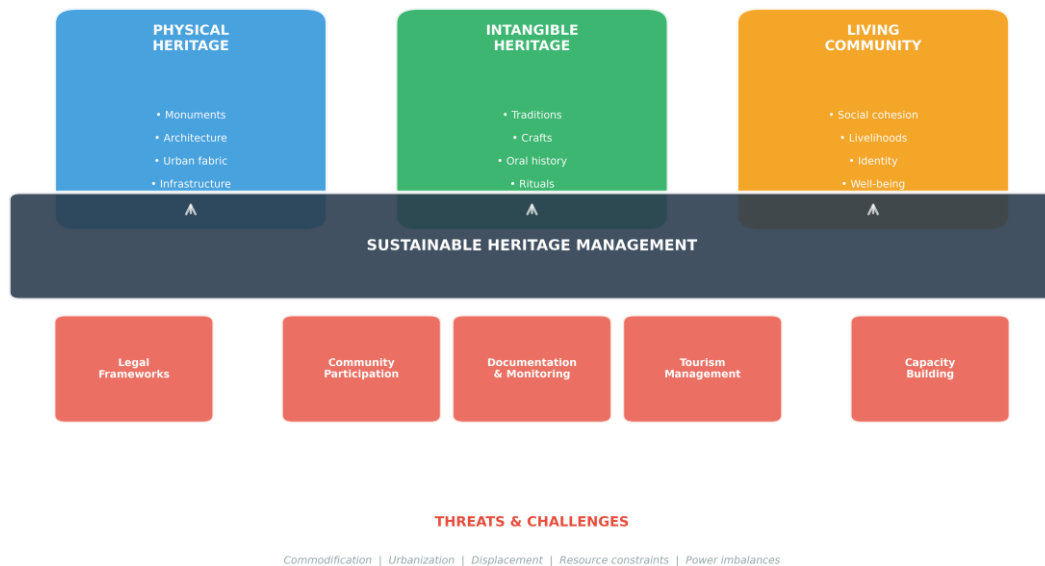


Figure 5. Bukhara Integrated Heritage Management Framework.

This conceptual framework shows the three key pillars for developing sustainable heritage management, namely physical heritage (monuments, architecture, urban fabric, infrastructure), intangible heritage (traditions, crafts, oral history, rituals) and living community (social cohesion, livelihoods, identity, well-being). These pillars are supported by sustainable heritage management with five key components (legal frameworks, community involvement, documentation and monitoring, tourism management, and capacity building). The Framework recognizes ongoing threats, such as commodification, urbanization, displacement, resource limitations and power imbalances, that must be recognized and overcome in order to reach sustainable results.

CONCLUSION

This discussion of the transformation of Bukhara into a holy city and a controlled heritage site shows a multifaceted image of successes and current problems. The city has preserved important aspects of cultural continuity through resilient social institutions, such as the mahalla system, revival of religious practices, preservation of vernacular architecture and persistence of traditional knowledge. The writing of systematic documentation approaches, the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape framework and international collaborations have led to the development of technical capacity for heritage management. Figure 6 shows a visual analysis of Bukhara's performance in maintaining cultural continuity while facilitating social change in five key dimensions, showing that the city has made fairly good progress in cultural continuity and heritage (both 7/10), but gaps exist in community well-being (5/10), and social change and the economy (both 6/10), so the balance is still fragile and needs to be addressed.

