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HUMAN CENTRIC PLANNING OF TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC SETTLEMENTS: A SPACE SYNTAX STUDY OF ITCHAN KALA, KHIVA

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Abstract

Traditional Islamic settlements reflect a sophisticated integration of spirituality, social organization, and spatial planning, yet few studies have examined these qualities at the scale of entire urban environments using analytical tools such as space syntax. This study investigates the fortified city of Itchan Kala in Khiva, Uzbekistan, to uncover how Islamic values are embedded within its urban planning and spatial configuration. Through axial and visibility graph analysis (VGA) using depthmapX, the research evaluates visibility, integration, and controllability at both global (R=n) and local (R=3) scales to explore the balance between openness, privacy, and movement regulation. The findings reveal a spatial structure that is compact yet hierarchically layered, supporting both communal interaction and seclusion. The highly integrated main market street, anchored by the central Juma Masjid, exemplifies the Islamic planning ideal of harmonizing commerce and worship. In contrast, residential quarters demonstrate low visibility and high controllability, fostering privacy and local stewardship. Madrasas, now repurposed as museums, occupy transitional zones mediating between public and private realms. As Itchan Kala continues to function as a living city with active residential, commercial, and institutional establishments much as it did a thousand years ago, its enduring spatial organization demonstrates the lasting effectiveness of Islamic planning principles across generations, socio-political transitions, and

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