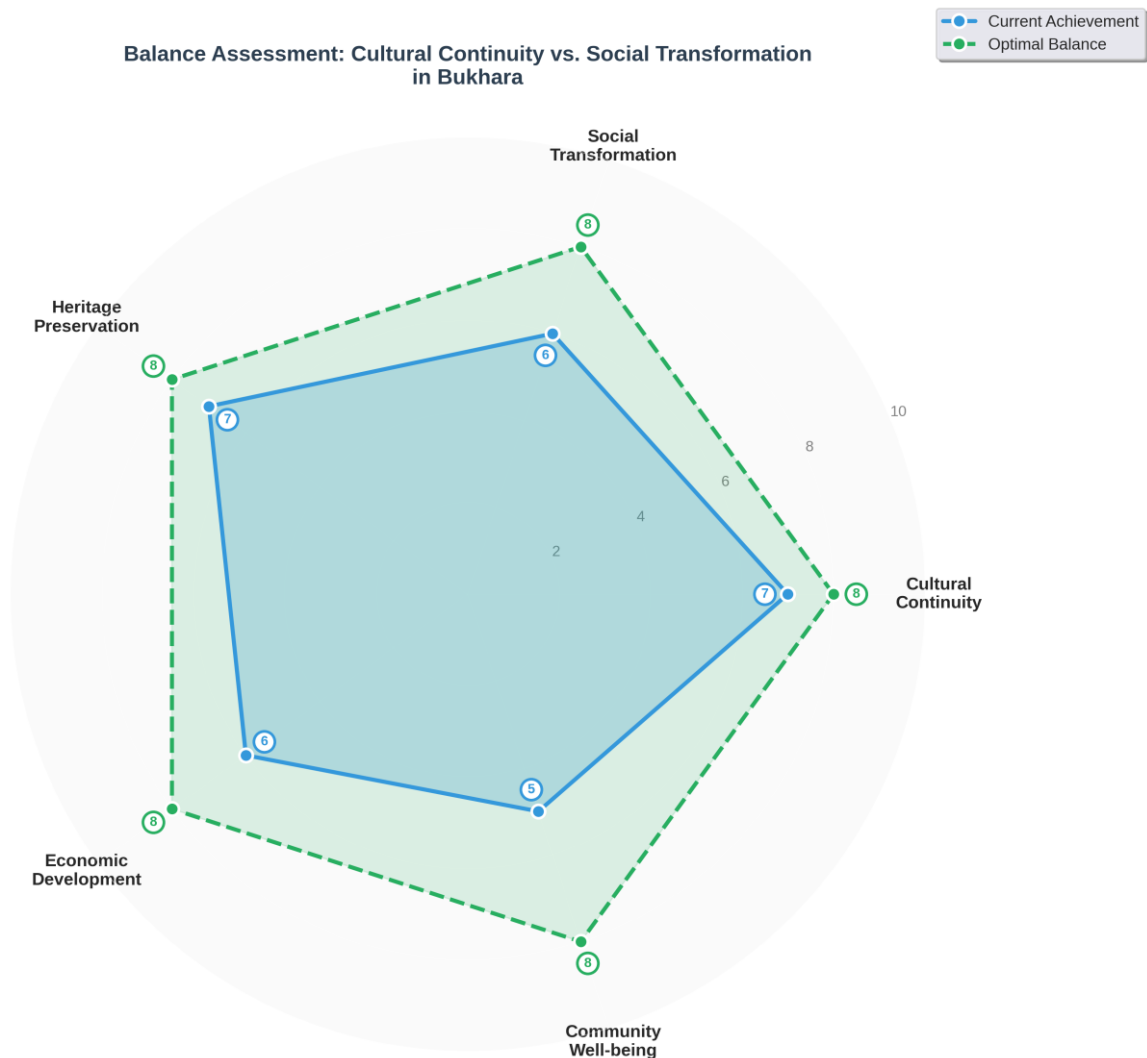


Figure 6. Balance Test: Cultural Continuity versus Social Transformation in Bukhara.

Radar chart showing current achievement levels (solid blue line) vs. optimal balance targets (dashed green line) in 5 key dimensions on a 0-10 scale. The analysis finds relatively good results in the areas of cultural continuity (7.0) and heritage preservation (7.0), moderate results in social transformation (6.0) and economic development (6.0), and a significant deficit in community well-being (5.0). The visual comparison highlights how by successfully conserving important cultural elements, the balance between conservation and development in Bukhara remains fragile and there is a need for greater attention to improving community wellbeing, and more even distribution of the benefits of heritage.

However, there are also a number of issues and weaknesses that emerged in the process of analysis which jeopardize sustainable heritage management. Tourism commodification runs the risk of reducing real cultural traditions to shallow performances that are removed from their original meaning and social context. New construction and infrastructure development pressures together with urban modernization have created conflicts with world heritage which need to be managed with resolution skills. Lack of legal frameworks, institutional coordination and limited resources have weakened the implementation of heritage policies. Most essentially, power dynamics of heritage decision-making tend to marginalize an open community voice and amplify expert, official, and commercial interests.

The central research question is the following: Has Bukhara managed to balance cultural continuity and social transformation in a successful way? received a qualified, affirmative answer. The city has demonstrated significant resilience in preserving its cultural identity and traditional practices while adapting itself to new political, economic and social circumstances. However, this equilibrium is still precarious and susceptible to influences of commodification, effects of modernization, and management practices placing greater importance on physical preservation than on living heritage and tourist experience rather than resident well-being.

Policy and Research Implications

Several policy implications emerge from this analysis. First, heritage management frameworks must adopt a holistic approach and combine physical heritage conservation with support of intangible heritage, community

institution and sustainable lifestyle and livelihood. The Historic Urban Landscape approach presents a helpful conceptual framework, but the implementation of the approach needs mechanisms for intersectoral coordination, participatory planning and allocation of resources to deal with the multiple dimensions of heritage.

Second, legal frameworks for the heritage protection needs strengthening in order to define clear guidance, enforce adequate legal framework and mechanisms to balance conservation and legitimate developmental needs. Third, the participation of the community needs to go beyond tokenistic consultations, to a real involvement in heritage decision making. This requires the creation of governance structures that involve sharing of power, recognition of community knowledge and priorities, and the ensuring that heritage management is for the well-being of the community as well as for conservation purposes. The mahala system of Bukhara offers the current community frameworks that can be used to facilitate participatory strategies, provided that they are properly resourced and empowered.

Fourth, tourism management should focus on sustainable practices that ensure benefits are shared fairly, negative effects on residents and the heritage fabric are minimized, and different functions are preserved in heritage areas, rather than development of tourism enclaves. This includes regulating the capacity for tourism, tourism revenues are directed towards conservation and community benefits and support forms of tourism that respect sacred meaning and cultural authenticity.

Fifth, capacity building for heritage management should include not only technical skills, but also institutional development, resource mobilization and the provision of professional opportunities to hold trained persons in heritage fields. Capacity building can be facilitated through international partnerships, but should be based on true collaboration instead of a one-way flow of knowledge.

This analysis also identifies a number of directions for future research. First, longitudinal studies of heritage conditions and community well-being and management effectiveness over time would allow a better understanding of trends and an assessment of intervention effects. Second, more research is required in the area of intangible dimensions of heritage, including traditional knowledge, social practices, and oral traditions, that receive less attention than do physical monuments, and that are crucial for cultural continuity.

Third, comparative studies of heritage transformation in different Silk Road cities can discern common elements and specificities which will help theoretical understanding and practical policy formulation. Fourth, research on community perspectives, experiences and priorities for heritage transformation could offer more responsive and equitable ways of managing it. Fifth, through the lens of a political economy of heritage, power relations, resource flows and stakeholder interests shed light on structural determinants of heritage outcomes realized above and contrary to declared policies and intentions.

Bukhara's evolution from holy cities to managed heritage sites illustrates the wider trends taking place in historic cities throughout the world as they mediate the tensions between the notions of preservation and development, tradition and modernity, place and that of global integration. When tackling the past of cities, we have recently demonstrated how cultural resilient heritage can be but at the same time vulnerable to commodification and transformations dictated by exogenous forces. Effective heritage management depends not only on technical knowledge of conservation and heritage, but also on political will for inclusive management, sufficient resource allocation and appreciation of the ultimate value of heritage - its meaning in the eyes of communities whose identities and well-being are intrinsically linked to place.

The challenge of transforming sacred cities into heritage sites need not be a symbol of loss if management approaches give reverence to both the sacred meaning and living traditions and support sustainable development that benefits the residents. However, this balance can only be achieved through constant negotiations between various stakeholders, awareness of power relations that influence heritage decisions, and adherence to the principles of authenticity, integrity and community agency that are the basis of meaningful heritage conservation. Bukhara's future as a living heritage and not a museum space is dependent on decisions that have yet to be made on how whose heritage is preserved, by whom, and through what processes of collective deliberation and action.

Declarations

Funding:

This research received no external funding.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Allaberganov, A. and Catterall, P. (2023). Using social exchange theory to examine residents' responses to heritage tourism: case studies of Samarqand and Bukhara in Uzbekistan. "Journal of Heritage Tourism, 18", 846-863. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873x.2023.2232474>
- Bahodirovna, A., Alisherovna, A. and Avazovna, A. (2024). The Rise of Interest in Learning Arabic Language in Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan: Sociolinguistic Survey. "Comparative Linguistics, Translation and Literary Studies". <https://doi.org/10.70036/cltls.v1i1.8>
- Baxtishod, U. (2025). THE ISSUE OF RESEARCHING THE HISTORICAL TOPOGRAPHY OF BUKHARA CITY DURING THE SAMANID PERIOD. "Journal of Learning on History and Social Sciences". <https://doi.org/10.61796/ejlhs.v2i3.1243>
- Bobokalonov, S. (2024). Prospects of Executing the Project of Compiling a Tourism City in Afshona Village Located in Bukhara Region. "American Journal of Economics and Business Management". <https://doi.org/10.31150/ajebm.v7i12.3115>
- Brooks, C., Waterton, E., Saul, H. and Renzaho, A. (2023). Exploring the relationships between heritage tourism, sustainable community development and host communities' health and wellbeing: A systematic review. "PLOS ONE, 18". <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282319>
- Bruno, J. and Puschnigg, G. (2022). Bukhara and its neighborhood. Reassessing the cultural links of the oasis from new ceramic evidence. "Archaeological Research in Asia". <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ara.2022.100372>
- Canbolat, A. and Gültekin, N. (2025). Sacred and Cultural Heritage of Sacred Cities. "PLANARCH - Design and Planning Research". <https://doi.org/10.54864/planarch.1563477>
- Chahardowli, M., Sajadzadeh, H., Aram, F. and Mosavi, A. (2020). Survey of Sustainable Regeneration of Historic and Cultural Cores of Cities. "Energies". <https://doi.org/10.3390/en13112708>
- Çora, H., Mikail, E. and Çora, A. (2025). The History and Culture of Bukharan Jews in Uzbekistan. "İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi". <https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.1540083>
- Dayoub, B., Yang, P., Omran, S., Zhang, Q., Chen, X., Alabsi, A. and Dayoub, A. (2024). The Belt and Road Initiative's impact on tourism and heritage along the Silk Roads: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. "PLOS ONE, 19". <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0306298>
- DSc, I. and Mrs, I. (2021). THE IMPACT OF ISLAM ON SOCIOPOLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE IN CENTRAL ASIA. <https://doi.org/10.47980/tloi/2021/1/1>
- Holtorf, C. (2018). Embracing change: how cultural resilience is increased through cultural heritage. "World Archaeology, 50", 639-650. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2018.1510340>
- Imangulov, L. and Kuksin, Y. (2023). Regional dimension of socio-cultural modernization of the population: results of expeditionary research in Uzbekistan and southern Kyrgyzstan. "Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Earth Sciences". <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu07.2023.104>
- Jumaeva, N. and Olimovna, J. (2021). The Topographical Changes Performed in the Holy Shrines of Bukhara City. "Asian Journal of Basic Science and Research". <https://doi.org/10.38177/ajbsr.2021.3402>
- Jumaeva, N. and Utaeva, F. (2020). CULTURAL SPONSOR -RELATED TO BOBODEHQAN TRADITIONS AND CEREMONIES(on the example of the Bukhara Oasis). "JOURNAL OF LOOK TO THE PAST". <https://doi.org/10.26739/2181-9599-2020-5-8>
- Kilichov, M. and Olšovský, F. (2023). Sustainable tourism development: Insights from accommodation facilities in Bukhara along the silk road. "Marketing Science and Inspirations". <https://doi.org/10.46286/msi.2023.18.2.2>
- Lak, A., Gheitasi, M. and Timothy, D. (2020). Urban regeneration through heritage tourism: cultural policies and strategic management. "Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 18", 386-403. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2019.1668002>
- Li, J., Krishnamurthy, S., Roders, A. and Wesemael, P. (2020). Community participation in cultural heritage management: A systematic literature review comparing Chinese and international practices. "Cities". <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2019.102476>
- Malikov, A. (2020). Celebration of Nowruz in Bukhara and Samarkand in Ritual Practice and Social Discourses (the Second Half of the 19th to Early 20th Centuries). "Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology of Eurasia". <https://doi.org/10.17746/1563-0102.2020.48.2.122-129>
- Malimov, S. (2025). The First Private Handicraft Workshop. "International Journal Of History And Political Sciences". <https://doi.org/10.37547/ijhps/volume05issue04-05>
- Naheed, S. and Shooshtarian, S. (2022). The Role of Cultural Heritage in Promoting Urban Sustainability: A Brief Review. "Land". <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11091508>
- Omirbay, A. (2024). Transformation of Public Consciousness: Based on the Image of Saints in the Mangistau Region and Uzbekistan. "Bulletin of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Historical Sciences. Philosophy. Religion Series". <https://doi.org/10.32523/2616-7255-2024-147-2-229-245>

- Park, J., Voyakin, D. and Kurbanov, B. (2021). Bronze-to-brass transition in the medieval Bukhara oasis. "Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences, 13". <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12520-021-01287-3>
- Pickett, J. (2020). Centering Bukhara. <https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9781501750243.003.0002>
- Pranskūnienė, R. and Zabulionienė, E. (2023). Towards Heritage Transformation Perspectives. "Sustainability". <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15076135>
- Ravshanovich, K. (2025). PERSPECTIVES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPING KAGAN DISTRICT AS TOURISM DESTINATION IN BUKHARA REGION. "INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY". <https://doi.org/10.70728/24m9ph19>
- Rizoev, S. (2023). Bukhara and the World through the Views of Jadid and Traveler Mirzo Sirodjiddin Hakim. "RUDN Journal of Russian History". <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8674-2023-22-2-223-232>
- Rutkouskaya, H. (2012). Redefining historical Bukhara: professional architectural vision of the national heritage in late Soviet Uzbekistan (1965-1991).
- Ruziyev, K. and Bobomurotov, K. (2024). Scientific research of urban-planning traditions of the medieval Bukhara. "E3S Web of Conferences". <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202454801004>
- Safarov, T. (2021). BUKHARA GUZARS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE CITY. "CURRENT RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HISTORY". <https://doi.org/10.37547/history-crjh-02-11-04>
- Seila, F., Selim, G. and Newisar, M. (2025). A Systematic Review of Factors Contributing to Ineffective Cultural Heritage Management. "Sustainability". <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17010366>
- Sengupta, A. (2000). Imperatives of national territorial delimitation and the fate of Bukhara 1917-1924. "Central Asian Survey, 19", 394-415. <https://doi.org/10.1080/026349300750058008>
- Turner, M. and Gak-Vassallo, D. (2024). The colonialism of the Modern Movement and the post-USSR reaction in Central Asia. "Curator: The Museum Journal". <https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12605>
- Ulugbekovich, B. and Sobirovich, T. (2025). Bukhara Silk Bazaar as a Symbol of 16th Century Trade and Architectural Heritage. "Mediterranean Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences". <https://doi.org/10.46382/mjbas.2025.9111>
- Vileikis, O. (2023). A STRATEGY USING HERITAGE DOCUMENTATION FOR MANAGING CHANGE OF THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF BUKHARA. "ISPRS Annals of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences". <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-annals-x-m-1-2023-269-2023>
- Vileikis, O., Allayarov, S., Ost, C. and Eppich, R. (2019). Bukhara: Living Central Asian Silk Road City. Application of the Historic Urban Landscape Approach. "Reshaping Urban Conservation". https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8887-2_9
- Vileikis, O., Carrillo, E., Allayarov, S. and Feyzulayev, A. (2017). Documentation for Preservation: Methodology and a GIS Database of Three World Heritage Cities in Uzbekistan. "ISPRS Annals of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences", 311-318. <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-annals-iv-2-w2-311-2017>
- Vileikis, O. and Khabibullaeyev, F. (2021). APPLICATION OF DIGITAL HERITAGE DOCUMENTATION FOR CONDITION ASSESSMENTS AND MONITORING CHANGE IN UZBEKISTAN. "ISPRS Annals of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences". <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-annals-viii-m-1-2021-179-2021>
- Welsford, T. (2015). Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia: Sufism, Education and the Paradox of Islamic Prestige By Allen J. Frank. "Journal of Islamic Studies, 26", 366-370. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etv073>
- Wenbo, Y. and Han, Z. (2025). Paikend and Bukhara as Symbols of the "Copper City": A Historical Examination of Oasis City Defense Systems and Cultural Significance. "Humanities and Social Science Research". <https://doi.org/10.30560/hssr.v8n1p17>
- Zokirov, B. (2020). Microtoponymy of Cities of Bukhara Khanate and Their Classification (Based on the Analysis of Travelogues of Russian Tourists Of The XVIII-XIX Centuries). "02", 229-237. <https://doi.org/10.37547/tajssei/volume02issue09-36>